



TO: Bill Marlett  
Oregon Natural Desert Association

FROM: Lisa Grove and Ben Patinkin  
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RE: Recent Polling Show A Majority Support Wilderness Designation for Badlands

DATE: June 26, 2002

**A Majority of Voters Favor the Creation of a Wilderness Area in the Badlands of Central Oregon**

Central Oregonians approve of the proposal to give the Badlands a Wilderness designation. After explaining the proposal in a format that describes restrictions placed upon the land as a result of passage of a Wilderness designation, 54% of voters approved, while only 35% were opposed. With a 19 percentage point favor margin this designation is clearly something Central Oregonians want.

Views are more strongly held on the support side. Indeed, strong support outpaces strong opposition by 19 points.

Democrats, especially younger (under 50) Democrats and young women, are most in favor. Of those opposed to the proposal the most strident are Republicans, those age 40 to 49, men and Crook County voters. Though to be clear, nearly every demographic subgroup is more likely to support than oppose the Wilderness designation. The only demographic sub-groups where opposition outpaces support is among Crook County voters and Republican men. Undecided

Now I'd like to get your reaction to a proposal regarding the Badlands area in Central Oregon. The proposal, if approved by Congress, would designate about 37,000 acres of federal land as a Wilderness area. The area is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management or "BLM." Under this Wilderness designation, all motorized vehicles such as trucks, dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles would not be allowed within the designated Wilderness area and 10 miles of existing, year-round motorized vehicle trails would be closed. Hiking, horse back riding and hunting would still be allowed. This arrangement is similar to other designated Wilderness areas in Central Oregon such as Three Sisters and Mill Creek. Do you favor or oppose designating this area as Wilderness, or aren't you sure?

Favor, strongly	44%	<b>54%</b>
Favor, not strongly	10%	
Oppose, not strongly	10%	
Oppose, strongly	25%	<b>35%</b>
Undecided	11%	

voters tend to be older voters, primarily those age 50 to 59, older Democrats and older women.

### The Natural Importance of the Badlands Area Is a Compelling Reason to Support the Proposal

The natural and geological uniqueness of the Badlands area is a compelling reason for voters to support the proposal. One-third (35%) of those surveyed say that this makes them much more likely to be in favor of the proposal while only 17% say that this makes them less

likely to support it. Those most persuaded by this argument (35%) include Democrats, Independents, older women and women in Deschutes County. This argument is also persuasive to undecided voters. The area’s uniqueness should be a central part of ONDA’s communications strategy.

Let me tell you a little more about this Badlands area. This area is winter habitat for deer and elk and many species of birds. It also includes one of the oldest stands of juniper trees in Central Oregon, unique geological formations and several Indian petroglyphs. Currently, it is designated a BLM Wilderness Study Area, which means most of it is already closed to motorized vehicles. Does knowing this make you more or less likely to support Wilderness designation or doesn't it make a difference to you either way?

Much more likely	35%
Somewhat likely	12%
No difference	36%
Somewhat less likely	6%
Much less likely	11%

### Some Voters Appreciate That Motorized Trails Will Still Be Open

Even if this proposal is approved, over 200 miles of existing motorized trails adjacent to the designated area would remain open for use on BLM lands. Does knowing this make you more or less likely to support Wilderness designation or doesn't it make a difference to you either way?

Much more likely	25%	<b>38%</b>
Somewhat likely	13%	
No difference	49%	
Somewhat less likely	6%	
Much less likely	7%	<b>13%</b>

When told that the proposal would not affect over 200 miles of adjacent off-road trails, most (49%) say the issue does not affect them either way. One-fourth (25%) claim that it makes them more likely to support the proposal. Of the 25% who become much more likely to support the proposal, Independents, young Democrats

and Democrats in Deschutes County top the list. Only 13% claim that it makes them less likely to support it. These include Republicans and older men. It should be noted that 44% of undecided voters find the argument to be persuasive. This message clearly reassures voters still on the fence that the proposal will not completely close off the Badlands to all motorized

activities. Therefore it should be a component of ONDA's message.