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WILDERNESS RECORD

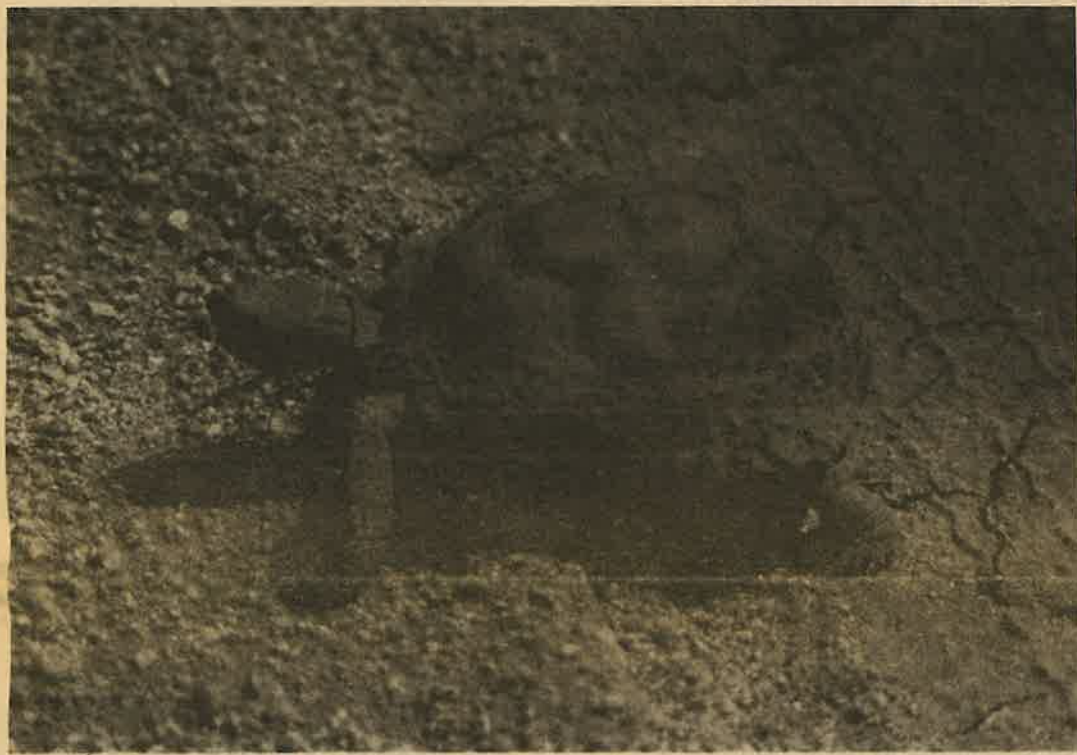
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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Why does the desert tortoise cross the road? To get to the protected side. Photo by Jim Eaton

Conservationists rally to repulse unappealing FS proposal

By Lucy Rosenau

It's ba-ack.

A black cloud hovers ominously over Forestland, and good citizens everywhere are rushing to their typewriters and converging on the capital to do battle with the dreaded Constraint of Appeals.

Yes, the Forest Service—undaunted by congressional rejection, impervious to the needs of western activists—is seeking once again to constrain the public's ability to appeal "project level" decisions, including the hundreds of timber sales proposed each year for California's national forests—our public lands.

Last year, the Forest Service proposed eliminating the administrative appeals process entirely. That proposal was foiled by eleventh-hour congressional intervention in the form of an appropriation bill that President Bush was unwilling to veto (see articles in April 1992 and November 1992 WR). Ordered by Congress to streamline the backlogged appeals process, the Forest Service instead seems intent on precluding dissent.

The agency's new, hard-line stance was evident in its

opening salvo: The deadline to comment on 83 pages of proposed changes, published April 14 in the Federal Register, was April 29. The 15-day comment period was made shorter still by the elimination of the "mailbox rule," the accepted practice under which a timely postmark is considered compliance with the deadline. Instead, comments on the proposed changes must arrive at the Forest Service's Washington, D. C. headquarters by the specified deadline. This provision is especially injurious to westerners, since the Federal Register generally appears in western libraries a week after its publication on the east coast.

Conservationists since have succeeded in getting the comment period extended to May 28, but the mailbox rule will not apply.

While the abbreviation of the comment period raised hackles, still more offensive is the agency's declaration in the Federal Register that the proposed changes in the appeals process will take effect in 60 days. The message to the American public is clear, according to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund's Kevin Kirchner: "Go ahead and comment, but we're doing this anyway." That kind of

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ESA "Deform" Act introduced

By David Orr

Among the many targets of the self-described wise-use movement, weakening the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which is up for reauthorization this year, may be foremost. To accomplish this end, opponents of the ESA have formed the ESA Reform Coalition.

Environmental groups, in contrast, established an Endangered Species Coalition (ESC) some years ago to support ESA reauthorization, preferably with amendments that would strengthen the Act. A bill endorsed by the ESC in the last Congress would have increased funding for implementing and enforcing the Act and granted protection to candidate species until listing decisions are made. Not surprisingly, the wise-use movement opposed that bill and this year is endorsing a bill that would weaken the Act.

The ESA Reform Coalition knows what environmentalists have known for years: Americans, in overwhelming numbers, support the ESA. The coalition knows, as every member of Congress knows, that it is political suicide for most members to openly advocate weakening the Act's stringent protective provisions.

The wise-use strategy, then, is to avoid negative-sounding terms like "weaken" and instead to call for "reform." Claiming that application of the ESA eliminates jobs, seizes private land, and wreaks economic havoc throughout the country, the wise-use coalition suggests that environmental groups have come to value gnatcatchers and murrelets over the livelihoods of their fellow humans. The ESA is, the coalition contends, a tool wielded by elitist preservationists in pursuit of their true agenda: stopping development altogether.

A bill endorsed by the wise-use coalition is now before Congress—*continued on page 5*

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Coalition news

Monthly Report

The music of the Good Ol' Persons remains in my head from last night's concert at the Palms, the intimate music haunt that once was a Davis barn. The band plays an eclectic mixture of bluegrass, old-time, country, Cajun, and Latin music, with a fiddle, mandolin, and dobro guitar providing the melodies while Kathy Kallick belts out the ballads.

Former CWC director John Hooper introduced us to the group years ago and arranged for them to play at several Coalition fund raisers in the last decade. They became one of my favorites, and I have several of their cassettes in my truck for company on long trips.

Wendy and I took off on one of these long drives last month when we decided we couldn't pass up the reports of spectacular flowers in the desert. After delaying a day to let a storm pass, we pointed the hood south down I-5. With no particular destination in mind, we found ourselves at the Kelso Dunes in the soon-to-be Mojave National Park.

Moist sand is easier to climb than dry, but it still was a struggle to get up the 600-foot dunes before sunset. Inyo thought this was wonderful terrain; four legs make for quick work up sand hills. It was great to back in familiar territory; the nearby Granite, Providence, and New York mountains all are good friends.

The next day we set out for the Piute Mountains. The recent rains forced us to dodge small lakes and mud holes along the main Cedar Canyon road, but we made it to the south end of the range. There we found quite a display of flowers amid spectacular scenery.

We then decided to return to another familiar area, the Turtle Mountains. On a long day hike, we wandered up a large wash to Mopah Spring, an oasis complete with a few native Washingtonia fan palms. While searching for petroglyphs, we discovered a shallow cave that showed signs of occupation, including pottery shards. The flowers were many and varied; the hike was marred only by the four-wheel drive tracks that ran over the vegetation in the wash after the vehicle had plowed down the "closed to motor vehicles" sign posted by the Bureau of Land Management.

I wanted to visit the Coxcomb Mountains east of Joshua Tree National Monument, but caution took hold when I reached a sandy stretch of road

that looked like a certain truck trap. We instead headed farther south to the Chuckwalla Bench. A good choice.

The Chuckwalla Bench is a massive bajada, a series of coalescing alluvial fans. We found a large mesquite tree for shade and spent the next three days there.

The area was stupendous. There were dozens of different plant species in flower, dominated by the red and green wands of ocotillo. Hedgehog, barrel, and silver cholla cacti were in full bloom, and flowering daisies gave the hills a yellow glow. We took numerous exploratory jaunts into the nearby canyons. Inyo quickly learned to give the jumping cholla a wide berth.

Wendy became adept at finding Gambel's quail after hearing its call. Hummingbirds buzzed by in pursuit of ocotillo nectar. We watched a golden eagle haul a long snake back to the nest we spotted on our drive in.

At night I pointed my telescope at distant nebulae and double stars, although the gibbous moon washed out many faint stars. We learned new constellations.

This is my idea of a vacation. We hiked in four areas that we trust will be designated wilderness later this year. We saw lots of interesting flowers and a number of animals. We were enveloped in the desert silence.

Reluctantly, we packed up and headed home. I saw the Mecca Hills in the early morning light and was reminded of Mabel Barnes' long struggle to preserve this fragile area; I didn't know at the time she had recently passed away.

In addition to her work to protect the Mecca Hills, Mabel generously opened her house for numerous meetings of desert activists working toward what now is known as the California Desert Protection Act.

It also was sad to hear of the death of CWC member Wallace Stegner. He was kind enough to lend his name to a successful fund appeal we had some years ago. His writings have inspired several generations of environmentalists.

Both Wallace Stegner and Mabel Barnes will be remembered for their tireless dedication to the preservation of our wildlands.

By Jim Eaton

Wilderness champions

Mabel Barnes

A long-time Board member of the Desert Protective Council, Mabel loved the desert, be it plain or exotic, and she worked tirelessly to protect it.

Decades ago, she was the architect of a plan to add the Mecca Hills wilderness to Joshua Tree National Monument. She worked hundreds of hours in the 1970s gathering on-the-ground information for the California Desert Plan and recently accompanied congressional aides on a tour of Mecca Hills and Chuckwalla Bench.

Mabel was fun and interesting to travel and hike with; she interpreted the desert with joy and eloquence. She will be sorely missed.

Wallace Stegner

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic

cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste, and so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves as single, separate, vertical, and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it."

—Wallace Stegner

Something has gone out of us with the death of Wallace Stegner. Writer, teacher, and sage, he understood the landscapes of the west and illuminated the landscapes of the human spirit. He was a man to match the scenery, and we all are poorer without him.

A grab bag of gifts from a great bunch of friends

Donations of property, like donations of money, keep the California Wilderness Coalition in business. We recently have received an unusually heavy and diverse crop of donations, for which we are very grateful.

Thanks to the San Francisco law firm of Jones, Clifford, McDevitt, Naekel & Johnson, we finally have enough filing cabinets to store the documents sprouting from every available surface and receptacle. Now if only we could learn to like filing.

Warren Jones of Solano Press Books sent us copies of his company's guides to CEQA and NEPA. CWC Board member and Eastside activist Sally Miller tells us she also received a complimentary copy of the NEPA guide, which she used to lead a workshop on the Act. Look for a review of the NEPA guide in a future issue of the *Record*.

From Stephen Green we received a copy of his 1993-1994 *California Political Almanac*, a trusted source of information about the many layers of California's government. The new edition is easier to use now that representatives are listed alphabetically rather than by district number.

And the *Wilderness Record* will benefit immeasurably from David Robertson's donation of a set of his unique photographic interpretations of California's wilderness.



Corrections

The April issue of the *Wilderness Record* contained a detailed, and in some cases inaccurate, list of wilderness regulations.

William Hayes was quick to point out what we should have spotted for ourselves: Neither Mt. Williamson nor Horseshoe Meadows is in the South Sierra Wilderness.

We learned from the Cleveland National Forest that the stock limit in San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is now eight, not 25 as we reported. And the phone number for the Trabuco District's Corona Ranger Station, which manages that wilderness is (909) 736-1811.

Finally (we hope), the correct zip code for the Angeles National Forest's Mt. Baldy District, a contact for the Cucamonga, San Gabriel, and Sheep Mountain wildernesses is 91764.

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

Where is the longest glacier in California?

Answer on page 7

Roadless areas

When wilderness is not the solution: a case history

By Larry Moss

When conservationists began preparing a statewide wilderness proposal in the late 1970s, they were told by Rep. Phillip Burton, who later would shepherd their bill through Congress, that the roadless lands of the Smith River watershed in far northern California were not open to consideration as wilderness because the mining industry wanted the area unrestricted—and a deal had been cut.

Conservationists accepted this exclusion, albeit reluctantly, and in 1984 the California Wilderness Act passed—without a Smith River Wilderness. Below, Larry Moss describes what has happened since: How, in the absence of wilderness designation, the Smith River watershed has nonetheless been accorded significant, if imperfect, protection.

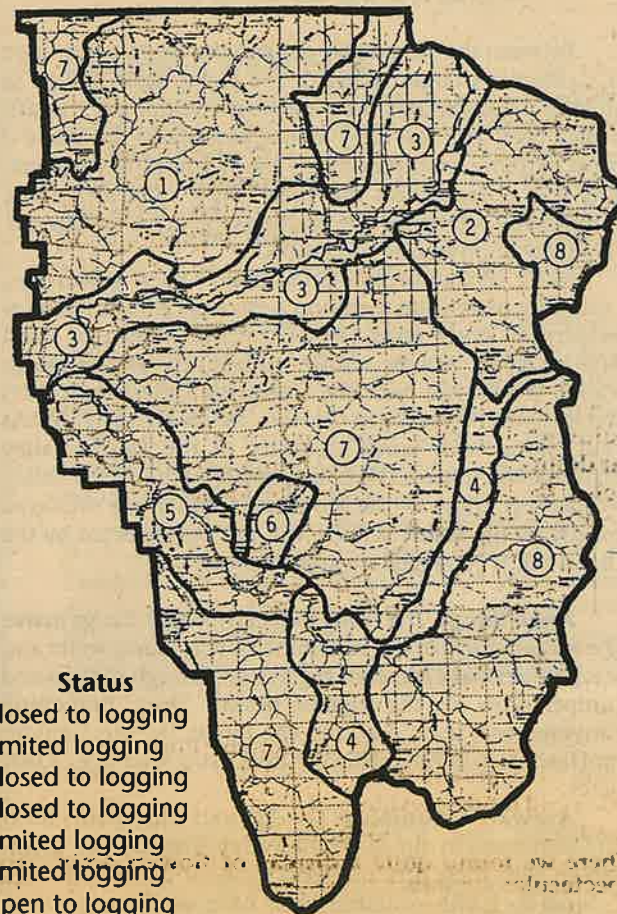
As we begin assembling a new wilderness proposal for California, we should remember first, that we cannot protect every area, and second, that we should never stop trying.

When President Bush signed the Smith River National Recreation Area Act on November 16, 1990, a decades-long effort by conservationists to protect California's most undisturbed river was rewarded. This unique legislation established a new, and for the first time adequate, level of protection for the 305,000 acres of the Smith River watershed managed by the U. S. Forest Service in California.

The effort to protect the Smith stretches back in time for more than 30 years. Some of the milestones in the conservation history of the Smith are state Senator Peter Behr's creation in 1972 of a California Wild and Scenic River (W&SR) System with the Smith as a featured component; Governor Jerry Brown's request to include the Smith and other California rivers in the federal W&SR system; establishment in 1984 of the Siskiyou Wilderness, which includes part of the upper Smith watershed; and defeat of a proposal for a large open-pit mine on the North Fork of the Smith.

During the 1980s, the establishment of a national park in the Smith River drainage was suggested, but the reaction to that proposal, partly because of hard feelings left over from the controversial creation and expansion of Redwood National Park in the 1960s and 1970s, was severely negative in the local area—Del Norte County. So the district's representative, Doug Bosco, worked with the Forest Service and developed legislation for a national recreation area (NRA). This legislation was a hollow shell, and conservationists hooted it down. But the Smith River Alliance, an environmental group dedicated to the Smith, worked with Representative Bosco to substantially redraft the proposed legislation. The amended bill was a real breakthrough. It was supported by the Alliance and other environmental groups and became law within a few

Smith River National Recreation Area



Map code	Management area	Acreage	Status
1	North Fork	50,060 acres	closed to logging
2	Upper Middle Fork	27,400 acres	limited logging
3	Middle Fork	37,200 acres	closed to logging
4	Upper South Fork	16,840 acres	closed to logging
5	Lower South Fork	17,900 acres	limited logging
6	Lower Hurdygurdy	3,700 acres	limited logging
7	Prescribed timber	105,000 acres	open to logging
8	Siskiyou Wilderness	46,400 acres	closed to logging

U. S. Forest Service map

months. The creation of the Smith River NRA was one of the few positive environmental stories of recent years.

The priorities for the Smith River NRA are protection for the river and stream corridors and maintenance of water quality, scenery, old-growth forests, biodiversity, and fish and wildlife populations. Compatible tourism and outdoor recreation are encouraged, and sustainable forestry is allowed in some areas of the NRA (see chart and map). The seven-mile corridor reserved for the completion of a high-standard road from Gasquet to Orleans (the infamous "G-O road") was added to the Siskiyou Wilderness by the legislation. And new mining claims and patents are forbidden. The Smith River NRA Act opened up new possibilities for conservationists—stringent protection for natural resources on public lands while still allowing a wide range of compatible uses. As a result, the

NRA was better accepted by the local community than a national park would have been.

At present, the most controversial issue regarding the Smith River is in Oregon, not California. Although most of the Smith is in California, 55,000 acres of the North Fork watershed are in the Siskiyou National Forest in southwest Oregon. This area was left out of the NRA legislation because including it would have greatly complicated congressional consideration of the bill. Approximately 17,000 acres of the North Fork are protected in Oregon's Kalmiopsis Wilderness but the remaining 38,000 are mostly roadless and vulnerable.

Larry Moss is Executive Director of the Smith River Alliance in Trinidad, California. A management plan for the Smith River NRA was released in late 1992 by the Six Rivers National Forest.

Funds needed to protect roadless N. Fork American

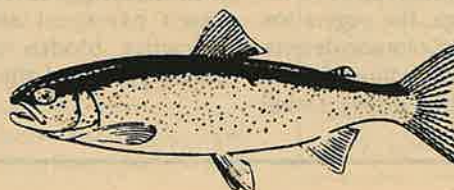
By John Moore

The 38 miles of the Wild and Scenic North Fork American River and the deep and rugged canyon through which it flows are one of the lesser-known jewels of the Sierra Nevada. The canyon is roadless and virtually pristine. The North Fork's clear, cold waters and deep pools are ideal habitat for native rainbow trout, and the state Department of Fish and Game manages the North Fork's outstanding fishery as a Wild Trout Stream.

Trails descend steeply into the North Fork canyon from 14 trailheads, and there is a seven-mile trail along the canyon floor which provides access to solitude, spectacular scenery, waterfalls and swimming holes (cold except in

late summer), and a great variety of vegetation including stands of ancient forest—all of it habitat for bears and other large mammals and about 150 species of birds.

Today, all that is at risk because 6,000 acres of land along a 20-mile stretch of the North Fork in the Tahoe National Forest are owned by a real estate syndicate and are up for sale. If the lands are not purchased as additions to the national forest, the forested lands undoubtedly will be logged and the remainder sold in small parcels for recreational use.



These developments would degrade the North Fork's wilderness and wipe out most recreational access.

The campaign for \$3.5 million in appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to buy roadless lands on the North Fork is continuing. To support the acquisition, write to your representatives at House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 or Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510.

John Moore is a member of the Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club's Mother Lode Chapter.

Desert wilderness

Death Valley Wilderness: A grand sampler of the Great Basin

Between the Nevada border and the Sierra's east slope is California's largest piece of the Great Basin Desert (a smaller piece extends into northeast California). Death Valley itself and the lofty White Mountains are but the most extreme examples of the basin-and-range topography that characterizes the Great Basin. Between these noteworthy extremes are millions of acres of rugged, relatively anonymous wilderness.

Much of California's Great Basin Desert wilderness, including more than a million acres now administered as wilderness study areas (WSAs) by the Bureau of Land Management, will be known collectively as the Death Valley Wilderness once the California Desert Protection Act is signed by President Clinton. Below are the 25 WSAs that, along with lands currently in the Death Valley National Monument (NM), will comprise the Death Valley Wilderness. (The White Mountains, which are managed mostly by the Forest Service, will not be protected by the desert bill.) Acreages are approximate.

Argus Range The rising wall of the Argus Range marks the western limit of the Panamint Valley. Scarce water and steep slopes make for scant vegetation, though pinyon and juniper grow on the highest peaks. Deep, branching canyons twist their way into the range; Darwin Canyon and lush Darwin Falls attract visitors to the west side. 2,000 acres.

Avawatz Mountains The Avawatz Mountains lie at the southeastern tip of Death Valley NM. Scenic themselves, with their precipitous canyons and slopes of varicolored rock, the mountains also offer sweeping views of Death Valley and the Amargosa River. 5,500 acres.

Darwin Falls Where the Darwin Plateau meets the Argus Range, a garden of green ferns and tumbling waterfalls, of quiet pools and singing birds offers shade, beauty, and respite to visitors of many species. The remainder of the area is less spectacular but just as wild: canyons deep and shallow penetrate both the mountains and the plateau. 4,000 acres.

Funeral Mountains There is nothing gloomy about the Funeral Mountains. Extending from the eastern portion of Death Valley NM, these mountains are noted for their dramatic dolomite and limestone formations and for Red Amphitheater, a bowl-shaped valley of reddish rock. A

herd of desert bighorn sheep inhabits the area. 26,000 acres.

Greenwater Range East of Greenwater Valley and Death Valley NM, this jagged range is riddled with river courses and the bajadas that accompany them. The abundant vegetation includes prickly pear, desert holly, cholla, sagebrush, and grasses. Rock shelters and petroglyphs fill Greenwater Canyon. 140,000 acres.

Greenwater Valley Names like Calico Peaks, Greenwater Valley, and the Black Mountains suggest the beauty and diversity of this area east of Death Valley NM. A herd of desert bighorn sheep roams the Black Mountains, through desert holly, creosote, and shadscale scrublands. 53,000 acres.

Hunter Mountain The great Saline and Panamint valleys west of Death Valley NM are separated by Hunter Mountain, a site sacred to Native Americans who gather pinyon nuts on the upper slopes. Sheer canyons, jagged crags, and spring-fed valleys beckon recreationists, and desert bighorn depend on the mountain as a migration corridor. 26,000 acres.

Ibex Hills and Ibex Spring The Panamint Shoshone and Chemehuevi tribes collected talc, sumac, and other plants in this mountainous area on the present-day eastern border of Death Valley NM. Desert bighorn sheep travel through the rugged Black Mountains, which, like the Ibex Hills, are banded with colorful rock strata. 23,000 acres.

Inyo Mountains From the Saline Valley basin, the southern Inyo Mountains rise 10,000 feet to Keynot Peak. Like the White Mountains to the north, the Inyos are at once forbidding and magnetic. Sinuous bristlecone pine grow improbably from rocky peaks, and plunging canyons fill seasonally with waterfalls. A host of unusual plants is found in these mountains, as are bighorn sheep and a local species of salamander. 55,400 acres.

Last Chance Mountain Between Eureka Valley and the Nevada border is 8,456-foot Last Chance Mountain, the northern end of the Last Chance Range. A small herd



The Last Chance Range is a dramatic backdrop to the Eureka Dunes. Photo by Jim Eaton

of desert bighorn ranges through these mountains that are cloaked with pinyon, juniper, shadscale, and blackbrush. 43,000 acres

Manly Peak The Panamint Mountains descend from the western border of Death Valley NM to Panamint Valley. At 7,196 feet, Manly Peak is high enough to support pinyon and juniper forests; cottonwood, cattails, and desert willow grow in canyons wherever water permits. 6,000 acres.

Middle Park Canyon North of the Manly Peak area, Middle Park Canyon reaches from the dunes of Panamint Valley up into the jutting peaks of the Panamint Range. Along the way, creosote scrublands merge into the pinyon-juniper woodlands of the higher elevations. Desert bighorn sheep and *Brickellia knappiana*, a sensitive plant species, inhabit the area. 2,000 acres.

North Death Valley and Little Sand Spring Immediately north of Death Valley NM on the Nevada border is a broad, gently-rolling alluvial plain. The Gold Mountain foothills are riddled with canyons that invite exploration. Saltbrush grows around Little Sand Spring; the rest of the area is vegetated with the creosote and sagebrush typical of the Great Basin. 50,000 acres.

Owlshead Mountains These low, rugged mountains south of Death Valley NM enclose a pair of secluded basins, each with a dry lake. Desert tortoises and bighorn sheep are intermittently seen in the area, but stunning views of Death Valley and the Amargosa River are available

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Joshua Tree Wilderness to gain (and regain) wildlands

In addition to establishing new Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service wilderness areas, the desert bill also will expand an existing wilderness by more than 100,000 acres. Four wilderness study areas to the east and north of Joshua Tree National Monument (NM) will be incorporated into the Joshua Tree Wilderness. Acreages are approximate.

Coxcomb Mountains In the northeast corner of Joshua Tree NM, the Coxcomb and Pinto mountains embrace Pinto Basin. Because this area is an ecotone, a place where ecosystems converge, the vegetation includes species of the Mojave and Colorado deserts. Smoke trees, palo verde, and desert willow fill the washes; cactus and scrub grow on drier slopes. Desert

tortoise, bighorn sheep, and burro deer make their home here as well. The Coxcomb Mountains, with their granite jumbles, spiky peaks, and labyrinthine canyons are a recreational paradise. 69,500 acres.

Eagle Mountains After World War II, these iron-rich mountains were evicted from Joshua Tree National Monument so that they could be mined. Now, having proved their mettle, the Eagle Mountains can be re-absorbed into the NM, this time as the southeasternmost portion of Joshua Tree Wilderness. It is abundantly clear why this area was considered special enough for a NM: great sheets of desert pavement are interspersed with jumbles, volcanics, hidden valleys, and web-like washes. Petroglyphs and the rare Alverson's foxtail cactus

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Wilderness legislation

Death Valley Wilderness

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year-round. 129,000 acres.

Panamint Dunes Ringed by mountains and high plains, Panamint Valley has a powerful attraction for humans. The dunes, shaped like stars and crescent moons, contrast strongly with the boulder-littered landscape of the Panamint Range to the east. Rare geoglyphs—figures formed on the desert floor—are the most interesting prehistoric sites, but a plethora of petroglyphs, hunting camps, and rock alignments bespeak the area's importance to ancient peoples. 113,000 acres.

Saddle Peak Mountain and South Saddle Peak The Saddle Peak Hills at the southeast corner of Death Valley NM are a range of low mountains that descend into the sandy plains of the Amargosa River. Hardy scrub species like creosote predominate. 8,000 acres.

Saline Dunes This portion of Saline Valley is a landscape of sand. Beyond the extensive dunes stretch vast sandy plains. Dense stands of mesquite predominate except where wet meadows support marsh grasses. The Inyo Mountains are a dramatic backdrop on the western horizon. 6,700 acres.

Saline Valley and Lower Saline Valley The treasure chest of the Great Basin, this vast and varied area on the northwest border of Death Valley NM reaches from the Saline Valley to the Eureka Valley and beyond. A National Natural Landmark, the Eureka Dunes are renowned for their unusual height and shapes and for their collection of rare plants. Eureka Valley contains a forest of Joshua trees, a species usually found in the Mojave Desert. 470,000 acres.

Slate Range Panamint Valley lies between the Slate and Panamint ranges, west of Death Valley NM. The area's varied terrain—shallow washes, an extensive salt pan, canyons, peaks, and bajadas—affords habitat for desert bighorn sheep, prairie falcons, and golden eagles. 35,000 acres.

Surprise Canyon Alluvial slopes intercut with canyons descend from the Panamint Range to Panamint Valley. In rocky outcrops, Panamint daisies flourish. Cottonwoods and willows grow in canyon bottoms, and the highest elevations boast limber and bristlecone pine. A herd of desert bighorn frequents the area, which also contains a prehistoric village site and rock art. 48,000 acres.

Wildrose Canyon Deep canyons penetrate the west side of the Panamint Range, which descends into bajadas and badlands and finally into Panamint Valley. Springs and streams support desert bighorn and prairie falcons.



The desert is full of unexpected beauties, like the deadwood of a cholla. Photo by Jim Eaton

Two rare species of buckwheat grow in the area, along with more common plants of the Great Basin. Intaglios, which are rare in California, have been found here. 25,500 acres.

For more information about these areas, contact the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Office at 6221 Box Spring Blvd., Riverside, CA 92507; (714) 697-5200 or, after the desert bill is enacted, Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, CA 93238; (619) 786-2331.

Joshua Tree Wilderness

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have been found here, and a second rare plant, California snakebush, may be present. 50,000 acres.

Pinto Basin This small area is flat and featureless compared to the spectacular Joshua Tree Wilderness and Eagle Mountains on its northern and southern borders. But wilderness does not have to be scenic or "special" to warrant protection; it must only be wild. 4,000 acres.

Pinto Mountains The Pinto Mountains north of Joshua Tree NM rise as a series of dark, granite masses banded with lighter rock. Desert tortoise and bighorn sheep occupy parts of the range. The predominant desert scrub is replaced with riparian species like smoke trees in washes, and Mojave yuccas flourish in enclosed valleys. 7,500 acres.

For more information about the proposed additions to the Joshua Tree Wilderness, contact the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Office at 6221 Box Spring Blvd., Riverside, CA 92507; (714) 697-5200 or, after the desert bill passes, Joshua Tree National Park, 74485 National Monument Dr., Twentynine Palms, CA 92277; (619) 367-7511.

Steer Babbitt in the right direction at public grazing forum

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will preside at a May 1 forum on public-lands livestock grazing. The forum, which will be held from 8:00-5:00 at the University of Nevada's Jot Travis Student Union in Reno, is open to the public.

A constellation of conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, California Native Plant Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Wilderness Society, is urging environmentalists to attend the forum which is expected otherwise to be dominated by defenders of the grazing industry.

Clinton the wild card as ESA re-authorization fight heats up

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H.R. 1490, the ESA Procedural Reform Act of 1993, authored by Reps. Tauzin (D-LA) and Fields (R-TX), with 26 cosponsors including six from California: Reps. Cunningham (R-Escondido), Dooley (D-Visalia), Doolittle (R-Rocklin), Herger (R-Marysville), Lewis (R-Redlands), and Pombo (R-Tracy).

Environmentalists strongly oppose this bill, which would delay the listing process by permitting citizens to sue to prevent listings, require peer review of species status evaluations, and require detailed economic analysis of recovery plans. This ESA "Deform" Act also would deemphasize habitat protection in favor of captive breeding programs. Under this bill, the only real gains accrue to private landowners, who would be compensated if their ability to develop or otherwise use their property is diminished under the ESA.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration has emerged as the wild card in the re-authorization deck. Environmentalists applauded a plan announced by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to conduct a nationwide ecological inventory. The Interior Department next listed the California gnatcatcher as threatened and established the largest habitat conservation plan to date, but with special allowances for gnatcatcher habitat destruction by developers. Two weeks later, Secretary Babbitt issued an incidental take permit for endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers on private timberland in the southeast, thereby permitting much logging to continue.

Environmentalists wonder at these moves. Do they portend an administration tilt toward the wise-use position? Or are Sec. Babbitt's actions, as some apologists have suggested, a stratagem to create a more favorable political

climate for re-authorizing the ESA? The answer remains to be seen, although environmentalists' expectations, as President Clinton may have intended, are falling like old growth redwoods at Pacific Lumber.

What You Can Do

Send your thoughts on H.R. 1490 and on the ESA in general to your representatives (House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 or Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20505). Contact the Endangered Species Coalition, at National Audubon Society, 666 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20003 (202) 547-9009, if you would like to be placed on their mailing list.

Wilderness management

Logging is no substitute for fire

By George Wuerthner

The timber industry and even many employees of federal agencies such as the Forest Service attempt to justify logging, particularly "salvage" logging, by arguing that removal of fuel by logging can mimic fires. There are, however, significant differences between the two in their overall impacts.

First, fires are random, creating a mosaic of burned, partially burned, and unburned stands. This randomness seldom is emulated by planned logging. Even the hugest fires of the past have tended to leave islands and corridors of unburned forest. Typically, the trees that escaped the blazes were in shady, old-growth groves, where downed, woody debris can act as a sponge, storing water well into the drought of summer. Yet these are exactly the groves loggers target for cutting.

Logging also removes nutrients from the site, while all but the hottest fires recycle nutrients. Furthermore, fires stimulate the growth of nitrogen-fixing bacteria and plants that enrich soils for several years after a burn.

Logging equipment compacts soils, reducing water infiltration and crunching animal burrows. Logging roads and skid trails disturb soil profiles and accelerate erosion. Studies in the Plumas National Forest of the Sierra Nevada show that logging-precipitated soil erosion has degraded 30 percent of the forest's watersheds, to the extent that they no longer meet state water quality standards.

Roads also increase access for humans, affecting animal migration and habitat use and, where hunting is allowed, contributing to increased hunter success. Few of these costs are considered when agencies decide whether or not to allow logging. Yet the influence of roads on wildlife use can be substantial. Studies in Montana have shown that grizzlies may avoid logged areas for several years after all human activity there ceases, even if road closures are in place. And elk are known to avoid active logging sites and roads. Repeated again and again, these losses represent a significant reduction of usable habitat.

Taxpayers are forced to pay twice. First we pay hundreds of millions of dollars annually for fire control efforts, then we pay to "fix" the forest that now is "sick" as a consequence.

Furthermore roads, with their abrupt changes in light, moisture, and exposure to predators, also can act as barriers to migration and recolonization by small invertebrates and animals. Some interior forest species, like juvenile spotted owls, are more vulnerable to predation in clearings. Increase the amount of clearings, and you automatically reduce usable habitat.

The dead snags that remain after a fire are habitat for cavity-nesting birds. After the dead wood falls into streams, it provides long-term structural stability and nutrients to the waterway and increases fish habitat.

Smoke and heat from fires cleanse soil and kill forest pathogens, leaving the site healthier for future tree and plant growth. In addition, fire-thinned forests are better able to resist drought, insects, and disease.

When you consider that many of the below-cost timber sales on our public lands

increasingly are justified as necessary to control insects or disease, it is reasonable to question whether the Forest Service policy of suppressing fires is not a major factor in creating ecological conditions that favor insect and disease outbreaks in the first place.

In essence, taxpayers are forced to pay twice for these policies. First we pay hundreds of millions of dollars annually for fire control efforts, then we pay to "fix" the forest that now is "sick" as a consequence.

For these and many other reasons, logging—salvage or otherwise—is no substitute for a natural fire regime. The only viable and realistic alternative is to permit fires to burn unrestricted over most of our native forests where fires are a natural ecosystem component (this will happen eventually anyway; it's only a matter of time) and to spend our money, time, and effort making our little islands of civilization fire resistant. Logging is no substitute for fire.



Unlike logging, fires trace a random path across a forest. Pictured is the Elk Creek Roadless Area of the Mendocino National Forest after a fire. Photo by Don Morris

George Wuerthner, a Montana photographer, writer, and activist, is a Director of The Wildlands Project. His next book will feature photographs of the Sierra Nevada.

FS planning to limit public participation

continued from page 1

arrogance is unlikely to endear the Forest Service to Congress.

This year's attempt by the Forest Service to limit administrative appeals differs substantially from last year's because the agency is bound by the 1992 legislation. There remains ample reason for concern, however, because the agency seems intent on flouting Congress' desire to provide for public participation.

If the agency gets its way, the mailbox rule now in effect will be eliminated for comments on timber sales and all appeals, including appeals of forest plans. The Forest Service acknowledges in an internal memo obtained by Kirchner that this "change is subtle but substantial" because "it effectively reduces the time available for preparation of comments and appeals."

The public's ability to participate in these decisions would be further reduced under the proposed changes because the agency has chosen to exempt itself from Congress' mandate that the Forest Service mail notices to the interested public whenever a timber sale subject to comment is proposed. The agency intends to substitute

announcements in local newspapers or the Federal Register for the individual notice now required.

Most troubling of all, the Forest Service is proposing to suspend the comment-appeal process whenever the agency determines an emergency exists. Federal agencies always have been allowed some latitude under emergency conditions (an out-of-control forest fire that is threatening human life, for instance), but a blanket ability to declare emergencies and revoke environmental law to facilitate "salvage" of diseased trees surely exceeds the agency's license as defined by Congress.

In light of the Forest Service's apparent readiness to ignore public input on the proposed changes, conservation leaders recommend that concerned citizens relay copies of their comments to the Clinton administration. Send comments before May 28 to:

Deputy Chief
National Forest System (1570)
Forest Service, USDA
P. O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

with copies to:

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
FAX: (202) 456-2710;

Kathleen McGinty
Deputy Assistant to the President
Director, Office of Environmental Policy
Room 360
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501
FAX: (202) 456-6231;

The Honorable Secretary Mike Espy
U. S. Department of Agriculture
14th St. and Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250
FAX: (202) 720-2166

Book review

Fascination of Shasta now in a book

Mt. Shasta: History, Legend & Lore

By Michael Zanger, Celestial Arts, Berkeley, 1993, 120 pp., \$17.95.

From its cover photo of the 14,162-foot volcano bathed in alpenglow, you might think this is a picture book of California's most celebrated mountain. But this is not a book of pretty pictures; most are historical photographs that illustrate an extremely detailed history of the area.

Michael Zanger knows the mountain well. During the past 25 years, he has wandered all over Mt. Shasta as the caretaker of the Sierra Club's Shasta Alpine Lodge and now as the owner of Shasta Mountain Guides. Although he does not take credit for it in his book, he has been instrumental in the effort to protect the Mt. Shasta Wilderness.

Zanger has compiled a fascinating history of the Mt. Shasta area. He examines the controversy over which European was first to discover the mountain, quoting from journals and ship's logs of early explorers. He looks into the meaning of the word Shasta and the confusion over which peak first received this name. A series of maps dating back to 1786 show the incrementally-gained understanding of the geography of northern California, from the voyage of Jean de La Pérouse to the treks of Hudson's Bay Company trappers and John C. Fremont.

After three reputed attempts to climb Shasta, Fremont declared that "it appears almost impossible to climb...." But Zanger reports on ascents by five women and 35 men between 1854 and 1856. He also mentions early attempts to judge the height of the mountain, including the fairly accurate 13,905-foot determination by William Moses

that was derided by many who were convinced Mt. Shasta exceeded 19,000 feet.

I was fascinated by the stories of scientific exploration on Mt. Shasta. Although I was aware that Josiah Whitney, William Brewer, and Clarence King surveyed the mountain for the California Geological Survey, I had no idea that many of Shasta's glaciers were named by the famous explorer John Wesley Powell. One-armed Powell climbed the mountain while studying the Wintun tribe, later completing a dictionary of their language.

Stories of early settlers and visitors, including John Muir and Joaquin Miller, are told in detail. The boom and decline of the lumber industry is described.

No book on Mt. Shasta would be complete without covering the extensive legends and lore of the mountain, and Zanger has researched this subject well. He recounts the legends of various Native American tribes in the region, and he covers modern myths, from the lost race of Lemurians confined within the mountain to the Harmonic Convergence gathering.

Zanger concludes with the preservation efforts at Mt. Shasta, from early national park proposals and the 1984 wilderness designation to the ongoing struggle over ski area construction. He chronicles these issues in a detached manner, not as an environmental activist.

This is not a scientific text, but there is a minimal discussion of the geologic formation of this grand volcano that explores the question of whether Shasta will erupt again.

It is the most detailed history of Mt. Shasta available. The text is fascinating, well organized, and accompanied with engravings, maps, and photographs that tell enchanting stories about this world famous peak. Anyone who has climbed to Mt. Shasta's summit, walked through its forests, or just gazed in awe at this magnificent mountain will be captivated by Michael Zanger's book.

—Jim Eaton

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DATES TO REMEMBER

May 1 ACTIVIST WORKSHOP to develop wilderness proposals for the North Coast. Call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380 for details.

May 1 ROUNDTABLE ON GRAZING hosted by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt at the University of Nevada at Reno. The meeting, which is open to the interested public, will begin at 8:00 a. m. (See notice on page 5.)

May 15 COMMENTS DUE on the California Wilderness Coalition's proposed grazing policy. Send to: CWC Grazing Policy, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616. (See article in April WR.)

May 28 COMMENTS DUE on proposed changes to the Forest Service appeals process. Send to: Deputy Chief, National Forest System (1570), Forest Service, USDA, P. O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090. (See article beginning on page 1.)

June 1 COMMENTS DUE on a draft recovery plan for the desert tortoise. For a copy of the plan, contact the Field Supervisor, Nevada Ecological Services Field Office, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4600 Kietzke Lane, Building C-125, Reno, NV 89502; (702) 784-5227.

Wilderness Trivia Answer:

On Mt. Shasta (Whitney Glacier)

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**California
Wilderness
Coalition**

Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

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

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The Wilderness Record

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

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

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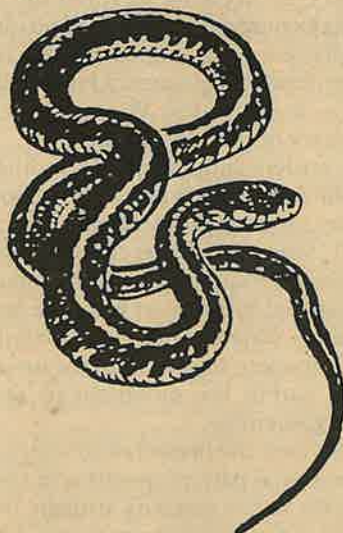
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