



October 26, 2010

The Cooper Spur Wild & Free Coalition (CSWF) is a diverse coalition of recreation, conservation, and citizen organizations that came together in July of 2002 to protect the land around Cooper Spur from commercial development and a proposed timber harvest. Since its inception, the coalition has been a voice for over a dozen conservation groups and recreation clubs that have promoted an alternative vision for the future of Mt. Hood's north side including the Mazamas, Oregon Wild, Bark, Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, Hood River Valley Residents Committee, the Ptarmigans, Friends of Mt. Hood, Northwest Environmental Defense Center, Portland Audubon, Friends of Tilly Jane, Oregon Nordic Club and Oregon Canoe and Kayak Club.



These organizations collectively represent the voice of tens of thousands of Oregonians who support the “**Clean Sweep**” which involves a land trade, the designation of new Wilderness, the protection of a watershed and the recognition of the unique historic backcountry on the North side of Mt. Hood.

The **Clean Sweep** will protect over 2,000 acres of the Tilly Jane roadless backcountry land as Wilderness and set aside over 2,000 acres of the Crystal Springs watershed for drinking water protection. The goal of the Clean Sweep is to protect **Clean Water and preserve the Historic Backcountry Recreation area found on the North side**. The Cooper Spur area has been the gateway for generations of visitors' backcountry excursions onto Mt. Hood. The area is historically significant and ecologically important. Old growth forests on the north side provide critical habitat for many species and ensure the health of the Crystal Springs Watershed, which provides 25% of the drinking water for Hood River Valley residents and farmers. Together, the Inn at Cooper Spur, the Tilly Jane Ski Trail, and the Cooper Spur Ski Area make up an important part the history of backcountry recreation on Mt. Hood.

2001: The Mountain Threatened by Resort & Logging Plans.

In 2001 the Hood River County Board of Commissioners was considering a proposal from Mt. Hood Meadows to develop a four-season destination resort on Mt. Hood's north side. Despite residents' concerns and strong public opposition, the Hood River County Board of Commissioners approved a land trade with Meadows allowing the company to pursue a large destination resort development affected thousands of acres on the north side. Around the same time, the Forest Service proposed a logging project in the general vicinity of Cooper Spur and the Cooper Spur Ski Area. In combination these projects had the ability to drastically change the nature of the north side of Mt. Hood, threatening the Valley's water supply and many of the scenic and historic qualities of the land that make Cooper Spur unique.

2001-2005: The People Respond with an Alternative Vision.

A committed group called the Hood River Valley Residents Committee stepped forward to work with other concerned groups and educate the public about the impact of the proposals. The HRVRC reached out to area residents, conservation groups and recreation clubs. HRVRC formed an alliance with local recreation, conservation, and citizens groups as well as area homeowners associations.

2006: Settlement Agreement to Protect the North Side.

After a series of legal battles and negotiations, the HRVRC reached a settlement with Mt. Hood Meadows that the other organizations in CSWF wholeheartedly supported. (www.crag.org) Mt. Hood Meadows agreed to a concept referred to by all as the **Clean Sweep**: this deal would involve independent appraisals, a trade, a public process, and new concessionaires for the existing operations on the north side.

Pursuant to the **Clean Sweep**, Meadows committed to exchange all of its 770 acres on the north side of Mt. Hood for 120 acres (plus or



minus) of Forest Service land zoned for development in Government Camp on the south side of the mountain. Meadows also committed to trade the Cooper Spur Ski Area operations and its permit (1,400 acres in size); the ski area would be reconfigured into its current 50 acre size. Upon completion of the land trade, over 2,000 acres within the Tilly Jane Roadless area will be protected as Wilderness and over 2,000 acres of the Crystal Springs Zone of Contribution will be protected as a watershed protection zone.

2009: The Clean Sweep Becomes Law.

After numerous attempts to pass legislation, Congress finally succeeded in 2009, and President Obama signed the Mt. Hood Wilderness bill into law in March of that year. The bill directed the Forest Service to move forward with the trade.

Today: A Great Deal for the Public.

Cooper Spur Wild and Free and its member organizations support this long awaited deal, the conservation benefits of which are significant. As part of the agreement, the exchange will permanently protect historically significant and environmentally sensitive lands around Cooper Spur, preserving over 2,000 acres of **priceless historic backcountry** on the north side of Mt. Hood as Wilderness and over 2,000 acres as part of a designated drinking watershed.



The **Clean Sweep** will protect the Crystal Springs Watershed; it will protect old growth forests and roadless areas, which serve as critical habitat for game animals and endangered species; and it will preserve the historic, small-scale use of Cooper Spur Ski Area (to its current developed size of 50 acres) and the Inn at Cooper Spur (approximately 3 acres of commercial land with an Inn and associated buildings).

In Government Camp, the Forest Service must assess two parcels of land (approximately 40 acres and 80 acres in size) that are zoned for development and are adjacent to already developed property. Unlike Meadows' initial proposal on the north side of Mt. Hood, the developer's proposed use for the land in Government Camp is consistent with that

community's existing community revitalization plan, and the infrastructure is already in place to support it. The terms in the legislation require the agency to protect all wetlands and existing public trails on the parcels with conservation and trail easements.

Cooper Spur Wild and Free believes the recreation and conservation benefits of this trade are clear: the public gains over 2,000 acres of backcountry as Wilderness and another 2,000 acres are protected as part of the Crystal Springs in exchange for approximately 120 acres of land currently zoned for development.

The Forest Service is seeking public comments on the Cooper Spur-Government Camp Land Exchange. The comment period ends November 27, 2010. We encourage you to voice your support for the Forest Service to permanently protect the North side of Mt. Hood for current and future generations of Oregonians.

To this end, we have enclosed maps and information explaining why the **Clean Sweep** is a great deal for all Oregonians and worthy of your support.

