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# WILDERNESS RECORD

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The Forest Service wants to drop the Highland Lakes basin from its recommended addition to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. The wilderness boundary is now along the ridge top; previously the agency had recommended adding most of the basin to the wilderness. USFS photo

## Reversal on logging San Joaquin RA shows the power of letter-writing

### Wildlands between Ansel Adams and Devils Postpile safe, for now

The Forest Service has decided not to log a pocket of unprotected roadless land in the Inyo National Forest that burned in the Rainbow fire two years ago. The decision is a victory for environmentalists who had vociferously opposed the agency's 1993 proposal to log 125 acres of the San Joaquin Roadless Area sandwiched between the Ansel Adams Wilderness and Devils Postpile National Monument southwest of Mammoth Mountain (see March 1993 WR).

California Wilderness Coalition executive director Jim Eaton credits the reversal to the labors of activists throughout the state who wrote letters urging the Forest Service not to log the little-known roadless area. "When they're caught in the spotlight of public attention, even the Forest Service has to do the right thing," he says.

The Coalition and other groups had criticized the agency for neglecting to do an environmental impact statement (EIS) for its logging proposal even though Forest Service regulations require an EIS for any action that could jeopardize an officially designated roadless area. In his September 13 decision notice cancelling the proposed Rainbow salvage sale, Inyo Forest Supervisor Dennis Martin cites his office's failure to "fully analyze or disclose the effects of treating burned areas within the San Joaquin released roadless area" as "a major reason" for the decision

to cancel the Rainbow sale. The failure apparently resulted from a error; the forest plan maps the Forest Service used in analyzing the logging proposal did not show all of the roadless area.

Martin's decision also states that he will "continue to ... pursue opportunities to reduce the fuel loadings" in the area, however. Local environmentalists have questioned whether reducing the amount of dead wood in the 125-acre pocket can be much of a deterrent to fire since 8,000 acres of the adjacent Ansel Adams Wilderness also burned in the Rainbow fire and no logging will be allowed in the wilderness.

However irrational the agency's continued emphasis on fuels reduction may seem under the circumstances, more logging proposals are likely. Friends of the Inyo activist Sally Miller cautions that "until the San Joaquin is permanently protected, we'll have to keep fighting these brush fires." And it is not just the 125-acre pocket that is at risk, she reminds us. "The whole area between Mammoth Lakes and June Lake is still unprotected roadless area."

In a separate decision notice, the Forest Service announced that it will plant seedlings of Jeffrey pine and red fir next spring to hasten revegetation of the 125-acre Rainbow site, which is traversed by the Pacific Crest Trail.

## Forest Service wants to redraw Carson-Iceberg addition

### FS calls it a mapping error, Coalition calls it trucking to snowmobilers

By Jim Eaton

Claiming a "mapping error," the Forest Service is proposing to change its recommended additions to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. The boundary modification near Highland Lakes (see map on page 5) would accommodate snowmobilers who currently use the Stanislaus National Forest roadless lands illegally. The Forest Service argues that when it issued its 1991 final land management plan recommending the wilderness addition, "detailed maps ... were not yet available."

Not only can environmentalists find no evidence of any mapping error, they note that Congress singled out this area for a detailed wilderness study in the California Wilderness Act of 1984, the same legislation that established the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Subsequently, in two draft plans as well as its final Stanislaus forest plan, the Forest Service recommended these lands for addition to the 158,000-acre Carson-Iceberg Wilderness that occupies the area between Ebbetts Pass and Sonora Pass.

Called the Tryon Peak additions by the Forest Service, the proposed wilderness extension spans the Sierra crest south of Highway 4. In addition to the wildlands around Highland Lakes, the study area includes Noble Canyon and lands north of Silver Peak. These lands were removed from the proposed Carson-Iceberg Wilderness in 1984 as part of an acreage compromise needed to secure the support of then-Senator Pete Wilson for the wilderness bill.

Like many areas dropped in the compromise, these lands were to be studied further to assess their wilderness potential. After directing the Forest Service to examine the wilderness potential of 59 further planning areas in future

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## Coalition news

### Monthly Report

It's been a wild few weeks. Every weekend has been filled with meetings: the California vision meeting of the Wildlands Project, the CWC board of directors, and the California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA). Then there are the newsletters. In addition to the *Wilderness Record*, the Coalition is now producing and mailing the *California Ancient Forest Activist*, the newsletter for CAFA. And then there have been the gadgets.

The new copy machine donated by Anne Schneider and her partners took every ounce of strength Ryan Henson and I had as we wrestled it first in and out of my truck and then into the office (where it required some creative rewiring). Scott Kruse's generous donation of a new fax modem means we have to revamp our two-line telephone system. And the two-page monitor Scott sent wouldn't have had a home if it weren't for the video cart Chris Agruss donated.

Meanwhile, I'm spending even more time on the computers with a free E-mail account that is part of a CalTrans study of Davis telecommuters. I'm still on EcoNet (but only a few times a week to hold down costs), and I check my new, local account on the Davis Community Network (jeaton@wheel.ucdavis.edu) daily. The learning curve is steep—there's new fax modem software, community bulletin boards, and the Internet to start with—but worthwhile. Former CWC staffer Dennis Coules, now in North Carolina, already has sent along some useful information, and many of the activists working on the Wildlands Project are connected. I'm hoping my brother, a longtime resident of Chile, will log on soon.

All this attention to fun and games has allowed a few items to remain unfinished, like our "spring" fund appeal. The CWC board (especially the treasurer) has mandated that the appeal be mailed forthwith, so you may have received our plea for funds already. Please give generously; the job you save may be Ryan's.

The fund appeal and other neglected projects (filing? what's that?) have led Lucy to start calling me a cunctator. Look it up yourself (but you may need an unabridged dictionary—my spell checker had never heard of the word). I'll probably find a "Procrastinate Later" t-shirt in my Christmas stocking.

We also got a rather depressing letter from former staffer Nancy Kang about how blasted the range is in eastern Nevada. Her temporary job dogging cows for the Forest Service is ending soon, and her experience has made her a staunch advocate of range reform.

Nancy also related her tale of being lost in the East Humboldt Range, wandering around the rugged mountains in shorts without pack, food, or water. But I was proud that she kept her composure and found her way back to Wells in the wee hours before would-be rescuers had time to organize a search.

Meanwhile Ryan came back from an organizer's training session in Montana hosted by Patagonia, Inc., bubbling with enthusiasm about ways to raise money (so we can put him to work for more than the one day a week we now can afford). He and Lora are forcing me finally to admit that fund raising is an important part of running an organization. We will never achieve our goals of protecting wilderness, saving ancient forests, and developing the wildlands vision without additional funding and staff time.

But it's a rather frightening prospect. Ryan accomplishes so much working just one day a week that I hesitate to unleash him full time on the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other derelicts. Perhaps they'll promise to protect all our wildlands if we just threaten to turn him loose?

**By Jim Eaton**

### Friends in deed

At its best, the CWC office is something of an obstacle course. From the front door you make a sharp left between the copy machine and the four-drawer files, only to confront a wall of forest plans. Turn right at the forest plans and step over Inyo, the office dog who likes to sleep in high traffic areas, and you arrive at the comparatively open space that houses five desks, four people, three computers, two telephones, one jury-rigged light table, and banks and banks of filing cabinets. Now picture everything in sight covered several inches deep in documents and dog hair, and you'll understand why first-time visitors tend to blanch, look carefully around, and then politely remark on the weather.

In September, the office was not at its best, but for some very good reasons. Our good friends at Ellison, Schneider and Lennihan offered us a copy machine that by their standards was obsolete. By our standards, it's a dream come true; the new machine does double-sided copies, collates, and other nifty stuff. The only hitch was that the new machine arrived before the old one left (we'll be donating it to one of our needier member groups), complicating our already cluttered floor plan.

We had barely gotten the floor clear when Jim started bringing over cartons of supplies for the Wildlands Project mapping meeting we hosted September 16-18. The weekend meeting went well, thanks largely to Bob Schneider, who had all 50 participants over to his house for dinner two nights in a row. We helped with the clean-up, but Bob did all the cooking, serving up hot, delicious meals as if cooking for 50 in the heat of a Davis September were easy as pie. There actually wasn't pie, because there was cheesecake—thanks to Bonnie Beffa.

The month ended with the arrival of a very large box. Inside was a week's worth of crumpled newspapers—and a two-page computer monitor, sent by Scott Kruse, that will have us all fighting over who gets to use the "good" computer.

With friends like these, who needs floor space?

### Correction

An article in the September *Wilderness Record* reported that the Friends of Hope Valley had joined the CWC and other groups appealing a Toiyabe National Forest salvage sale. In fact, Sorensen's Resort, not the Friends of Hope Valley, is helping with the appeal. We regret the error.



The Coalition hosted the first meeting of the Wildlands Project for California in September, a weekend mapping session to draft a wilderness recovery network for the state. The story is on page 5. Photo by Lucy Rosenau

## Letters

### In defense of DFG

I am writing this on behalf of several competent, hard-working, and conscientious colleagues, biologists assigned to the Bishop office of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), who were unjustly maligned in Canyon Fred's article "High summer in the High Sierra" in the August 1994 *Wilderness Record*. Because of their busy schedule at this time of year I shall respond for them, and I do so with their permission. We were all blasted from ambush by the same shotgun triggered by a writer who was afraid to reveal his or her identity.

The statement that there would be no fish in most High Sierra lakes today if it weren't for "overzealous DFG biologists" is just totally incorrect. Fish were there long before the DFG even hired biologists (about 1931), as attested to by photographs in my possession of cutthroat trout taken in historically-troutless Mono Basin in the 1920s, and abundant written records going well back into the 19th century. During the time that I directed fishery management and research for the DFG on the eastside (1957-1990), trout were stocked only into waters that already contained established trout populations, a policy that continues today.

Trout have been in most High Sierra lakes since long before the DFG was created, or before society or even the scientific community began to think in terms of ecosystem integrity or purity. Trout stocking began on the east slope well over 100 years ago, primarily by cattlemen and sportsmen's groups using native trout taken from streams. Completion of Mt. Whitney Hatchery in 1916 allowed the Fish and Game Commission to continue this procedure 36 years before the DFG was created in 1952. Local citizens' groups, such as the Rainbow Club of Inyo-Mono, were participants all the way along. I have in my possession

*continued on page 6*

### Wilderness Trivia Question:

How did the Highland Lakes get their name?

Answer on page 7

# Wilderness management

## A view from the PIT

### Sierra consensus group tackles multi-wilderness plan

By Joe Fontaine

A lot has changed since Joe Fontaine last reported on the consensus group that has been assisting the Forest Service to develop a management plan for the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch wildernesses. Several of the environmentalists serving on the consensus group have left because they had reservations about the process. In addition, the Forest Service has determined that it would violate the Federal Advisory Committee Act if the agency simply adopts the management practices the consensus group endorses. Consequently, the consensus group and the process are now in transition.

For over a year the Forest Service has been receiving input from a public involvement team or PIT in developing a wilderness management plan for the large section of the Sierra Nevada between Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks. The Forest Service hopes to institute a single management plan for four adjoining wilderness areas—Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch—in the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia national forests.

The PIT is a consensus group, a method public land managers across the West are using to help them make management decisions about controversial issues. The idea is to include on the PIT a representative of each group or agency with an interest in how the wilderness is managed. Groups represented on the Sierra PIT include backpackers, stock users, ranchers, business owners, research scientists, the California Department of Fish and Game, and many others, nearly 30 participants in all. Although everyone serving on the PIT is an advocate of wilderness status for the area, there are many differences of opinion

about how the wilderness should be managed.

Many environmentalists look askance at consensus groups and refuse to participate. There is a concern that land managers are trying to duck difficult decisions, enlisting opposing groups to develop compromises and thereby let the managers off the hook. Many environmentalists feel that in participating they are being co-opted into supporting decisions that compromise their principles—and the wilderness. There is also the danger that public officials will try to manipulate the process and end up doing just what they wanted to do in the first place.

On the other hand, if consensus groups such as the PIT are an honest attempt to get in-depth public input and develop the best possible plan to protect the wilderness, a plan that is fair to all users, then the public will be well served and the wilderness will be better off. It all boils down to trust: Are user groups willing to put the welfare of the wilderness ahead of their own interests, and can you trust the agency sponsoring the consensus group? The Sierra PIT may be a good example, a test case for us to determine how consensus will work with the Forest Service here in California.

So far, the PIT has agreed, by consensus, that the wilderness should be divided into four management zones, called opportunity classes under the limits of acceptable change system the Forest Service has adopted. The zones range from the most pristine, where there are no trails and evidence of human presence is difficult to detect, to the least pristine, near trailheads and where trails are heavily worn and frequently used campsites are obvious.

Controversy has arisen during the PIT's discussions about regulating recreational use in each opportunity class. For example, should campfires be allowed in all areas or should they be restricted by opportunity class or elevation? Should wilderness permits be required and should existing quotas for popular trailheads be continued? Should wilderness rangers just clean up the backcountry and educate visitors or should they have the authority to issue citations to visitors who flagrantly violate wilderness rules?

The most virulent conflict, however, is between backpackers and stock users. No one on the PIT has argued that stock do not belong in the backcountry. Rather, the argument revolves around whether stock should be allowed into all areas of the wilderness or be restricted from trails that are vulnerable to damage and from the most pristine trailless areas. The High Sierra Hikers Association has proposed that some wilderness trails should remain stock-free. In addition, some wilderness users who are not on the PIT have charged



Mt. Harrington, Monarch Wilderness

Photo by Pete Yamagata

that packers are treated more leniently than hikers and that rules are not always enforced.

Will the PIT help the Forest Service resolve these and other contentious issues in a way that protects the wilderness and is fair to all users? In my opinion, it remains to be seen. There are certain conditions that I believe must be met if the PIT is to be successful:

- There should not be a final PIT report that the Forest Service refers to in its environmental documents to justify its decisions.

- It needs to be made clear that decisions about wilderness management must be made by the Forest Service and not delegated to groups like the PIT.

- Members of the PIT belong to various organizations, but on the PIT they represent only the user groups the agency has identified. I was invited to join because of my activity in the Sierra Club, for example, but on the PIT I represent backpackers, not the Sierra Club.

- Members of the PIT and the organizations to which they belong should be free to appeal any final management decisions they disagree with. Participation on the PIT should not inhibit anyone's right to protest decisions made by the Forest Service.

If these conditions are met, I believe the PIT process has a good chance of working. Certainly one result of all this will be to give environmentalists an indication of whether we should participate in future consensus groups.

In the meantime, the PIT will continue to meet. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, October 16, in the Fish Camp-Oakhurst area west of Yosemite. Meetings are open to the public; call the Inyo National Forest supervisor's office at (619) 873-2400 (or the Sierra or Sequoia national forest office) for details if you wish to attend. There may be two or three more PIT meetings before the Forest Service begins work on a draft environmental impact statement for the new management plan, which should be issued sometime next spring.

We all work very hard to get new areas added to the wilderness system through legislation, but our job doesn't end there. Poor management and overuse can gradually destroy wilderness. Logging and development just do the damage faster. Be sure to read the draft environmental impact statement when it comes out and put your two cents in. Let the Forest Service know you care.

Joe Fontaine is a director of the Sierra Club. He first wrote about the PIT in the August 1993 Wilderness Record.

## FACA: the law nobody knew

The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) is a law paved with good intentions. Described as "one of the four pillars of open government law" (along with the Freedom of Information Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, and the Government in the Sunshine Act), FACA requires that groups assembled by the government to provide policy advice have balanced membership and are open to public scrutiny, thus ensuring that special interests do not exert undue influence on federal decision makers. According to the Supreme Court, "FACA was enacted to cure specific ills, above all the wasteful expenditure of public funds for worthless committee meetings and biased proposals."

Although FACA has been on the books for over 20 years, it seemed unimportant to environmentalists until it was brought up in the context of the president's plan for the Pacific Northwest's old-growth forests. A federal court has ruled that the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team of scientists was convened and did its work in violation of FACA's requirements for the proper conduct of an advisory committee.

By contrast, the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project does not have to comply with FACA, even though it too involves many scientists who are not federal employees, because Congress asked for the advice and recommendations and the project's final report is being prepared for Congress.

In general, FACA represents sound public policy. The problems arise because FACA's requirements are not well understood. With time and experience, compliance will become comfortable for the federal agencies that must adhere to FACA's mandates.

Excerpted from a longer article by Doug Heiken that appeared in the May/June 1994 issue of Inner Voice, newsletter of the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics.

## Wilderness news

# Tahoe NF proposal would protect only two rivers

By Steve Evans

The Forest Service is tentatively recommending that portions of the upper Truckee River near Lake Tahoe and Sagehen Creek be added to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. The recommendation is part of a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and suitability study that documents the agency's eligibility findings for eight river and stream segments in the Truckee River drainage in the Tahoe National Forest.

The eligible rivers include the upper Truckee River, lower Truckee River (from Lake Tahoe to Truckee), Cold Stream Canyon, Alder Creek, Sagehen Creek, Independence Creek, Little Truckee River, and Perazzo Canyon. The upper Truckee River flows through the Echo-Carson (a.k.a. Dardenelles) Roadless Area, which the Forest Service failed to recommend for wilderness protection in its land management plan. Portions of Perazzo Canyon and Independence Creek are in the old (RARE I) Castle Peak Roadless Area.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service recommended only the upper Truckee River and Sagehen Creek (two of the eight eligible rivers) for wild-and-scenic designation and rejected the remaining six streams because they pass through private lands. This draft recommendation bodes ill for the agency's upcoming recommendations for 22 eligible rivers and streams in the Yuba and American river watersheds, recommendations which are expected in a separate DEIS this fall. Ironically, federal designation has no impact on private property rights, which remain regulated by local government. In practice, designation often encourages acquisition from willing sellers or exchange of private lands, but no private land ever has been condemned on a wild-and-scenic river in California.

Also disappointing is the proposed "scenic" classification for the upper Truckee. The river's location in an undeveloped roadless area which is a popular destination for backpackers and hikers clearly calls for the much more protective "wild" classification. Federally designated rivers are classified "wild," "scenic," or "recreational" depending on the level of development and kind of use.

The document ignores the need to provide wild-and-scenic protection for critical habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout in Independence Creek and endangered willow flycatcher along the Little Truckee River and its tributary, Perazzo Canyon. In addition, conservationists are disappointed that the Forest Service

failed to recommend protection for the lower Truckee River between Lake Tahoe and the town of Truckee. This popular recreational segment needs federal management to control overuse and prevent degradation of its outstanding natural values.

The Forest Service is soliciting public comments in response to the Eight Eastside Rivers DEIS until November 18, 1994. It is important that a groundswell of public concern be generated to convince the agency that the existence of private land in the river corridor should not preclude federal protection (a particularly important point given the upcoming Yuba and American watershed recommendations).

### What you can do

Please write a letter by November 18 to Forest Supervisor John Skinner, Tahoe National Forest, P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959. In your letter:

- Support Alternative A, which recommends designation for all eight eligible rivers. Be sure to mention that private land should not preclude wild-and-scenic recommendations since designation does not impact private property rights or land use.

- Urge that the upper Truckee River be recommended for "wild" classification since it is in an undeveloped roadless area.

- Point out that wild-and-scenic designation will protect critical habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout in Independence Creek and endangered willow flycatcher along the Little Truckee River and Perazzo Canyon.

- Note that wild-and-scenic designation will provide much needed regulation and management of intensive recreation along the lower Truckee River.

- Ask to receive a copy of the upcoming suitability study for the 22 westside rivers and streams in the Yuba and American watersheds.

Steve Evans is conservation director of Friends of the River and a director of the California Wilderness Coalition.



Upper Truckee Meadows, Echo-Carson Roadless Area Photo by Phil Farrell

## Desert bill evades another roadblock, but time is running out

The California Desert Protection Act has become a lesson in civics, a lesson that is as frustrating to desert activists as it is instructive. Since the House of Representatives passed its version in late July, the desert bill has progressed as slowly as a desert tortoise. By September, the legislation had become thoroughly entangled in election-year politics, and although Senator Dianne Feinstein won a critical vote halting a filibuster that threatened to impede the bill, there may be more filibusters to come.

With control of the Senate at stake in the November 8 election, the race between Democratic Senator Feinstein and her Republican opponent Rep. Michael Huffington is important to both parties. And that means the desert bill, which has the potential to help or hurt both candidates, is important to both parties. Consequently, we can expect more delaying tactics from Republican senators—primarily from Wyoming's retiring Sen. Malcolm Wallop, who opposes the legislation—until the election.

It was Senator Wallop who threatened in late September to filibuster the bill when it faced the first of the three procedural votes required in the Senate to send the legislation to conference, the joint House-Senate committee that will fashion a compromise from the two versions of the bill. On that occasion, Senator Feinstein surprised Capitol insiders by mustering a whopping 73 votes (13 more than necessary) to enforce cloture, a motion that derails a filibuster by limiting debate to a maximum of 30 hours.

In the scant time that remains, the desert bill must move through two more procedural votes. Each of the procedural votes is a potential opportunity for further debate, and therefore, for further filibusters. If the legislation survives the procedure, the conference committee is expected to act quickly to send the compromise bill back to the House and Senate for a final vote—and, perhaps, a final filibuster.

Desert bill supporters still hope to influence the outcome of the conference, which, if it comes to pass, will determine whether the bill that is sent to Congress designates the Mojave as a park or a less-protected preserve, but the opportunities are slight. Senator Feinstein will not serve on the conference committee because she is not on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that has authority over public lands legislation, and Senator Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana), who will control the Senate side of the conference committee, is allied to the National Rifle Association (NRA). The NRA has lobbied against any status for the Mojave that does not allow continued hunting there.

The House of Representatives, which has a different procedure for getting a bill to conference, is considered less of a minefield for the desert bill than the Senate. The legislation has a powerful champion in Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez), who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee.

## House passes Headwaters bill

On September 21, the House of Representatives voted 288-133 to pass Rep. Dan Hamburg's (D-Utah) Headwaters Forest Act, legislation that would authorize the Forest Service to acquire 44,000 acres of private forest land in Humboldt County as additions to the Six Rivers National Forest. The bill also would add the 3,100-acre Headwaters Grove of ancient redwoods to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Much of the opposition to the Headwaters bill came from Reps. John Doolittle (R-Rocklin) and Richard Pombo (R-Tracy), legislators who usually vote against bills that would protect public lands. In the case of the Headwaters bill, Reps. Doolittle and Pombo objected to the government's acquisition of private land, an acquisition that will command a high price. The Forest Service has valued the Headwaters Grove at \$500 million and the other forest lands at \$1 billion.

Rep. Doolittle attached an amendment to the Headwaters bill that would cap federal spending for the acquisitions at \$200 million, although the legislation also contains provisions that would allow the government to swap other assets for the forest lands. The landowner, Pacific Lumber (which is itself owned by Maxxam Inc.), has announced that it is willing to sell the Headwaters

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## Wilderness news

# Snowmobiles or wolverines: Which do you want in wilderness?

continued from page 1

forest plans, Congress in the 1984 act specifically ordered the agency to study potential additions to the Carson-Iceberg and Hoover wilderness areas—and provided detailed maps of the lands to be reviewed.

The Forest Service maps that accompany the two drafts and the final forest plan clearly indicate that the lands around Highland Lakes are proposed for wilderness designation. The Tryon Peak study area "would make a logical addition to the Carson-Iceberg," concluded the Forest Service analysis.

Why the change of heart by the Forest Service? Winter use of the Highway 4 corridor by over-the-snow vehicles has increased. Snowmobilers use snowbound Highway 4 as a route across the Sierra, and they also turn south to Highland Lakes and north to Blue Lakes. Trespass occurs frequently in both the Carson-Iceberg and Mokelumne wilderness areas.

The increased snowmobile use has chased numerous cross-country skiers away from the region, but more important is the impact on wildlife. According to the Forest Service, wolverines and pine martens use the area, and fishers have been seen nearby. These rare forest carnivores are active in the winter, when survival is especially difficult.

The Forest Service argues that snowmobilers "traditionally" have ridden the snow-covered road to reach Highland Lakes; from there they continue, off-road, onto the slopes surrounding the lakes. By leaving the wilderness boundary at the ridge top above Highland Lakes, the Forest Service would "facilitate public understanding and respect for wilderness management goals and objectives," the agency claims.

But the Forest Service does not address how it will keep vehicles out of the existing wilderness both upstream and downstream of Highland Lakes where the boundary is not on a ridge top.

Environmentalists are concerned that snowmobile enthusiasts will continue to press the Forest Service to open even more lands to their noisy recreation. Many roadless areas are managed by the agency as "near natural," a designation under which off-road vehicle use currently is prohibited.

Adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness is Pacific Valley, a roadless area that the Forest Service did not recommend for wilderness status. But the area is managed as "near natural" to protect the rare species—wolverine, fisher, and pine marten—known to inhabit the old-growth forest there.

## Headwaters bill

continued from page 4

Grove but not the other forest lands, which the company wants to log. The owner's willingness matters because the Hamburg bill does not authorize the government to acquire the lands through eminent domain, a limitation now duplicated by an amendment from Rep. Pombo requiring that the seller be willing.

Rep. Cal Dooley (D-Visalia) also amended the bill, establishing a 10-year time limit for the acquisitions. Rep. Dooley further insisted on a provision barring the Forest Service from exercising any authority over the lands until they are added to the public domain.

A companion bill, S. 2285, has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Barbara Boxer, but without the support of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the bill is unlikely to pass. Traditionally, the Senate does not consider public land legislation unless both senators from an affected state support the bill.

These rare animals are so elusive that few scientific studies have been conducted to determine how they are impacted by various forms of winter recreation. But it is known that when humans disturb their wilderness habitat, the animals disappear. Until we know just what effect snowmobiles have on wildlife, opening their habitat to motorized recreation surely is premature.

The route to Highland Lakes is a narrow corridor into the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. The Forest Service is still recommending the lands east of the route for wilderness designation. Although the Forest Service has not proposed protecting Pacific Valley, many environmentalists

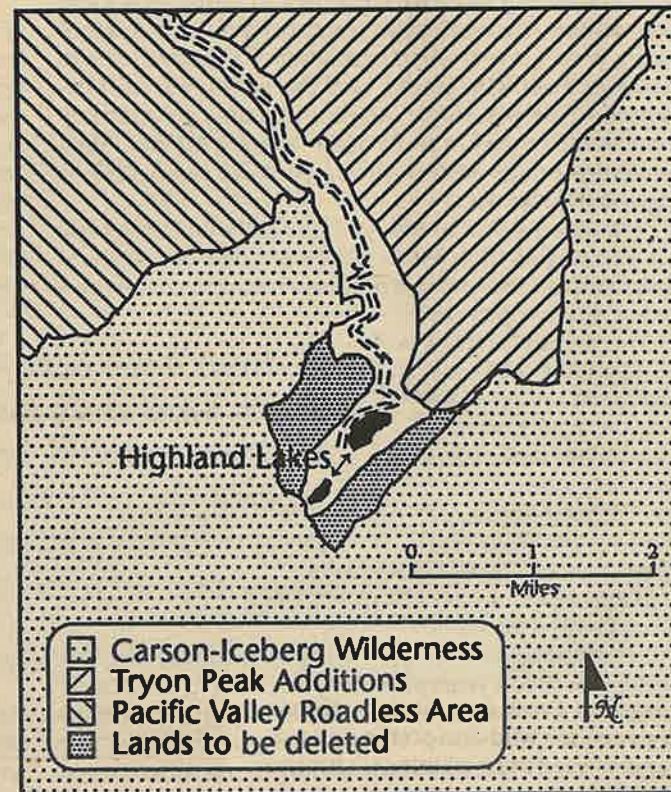
believe this area west of the corridor deserves wilderness status as well.

The logical solution to the problem is to close the Highland Lakes road to winter use. Closing the road would protect the wilderness and wildlife and reduce illegal vehicle use in the wilderness.

Changing the wilderness recommendation will require an amendment to the Stanislaus forest plan. The Forest Service is requesting public comments on its proposal through October 14. For more information, call forest planner Lisa Schwartz at (209) 532-3671 ext. 444. Send your comments to District Ranger David M. Freeland, Calaveras Ranger District, P.O. Box 500, Hathaway Pines, CA 95233.

Jim Eaton is executive director of the California Wilderness Coalition.

**The logical solution to the problem is to close the Highland Lakes road to winter use.**



In winter, the dirt road that leads from Highway 4 south to the Highland Lakes funnels snowmobilers to the brink of the wilderness—and beyond. Map by Jim Eaton

## Wilderness recovery network for California launched

By Lucy Rosenau

The Wildlands Project brought its unique vision to California in September only to discover that California activists have a pretty far-sighted vision of their own.

September 16-18, 50 activists from all over California and beyond met in Davis to draft a wilderness recovery network for the state, part of a 75-year plan to "re-wild" the continent. Encouraged to dream big and think wild, the participants in the first meeting of the California region of the Wildlands Project complied with more fervor than the organizers, themselves longtime radicals, had anticipated. The rough maps the weekend meeting produced incorporate 90 percent of California's landbase (and some off-coast areas as well) in the recovery network.

As envisioned by the Wildlands Project, the California recovery network will be linked with similar plans being drafted for neighboring regions of North America—the Great Basin, the Pacific Northwest, Baja, and the Southwest. The networks will consist of core wilderness reserves interconnected by migration corridors and surrounded by buffer zones.

It is a vision of North America's future that looks a lot like North America's past: People would live in urban pockets surrounded by a vast wilderness that is home to grizzlies, wolves, and other native species; logging, agriculture, and backcountry recreation would be restricted to the buffer zones between the urban areas and the wilderness. It is a vision that inspired activists, some of the country's most eminent conservation biologists, and other scientists to spend a summer weekend huddled over maps in a meeting room that lacks air-conditioning.

Equipped with red pencils and mylar overlays, the participants gathered around four tables to draw wilder-

ness reserves and migration corridors (buffer zones will be added when larger-scale maps are produced). The result was the stuff of dreams, or nightmares—what one Wildlands Project director has termed "blob mapping." "Can we include the Los Angeles basin?" one participant asked seriously, to the surprise of fellow mappers. In her 75-year vision, L. A. will have succumbed to earthquake and will need only restoration to qualify as wilderness.

No other major cities disappeared to the red pencils, but plenty of roads did. Roads that cross the Sierra, bisecting existing wilderness areas, were among the first to go. By the second day, Earth First veteran and Wildlands Project co-founder Dave Foreman was remarking, half-ruefully, that people usually call him a radical. At the California meeting, he found himself urging moderation.

The final day was devoted to brainstorming about how to begin implementing the wilderness recovery network. To that end, the California Wilderness Coalition, which hosted the weekend workshop, was selected to organize the California region of the Wildlands Project. The next step, once the maps from the Davis meeting are digitized, is to return them to the activists and scientists for further refinement.

Important as the maps are as an inspirational and educational tool, however, it is the wildlands that matter most. So in the meantime, the activists and the Coalition will do what they have always done—defend the wildlands and wilderness areas that remain.

For more information about the ongoing Wildlands Project in California, contact Jim Eaton at the California Wilderness Coalition, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616. And look for periodic updates in the *Wilderness Record*.

## Letters

### In defense of DFG

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original planting records dating back to World War I and even earlier. Eastern brook trout arrived in abundance during World War II when manpower was unavailable to take eggs from wild stocks, and the public was still demanding fish planting. Angling remains enormously popular with many who frequent the wilderness. Such popularity brings with it strong political persuasion to retain the status quo.

It is inconsistent by today's standards that much early fish planting of High Sierra lakes was done by the Sierra Club. Perhaps the greatest proponent of this activity was the legendary Will Colby,

a close friend of John Muir. This type of activity was not unique to the Sierra Club, however. Many individuals felt it was their obligation to play "Johnny Applefish" and to plant trout anywhere and in anything that was wet. A good example of this is pro-

vided by famed rock climber and mountaineer Norman Clyde, who for 15 years preceding his death in 1972 made a special point to come to my office in Bishop to report his most recent transplants. He was keenly aware that it was illegal to do so, but this made absolutely no difference to him. And there wasn't a judge on the eastside who would toss Norman into jail for stocking a few fish, despite the law! Thousands of wilderness enthusiasts shared these same philosophies; many still do and continue to move fish around, often (tragically) into fishless habitats.

Once fish are placed in a lake or stream they tend to persist there. This is particularly true of eastern brook trout, which can spawn successfully nearly anywhere. Planting trout only augments existing populations to provide sport and food for wilderness users. Trout populations will seldom go away spontaneously just because planting is stopped, and once they become established the "damage" is done. In the great majority of cases the horse has been gone for more than 100 years, and closing the barn door now will not help things much. So if Canyon Fred dislikes watching a DFG aircraft drop its "disgusting, exotic seed" into a lake, he might ask what right he has being there compounding the problem. I firmly agree, as a Sierra Club member since 1948 and a longtime member of the Wilderness Society, that wildernesses should "be protected as refuges where natural processes operate freely without the interference of humans." I would be sure to include here as well certain backpackers who normally urinate, defecate, disturb native fauna and flora, and do other "disgusting, exotic" things to degrade the ecosystem.

I am in total agreement that trout disrupt native aquatic ecosystems, a fact confirmed by my own research. That is why pristine aquatic ecosystems were not planted after 1957 in Inyo or Mono counties or in the higher elevations of Fresno, Madera, and Tulare counties, which are all managed from the Bishop DFG office.

As for the impact of trout on mountain yellow-legged frogs and Yosemite toads, the jury is still out. Evidence points to a definite role of introduced trout in the overall problem of declining amphibian populations, but one cannot reasonably place all of the blame on trout. Amphibians have disappeared from many locations where trout never existed. DFG biologists are neither unaware of, nor unconcerned about, such things as frogs. It is interesting to speculate on why, after trout, mountain yellow-legged frogs, and Yosemite toads had coexisted very successfully in the headwaters of Lee Vining Creek for more than 100 years following the introduction of cutthroat trout in the 1850s, unexplained depletions of these amphibians began to occur during the past two decades, and more or less concurrently, throughout much of the world.

**Trout have been in most High Sierra lakes since long before the DFG was created, or before society or even the scientific community began to think in terms of ecosystem integrity or purity.**

It is both unfair and inaccurate to state that "biologists at 'Fun and Games' believe that good fishing is more important than intact native ecosystems." In terms of competence and ethics, most DFG biologists stack up with the best. Look at the record. Most of a DFG biologist's time is spent doing his or her best to protect intact native ecosystems. If it had not been for the efforts of a few DFG biologists, most streams on the east slope would now be flowing in penstocks, water would not be flowing again in the Owens River Gorge, several recovering fish species would now be extinct, the East Walker River would still consist essentially of eight miles of mud, and the DFG Inyo-Mono Fish Slough Ecological Reserve (part of a larger Bureau of Land Management area of critical environmental concern) would now contain a housing subdivision. It is a rare day when many DFG biologists can entertain the luxury of even *thinking* about making fishing better, other than through habitat protection.

Finally, in the matter of the Silver Creek trout eradication project, this was done to remove introduced eastern brook and brown trout, present since early in the century, to re-establish native Lahontan cutthroat trout (a threatened subspecies) under direction of the Endangered Species Act. Other than in their original containers prior to extreme dilution to parts per billion during the actual eradication process, cancer-causing chemicals were not used for this. Does Canyon Fred actually think one could get away with introducing a chemical at known carcinogenic levels into public waters in 1994? Clearance by the Environmental Protection Agency and a host of other federal, state, and local agencies was necessarily obtained prior to the treatment. The chemical (rotenone) used for trout eradication is an organic compound that in no way comes even close to being a carcinogen in the concentrations used. Residues are undetectable downstream from potassium permanganate detoxification stations. There is absolutely no other known means of totally removing all the trout from a stream, short of drying it up.

As for "Fun and Games" doing such things "as a conscious attempt to foster job security," this is an absolute lie and a totally undeserved slap in the face. Along with wilderness, truth is one of the few decent things remaining on this planet. What a tragedy to see it taken so lightly!

Edwin P. (Phil) Pister  
Bishop

Phil Pister spent most of his 40-year career in Bishop as a DFG fishery biologist. In 1969 he founded and now

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### Canyon Fred responds

The underlying premise of my August piece in the *Wilderness Record* remains true—that stocking non-native fish in wilderness areas is bad for biodiversity. I apologize to your readers for neglecting to mention the role of early explorers, ranchers, and recreationists in stocking many fishless lakes in the High Sierra. I maintain, however, that the State of California fisheries bureaucracy (currently called the Department of Fish and Game or DFG), has played and continues to play a significant role in disturbing native aquatic ecosystems by stocking trout in once-fishless lakes.

It is Mr. Pister's opinion that discontinuing fish-stocking now "will not help things much" because "the damage is done." To the contrary, there are a significant number of lakes in the Sierra that would become fish-free over time if stocking by the DFG were discontinued (i.e., those lakes which are isolated from good spawning habitat). At least some prey species should show signs of recovery as predation by fish is lessened and then eliminated. These lakes could be important corridors or refuges for amphibians, such as the mountain yellow-legged frog, which are on the decline. Even in those lakes with self-sustaining fish populations, populations of prey species should increase if predation pressure attributable to supplemental stocking were lessened. We should all acknowledge the significant gaps in our collective understanding of these relationships and support an immediate ban on wilderness fish-stocking. Only then could we say with confidence that we aren't making the situation worse. And besides, many lakes would continue to support self-sustaining fisheries. (Although biocentric wilderness managers do not concern themselves with providing artificial fun and fodder for recreationists, the assurance that fish will thrive in the post-stocking era can be used to comfort those who are behind the "strong political persuasion to retain the status quo.")

I don't buy for a second Mr. Pister's argument that all fish-stocking plans are cleared with the Forest Service. He knows very well that "good interagency relations" are often considered more important than good science when it comes to land management issues. The few Forest Service managers who are willing to "stick their necks out" to do the right thing by opposing fish-stocking in wilderness are regularly snubbed by the DFG. Take the recent example of the Granite Chief Wilderness. The Forest Service drafted a wilderness plan that called for discontinuing trout stocking at lakes that had not been stocked in recent times. Before the plan was finalized, the DFG flew out and stocked lakes in the Granite Chief (without telling the Forest Service) in a blatant attempt to keep their foot in the door.

The use of rotenone to foster the reintroduction of threatened or endangered fish is a separate issue, which I raised to display the irony of an agency poisoning the same fish it earlier planted (because the released fish threatened the survival of native species). The use of rotenone also has side effects, such as killing all gill-breathing invertebrates and amphibians in the poisoned water. Thus, endemic species may be lost in an attempt to save threatened fish. The ichthyocentric viewpoint (or "adipose complex") of the fisheries agencies becomes clear when one considers that streams are not surveyed for endemic species of invertebrates before rotenone is applied. Therefore, we don't even know how many species of endemic invertebrates we may be sending into extinction in our efforts to save threatened fish.

Mr. Pister makes some very misleading statements regarding rotenone, namely "Does Canyon Fred actually think one could get away with introducing a chemical at known carcinogenic levels into public waters in 1994? ... The chemical (rotenone) used for trout eradication is an organic compound that in no way comes even close to

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### Should the CWC oppose fish-stocking in wilderness?

In the coming months, the *Wilderness Record* will continue to publish articles and opinions about fish stocking and the management of wilderness lakes and streams. In the meantime, however, your initial thoughts on the question of fish-stocking in wilderness will help the California Wilderness Coalition's board of directors decide whether to write a draft policy for further consideration by our members. Send comments to: Fish Policy, CWC, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616. Thanks.

## Letters

### Canyon Fred

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being a carcinogen in the concentrations used."

First of all, a carcinogen is a carcinogen regardless of concentration. The fact that certain levels are determined by our government to pose "acceptable risk" does not mean that there is no risk or that nobody will get cancer. It means only that our government deems that the risk is low enough to be considered "acceptable." Rather than implying that there is no risk, Mr. Pister should have provided this explanation and/or done his best to quantify the risk so that your readers could make their own decisions.

Secondly, rotenone is not a known carcinogen at this time (although it is currently being studied by the manufacturer as required by the federal Environmental Protection Agency). However, the compound known as "rotenone" only comprises 5 to 10 percent of the pesticide formula used by the DFG. The other 90 to 95 percent of the formula is other toxic synergists, emulsifiers, dispersants, and solvents. At least one of these is a known carcinogen. While Mr. Pister perceives the health risk to be negligible, other experts disagree. In commenting on the DFG's recent environmental impact report for its rotenone program, several health experts pointed to

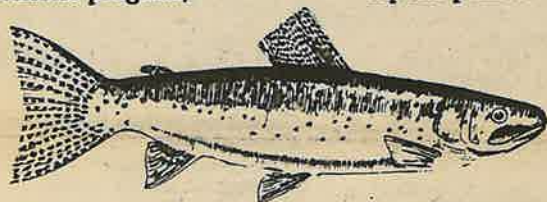
the need for more detailed studies and safety precautions before the DFG proceeds with rotenone applications.

Finally, I am compelled to respond to Mr. Pister's question about what "right" I have to be in the wilderness "compounding the problem." I believe that we all have the right to visit the wilderness as long as we take all reasonable steps to minimize our impact. This includes traveling in small groups, camping on already worn spots (away from water), forgoing campfires, packing out all that you packed in, and avoiding wet or otherwise sensitive terrain. Buzzing remote wilderness with low-flying aircraft and dropping exotic species hardly qualifies.

I have on many occasions seen the best of friends strongly disagree on issues pertaining to wilderness management. It is not surprising to me that there is a great diversity of opinion among the members of the California Wilderness Coalition regarding fish-stocking and fish-poisoning. Debate on this issue is healthy, timely, and important. I commend the *Wilderness Record* for printing these divergent views.

Canyon Fred

Canyon Fred is a scientist who prefers to remain anonymous because, he says, "the establishment doesn't look favorably on critical thinkers who question business-as-usual." This letter was abridged for publication. Copies of the unabridged letter are available from the California Wilderness Coalition, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.



### Defending DFG

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serves as executive secretary of the Desert Fishes Council, an international group of 500 university and governmental research and management biologists dedicated to the conservation of North America's arid land ecosystems. He also serves on the governing boards of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists and the Society for Conservation Biology and teaches a course in environmental ethics.

This letter was abridged for publication. Copies of the unabridged letter are available from the California Wilderness Coalition, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.

An upcoming issue of the *Wilderness Record* will feature an article about fish stocking and managing lakes and streams in wilderness areas written by a DFG scientist.



**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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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**October 14** COMMENTS DUE on a Stanislaus National Forest proposal to change the boundary of the recommended Tryon Peak addition to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Send comments to: David M. Freeland, District Ranger, Calaveras Ranger District, Stanislaus NF, P. O. Box 500, Hathaway Pines, CA 95233. (See article on page 1.)

**October 16** MEETING of the public involvement team that is helping develop a management plan for the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch wildernesses. For details, call the Inyo National Forest at (619) 873-2400. (See article on page 3.)

**November 8** ELECTION DAY

**November 18** COMMENTS DUE on the Forest Service's wild-and-scenic river recommendations for the Tahoe National Forest. Send comments to: Forest Supervisor John Skinner, Tahoe NF, P. O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959. (See article on page 4.)

### Wilderness Trivia Answer:

The name commemorates long-gone Highland City, which was built on the divide between the Stanislaus and Carson rivers.

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### CWC T-shirts: buy-a-diversity!

Michael (left) models our six-tone landscape shirt now available in jade and fuchsia as well as the ever-popular light blue and pale green for \$15. Reed wears a design by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige or light gray for \$12. All shirts are 100 percent double-knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.

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The *Wilderness Record* is the monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition, but not all articles published herein reflect the views of the Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit would be appreciated. Subscription is free with membership.

The *Record* welcomes submissions on California wilderness and related subjects. We reserve the right to edit all work.

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