

# Committee on Resources

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**TESTIMONY OF  
ED HUSMANN, SKY VALLEY RESIDENT  
AND SNOHOMISH COUNTY FARM BUREAU MEMBER**

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH  
RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON  
THE WILD SKY WILDERNESS PROPOSAL, H.R. 822

JULY 22, 2004

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am Ed Husmann and I have been a resident of Sultan, Washington for 25 years, which is located a few miles west of the proposed Wild Sky wilderness area. My wife and I own twenty-three acres, with a small orchard operation, that has a direct view of the western edge of the area we are discussing today. I recently retired after 30 years of service as a Captain with United Airlines. I was also a Navy Pilot and served in Vietnam and retired in 1984 with a rank of Commander. I have a BS degree in Metallurgical Engineering, from the University of Nevada-Reno. I also completed my teaching certification at Trenton State College and Postgraduate studies at Rutgers University. I taught at Somerset County Vocational High School, New Jersey for approximately 5 years in the 1970's. I have 4 daughters and one son, along with two stepsons and a stepdaughter. My wife and I have 6 grandchildren. I currently am a Board Member of the Snohomish County Farm Bureau.

I am here today on behalf of myself, the Snohomish County Farm Bureau, the Chelan/Douglas County Farm Bureau, the more than 2,000 local citizens who have joined Forests for People, as well as many others who have entrusted me to voice their opposition to H. R. 822, the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2003. I would like to point out that our State Farm Bureau Policy book includes Forestry in the definition of Agriculture (Encl. 1) and that this policy book contains many policy statements that preclude support for this most restrictive federal land use designation. For clarity, I would also indicate to you that Chelan County is directly east of Snohomish County and shares a boundary line through the neighboring Sen. Henry M. Jackson Wilderness Area. Recently, Chelan County has suffered devastating forest fires and as we meet here today yet another forest fire is burning in the Icicle Creek drainage area. The citizens of Chelan County maintain a keen interest in any activity that may increase their exposure to losses from catastrophic wildfires.

I would like to formally request, with the Chairman's consent, to submit into the hearing record the following letters, memos, and petitions in opposition to H.R. 822 as well as other supporting documents.

Having lived and recreated in the Wild Sky area for the last 25 years, I know the area very well. Furthermore, my wife, children, grand children, and I have all participated in both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities in the proposed "Wild Sky" area over these years. I have day hiked, backpacked, off road motorcycled and mountain biked throughout this area. I have backpacked into Lake Isabel and my children and I have flown into Isabel for a picnic in a friend's floatplane. We enjoy these diverse activities and do not want to change any recreational opportunities afforded us, or for that matter, anyone, in this area. We only hope that the people using this, or any outdoor area, would use common sense, and are considerate of both the land and others in the area. Unfortunately, these qualities cannot be legislated.

I would like to point out that the list of organizations in support of the "Wild Sky" (Encl. 2) might not, necessarily reflect the views of its members or patrons. The list published on the Wild Washington Campaign website lists, in particular, REI (Recreational Equipment Inc.), The Mountaineers and WTA

(Washington Trails Association). I have been a member of REI for more than 30 years and have spent an enormous amount of money at their stores and through their catalogue. I can tell you that my wife would rather shop at REI than Nordstrom's. We do not appreciate REI spending "our" dividends on lobbying "Wild Sky" into existence. We also belong to the Mountaineers and the WTA (Washington Trails Association). As a member in good standing of all of these organizations, I can report that the membership was never asked about taking a position on this legislation. We participated in "National Trails Day" both last year and this year. It was very interesting that one of the repair projects this year in the Darrington area was in a wilderness area. My friend and I volunteered for the "extreme" repair project and were among the 8 of the 75 volunteers that agreed to endure the "tough day". Mind you, both my friend and I are over 60 while the others were much younger. Wilderness areas are not friendly to us older folks! As a point of interest, the Forest Ranger stated that they used dynamite to move deadfalls and stumps in wilderness areas. That surprised me, but I was told that it was not "mechanical transport".

Although I have tried, I have yet to understand why this area needs to be protected. What is the threat to this area? All of this land is part of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie (MBS) National Forest. Are the "Friends of Wild Sky" implying that the Federal government and the Forest Service are plotting to destroy this beautiful area? Last year, as well as today, Mr. Town testified (Encl. 3) on behalf of "Friends of Wild Sky". In his testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee, Mr. Town described the Ragged Ridge area as "wilderness in the truest sense" and an area of "core security habitat." He states the lower North Fork of the Skykomish Valley contains "beautiful ancient forests." He describes extensive "virgin" forests in the upper Trout and Howard Creek areas. He reported that the areas that were logged around 1920 are now recovering naturally and that previously harvested stands in the North Fork area had grown back on their own, without protection, and have now almost returned to their "former glory." "Other than the occasional stump, these forests appear quite natural to almost all visitors as they assume the characteristics of true ancient forest." The truly amazing statement here is that Mr. Town claims this area has returned to a "true ancient forest" and I find that confusing. Am I to understand that the loggers were correct all along - we can harvest the resources and these areas will return to their natural ancient state? Sounds like we owe a "BRAVO" to the employees of the Forest Service for a job well done. This is certainly contrary to environmentalist claim that once harvested these lands are somehow "lost forever."

Contrary to the claims you may have read, local community involvement concerning this issue has been severely lacking. To date there have been only three quasi-public meetings in Washington State and all occurred before the Wild Sky legislation was crafted and the formal maps prepared. There was no public testimony ever heard at these meetings nor was there opportunity for such, and there are no mysterious file cabinets containing such materials as was claimed during the Senate hearing I attended in 2003. Furthermore, the meeting held in Seattle clearly cannot be considered local "community involvement." The Wild Sky wilderness proposal is the quintessential example of a devil hiding in the details

It is certainly not a bipartisan issue here in Snohomish County, which by the way, is where the land in question is located. You have letters on record from the Snohomish County Republican Party, Snohomish County Council, and elected officials from the 39th Legislative District, Sen. Val Stevens, and Representatives Kristiansan and Pearson (Encl. 4) Also, at the 2004 Snohomish County Republican Convention, a NO-Wild Sky resolution was passed unanimously.

U.S. Highway 2, commonly referred to as the "Highway of Death", is the only access to this proposed wilderness area. It is deplorable that Senator Murray and Congressman Larsen would consider legislation that they say would generate additional traffic to this highway without, at the same time, working on ways to improve highway safety. It is ironic that if Wild Sky becomes wilderness, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the Federal government will have to spend millions of our tax dollars to destroy roads and any other evidence of man, in an attempt to create a wilderness where one presently doesn't exist. In addition, and to add to this ridiculous travesty, no formal studies have been done to determine either the environmental or economic impacts on surrounding communities served by the Cascade Loop Scenic Highway. Even more disturbing, is the misunderstanding of the impact this bill will have on the recreational opportunities in this area. I fail to understand why the supporters of the Wild Sky proposal did not first request to have this proposal reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act as was recently done with the I-90 wilderness proposal in my state. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I urge you to ask the Wild Sky proponents if they would object having Wild Sky go through the NEPA process just like any other major proposal affecting public lands. I would hate to think that management of our Federal lands has gotten to the point where there was more formal environmental analysis done for the last outhouse placed on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest than there was for the Wild Sky Wilderness proposal.

Let's be truthful. The 1964 Wilderness Act is really quite clear. It is the law and the intent is easily understandable. I believe in the "purity" of this law, it clearly states wilderness areas are for the enjoyment of the American people the only actual species mentioned in the Act. This important legislation states that areas of wilderness, in their natural state, may be set aside and protected from the works of man, untrammelled by man. Wilderness areas are to be managed so as to maintain their natural condition, affected primarily by the forces of nature. Now, that's pretty clear, a wilderness has to have these characteristics prior to consideration for designation. Going into an area with bulldozers and track hoes to create a wilderness is definitely not what Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson had in mind when this law was passed. It has to be wilderness to start with, no advanced degree required to understand that. Only the forces of nature may work in these areas, no chain saws and travel is by foot or horse, no mechanized transport. The American people may visit, you may look and enjoy the quiet but that is it, it is not a recreational (Enc. 7, pg3, Q2) area, it is a museum, look but don't touch. Pretty simple, and it makes the Wild Sky Wilderness proposal an entirely different proposition.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring Results (Encl.5) indicates wilderness use is a relatively small percentage and narrow demographic portion of the Forest visitors. Nationally, there were 257 million (Encl.10, pg 8) visits that included 14.3 million wilderness visits. Additionally, another 258 million people enjoyed viewing National Forest scenery from non-Forest Service managed travels ways. I strongly suspect that the bulk of travel ways refers to roads and vehicles. These numbers strongly demonstrate that people use roads. More people enjoyed the National Forest via "travel ways" then all other visits combined. How can you justify closing roads in the face of these figures? And, wilderness visits, we have nearly half our National Forest locked up in wilderness now and only 5% of the site users go there. Even more graphic is adding those who basically sight see from their cars - wilderness visits become 2%. These are sobering statistics when considering the destruction of our forest roads, infrastructure, in the Wild Sky area at a cost of \$18million or more to the taxpayers?

Specifically, in the MBS area (Encl. 5, pg 8,9) there were 10.3 million site visits of which .779 million were to wilderness. That's 7% of the site visitors use wilderness. This does not count the visitors that drive though for the scenic value of the Forest, which may be a figure that exceeds that of the site visitors. Why are you considering more wildernesses?

In summary, this area is not wilderness to start with. Wilderness already comprises 47% of our National Forests in our State. Isn't this enough? If Wild Sky is enacted the National Forest in Snohomish County alone will be 63% wilderness designated land. Is that reasonable? This proposal is fraught with technical and legal problems. Many citizens including our elected officials are ignorant regarding this proposal (Encl. 6), its implications and even it's location. Those who do understand agree that this legislation will not enhance the economy. Either way, I am at a loss as to understand how you could make an educated decision without any formal studies or data.

Officials at the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest do not appear to be excited about endorsing this idea and have clearly stated that no new trails would be constructed in this area regardless of Wild Sky (Encl 7, pg3, Q2). In addition, the cost of building trails in this area would exceed \$100,000 per mile. New trails were one of the key promises made by the proponents of this bill. It now appears that this area is a habitat area for the Grizzly Bear, which, among other things, requires that no new trails be built.

The Farmers and Cattleman (Encl. 8) who are traditional stewards of the land do not support this proposal. The issues of right of way, private property and safety all spell litigation. A potential lawsuit has already been filed (Encl. 9). In all the information that I have seen, read and heard, I am unable to find any compelling reasons to continue expending valuable energy on this legislation that further restricts our individual freedoms. Given the campaign season in full swing, this proposal has become a political issue and its merits good or bad are completely obscured by the politics of the day. Lastly and most sadly if this legislation is passed, some of the recreational freedoms that I, and my neighbors enjoy in this area will become Federal criminal offences, except walking and horseback riding. I strongly believe that the "Peoples House" should view this bill for what it is and give it no further action. Just say NO for "we the people".

As Teddy Roosevelt once stated "If your horse is dead, dismount".

As a P.S. to my testimony, I would like to share with you a true story that I believe you are familiar with. This story is about consequences of our political meddling with Nature.

There is a coined phrase that I hear often "...we need to "preserve, protect, the owls, fish, trees, etc, the list is endless," for our children and future generations."

This is a story about children, my children and their children and the "children's pool" in La Jolla California. One of my daughters and her family, two grandchildren, all reside in La Jolla. The children's pool was built a long time ago, in fact it all started in June of 1931. Ellen Scripps Browning donated an enormous sum, at that time, of money and in conjunction with the State of California, built a wall on the sea shore in the city of La Jolla. The surf in the area was rough and dangerous for the children. The wall was constructed to form a pool – a tide pool – for the children to swim, play, explore and discover sea life.

This pool was built and put into a trust "to be forever" held by the City of San Diego (Encl. SD). The purpose being spelled out explicitly;

- 1) Exclusively for a public park and bathing pool for Children
- 2) The absolute right to fish
- 3) The state retains the mineral rights

In trust forever, the Children's Pool.

This was a wonderful thing for about 50 years. Beginning in the 1980's and furthered by the enlightened plant and animals FIRST movement, occasional visits to the area by Sea Lions became a concern for the Friends of Sea Lions. It seemed that human activity in the children's pool disturbed the Sea Lions and it made the creatures nervous and shy about entering the children's pool. So, off to the City Council the Friends of Sea Lions marched, with their complaint. All this human activity was in fact disturbing the Sea Lions and the City needed to correct the problem.

After many meetings, with the Friends of Sea Lions attending in force, the children and their parents were at the pool, a bipartisan agreement was forged-----Sea Lions Yes, children No.

no one was allowed to hassle the Sea Lions, they populated the pool in force. Since these are marine mammals worthy of special recognition, the children's pool became a Marine Preserve. Well this activated the Marine Mammal Protection Act provisions, everyone out of the pool, and no fishing either.

Well, the water in the pool was polluted with Sea Lion fecal material and, in reality; no children were in the pool anyway. For the past few years no one would want to go there anyway because of the smell and the mess.....Except...

A few angry Dads ...they donned their wetsuits, masks, fins and snorkel, and entered into the pool. Of course the police had been tipped and the "invaders" were arrested as they exited the waters. No one went in after them, not in that water. They were handcuffed and carted off to jail.

The status at this time, well, I believe some of the human "invaders" were forced to pay the \$1,000 fine imposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Apparently you can now merely stroll in the area, gas mask recommended, while populations of sea lions are exploding all over the west coast. To me the parallels are frightful. What in fact are we doing?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today.