

BREITENBUSH WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

As proposed in the River Democracy Act of 2021

Santiam Basin | Marion County | Proposed Miles: 51.6 | Willamette National Forest



Deemed eligible as a Wild & Scenic River by the USFS, the Breitenbush River and its major forks and tributaries is about as wild and scenic as they come in western Oregon. Outstanding values of recreation, water quality, scenery, and wildlife habitat are just some in need of protected status in this beautiful watershed as it recovers from recent wildfires.

What makes the Breitenbush River and its tributaries special?

RECREATION: The wild streams in this proposal offer excellent whitewater paddling opportunities on several segments, including on French Creek and the river's mainstem. Hiking trails like the South Fork Breitenbush Gorge National Scenic Trail and along the mainstem, and others that connect to the Mount Jefferson Wilderness are popular, and there are other stellar opportunities for camping, recreational driving, photography, fishing, and seeking solitude. Visitors to the popular hot springs in and near Breitenbush Hot Springs and Resort get to experience one of the most unique and beautiful areas in the Cascades. Recreation values are likely to be temporarily impacted by the fires of 2020.

SCENERY: The Breitenbush scenic corridor, deemed the West Cascades Scenic Byway and the Cascading Rivers Scenic Bikeway, connects with the higher elevation Olallie Lakes Scenic Special Interest Area into the Clackamas basin to the north. The ancient forests, waterfalls, wild river gorges, and mountain views make this area simply spectacular. Impacts to these scenic corridors occurred with roadside tree removal after the fires of 2020.

FISH: Despite the blockage of Detroit and Big Cliff Dams, the Breitenbush River and tributaries like Humbug Creek are important habitat for spring Chinook salmon, coastal cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and winter steelhead.

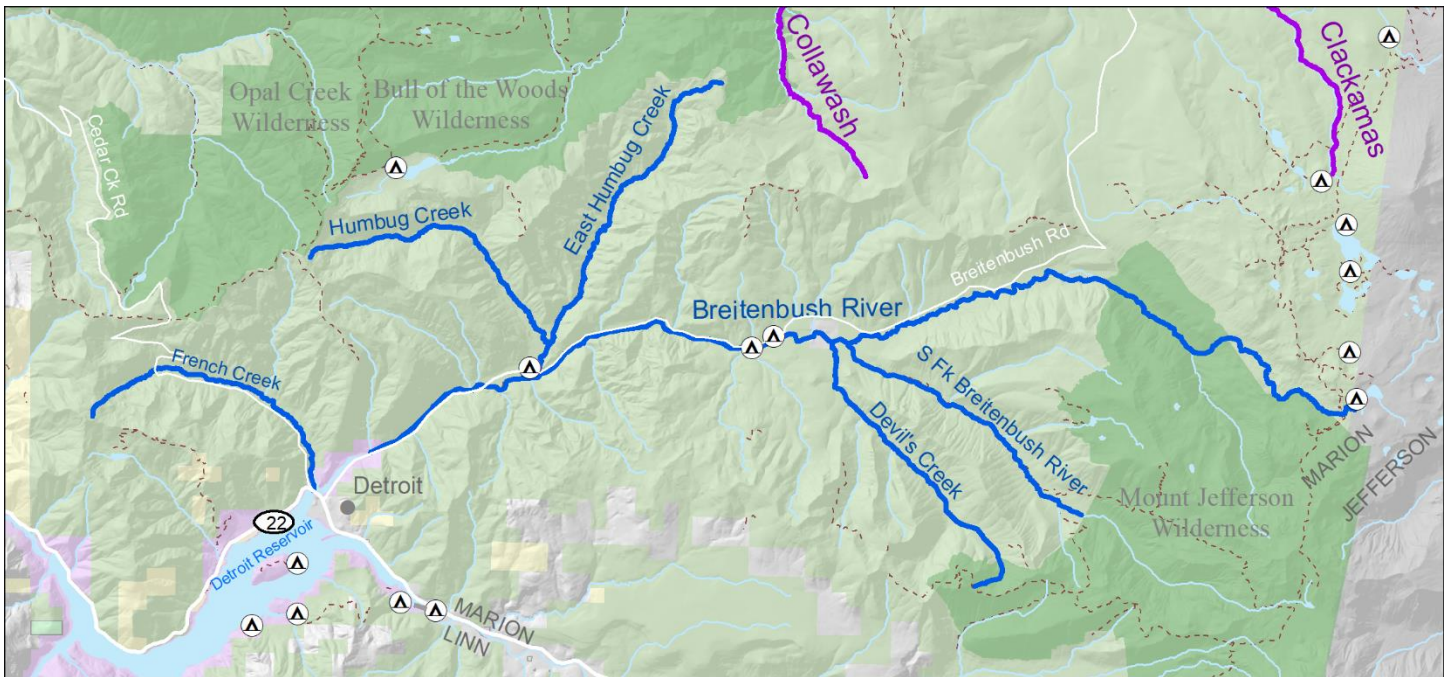
WILDLIFE: The Breitenbush watershed offers plenty of high quality habitat for old growth-forest dependent species like northern spotted owls, as well as for deer and elk. Some areas burned in 2017 fires are recovering naturally and offering important, and rare, habitat for woodpeckers and other native wildlife. Additional areas burned in 2020, where there is an opportunity for natural recovery.

WILDNESS: The forks of the Breitenbush flow off the slopes of Mt. Jefferson through pristine forest and mountainous terrain and the USFS has deemed these rivers eligible for Wild & Scenic status. While past logging has fragmented some

of the landscape within the proposed stream corridors, most are quite intact, wild, and ecologically important connections for climate adaptation and migration.

ECOLOGY/GEOLOGY: The wild nature of the North and South Fork Breitenbush rivers have led to some of the most dynamic stream channels, structures, and forests in the region. Old growth forests dominate much of this landscape along steep walled canyons - offering a series of ecological marvels. Natural hot springs are found along the Breitenbush River.

Proposed Breitenbush Wild and Scenic River Segments



| <i>Segment Name</i> | <i>Length</i> | <i>Proposed Classification</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mainstem, Upper | 0.2 Miles | Recreational |
| Mainstem, Lower | 9.1 Miles | Recreational |
| North Fork Breitenbush | 11.9 Miles | Scenic |
| South Fork Breitenbush | 5.6 Miles | Scenic |
| Devils Creek | 6.1 Miles | Scenic |
| French Creek | 5.8 Miles | Recreational |
| Humbug Creek | 6.4 Miles | Scenic |
| East Fork Humbug Creek | 6.5 Miles | Scenic |
| Total | <i>51.4 miles</i> | |

Friends of the Douglas-fir National Monument, Oregon Wild, American Whitewater, the Breitenbush Cabin Owner Association, and Friends of Breitenbush Cascades support this proposal.

Logging under the “Hwy 46” project and post-fire roadside and hazard tree logging after fires burned in this area in 2020 threaten the watershed.