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Extensive critical owl habitat proposed

By Lucy Rosenau

The spotted owl has something to crow about. Late last month the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed designating a great swath of forestlands—11.6 million acres in California, Oregon, and Washington—as critical habitat for the threatened species. If the proposal survives a five-month process of hearings and reviews, it will severely restrict logging in old-growth forests within the designated habitat.

The owl's threatened status—and a federal court order obtained by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund—required the Fish and Wildlife Service to designate "critical habitat," the territory necessary to sustain the species. The designated habitat covers both public (75 percent) and private and (25 percent): 5.1 million acres in Oregon, 3.3 in Washington, and 3.2 in northern California. The proposed habitat for the spotted owl is the broadest application of the Endangered Species Act to date.

Critical habitat designation does not in itself preclude logging. A provision of the Endangered Species Act allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the economic implications of its critical habitat proposals and to accommodate economic interests. Nevertheless, because the agency's first responsibility is to preserve the species, it is generally believed that logging within the

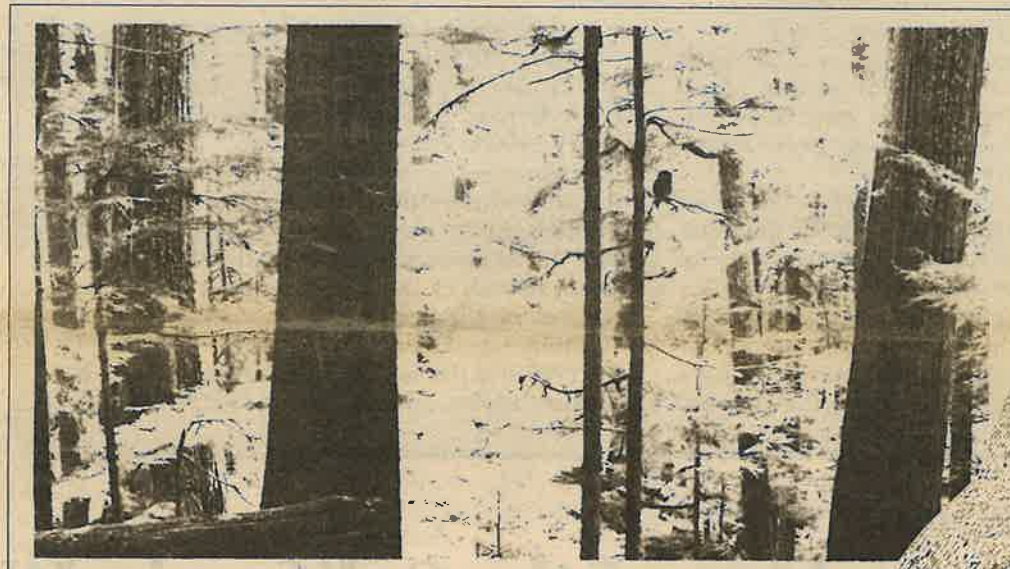
critical habitat will be severely curtailed.

The proposal's potential for restricting logging makes it controversial; Congress will be under pressure to reconcile economic and environmental interests. Because the largest

share of designated land lies in Oregon, the economic effects of restricted logging will be felt most strongly there. (In California, the owl's threatened status has already blocked 1991 timber sales in four national forests: Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, Six Rivers, and Mendocino.)

The northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis*, is non-migratory, inhabiting forests in the Pacific Northwest from

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Spotted owl

Photo by USDA Forest Service

Lack of information threatens the rare wolverine

By Jim Eaton

"The wolverine has a notorious personality that has been a popular subject in journalistic writing. There is no question about its ferocity and strength. I wonder if there is another inhabitant of northern wilderness that so excites the imagination."

That is how naturalist Olaus Murie described this rare member of the weasel family. Originally found throughout the Sierra and in the Rocky Mountains as far as southern Colorado, the wolverine is now exceedingly scarce south of Canada. The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) estimates that only 50 to 100 animals survive in the state. It is classified by the state as a "threatened" species.

The wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) truly is a wilderness species. It requires remote areas of old-growth coniferous forest (especially in winter) or alpine tundra. It is believed to range in the Sierra Nevada from Lake Tahoe to the Kern

gap and in northwestern California (especially in the Siskiyou, Trinity Alps, and Marble Mtn. wilderness areas). It has been spotted between 1,600 and 14,200 feet in elevation.

One common name is the "skunk bear," and it does resemble a diminutive bear. The general body color is chestnut brown with two yellowish bands along the shoulders to the base of the tail. There is a patch of light-colored fur at the base of the throat.

Also known as the glutton, the wolverine is not too particular about what it eats: any animal it can kill, as well as carrion, fruit, and fungi. It does not hibernate and is active both day and night throughout the year.

In an article in the March-April 1991 issue of DFG's *Outdoor California* magazine, author Lanny Claveilla writes that wolverines "are true wilderness species, inherently

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COALITION PAGE

MONTHLY REPORT

The chimney smoke from the burning ballots changed from black to white, signaling the selection of a new *Wilderness Record* editor.

Actually, the decision was made over a conference call, by outgoing editor Stephanie Mandel, director Mary Scoonover, and myself. The choice was difficult. We had several highly qualified candidates, each with a special mix of strengths and weaknesses. After interviewing six women and a man, checking references, and ruminating for a couple of days, we chose Lucy Rosenau.

Lucy will be taking the reins from Steph, and although she doesn't officially start until May, she has been working enthusiastically on this issue of the *Record*. With a degree in linguistics from U.C. Davis, Lucy may try to keep my theatrical prose in check. She also has a penchant for puns, so someone else may have to keep us *both* in line.

Lucy has been reviewing past issues of the *Record*, noting such literary blunders as "wonton destruction." Everyone is invited to mail us postcards pointing out her first mistakes.

Those of you that have an occasion to talk with our new editor will find her, like Stephanie, pleasant and easy going. There also is great hope and expectation that she will bring new order to the office to offset my messy habits.

Actually, this was our "dream reference" from CWC member Sheila Kenward. As office manager for Village Homes in the room opposite ours, Sheila dreamed that she came into the Coalition's office and found everything neat and orderly. She then knew that we would hire Lucy.

Another new face in the office is our intern Tova Spector. She was stunned to learn that we are

familiar with the place she calls home—her parents just sold their organic potato farm in Fish Lake Valley—after finding few students at UCD who had heard of it.

Not only were we familiar with the place, but in the next office soil scientist David Kelley had been at Tova's parent's house during the holidays helping a friend buy and transport potatoes! Small world, eh?

[For those of you wondering, Fish Lake Valley is on the east side of the White Mountains.]

Tova is completing a comprehensive 15-year index to the *Wilderness Record*. We had a previous intern begin the index a few years ago, and we frequently use the database in the Macintosh to locate background information on a number of issues. We hope to have this completed in a month or two and make copies available. We may then need to provide a clipping service so people can obtain articles from old issues of the *Wilderness Record*.

The *Record*, by the way, is posted each month on EcoNet. It is a convenient way to download articles for reprinting. The conference is cwc.wilderness, and the *Record* is complete from January 1990 to date.

Yet another recent change for the Coalition has been the addition of Nobby Riedy to the Board of Directors. Nobby works for The Wilderness Society (TWS) in San Francisco and brings skill and knowledge on Bureau of Land Management issues (especially desert wilderness).

Nobby has worked on a number of topics for both TWS and the Sierra Club in recent years. His expertise, advice, and humor are welcomed.

BY JIMEATON



Calochortus

Uncle Jim's

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What is the only member of the weasel family *larger* than a wolverine?

Answer on page 7.

Wilderness primer, part X

The making of the California Wilderness Act

In summer of 1979 the State of California filed suit against the U.S. Forest Service's second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) decision. Most conservation organizations, fearful of a Congressional backlash to a successful lawsuit, began to work on legislation to protect the roadless areas.

By November, hearings were scheduled for several proposals to designate Forest Service roadless areas as wilderness. Representative Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson (D-Roseville), seldom a friend of wilderness, introduced a bill that would have implemented the Forest Service's wilderness recommendations (except for a smaller Mt. Shasta Wilderness) for less than one million of the 6.3 million acres of *de facto* wilderness under study. Johnson's measure also required that 2.5 million acres of roadless land be managed for "multiple uses"—other than wilderness.

Taking a different tact, Rep. Phillip Burton (D-San Francisco) proposed that about five million acres of land be designated as wilderness.

By 1980, the State had won its lawsuit against the Forest Service [see the Wilderness Primer, Part IX, in the April 1991 WR], prompting Rep. Thomas Foley (D-WA) to propose legislation to override the court's decision. Foley's bill would have released most of the roadless areas to immediate development and set a deadline for Congress to act on the remaining areas. Environmentalists strongly opposed this bill and kept it from passing through Congress.

In August of that year, Congress passed by a unani-

mous vote Burton's bill, although compromises had whittled it down to 2.1 million acres of wilderness. The legislation also would dissolve the federal court order injunction won by the State that protected a number of roadless areas.

Burton's legislation again passed the House without dissent in 1981. Meanwhile, Senator S.I. Hayakawa (D-CA) introduced a bill that not only would set a rigid deadline for wilderness consideration but also would prohibit future consideration of national forest lands for wilderness designation.

In August Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA) offered his RARE II bill, which was quite similar to the House-passed legislation. But Hayakawa's refusal to negotiate, coupled with the Senate's reluctance to pass a measure unless both Senators from a state agree to it, resulted in no action to resolve the wilderness dispute.

Big changes came in 1983. Cranston again introduced his RARE II proposal, and newly-elected Senator Pete Wilson (R-CA) expressed his intention to work out a compromise. Phillip Burton died suddenly on April 10th, and two days later the House overwhelmingly passed his bill.

Early in 1984 Wilson set forth his own proposal: 1.68 million acres of Forest Service wilderness. By the end of June, Wilson and Cranston settled on a 1.8 million-acre compromise. Both the Senate and the House accepted the compromise, and President Reagan signed the bill into law on September 28th.

Many environmentalists found the compromise hard to accept. Nineteen areas that had passed the House without objection were dropped from wilderness designation; a dozen more were reduced in size. Eighteen areas, totaling more than 310,000 acres, that originally were scheduled for further study were "released" to non-wilderness uses.

The California Wilderness Act of 1984 did establish 25 new national forest wilderness areas and 14 additions to existing wilderness areas. It also designated much of Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks as wilderness, established the Tuolumne River as a wild and scenic river, and authorized the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

About 1.8 million acres of roadless land was left to be studied further by the Forest Service, although 80 percent of these lands are in the Inyo and Los Padres national forests—areas with little commercial timber.

The rest of the roadless areas were "released" for "multiple uses other than wilderness." This included 241 roadless areas totaling 3.1 million acres.

Wilderness opponents and the Forest Service thought the 1984 act "resolved" the wilderness question in California. However, citizens have not given up fighting for many of these "released" areas, and a number of these areas have values like ancient forests and spotted owl which continue to be hotly contested.

Wilderness news



The Red Mtn. Wilderness Study Area in Mendocino County will be proposed for wilderness by conservationists, but not the BLM. By The man who walks in the woods

Defiant cyclists request access to sensitive lands

California Trail Rides, the motorcycle club that only a few months ago defied a Forest Service restriction and organized a ride across sensitive public lands, is back again. Last November, 89 motorcyclists rode the roundabout loop from Independence to Bishop (article in the December 1990 WR). A permit for the ride was denied because the route crossed several BLM wilderness study areas, the Birch Creek roadless area, an ancient bristlecone pine forest, and a Native American sacred area in the Inyo Mountains.

To date no action has been taken against the offenders, and the club recently applied for a permit from the Forest Service to conduct a ride across the same route on October 5 & 6, 1991 or, alternately, October 26 & 27. An estimated 100-150 riders would take part.

Despite last year's fiasco, the Forest Service is entertaining the proposal and preparing an environmental assessment (EA). As part of the "scoping" phase of the EA process, the agency will be identifying issues or concerns regarding the proposed event until June 1. Send any issues or concerns to: JoEllen Kiel, District Ranger, White Mountain Ranger District, Inyo National Forest, 798 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514.

Wilderness proposals in the works for BLM lands

By Mike Gonella

Carson-Iceberg, North Fork American River, and Cahto Peak. Do these names ring a bell? How about Soldier Canyon, Granite Mountains, and Mount Bidwell? All of these are Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) that are not recommended by the BLM for possible wilderness designation in the impending BLM statewide wilderness proposal. And there are plenty more.

Next comes the list including Bodie, Rocky Creek-Cache Creek, Buffalo Hills, and Caliente Mountain. These are among the WSAs considered in the BLM's proposal, yet found unsuitable for wilderness. Only 20 percent of the WSA lands considered by the BLM were judged

to be of "suitable" quality, and in these areas the original WSA acreages are severely reduced. Examples include the King Range WSA in the Ukiah BLM District, where only 20,248 acres out of 33,485 were found suitable, and the Southern Inyo Mountains WSA in the Bakersfield District, where only 28,291 acres out of 36,901 were found suitable.

Now the good news: citizens have always been able to convince Congress to designate wilderness that wasn't supported by agencies, and the development of a conservationists' proposal, which will be put together by the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC), is underway. This proposal will consider each and every acre of the BLM's WSA system as well as areas on their boundaries. The proposal also will include areas which were never officially designated as WSAs or considered by the BLM, but which house special resources deserving wilderness status and protection. The CWC proposal aims to leave no wilderness-worthy acre unrepresented.

This April, several organizations (CWC, Sierra Club, *continued page 6*)

Large land exchange adds acreage to Granite Chief wilderness

Large private land holdings right in the middle of the Granite Chief Wilderness were traded for Forest Service timber lands in a deal made final on March 28th.

The agreement between the Tahoe National Forest and Sierra Pacific Industries was the second most valuable land exchange in the history of the Forest Service.

The agency acquired 6,159 acres within the wilderness boundaries, and gave up 5,426 acres scattered throughout Nevada and Sierra counties.

The 25,700-acre Granite Chief Wilderness, named for its highest peak (9,006 feet), still has 600 acres of private lands, or inholdings, within its boundaries, owned by Bohemia Inc. (a timber company) and Jim Nicklos of Sacramento.

The consolidation of federal lands in some wilderness areas was required by the California Wilderness Act of

1984, which established the Granite Chief Wilderness.

According to John Corbett, Tahoe National Forest land and minerals officer, the deal was delayed these seven years by three changes in corporate ownership and by the difficulty of deciding what lands to trade away.

Even when their lands are within wilderness boundaries, private owners retain the right to log or otherwise

develop them.

The land acquired by the Forest Service in the exchange is pristine, and covered with old-growth forest. It is prime habitat for spotted owls and furbearers such as the pine marten and Pacific fisher.



Mono Lake wins round three in court

On April 17, El Dorado Superior Court Judge Terrance Finney ruled against Los Angeles for the third time, prohibiting the city from diverting water from the Mono Basin until the lake level rises to 6,377 feet above sea level.

The lake is currently two feet below this critical level, and is not expected to reach it this year due to continuing drought conditions in the basin. The 6,377-foot threshold will remain in effect until September 1991, when the State Water Resources Control Board completes its study of Mono Basin water rights.

Located east of Yosemite National Park, this million-year-old lake is part of an ecosystem providing significant habitat for birds, shrimp, and brine flies, and recreation for thousands of people. Since 1941, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has diverted a majority of the

flow of four fresh water streams that feed Mono Lake resulting in a 40-foot drop in the lake level and an increase in salinity. The Mono Lake Committee, National Audubon Society, Cal Trout, the State of California, and others have joined in numerous lawsuits to protect the tributaries and the lake itself from Los Angeles' diversions.

A number of Mono Lake cases have been consolidated before Judge Finney. Previously, the judge had ordered releases of specified flows into the four tributaries as well as some streambed regeneration work. Then in August of 1989 Audubon and the Mono Lake Committee won an initial preliminary injunction setting the minimum lake level at 6,377 feet. That injunction was due to expire in March of 1990. Both sides agreed, however, to continue the old injunction until a hearing on a new one could be

completed. The parties spent a good portion of last summer and fall presenting evidence on the air quality, salinity, habitat, and aesthetic impacts of lowering the lake level. Closing arguments concluded in January of this year.

Although the ruling remains in effect only until the State Water Resources Control Board completes its study of the Mono Basin, the judge has sent a strong message to the Water Board. Judge Finney concluded that "a national environmental, ecological, and scenic treasure should not be experimented with even for a few brief years." He suggested that the mandated level of 6,377 feet is "simply a minimum level necessary to protect the resources at Mono Lake," and that the Water Board may well conclude a higher one is needed to protect public trust values.

Ancient forests

Agency maps extensive critical habitat for owl

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California to British Columbia. It was declared a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act last June, when estimates placed the owl's population at 3,000 mating pairs. Currently, threatened status makes it illegal to kill the owl or cut its nest trees.

Dense, old-growth forests are necessary for the owl's survival because only in this forest type, protected from predators, will the owls nest. Estimates of the continuous acreage needed per pair of owls have ranged from as little as 300 to as much as 4,000 acres.

The spotted owl is a Forest Service indicator species, a species whose survival implies the survival of other species which depend on the same type of ecosystem. Of course, some ancient forest-dwelling species may have additional

habitat requirements that would not be protected under this proposal. Ideally, saving the owl means saving the ancient forests and their inhabitants.

The months ahead will determine whether the proposed habitat will survive the review process and whether the Endangered Species Act can survive political pressure.

Ancient forest maps reveal fragmentation

By Tim McKay

The Wilderness Society has added a powerful new tool to the debate over the remaining ancient temperate rainforests by releasing computer-generated maps that show just how much old growth is left in 12 national forests with spotted owl habitat in western Washington, Oregon, and northwestern California.

The maps will complement the five-year-old mapping project of the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC), which measures individual stand size on both ancient forests and clearcuts in eight contiguous ranger districts of three California national forests—Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath.

The area between the crest of the Cascade Range and the Pacific Ocean, referred to on the maps as the "Douglas fir region," once contained about 25 million acres of ancient forest. But satellite data of the 12 national forests in the region that were part of the mapping study show that only 3.8 million forested acres are left.

The mapping study looked at different types of ancient forest, from low-elevation Douglas fir to high-elevation true fir. Only 700,000 acres of the low-elevation type, especially important for the northern spotted owl, remain in these 12 national forests, and only 10 percent of that is

protected. The same amount is left of the high-elevation type forest, which is above the range of the owl and other ancient forest-dependent wildlife species.

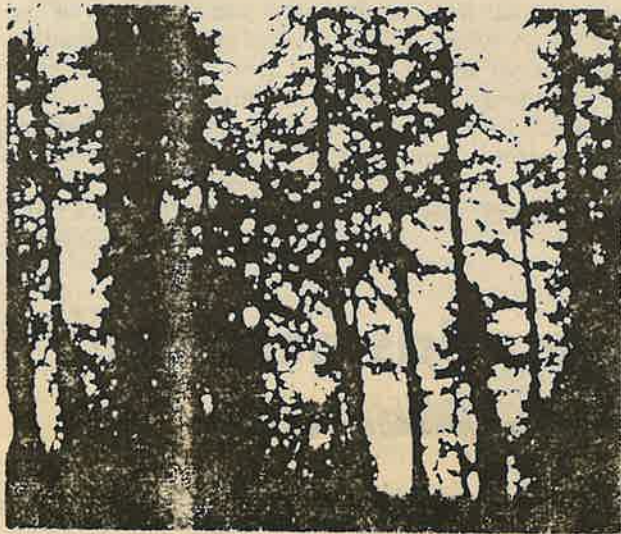
While about 983,000 acres of the California forest area is protected as wilderness or research natural areas, that includes only 10,300 acres of low-elevation ancient forest.

If the Interagency Scientific Committee's strategy for Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) is permanently implemented as a spotted owl recovery plan, more than 47 percent of all remaining ancient forest on the three California national forests will not be protected.

The major conclusion of the study was that the northwest ancient forests are highly fragmented. "Ecological benefits associated with ancient forest are significantly diminished through fragmentation and isolation of stands," it said. "The relatively few large stands of ancient forest that still exist represent a tremendously valuable resource. Their protection is a high priority."

To find out more about the maps, contact The Wilderness Society at (415) 541-9144.

Reprinted from the April 1991 issue of Econews, published by the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.



Sacramento R. eligible for Wild & Scenic status

By Steve Evans

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has declared 25 miles of the Sacramento River upstream of Red Bluff to be eligible for National Wild and Scenic River designation. Wild and Scenic River status would prohibit construction of dams and require the management of the river to protect "outstandingly remarkable" resources. A finding of eligibility means that a stream must be protected until the BLM makes a recommendation to Congress as to whether it should be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Wild and Scenic eligibility determination was made in a recently published resource management plan (RMP) for the 246,000 acres of public land managed by the BLM's Redding office. The RMP also has found segments of several Sacramento tributaries to be eligible for protective status, including Clear Creek, Battle Creek, Paynes Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek, Butte Creek, Beegum Creek, and three forks of Cottonwood Creek. In addition, the Shasta River near the Oregon-California border was determined to be eligible.

Not surprisingly, the Sacramento River was found eligible because of its "outstandingly remarkable" cultural, historic, fishery, recreation, habitat, scenic, and economic features. The BLM manages slightly more than seven miles of the 25-mile river corridor that was declared eligible in the RMP, and the agency is working to acquire more river frontage. The eligible segment begins at the

Balls Ferry bridge and ends approximately four miles upstream of the Interstate 5 bridge in Red Bluff. This segment is famous for its salmon fishery and its calm water boating opportunities. The river cuts a magnificent rimrock canyon through oak-studded foothills which are little changed from the time when Native Americans camped along the river to fish for salmon, hunt deer, and gather acorns.

Wild and Scenic status would provide protection for the fish, wildlife, and plant species dependent upon the pristine habitat of the Sacramento River for survival. Among these residents are threatened winter run chinook salmon and bald eagles. Designation by Congress would probably accelerate acquisition of lands threatened by residential development and lead to more funding for active federal management of this area. Designation would not preclude motor boats or any other recreational uses common on the river today.

The BLM will complete suitability studies and make recommendations to Congress for the Sacramento River and six other streams when detailed activity plans are completed. Recommendations for the remaining streams are deferred until BLM consults with federal, state, and local agencies about cooperative studies of mixed ownership corridors.

Unfortunately, at least six river segments may have been erroneously determined as ineligible for Wild and Scenic status because the BLM has only minimal—though critical—holdings along the stream corridors. These seg-

ments are on Big Chico Creek, lower Butte Creek, Antelope Creek, Bear Creek, lower Clear Creek, and the main stem of Cottonwood Creek. River conservation organizations are asking the BLM to re-assess these segments for Wild and Scenic eligibility.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: The BLM is holding public meetings in May and is soliciting written comments until June 28, 1991. Please attend one or more of the following meetings and speak out in favor of Wild and Scenic status for the Sacramento River and other streams:

Tuesday, May 21: Chico Holiday Inn, 685 Manzanita Court, 6:30 pm

Wednesday, May 22: Weaverville Lowden Park Rec Hall, Washington Street, 6:30 pm

Thursday, May 23: Redding Holiday Inn, 1900 Hilltop Drive, 6:30 pm

Wednesday, May 29: Red Bluff Fairgrounds - Tehama Room, Antelope Blvd, 6:30 pm

Thursday, May 30: Yreka Community Center, 810 N. Oregon Street, 6:30 pm

Written comments should be addressed to Mark T. Morse, BLM Area Manager, 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding, CA 96002. In your comments, be sure to mention the following points:

- Strongly support Wild and Scenic designation for the Sacramento River. Ask BLM to manage the land adjacent to the river for non-motorized primitive recreation. Support continued acquisition of river front lands to

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Wilderness management



Bullfrog Lake in Kings Canyon National Park

Photo by Phil Farrell

Standard limits on group sizes proposed

A uniform group size limit has been proposed for 16 wilderness areas in the central and southern Sierra Nevada. Administrators of five national forests and two national parks have proposed that parties no larger than 15 people and 25 pack animals be allowed.

The managers feel that standardizing the rules will eliminate problems that arise when groups cross boundary lines and suddenly face lower size limits.

Reaction to the news is mixed. The High Sierra Hikers Association (HSHA) objects to the stock (pack animal) limit. A spokesperson for the group points out that 76 percent of the comments agencies received on the issue suggested that the number of stock per party should not exceed 20. The agency officials' response to this, as written in the *Federal Register*, is that "it is appropriate to establish a maximum number that would permit stock trips for a party of 15 people, recognizing that additional stock is needed to carry dunnage [personal belongings or baggage] and supplies."

The Back Country Horsemen, a non-commercial recreation and wilderness preservation advocacy group, "endorses wholeheartedly" the proposed limits, according to member Charley Morgan. Morgan explains that 25 head of stock is a good number for 15 people, but that the average stock party size is much lower than that. Morgan also supports the standardization between agencies.

Some commercial pack outfitters, however, are complaining that the limits are too low. In the past, many of the areas had no limits on stock, and groups as big as 60 head had been allowed in.

The *Federal Register* notice summarized the public comments as follows:

"Many respondents cited social values such as noise, inappropriate behavior, intrusion on solitude, and damage to campsites in opposing large groups. Respondents favoring reduced numbers of stock often cited damage to trails, campsites and meadows, excessive manure on trails and campsites, and other social factors affecting their enjoyment of the wilderness. Respondents favoring current group size mentioned economics, efficiency, and camaraderie. Those favoring larger numbers of stock cited economics and the fact that stock provided some user groups with their only means to reach portions of the wilderness."

An analysis of almost 38,000 wilderness permits issued in 1989 revealed that almost 99 percent of all parties, backpackers and stock users, numbered 15 persons or less. Larger groups are likely to be commercial stock and guide services.

A one-year phase-in period is proposed, during which field managers could waive the new limits. After the first year, with 30 days notice, they could make exceptions for extra stock when grazing restrictions require that they carry in the animals' food. The limits could be reduced in specific, localized areas where "resource and/or social conditions required this action."

A new policy will be made final after comments from the public are considered, and will probably take effect in the summer of 1992. Comments on the proposal must be received by June 6; send to: ATTN.: Wilderness Party Size, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, Three Rivers, CA 93271; to Sequoia, Inyo, Sierra, Stanislaus, or Toiyabe national forests; or to Yosemite National Park.

Current & proposed group size limits for Sierra wildernesses

Wilderness area	current/proposed max. stock group size	current/proposed max. person group size
Ansel Adams	no limit/25	25/15
Carson-Iceberg	no limit/25	25/15
Dinkey Lakes	no limit/25	25/15
Dome Land	no limit/25	25/15
Emigrant	20/25	15/15
Hoover	no limit/25(Inyo NF)	15 (Toiyabe National Forest)/15
	25/25(Toiyabe NF)	8 (Sawtooth Ridge Zone)/8
Trout	25/25	25/15
Jennie Lakes	no limit/25	25/15
John Muir	no limit/25	25/15
Kaiser	no limit/25	25/15
Mokelumne	no limit/25	25/15
Monarch	no limit/25	25/15
Sequoia-Kings Canyon	20/25	15 on certain trailheads/15
Sierra	no limit/25	25/15
Yosemite	25/25	8 in certain trail-less areas/8

BLM planning oil & gas leasing near wilderness study area

Despite the presence of threatened and endangered plant species and an adjacent wilderness study area, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and "Finding of No Significant Impact" for oil and gas development in the Caliente Resource Area. Two locales are being considered for leasing: the Caliente Mountain area in eastern San Luis Obispo County and the Wheeler Ridge area in southern Kern County.

One site is near the Caliente Mountain Wilderness

Study Area (WSA). Seven other sites originally proposed for development that are surrounded by the WSA are not being offered for lease at this time.

The area is California condor habitat that will be needed when condors are reintroduced into the wild.

The area is archaeologically rich, but the BLM plans to lease without doing any additional studies, saying: "Although the overall study area is considered to be sensitive for cultural resources, current inventories are incomplete, and potential impacts are highly speculative."

Wilderness animals

Sheep grazing banned in some desert tortoise habitat

To save the desert tortoise, which is listed by the federal government as a threatened species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS) has forced the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to ban sheep grazing in Category I and II tortoise habitat. The F&WS issued a judgement that sheep grazing in these areas would put the tortoise's survival in jeopardy.

The BLM will allow sheep grazing, with some restrictions, in Category III tortoise habitat.

Sheep are a threat to desert tortoises because they eat understory plants, under which tortoises—hatchlings in particular—hide from predators such as ravens, coyotes, and humans. The understory also provides shade so the reptiles don't get thermal stress. Also, sheep deplete the supply of plant food on which tortoises rely.

Some advocates of tortoise protection believe the BLM should extend its ban to Category III habitat. Category III habitat generally means that lower densities of tortoises live on these lands. In some cases, however, the designation has been given because fragmented land ownership limits the BLM's ability to manage the land as it sees fit. Elden Hughes, Chair of the Sierra Club's Desert Committee, feels that allowing sheep grazing in Category III habitat is a contradiction in BLM policy, as agency plans call for no loss of tortoises. Hughes says that the grazing decision



means that "the tortoise will be sacrificed in Category III."

The BLM has pledged to closely monitor the impacts this year's grazing has on the reptiles, but citing past monitoring efforts, Hughes remains skeptical that the efforts

will be effective.

Wool "growers," as they are called, have complained of the economic hardship brought on them by the BLM's ban. Grazing leases on public lands are generally much cheaper than those on private lands.

The BLM will reconsider the sheep grazing policy in 1992, when additional studies on the impacts of sheep grazing on desert tortoise populations should be completed. This year the agency began a five-year research project on desert tortoises.

Cattle grazing is a worse threat, according to desert tortoise expert Steve Johnson. Cattle graze BLM desert lands all year long, not just for a few weeks, as do sheep. The F&WS will be considering the impacts of cattle on the tortoise in the near future.



This adult wolverine looks friendly, but watch out!

Drawing by Paul B. Johnson

Wolverine: the ultimate wilderness animal

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reclusive—wildlife hermits living lonely, solitary existences amid remote, inaccessible areas that confound efforts to study and learn more about them."

This lack of information about the wolverine's habitat and needs is used by agencies as an excuse *not* to protect the animal. The argument is that since we do not know much about the wolverine, we might as well go ahead and develop its territory.

For example, in its recent proposal to log the Duncan Canyon Roadless Area near Lake Tahoe, the U.S. Forest Service reported that wolverines have been spotted in and near the canyon. Yet they still propose to log the area despite admitting that "this alternative may have a potential negative effect on wolverines," and "no information is available on habitat use of pine marten, fisher, Sierra Nevada red fox or wolverine in the west-slope of the Sierras [sic]."

Further south, a proposal to expand the Mt. Reba-Bear Valley ski area states that "species which would be affected by human activity during the winter include...wolverine (a State-listed species)."

Clavacilla sees lack of information as a major threat to the species:

"Because of the dearth of recent research conducted on wolverines, state wildlife biologists face the prospect of devising management plans in a relative vacuum of information. Currently, no management focus on wolverines, and little definitive scientific information, exists to provide a basis for such efforts. This lack of reliable information with which to make crucial management decisions may itself pose a major threat to the species' existence in California."

"...the need to invade her last remaining wildernesses, for business or pleasure, must be resisted if there is to be a place in the state for an animal that so personified untouched natural environments as the wolverine."

Wilderness proposals

continued from page 3

Friends of the Inyo, and The Wilderness Society) teamed up with the outdoor equipment company REI to fund a part-time BLM wilderness intern through The Wilderness Society's "California Non-Desert BLM Wilderness Project." The project is designed to provide an organizer to work with CWC in developing the conservationists' proposal for California wilderness outside the California Desert. I am excited to have been picked for the project and am looking forward to helping you develop a strong wilderness proposal for BLM lands outside the desert.

The most basic unit of the wilderness proposal will be WSA summary sheets—narratives describing general characteristics, unique features, conflicting uses, and threats to each area. I have begun compiling summary sheets, maps, and slides on every known non-desert WSA or area that should be considered for wilderness designation. My work is made somewhat easier by the information the BLM has on the approximately 1,000,000 acres it chose to study outside the California desert. (However, only 198,911 acres of these lands were found to be suitable!)

Along with compiling the substantive information on each WSA, I am gathering names of contact people who have visited specific areas and could provide information regarding the WSA, including a brief summary of the area, special features, and/or conflicts. I have met with the BLM State Wilderness Coordinator, Jeff Jarvis, and plan to hold future meetings to go over the BLM's data on each WSA. WSA contact people will be essential at these meetings.

Here's what you can do to help:

1) Attend the CWC Non-Desert Wilderness Proposal Organizational Meeting on June 15th. Call the CWC for more information, at (916) 758-0380.

2) Call Mike at (415) 541-9144 during the day or (415) 255-2820 in the evening if you would like to help in some way. Or write to The Wilderness Society's Regional Office at 116 New Montgomery, Suite 526, San Francisco, CA 94105.

3) Visit any WSA outside (or abutting) the desert and get to know its features. Document what you discover. Let me know about your trips, past and present. Write down your observations and send them to me.

Sacramento River

continued from page 4

consolidate BLM management of this area. Ask that recreational development be limited to preserve fish and wildlife habitat and cultural/historical resources. Ask that grazing be reduced to protect rare plants and wetlands.

- Support Wild and Scenic designation for the other streams, including Clear Creek, Battle Creek, Paynes Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek, Butte Creek, Beegum Creek, North Fork Cottonwood Creek, Middle Fork Cottonwood Creek, South Fork Cottonwood Creek, and the Shasta River. Ask that lands be acquired along these river corridors to consolidate BLM management.

- Ask the BLM to reassess Big Chico Creek, lower Butte Creek, Antelope Creek, Bear Creek, lower Clear Creek and the main stem of Cottonwood Creek for Wild and Scenic eligibility. Ask that lands along these river corridors be acquired to consolidate BLM management.

Letters should be mailed before June 28, 1991. IMPORTANT: Please make three copies of your letter and send them to your Representative in Congress (House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515) and to Senators Alan Cranston and John Seymour (separate letters to Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510). If you do not know the name of your Representative or would like more information, please call Steve Evans at Friends of the River, (916) 442-3155.

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

Book review

New journal by familiar names

Wild Earth

Vol. 1, No. 1, Wild Earth Association, Canton, NY, 70 pp.

The premier issue of *Wild Earth* is off the press, and it's great! This quarterly journal is a must for grassroots activists with a biocentric view. It is to become a forum for serious discussion of the ideas and methods of ecological preservation.

Each issue will have a theme for its major articles; the first issue theme is "Ecological Foundations for Big Wilderness." Among the articles are *Dreaming the Big Wilderness* by Dave Foreman, *The Impoverished Landscape* by Howie Wolke, *Ecosystem Restoration, An Example for Florida* by Reed Noss, *The Grider Creek Story* by Felice Pace, *The Earth First! Wilderness Preserve System* by Foreman, Wolke, Bart Koehler, and Sharon Netherton, and *A Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Marshall Plan* by George Wuertner.

Regular departments include Biodiversity Reports, Reports from the Front—Campaigns, Legislative Corner, Movement Mutterings, Land Ethics, and Book Reviews.

A one-year subscription (4 issues) costs \$20.00. Contact Wild Earth at P.O. Box 492, Canton, NY 13617.

-Jim Eaton

Oil development decision due for Alaska wilderness

The fate of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), one of the U.S.'s largest wilderness areas, is being debated in Congress as the Senate Energy Committee prepares to vote on opening a portion of the area to oil drilling.

The refuge covers 19 million acres on Alaska's north slope. Its 105-mile-long coastline is the only stretch of Alaska's 1,200 miles of shoreline that is currently off limits to oil development. A few hundred Eskimos live in the refuge, depending on Caribou herds and musk oxen for their livelihoods.

Interest in oil development in the refuge has been spurred by the Bush administration. In February, Bush released a national energy strategy that focuses on increased use of oil, coal, and nuclear energy, rather than energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

California's new U.S. Senator, John Seymour, will have a voice in the ANWR's future. Senator Seymour, appointed to complete Governor Pete Wilson's term, serves on the Senate Energy Committee. Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana, who chairs the committee, is pushing legislation that roughly parallels the administration's energy proposals. Called the "Energy Security Act of 1991," the bill will come to a vote soon.

Environmentalists oppose any oil development in the fragile tundra ecosystem of the ANWR, arguing that the oil potential does not justify the risk of ruining the wilderness.

The Interior Department has reported that there is only a 19 percent chance that economically recoverable oil will be found in the ANWR, although the estimate has recently been raised to 43 percent.

Even if oil is found, estimates suggest there would be only enough to supply about 200 days of America's current consumption.

Two wild ones

The animal design that the Sonoran pronghorn antelope (r.) is wearing is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige and light gray for \$12. The mountain lion is wearing our anniversary shirt; it has no less than six colors and comes in light blue, yellow, light green, and peach for \$15. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.

Wilderness
Trivia Quiz
Answer:

from page 2

The sea otter,
which weights up
to 85 pounds
(38.6 kg.).

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 10 & 11 DEDICATION of the *Smith River National Recreation Area*, May 11 at 2:00 pm in Gasquet. Numerous activities, events, and demonstrations will take place in Gasquet both days. For more information, contact the Six Rivers National Forest at (707) 457-3131.

May 21, 22, 23, 29, & 30 Public meetings on Wild and Scenic status for the *Sacramento River* and other streams. (See article on page 4 for meeting locations.)

June-August *Sierra Nevada Field Campus* classes in geology, astronomy, education, and biology will be offered to the public, with college credit optional. For more information, contact: Jim Steele, School of Science, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132-9987 before June 1, and *Sierra Nevada Field Campus*, Star Route, Satley, CA 96124 after June 1.

June 6 COMMENTS DUE on proposed wilderness party size changes. Send to: ATTN: Wilderness party size, Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park, Three Rivers, CA 93271 or to any of the other agencies listed on page 5. (Article on page 5.)

June 28 COMMENTS DUE on the Wild and Scenic River study for the *Sacramento River* and tributaries. Send to: Mark T. Morse, BLM Area Manager, 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding, CA 96002. (Article on page 4.)

June 1 COMMENTS DUE on a proposal to conduct a motorcycle ride for 100-150 riders in the Inyo and White mountains, from Independence to Bishop, on October 5-6. (Article on page 3.)



**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 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:

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Wintu Audubon Society; Redding
Yolano Group, Sierra Club; Davis

Focus: High Sierra Hikers Association

The time must have been right, because just a few months after its inception, the High Sierra Hikers Association (HSHA) is going strong with almost 150 members.

The informal group coordinates by phone and mail because its active members are geographically dispersed from Seattle to L. A.

The impetus for the group's formation was hikers' concern over the number of pack animals—horses and mules—that will be allowed in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park wilderness under a revised management plan.

Cattle grazing in wilderness is another main focus for the HSHA. The group's members do

not have a monolithic point of view on the degree to which stock use in wilderness should be limited, coordinator Peter Browning points out. In fact, the HSHA actually submitted two stock management proposals, reflecting different positions, to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. One would ban stock use in the backcountry, while the other contained detailed stock management guidelines for the area.

In the future, the group may address other issues, such as military planes flying over wilderness areas.

For more information on the HSHA, write to P.O. Box 9865, Truckee, CA 95737.

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