

Phil Farrell
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Mining law and wilderness

By Stephanie Mandel

What potentially conflicting use forced one of the Wilderness Act's greatest compromises? Mining. What law decrees mining the "highest and best use" of public land? The Mining Law of 1872. Former Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall calls it "the most important piece of unfinished business on the nation's resource agenda," and the Mineral Policy Center in Washington, D.C. calls it "unworkable for the mining industry itself, and disastrous for the rest of the public interest."

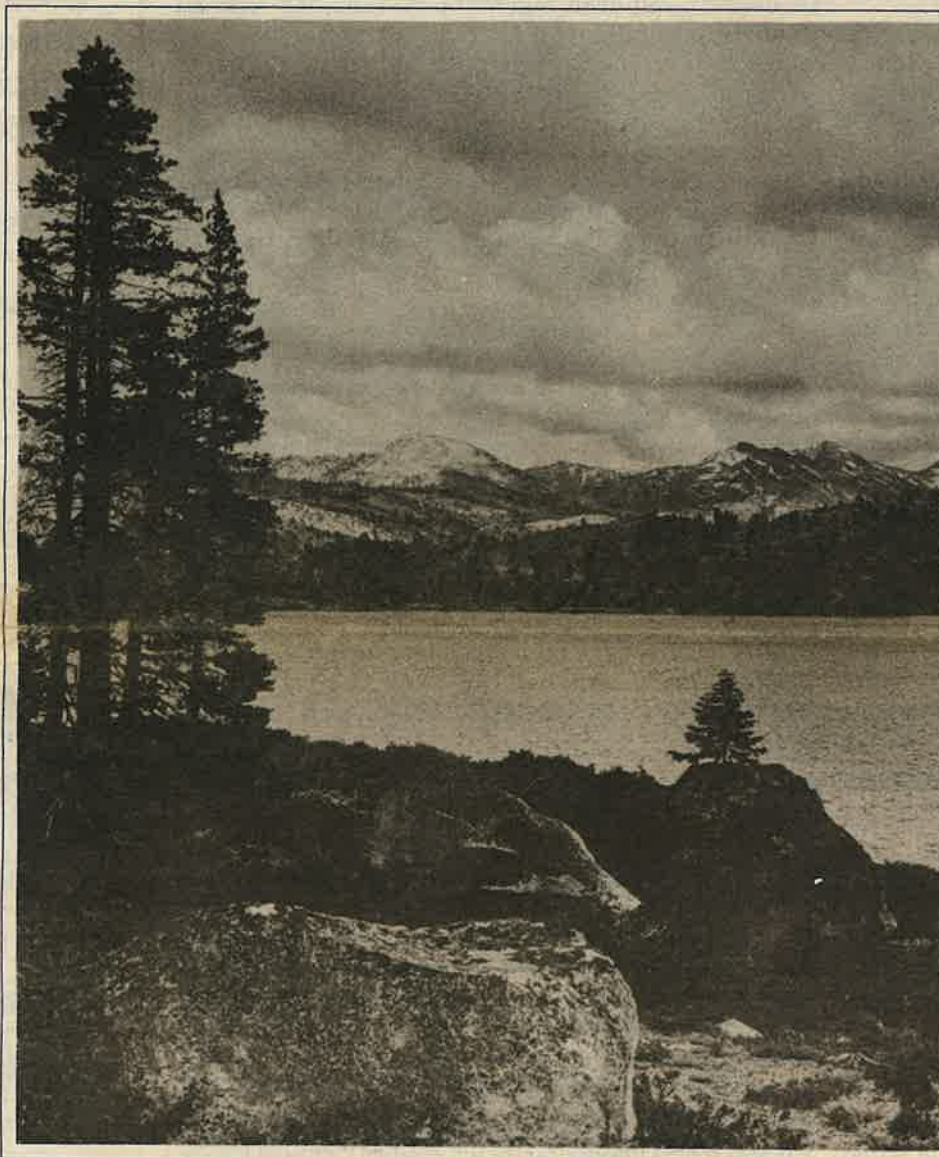
The law was written at a time in history when today's environmental threats were unimaginable. The frontier seemed endless, inviting exploration and exploitation.

At the core of the 1872 mining law's threat to environmental values—including wilderness—is its immunity from other environmental laws. The Mineral Policy Center writes:

"The 1872 mining law makes no provision for weighing the values of a mountaintop or a streambed as wildlife habitat, as fishery, as a source of unpolluted water for future generations, or merely as natural beauty, against its value as a lump of ore. To be mined under the 1872 law, a deposit must be 'valuable,' but that only means that it can be mined and sold at a profit for the miner."

The Wilderness Act of 1964, and subsequent acts designating wilderness areas, allowed mineral exploration in wilderness areas until 1984. After that time no new mining claims could be located, but hardrock mineral development on valid claims was allowed in perpetuity. The managing agency was given the authority to regulate the mineral activity in order to allow protection of wilderness character "consistent with the use of the land for mineral location and development and exploration, drilling, and production."

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Rockbound Lake in the Desolation Wilderness.

Wood fire ban proposed for Desolation Wilderness

The Forest Service will be proposing a new policy that would ban wood fires and fire rings in the Desolation Wilderness near Lake Tahoe.

Don Lane, Assistant Recreational Officer for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, says some of the fire rings he has found in the wilderness are so big they take away the Desolation's wilderness character. Lane has seen some rings as big as three to four feet high by three to four

feet wide; "you can roast half a cow in some," he half-jokes. Perhaps even worse for the ecology of the forest, live trees are found stripped of branches to keep big campfires blazing.

Lane believes Desolation is one of the most heavily used wilderness areas in the country, in numbers of people per acre. He credits the popularity to good weather and the proximity to the Bay Area and

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Too close for comfort

The Forest Service plans to log a roadless area right next to wilderness—and that's only part of the problem

By Tim McKay

Siskiyou Wilderness lovers will be most upset with Klamath National Forest plans to salvage log in the adjacent Five Mile Creek Roadless Area and along the high bluffs above Clear Creek, the major watercourse of the wilderness. The area affected by the logging plan, called the "project area" by the Forest Service, lies between the wilderness boundary and the Klamath River. The 14,000-acre area is rich in salmon and steelhead, provides habitat for spotted owls and other wildland-dependent species, and boasts scenic vistas, historic and contemporary

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COALITION PAGE

Monthly Report

Unlike previous issues, this edition of the *Wilderness Record* has a large number of wilderness management articles, including two about appeals the California Wilderness Coalition has filed on wilderness management plans.

Usually we spend most of our efforts trying to protect threatened wild lands and little on managing the lands we succeed in getting preserved. Although we will continue this emphasis, some management issues clearly must be addressed now, or we will have to live with the decisions for years to come.

I am personally fascinated by wilderness management. Although I dropped out of graduate school to take on a lucrative career as a professional environmentalist (at \$250 per month for the local chapter of the Sierra Club), my thesis was to have been on visitor use in the Desolation Wilderness. Before that, college friends and members of the Club's Wilderness Classification Study Committee spent many hours debating management issues: should wood fires be totally banned? Are wilderness permits a plot to sway the public against saving wild lands? Why build bridges for visitors (after all, did Jim Bridger need them)?

One thing I learned early on was that good friends could be poles apart on wilderness management topics. I have swayed back and forth on issues such as fire, quotas, and trail construction.

It became clear to me years ago that the major problem with wilderness use is not the numbers of backcountry travellers, but their habits. Aside from the question of solitude (which, by the way, is *not* mandated by the Wilderness Act), you can cram a lot of visitors into a wilderness with little effect if they practice minimum impact techniques. But one party of slobbs on a single trip can cause unacceptable damage to the wilderness.

By Jim Eaton

The challenge, then, is educating about and enforcing wilderness manners. Many ideas have surfaced over the years: education in schools, wilderness licenses for users, and more wilderness rangers. All these proposals have good and bad points; most of them cost money.

So instead, agencies search for solutions that are cheap and easy to implement. Banning all wood fires in the Desolation Wilderness is a good example. There are portions of the wilderness that are not denuded of all dead vegetation and marked with a Stonehenge of fire rings. But how do you allow fires there and not around the popular lakes that have trees stripped of their limbs to 30 feet up?

In other wilderness areas, fires have been banned near certain lakes or above a certain elevation (although the fire prohibitions in Yosemite and Kings Canyon/Sequoia are for a much higher elevation than I would choose). But without general public support and enforcement, the best plans will result in little change on the ground.

There are two general types of management issues: the aesthetic and the ecological. Aesthetic issues are for questions such as solitude, bright colored tents and clothing, and the use of helicopters. I usually am more concerned more about ecological problems, such as campfires, sanitation and water quality, grazing, and wildfire policies.

There are no right answers to wilderness management issues. We invite your comments exploring problems and solutions to the myriad of management topics we face. Let us know how you feel our wildlands should be preserved and protected. Working together, we can find ways to protect our wilderness not only for our generation but for those to come.

Uncle Jim's

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What county has the greatest number of designated wilderness areas completely or partially within its borders?

(Answer on page 7.)



1989 Financial Statement

The California Wilderness Coalition did well last year. Our income nearly doubled to \$86,500, while we spent just over \$92,000 (fortunately, the extra expenses came from funds held over from the previous year).

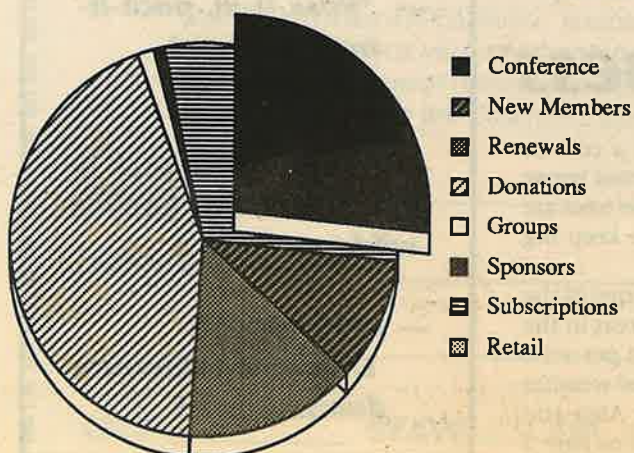
A major chunk of both income and expenses was the California Wilderness Conference—about \$23,000 was brought in and an equal amount spent on the event.

Almost all the rest of our income came from donations, renewals, and new members. The Coalition is a membership organization, and your membership and special donations are what make our operation possible.

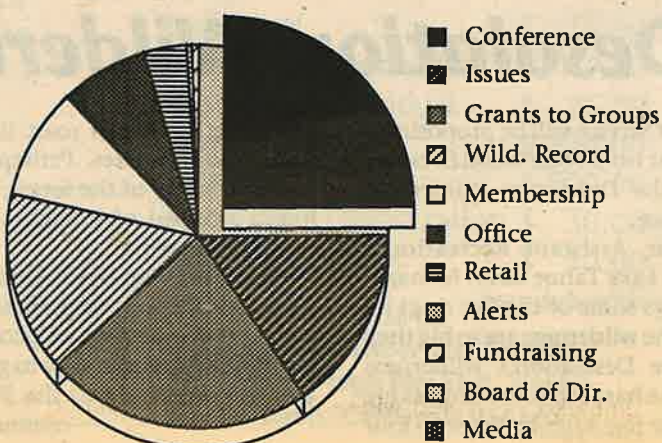
Our expenses are similar to previous years. Outside of money spent on the conference, most of the income was used for work on numerous wilderness issues and the *Wilderness Record*. An increasing amount of money, however, is being granted to our member groups to work on their special wilderness issues. In 1989 earmarked money was received and spent on protecting Mt. Shasta, projects on the east side of the Sierra, and the Sequoia National Forest.

Most of the expenses in the membership category are spent reaching new members (500 last year) and servicing existing members with renewals and special requests.

1989 Income



1989 Expenses



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DON'T MISS IT!

Roadless Areas



One of the dozens of lakes in the Grouse Lakes area, where private lands interspersed with roadless public lands are threatened with development.

Photo by Eric Gerstung

Funding needed for Grouse Lakes land purchases

By John K. Moore

It is hard to believe that fifteen miles west of Donner Summit and just a few miles north of noisy Interstate 80 lies an unspoiled wonderland of deep blue subalpine lakes, green meadows, stands of ancient red fir, and broad areas of glaciated granite—the Grouse Lakes Roadless Area in Tahoe National Forest.

The amazing variety and beauty of this area, with its more than 125 lakes and ponds, are packed into only 30 square miles. The scenery and recreational opportunities at Grouse Lakes compare with those of the much better-known Desolation Wilderness. The Grouse Lakes area is one of the favorite hiking areas of many Sacramento-area residents.

The lakes and ponds in the Grouse Lakes area are especially inviting because many can be reached by no more than an hour's walk from one of the twelve trailheads. Easy access to beautiful lakes makes the area particularly attractive to families with small children who want to get away from noisy automobile campgrounds. More energetic visitors can find solitude at the many lakes reached only by cross-country travel. No motorized vehicle travel is allowed, which enhances the naturalness enjoyed by visitors.

But this beautiful place is threatened by development. Half of the Grouse Lakes area is owned by Sierra Pacific Industries, which has placed its lands on the market.

Fortunately, Sierra Pacific has given the Forest Service a first chance to buy the lands. The necessary funds must be secured from federal appropriations in 1990. If the lands are not purchased by the Forest Service this year,

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Wild & Scenic Rivers

100 Rivers Campaign flowing smoothly

By Steve Evans

When Friends of the River first embarked on a campaign to encourage federal agencies to study rivers for Wild and Scenic status in their planning process, the organization had no idea how successful the campaign would be. Starting with the objective that each of the 18 national forests in California should be studied for one or two rivers needing protection, it was difficult to foresee the full scope of the assessment process required by the federal agency's own regulations. Many letters, personal meetings, and a few appeals later, FOR succeeded in encouraging federal agencies to recommend up to 100 rivers in California for Wild and Scenic protection. Highlights of the campaign so far include:

- An agreement by the Los Padres National Forest to study up to 15 rivers for possible Wild and Scenic River designation has recently been signed by the Forest Service, FOR, and two other conservation groups.

- The Stanislaus National Forest has found 19 streams to be eligible for Wild and Scenic status and will be making initial suitability recommendations in their draft forest plan to be released this summer.

- The Klamath National Forest has assessed more than 150 streams for eligibility and has finalized a list of 13 for which they will determine suitability in their draft forest plan to be released this summer.

- After receiving initial comments from conservation groups nominating three streams for Wild and Scenic protection, Mendocino National Forest officials have embarked on a forest-wide assessment of all streams in the forest.

El Dorado National Forest

"Devil's Den" timber sale stalks Caples Creek RA

The Eldorado National Forest is considering a timber sale that could be double trouble. The Devil's Den Sale in the Strawberry Canyon area could involve constructing roads and logging in the Caples Creek Further Planning Area (FPA) (roadless) as well as logging near the North Fork of the American Wild & Scenic River.

In its forest plan, the Eldorado National Forest recommended 17,340 acres of the Caples Creek FPA for wilderness designation and left out 3,636 acres. The area being analyzed for logging includes the northern end of the Caples Creek FPA.

Debbie Gaynor of the Placerville Ranger District claims all of the area analyzed will probably not be proposed for logging, saying "we haven't committed ourselves to anything yet." Spotted owl habitat and summer recreation homes near the river may prevent any logging there, Gaynor added.

"Scoping" comments on the sale will be used in Forest Service planning meetings held in mid-February, but will be accepted for several weeks after that time. Send to: District Ranger, USFS, Placerville Ranger District, 3491 Carson Court, Placerville, CA 95667. For more information, contact Debbie Gaynor at (916) 644-2324.

- The BLM is conducting area-wide Wild and Scenic River assessments for the Bishop and Redding Resource Management Plans.

On the other hand, the successes of the campaign to date must be tempered with the knowledge that not all rivers found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic status will actually be recommended by the managing agency or designated by Congress. In addition, some agencies remain reluctant to conduct proper assessments. Some examples include FOR's appeals of the Eldorado and Plumas national forest plans, as well as FOR's first BLM resource management plan protest for the Arcata Planning Area (see accompanying article).

Overall, it appears that consideration of Wild and Scenic River candidates has been institutionalized in the land management process of the Forest Service and BLM. The next step will be to monitor and encourage recommendations from these agencies supporting protective status for eligible rivers and initiating discussions with the National Park Service about conducting assessments of rivers they manage.

Reprinted from the January-February 1990 issue of Headwaters, Friends of the River's bi-monthly publication.

Steve Evans is President of the CWC and Conservation Director of Friends of the River.

Wilderness Management



Wilderness management

Bring-your-own-wood policy considered in Inyo NF

In California's Inyo National Forest horse packing outfitters have asked the Forest Service for permission to haul in and burn firewood in wilderness areas that are presently closed to fires.

For many years the Forest Service and Park Service have banned wood fires in high elevation areas where few trees grow and little fuelwood is available.

The outfitters contend that "people will not camp in areas where they cannot have a fire," also saying that "from the health and safety aspect, fires are necessary at times for survival."

Others, however, are concerned that users who do not bring their own wood into the wilderness will view packers' fires as a green light for starting fires themselves.

In response to a call for public comments on the fuelwood proposal, the Forest Service received overwhelming opposition.

In the summer of 1989 fuelwood packing was "tested" in the Duck Lake and Lake Ediza areas of the John Muir and Minarets wilderness areas. Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor of the Inyo National Forest, will soon make a decision on whether to allow packing wood into wilderness.

Write Martin at: Inyo National Forest, 873 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514.



The Ishi wilderness from Steamboat Trail, looking toward Deer Creek and the Coast Range.

Photo by Nancy Morton

Ishi Wilderness grazing provisions appealed

The winds of change on the range do not appear to have reached the Lassen National Forest, which recently released the Ishi Wilderness Implementation Plan.

The plan calls for continued grazing at current levels, to be mitigated by "increased controls" which amount to little more than repair of existing fences.

The California Wilderness Coalition and Friends of the River appealed the Ishi plan because the Environmental Assessment failed to analyze the adverse impacts of continued grazing at current levels. The appeal cites dozens of scientific studies and describes the many adverse impacts of grazing, including reduction of species diversity, reduction of woody species, soil compaction and trampling of streambanks (which result in elevated water



temperatures, sedimentation, and reduction of fish habitat), and aesthetic concerns affecting recreation.

The appeal requests that the Forest Service assess the true impacts of grazing in the Ishi Wilderness before proposing a specific grazing strategy.

The initial response to the appeal from the Forest Supervisor was that, although eight scientific references were provided, the appellants object to grazing merely on "philosophical" grounds. As we go to press, there is no indication how the Regional Forester will respond.

"Pack it in, pack it out" policy challenged

By Canyon Fred

A dangerous precedent regarding the Forest Service's "pack it in, pack it out" policy is brewing in Idaho. Commercial outfitters using the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness want the right to cache equipment and supplies at permanent camps within the wilderness.

The River of No Return Wilderness was established in 1980 and its management plan, completed in 1985, required the removal of all caches and permanent structures. The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association appealed the plan, but the appeal was denied by then-Chief Max Peterson. The outfitters responded by filing a lawsuit in federal court.

Following an out-of-court settlement negotiated by Chief Dale Robertson in 1988, a task force was established to review the policy. The task force reaffirmed the validity of the "pack it in, pack it out" policy for all wilderness areas, including the River of No Return.

In 1989, Chief Robertson rejected the task force recommendation and authorized continued equipment caches during an interim "trial period." Results of that trial period are being studied, and a final decision is pending. This decision is critical, as it could set a precedent for other Forest Service wilderness areas.

Letters are needed immediately to Dale Robertson, Chief, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington D.C. 20090-6090. Tell Chief Robertson that neither caches nor permanent structures are appropriate in wilderness areas. Tell him you support the present policy of "pack it in, pack it out." Send a copy of your letter to Representative Bruce Vento, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Grouse Lakes

continued from page 3

they will be sold for vacation homes and resort development, and the public will lose access forever to the great scenery and recreation at Grouse Lakes.

Conservationists are asking for appropriations of \$6 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase lands at Grouse Lakes, as well as a total appropriation of \$600 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to begin clearing up the enormous backlog of land acquisition needs across the county.

John K. Moore is a member of the Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club's Conservation Committee and lives in Sacramento.

Wilderness Management

issues: all over the map!



A huge fire ring in the Desolation Wilderness.

Photo by U.S. Forest Service

Wood fire ban

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Lake Tahoe. And Desolation's popularity is growing fast—from 1988 to 1989 alone the number of day-visitors in the Desolation tripled.

From mid-June to Labor Day the number of overnight visitors is limited to 700 people in the 98-square-mile wilderness, although there is no limit to the number of people who may visit for just a day.

As of yet, no other California wilderness has a year-round policy prohibiting wood fires, although others prohibit fires during fire season, at higher elevations where wood is generally more scarce, or at popular lakes.

Many backpackers and stock users are attached to the romance of a glowing fire, and Lane acknowledges that "there's a certain amount of risk" of public resistance to his division's new scheme.

To implement the ban, the Forest Service must change the Desolation wilderness management plan, released in 1978. Public opinion on the proposed change is currently being sought, and Lane hopes the public will support the ban. "Scoping" comments will be accepted through March; send to: Forest Supervisor, LTBMU, P.O. Box 731002, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95731-7302.

"Let-burn" returns to Sequoia/Kings NP

Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park will be the first national park or national forest in the country to reinstate its policy of letting some wilderness lightning fires burn themselves out. The park's fire management plan was approved in early December, well before the late July to early October fire season, when the majority of lightning fires ignite.

Concern over the far-ranging fires in Yellowstone National Park in 1988 led the agencies to suspend the 20-year-old "let burn" policy until fire management plans were approved by a national review team.

The Sequoia/Kings Canyon fire plan, which was approved without public controversy, would allow fires to burn under certain "safe" conditions of temperature, wind speed, and fuel moisture. The plan also requires that enough firefighters to put out the fire be available.

According to Tom Gavin of the National Park Service, the "natural fire policy" for wilderness at Yosemite National Park should also be resumed by this spring. The policies for Joshua Tree, Lava Beds, and Pinnacles national monuments will resume when plans are approved late this summer, Gavin estimated. He expects Lassen Volcanic National Park to follow the others in 1991.

CWC wants Forest Service to halt work on Emigrant dams

The California Wilderness Coalition recently appealed a decision by the Stanislaus National Forest to retain 12 out of 18 rock and mortar dams in the Emigrant Wilderness. The Forest Supervisor is proposing to repair and increase maintenance on at least eleven of the four to 25-foot high dams, claiming that they provide historic, fisheries, and recreation values. Six dams would be allowed to deteriorate naturally without continued maintenance, and one would be studied further.

In the 24-page appeal, the CWC demonstrates that continued maintenance of the dams violates the National Environmental Policy Act, the Wilderness Act, and Forest Service wilderness management policy by causing significant adverse impacts on wilderness values. Such impacts include inhibiting the free-flowing nature of headwaters of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers, inundating valuable terrestrial wildlife habitat, and perpetuating unsightly reservoir "rings." The appeal also shows that none of the benefits claimed by the Forest Service were documented adequately in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Most of the dams were constructed by Fred Leighton, a Sonora-area businessman, in the 1920s and 1930s. The dams were intended mainly to establish an exotic fishery, as the Emigrant wilderness was naturally barren of fish since being scoured during the last glacial period.

The Forest Service has attributed historical significance to the dams based on the premise that they represent "a water conservation theme of a past era." The appeal claims that the dams are not water conservation structures and that insufficient evidence is available to document whether the dams ever achieved their real purpose—to establish a recreational fishery.

The Decision Notice for the EA claims that the dams provide significant fisheries benefits simply due to the potential increase in fish habitat created by the enlarged lakes behind the dams. The appeal points out that even after a five-year study, insufficient data exist to show whether the dams significantly affect fish populations or angling success. The appeal also points out that no data were provided to substantiate claimed benefits to recreation.

But perhaps the most important issue is the impact of continued dam maintenance. CWC's appeal claims that continued maintenance conflicts with the Wilderness Act and Forest Service wilderness management policy by trading intrinsic wilderness values for (undocumented) "artificial" benefits. Impacts of past maintenance activity were described, including trash and construction materials left at dam locations, graffiti carved into repaired dam sections, and a larger-than-life sculpture of a naked woman recently chiseled into granite at one of the dam sites. Campsite impacts and effects on visitors' "wilderness experience" can also be expected from large maintenance crews.

Since the Forest Service decided not only to continue, but to increase dam maintenance, the appeal claims that significant adverse environmental impacts are reasonably expected, and therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is required. To avoid the need for a costly EIS, the appeal asks that all 18 dams be allowed to deteriorate naturally and that foreign materials (i.e. metal pipes, valves, cables, etc.) be removed as they are exposed.

Desolation visitors to be surveyed

Visitors to the Desolation Wilderness this summer will be asked to fill out questionnaires, helping the Forest Service update data on wilderness users.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) manages the Desolation and is administering the survey. According to Don Lane, Assistant Recreation Officer with LTBMU, "the wilderness user hasn't been static" in the fifteen or so years that have passed since such data was last collected. The results of that survey led to the Desolation's quota system.

The survey also is being conducted in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and North

Carolina's Shining Rock Wilderness; the information will be used in Forest Service technical bulletins that are distributed to wilderness managers all over the country.

Fourteen pages long in its draft form, the survey is geared more toward people who stay in the wilderness overnight than toward day users.

The questionnaire is mostly in a multiple choice format with plenty of space for "other"-type responses. People will be asked to gauge their wilderness experience, ranging from "nude sunbathing" to "spending time with my dog." The final three pages concern the socio-economic status of the respondent.

Mining wilderness

continued from page 1

Has this compromise, and the law itself, been a major thorn in the side of wilderness advocates? Not really, according to John D. Leshy, author of *The Mining Law*. Leshy concludes that public concern has kept the nation's wilderness areas safe from destructive mining schemes. He writes: "mere designation of land as wilderness has chilled exploration in those areas and been almost a totally effective barrier to mineral development and production."

Leshy credits this effect to "a combination of agency opposition, enough flexibility in the law to allow the imposition of additional regulatory controls with extra costs, and an evolving public opinion hardening in favor of complete protection for wilderness areas."

Despite this seemingly happy result, Leshy does note side effects: "The industry and its supporters have felt a sense of frustration that is palpable and which occasionally erupts during congressional debate on proposals to designate new wilderness areas."

Reaction to the California Desert bill is a perfect example of such an eruption. The mining lobby has been, along with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and off-road vehicle associations, one of the legislation's major

In the Emigrant Wilderness, adjacent to Yosemite's northern boundary, a road is used annually by the holder of a tungsten claim.



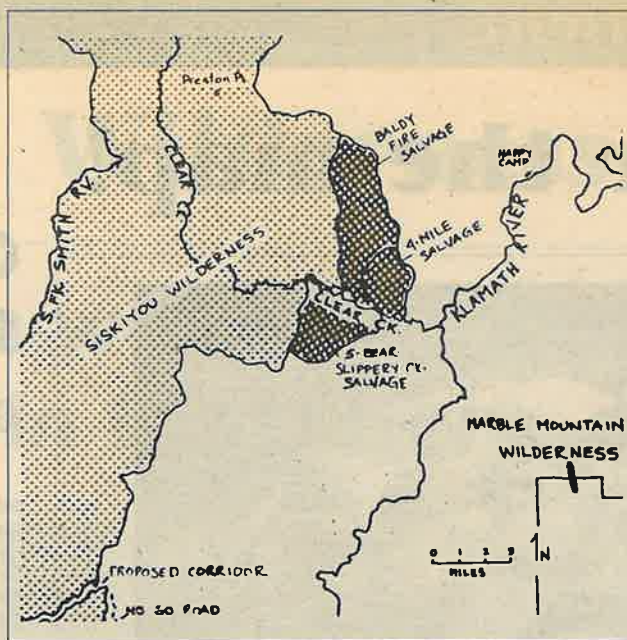
opponents, in spite of attempts by the bill's authors to skirt any areas with proven or suspected mining value.

Despite the fact that the 1872 mining law's charter has not resulted in many gross violations of wilderness sanctity, Phil Hocker of the Mineral Policy Center calls any old mining claim in a wilderness area a "ticking time bomb," as claims can be developed.

In the Sheep Mountain Wilderness near Los Angeles, development of a tungsten claim is taking place on a large scale smack in the middle of the wilderness [Longer story on this mine in the next issue.]

In the Emigrant Wilderness, adjacent to Yosemite's northern boundary, a road is used annually by the owner of a patented tungsten claim. Although no major mining has taken place there since 1984, when that area was added to the wilderness, the claim holder keeps his right to reach the claim. Bill Farrell of the Forest Service says "we're not presuming it is something that's going to be there forever."

Leshy explains that most wilderness areas "escaped substantial pressure from mineral developers either because of their remoteness, which increased the cost of exploitation, or because the Forest Service excluded areas of likely mineral potential in drawing boundaries." Yet the exclusion of areas for their mining claims has sometimes conflicted with logical and ecological wilderness boundaries. For example, a piece of the southeastern boundary of the John Muir wilderness was drawn in the



form of a "cherry stem"—a narrow stretch reaching into the main body of the wilderness—because of tungsten mines.

Another problem the mining law creates for wilderness is from land being tied up in claims. Hocker points out that such a large number of claims are filed on public lands that any new wilderness area will probably have claims on it. And finding public lands free of mining claims to be used for trades for private lands within wilderness areas can be difficult, according to Doug Kari of Desert Survivors, a hiking and conservation group that watchdogs BLM wilderness study areas in the desert.

In a more precarious position than designated wilderness areas are wilderness study areas and roadless areas—*de facto* wilderness not yet protected. These remain open by the provisions of the mining law. At a nickel deposit on Gasquet Mountain in the Smith River Roadless Area, which overlooks the Wild & Scenic Smith River in northwestern California, plans to mine were in conflict with the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, Endangered Species Act, and other environmental laws. Comments on the draft EIS raised so many environmental issues that needed to be addressed that the company dropped the project.

Similarly, the mining of chromite, nickel, and other minerals in the Red Mountain Wilderness Study Area was discouraged based on the BLM's position that the Endangered Species Act takes precedence over the mining law. Four sensitive plant species are found on Red Mountain, and claim owners there have never asked to develop the claims.

The question of the mining law's primacy over other land values and laws is one of the elements that mining law reformers are aiming to change.

The several ways that the mining law impacts wilderness add up to a substantial whole: opposition to designation of new areas, scarce "unclaimed" land for trades, illogical/unecological wilderness boundaries, development of roadless and wilderness study areas, and even roads and mechanized mining in designated wilderness.

In 1989 Senator Dale Bumpers introduced mining reform legislation, and he plans to do so again this year. Bumpers' bill would put wilderness study areas off-limits to mining, along with lands recommended by federal agencies for wilderness or further wilderness study.

Environmentalists also would like to see wild & scenic rivers, national parks, and other areas put off-limits to mining. They would like to see Bumpers' bill give federal agencies discretion to consider mineral development one of many possible uses, not the "highest and best use" of the nation's public lands.

Working for change in the mining law is the Mineral Policy Center, Suite 550, 1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 787-1872.

Baldy EIS

continued from page 1

Native American use areas, rare plants, National Recreation Trails and a unique and highly unstable geology.

The logging plan is in the form of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Baldy Fire Recovery Project (comments are due on March 13, 1990). Impacts to important and almost universally declining timber foot attributes are down-played.

The DEIS discusses four alternatives: A) not to log; B) log a bunch and build 9.5 miles of new road; C) log from existing roads and with helicopters; and D) almost identical to C. The DEIS does not indicate that any other alternative was considered, such as a recreation/non-timber values/preservation alternative.

Alternative D responds to a problem that the Forest Service has with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSA). Clear Creek is a candidate in the Klamath National Forest's forest planning process to be considered for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The mandate is not to conduct logging and road building in a way that will not detract from those values that make the stream eligible. The Forest Service tells us, without adequate explanation, that this part of Clear Creek would only qualify as "scenic" or "recreational," as opposed to the more restrictive "wild" classification. Alternative B, according to the Forest Service, would foreclose any Wild and Scenic River options, and since that would be illegal at this point they probably should not have considered B in the DEIS analysis. Under a "wild" classification alternatives C and D would be illegal.

In the first sections of the DEIS, where timber values are boosted, the water quality of Clear Creek is called "good," while buried deep in the document it is described with the sentence "Excellent clarity, aesthetic water quality and year round water." The same scenario is true with fish, their value minimized up front and later admitted to be significant.

Despite the fact that a significant number of acres to be logged are on highly unstable and steep slopes, the Forest Service minimizes the potential for serious watershed damage by averaging the landslide potential over a much larger assessment area that includes the upstream

The Baldy Project DEIS presents a poor range of alternatives and an obscured analysis.

portions of the Clear Creek watershed in the wilderness. This is copied to in the fine print in Appendix E: "When viewing the data it is useful to...remember that if the actual sediment production from the Wilderness is relatively lower than the proportion of management associated production in the project area increases."

If visuals are important to you, you will be concerned with the fact that the proposed logging will add to the burden of visible clearcuts in the viewsheds of the Five and Ten Divide Trail, the Kelsey National Recreation Trail, and the Bear Peak Road.

The Baldy Project DEIS presents a poor range of alternatives and an obscured analysis. Comments may be sent to: Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, Re: Baldy Fire Recovery Project DEIS, 1312 Fairlane Rd., Yreka CA 96097. For a copy of the DEIS contact Barbara Holder at the address above, or call 916-842-6131. The deadline is March 13.

Tim McKay works with the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.

Book review

Stunning wildlife book has 'em all

California Wildlife

by Bernard Shanks, Falcon Press, 128 pages, \$14.95

By Jim Eaton

I have lots of wildlife books in my collection. A few have great photographs but little text; others are crammed with information but lack photos or good sketches. Most of them concentrate on one species or family of animals.

California Wildlife, by Bernard Shanks, has the best of both worlds. Beginning with the mountain lion on its cover, there are 92 stunning color photographs depicting the amazing variety of our state's wildlife. There is a wolverine, mountain beaver, river otter, kit fox, ringtail,

and many other of my favorite animals.

The text is as outstanding as the photos. Although in a book of this size there is only space for a few paragraphs per species, this is not intended to be an encyclopedia of California wildlife. Instead it looks at the major ecosystems of the state and describes the important plants and animals in these regions. You then learn about the wildlife that share forests, desert, the Great Basin, mountains, foothills, grasslands, freshwater, and saltwater environments.

The publication is current enough to mention the controversies surrounding the spotted owl, mountain lion, and desert tortoise. It is not an advocacy book, however, and does not take a strong stand on these debates.

Although it is a horizontal rather than vertical paperback, the book has a little of the feel of the Time-Life series. Interspersed with the photographs and text are sidebars about particular species or topics, such as the California condor, tule elk, and feral pigs. These pages make the reading easier and more interesting.

There also are some suggestions on where to watch wildlife, although for the most part only agencies, addresses, and phone numbers are offered. It is left up to the reader to get details on exactly where to go.

If you are looking for detailed information on a particular species, this book is not going to be of great help. But if you want an overall view of California's remarkable wildlife, with wonderful photos and some useful information, you will find *California Wildlife* a delightful book.

Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

from page 2

Siskiyou County has eight: the Castle Crags, Lava Beds, Marble Mtn., Mt. Shasta, Red Buttes, Russian Peak, Siskiyou, and Trinity Alps wilderness areas.

New CWC T-Shirts!

Not one, but two CWC t-shirts! The animal design that Mona (left) is wearing is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank (of Farley fame); it comes in beige and light gray for \$12. At right is Neil in our official conference shirt; it has no less than six colors and comes in yellow, light green (xlarge & small only), and peach (xlarge, large, & small only) for \$15. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on page 8, adding \$1.50 postage for the first shirt 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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CALENDAR

February 9 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the proposed off-road vehicle plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Send comments to: OHV Program Manager, Forest Service — Lake Tahoe Basin, Box 731002, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95731.

February 10 DESERT BILL HEARING in Los Angeles; the last of three all-day Congressional field hearings on the Cranston/Levine California Desert Protection Act. If you plan to attend, send your name to the Sierra Club's Southern California Field Office, 3550 West 6th St., #323, Los Angeles, CA 90020; you will receive a detailed informational letter. For more information, contact Jeff Widen of the Sierra Club at (213) 387-6528.

February 15 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the Devil's Den Timber Sale in the Strawberry Canyon area of the Eldorado National Forest's Placerville Ranger District. Send to: District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service, Placerville Ranger District, 3491 Carson Court, Placerville, CA 95667. (See article on page 3)

February 17-May 13 "The Vanishing Desert," a major exhibit at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. For more information, contact David Shaw at the Academy at (415) 750-7142.

February 23 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the supplement to the draft EIS for the General Management Plan for Lassen Volcanic National Park. Send to: Supervisor, Lassen Volcanic National Park, P.O. Box 100, Mineral, CA 96093-0100. For more information call (916) 595-4444.

March 3 "Humans, Wildlife, & Habitat: Perspectives on Coexistence" conference sponsored by the Environmental Law Society of the University of California at Davis School of Law. For more information, write to ELS, School of Law, University of California, Davis, CA 95616.

March 14 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the supplement to the draft EIS for the Castle Mountain gold mine in San Bernardino County. Send to: Attn.: Elena Daly, BLM, Needles Resource Area, P.O. Box 888, Needles, CA 92363-0888.

March 16-18 RIVER CONFERENCE/FESTIVAL hosted by Friends of the River Foundation at Dominican College, San Rafael, CA. For more information contact Merlyn Storm at (415) 771-0400 or F.O.R., Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123.

April 21 JOHN MUIR'S BIRTHDAY

April 22 EARTH DAY

The Wilderness Record

The *Wilderness Record* is the monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit would be appreciated. Subscription is free with membership.

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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Editor

Stephanie Mandel

Contributors

Jim Eaton
Steve Evans
Marcus Libkind
Tim McKay
John Moore
Tom Suk

Photos & Graphics

Eric Gerstung
Nancy Morton
U.S. Forest Service
Production
Wendy Cohen
Jim Eaton
Stephanie Mandel
Vince Haughey
Mona Schraer

Coalition Member Groups

Focus:

Nordic Voice

Three years ago a group of backcountry skiers in the Conservation Committee of the Ski Touring Section of the Sierra Club's Loma Prieta Chapter decided that the future of backcountry skiing was looking grim. Former ski areas became housing developments, were locked up by resorts, or were under study for inclusion in alpine ski areas. Helicopter skiing, with its attendant intrusive noise, was available to the affluent, and snowmobilers had a strong lobby to promote their activity.

This group decided to take positive steps to make the needs of backcountry skiers more visible to those who make decisions which affect their sport. The result was *Nordic Voice*, a newsletter that serves as the focal point for the gathering and dissemination of information on issues which affect backcountry skiers.

Nordic Voice includes articles on land management plans, off-road vehicle plans, ski area developments and

expansions, changes in Sno Park, and parking issues. In addition to publishing *Nordic Voice*, the Conservation Committee attends Forest Service meetings, marks trails, works on the creation of new backcountry ski huts, and occasionally even publishes an article solely about the joys of backcountry skiing.

Subscription to *Nordic Voice* is absolutely free. To receive your free subscription please write: Nordic Voice, 3383 Burgundy Drive, San Jose, California 95132.

— Marcus Libkind, *Nordic Voice*

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