For Immediate Release

A presentation at the 2009 annual meeting
of the Geological Society of America

**Geoparks are coming to America?**

The first American "geopark"—the Klamath Knot Geopark—is being proposed in a session of the 2009 annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in Portland, Ore.

A geopark is a new land designation, introduced in Europe in 2000, that preserves unique and outstanding geologic landforms in their natural, unaltered state. Geoparks preserve geologic features such as mountain ranges, underground caves, limestone karst terranes, active and dormant volcanoes, petrified forests, dinosaur fossils, and certain archaeological sites.

Proposing the Klamath Knot Geopark is Doug Prose, one of a group of earth scientists exploring the prospects for a new system of American geoparks. Prose, an independent filmmaker/geologist based in Oakland, Calif., will show new film footage of the Klamath Knot, a geologically and ecologically outstanding mountainous area on America's west coast, reaching from southern Oregon into northern California.

"This is a very rare, very special opportunity for earth scientists and educators to usher in an exciting new era of conservation of our country's exceptionally rich geologic heritage," Prose says, "and to help build a greener, more sustainable economy, something that the world's people, and the Earth itself, so urgently need."

The concept has caught on internationally: In less than ten years, sixty-four geoparks have been established in 19 countries. These geoparks are all members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Global Geoparks Network, established in 2004.

However, not a single geopark has been established in the United States, nor does this country have a process for nominating and choosing new geoparks.

But interest has grown among American earth scientists who want to preserve rare geologic landforms around the country, particularly those that face imminent destruction by development. Some of these scientists will discuss the establishment of an American geopark system in the GSA session entitled Geoheritages, Geoantiquities, and Geomorphosites.

In the session Prose will show footage he shot in the Klamath Knot for an upcoming public television documentary, *A Wild American Forest*, narrated by Susan Sarandon. He will explain why the Klamath Knot's remote, jumbled, mountainous terrain of diverse conifer forests and salmon-bearing rivers is a prime example of a place where a geopark

would preserve rare geologic landforms and foster the growth of a green, sustainable economy in the region.

A unique feature of geoparks, likely to win supporters in the US, is that, unlike traditional parks, they permit cultural features such as towns and roads within their borders. Local citizens and business interests operating within a geopark, especially those engaged in ecotourism and related industries, are actively involved in the geopark's management. This formula of preserving geologic features in their natural, undisturbed condition while simultaneously encouraging sustainable, ecotourism-based economic development, has been remarkably successful internationally.

NOTE: B-roll of the proposed Klamath Knot Geopark will be available for use by television media at the On-Site Newsroom. B-roll is also available from Earth Images Foundation.

WHEN AND WHERE

American Geoparks: From Idea to Reality
October 19th, 2:45-3:00PM
Oregon Convention Center, B113
Session Number 125: Geoheritages, Geoantiquities, and Geomorphosites
Session begins at 1:30PM and concludes at 5:30PM.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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