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May 24, 2016

Robert MacWhorter
Forest Supervisor
c/o Shannon Downey
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

Submitted online via NPS comment form

Dear Mr. MacWhorter,

On behalf of Wilderness Watch, I want to submit the following comments on the Southwest Oregon Mineral Withdrawal. Wilderness Watch is a national wilderness conservation organization focused on the protection of the Wildernesses in the National Wilderness Preservation System, including the Kalmiopsis Wilderness.

Wilderness Watch supports the Forest Service decision to withdraw 101,000 acres of mineral rights from exploration and development in this area for five years for the following reasons:

- The Kalmiopsis Wilderness is recognized for its exceptional rivers and streams—including the Wild Illinois, Chetco, and North Fork Smith rivers—that support salmon and steelhead among other fish and aquatic insects.
- The Kalmiopsis is also noted for its unique geology and rich plant life.
- The Forest Service's decision to extend the withdrawal of mineral rights for another five years is a good decision that will protect the wild character of the Kalmiopsis as well as its rich plant and animal life and clean waters.
- The Forest Service's plan is necessary to protect the Kalmiopsis Wilderness from mining while Congress considers its permanent protection through the Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act of 2015.

Please keep Wilderness Watch on your contact list for future steps on this project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Proescholdt

Kevin Proescholdt
Conservation Director
Wilderness Watch

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