

Hells Canyon bill passage praised by Gem senators

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Idaho's U. S. senators said they were pleased Monday by the unanimous passage and swift action in the Senate on a bill to create a Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, said he was heartened by the action.

"After more than two decades of uncertainty, our bill should it become law will assure that the rugged, majestic beauty of this area will be kept intact for all to enjoy," Church said.

He also expressed hopes that the House would pass similar legislation this year.

Sen. James Mc Clure, R-Idaho, called the measure a "milestone in the long efforts to formulate proper protection for all legitimate rights and

uses in the Middle Snake region.

"This bill, for the first time, extends some protection against the establishment of minimum stream flows, and for the first time in any statute, would guarantee the future of upstream water rights. On balance, the legislation accomplishes all of the things that are of major interest to Idaho citizens," McClure said.

"There is now no existing law that curbs the present authority of the federal government to impose minimum stream flows, or the federal government's authority to use the waters of the Snake River in defiance of water rights given under state law.

the scenic values and the setting the scenic values and the setting of the river, but it provides suitable protection for grazing rights and recognizes legitimate timber operations and mineral potential in the area affected,