

The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA) in the 111th Congress

Section-by-Section Summary

Title I designates wilderness areas within the various ecosystems of the Northern Rockies. This Title designates wilderness within the Greater Glacier/Northern Continental Divide, Greater Yellowstone, Greater Salmon/Selway, Greater Cabinet/Yaak/Selkirk, and Greater Hells Canyon ecosystems. It also designated wilderness in the isolated mountain ranges within the Rockies bioregion. The areas to be designated include the additions to such great Wildernesses as the Bob Marshall, Selway-Bitterroot, Teton, Eagle Cap, and Wenaha-Tucannon as well as the remote regions of Yellowstone, Glacier and Grand Teton national Parks.

Title II designates biological connecting corridors on public land and designates, as wilderness, certain undeveloped public land areas in those corridors. These are the areas that are not found within the larger ecosystems or mountain ranges, but the public land that connects them together. Protective language provides for reducing road density in the public land corridors not designated as wilderness to facilitate movement of wildlife. Corridor examples include the Centennial, Lemhi and Lost River Mountains ranges between Yellowstone and the wildlands of central Idaho and the Continental Divide between the southern end of the Bob Marshall region to Lost Trail Pass. The bill recognizes the importance of corridor

Title III designates wild and scenic rivers. Crucial rivers such as the Payette in Idaho, Rock Creek in Montana and the Thoroughfare in Wyoming are protected

Title IV creates a system of national wildland recovery and restoration. The goal of this system is to restore to a wildland condition certain area that have been damaged by road building, logging and mining on public land. Restoration will allow for natural processes, including the hydrological cycle, to function. Functioning areas will aid species to adapt to climate change.

A National Wildland Recovery Corps will be established to do the recovery work. Economic studies show that savings from the reduction in below-cost timber sales on national forests will be more than adequate to fund this effort. Local people will be given priority in restoration work. Greater economic benefits to taxpayers and local economies should result from NREPA over current plans.

Title V requires scientific monitoring to study implementation of the bill. It requires an independent scientific panel to evaluate management and do a study of any remaining undeveloped (roadless) areas on the national forests system within the bioregion. This title recognizes traditional uses by native people.

Title VI ensures that water rights will be sufficient to provide for the conservation purposes of the bill. It also ensures that treaty rights will be respected.