

Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA)

Introduced by Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney and Raúl Grijalva

“We have an opportunity unique to our generation to halt a mass extinction.”

-Reed Noss, PhD, conservation biologist

The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act differs from traditional state-by-state wilderness bills by offering a variety of designations designed to work in concert to achieve one goal: **protection of an entire, functioning ecosystem**. These designations are based on the best science on ecological and watershed features—not arbitrary political boundaries.

Wilderness

- NREPA affords America's pristine roadless lands with their highest level of legal protection—designation under the 1964 Wilderness Act. These designations complete the visionary work enacted by previous Congresses and fill important ecological gaps overlooked when our understanding of conservation biology was less advanced.
- Yellowstone, Glacier and Grand Teton National Parks, America's crown jewels, have backcountry that the National Park Service recommends as wilderness with NREPA.
- Protects lands virtually unchanged since Lewis and Clark saw them.

Wild & Scenic Rivers

- NREPA protects the headwaters of rivers which feed the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Hudson Bay. NREPA will protect and safeguard ancient migration routes for numerous species of salmon, steelhead, and native trout including bull trout.
- World-class rafting and boating opportunities will also be preserved while assuring steady flows of high quality water for downstream users such as ranchers and farmers

Biological Linkage Corridors

- NREPA safeguards against habitat fragmentation by establishing a system of Biological Linkage Corridors to **connect the region's core wildlands into a functioning ecological whole**. These areas would be protected as wilderness and as special management zones where development is limited, but not prohibited.

National Wildland Recovery System

- NREPA establishes a pilot system of Wildland Restoration Areas and creates appx. 2300 jobs restoring damage caused by unwise resource extraction practices. Efforts will focus on removal of excess and unneeded roads, reduction of soil erosion, and restoration of native vegetation and water quality.
- Native fisheries and wildlife populations will be rejuvenated while boosting the economy in rural communities formerly dependent on resource extraction.
- Protects watershed health—water supply and quality are issues of central importance in the semiarid interior mountains, the Great Plains, and the densely populated Northwest,

Native American Religious & Treaty Rights

- NREPA respects and honors the rights and religious practices of our first citizens. The Badger–Two Medicine area adjacent to Glacier National Park is designated The Blackfeet Wilderness where traditional Native American uses and treaty rights are fully protected. All areas designated through NREPA explicitly recognize and protect these rights.

NREPA uses sound economics to promote sustainable economic development in the Northern Rockies region,

- NREPA provides a net savings of more than \$245 million over the first ten years after passage by prohibiting below-cost roadbuilding and timber sale programs within sensitive roadless areas.
- Pays for job creation by ending taxpayer-supported corporate timber subsidies,
- NREPA protects the economic base of the region: clean water, wildlife, fish, recreation, jobs and the unsurpassed natural beauty.
- NREPA is based on sound science, sustainable economic models and environmental law that will provide long-term stability that is vital to intelligent economic planning and prosperity.

NREPA won't "lock up" public lands.

- Approximately 50% of publicly managed lands in the region will be managed for sustainable uses.
- Allows for historic uses such as hunting, fishing and firewood gathering,
- Grazing is not affected

NREPA affects only Federal public lands—private landowners are not impacted.