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# WILDERNESS RECORD

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Clearcuts near South Fork Kelsey Creek, Klamath National Forest. Photo by Felice Pace

## Integrity of wildlands—and Forest Service—at stake in latest assault on San Joaquin RA

By Sally Miller

The Inyo National Forest is at it again! After numerous unsuccessful attempts to exploit the San Joaquin Roadless Area since adoption of the Inyo forest plan in 1988, the Forest Service's latest endeavor to degrade the area's natural values comes in the guise of salvage logging.

### The Proposal

In a scoping letter released November 3, the agency proposes "fuels reduction" in a 60,000-acre "analysis area" which includes the entire San Joaquin Roadless Area (see map on page 6). The Forest Service's justification for logging is that continued buildup of dead and dying trees "may result in catastrophic wildfire, threatening human lives, property, and forest resources." The agency has targeted 10,000 acres, including all of the significant old-growth tracts within the 21,000-acre roadless area, as having the greatest concentration of dead and dying trees. The scoping letter states that "mortality [is] scattered through the entire area," however, thereby leaving the entire analysis area, from south of Mammoth Lakes to June Lake (and some land east of Highway 395 as well), vulnerable to the saw.

The scoping letter provides little additional information. It does list one alternative currently being considered, a helicopter salvage timber sale. The scoping letter states that other alternatives will be developed based on comments received from the public.

### The Background

When it issued the Inyo forest plan in 1988, the Forest Service allocated most of the region between Mammoth Lakes and June Lake, including the roadless area, to potential alpine ski development. Forest Supervisor Dennis Martin committed the agency to preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the cumulative impacts of all possible "uses" of the area, whether developing ski resorts or geothermal energy or maintaining the area's roadless character. Since then, the Forest Service has announced its intention to make the Mammoth-June EIS a showcase for Ecosystem Management, the agency's most recent appellation for its most recent management philosophy. The Forest Service currently plans to begin soliciting public input on proposed management options for the Mammoth-June area in the summer of 1994.

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## More roads, herbicides planned for the Klamath . . . that's Ecosystem Management?

By Felice Pace

Lying just south of the Oregon border and, for the most part, west of Interstate 5, the Klamath National Forest is located at the center of the Klamath Physiographic Province, an area noted by biologists worldwide for its diversity of flora and its high incidence of rare, endemic species. In one area of the Klamath, 17 species of conifers grow within one square mile. This is believed to be the greatest conifer diversity on Earth. The biological significance of the area has not been promoted by the Forest Service, however. Instead, the agency's emphasis has been on logging. Until recently, the Klamath was the top timber-producing national forest in California.

Under any of the alternatives proposed in the draft Klamath forest plan released in September, logging would be further reduced. Close analysis of the agency's preferred alternative, however, reveals that the forest ecosystem would be inadequately protected in order to keep the cut as high as possible. The Forest Service proposes logging in areas where the agency itself admits forests will not grow again. The Forest Service's solution is to spray these areas with herbicides after logging to promote regrowth of trees. Though there are no studies demonstrating that herbicide application will be effective, by assuming its solution will work, the agency can "count" thousands of acres which would otherwise be unsuitable for timber production as contributing to the annual timber sale quantity (ASQ), which still largely determines the budget available for a national forest. In this way, the draft plan overestimates sustainable logging levels by about 15 percent, over 10 million board feet a year.

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## Coalition news

### Monthly Report

I feel astronomically cheated. There is a total lunar eclipse tonight, but it is raining. Other than a 20-second glimpse of the event when the clouds parted briefly, I now must wait another three years for the next opportunity to see the Moon veiled by our planet. I can add it to my list of disappointments that includes Halley's Comet and this year's Perseids meteor shower. I still hope to view something akin to the 1966 Leonids shower that reportedly featured 150,000 meteors per hour and, at times, an estimated 140 per second.

Still, November was a productive month. In addition to our normal activities, Coalition staff and volunteers hosted a major meeting of the California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA), met with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officials, and pumped out our fall fund appeal.

We packed 65 environmentalists into the Village Homes Community Center for the CAFA meeting. Activists from Porterville to Arcata joined national representatives from Washington, D.C. to discuss strategy to save our remaining ancient forests. There were inspiring updates and discussions about the Sierra forests, the four northwest forest plans out for review, and the decisions being reached in our nation's capitol.

Due to the work of our super-volunteer Ryan Henson, four BLM staffers from the Ukiah District (including the district and area managers) came to town to discuss the future of the proposed Yuki Wilderness—the Eden/Thatcher area in eastern Mendocino County. Another group of Ukiah District employees hosted a meeting about the proposed Cache Creek Wilderness that Bob Schneider, Lucy Roscnau, Ryan, and I attended. Our relations with this agency have vastly improved; rather than being adversaries, we are working together on a number of issues.

Our fall fund appeal threatened to become a winter event as delays in writing the letter, fixing the copy machine, and getting our envelopes from the Postal Service plagued us. Though suffering from the flu, office coordinator Nancy Kang worked hard to get the mailing out. Lucy and I joined in the stamping, folding, inserting, and sealing of

each piece, giving us a lasting appreciation of how big a number 1,000 is. In the meantime, the USPS increased our postal rate.

I also was blessed by a rare visit from my brother Bud who, with his wife Viviana, flew up from Chile to celebrate (mourn?) his 50th birthday. At times like this I relish being the younger brother.

As the first born, Bud inherited the family name—Lafayette Claud Eaton III. Two decades ago the Peace Corps sent him to Chile to work on the dying Monterey pines that were planted after the native forests were logged. He liked the country so much he never returned. I should visit to find out why.

Recently we received notice that *Shelley Rae Mountjoy y Ramón Lopez Mejía le invitan a presenciar el intercambio de promesa nupcial*. With my meager Spanish I figured out that we were being invited to a wedding, which was confirmed when I turned the page and found the English translation.

Shelley was one of our favorite interns here. She came along on several CWC backpack trips and joined me on some of my travels. Her genuine, infectious smile puts everyone around her in a good mood. Nancy and I decided to join the festivities.

Ramón and Shelley exchanged bilingual vows under a bright sun in Fair Oaks. Many of the women present aerated the lawn as their high heels sank into the rain-soaked turf. A mariachi band struggled with the wedding march before launching into some joyous Mexican music.

I spoke with several people at the reception who I know from other walks of life, people who met Shelley through her work on a farm or at the U.C. Davis craft center. Increasingly, I find there are threads which bind us all to a larger community. Whenever I meet someone new, I seem to discover we have friends in common, even if the person is from another state. Small world, we say.

So while I have a new appreciation for the number 1,000, I still can't believe there are 33 million people in California.

**By Jim Eaton**

### Changing times, changing titles

In November, the California Wilderness Coalition's board of directors authorized the executive director to hire a new membership and development associate. The associate will assume the responsibilities of our office coordinator Nancy Kang, who is leaving us for fairer climes, and have the additional job of raising funds for the Coalition. Members will be relieved to learn that our increased emphasis on fund raising will not entail a deluge of dunning letters; the associate's first assignment will be to pursue the grants we need to support an expanded staff and an ever-expanding workload.

Interviews for the half-time position will be conducted in December, and we expect to have an associate busily researching grant opportunities and assiduously maintaining membership records by January.

### Wilderness management scholarship offered

The Society of American Foresters's Wilderness Management Working Group is accepting applications for the first Arnold Bolle Scholarship in wilderness management. Applications are due January 31, 1994.

Full-time students specializing in wilderness management in fields such as ecology, recreation, social sciences, wildlife, fisheries, soils, range, or forestry are eligible for the \$500 scholarship. Travel expenses to the 1994 inter-agency wilderness conference sponsored by the society may also be awarded.

Applicants must demonstrate a sincere commitment to wilderness management through related work experience or study, including publications, field experience, thesis projects, or volunteer work.

For an application, write to: Arnold Bolle Scholarship, Department of Science and Education, Society of American Foresters, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814.



### Meiss reprieve!

The Forest Service announced November 18 that it would uphold its earlier, contested decision to close the Meiss grazing allotment for five years. Visitors to the proposed Echo-Carson wilderness, where the allotment is located, have long complained that grazing in Meiss Meadows is incompatible with both recreation and conservation.

#### Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

Only one Northwest roadless area is evaluated for its wilderness potential in the current crop of forest plans. Which?

Answer on page 7

### Wilderness reflections

### Autumn in the Echo-Carson

By Canyon Fred

Veteran's Day, 1993. A welcome holiday from the Monday-through-Friday grind. Sipping tea after sleeping in, I find myself staring at the stack of paperwork cluttering the hutch. But whispers from the voices within say "go outside," and soon I'm gazing out the window in search of excuses to leave my chores behind.

I ponder the flag-waving parades in town, and wonder when we'll have a national holiday for veteran conservationists—like Jim Eaton, Dave Foreman, and David Brower—who have dedicated their lives to saving the last vestiges of our North American heritage. It takes almost two minutes to convince myself that this is no day to pay the bills. I'm off to the woods.

I pass pubescent plinkers taking aim at Forest Service trailhead signs and hurry for the first half-mile, anxious to get beyond the sounds and smells of the highway. With

the modern mayhem behind me, I slow down to take in the aspens, which have gone to sleep, showing only their bright, slender trunks. Now-brittle mule's ears crackle in the cold autumn breeze. A chickaree chides, a nuthatch softly plays the horn.

I soon arrive at Big Meadow, and though the fences are down and the cattle are gone for the year, the place looks mowed—like the lawn in front of Denny's. I utter "thank you" aloud to all those who have worked so hard to get the cows out of here. Sidestepping the pies, I push on, accompanied now only by the sound of the wind in the trees.

As I move on and up, I hear the crunch of last night's snow under my feet, and I am reminded of the many times I have skied here. (I usually avoid this area with its clamor of cowbells and proliferation of manure in summer.) But all is now quiet and beautiful.

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## Roadless areas at risk

### Option 9 leaves fate of Six Rivers riparian roadless areas in doubt

By Tim McKay

It wasn't so very long ago that the timber industry was demanding that the Forest Service sell 245 million board feet of timber each year from the one million-acre Six Rivers National Forest. And the Forest Service itself was pressing to implement a plan that would have allowed for annual sales of 175 million board feet.

That was 1987. Today, the latest version of the decades-delayed Six Rivers forest plan ostensibly would allow an annual probable sale quantity of only 20 million board feet after the agency's preferred alternative is screened through the Clinton administration's Option 9 proposal for the "northern spotted owl" forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Overall, only 12 percent of the forest is open to logging under the Clinton plan. The Six Rivers plan is harder to analyze because a seven-page addendum to the draft environmental impact statement that accompanies the forest plan states that the draft Clinton plan takes precedence (as it does for all the recently-released draft forest plans for California's owl forests).

The Six Rivers National Forest is the most southwesterly of the owl forests (see map). It stretches from the Oregon border south for 110 miles until it touches Mendocino County and the Mendocino National Forest, the southernmost owl forest.

The forest is known for its Native American communities, its diversity of conifers including sugar pine, redwood, and Port-Orford cedar, its wild-and-scenic rivers, and its wilderness areas (Siskiyou, Trinity Alps, Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel, and North Fork are all within, or partly within, the forest).

As its name suggests, the Six Rivers contains significant portions of six major anadromous fish streams: the Eel, Klamath, Mad, Trinity, Smith, and Van Duzen rivers. The forest's native runs of coho and chinook salmon, along with other anadromous species, have declined significantly in recent decades, so much so that 21 environmental groups recently filed a petition with the National Marine Fisheries Service to list the coho as a threatened or endangered species.

The Smith River was designated a national recreation area (NRA) by Congress in 1990. Prior to receiving NRA status, the Smith River drainage yielded more than one billion board feet of timber during the heyday of Forest Service timber selling that began in the 1950s.

The law that created the NRA divides the Smith River watershed into eight zones, with some logging allowed in four of them (though most of that is limited to existing tree plantations that still have years to grow before reaching maturity). The draft forest plan calls for logging 1,300 acres of the 306,000-acre NRA over the next decade, but that is without the Option 9 screen applied.

The designation of the Siskiyou Wilderness in 1984 protected the uppermost headwaters of the South Fork of the Smith River and Blue Creek, a Klamath River tributary, in the Six Rivers National Forest and the upper reaches of Dillon and Clear creeks, also tributaries to the Klamath, in the Klamath National Forest.

Wilderness designation "gerrymandered" Blue Creek, one of the most important salmon streams in all of the lower Klamath River (and one of three mostly-pristine sub-watersheds in Six Rivers), by leaving out the heavily forested East Fork and the west bank of the Crescent City Fork. The East Fork is in a forest reserve under the Clinton plan (a dubious form of protection because some logging is allowed), but the west bank of the Crescent City Fork would be protected only by riparian management standards in the draft forest plan.

Forest activists are recommending that full Scientific Advisory Team (SAT) riparian standards be implemented for Six Rivers and the adjacent forests. Under the draft Clinton plan, headwaters streams that do not support fish populations would receive only "half-SAT" protections, that is, logging would be prohibited only half as far from the stream channel as the SAT standards require.

Another important roadless area in the Six Rivers is Horse Linto Creek, a tributary to the main stem of the Trinity River near Hoopa. Horse Linto Creek drains the western slope of the Trinity Alps and is the most heavily forested, unlogged area remaining in Six Rivers National Forest. Horse Linto Creek is designated a forest reserve under the Clinton plan.

Pilot Creek, the third largely-roadless sub-watershed in the Six Rivers, empties into the Mad River about 35 miles upstream from Arcata. It is here that the Forest Service hopes to get its stalled timber sale program going again with a sale of 7.5 million board feet in this fiscal year or next. Under the Clinton Option 9 plan, Pilot Creek is part of the 400,000-acre Hayfork adaptive management area (AMA), a category conservationists consider non-protective.

Pilot Creek has no salmon run but contributes high-quality water to suitable wild coho habitat in the Mad River immediately below the confluence.

Finally, the 4,580-acre Board Camp Roadless Area just north of Pilot Creek is also part of the Hayfork AMA.

To compound the confusion surrounding the draft plan, the Clinton administration has requested a three-month delay to enable its planners to digest the 103,000 comments the administration has received from the public on Option 9. The deadline to comment on the Six Rivers plan is January 6. The Northcoast Environmental Center is asking the Forest Service to extend its comment period one month beyond whenever the final Clinton plan is issued to allow citizens to submit more-informed comments. Alternatively, the Forest Service could issue supplements to the four draft forest plans after the administration has determined what its management standards for the owl forests will be.

Comments on the Six Rivers plan, or requests for the documents and maps that comprise the draft plan, should be addressed to Laura Chapman, Land Management Planner, Six Rivers National Forest, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501.

Tim McKay is director of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.

### Hail to the Chief! Jack Ward Thomas will lead Forest Service

Though conservation groups overwhelmingly oppose President Clinton's plan for the Northwest forests, they overwhelmingly support his recent appointment of Jack Ward Thomas, the lead author of that plan, as Chief of the Forest Service.

Thomas, a respected wildlife biologist, first came to national attention when he led the team of scientists (later dubbed the Gang of Four) that determined the northern spotted owl, the species the agency itself had selected as an indicator of overall forest health, was in decline as a result of logging in old-growth forests. Wielding the Thomas report, conservationists were able to win an injunction against logging in spotted owl habitat.

With the injunction in effect, the long-simmering feud over the appropriate management of Northwest forests came to a boil, and President Clinton convened first a conference, and then a team of scientists, to address the management impasse.

The science team, led by Thomas, drafted eight options for forest management that would preserve the spotted owl. President Clinton rejected all the options, however, and asked the scientists to devise an option less restrictive of continued logging—the much-maligned Option 9.

Despite the taint of Option 9, Thomas was environmentalists' first choice for Chief. Never before has a scientist held the agency's highest administrative office, and conservationists hope that his tenure will transform an agency long perceived as favoring extractive uses of national forests.

### What's next for the forests

The four forest plans and President Clinton's Option 9 are draft plans. What that means is none of the proposed management changes for the Pacific Northwest will be implemented any time soon.

After the January 6 comment deadline, national forest planners will spend months considering the comments submitted by members of the public and by other agencies and then writing final plans and the final environmental impact statements that must accompany them.

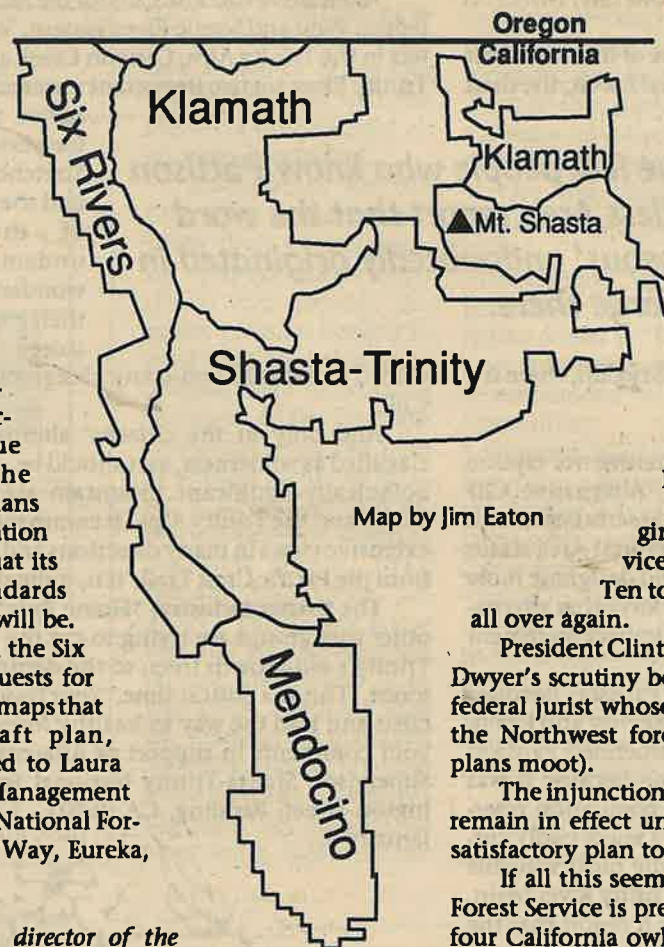
Then the public review process begins again, and eventually the Forest Service will adopt final plans.

Ten to fifteen years after that, the cycle starts all over again.

President Clinton's plan, meanwhile, must pass Judge Dwyer's scrutiny before it can be adopted. Dwyer is the federal jurist whose injunction halted all timber sales in the Northwest forests (and made previous draft forest plans moot).

The injunction, for the benefit of the spotted owl, will remain in effect until the federal government submits a satisfactory plan to protect the threatened species.

If all this seem a bit convoluted, consider this. The Forest Service is presently thinking about combining the four California owl forests into one vast national forest. Less bureaucracy, yes; lower cost, perhaps; but oh, think of trying to analyze that forest plan. Think of trying to lift it!





## Roadless areas at risk

### Shasta-Trinity plan: Will the third time be the charm? Will the 85 percent prevail? Will Pattison and Mt. Eddy ever become wilderness?

The massive volcano, Mt. Shasta, gloriously marks the north end of one of the world's renowned "food baskets," the Sacramento Valley. Just to the southwest of this sentinel, the jagged, alpine peaks of the Trinity Alps Wilderness rise. These two crown jewels are within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, where all is not well.

The very vitality of the Shasta-Trinity's once seemingly immortal forests is terribly depleted. Trees have been logged—mostly by clearcutting—to a degree that speaks more of "mining out" a resource than sustainable forestry. This logging and its attendant road-building have contributed significantly to the near decimation of the salmon and steelhead runs which formerly flourished in the Trinity River system. And these are but two of the many symptoms of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest's decline.

In 1984, concerned residents, including some forestry specialists, formed the organization Citizens for Better Forestry (CBF) to respond to the woefully inadequate forest plan then being prepared to direct the future management of Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Seeing an opportunity to help turn forest management in the direction of forest health, CBF developed a citizens' alternative to the forest plan.

When a draft forest plan was first released in 1986, approximately 85 percent of the public response favored the citizens' alternative. The plan was so riddled with inadequacies and inaccuracies, however, that it was withdrawn. The Forest Service then invited CBF to prepare an alternative for inclusion in the next draft forest plan, which CBF did. When the Forest Service released its second draft forest plan in 1990, about 85 percent of public input again favored the CBF's alternative.

The subsequent listing of the northern spotted owl as a threatened species caused the second draft to be withdrawn, and CBF members slogged on, devoting hundreds of hours to molding their alternative to the constraints of the Forest Service's computer model, FORPLAN (which is itself seriously flawed).

Just prior to the October 1993 release of the third draft forest plan for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, the draft of President Clinton's Option 9 management plan for the "spotted owl" forests of the Pacific Northwest was released. Because there are differences between the two plans, it is unclear how the Forest Service will manage the forest. But, once again, there is a CBF alternative.

Here's why you should support it.

Neither the agency's preferred alternative nor Option 9 protects endangered roadless areas. Alternative CBF does, by recommending non-motorized recreation status for some roadless areas and Research Natural Area status for others. In fact, Alternative CBF would designate more areas for non-motorized recreation than any other alternative considered in the environmental impact statement that accompanies the draft plan.

Consider, for instance, the case of Pattison Roadless Area. During the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II), Trinity County recommended Pattison Roadless Area for wilderness designation because it was unanimously recognized as a "wildlife population reservoir," an island of rugged wilderness in a sea of badly cut-over land. Pattison contains some of the most valuable fishery habitat in the ailing South Fork Trinity River basin. The few people who have been through it report that the word 'gorgeous' undoubtedly originated in the gorge there.

*The few people who know Pattison Roadless Area report that the word 'gorgeous' undoubtedly originated in the gorge there.*



Roadless lands along the South Fork Trinity River are at risk.

Photo by Mary Lee Steffenson

Protection of Pattison and other endangered roadless areas—protection that is necessary if we are to preserve the biological diversity and the water quality essential for restoring salmon and steelhead runs in the forest—is recommended only in Alternative CBF.

Alternative CBF also calls for the most additions to the federal Wild and Scenic River System. With their headwaters in the Trinity Alps, Canyon Creek and the North Fork Trinity River are two important watercourses which Alternative CBF recommends for wild-and-scenic status. Stretches of Hayfork Creek and the upper South Fork of the Trinity are undammed, wild, and wonderful. They too, with their great potential for restored fisheries, are included in the wild-and-scenic designations of Alternative CBF.

And only in the citizens' alternative is Mt. Eddy classified as wilderness, as it should be. This dramatic and botanically-significant mountain stands between Mt. Shasta and the Trinity Alps. It commands remarkable and extensive views in many directions and is easily accessible from the Pacific Crest Trail. It is, quite simply, wilderness.

The timber industry, "Home Rule" proponents, and other user groups are trying to cut the last of the Shasta-Trinity's old-growth trees, to the detriment of the whole forest. This is a critical time. Your input can help avert a crisis and lead the way to healthy forests. Please address your comments in support of Alternative CBF to Forest Supervisor, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, 2400 Washington Street, Redding, CA 96001. Comments are due January 6.

## Echo-Carson

continued from page 2

A few miles later, my solitude is suddenly shattered by a pair of cyclists who speed past, giving me a nod. I knew they were out here somewhere because I'd been watching the tracks. But their rapid assault on my peaceful stroll nevertheless catches me by surprise.

I like mountain bikes. I've owned a StumpJumper since the day they hit the market about a dozen years ago. But I keep to the roads, and I wish the plethora of new trail riders would be more sensitive to the effect they have on my hiking experience when they blow by at fifteen miles an hour. I am also somehow bothered—and I have difficulty explaining it—by seeing all the tracks. Numerous tracks from *any*-wheeled vehicles just seem to make the wilderness feel smaller and the city that much closer.

I leave the trail and find a sunny spot to relax for lunch. Before me is Meiss Lake, the heart of the Echo-Carson. This area is habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, but streambanks and riparian areas have been so degraded by cattle grazing over the years that even the Forest Service admits something must be done. Thanks to pressure applied by the California Wilderness Coalition and other groups, grazing will soon come to an end here.

In the afternoon, the winds intensify and clouds move in. Before heading for home, I decide to explore a few pockets of old growth. (The junipers grow so big out here that you'd think they were sequoias.) It is in the ancient forest that I pay my respects to veterans of noble causes everywhere and rededicate my vision that the Echo-Carson someday receive the wilderness protection it deserves.

*Canyon Fred is a resident of Lake Tahoe and a longtime supporter of the CWC.*





# Roadless areas at risk

## More roads for the Klamath

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Another indication of the agency's strategy to maximize logging is the inadequate protection afforded aquatic ecosystems in the draft plan. Studies by the American Fisheries Society, the Forest Service's own scientists, and many independent scientists confirm that the national forests contain most of the remaining quality habitat for wild salmon and steelhead stocks that are currently at risk of extinction. Despite this fact, the draft plan fails to designate adequate "key watersheds" for wild salmon. Even worse perhaps, the preferred alternative does not establish no-logging buffer zones along small headwater streams. Steep mountain streams are intrinsically prone to landslides that destroy habitat for salmon, rare amphibians, and other aquatic species; logging next to streams accelerates slope and bank failure and raises water temperatures by removing the shading forest canopy. By leaving headwater streams open to logging, the Forest Service may doom some stocks of wild salmon and rare amphibians to extinction.

Though both the draft plan's preferred alternative and President Clinton's Option 9 approach to northwest forests would create new forest reserves, the majority of the Klamath's roadless areas would be designated for logging under either plan. Under Option 9, for example, over 60 percent of roadless areas would be logged (see chart below). In addition, neither plan provides adequate habitat connectivity between reserves. The draft plan proposes no biological corridors, and Option 9 reduces both the percentage of trees retained inside clearcuts and the total forest cover between reserves. Even the reserves themselves would remain open to "thinning" and "salvage" logging under Option 9.

The Forest Service has done a fairly good job in assessing the eligibility of the Klamath's rivers and streams for designation under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The draft plan does not, however, recommend wild-and-scenic designation for parts of the Klamath's most

important salmon streams, and it fails to recommend the most protective classification, "wild," for key streams. Dillon, Grider, and Kelsey creeks are each eligible for "wild" designation but are recommended only for "recreational" designation, the weakest classification. These watersheds are largely roadless, but recreational classification will facilitate logging by allowing roads to be built.

Forest activists have known for a long time that logging roads in the steep mountains of northern California are the number one contributor to the sediment loads that are destroying our water quality and our wild salmon. Scientific research has confirmed these impacts and found that roads can be a detriment to wildlife as well. The draft plan fails to inventory all road miles. Instead, it estimates 200-500 miles of "uninventoried" roads in addition to over 5,000 miles of "forest development roads" and 900 miles of county or state roads. If the estimate is correct, there currently exists on average 3.1 miles of road per square mile of national forest land. Under the preferred alternative, road-building would reach a projected average of 4.5 miles of road per square mile of forest land.

The impacts of constructing this vastly increased road system are not adequately assessed, nor does the draft plan tell us how the Forest Service will be able to maintain a road system with 50 percent more miles than the system the agency is failing to maintain adequately today. The proposed increase in roads was put in the preferred alternative despite the strong recommendation of many environmental groups that the Forest Service maintain existing roads and remove failed or "problem" roads before building new ones.

The agency's emphasis on logging will affect recreationists as well as wildlife. The Forest Service has long maintained natural-looking, if not natural, views

from major roads and trails. In a surprising departure from that tradition, evidence of logging will be apparent to forest visitors if the preferred alternative is adopted.

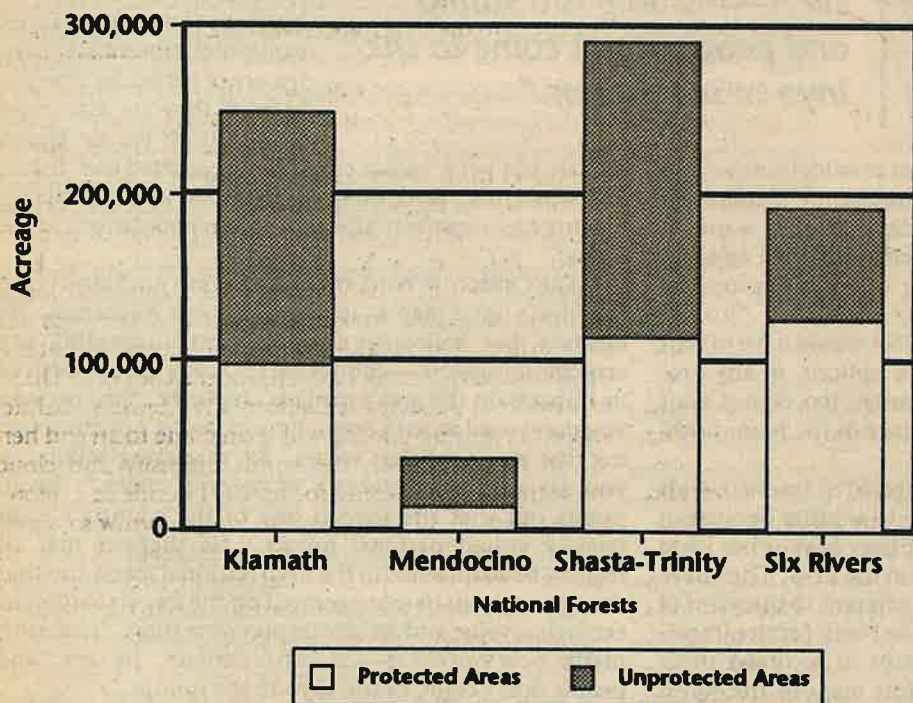
Comments on the draft plan and accompanying draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) can provide the public pressure needed to get a final plan that truly protects and sustains all the parts of the Klamath ecosystem. You can help by sending a letter by January 6 to Barbara Holder, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, 1312 Fairlane Rd., Yreka, CA 96097. Let Holder know that you are commenting on the draft forest plan and DEIS. Request that the Klamath be managed with an emphasis on rehabilitating forest ecosystems degraded by decades of overcutting, excessive road



Second Valley Creek, Klamath National Forest

Photo by Felice Pace

### Roadless Areas at Risk under Option 9



'Protected' is something of a misnomer because forest 'reserves' will be open to some logging if Option 9 is adopted. Option 9 must be approved by Judge Dwyer, the federal jurist who enjoined logging in spotted owl habitat, before it can be implemented. Chart by Jim Eaton, with data from the Sierra Biodiversity Institute.

building, and neglect of wildlife and water quality. Specifically, the Forest Service should:

- remove problem roads and limit construction of new roads so that there is no net increase in road miles;
- place a moratorium on development of roadless areas, manage all forest watersheds so that there is an increase in mature and old-growth forest habitat over time, and provide greater habitat connectivity between reserved lands;
- recommend "wild" designation for all of Dillon, Grider, and Kelsey creeks and designate Boulder, Canyon, and Kelsey creeks as "key watersheds" for the Scott River;
- provide adequate no-cut buffers for all riparian areas as recommended by the agency's own Scientific Advisory Committee;
- eliminate loopholes in the plan that would allow logging to continue in proposed reserves, fisher and marten habitat, Native American cultural sites, riparian areas, and lands which cannot grow trees without the use of herbicides; and
- retain the protection of visual quality which is contained in existing plans, including "preservation" visual quality in the foreground, "retention" visual quality in the mid-ground, and "partial retention" visual quality in the background as viewed from major highways, trailhead access roads, designated wild-and-scenic rivers, campsites, and trails both within and outside wilderness.

Felice Pace works for the Klamath Forest Alliance and serves as conservation chair for Marble Mountain Audubon.





## Roadless areas at risk

# FS and BLM smitten with the lure of the open road

By Sally Miller

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have prepared a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) to consider what amount of off-road vehicle (ORV) use will be allowed on public lands in the Inyo National Forest and Bishop Resource Area east of the Sierra Nevada.

The EIS analyzes three alternatives, including a "no action" alternative which would maintain the status quo. The most environmentally oriented of the three approaches, Alternative B, would close only 500 miles of roads, ways, and routes in the more than two million acres addressed by the EIS—only those roads that the agencies have identified as having unacceptable impacts on the region's wildlife, vegetation, and cultural and other values. The agencies' preferred alternative, by contrast, would close 373 miles of road but leave more miles of road

open and allow the development of still more. Agency planners have dubbed this the "Maximize Access" alternative.

To environmentalists who have been involved in the lengthy public process that led to the formulation of the draft EIS, none of the alternatives is sufficient. "Even Alternative B isn't nearly strong enough," says eastern Sierra activist Mike Prather. "There are many roads that citizens who served on public work groups for this plan proposed for closure for environmental reasons. The Forest Service and BLM ignored those recommendations." Adds longtime

*continued on page 7*



Dry lakebeds, like this one near Beauty Mountain in the Bodie Hills, are magnets to off-road vehicle users. Photo by Lucy Rosenau

## San Joaquin Roadless Area under the axe

continued from page 1

At the center of the fray is the San Joaquin Roadless Area, which supports the Eastside's only extensive old-growth red fir forest (excepting Monache Meadows far to the south) and untouched stands of mixed conifer and Jeffrey pine forest. One of the greatest concentrations of furbearers east of the Sierra crest between Sonora Pass and Monache Meadows (a distance of about 150 miles) is found in this region. The area encompasses proposed wild-and-scenic rivers, including the headwaters of the Owens River, and a proposed Research Natural Area (RNA) at Whitewing Mountain.

Whitewing Mountain was recommended by the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest regional office and research station for designation as an RNA in the fall of 1992 because of its botanical and geological significance. The 10,000-foot mountain contains an abundance of 900-year-old logs believed to be sugar pine. Sugar pine does not now grow east of the crest, nor has it been found at so high an elevation in its current range on the west slope of the Sierra. In a letter to the Inyo National Forest, regional officials called Whitewing Mountain "an area of exceptional scientific and research value, especially for studying

vegetation response to climate change." Forest Supervisor Martin responded that he would not consider the proposal until the Mammoth-June EIS was prepared, however. If salvage logging is allowed in the roadless area, the integrity of the proposed RNA may be gutted before it ever receives fair consideration for protective designation.

### The Reaction

This latest in a series of attempts to degrade the wilderness values of the Eastside's roadless jewel has outraged local environmentalists. Longtime Inyo activist Marge Sill angrily notes that the area slated for fuels reduction constitutes the bulk of old-growth habitat proposed by conservationists for permanent protection as an ancient forest reserve. Furthermore, she says, the Forest Service committed itself to maintaining the status quo in the roadless area until the cumulative Mammoth-June EIS is completed. "If we begin that process with an already-degraded roadless area, our chances of securing wilderness designation are greatly diminished."

Sill sees the proposal as a deliberate attempt to harm the roadless area so that its management as wilderness will no longer be a viable option when the agency prepares its plan for the region. "If the Forest Service really wants to examine fuels reduction in the Mammoth-June area, we have no problem with their doing so at the appropriate time, in the Mammoth-June EIS," says Sill. "Just as Supervisor Martin said a proposed RNA would have to wait because he didn't want to foreclose options, so any proposed logging must also wait because we, too, do not want to foreclose any options for the future of the Mammoth-June area."

Local environmentalists concur that all forested lands in the Sierra are unnaturally prone to wildfire because of past fire suppression practices, but they have other ideas on how to remedy the fuel buildup in the Inyo. They have supported fuels reduction directly adjacent to the town of Mammoth Lakes and suggest that the Forest Service implement a program of prescribed burns in second-growth stands within the timber base, those areas of the forest slated for logging, to help reduce fuel loading. "Controlled burning in certain areas of the timber base would help the Forest Service meet its desire to reduce fuels buildup without robbing the soils of nutrients and without destroying the integrity of the few remaining ancient forest groves on the Eastside," says Bishop activist James Wilson. "What's more, if the Forest Service is truly committed to

'forest health' and implementing Ecosystem Management, this is a much more ecologically sound alternative than commercial timber sales."

"What's the real goal here?" asks the Wilderness Society's Louis Blumberg. "Is it fuels management or trying to make a few bucks though a commercial timber sale?" Blumberg agrees with Wilson that the Forest Service should consider other options besides logging in the roadless area, an option, he hastens to point out, which will require preparation of an EIS.

Activists are also concerned that tree removal and the resulting disturbance will harm sensitive wildlife populations in the area, especially rare furbearers such as the marten, fisher, and Sierra Nevada red fox. They note that many furbearers need dead and downed logs for denning

and refuge. Dr. Thomas Kucera, a wildlife biologist who is preparing a manual for the Forest Service on methods to detect rare forest carnivores, notes that "marten are of particular concern because they are associated with mature red fir forests

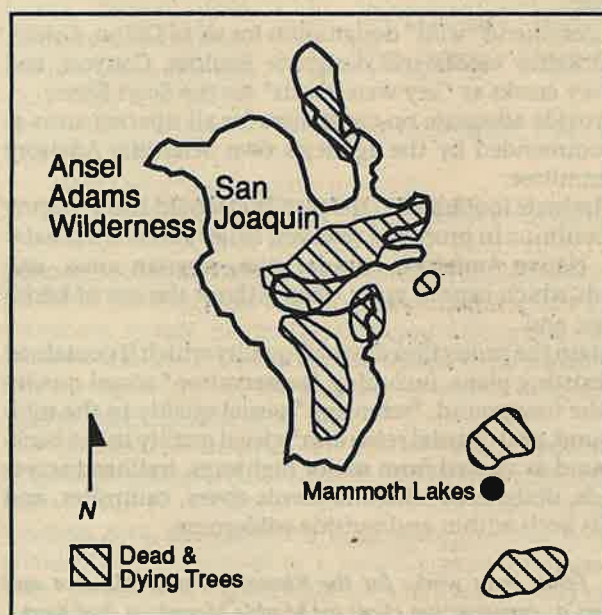
**"It doesn't matter how you cut it—a stump is a stump, and people don't come to the Inyo to see stumps."**

and are not yet a 'basket case' like the spotted owl, fisher, and wolverine. And, there are data that indicate salvage logging has negatively affected marten populations in the Sierra."

The California Wilderness Coalition's Jim Eaton views the Inyo's latest plan as an assault against wilderness. He believes that helicopter logging—withstanding any ecological impacts—requires an EIS solely on the basis of its impacts on the area's roadless character. "Just because you don't road an area doesn't mean you're not diminishing that area's roadless values. By 'managing' wildlands you are adversely affecting wilderness values." Eaton points out that the Inyo is one of the country's most heavily visited national forests. He suggests that all logging be abandoned in the Inyo National Forest and that the agency focus its management on the forest's abundant ecological value and on low-impact recreation. "It doesn't matter how you cut it—a stump is a stump," he says, "and people don't come to the Inyo to see stumps."

The Forest Service will accept public comments on its plan until January 10. Send your letters to Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo N. F., 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514. For more information, please contact James Wilson at (619) 873-7520 or Sally Miller at (619) 647-6411.

Sally Miller is herself a longtime Eastside activist and a director of the CWC.



The pockets of dead and dying trees don't tell the whole story: All of the San Joaquin Roadless Area is within the Inyo National Forest's analysis area, making all of it vulnerable to logging. Map by Jim Eaton



## Wilderness news

### Sherwin Ski Area, the plan that wouldn't die, is back

The Forest Service is soliciting public input on what issues should be addressed in a supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) that will analyze a proposal to develop a ski area and 18-hole golf course next to the John Muir Wilderness on the east side of the Sierra.

A ski area at Sherwin Bowl in the Inyo National Forest has been envisioned since 1967, but environmental concerns have forestalled development. In a 1990 final EIS, the Forest Service's preferred alternative authorized the creation of a master plan for the recreation area, which would occupy both private and federal land, including parts of the Sherwin Roadless Area. The 1990 decision was appealed by environmental groups. That appeal was partially upheld at the regional level (see January 1992 WR) but then was partially rejected by the Chief of the Forest Service. The Chief did, however, require that a supplemental EIS be written to address remaining concerns.

That brings us to today.

Friends of the Inyo representative Frank Stewart contends that the environmental review process has been fragmented throughout its history because previous reviews have addressed only the impacts of the portion of the development that will occupy federal land; no review has considered the cumulative impacts of the full development. Because only half the golf course would be located on federal land, for instance, an environmental analysis considered the effects of only nine holes.

Two native species are the focus of much of the environmentalist concerns. Solitude Canyon, the planned location of support facilities for the ski operation, is the main migratory corridor for mule deer, which also fawn in the area. The degradation of mule deer habitat that would result from the agency's preferred alternative for the development violates the agency's own forest plan, which calls for mule deer populations and habitat to be enhanced.

More seriously, the preferred alternative seems to violate the Endangered Species Act. Hot Creek, downstream from the proposed development, is habitat for Owens tui chub, an endangered desert fish. Though the final EIS incorporated a biological assessment for the tui chub, that assessment underestimated population projections for the town of Mammoth Lakes, Stewart says. If more water is consumed by Mammoth Lakes residents than estimated, there will be less groundwater available for the fish.

If the plan for Sherwin Bowl hasn't changed in decades, something potentially more important has. The Chief who rejected the environmentalist appeal, Dale Robertson, has been replaced by a new Chief, wildlife biologist Jack Ward Thomas. If an appeal again reaches Washington, the outcome may be different.

Scoping comments will be accepted until January 4. Because of the complexity of the issues involved, Friends of the Inyo has requested a deadline extension, but the group does not yet know whether the extension will be granted. More information about the master plan can be obtained from Bob Hawkins, winter sports specialist for the Inyo National Forest, at (619) 873-2400 or from Stewart at (619) 935-4974. Comments should be addressed to Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514, Attn: Sherwin Ski Area.

### Open roads

continued from page 6

anti-ORV activist George Barnes, "Some of the proposed closures are non-discretionary, such as those needed to protect endangered species habitat or roads that are left after mineral exploration. They shouldn't even be counted as part of the mileage. In many cases, the agencies should have closed these roads long ago." As for the roads that are slated to be kept open under the preferred alternative, Barnes says "quick, preliminary field checks have revealed that some of these 'roads' are entirely nonexistent."

Barnes and other activists believe that closing even 500 miles of roads is a drop in the bucket, considering that there are many thousands of miles of these primitive roads, ways, and routes riddling what would otherwise be wildlands in the eastern Sierra.

Comments on the draft EIS will be accepted until January 24, 1994. Send your letters to Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514, Attn: ORV Plan. If you can identify specific routes that you want to see closed or that are causing environmental damage, contact Sally Miller at P. O. Box 22, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

#### Wilderness Trivia

##### Answer:

Mt. Eddy Roadless Area in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest

from page 2



**California  
Wilderness  
Coalition**

#### Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

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

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

California Wilderness Coalition  
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5  
Davis, California 95616  
(916) 758-0380  
jeaton@igc.apc.org

#### Editor

Lucy Rosenau  
**Contributors**  
Canyon Fred  
Jim Eaton  
Tim McKay  
Sally Miller  
Felice Pace  
**Photos & Graphics**  
Jim Eaton  
Felice Pace  
Lucy Rosenau  
Mary Lee Steffenson  
**Advisors**  
W. Cohen  
J. Eaton

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**January 4** SCOPING DEADLINE for a supplemental environmental impact statement evaluating the master development plan for the proposed Snowcreek Ski Area (formerly the Sherwin Ski Area) in the Inyo National Forest. Send comments to: Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo N.F., 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514, Attn: Sherwin Ski Area. (See article at left.)

**January 6** COMMENTS DUE on the draft land and resource management plans and environmental impact statements for the Klamath, Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, and Six Rivers national forests. Send to Forest Supervisor at: Klamath N. F., 1312 Fairlane Rd., Yreka, CA 96097; Mendocino N. F., 420 East Laurel St., Willows, CA 95988; Shasta-Trinity N. F., 2400 Washington St., Redding, CA 96001; or to Laura Chapman, Land Management Planner, Six Rivers N. F., 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501. (See articles in this issue and in November 1993 WR.)

**January 10** COMMENTS DUE on proposed logging in the San Joaquin Roadless Area of the Inyo National Forest. Send to: Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo N. F., 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514. (See article beginning on page 1.)

**January 24** COMMENTS DUE on a draft environmental impact statement for motor vehicle use on the Sierra's Eastside. Send comments to Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514, Attn: ORV Plan. (See article on page 6.)



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*"Wild areas humble us,  
and we need humility more  
than anything."*

—Reed Noss in Fall 1993  
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