



Description

If Bigfoot lives, he or she dwells in the Siskiyou Mountains. The northwestern portions of the proposed wilderness additions are in the Smith River and Illinois River watersheds.

The Smith is California's only undammed river and it hosts one of the "best salmon and steelhead fisheries on the west coast" according to the Six Rivers National Forest. The stream is known for its beautiful blue-green color, scenic vistas, challenging whitewater, abundant fish and other wildlife populations, rare plants and recreation opportunities. These superlative features lead Congress to designate the California-portion of the watershed the Smith River National Recreation Area in 1990.

A significant portion of the Smith's headwaters are protected by the Siskiyou Wilderness. Unusual soils, great rises and drops in elevation, and plenty of water all combine to make the Siskiyou Wilderness a refuge for a great diversity of species, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. Ancient forests consist of an amazing fourteen species of conifers, the second greatest conifer diversity in the world.

The southwestern proposed wilderness additions are situated along the canyon and surrounding slopes of the Crescent City Fork of Blue Creek, one of the purest and most important tributaries of the Klamath River. Blue Creek flows through an exceptionally wild region dominated by the Siskiyou Wilderness and many unprotected roadless lands adjacent to it. The stream's steep banks are covered in some of the finest ancient forests in northern California. Tree species include the rare Port Orford cedar among others. One of the stream's most important values are its healthy populations of salmon and steelhead trout, making Blue Creek one of the most important tributaries of the Klamath in terms of the quality and quantity of habitat it provides for these species. Blue Creek is also a proposed wild and scenic river.

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Quick Facts

Management Agencies:
Six Rivers National Forest

Location:
Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, CA;
2nd Congressional District

Watershed:
Smith River, Blue Creek (a tributary of the Klamath River) and the Illinois River

Size: 39,355 acres

Recreational Uses:
Some of the purest, most scenic streams in California, boating, swimming, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, botanizing. The popular South Kelsey National Recreation Trail passes through the proposed additions.

Ecological Values:
Rare plants, superlative fish habitat, abundant ancient forest, astonishing plant diversity