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PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Senate Committee Acts to Protect 16 Rivers In Owyhee Canyonlands

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today approved legislation insuring sixteen Idaho rivers will remain free-flowing for Idahoans to enjoy for generations. The legislation authored by Idaho Senator Mike Crapo designates 316 miles of high-desert rivers as part of the National Wild and Scenic River system. The Senate will consider the bill in June. No Idaho rivers have been added to the Wild and Scenic River system since 1980 when the Salmon River was designated.

Liz Paul, campaign coordinator for Idaho Rivers United said, "Clean, free-flowing rivers are an essential part of Idaho's culture, environment, and economy. The remarkable rivers of the Owyhee Canyonlands deserve the strongest protection our nation can offer, and we are happy to see this legislation making headway in congress."

Dams will be forbidden on 67.3 miles of the Owyhee River, 38.7 miles of the Bruneau River, and 28.8 miles of the Jarbidge River. Sections of Battle Creek, Big Jacks Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Deep Creek, Dickshooter Creek, Duncan Creek, Little Jacks Creek, North Fork Owyhee River, Red Canyon Creek, Sheep Creek, South Fork Owyhee River, Wickahoney Creek and West Fork Bruneau River will also be protected.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act celebrates its 40th Anniversary in 2008. The Act, championed by Idaho Senator Frank Church, and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on October 2, 1968 protects 11,000 miles of 165 rivers in 38 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Eight Idaho rivers were designated between 1968 and 1980. 17% of America's rivers lie behind an estimated 60,000 dams. Wild and Scenic River designation:

- Prohibits dams and other federally assisted water resources projects that would adversely affect river values;
- Protects outstanding natural, cultural, or recreational values;
- Ensures water quality is maintained; and
- Requires the creation of a comprehensive river management plan that addresses resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and other management practices necessary to achieve purposes of the Act.

Idaho Rivers United is a membership organization that works to protect and restore Idaho's rivers and native fisheries. For more information visit www.idahorivers.org or call 343-7481.