August 5th, 2019

Senator Wyden and Representative Blumenauer,

Good afternoon, my name is Felice Kelly, and I am a somewhat junior member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness. Senator Wyden and Representative Blumenauer, thank you so much for holding this forum. Senator Wyden, The Broads thank you for protecting the old-growth forests in the Devil's Staircase Wilderness as well as the newly-designated 250 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Congressman Blumenauer, we know how hard you work everyday to fight climate disruption and protect Oregon’s wildlife, especially our keystone species, and we appreciate your interest in protecting Mount Hood.

One day last summer I ran from Ramona Falls to Cascade Locks, and what we saw on the way made me realize how special this area is. We ran past enthusiastic hikers at Ramona Falls, gorgeous view of this mountain, miles of deep forest, lakes, and wilderness, and then so many kids and families of all ages out walking in the woods in the treasured Columbia River Gorge. For hours we did not see a car or building, and we watched butterflies pollinate the wildflowers instead. This unique, interconnected region is a refuge to people, plants, and animals, and its essential wildness is one of its chief values. This wildness must be carefully shepherded as we plan the future of the mountain. We can do that by ensuring that wilderness and wildlife are included in our planning, and by protecting this forest to increase its carbon storage, which will help mitigate climate change.

The Broads encourage you to look at the wilderness expansions discussed and debated over the past 5 years as a starting point. I have a map of that proposal here that I will leave with you. These include stunning and ecologically important areas like Hunchback Mountain, Tamanawas Falls, McCall Point, Bluegrass Ridge, and closing the gap between the Salmon-Huckleberry and Roaring River Wilderness areas. In 2015 and 2016 the Broads spoke with hikers at trailheads and businesses around the Mountain and near the Gorge about threats to these areas and how they can help protect them. Hikers and business owners alike were eager to see this area protected forever! We hope that long-term protection would include wilderness protection and limiting clearcuts to retain habitat connectivity, maximize carbon sequestration, and protect the region from administrative threats from the Trump administration. Thank you again.

Felice Kelly

Chair, Broadactivism Committee,

Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Cascade Volcanoes Chapter