

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. ROUTE ADJUSTMENT.

Section 5(a) of the National Trail Systems Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)) is amended in the first sentence –

- (1) by striking “Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail: Proposed Trail”, numbered T12/80,000, and dated February 2008 (referred to in this paragraph as the map)” and inserting “Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail, Authorized Route” dated [xxxxxx], and numbered [xxxxxx].

Purpose

The purpose of S. xxx is to revise the route of the Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail in Montana and Idaho to avoid areas of cultural significance to the Kootenai Tribe and to limit disturbance of grizzly bear and caribou habitat, while also providing a scenic route for hikers and provide economic benefits to rural communities.

Background and Need

The Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail (“Trail”) was established in Section 5205 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. The Trail extends from Continental Divide in Glacier National Park, Montana, to the Pacific Ocean Crest in Olympic National Park, Washington, and at the time of its creation consisted of approximately 1,200 miles.

The Kootenai Tribe raised concerns that the Trail route consists of areas of cultural sensitivity and religious areas that would be negatively impacted by increased human traffic. The Kootenai Tribe, local governments, community collaboratives, and other stakeholders also raised concerns that the Trail route crosses grizzly bear and caribou management units, both species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Increased human traffic in areas inhabited by grizzly bear and caribou increase stress on and impact the ability to recover the species.

As an alternative, the Kootenai Tribe, local governments in Idaho and Montana, community collaboratives, and other stakeholders proposed a new route that avoids the primary areas of cultural sensitivity and limits impacts to grizzly bear and caribou management units, while still providing a scenic route for hikers and economic benefit to rural communities.

S. xxx would modify the route of the Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail to incorporate the alternative route.