



WILDERNESS RECORD

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Fern Canyon in the Prairie Creek area in Redwood State Park is one of many incredible places waiting to be considered for designation as state wilderness.

Photo by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation

San Bernardino National Forest Plan: *What's new? Not wilderness*

By Joyce Burk

After quite a long delay, the San Bernardino National Forest's Final Land & Resource Management Plan was released in early February. Some environmentalists were basically pleased with the plan; however, the Sierra Club's San Geronio chapter will appeal in order to clarify the management of a number of roadless areas.

The following is a summary of what the plan will do during the next ten years or more:

1) No new wilderness was recommended, but the Pyramid Peak Planning Area and the Cucamonga roadless areas will be left unimpaired so they can be re-considered for wilderness status during the next planning cycle. No permanent roads will be allowed in the remaining two further planning areas (Raywood B and Sugarloaf) and downhill ski development would not be allowed in the Sugarloaf area during this planning period.

2) Four rivers will be studied for Wild and Scenic status. Deep and Lytle creeks and the Santa Ana & Whitewater rivers. A study will be done of each candidate river within the next five years or earlier if a proposed activity affects its attributes. The north and south forks of the San Jacinto River were deemed ineligible, a decision with which the local Sierra Club is unhappy.

3) A new Special Interest Area

continued on page 3



Federal & State: Two Kinds of Wilderness Opportunity

By Stephanie Mandel

Here's a bonus wilderness trivia question: how are Henry W. Coe Wilderness and John Muir Wilderness different? Besides the obvious (they're in different parts of the state, named for different people, and look totally different), one is a state wilderness and one is a federal wilderness.

What this means is that their protection is similar in most ways. The California Wilderness Act of 1974 was patterned after the 1964 federal Wilderness Act.

However, as far as management goes,

Jim Trumbly, Senior Park Resource Ecologist of the State Parks and Recreation Department, feels that the state law is actually more strict in some ways. Take the issue of helicopters flying into wilderness backcountry stations to bring in radio equipment and supplies. The federal wilderness managers may be able to rationalize this under their law, which states: "...except as necessary to meet the minimum requirements for administration of the area, there shall be...no use of motorized

equipment...no landing of aircraft, no form of mechanical transport..." The vagueness of the term "necessary" leaves "a lot of prerogative to managers," according to Trumbly.

He points out that the state act says that "vehicle use is permitted only in the health and safety of individuals." Bringing in supplies by helicopter would not fit in this category, and the state managers would have to use horses or mules instead.

continued on page 5

INSIDE this issue:

— Agencies rethink wilderness fire policy...page 2

— The Desert Bill is back!...page 4

— Wilderness Elder Ardis Walker...page 6

COALITION PAGE COALITION PAGE COALITION PAGE

Monthly Report

By Jim Eaton

Individual members are the financial strength of the California Wilderness Coalition. But until recently, our efforts were rather sporadic to entice new people to join the CWC.

That began changing last year with an expanded program to leave complimentary issues of the *Wilderness Record* in various locations around the state. The newsletter is distributed by members or mailed to such places as REI stores in Sacramento and San Diego, ecology centers in Ukiah, Arcata, and Berkeley, and the Mono Lake Committee's wonderful visitor center in the thriving metropolis of Lee Vining.

Our most successful efforts, however, always have been from direct mailings. Unlike many organizations that lose money getting new members (planning on recouping that in future years), the Coalition usually makes money on our solicitations. The problem was that we didn't do enough mailings. There is always a Wilderness Alert that takes precedence, or something else that seems to come up.

So we are trying an experiment with hiring a former intern to crank out these mailings. Bill Burrows, who served as an intern last fall, has the unenviable task of copying, folding, stamping, inserting, stapling, and labeling hundreds of *Wilderness Records* each week. So far it looks like this is going to pay off with loads of new

members and activists.

Bill, by the way, is the unidentified wearer of a Coalition T-shirt in the November issue of the *Record*. I mention this because an unidentified young woman who works for an unnamed environmental group in an untold remote California town called after that issue to exclaim, "is that a photo of your intern Joe Bogaard? Wow, is he cute!" [No, it's not Joe. To see him, bare-chested and with a backpack, you need to pick up the December issue of *California Today*, the news from the Planning and Conservation League. Joe and a friend are going to hike the California portion of the Pacific Crest Trail this year as a fundraiser for PCL]

This, too, should help dispel the myth that I only take on young women as interns and volunteers. Our current help, Shelley and Celeste, will confirm that.

We are, indeed, equal opportunity acceptors of volunteers. Anyone who is interested in helping out with our multitude of projects is welcome to come in to our Davis office. Never a dull moment here.

This also is the time to mention that on occasion we do exchange our mailing list with other organizations for new member mailings. We are happy to honor your request not to exchange your name; just drop us a card or write it on your membership renewal and you won't be bugged.

Bureaucrats Consider a Burning Issue

As a result of last year's fires in the West, especially those in and around Yellowstone National Park, a committee was formed to reevaluate national policies for fire management in national parks and wilderness areas. Public concern was raised over the "let burn" policy that many people believed caused the "destruction" of Yellowstone. In fact, only 28 of the 249 separate fires in the Greater Yellowstone Area were initially allowed to burn (called prescribed natural fire); most of the million acres burned came from fires fought from the beginning.

The Fire Management Policy Review Team, composed of representatives from the Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and other agencies, submitted their report in December. Their goal is to have improved fire management policies and plans in effect by the end of May 1989.

Among the Team's conclusions are:

- The objectives of policies governing prescribed natural fire programs in national parks and wildernesses are sound, but the policies themselves need to be refined, strengthened, and reaffirmed. These policies permit fires to burn under predetermined conditions.
- There are risks inherent in trying to

manage fire, but they can be reduced by careful planning and preparation. Use of planned burning and other efforts to reduce hazard fuels near high value structures and to create fire breaks along boundaries help to reduce risks from both prescribed natural fires and wildfires.

- The ecological effects of prescribed natural fire support resource objectives in parks and wilderness, but in some cases the social and economic effects may be unacceptable. Prescribed natural fires may affect permitted uses of parks and wilderness, such as recreation, and impact outside areas through such phenomena as smoke and stream sedimentation.

- Dissemination of information before and during prescribed natural fires needs to be improved. There needs to be greater public participation in the development of fire management plans.

But while supporting natural fires, the Team recommended that no prescribed natural fires be allowed until fire management plans meet new strengthened and reaffirmed standards. Just exactly how this will be done, and how long it will take each national forest, national park, or other agency to complete these revisions, is not clear.



California Wilderness Conference Registration

- ☐ I will be a local conference coordinator.
- ☐ Here is my \$15 registration fee.
- ☐ Here is \$30 for registration + CWC membership.
- ☐ Here is my Conference Mentor contribution.

Name

Address

City Zip Code

Please send to:

California Wilderness Coalition, 2655 Portage Bay East, Ste. 5, Davis, CA 95616
Make checks payable to: California Wilderness Coalition or CWC



"Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act"

October 19-22, 1989 Visalia, California

Planning for the 1989 California Wilderness Conference is going strong! The Visalia Convention Center has been reserved, the conference has been expanded from 3 to 4 days, and the fee has been set for \$15, the same cost as the 1985 California Wilderness Conference!

We estimate that this \$15.00 grassroots fee will pay for less than 25% of the conference costs and are depending on the goodwill of those of you who have the resources to donate more. Please consider being a Conference Mentor by contributing \$50 or more, for which you will receive a free conference t-shirt.

LOCAL VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS ARE NEEDED — volunteers from all over California can help to make the conference a success by helping to publicize the conference in their region and by gathering suggestions for conference activities.

WORKSHOPS will be held on subjects including ancient forests, non-desert Bureau of Land Management lands, the Cranston-Levine desert bill, wilderness management in Yosemite, wilderness writing, and much more. We're still very interested in your ideas for other workshops and speakers!

Conference Mentors: Harriet Allen, Bob Barnes, Liz Caldwell, Jim Clark, Ron & Mary Ann Henry, Vicky Hoover, Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Brian Newton, Stan Weidert, Carl Weidert.

Conference Co-sponsors to date: Sierra Club Kern-Kaweah Chapter, The Wilderness Society, Tulare County Audubon, Yosemite Association.



Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What California wilderness area is named for an animal that never lived in the state?
(Answer on page 5.)

UPDATES

Court Reaffirms Demand for More Mono Lake Water

A state appeal court ruled for the second time in eight months that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power must reduce its water diversions from Mono Lake in order to maintain fish populations. The court said LADWP must allow enough water to run down four stream beds that flow into the lake to sustain fish in those creeks.

LADWP began diverting water from the creeks feeding the lake basin in 1941 under state permits. Los Angeles diverts about 100,000 acre-feet of water a year, making up about 17 percent of its water supply. The City of Angels also uses the diversion to generate power.

The diversions leave portions of the four streams virtually dry except in wet years, and the water level in Mono Lake has receded as a result. Conservationists have been concerned about the dropping lake level and the effects on the unique biological characteristics of this large, salt lake.

The appeal court's ruling overturned a lower court decision and directed the lower court to order the State Water Resources Control Board to modify two of LADWP's licenses in order to provide for flows adequate to sustain fish. The opinion signed by Justices Coleman Blease, Robert Puglia, and Hugh Evans acknowledges "...that application of the rule will require reduced diversions of water from the Mono Lake tributary creeks, albeit in an amount that cannot be precisely calculated on the record before us."

The appeal court issued a very similar decision last May but then agreed to reconsider the decision. The May decision required the State Water Resources Control Board to revoke LADWP's licenses and then reissue them with the fish-sustaining flow provisions. The more recent decision requires the water board to modify the existing licenses.



Live Oak Spring in the Pyramid Peak Planning Area of the San Bernardino National Forest. Photo by Joyce and Peter Burk

San Bernardino Forest Plan

continued from page 1

created as a result of the suggestion of the Conservation Alternative, written by the San Bernardino National Conservation Coalition. The North Baldwin Lake and Holcomb Valley Special Interest Area is reportedly one of the largest Special Interest Areas in California, encompassing approximately 13,000 acres. The Baldwin Lake Area was included to provide the public with an opportunity to gain understanding of the sensitive plants and fragile wildlife habitat that occur in Big Bear Basin. The Holcomb Valley area was included to increase public understanding of historic and botanical resources. Plants exist in this area that exist nowhere else in the world. (See side story.)

Five Research Natural Areas have received local and regional approval; a sixth candidate is receiving regional review.

4) No new downhill ski facilities will be built during this planning period. However, an additional 18,000 downhill skiers could be skiing down Sugarloaf Mountain's northern slopes in the twenty-first century if successful mitigation is found for the impact on spotted owl habitat and high elevation deer summer range, vehicular traffic problems in the Big Bear Basin, watershed disturbances, and depletion of the domestic water supply in the overdrafted Big Bear Basin. This issue deserves all forest watchers' attention!

5) The cross-forest off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail which you may have heard about two years ago is not approved in the plan, but a potential corridor for its future construction is on the OHV plan map. The United Four-Wheel Drive Association has already filed an appeal of the plan over this issue.

The forest plan allows for three OHV loop areas, each with its own staging area. Rock Camp and Cactus Flats already have staging areas in the works and Big Pine Flat/White Mtn. and Baldy Mesa staging areas

will be considered in the future.

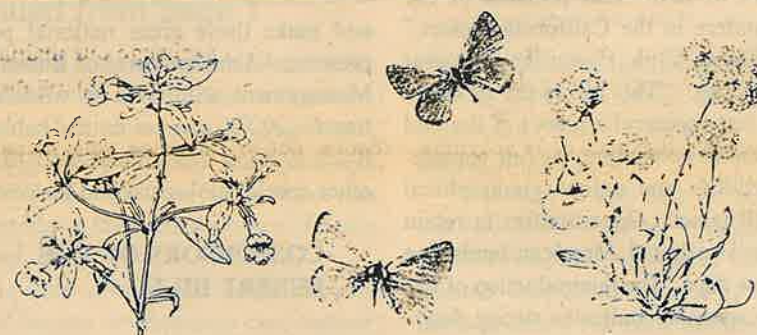
To the Forest Service's credit, they have now closed, at least on paper, 1,300 miles of forest roads, including Holcomb Creek and Coxey Creek roads, to vehicles that are not licensed and equipped for highway use. Also, there are now no open areas in the forest, which is quite an anomaly for Southern California.

The best new change in the forest plan will be measures such as area closures and permit limits to restrict fuelwood gathering when monitoring indicates a significant departure from the desired state. The forest has a terrific problem with fuelwood theft, particularly near the urban centers of Big Bear Lake, Lake Arrowhead, and Crestline (which are actually within the national forest boundaries).

Only time will tell how successful the plan will be. However, it does give the San Bernardino National Forest Conservation Coalition great satisfaction to know that a number of its recommendations on Special Interest Areas and Wild and Scenic rivers were incorporated. The coalition was formed by the California Wilderness Coalition, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Cal Trout, Tri-County Conservation League, Deep Creek Fly Fishers, and hunting and fishing two years ago to address the issues in the draft forest plan.

The deadline for appeals of the final forest plan is March 12, 1989.

Joyce Burk is the Southern California Forest and Wilderness Committee Chair for the Sierra Club.



Big Bear Basin: A Place of Rarities

From *California Wild Lands: A Guide to the Nature Conservancy Preserves*, by Dwight Holing, published by Chronicle Books of San Francisco, 1988.

An excerpt from Chapter 20, Big Bear Valley: Glacial Legacy:

"No place in the entire continental United States has a higher concentration of unique species of rare plants than Big Bear Valley, located two hours east of Los Angeles in the San Bernardino Mountains. At least twenty-seven rare or endangered wildflowers thrive here on ice age soils. Sixteen of these are restricted in the world to the San Bernardino Mountains. Eleven others occur only here and in a few other locations in the mountains of Southern California. The federally endangered Big Bear Checkerbloom, Eyestrain Monkey-flower, and extremely rare California Dandelion, Bear Valley Sandwort, and Munz's Hedgehog Cactus are only a few of the area's rarities that send rushes of color across the hills from late spring through early summer. Most are 'belly plants'—delicate miniatures you have to get down at lizard level to appreciate."

Other endangered plant species are only found in the North Baldwin Lake and Holcomb Valley Special Interest Area (no where else in the world) are:

1. Bird-footed checker mallow (*Sidalcea pedata*)— Listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and listed as endangered by the State of California.

2. Slender-petalled mustard (*Thelypodium stenopetalum*)— Listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and listed as endangered by the State of California.

The Big Bear Valley Preserve is just to the immediate northwest of Baldwin Lake in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains. The Pacific Crest Trail transverses the Preserve on its way west to Holcomb Valley.

The Desert Bill is Back, Stronger Than Ever

By Vicky Hoover

On February 2, Representative Mel Levine (D-Santa Monica) reintroduced the California Desert Protection Act in the House of Representatives, as H.R. 780. The bill is identical to that reintroduced in the Senate by Alan Cranston (D-CA) on January 25 as S. 11. Originally introduced by Senator Cranston three years ago, the present bill has some boundary modifications to answer specific concerns and also now assures continuation of existing military uses of airspace over proposed wilderness areas.

"The reintroduction of the California Desert Protection Act with forty-one of my colleagues from California to Connecticut, marks the beginning of the national bipartisan coalition needed to permanently protect the park and wilderness lands of the California Desert," said Congressman Levine. "We aim to protect the California Desert before it is irreparably damaged or lost."

By February 26 the Levine bill had a total of 59 cosponsors.

"We feel strongly that this Congress should vote to save what remains of the special wonders in the California Desert," declared Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Fischer. "This bill is the ticket to one of the last spectacular places of the Old West—an entire ecosystem, its full complement of wildlife and unique geographical features still intact. Opportunities to retain any portion of original American landscape are rare these days. The reintroduction of this bill with cosponsors indicates strong determination to preserve the desert's unique natural resources."

The Levine/Cranston bill would (1) establish the 1.5-million-acre Mojave National Park, (2) expand the boundaries of Death Valley and Joshua Tree national monuments



The New York Mountains will become part of the proposed Mojave National Park

Photo by Jim Eaton

and make these areas national parks, (3) preserve 4.5 million acres of Bureau of Land Management wildlands as wilderness, (4) transfer 20,500 acres of critical habitat to Red Rock Canyon State Park, and (5) protect other special biological and historical areas.

COSPONSORS OF THE DESERT BILL

The original cosponsor list of H.R. 780 included the 19 members of the California delegation who sponsored the Levine bill in the previous Congress—as well as an important new cosponsor: Republican Representative Tom Campbell. A freshman representa-

tive in the 101st Congress, Campbell was endorsed by the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters in his successful bid last November to represent California's 12th Congressional District, which includes portions of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. Recently a tenured Stanford University law professor, he was previously on the U.S. Department of Justice staff for anti-trust law enforcement. He strongly opposes new oil drilling off the California coast.

Representative Campbell emphasizes that "the Desert Protection Act incorporates strong protection of the California Desert with continued recreational commercial use. If passed, this bill will move to protect these lands permanently for future generations to enjoy."

To date, the California cosponsors of H.R. 780 are: Robert Matsui, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer, Ron Dellums, Pete Stark, Don Edwards, Tom Lantos, George Miller, Norman Mineta, Tony Beilenson, Henry Waxman, Edward Roybal, Howard Berman, Julian Dixon, Augustus Hawkins, Marty Martinez, Mervyn Dymally, Esteban Torres, George E. Brown, Jr., and Jim Bates.

Outside of California, 13 of the cosponsoring representatives are members of the House Interior Committee. Solid national support for desert protection is shown by the non-interior committee cosponsors from other states.

THE NEED FOR DESERT PROTECTION

Emphasizing the need for desert protection, Senator Cranston stated, "The overwhelming presence of time and force surround you in the desert. There is an immense,

almost incomprehensible beauty there that attracts people from all over the world."

"The new bills—S. 11 and H.R. 780—are a refinement of last year's bills," said Jim Dodson, a director of the California Desert Protection League, an umbrella organization uniting over 100 environmental groups. "This new legislation demonstrates sensitivity to specific public needs expressed during the legislative process last year."

Elden Hughes, also a League Director, expressed concern that failure to pass the Act this year would allow irreparable damage to continue: "The greatest threat to the desert is that 15 million people live within three hours of it. It is imperative that we act now to keep the remaining wild areas pristine."

Vicky Hoover is Chair of the Sierra Club's Northern California Desert Task Force.



Eureka Dunes will be added to Death Valley National Park

Photo by Jim Eaton



Beavertail cactus in bloom, Last Chance Range

Photo by Jim Eaton

Ancient Forest Groups Unite

By Stephanie Mandel

In a room decorated with colorful paper Valentine hearts by the preschoolers who inhabit the Village Homes Community Center in Davis during the week, forest activists came together to organize an effort born of love—love for ancient forests.

They came from as far as Kernville in the Southern Sierra to Crescent City; the youngest 22 years old, the oldest in his late 60s, over 70 people who have been working independently and ardently to save places they love.

The rare gathering was part of a larger coordinating effort involving the states of Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and California. Local and national environmental groups are forming an Ancient Forest Alliance Steering Committee, with representatives from The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and Sierra Club.

Settling down from travel, the California gathering first shared each region's protection efforts. Some are suing the Forest Service, while others are just beginning a dialogue with public land managers. In the afternoon the group split into four committees—legal, data gathering/scientific, legislative, and media/public education/networking.

Later, reporting back to the entire group, the legal committee was represented by David Edelson of the Natural Resources Defense Council. Edelson announced his intention of serving as a liaison and clearinghouse of ancient forest litigation. He and Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney Julie McDonald will work on developing a list of lawyers willing to work *pro bono* (for free). Finally, the legal group reported that more money is needed.

The legislative committee intends to

work toward the establishment of a federal system of ancient forest ecological/biological reserves. In the immediate future, the group felt that it was important to identify timber sales to be saved for the reserves. Veteran forest activist Tim McKay of the Northcoast Environmental Center agreed to coordinate the effort.

The scientific and data gathering committee will concentrate on coordinating the mapping of ancient forests. Various mapping efforts have been proceeding throughout the state, and the group would like to see a consistent set of maps emerge to aid conservation efforts. Stan Weidert of Shingletown and Eric Beckwith of Nevada City will coordinate the mapping.

The media/public education/networking group discussed a number of strategies, and Jan Mountjoy of Hayfork offered to provide a clipping service of relevant articles.

After these plans were laid, Dean Carrier, Old Growth Habitat Program Manager for the Forest Service, offered some of his personal insights into what his agency is doing about concerns that old-growth forests are disappearing. Carrier warned that the Forest Service was not very interested in the subject this year, as they are concentrating on the controversy over timber harvest levels in Alaska's Tongass National Forest.

Carrier did say that he felt saving the ancient forests would require revising some of the ways that the Forest Service operates. "It's going to take a whole change in management scheme," he said. The veteran agency biologist also felt strongly that environmentalists should try to work cooperatively with Forest Service officials.

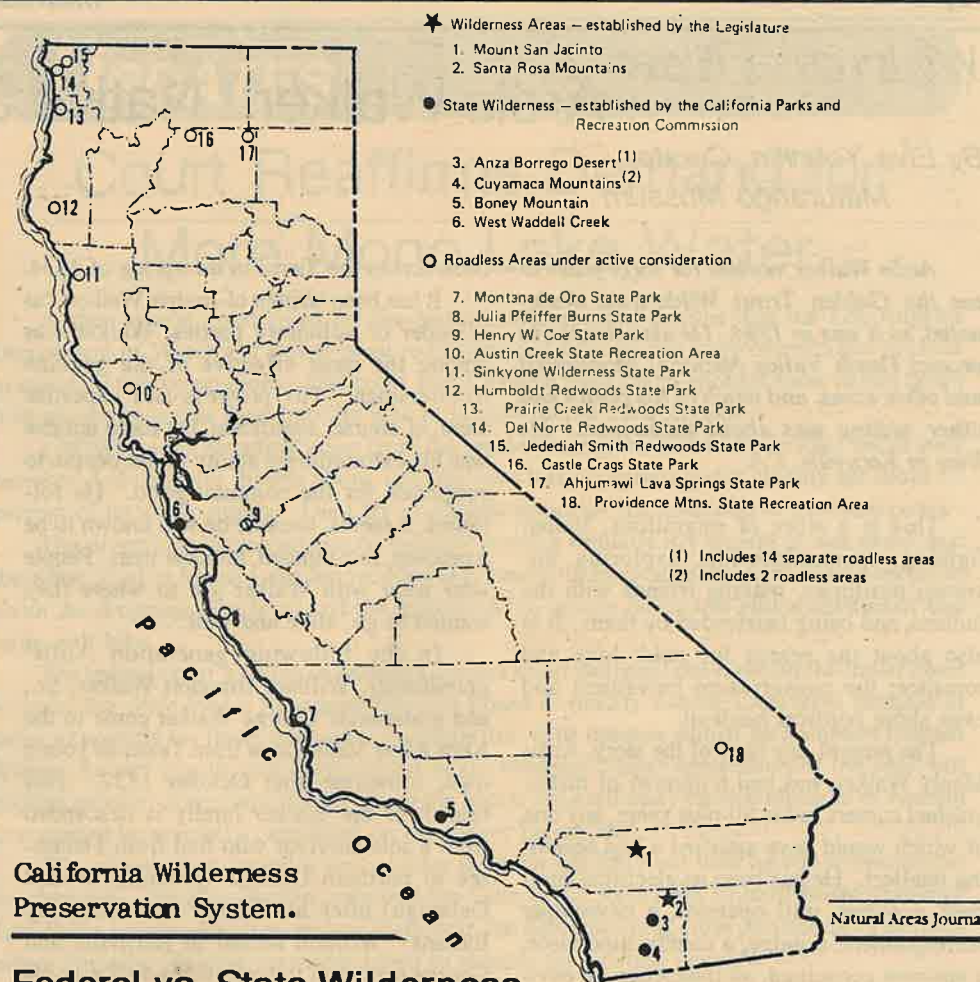
State Assembly Considers John Muir Day

Assemblymember Robert Campbell (D-Martinez) has introduced A.B. 476, which will formalize the public recognition of "John Muir Day" in California. John Muir, who was the founding President of the Sierra Club in 1892, has been recognized as the most influential figure for the conservation movement in American history. A John Muir Day would recognize both the importance of an ecologically sound natural environment and the significant contributions that John Muir made during his life to heighten an awareness of that importance.

Although for the past five years the Governor has issued proclamations for "John Muir Day," interest in John Muir Day grew rapidly last year in recognition of the 150th anniversary of John Muir's birth. There were many events held in honor of the occasion, including both state and national proclamations commemorating John Muir. The California Legislature further provided that April 21 be commemorated annually in recognition of John Muir as the founder of the modern environmental movement. Campbell's new legislation will legally implement that resolution.

This bill is designed to dovetail with previous similar legislation establishing such commemorative days as "Cabrillo Day," (Spanish discovery of California); Susan B. Anthony Day (women's rights), Luther Burbank Day (Arbor Day and economic use of resources); and for such days as Black American Day and California American Indian Day. The bill would also add a new paragraph to an existing California Education Code provision for commemorative exercises in the public schools for certain notable historical figures and a new provision for a memorial state "holiday" within the Californian Government Code.

Given the historical importance of John Muir to California, and the modern understanding of the importance of protection of the natural environment, it seems appropriate to honor John Muir.



Federal vs. State Wilderness continued from page 1

Both acts outlaw permanent structures, like roads, as well as motorized vehicles and equipment; both allow pre-existing mining and grazing. Only the state wilderness system prohibits aircraft from flying lower than 2,000 feet above the ground surface of designated land.

So is state wilderness "safer" from the whims of human development than federal? Not really, according to Jim Eaton of the California Wilderness Coalition. Eaton says "Congress has a national commitment. The state legislature tends to pass more bills that reflect special interests, and this could mean the overturning of state wilderness designations."

State wilderness may be designated by the state legislature and/or, for state park lands, by the California Parks and Recreation Commission, a body appointed by the governor. Only Congress may designate federal wilderness.

Another difference is that a wider range of lands are eligible for state wilderness, as the California Wilderness Act, says Trumbly, explicitly states that wilderness areas need not be "pristine" or "virgin."

So the state has more freedom, theoretically, to designate wilderness areas. Then why are there only seven state wildernesses? Politics; seventeen roadless areas within state parks that were recommended for wilderness by the Resources Agency to the legislature in 1978 are still awaiting consideration.

There is no deadline for the State Parks and Recreation Commission to consider these areas. And it doesn't take much arithmetic to figure that the parks commission became sluggish on wilderness about when Deukmejian took office. (The exception is

the designation of the Henry W. Coe Wilderness in 1985, an effort that activists say required a "major campaign, with a lot of people involved.")

Trumbly would like to see state park roadless areas such as Prairie Creek, Jedediah Smith, Del Norte, and Humboldt designated wilderness. He feels that there is much potential for using the state wilderness act to protect unique ecosystems in California—different sorts of areas than the usually high-elevation federal wildernesses. But until the winds of politics change, the opportunity will lie dormant.



Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

(from page 2)

The Caribou Wilderness, named by California prospectors returning from the Cariboo mines in British Columbia, is named for a non-native animal.

Wilderness Elder

Ardis Walker: Native Son of the Kern River Valley

By Elva Younkin, Curator,
Maturango Museum

Ardis Walker worked for forty years to see the Golden Trout Wilderness designated, as it was in 1984. He also worked to protect Death Valley National Monument and other areas, and much of his poetry and other writing was about wilderness. He lives in Kernville, CA.

This is a story of migrations, Indian fighting, mountaineering, exploring unknown territories, making friends with the Indians, and being befriended by them. It is also about the search for gold; love and romance; the conservation movement and even about political hardball.

The present-day hero of the story, Ardis Manly Walker, has had a number of distinguished careers in his 80-plus years, any one of which would have satisfied a less searching intellect. He has been an electrical engineer, a miner, mill operator, a newspaper correspondent, a judge, a county supervisor, a business consultant, an innkeeper, an environmentalist, an author of local history, and through it all an accomplished poet.

But to know Ardis, one must know some of the particulars of his story. Ardis Manly Walker is a true native son of the Kern River Valley. He is a descendant of both William Manly—savior of the first party through Death Valley in 1849—and Captain Joseph Rutherford Walker, the first white man to cross the Sierra Nevada from the east. Walker Pass, 5,200 feet at its summit and the southernmost pass through the Sierra, was found by Joe Walker on his return journey

back across the Sierra in the spring of 1834.

It has been written of Joseph Walker: "as a leader of voluntary parties, Walker was among the most effective of the genuine frontiersmen. His prowess and expertise were, of course, significant, but more notable was his extraordinary ability to get people to cooperate for the common good. He followed, it seems, because he was known to be a prudent, fair-minded, humane man. People who went with Walker got to where they wanted to go, alive and well."

In the following generation Ardis' grandfather, William Brannon Walker, Sr., and granduncle George Walker came to the Kern River Valley area from Texas as young men, sometime after October 1852. This branch of the Walker family is descended from a sole survivor who fled from Tennessee to northern Georgia (probably around Delaniga) after his family was killed by Indians. William settled in Kernville and George settled in the area that now bears his name, Walker Basin.

Ardis' father, William Brannon Walker, Jr., and his mother, Etta Mae Bole, were both born in Kernville. His father was a hard rock miner and sometime rancher as were his uncles Jim, Ben, Tom, Newt, Phil, and Hal.

Born in the mining town of Keyesville, Ardis hiked five miles a day to and from a one-room school house in old Isabella. As a lad he was fascinated by the poetry he learned there. It was a passion that proved to be lifelong. In a sense his poetry and his interest in the wilderness environment are underly-



Ardis Walker speaks to a conference in Kernville.

ing motifs that tie Ardis the poet and Joseph the pathfinder more closely than any ancestral bond.

Ardis earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at the University of Southern California in 1927 and went to work for Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York City. There he continued to write poetry and had his first book, *Quatrains*, published in London in 1930, where he received such good reviews that his name was published in the international *Who's Who*.

In 1932, after five years in the harsh city environment and longing for his mountain home, Ardis returned to the Kern River Valley where he worked at a variety of responsible jobs not related to engineering. But one cannot continue here without introducing his wife Gayle. [Gayle passed away in September of 1988.] It was soon apparent to all who met them together that Gayle was a major source of inspiration for Ardis. One of his books is dedicated "To Gayle who shares the wonder of my wilderness."

Ardis spent five years courting Gayle Mendelssohn, who came to Kernville as a young school teacher soon after Ardis returned. During this courtship period, Gayle had an opportunity to go on a Mediterranean cruise. She asked Ardis if she should go. He knew he could not ask her to miss the experience, so he told her to go ahead. But—he made sure she didn't forget him: he mailed love sonnets so that one would be waiting for her at each port when her ship docked. They were married soon after her return.

From 1938-48 Ardis served as a justice court judge in Lake Isabella and then as a Kern County supervisor for one four-year term. It was during this time that the Democrats in Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties persuaded him to run for Congress in 1950. During an appearance in Bakersfield, Richard Nixon, then running for the Senate, called Ardis and other district Democrats "a bunch of commies." Anyone who remembers the days of the infamous Joe McCarthy "hearings," it is obvious that this was no laughing matter. The *World Book Encyclopedia* called the race "one of California's most savage political contests." Ardis and the local Democrats lost the election and Ardis never again ran for political office.

After leaving the political scene Ardis turned his attention back to the Kern River Valley and he and Gayle ran the Kernville Inn for eleven years. They retired in 1964 and spent considerable time defending the local environment. It was largely through their efforts that the Golden Trout Wilderness was established in 1973.

Throughout the diversity of all his careers Ardis has continued to write and publish poetry.

Wilderness Wildlife: The Flying Squirrel

By Celeste Lee

In the mixed conifer forests and oak woodlands of the San Bernardino Mountains lives a subspecies called the San Bernardino flying squirrel. Presently, the Forest Service considers the flying squirrel "sensitive" in the San Bernardino National Forest and region due to potential threat of habitat loss.

Among the arboreal (tree) squirrels of the Pacific States, the northern flying squirrel (*Glaucornys sabrinus*) is the only species that is nocturnal. The northern subspecies inhabits forests throughout the Sierra and up to Canada, common in forested areas of yellow pine, red fir, spruce, hemlock, and redwood.

Victim of a misnomer, the lead gray "flying" squirrel doesn't really fly at all. It has a flat, furry membrane that extends along each side of its body, between the ankle and wrist. This specialized structure allows the flying squirrel to launch itself from high atop one tree and glide to the base of another. To many nature viewers this mode of locomotion makes it appear as if the flying squirrel is indeed flying.

Building high in the branches of trees, the northern flying squirrel makes its nest from an assortment of materials that range from small twigs and leaves to bird feathers. Abandoned nest cavities from other animals also make choice nest sites that are well protected from the environmental elements and potential predators.

Like other arboreal squirrels, the flying squirrel does not hibernate. During the cold, winter months, its primary food source is hair moss (*Alectoria fremontii*), a lichen that

hangs from tree foliage. Fungi, seeds, fruits, and insects primarily make up the spring and summer diet.

Predators include spotted and other owls, and an occasional marten or weasel. But due to the flying squirrels' ability to minimize their time on the ground, they have been able to escape heavy predator pressure.

The populations in the San Bernardino National Forest may face a number of threats, however. One such threat, according to Forest Biologist Steve Loe, is disease from



Flying Squirrel

gray squirrels. While the large gray squirrel populations could weather a disease, the flying squirrels could be wiped out.

In addition, the flying squirrels are "isolated in little patches of forest"—the most productive sites, says Loe. Development and fuel wood cutting threaten these "islands." "They don't have a very continuous habitat," Loe adds, but "the situation may be better than we think or worse than we think." He suggests more studies are needed.

Celeste Lee has a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from the University of California at Davis and is an intern with the CWC.

Book Review: *Seeing Forests Through Trees*

Review by Rocky Smith; reprinted from the Colorado Environmental Report

The Forest and the Trees, A Guide to Excellent Forestry

by Gordon Robinson (Island Press, Box 7, Covelo, CA 95428 (707) 983-6414.)

"Anyone can identify destructive forest practices...if logging looks bad, it is bad. If a forest appears to be mismanaged, it is mismanaged." With these words, Gordon Robinson begins his book *The Forest and the Trees, A Guide to Excellent Forestry*.

This opening quote more or less sets the tone for the entire book. Gordon Robinson is an unabashed, uncompromising proponent of what he calls "excellent forestry"—the cutting only of individual trees or groups of trees. This is known as selection logging; it preserves the uneven age structure of forests, thus usually preserving recreation and wildlife values.

Robinson presents his arguments in four parts. In part one, he outlines a history of timber cutting in the United States and the beginning of what became the Forest Service. The national forests (originally called Forest Reserves) were first established in 1891 to preserve some forest land, much of

which had already been cleared as the west was settled.

Before World War II, very little timber was cut from the national forests. The Forest Service even promoted proper forestry by encouraging private land owners to practice sustained yield and to cut timber selectively, as Robinson now advocates.

But most of the big timber companies ignored this advice and began clearcutting on their lands to realize larger profits sooner. By the early 1950's, with the baby boom in full swing and the demand for wood products rising rapidly, industry lands had been badly overcut. So the timber industry turned to national forest land for its main source of raw materials.

Robinson describes how the industry successfully lobbied Congress and the Forest Service to rapidly increase the allowable cut from public land. Robinson argues that this soon led to violation of sustained yield, i.e.,

some forests were being cut at a rate faster than they were growing. This practice continues throughout the West today, and in many places most of the old-growth forests have disappeared.

In part two, Robinson describes his "excellent," or true, multiple use forestry. He presents a solid case for use of the selection logging system, noting that it reduces damage from insects, disease, and windthrow and that it protects natural biota, fish, wildlife, and recreational values. He devotes a whole chapter to soils, discussing how use of the selection system reduces erosion, stream sedimentation, and nutrient loss.

Part three presents some of the more technical aspects of forestry in a form understandable to the non-professional. The information presented would be useful for examining national forest management plans.

Part four summarizes some research relevant to Robinson's arguments. This part would be of limited value for people concerned about forests in the Rocky Mountains, because most of the research cited comes from the Pacific Northwest. Also little or none of the research cited was published after 1980, although this book was published in 1988.

In the preface, Robinson admits he is "deliberately offering a polemic in support of a return to uneven-age management of our national forests." He also realizes that his book "offer(s)...a description of ideal forest management" and that this ideal "probably never can be reached."

These unusually candid admissions do not detract from the validity of the arguments presented. On the contrary, they give conservationists a mission: to work as hard as we can in our lifetimes to change destructive logging practices before all beautiful growth forests are destroyed.

For people concerned about forest management, this book is a must.

Colorado Environmental Report is published bi-monthly by the Colorado Environmental Coalition, based in Denver, Colorado.

CALENDAR

March 3-4 "THE CALIFORNIA DESERT MINERAL SYMPOSIUM ...PLANNING FOR TOMORROW," co-sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management & South Coast Geological Society in Irvine. For more information call Sean Hagerty or Bob Anderson at (916) 978-4735.

March 10-12 5th ANNUAL RIVERS FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE, "In Celebration of Rivers"; sponsored by Friends of the River at Dominican College in San Rafael. Workshops, speakers, river equipment swap, dance; for more information and/or a registration form, contact Ethan Winston at (415) 771-0400 or write to FORF, 5th Annual Rivers Conference, Building C, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123.

March 12 DEADLINE to appeal the *San Bernardino National Forest Final Environmental Impact Statement and Land & Resource Management Plan*. Write to: Paul F. Barker, Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region, USDA, Forest Service, 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94111.

April 7-9 BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF CALIFORNIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE at the Visalia Convention Center. Speakers, workshops, dinners, entertainment, and dancing. Contact the Backcountry Horsemen of California, P.O. Box 520, Springvale, CA 93265.



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Yes, we've been threatening this for a while now, but we really are running out of CWC T-shirts—don't delay in ordering yours!

This design of black mountains beneath a blue sky with yellow sand dunes in the foreground comes in white, tan, light blue, and yellow in small, medium, and extra-large (no larges). French-cut style shirts are available in white, pink, and light blue in sizes small, medium and large (except no large in light blue).

The shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton, and cost \$8.00 for CWC members and \$10.00 for non-members (sales tax included). Use the order form on page 8, and clearly indicate if you want regular or French-cut, and a substitute color. Please add \$1.50 postage and 75 cents for each additional shirt.



California
Wilderness
Coalition

Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

...to promote throughout the State of California the preservation of wild lands as legally designated wilderness areas by carrying on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest, by making and encouraging scientific studies concerning wilderness, and by enlisting public interest and cooperation in protecting existing or potential wilderness areas.

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The *Record* welcomes letters-to-the-editor, articles, black & white photos, drawings, book reviews, poetry, etc. on California wilderness and related subjects. We reserve the right to edit all work. Please address all correspondence to:

California Wilderness Coalition
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5
Davis, California 95616
(916) 758-0380

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Contributors

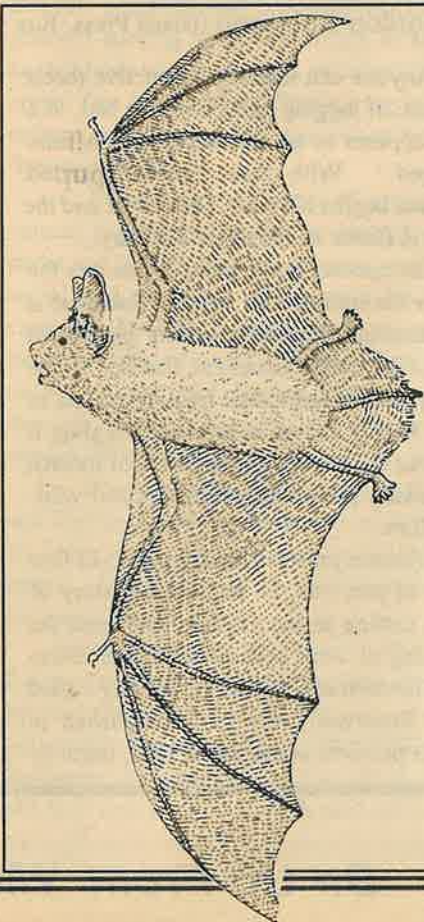
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