WHEREAS, the United States Congress approved the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) on October 2, 1968, to preserve certain rivers that possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational or other similar values in free-flowing condition and to protect such rivers for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations; and
WHEREAS, Idaho's former United States Senator Frank Church served as the author, sponsor and floor manager for the bill in the U.S. Senate; and
WHEREAS, Idaho's former United States Representatives George Hansen and James McClure cosponsored the House version of the bill; and
WHEREAS, the Middle Fork Clearwater, Selway, Lochsa, and Middle Fork Salmon Rivers were designated as "original" Wild and Scenic Rivers upon passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; and
WHEREAS, the Saint Joe, Salmon, Snake and Rapid Rivers were added to the network of Wild and Scenic Rivers with the support of the Idaho congressional delegation under various acts passed by the United States Congress in the 1970s and 1980s; and
WHEREAS, the Bruneau, West Fork Bruneau, Jarbridge, Owyhee, North Fork Owyhee and South Fork Owyhee Rivers, along with Battle, Big Jacks, Cottonwood, Deep, Dickshooter, Duncan, Little Jacks, Red Canyon, Sheep and Wickahoney Creeks, were designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers pursuant to the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, by and through the recommendation of the collaborative Owyhee Public Lands Initiative and with the support and leadership of Idaho's U.S. Senator Michael Crapo; and
WHEREAS, Idaho has 891 miles of rivers and streams designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which represents less than 1% of the state's 107,651 miles of rivers; and
WHEREAS, the protections established by Congress have permitted millions of Americans to enjoy the natural beauty of our nation's rivers and
have resulted in additional visitation and tourism that contributes significantly to Idaho's economy; and
WHEREAS, Idaho's river outfitters and guides rely upon the free-flowing nature of Idaho's Wild and Scenic Rivers and contribute significantly toward the economy of rural communities across Idaho; and
WHEREAS, Idaho's Wild and Scenic Rivers provide important habitat for steelhead, salmon and trout, which are important for recreational and tribal fisheries alike; and
WHEREAS, the State of Idaho and its citizens recognize the importance of the protection of streams and watercourses for the enjoyment, use and benefit of all people and recognize that clean water in the streams of Idaho is in the public interest; and
WHEREAS, the State of Idaho explicitly recognizes, retains and exercises its appropriate authority over management of navigable riverbeds, adjacent roadways and commercial corridors; and
WHEREAS, the State of Idaho encourages the federal government to work with state partners and stakeholders to resolve potential disputes associated with the management of Wild and Scenic Rivers in a transparent and collaborative manner; and
WHEREAS, the State of Idaho, the United States of America, and other interested parties have signed stipulated agreements regarding objections to in-stream federally reserved water rights claimed pursuant to the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; and
WHEREAS, these stipulated agreements are referred to as the Wild and Scenic Agreement, which quantifies the federally reserved in-stream water rights on specific Wild and Scenic Rivers in Idaho; and
WHEREAS, in addition to quantifying the Wild and Scenic Water Rights, the Wild and Scenic Agreement subordinated the Salmon River's Wild and Scenic Water Right to certain existing and future water uses and required detailed administration of existing and new water rights to ensure water use conforms to all elements of the water rights; and
WHEREAS, the Snake River Basin Adjudication court approved and adopted the agreement as a court order, and thus finally settled and resolved the in-stream flow claims.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the State of Idaho recognizes the 50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and celebrates the contributions that Idahoans have made to protect and appreciate rivers and streams in Idaho, and across the nation.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as land management agencies consider changes to future Wild and Scenic River designations, those changes should be considered only through a transparent process that includes input from Idahoans, including those most impacted by any new designations.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the federal land management agencies with responsibility over Idaho's Wild and Scenic Rivers direct adequate financial resources and expertise to ensure the ongoing protection, management, utilization and enjoyment of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in Idaho.