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# WILDERNESS RECORD

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## ESA re-authorization debate: A kettle of fish and a can of worms

By Scott McCarthy

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was passed by Congress in 1973 with the laudable goal of preserving this nation's rich variety of wildlife. The Act came about because enough people were alarmed at the increasing number of plants and animals then in danger of being lost forever. (Since 1973 many more species have been listed as endangered or threatened; still more are candidates for listing.) The only U.S. law passed specifically to protect individual species, the ESA will no longer be in effect if it is not re-authorized by Congress this year. While it is unlikely that the ESA will not be re-authorized, a coalition of industry and development interests is lobbying fervently for amendments that would strip the Act of its teeth.

Since its passage, the ESA has gone through several revisions that have diminished its efficacy. The most famous was in response to a Supreme Court decision which upheld an injunction precluding completion of the \$100 million Tellico Dam. Filling the dam would have killed the only known population of the now legendary snail darter, a small fish. The Court apparently felt that the mandate from Congress was clear and that the preservation of endangered species was a national priority. This apparently surprised Congress, which responded by creating legislation exempting the Tellico Dam from the ESA, changing some of the

language of one section, and creating the Endangered Species Committee.

The ESA requires that once a species is listed as endangered the government must use all possible means to reduce the threat to the species, until it is no longer endangered. The Endangered Species Committee (also known as the God Squad for its power to decide whether a species continues to exist or dies) has the authority to overrule the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service when the economic impact of listing a species as endangered outweighs the benefits of fulfilling the requirements of the ESA.

Since listing a species as endangered is nearly always a result of commercial or developmental pressure on the species' habitat, incorporating in the ESA the economic impact of a listing would effectively gut the Act. The controversial designation of spotted owl habitat is now driving debate over whether to weaken or strengthen the ESA.

A coalition of commercial interests has launched an unprecedented drive to make the ESA more amenable to them. The California Chamber of Commerce, Chevron USA, Dow Chemical Co., the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the American Farm Bureau, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the California Cattlemen's Association are part of a 121-member coalition that has drafted proposed amendments to the ESA.

Among the proposed amendments are:

- requiring that the economic impact of a proposed listing be given the same weight as the environmental impact;

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Bald eagles in the Klamath basin Photo by Tupper Ansel Blake, courtesy of the Dep't. of Fish & Game

## Chilling new rules would eliminate FS appeals

If the Bush administration has its way, citizens who want to appeal timber sales and other proposed Forest Service activities will have to tell it to the judge; administrative appeals, now the first and least expensive resort of environmentalists and industry alike, will be disallowed. The proposed change, one of many unveiled by the Bush administration in its attempts to streamline governmental regulations and foster economic growth, was announced by Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan on March 19 and subsequently published in the Federal Register. A thirty-day comment period ends April 27.

In the last two years, the Forest Service has been deluged with more than 3,000 administrative appeals which have delayed or halted timber sales across the country as well as developments such as ski resort propos-

als. Rather than interpret the flood of appeals as evidence that the agency's decisions are flawed, the administration instead concluded that the procedure is "onerous and confrontational" and is seeking to eliminate it. The proposed change would substitute for the appeals period, which now follows an agency decision (see Wilderness Primer, page 2), a 30-day period of public review and comment prior to, but not binding on, the decision.

The administration contends that frivolous appeals are glutting the system, causing unnecessary delays and wasting staff time and money. Yet a 1989 General Accounting Office study of 132 appeals found that none were without merit; by contrast, 98 percent of the appeals studied were the result of inadequate environmental re-

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# COALITION PAGE

## MONTHLY REPORT

BY JIM EATON

At the last California Ancient Forest Alliance meeting, David Orr told me that my late dog, Stickeen, had made the *Washington Post*.

I was puzzled about how a dog more than six years dead could make the *Post*. I've never been in the *Post*, although I did once make the *Washington Star*.

David showed me the article, a review of Michael Frome's latest book, *Regreening the National Parks*. In his tome, Frome retold the story of a Wilderness Society staff backpack into what is now the Granite Chief Wilderness. Whoever related the tale to Frome greatly embellished on the actual event in which Dave Foreman and Stickeen shared a raw steak. I guess this is how legends are born.

This got me thinking about a Round River Rendezvous in Idaho where Foreman told the Fourth of July crowd that someday continental glaciers would return to North America and obliterate the signs of modern civilization. As he spoke, snow flakes fell from the sky. I later told Dave that future generations would learn that "when Foreman beseeched the ice to return, the mighty glaciers began to move."

Well, Dave has done it again. At the Friends of the River conference last month, Foreman gave a moving speech that climaxed with his recounting Aldo Leopold's conversion after killing a wolf. As the skies darkened and a few drops of rain fell, he quoted from *A Sand County Almanac*: "We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain."

At that dramatic moment, Mother Nature let loose several resounding peals of thunder. I don't know how he does it, but Foreman has fantastic timing.

There was a stirring photographic exhibit of the Stanislaus River at the conference. Many photographers contributed to the display; there were black-and-white prints by Martin Litton and Ty

Childress from the 1960s and Tim Palmer's color photos from the 1970s. And there were chilling pictures of the dead canyon uncovered recently by falling water levels in New Melones Reservoir during our continuing drought.

I walked through the gallery with Catherine Fox and Mark Dubois, two of the founders of Friends of the River. Catherine is a former CWC board member and Mark is the courageous man who chained himself to a rock to forestall the filling of New Melones. Stickeen and I once floated the Stanislaus, but my two friends know every inch of the Stan—the rapids, quiet stretches, campsites, side creeks, archaeological sites, plants, and animals of the canyon. It was a difficult viewing; there was joy in Catherine's and Mark's eyes as they recognized old friends, but then they saw what became of their beloved river. There were no dry eyes.

Later, many of these images were shown to the gathering in a slide presentation. Afterward, Catherine, Mark, and river guide Marty Mac gave heartfelt memoirs of *The River*. They all had trouble speaking about the Stan; Mark frequently had to stop and compose himself.

Mark recalled that he often spoke of how the river would die under the still waters of the reservoir, but he never really knew how bad it would be until he saw the recent photographs. He asked us not to forget the images of dead trees, missing wildlife, and the silt-choked canyon so that we may never let this happen to a living river again.

But he also held out hope, hope that someday our society will be wise enough to unchain the Stanislaus, free Hetch Hetchy Valley, and remove Glen Canyon Dam. Although the rivers will not regain their vitality during our lifetimes, future generations will see the canyons recovered.

Mark and Sharon's infant son Tevon listened to his dad's address. And it is for Tevon and other children, for spotted owls and wolves, for redwoods and adobe lilies that we continue to work for the preservation of the wild.

## Wilderness primer, part XIII

## Appealing Forest Service decisions

Appealing a decision of the U.S. Forest Service is an informal process, accessible to a wide variety of potential appellants with a minimum of legalistic procedures. Intended as a forum for resolving disputes short of filing suit in a court of law, the appeal is the final administrative opportunity to convince the Forest Service to change a particular management plan or project.

The Forest Service appeals process is not required under any statute passed by Congress. As a result, the Forest Service has been free to fashion the rules governing the process. Unlike the Bureau of Land Management process, Forest Service appeals are not heard by an independent agency. Rather, all appeals are heard by officials within the Forest Service. An appeal of a Forest Service official's decision is decided by his or her supervisor.

Although the appeals process is intended to be informal, the Forest Service will deny appeals if they fail to meet certain standards, such as timeliness. An appeal filed one day past the deadline will not be considered.

Citizens, environmental organizations, and industry groups have successfully used the appeals process to challenge Forest Service decisions. As a result, the Forest Service has made it more difficult over the years to appeal agency decisions. The latest changes in the process were adopted in 1989.

Among the major changes from earlier regulations adopted in 1989 are:

- Short time periods (45 or 90 days, depending on the type of decision) apply to filing appeals of plans and projects.
  - Only one level of appeal is allowed in most cases.
  - The notice of appeal must state the reasons for the appeal—there is no separate statement of reasons.
  - No extension of time is allowed for filing any part of the notice of appeal.
  - There is no responsive statement, reply, or oral presentation; instead, meetings between appellants and deciding officers are encouraged.
  - Intervenor must observe strict time limits for intervening in pending appeals and submitting comments.
- Decisions relating to "natural disasters" such as salvage timber sales following major wildfires may be excluded from appeal if the Regional Forester or Chief gives notice in the *Federal Register*.

Each year, thousands of administrative appeals are filed against Forest Service decisions. This is why some politicians clamor for "reform" of the appeals process.

Notwithstanding political hysteria, a few thousand appeals are far less disruptive to the Forest Service than several dozen lawsuits. Lawsuits set precedents that affect the agency far more than do informal appeals that lead to minor corrections of agency actions.

## CWC videos debut on local cable

The Coalition's latest venture into the world of video will premier on Davis Community Television on April 8. *Planet Talk*, a weekly environmental television program, will air on Channel 5, the local public access channel of cable television in Davis.

Volunteer producers of the series are Kristen Weeks and Cheri Sanville, along with CWC staffers Nancy Kang and Jim Eaton.

Programming will be a mix of locally produced programs, performances, lectures, and panel discussions, along with video tapes produced by others. The April schedule of programs is:

- April 8—Two panels of local environmental leaders discuss their organizations and their

connection to the Yolo Environmental Resource Center.

- April 15—Videos, *In These Ancient Trees* and *Mount Shasta: Cathedral of Wilderness*.

• April 22—Special two-hour presentation of readings by poet Gary Snyder and actor Peter Coyote from their benefit for the Coalition last February.

• April 29—Video on garbage along with a look at recycling in Davis. Featured each week will be third-grade students of the Endangered Animals Project from West Davis Elementary School.

Although *Planet Talk* will be available only to cable television subscribers in Davis, locally produced programs will be offered to other public access stations around the state.



## Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What small wilderness was named for a grizzly-fighting dog?

Answer on page 6.



## Wilderness management

### One master plan proposed for four Sierra wilderness areas

For the first time, four neighboring wilderness areas will be managed under a single plan if a Forest Service proposal survives scrutiny. The Forest Service announced in March that a wilderness management plan will be prepared to protect four Sierra wildernesses in three national forests: Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch. The proposed master plan would replace the wilderness management plans now in effect for the Ansel Adams and John Muir wildernesses; Dinkey Lakes and Monarch have been managed without specific plans since their designation as wilderness in 1984.

Forest Service planners intend to incorporate in the master plan a controversial management technique which defines the "Limits of Acceptable Change" that an area can sustain without suffering degradation (see sidebar). Using this method, planners first would catalog an area's resources and then determine how much variance from the status quo is acceptable before intervention is necessary to preserve the resources. By quantifying and defining these limits, planners hope to improve wilderness management.

The Forest Service is soliciting public input regarding



The Minarets, Ansel Adams Wilderness

Photo by Pete Yamagata

issues that should be addressed in the planning process. To comment on the proposal, or to receive future mailings, write to: Recreation Planner, Inyo National Forest, 873 N. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514.

### Scoping underway for Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) want your help in developing a unified "wilderness implementation schedule" for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. The implementation schedule eventually will replace the Forest Service's existing wilderness management plan and the BLM's interim management plan.

An environmental analysis will be prepared along with the implementation schedule, which will direct management activities for a period of five years. Those activities might include rehabilitation of degraded areas, resource inventories, outfitter and guide services, and management of fire, livestock, trails, and campsites. The public is invited to submit ideas and comments, preferably by April 15.

The national office of the Forest Service has directed forest planners to replace wilderness management plans with a combination of amendments to forest plans and wilderness implementation schedules. The specific direction now contained in wilderness management plans one day will be found in revised forest plans; the implementation schedules are envisaged as lists of activities needed to carry out the directions of the forest plans. The three national forests—Mendocino, Six Rivers, and Shasta-Trinity—responsible for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness have

*continued on page 6*

### Forest Service premature in discarding Emigrant plan

The Emigrant Wilderness Management Plan, adopted in 1979, was ahead of its time. But its time may have run out. Managers at the Stanislaus National Forest want to discard the plan and write a new one, effectively stripping the Emigrant Wilderness of protection during a process that is likely to take years.

The 1979 Emigrant Wilderness plan was a "first" in many ways. With its adoption, the Emigrant became the first Forest Service wilderness in the Sierra to prohibit campfires at high elevations (above 9,000 feet). The plan adopted group size restrictions (a maximum of 15 persons and 20 stock animals per party) significantly tighter than other Sierra parks and forests. And it limited commercial pack station operations to 1975 levels.

The Stanislaus National Forest Plan, signed in October 1991 by Regional Forester Ronald Stewart, contains some new direction for managing the Emigrant Wilderness. The new Forest Plan calls for using the Limits of Acceptable Change concept (see sidebar) in wilderness planning and for protecting the Wild and Scenic River values of several river segments within the wilderness. Adding these elements to the existing wilderness plan would strengthen protection for many resources within the Emigrant Wilderness. But managers have proposed instead to discard the entire 1979 plan and to start over from scratch to draft a new plan. The Stanislaus National Forest has promised to complete a new management plan for the Emigrant Wilderness within two years, but conservationists are concerned about what may occur in the interim.

The High Sierra Hikers Association (HSHA) appealed the decision to discard the 1979 wilderness management plan, asking that the existing plan be retained until a new one is adopted. Peter Browning, a spokesperson for the HSHA, points out that the Stanislaus National Forest already has weakened regulations in the Emigrant Wilderness since "superseding" the Emigrant plan. "Soon after scrapping the Emigrant plan, managers raised the limit on horses and mules from 20 to 25 per group, even though there is overwhelming public support for a reduction in stock numbers. With the elimination of the plan, the door is wide open for a return to the dark ages of wilderness protection," he said.

The California Wilderness Coalition has intervened in the appeal, asking only that the 1979 wilderness management plan remain intact until a new or revised plan is adopted. A decision on the appeal is pending.

### Limits of Acceptable Change: promise and problems aplenty

Wilderness management is something of a misnomer: managing wilderness means managing the people who use wilderness. Managers across the country are trying to do just that using a relatively new method known as Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). Intended to make wilderness management better and easier, LAC is proving difficult to implement and difficult to judge.

LAC is a process designed to enable managers to determine the carrying capacity of an area. Rather than arbitrarily setting limits on how many people may use an area without detrimental effects, managers who employ LAC assess existing conditions and determine what actions may be needed either to maintain or improve those conditions. But LAC requires managers to assign numerical values to all the aspects of an environment, such as soil compaction and water quality, which taken together constitute existing conditions. According to a former Forest Service employee who preferred not to be named, the "numbers simply don't exist and have to be fudged for every wilderness in the United States."

LAC requires also that wilderness conditions be monitored regularly. That takes money, money most wilderness managers are hard pressed to find.

Forest Service planners recognize that LAC has merit in theory, our source said, but are frustrated in practice. "The people drafting LAC [parameters] don't have field experience; the field people see LAC as a panacea." In the future, we'll be seeing a lot more of LAC, in theory and in practice. Only time will tell whether LAC will live up to its promise.



## A voice in the wilderness

# On behalf of bioexuberance

## The ethical mandate for species preservation

By Holmes Rolston, III

"Ought species *x* to exist?" is a single element in the collective question, "Ought life on Earth to exist?" The answer to the question about one species is not always the same as the answer to the bigger question, but since life on Earth is an aggregate of many species, the two are sufficiently related that the burden of proof lies with those who wish to extinguish a species and simultaneously to care for life on Earth.

On evolutionary time scales, species, like individuals, are ephemeral. But the speciating process is not. Persisting through vicissitudes for two-and-a-half billion years, species evolution is about as long-continuing as anything on Earth can be.

Ecosystems are the context of speciation. Neither individual nor species stands alone; both are embedded in an ecosystem, and in that sense it is even more important to save evolutionary ecosystems than to save species.

Ecosystems are biotic communities, kept in dynamic evolution over time by selection pressures toward an optimally satisfactory fit for each species. Each species defends its own kind, but the ecosystem coordinates kinds, through a spontaneously evolving order that arises when many such species interact. That order exceeds in richness, beauty, and dynamic stability the order of any of the component parts. Species reproduce their own kind; evolutionary ecosystems produce new kinds. Bioexuberance, both diversity and complexity, is conserved while it is increased.

It might seem that for humans to terminate plant species now and again is quite natural—after all, plants become extinct all the time. But when human culture supplants nature, extinction is radically different. Natural extinction is the key to the future because in nature, a species dies when it has become unfit in its habitats, and other species appear in its place. Artificial extinction closes off the future because it shuts down speciation.

The evolutionary odyssey is prolific, that is, pro-life. We ought to admire the process as much as the product.

Rarity per se is not a valuable property. Rarity simply means few individuals of this kind exist. We do not, or should not, value plants or plant encounters just because they are rare.

That a plant is naturally rare may seem to suggest its insignificance in an ecosystem. But naturally rare species, as much as common species, signify exuberance in nature: each is a unique expression of the potential that drives evolution. Some rare plants may be en route to natural

extinction, but it does not follow that most rare plants have less biological competence than common species. On the contrary, endemics or specialized species—like the grape fern *Botrychium pumicola*, which grows only on pumice at high elevations in the Cascade Mountains—may competently occupy restricted niches.

A rare flower is a botanical achievement, a bit of brilliance, a problem resolved, a threshold crossed. An endemic species, perhaps one specialized for an unusual habitat, represents a rare discovery in nature (in addition to the adventure that humans experience in finding it). Rare species ornament the display of life. Together, the myriad species make Earth a garden.

Some rare plants live on the cutting edge of adaptability; some are relics of the past. Either way they offer promise and memory of an inventive natural history. Even more poignantly than the common, they provide both a liberal and a conservative sign, evidence of life flourishing, pushing on at the edge of perishing. The

**There is something morally naive about living in a reference frame where one species takes itself as absolute and values everything else relative to its utility.**

extinguish species, they stop the story. That makes humans misfits in the system, because they bring death without survivors into Earth's prolific exuberance. Life is a many-splendored thing; extinction of the rare dims its luster.

Several billion years worth of creative toil, several million species of teeming life, have been handed over to the care of this late-coming species in which mind has flowered and morals have emerged. Ought not those of this sole moral species do something less self-interested than count all the produce of an evolutionary ecosystem as resources? Such an attitude hardly seems ethically adequate.

There is something overspecialized about an ethic that regards the welfare of only one of several million species as an object of duty. It is an ethic no longer functioning in, or suited to, the changing environment. There is something morally naive about living in a reference frame where one species takes itself as absolute and values everything else relative to its utility.

Holmes Rolston, III is the author of *Environmental Ethics and Philosophy Gone Wild*. A longer version of this article first appeared in 1987. Reprinted with permission of the New York Botanical Garden.



rare flowers—if one is open to a wider, more philosophical perspective—offer a moment of perennial truth.

Rare species have proved their right to life through being tested by natural selection. These examples of biological right-to-life, of adaptive fitness in an ecosystem, generate at least a presumption in the humans who encounter them that these are good kinds, good right where they are, and therefore that it is right for humans to let them be, to let them evolve. That leaves plants, species, and process all in place.

When humans make once-common plants artificially rare, biological vitality is lost. When humans

## Spotted owl plan back in court

By Tim McKay

Several conservation groups filed suit on March 25 challenging the legality of a new Forest Service spotted owl plan which would allow continued logging of publically-owned ancient forests. Todd True of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which is representing the plaintiffs, said the new plan for the northern spotted owl "would allow tens of thousands of old-growth acres to be destroyed. That's just not the way to manage species threatened with extinction like the spotted owl."

Because the plan acknowledges that, despite owl protection, other species dependent on old growth are likely to disappear, the suit argues that the plan would violate the National Forest Management Act, which requires the Forest Service to maintain viable populations of all forest-dependent species. Forest scientists say as many as 108 species of wildlife and 90 stocks of salmon and steelhead are at risk because of historic logging patterns on public lands in California, Oregon, and Washington.

The complaint also charges that new information

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## Endangered species

### ESA in action: Carryin' carrion to condors

A long chain of events has led the California condor first to the brink of extinction and now, biologists hope, to the brink of survival. As part of the next link in that chain, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS) biologists intend to construct feeding sites protected by electrified fences in the Los Padres National Forest. As a precaution against human harassment, the specific locations of the seven proposed feeding sites will not be disclosed, but six are expected to be within the proposed Sespe and Matilija wildernesses.

Initially, the F&WS plan envisioned using motorized vehicles to transport "condor food" (calf carcasses, that is) to the feeding sites until the two young condors released last fall learn to find food on their own. Public outcry, and the timely donation of a llama, led the agency to revise its plan; no off-road vehicles will be used in the proposed wilderness areas. Electrified fences (powered by small solar cells) may be needed, biologists believe, to prevent black bears from beating the birds to the lunch.

Forest Service personnel are preparing a study to assess the environmental impacts of the F&WS proposal. For more information, or to receive a copy of the eventual environmental assessment, write to: George Garcia, District Biologist, Ojai Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest, Ojai, CA 93023.



Kit foxes are as photogenic as they are endangered.

Photo © Roger Jones 1992

### Studies say owls and jobs both declining Job losses not due to owl protection

By Tim McKay

Two new studies conclude the northern spotted owl may be losing its race with extinction faster than once thought and that the Northwest timber industry will keep shrinking no matter what decisions are made about the threatened bird.

In the first study, to be included in an appendix to the still-unreleased draft recovery plan for the owl, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists David Anderson and Kenneth Burnham reviewed years of field work and found that the decline of the bird's population is seven and a half to ten percent a year, not the one to two percent assumed by the Forest Service. What's more, they discovered the owl is declining throughout its range.

The draft recovery plan was due to be released on April 15, the same day that the so-called God Squad—a cabinet-level review committee—had planned to decide whether to allow an exemption from the Endangered Species Act for 77 Bureau of Land Management timber sales in southern Oregon. But last month Interior Secretary Manuel

Lujan said the decision will be delayed until May because of the thousands of pages of testimony recorded when the God Squad held hearings in Portland in January.

#### Delays help no one

Secretary Lujan is coming under increasing fire from elected officials in the northwest who say the Bush administration's delaying actions on owl protection actually are a disservice to timber workers, holding out false hope and postponing retraining and other benefits to already-displaced workers.

Democratic members of three House subcommittees with jurisdiction over national forests held an unusual joint hearing last month to blast the Bush administration for its reluctance to protect the owl. "If the Bush administration had followed the nation's environmental laws four years ago, there would be no 'spotted owl crisis' today," said Rep. Bruce Vento (D-MN), chair of the House Interior panel on national parks and public lands.

That view was partly borne out by the results of a second study, released last month by the American For-

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### Re-authorization debate

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- requiring that any individual who proposes a species for listing post a bond. If the species subsequently is determined ineligible for listing, the individual would be liable for damages incurred by the proposed listing;

- removing the grizzly bear and wolf from the federal Endangered Species list; and

- giving priority to the production of food and energy over the protection of endangered species.

If these proposals become part of the ESA, a species'

right to exist would depend on whether or not its continued existence would jeopardize commercial interests. Desert tortoises would be weighed against mining and off-road vehicle interests. Bears, coyotes, wolves, and mountain lions might be sacrificed while cattle and sheep would continue to graze on public lands. Plant species with no known commercial value would have a difficult time surviving the developer's bulldozer. The Delta smelt would most likely become an aquarium curiosity, victim of the Goliath central and southern California water users.

As a society, we need to examine our priorities and assumptions. Is it possible for people to co-exist with animals living in the wild? One-hundred years from now which will have more value: an undisturbed ancient forest or some assortment of wood products? A desert scarred with roads going nowhere or a desert that looks as it did hundreds of years ago? What are we willing to do, what expense are we willing to incur to preserve biological diversity?

The debate over the ESA is about much more than whether or not our children inherit a world populated with snail darters and spotted owls. Whether or not we save spotted owls, clearcutting of the last old-growth trees will end (as will the jobs dependent on clearcutting). The growing roster of endangered species is exposing the legacy of resource management practices that have allowed domination and utilization of the parts without an appreciation

of the whole. Preserving endangered plants and animals requires that we protect their habitat. Wildlife, plants, and habitat are inseparable components of the rich biodiversity we take for granted today and must be considered together if we would preserve them successfully. The decisions made in the next few months and years will affect all future generations and should be made cautiously, with knowledge of the past and an eye toward the future.

Scott McCarthy is an intern for the California Wilderness Coalition.

### Owl plan appealed

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shows that the decline of owl populations is much steeper than had been projected previously (see related story).

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit are the Northcoast Environmental Center, Washington Environmental Council, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Wilderness Society, Klamath Forest Alliance, Headwaters, National Audubon Society, and four Audubon chapters.

Reprinted from the April 1992 issue of *Econews*, newsletter of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.



## Wilderness news

# New bill focuses on improving wilderness management

Representative Bruce Vento (D-MN) has proved himself an environmental champion again with the introduction of a bill that would ensure better wilderness management. Called the National Forest Wilderness Management Act, the legislation is intended "to prevent further degradation and to restore...wilderness lands already damaged."

To achieve those ends, the bill would create within the Forest Service a Director of Wilderness, establish research and training centers, require wilderness monitoring, bring each wilderness area under the management of a single supervisor, and make wilderness funding separate from other budget items.

Because wilderness merits treatment equal to that received by other resources, the Vento bill would establish a new office, Director of Wilderness, to supervise wilderness management for the Forest Service. The Service already has directors for timber, mining, recreation, and almost all the other "multiple uses" of public land.

Staff training and wilderness research would be among the Director's responsibilities. Those tasks would be made easier by the establishment of a wilderness academy for the training of wilderness rangers and managers and an Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute in Missoula, Montana. Both the academy and the institute would serve the needs and personnel of all federal agencies that manage wilderness.

Monitoring the wilderness system would be the purview of a scientific com-

mittee to be appointed by the Chief of the Forest Service in consultation with the Department of the Interior. (The Forest Service is the only federal agency managing wilderness that is not part of the Interior Department; somewhat anachronistically, it remains under the Department of

Agriculture.) The committee would report its findings to Congress.

Some of the provisions of Rep. Vento's bill address specific problems with the Forest Service's current management. Many wilderness areas lie within the boundaries of more than one national forest and are managed from multiple ranger districts. The bill would require the Chief to consolidate responsibility for wilderness areas, with one forest supervisor and a minimal number of ranger districts per wilderness. Consolidating responsibility would allow wilderness areas to benefit from management by full-time, specialized personnel.

A second problem—illegal logging within wilderness areas—would be ameliorated by the bill's requirement that boundaries be surveyed, mapped, and posted whenever a timber sale adjacent to wilderness is proposed. The 1964 Wilderness Act prohibited timber sales in wilderness, but environmentalists complain that inadequate supervision has led to abuses.

In a departure from one of the politically-expedient provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act, which mandated that no money would be designated solely for wilderness, Rep. Vento's bill would create a separate presidential budget item for wilderness funding.

Rep. Vento has introduced companion legislation addressing wilderness management by other agencies. The package of bills, if enacted, would go a long way toward making federal agencies responsible and able stewards for our country's wilderness.



Near the west shore of Lost Lake, Desolation Wilderness

## Timber sale appeals may be axed

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views. The report concluded that delays were due not to the appeals process but to "underlying problems with Forest Service environmental analyses...."

Currently, if the Forest Service rejects an administrative appeal, the appellant may challenge the decision in federal court. Eliminating the right to administrative appeal, the Bush administration claims, "will permit expedited judicial resolution of contested decisions." This argument disingenuously ignores the fact that, unlike businesses and large environmental groups, citizen activists who now utilize the administrative appeals process cannot afford to challenge every questionable agency decision in court. One way or another, in or out of court, if the administration gets its way, the number of appeals assuredly will drop.

Comments on the proposed

elimination of administrative appeals must be submitted by April 27 to: Appeals Staff (NFS), Forest Service, U. S. D. A., P. O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090.



Forest Service graphic

## Spotted owls

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estry Association, the nation's oldest forest conservation group. The study found that mills in the Pacific Northwest will continue to suffer regardless of what decisions are made about the owl and that the collapse of high timber cutting levels was predicted as early as 1963 in studies of the industry.

Excerpted from the April 1992 issue of Econews, newsletter of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.

## Yolla Bolly

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not yet adopted forest plans.

For more information on the wilderness implementation schedule or the planning process, call Mike Van Dame, Resource Assistant, at (707) 983-6118. To comment, or to receive a copy of a comment workbook, write to: Wilderness Planning, Covelo Ranger District, Mendocino National Forest, 78150 Covelo Rd., Covelo, CA 95428.

### Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

Dinkey Lakes. The dog, Dinkey, was injured by the bear next to a creek; Dinkey's human companions named the creek.

from page 2



## Book review

# Tome on the range

### *Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching*

By Lynn Jacobs, 1991, 602 pp., \$28.00.

A very quiet, gentle, humble person with a deep affection for the natural world, Lynn Jacobs does not seem like the kind of person who would try to lead a revolution, but that is just what he may accomplish with the publication of his book, *Waste of the West*.

The book is an exhaustive, comprehensive, and thorough overview of livestock grazing—its past, its present, and what Jacobs would like to see as its future. Although this book could serve as a textbook on livestock grazing, Jacobs has a clear, easy-to-read writing style which makes the information accessible to everyone, particularly those without special knowledge of range or other resource management issues.

It is clear from the start that ending the ranching industry's domination over public lands of the west is one of Jacobs' objectives, and he proceeds to provide ample justification for his position. Readers should keep this perspective in mind.

To label the book as nothing more than a raging tirade against the perceived evils of livestock grazing, however, would be shortchanging the author, who spent more than

three years researching the topic and writing *Waste of the West*. Without exception, his conclusions and observations are based on extensive documentation and well-reasoned arguments.

*Waste of the West* is encyclopedic. In its more than 600 pages, complete with literature citations, are chapters on the history of the livestock industry, a discussion of public lands history with particular reference to livestock use, descriptions of various range ecosystems, range ecology, wildlife and domestic livestock interrelationships with the landscape, and a thorough discussion of the socio-political aspects of livestock grazing in the west and what the author feels are myths and justifications of the livestock industry. Since each chapter stands more or less on its own, it is possible to read individual chapters and still learn a great deal.

The book is attractively laid out, set off with numerous highlighted quotes that are fun to read all by themselves and wonderfully illustrated with dozens of charts and graphs and over a thousand photos. Just scanning the photos, reading the captions, and reviewing the maps and illustrations would give any reader new insights and a head full of statistics and concepts. Want to know how many acres of land are grazed in the west or how much forage is allotted to livestock versus wildlife? Jacobs makes it easy to find out.

Is Jacobs right? Has livestock wasted the west? Read the book and decide for yourself.

—George Wuerthner

Reprinted from the February 2, 1992 issue of *Earth First!* *Waste of the West* is available from Lynn Jacobs, P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, AZ 85703.

## On a coalition course

John (r.) models our six-tone anniversary shirt which comes in light blue, yellow, light green, or peach for \$15. The animal design Jeff wears is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige or light gray for \$12. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

**April 15** COMMENTS REQUESTED on issues relevant to a proposed wilderness implementation schedule for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. Send to: Wilderness Planning, Covelo Ranger District, Mendocino N. F., 78150 Covelo Rd., Mendocino, CA 95428. (See article on pages 3 & 6.)

**April 15** COMMENTS REQUESTED on issues relevant to a proposed unified wilderness management plan for the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch wildernesses. Send to: Recreation Planner, Inyo N. F., 873 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514. (See article on page 3.)

**April 26** ACTIVISTS MEETING of the California Ancient Forest Alliance in Davis. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.

**April 26** COMMENTS REQUESTED on a proposal to allow an endurance horseback ride through proposed additions to the Hoover Wilderness. For more information, call Joanne Webb at (619) 932-7070. Send comments to: Joanne Webb, Toiyabe N. F., Bridgeport Ranger District, P. O. Box 595, Bridgeport, CA 93517.

**April 27** COMMENTS DUE on the Forest Service's proposed elimination of many administrative appeals. Send to: Appeals Staff (NFS), Forest Service, USDA, P. O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090. (See article on pages 1 & 6.)



**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:

California Wilderness Coalition  
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5  
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### Focus

## League to Save Lake Tahoe

Since 1957, the League to Save Lake Tahoe has been fighting to "keep Tahoe blue." To that end, the League is focusing its efforts on two major threats to the lake's legendary but declining clarity: auto emissions and erosion.

Intuitively, auto emissions might seem an unlikely culprit in the decline of Lake Tahoe's water quality, but particles in the emissions are attracted to water. Consequently, transportation issues, from

mass transit to road construction, are a high priority for the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

Roads contribute to erosion as well, yet the interstate Tahoe Regional Planning Agency continues to approve new roads and development. For that reason, litigation against the agency is an important vehicle for the League's efforts on behalf of the lake, as its budget and success record clearly attest.

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