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WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

ISSN 0194-3030

Vol. 20, No. 1

2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5 Davis, CA 95616

January, 1995



Some of the proposed Soda Mountain Wilderness on the California-Oregon border is unprotected under Option 9, the president's plan for the spotted-owl forests of the Pacific Northwest.
Photo by Marc Prevost

The politics of wilderness, 1995 (It's just as bad as you thought)

By Steve Evans

In regard to the environment, voters may have thrown out the proverbial baby with the bath water in the November '94 election. Frustrated by gridlock and out-of-touch politicians, the voters put the Republican Party in charge of Congress for the first time since Harry Truman was president.

Ironically, the same Republicans who now run Congress masterminded the legislative gridlock that prevailed through much of 1994. And based on their environmental voting records, many of the Republican leaders apparently have abandoned the conservation tradition of Teddy Roosevelt in favor of the rabid anti-environmentalism of Rush Limbaugh.

As a result, conservationists can expect an all-out assault on many of the nation's most important and protective environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. Furthermore, voters can expect significant changes in the federal budget which impact the environment, like massive cuts in the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory budget and increases in the Forest Service's timber sale and road building budget. Little new legislation to protect public lands in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System, Wilderness System,

and National Park System will be politically feasible, at least in the next two years. And the new congressional regime is expected to push legislation that will require planners to determine the impact of new federal regulations and initiatives on jobs and the economy.

From a California perspective, this means no omnibus rivers bill in 1995, no wilderness bill for roadless areas on public lands, and no legislative protection for ancient forests. In fact, we can expect Congress to cut funding needed for major resource management programs. We also can expect to see extraordinarily destructive legislation, like a new federal bill to authorize and fund Auburn Dam on the American River.

Here's a quick but not complete synopsis of California's election results:

Congressional Authorizing Committees The election will result in new leaders for the key committees in Congress that authorize environmental legislation. California Representative George Miller will no longer chair the House Natural Resources Committee, and Senator Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) will no longer lead the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The new chairs are a brace of Alaskans with two of the worst environmental voting records in Congress—Representative Don Young and Senator Frank Murkowski. According

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Judge approves Clinton's plan for Northwest forests

By Ryan Henson

Ending five years of litigation, U. S. District Judge William Dwyer ruled in late December that Option 9, President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, complies with federal environmental laws and satisfies his previous order that the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) develop a credible plan for managing old-growth forest habitat in the Pacific Northwest. Dwyer's ruling clears the way for approximately 1.1 billion board feet of timber to be cut annually in the Pacific Northwest, including 224 million board feet a year from the Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, Six Rivers, and Klamath national forests in northwestern California.

The ruling disappointed conservationists who thought Judge Dwyer was inclined to reject Option 9 in favor of a more protective version of the plan. John Fitzgerald of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (a plaintiff in the case against Option 9), regretted that many areas of "ancient forest will be lost forever under this ruling."

Option 9 is the latest in a long series of plans developed by the Forest Service, BLM, and Fish and Wildlife Service to manage habitat for the declining northern spotted owl. Since the 1970s, conservationists have defeated every major spotted owl management plan, arguing that too much ancient forest habitat would be destroyed and that the plans focused too narrowly on the spotted owl while ignoring other old-growth inhabitants. After previous administrations failed to resolve the issue, Option 9 was offered by the Clinton administration as a compromise that would allow continued logging while maintaining stable populations of spotted owls, salmon, steelhead, marbled murrelets, and other species. Though conservationists were pleased with some provisions of the plan, many felt that Option 9 was too lax and threatened the continued existence of the very species it was supposed to protect.

Now that it has been endorsed by Judge Dwyer, Option 9 will have dramatic impacts on federal land management in northwestern California: 1.5 million acres of federal land have been designated late-successional (old-growth) reserves; another 799,000 acres around

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Coalition news

Monthly Report

It always is sad to lose an old friend, but last month we learned that two longtime Coalition members had died: Clyde Wahrhaftig and Gordon Robinson. I knew both these men for more than twenty years and learned much from them.

I first met Clyde in 1971 in Washington, D.C. We were there on behalf of the Emigrant Wilderness, and it was the first time either of us had testified before a congressional committee. We tried to convince the lawmakers that a strip of land along the Sierra Crest used by miners was essential to the Emigrant-Hoover-Yosemite wilderness complex.

I was a long-haired environmental extremist (although that term came later); Clyde a distinguished geologist who had studied the area for 18 years. We lost.

But we didn't give up. For the next decade we fought the miners, got the backing of the Forest Service, and built grassroots support.

In 1984, Ronald Reagan signed the California Wilderness Act. Among the 1.8 million acres of national forest wilderness in that bill was 6,100 acres added to the Emigrant Wilderness—the mining corridor.

Wendy ran into Clyde as well. As an undergraduate at U. C. Berkeley, she took a course from him. Clyde did his best to convince her that geology was her calling in life, but with role models like Bob Schneider and me (geology majors both), she resisted the temptation. But she thoroughly enjoyed his class.

My association with Gordon Robinson goes back even further. While travelling around the west in 1969 with another mentor, Francis Walcott, I stopped in Wyoming at the proposed Laramie Peak Wilderness. Gordon was there, and he was appalled at my clumsy attempts to clean my camera lenses. He taught me the proper care of ground glass.

In the years that followed, I learned about forestry from Gordon. I began to identify trees, understand board feet and cubic inches, and estimate timber volume. We tramped through forests together and looked at clearcut disaster areas. He was ever willing to attend our activist workshops to spread the gospel of "excellent forestry."

We learned that forestry was not a subject controlled by the timber priesthood. Gordon taught us that if a logging operation looked bad, it probably was. Great advice still.

I was working on the Snow Mountain Wilderness and asked his opinion about a timber sale (already sold) that called for injecting hardwoods with herbicide. He recalled being taught that the "oak was mother to the pine," an early lesson in biodiversity. We successfully fought that timber sale. If you visit The Pocket area west of St. John Mountain, you will find those oaks continuing their symbiotic relationship with the conifers.

During this time, every forester with the timber industry and every forester with the Forest Service openly ridiculed Gordon. He was called lunatic, unscientific, romantic. Even some environmentalists began to doubt Gordon; after all, all the other foresters said he was crazy. He was the proverbial voice in the wilderness.

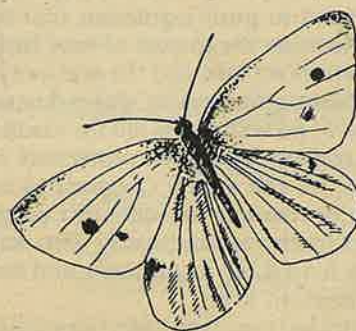
But Gordon didn't cave in to the pressure. He could take the heat and stay in the kitchen. It was a good lesson. Gordon taught us that even though we might not win popularity contests, we must stay true to our principles.

His stubbornness extended beyond forestry. In the 1970s a number of Sierra Club employees grew their hair long and came to work in Levis. Management decreed that since the office was in the financial district of San Francisco, proper grooming and attire were dictated. Gordon promptly stopped wearing a tie and shaving. His flowing silver locks and beard became his trademark.

Bob Schneider and I went to the opening of Gordon's art exhibit early in 1994. We hadn't known he had been painting for decades, and it was delightful to discover this different side to our longtime friend. I didn't know it was the last time I would see him.

Both Clyde and Gordon lived long, productive lives. During their 80 plus years they touched and influenced many lives. In the honor roll of California wilderness saviors, their names are forever etched.

By Jim Eaton



A lot of help from our friends

Neither the *Wilderness Record* nor the California Wilderness Coalition could exist without help from individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the state and beyond. We are especially grateful to some especially generous friends of the Coalition who supported our work in the second half of 1994:

Harriet Allen; Ascent Technologies Inc.; Virginia Bacher; Art Baggett; California Alpine Club; Alan Carlton; Edythe & Samuel Cohen; Lenore Cohen; Wendy Cohen & Jim Eaton; Kimball Cranney; Eastern Sierra Audubon Society; Lillian & Claud Eaton; Mr. & Mrs. John Frankel; Dennis Hadenfeldt; Stanley Haye; Mike Henstra & Karen Northcutt; Kenneth Himes; Scott Kruse; Robin Kulakow & Bill Julian; Jordan Lang & Ton Vorster; Norman B. Livermore; Chris Motley & Trudy Baltz; Peter Norquist; William Patterson; Robert Potts; Richard Runcie; Anne Schneider; Bob Schneider; Skip Smith; Susan Smith; Frances Stevenson; James Swinerton; Mary Tappel; Paul Tarczy; Martin & Laura Towbin; Jon & Peggy Watterson; Wilderness Press; H. G. Wilshire.

Wilderness Trivia Question

What coastal and marine areas in California enjoy wilderness protection?

Answer on page 7

Remembering...

Clyde Wahrhaftig

It was with regret that we learned that geologist Clyde Wahrhaftig had died. Perhaps most widely known for his book *Streetcar to Subduction*, a guide to points of geological interest in the San Francisco Bay Area that can be reached by public transit, Clyde also leaves a legacy of wilderness.

In the early 1970s, Congress began considering legislation to establish the Emigrant Wilderness. A 21-mile-long strip of land stretching from near Sonora Pass into the heart of the Sierra north of Yosemite National Park led to some mining claims, and the Forest Service opposed including the corridor in the wilderness as long as the mines were active.

Clyde went to Washington, testifying that the mining claims near Horse Meadow had no commercial value and that the road to the claims was being used not for mining but for private recreation by the mine owners and their friends. It took Congress more than a decade to come around, but in 1984 the California Wilderness Act added the disputed 6,100-acre corridor to the Emigrant Wilderness.

Gordon Robinson

The environmental movement lost a true friend when Gordon Robinson died at age 83 on November 27, 1994. He was a person of principle, idealism, and courage.

I first met Gordon in 1967, at his Sierra Club office on Bush Street in downtown San Francisco. His desks were piled high with maps and reports on the proposed Redwood National Park. But Gordon was not an office forester. He really knew forests and often wandered through the majestic Redwood giants.

A graduate of the U. C. Berkeley School of Forestry, Gordon worked from 1939 to 1966 for the Southern Pacific Transportation Company managing timberlands in northern California. It was there that he refined his concepts of excellent forestry. When the company sold off much of its timberlands, Gordon left to work for the Sierra Club as chief forestry spokesperson.

Gordon spoke loudly, clearly, and effectively in the face of ongoing attacks and efforts to discredit his approach to good forestry. He knew that forests were neither tree zoos nor corn crops.

Prodded and assisted by friends, in 1988 Gordon wrote *The Forest and the Trees: A Guide to Excellent Forestry*. The book is a must-read for environmentalists working on forestry issues.

Gordon wrote, "I have given special attention to soils, which are essential to the continuation of life as we know it on this planet. Forest soils are more fragile than those of agricultural lands and generally are only superficially considered by foresters, if not outright neglected." The passage is symbolic of his holistic approach to forest care and in marked contrast to the baser goal of corporate timber.

Gordon was a friend to many and a reminder always to stand for principle. He was loved and will be missed.

As you enter the heart of Redwood Creek and the wild flow of its water, / you emerge in another world. / You are a leaf in the water, / your time here an instant in the timelessness of the forest

—Peggy Wayburn (from *The Last Redwoods*)

Gifts in memory of Gordon should be sent to SCLDF, EPIC, Earth Island Institute, or Forests Forever. Or, be an activist for the forests.

—Bob Schneider

Wilderness at Pt. Reyes

Does habitat diversity have a future at Pt. Reyes?

By David Rains Wallace

The Phillip Burton Wilderness in Point Reyes National Seashore is undoubtedly one of the most heavily visited areas in the wilderness system, for good reasons. It's the only unit that's an hour's drive from the Bay Area, and one of the few wilderness areas bordering the ocean. Its mosaic of habitats—from beaches, to coastal scrub and prairie, to riparian thickets, to old-growth Douglas fir forest, to ridge top grasslands—provides a diversity of wildlife and scenery that would be extraordinary anywhere. So close to a megapolis, it's nothing short of miraculous.

In the three decades I've been visiting the Burton, I've seen it change considerably. Many changes have been positive. Overgrazed and weedy pastures have reverted to native shrubs and grasses. Denuded streambeds have reverted to riparian vegetation. Wildlife populations have grown. The bobcat population in the wilderness is phenomenal, for example. I see one or more bobcats on about every other visit.

Other changes in recent years have made me wonder about the Burton's future. Trails are deteriorating under the heavy use. Mountain bike tracks are everywhere despite the "no bikes" signs at trailheads. Horseback use is so heavy, particularly around the Five Brooks area, that stretches of trail are deep dust in the dry season and deep mud in the wet. One must sympathize with the Park Service's dilemma in dealing with these problems. Horseback riding is a legitimate use, and mountain bikers are very hard to control. They may degrade the hiker's experience, but they probably don't threaten the area's overall ecological quality.

Ironically, a natural process now well underway in the Burton could affect at least some aspects of ecological quality as well as the user's experience. Douglas fir is rapidly invading forest glades, coastal prairies, and other grasslands, including some Bishop pine groves in the north end. This invasion is fascinating and impressive to watch, as thousands of little trees suddenly cover the bare slopes of Mt. Wittenberg, the glades along the Woodward Valley trail, or the grassy slopes at the ocean end of the Bear Valley trail. The implications for someone who likes the

present mosaic of forest and open habitats is unsettling, though. In another decade or two, most of the present grassland and scrub in the Burton may look like a Weyerhaeuser tree farm. (Much of the Burton is a former tree farm. A lot of the Douglas fir was planted during various reforestation projects before the Seashore was established, or grew naturally after heavy logging in the 1950s.)

Of course, the scrub and grasslands in the Burton largely are the result of the century of ranching and logging before the Seashore (some of it may date back to Miwok land management, too). Reversion to Douglas fir is natural, and stopping it would require either wildfire or human intervention. There's certainly no excess of protected Douglas fir forest in the world, so maybe the Burton's reversion to it would be positive. Yet I think some things would be lost in the process, and not only from the human viewpoint. I don't think the bobcat population would benefit from the tree-farm stage of forest reversion. Every bobcat I've seen in the Burton has been in grass or scrub, where the gophers, rabbits, quail, and voles are. There'll still be bobcats in a tree-farm Burton, but probably not as many. There certainly won't be as many gophers, rabbits, quail, and voles. There won't be as many poppies, lupines, tidytips, brodiaeas, and other grassland wildflowers either.

At present, the Park Service is letting reversion proceed freely. In the past year, I've noticed one small controlled burn at Divide Meadow, which was mainly to



Douglas fir along the trail to the summit of Mt. Wittenberg, as it looked in the 1970s.
Photo by Jim Eaton

eradicate a patch of broom (one problem which wall-to-wall Douglas fir will solve). They put out a brush fire south of Coast Camp with fire lines and chemical retardant.

Worrying about forest reversion may seem trivial when wilderness is threatened by so many human-caused factors. Yet California's high biodiversity is a function of just the kind of habitat mosaic that's starting to disappear from the Burton. The situation there isn't unique in California, where ever-spreading property development around public lands makes fire unpopular both in its wild state and as a management tool. I'd bet, at least, that most wilderness users would prefer a mixture of forest, ridge top and headland meadows, and brush-covered slopes to a mixture of forest and Douglas fir saplings.

David Rains Wallace is the author of *The Klamath Knot*.

From the archives: a master plan to develop Pt. Reyes

By Jim Eaton

Few visitors hiking through the forests and glades or along the beaches of Point Reyes National Seashore are aware they are in a federally designated wilderness area, the Phillip Burton Wilderness.

Fewer still know that just 30 years ago nearly all of Point Reyes was in private ownership. As Congress worked with glacial speed on legislation to protect the area, trees were being logged along Inverness Ridge, oil exploration rights were being leased, and subdivisions with names like Drakes Beach Estates were being built.

Obviously, the National Seashore became a reality. But this story is about the original master plan the National Park Service had for Point Reyes, a plan that included building highways from Drakes Bay to the southern end of the Seashore, damming and dredging Limantour Estero (a 600-acre estuary), and constructing a marina, coffee and souvenir shop, and 1,000 drive-in campsites.

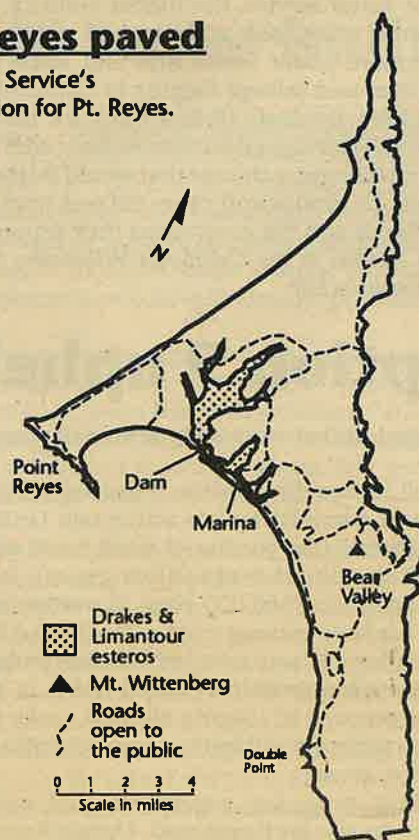
As Point Reyes defender Bill Duddleson uncovered, the original 1965 plan was prepared by a two-person team, a landscape architect and a civil engineer. They proposed spending \$32 million to develop the Seashore, including 51 miles of two- and four-lane highways.

The planners anticipated two freeways stretching from San Rafael and Novato to Point Reyes Station, linking U.S. 101 to State Route 1. From Route 1, a four-lane expressway would lead into the Seashore near Bear Valley where it would ascend the slopes of Mt. Wittenberg en route to

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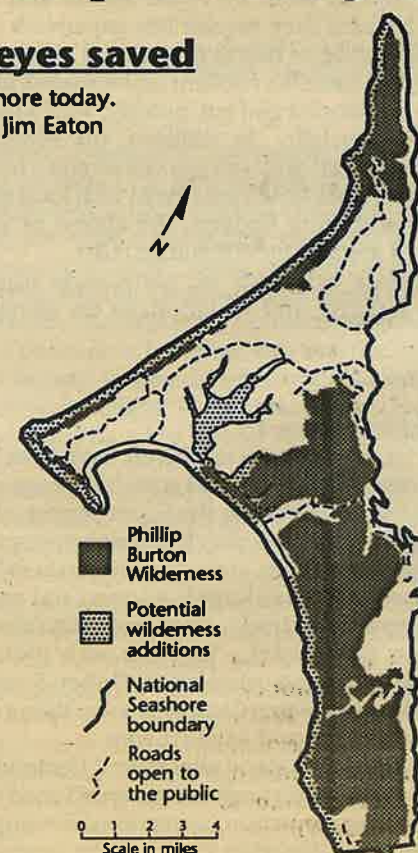
Pt. Reyes paved

The Park Service's 1965 vision for Pt. Reyes.



Pt. Reyes saved

The seashore today.
Maps by Jim Eaton



Ancient forests

Bad medicine:

Forest Service calls for increased salvage logging to solve "forest health" problems

By Ryan Henson

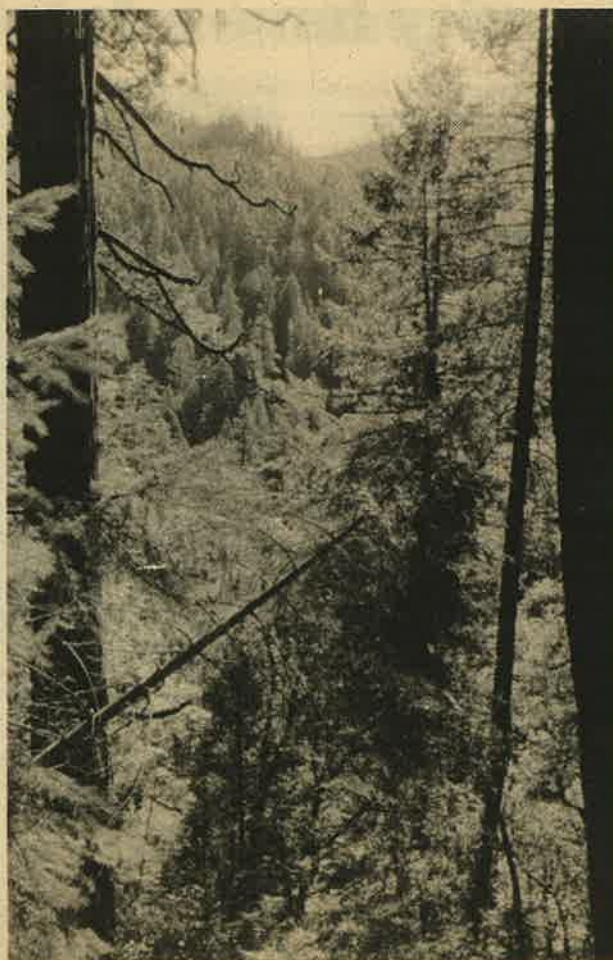
Citing a "forest health crisis," the Forest Service recently unveiled its Western Forest Health Initiative, a proposal designed to address the result of decades of logging, road construction, and fire suppression on national forest lands: fragmented old-growth forests, highly flammable logging debris, and fewer wildfires to thin young trees from the forest understory. Over time these management practices created young, crowded forests more vulnerable to insects, disease, and fire than the ancient groves they replaced.

Instead of proposing fire, old-growth protection, and selective thinning to correct the problems, however, the initiative calls for salvage logging (the cutting of supposedly dead and dying trees) and thinning on a massive scale, including a full 1.5 billion board feet from over 600,000 acres of national forest land within the next few years. Though some conservationists support both the proposed thinning and the agency's commitment to set prescribed fires (controlled burns) on over 300,000 acres of forest and grasslands, many see the salvage logging proposals as a step in the wrong direction.

Fueling the controversy is the Forest Service's goal of logging and thinning over 100,000 acres of roadless national forest lands. The irony is that roadless areas are considered models of forest health by environmental activists and conservation biologists—the benchmarks for restoring other, more developed areas. When the Western Ancient Forest Campaign asked for an explanation of this seemingly counterproductive proposal, the Forest Service claimed that salvage logging in roadless areas is necessary to save salmon streams from the threat of catastrophic fire but was unable to offer any scientific evidence to support its contention.

The Forest Service's renewed emphasis on salvage logging comes as no surprise to conservationists; the agency has relied increasingly on salvage sales to reach its annual timber production targets. Despite the often profound environmental impacts of salvage logging, these sales are popular with the Forest Service and the timber industry because they require less paperwork than green sales (the logging of healthy trees) and are not subject to many of the same environmental constraints. Salvage sales can be planned and cut quickly, with a minimum of regulatory oversight. In addition, the Forest Service is allowed to keep all of its salvage sale receipts, in contrast to green sale receipts which are shared with local counties. In a time of shrinking budgets, the appeal of salvage sale revenues is apparently difficult to resist.

California wildlands are particularly threatened by the new initiative and its emphasis on salvage logging.



Mill Creek Roadless Area in the Lassen National Forest may be logged because the Forest Service believes salvage logging will improve forest health. Photo by Jim Eaton

Salvage sales already have replaced green sales as the primary threat to roadless areas in California. Indeed, over 85 percent of the roadless area timber sales the California Wilderness Coalition opposed in the last five years have been salvage operations. Currently, salvage sales are being planned in (or very near) roadless areas of the Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, Toiyabe, Modoc, and Lassen national forests.

Adding to these threats is the hysteria arising from recent fires in the Sierra Nevada and other parts of the state. The Forest Service, the timber industry, and their congressional allies took advantage of public fears and misconceptions about forest fires and forest health to push for increased salvage logging in California. Representative John Doolittle (R-Roseville), for instance, has sought to make salvage sales immune from administrative and legal challenges, a change that would tie the hands of environmental groups and other citizens working to defend wildlands and the ecosystems they support.

Ryan Henson is the California Wilderness Coalition's conservation associate.

Option 9 upheld

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streams, lakes, wetlands, and rivers have been designated riparian reserves; and 565,000 acres have been administratively withdrawn by either the Forest Service or BLM from most logging and other development activities. Option 9 also designates certain areas "key watersheds" where no net increase in road mileage is allowed and road closures for the benefit of salmon, steelhead, and other sensitive species are encouraged. Together with national parks, wilderness areas, and other lands, Option 9 means 75–85 percent of northwestern California's remaining old-growth forest will be protected in some way.

In addition to its land allocations, Option 9 toughens Forest Service and BLM regulations on off-road vehicle use, grazing, road construction, recreational development, and other activities. The plan also includes programs to hire

unemployed timber workers to restore damaged ecosystems.

For all its benefits, Option 9 has serious flaws. The reserves and administratively-withdrawn lands are subject to thinning (the cutting of small trees) and salvage logging (the cutting of dead and dying trees). In addition, the plan designates 660,000 acres in northwestern California as adaptive management areas (AMAs) for experimental logging and watershed restoration projects. Since the Clinton administration created AMAs in part to increase the amount of logging allowed under Option 9, restoration probably will be the exception rather than the rule in these areas.

Roadless areas, key watersheds, and residual old-growth groves also are threatened. Option 9 requires only

Same roadless area, same mistake

Logging proposed for Klamath's Tom Martin Roadless Area

The Tom Martin Roadless Area of the Klamath National Forest is a land of steep slopes, deep woods, and streams dancing with native trout. But it may soon be a land of helicopters and felled trees if the Forest Service's planned Lick timber sale goes forward.

The Forest Service says removing some dead or dying trees and thinning groves that are too dense will improve the health of the forest, which lies within the territory of the northern spotted owl and therefore within the territory covered by Option 9, the president's plan to protect the threatened owl and other old-growth dependent species by protecting their habitat. But conservationists question whether logging is the best way to promote healthy forests (see article at left) and maintain that the integrity of the roadless area should be preserved.

Only a portion of the roadless area, the northeastern slope of Tom Martin Peak, is included in the larger Lick planning area which extends on both sides of the Scott River, home to steelhead trout and coho and chinook salmon. The steep slopes that descend to the river have unstable soil and are prone to erosion, so much so that the Forest Service, in its Klamath forest plan, stated that "landslide potential is high in this area." And in the 1980s, another timber sale planned for the same location had to be abandoned when the agency determined that logging would be too expensive.

Although only a portion of the roadless area would be logged under the Lick plan, the California Wilderness Coalition contends that the Forest Service must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the sale. At present, the agency is writing a watershed analysis, as required by Option 9, and an environmental assessment, a less exacting document than an EIS. Although the Tom Martin Roadless Area has been diminished by past logging, it still meets the 5,000-acre threshold for an EIS.

What you can do

The Forest Service will accept public comments on the proposed timber sale through February 1. Write to District Ranger Robert G. Lindsay at the Scott River Ranger District, 11263 N. Highway 3, Fort Jones, CA 96032 and request that the roadless area be left out of the Lick sale for the following reasons:

- The roadless area is characterized by unstable soils;
- Forest health improvement funds should be used to rehabilitate young stands—not old-growth groves;
- To preserve salmon and steelhead populations in the Scott River watershed, all roadless areas and old-growth groves must be protected;
- Forest Service regulations require that an EIS be prepared before a roadless area of 5,000 acres or more may be logged.

a cursory watershed analysis before roadless areas and key watersheds may be logged and laced with roads (existing laws may impose other restraints, however). No road construction is allowed in roadless areas within key watersheds, but these wildlands may still be logged from helicopters and balloons or by other extraordinary means. And the plan requires that only small patches of old-growth forest be retained in the matrix (the lands not in reserves or other protective designations) for the benefit of sensitive plants and wildlife, an omission that could leave reserves isolated without the linking corridors of habitat the species need.

Option 9 was adopted by the Clinton administration in April 1994. Since then, the Forest Service and BLM have

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Wilderness management

A chance to evict the cows from Deer Mtn. Roadless Area

By Ryan Henson

The 11,700-acre Deer Mountain Roadless Area of the Mendocino National Forest is a rarity in California: an expanse of chaparral, foothill woodland, riparian, and serpentine soil-dependent ecosystems unbroken by the innumerable roads, fire breaks, off-road vehicle routes, subdivisions, and other developments that mar similar habitats throughout the state. This haven for wildlife and sensitive plant species has suffered its share of abuse, however, mostly from overgrazing along the ridge tops and from the conversion of native chaparral thickets to pastures on lands bordering the roadless area.

After years of denying its ecological value, the Forest Service has begun to give the area its due. The draft land and resource management plan for the Mendocino National Forest proposes setting aside 8,600 acres for primitive recreation and habitat protection. Though conservationists believe the entire roadless area should be similarly designated in the final Mendocino forest plan, which is expected soon, the Forest Service has made a good start. In addition, instead of continuing to encroach on the area by clearing chaparral and introducing sheep, as was proposed in the mid-1980s, the Forest Service is now moving to correct grazing problems in the roadless area and surrounding lands.

The agency's first proposal to stop overgrazing in the area is outlined in the recently released environmental assessment (EA) for the Doe Peak grazing allotment. In

that document, the Forest Service admits that if overgrazing continues, soil productivity will be "permanently impaired" in places. The EA further states that destruction of vegetation and other sources of cover around springs is preventing quail and other birds from finding shelter from predators while drinking. (On a happier note, the EA concludes that oak woodlands are regenerating in the region, something that is failing to occur in many other parts of California where cattle trample and devour young oaks before they can mature.)

To correct the problems, the Forest Service proposes to reduce by one third the amount of forage cattle may consume in the allotment and to create more cover for wildlife near developed water sources. In addition, the agency plans to allow cattle to graze only two months a year. Though many conservationists object to cattle grazing in roadless areas and other sensitive lands—and some oppose public lands grazing altogether—the Forest Service proposals for the Doe Peak allotment are a real step forward.

There are, however, some serious problems with the EA. The document fails to address the impacts of grazing

on water quality, an important consideration since there are several springs, ephemeral streams, and other water sources in the allotment, including Grindstone Creek, a major drainage proposed for wild-and-scenic river status by local activists. In dry foothill woodland ecosystems like Deer Mountain, animals have fewer water sources to choose from than creatures in higher, wetter habitats. Since overgrazing can lower water tables, pollute streams, and destroy riparian areas, what little water exists in these environments must be protected. It is critical that the Forest Service study the impacts of grazing on water quality in every grazing EA it prepares and assess the health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems at every opportunity. This is a good idea in any case; in this case, it is required under Option 9, President Clinton's plan for Pacific Northwest forests which designates riparian reserves around all streams, springs, and wetlands and establishes criteria for cattle grazing. Most importantly, Option 9 stipulates that if riparian reserves are harmed by livestock, grazing must be reduced or eliminated. That Option 9's grazing standards are never mentioned in the EA is a serious oversight.

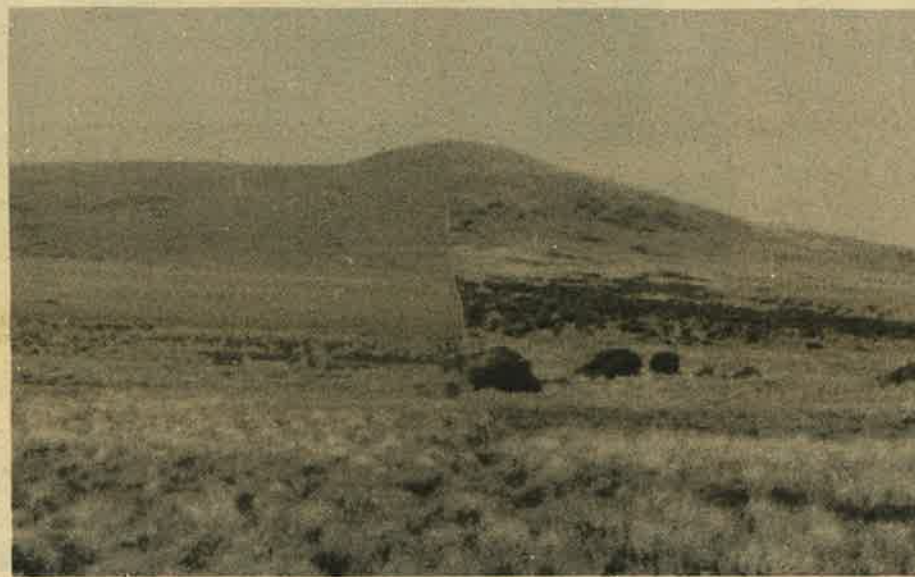
What you can do

The Forest Service will accept public comments on the Doe Peak Allotment EA until January 13 (your letter must be postmarked by that date). Please write to Mike Van Dame, Covelo Ranger District, Mendocino National Forest, 78150 Covelo Road, Covelo, CA 95428 and

- thank the Forest Service for attempting to end overgrazing in the area;

- request that the EA be amended to include specific provisions of Option 9's riparian reserve management and water quality concerns; and

- express support for either Alternative 1, which would phase out grazing, or Alternative 2, which would reduce grazing by one third.



A fence divides grazed lands (left) from ungrazed lands at Pt. Reyes National Seashore.

Photo by Jim Eaton

Babbitt retrenches on grazing reform

Taking the measure of the incoming 104th Congress, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced in December that he has abandoned his crusade to impose higher fees on ranchers who graze livestock on public lands. The remaining elements of Babbitt's 1994 plan to reform public lands grazing, which was to have taken effect this month, are intact for now, but their implementation has been delayed six months so the new Congress can have its say.

This is the Clinton administration's second setback on grazing reform. After the last Congress rejected the administration's bid to enact grazing reform, Babbitt announced he would incorporate his reforms in new regulations for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, the two agencies that administer most of the West's federal lands where livestock graze (see July 1994 WR). Now the regulatory approach to grazing reform appears endangered by the clout of Western lawmakers and the Republican leadership's antipathy to federal regulation.

The financial core of the reform package—a proposal to double the fees charged ranchers who graze cattle or sheep on public lands—generated the most controversy in a series of public meetings Babbitt hosted throughout the West. Currently, ranchers pay \$1.98 for every month a cow and her calf graze. By contrast, the average fee for grazing on private lands in California is \$10.40, a discrepancy that has led many environmentalists to deride public lands grazing as a subsidy and a boondoggle. The consensus the administration wanted never developed, not at the meetings and not in the written comments—more than 30,000 of them—that the public submitted as the reform plan evolved.

Babbitt's other proposed reforms, including stricter standards for grazing in fragile environments and penalties for ranchers who do not comply with them, are addressed in a final environmental impact statement published in the Federal Register of December 22, 1994. For more information, contact Mike Ferguson at the Bureau of Land Management, (202) 452-7740, or Jerry McCormick at the Forest Service, (202) 205-1457.

Cabin to be built in Yosemite W'ness

By Jim Eaton

The National Park Service is proposing to build a ranger station at Little Yosemite Valley inside the Yosemite Wilderness. The agency argues that a permanent structure "will allow rangers to better assist visitors, protect resources more diligently, and have food and supplies stored securely."

Several environmental organizations are not sympathetic. "Our initial reaction is disbelief," wrote Peter Browning of the High Sierra Hikers Association. "It is our understanding that it is not legal to construct such permanent facilities in wilderness areas, without first making very detailed findings that such facilities are absolutely essential."

Though the overnight trailhead permit system means 60 backpackers at most can stay in the area each night, there are no controls on day use. On a Saturday last August, 2,800 visitors were counted entering the Mist Trail corridor near the wilderness boundary. On that same day 724 hikers were counted at the shoulder of Half Dome.

Because of the heavy use, the Park Service feels it necessary to station rangers at Little Yosemite Valley twenty-four hours a day except during the four months of heaviest snow. The tent cabins currently available to rangers can be used only six months of the year.

The Park Service argues that a permanent cabin will enhance the agency's ability to handle medical and search-and-rescue emergencies, improve health and safety conditions for rangers, and reduce risk of employee exposure to Hanta virus and other rodent-borne diseases. Skeptics counter that controlling the number of visitors will lessen medical emergencies, that reducing housekeeping chores hardly justifies a permanent building, and that the rodent population will *increase* if there is a year-round cabin for shelter. They object to felling trees, excavating soil for a foundation, and building a leach field sewage system in the wilderness.

"We believe that this proposal would be damaging to the wilderness character," wrote Peggy Dylan of Central Sierra Wilderness Watch, "as well as reinforce a mistaken but unfortunately common mind set—that it is permissible to construct permanent facilities within wilderness for the purpose of improving administrative efficiency."

The Wilderness Act mandates that there shall be no structure or installation (or roads or motorized equipment) within a wilderness "except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area)."

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Wilderness news

Implementing Option 9

continued from page 4

begun implementing the plan with mixed results: conservationists have praised (with reservations) the BLM's implementation of Option 9 and criticized the Forest Service. But since most of the land covered by Option 9 is managed by the Forest Service, the bad is outweighing the good.

Many activists fear the Forest Service is doing all it can to exploit Option 9's loopholes. The agency's watershed analyses have been prepared hastily with a minimum of research and favor development over restoration. Lately, the agency has argued that it must log old-growth forests to get the money it needs to restore watersheds, an ugly irony since most watersheds in need of restoration were damaged in the first place by logging and road construction. And recent grazing, logging, and recreation development plans have omitted Option 9's standards and guidelines, revealing that many Forest Service staff are still confused and generally uninformed about the plan.

Judge Dwyer noted in his decision that Option 9 risks violating several environmental laws if it departs substantially from any of the protections it grants old-growth ecosystems and the species dependent on them. So the success or failure of Option 9 will be determined in the coming years as the plan is implemented fully. For northwestern California, the most important test will come when the final land and resource management plans for the Mendocino, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath national forests are released in the next few months. These plans will clarify the specific details of Option 9, including the amount of land to be withdrawn from development, the number of timber sales allowed each year, and the changes in grazing, recreation, and timber management needed to meet Option 9's requirements. Following the release of these plans, a steady stream of timber sales, grazing proposals, and other projects is expected. Although the conservation commu-

nity lost its court challenge to Option 9, many feel the real battle will be fought through appeals of these smaller, specific proposals.

Those appeals may be forestalled, however, by Congress, where a new anti-conservation majority already is planning to mandate increased logging on federal lands. Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon), incoming chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has said he will sponsor legislation requiring the Forest Service and BLM to log at twice the level called for under Option 9. Worse, Senator Hatfield proposes making these accelerated timber sales immune from environmental laws and administrative and judicial reviews.



The Merced River flows through Little Yosemite Valley,
Yosemite Wilderness Photo by Jim Eaton

Though several environmental groups have expressed an interest in appealing Judge Dwyer's ruling to a higher court, most seem resigned to challenge the plan project by project. That will be difficult enough, with activists fighting anti-conservation members of Congress on one front and the Forest Service and BLM on the other, just to preserve what little is left of northwestern California's irreplaceable wildlands.

Yosemite cabin

continued from page 5

Ranger cabins are found in some wilderness areas, especially National Park wildernesses, but this is the first time an agency has proposed building a cabin *after* the wilderness was established.

In its initial wilderness review for Yosemite National Park, the Park Service proposed that Little Yosemite Valley not be designated as wilderness. Overwhelming public support for wilderness led the agency to reconsider, and in 1984 Congress concurred, designating 95 percent of the national park as the Yosemite Wilderness.

Environmental groups opposing construction of a permanent cabin argue that excessive use is the real cause of the problems facing the Park Service. They recommend limiting day use in the wilderness and studying the removal of the cables that allow hikers to ascend the summit of Half Dome.

What you can do

The Park Service says that if comments are not received by late January, it will assume no one objects to the plan to construct a cabin. To counter that assumption, address your comments to National Park Service, Superintendent, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389, Attn: LYV Environmental Assessment.

Lost in a political wilderness

continued from page 1

to the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) rating, each scored 0 out of 100 in 1994.

The House Republican leadership plans to eliminate three full committees and 25 subcommittees. The California delegation's influence on federal legislation will wane as 18 Democratic members from California who are committee or subcommittee chairs lose their positions and are replaced by only 8 Republican chairs. One of the full committees slated for oblivion is the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Its jurisdiction over fisheries and endangered species will be allocated to a revamped Natural Resources Committee (which may be renamed the House Public Land and Resources Committee).

California Republican members of the Natural Resources Committee also have extremely poor environmental voting records. Rep. John Doolittle has an LCV voting score of 4, and Reps. Richard Pombo, Bill Baker, and Elton Gallegly each scored 8. Wielding his power as a senior member of the committee, Doolittle already has promised to quickly introduce a bill to build Auburn Dam, promising to "make the most" of the so-called Republican tidal wave by "backing efforts to cut taxes, shrink the federal government, reduce environmental restrictions, and win approval for a full-size Auburn Dam." Doolittle is well placed to push his plan for Auburn Dam because he will chair the reconstituted House Water and Power Subcommittee.

Senator Dianne Feinstein One of the few bright spots of the election is that Senator Dianne Feinstein, along with Senator Barbara Boxer, will continue to represent California's threatened environment. Republicans

endeavored unsuccessfully to deny Feinstein her primary conservation achievement in 1994—passage of the California Desert Protection Act. As a junior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Feinstein may lose her position on this important committee as Republicans follow through on their promise to reduce committee size.

Rep. George Miller The good news is that one of the strongest environmentalists in Congress will return to represent the 7th Congressional District encompassing the east Bay Area. He will remain an important ally of the environment as the ranking minority member on the Natural Resources Committee.

Rep. Rick Lehman Longtime defender of the state's wild rivers and wilderness areas, Rep. Rick Lehman lost to George Radanovich in the Fresno-Sierra region that is the 19th Congressional District. As a key member of the House Natural Resources Committee, Lehman was instrumental in the passage of virtually every California wilderness and wild rivers bill in the last decade. Radanovich campaigned in support of increased water development for the agricultural interests in the district, but as a Mariposa County supervisor he supported federal protection for the Lower Merced River.

Rep. Dan Hamburg Environmental advocate Dan Hamburg lost in a nasty campaign funded by the timber industry and waged by former Representative Frank Riggs. Representing the 1st Congressional District's north coast region, Hamburg sponsored critical legislation to preserve old-growth redwoods and supported protection of the area's rivers and salmon fisheries. Riggs is expected to push legislation to gut the Endangered Species Act, which has hampered logging of ancient forests, and will become

an influential member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Rep. Sam Farr Farr won re-election in the Santa Cruz-Monterey-Salinas 17th Congressional District. Farr, along with George Miller, will represent California on the Natural Resources Committee. With a perfect LCV environmental voting score of 100, Farr is a much-needed defender of California's wild lands and rivers.

Rep. Vic Fazio Fazio defied the conservative sweep through California's Central Valley and won re-election. Unfortunately, as his district has become more conservative, so have his actions. Still, Fazio has been an important environmental vote, particularly as a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee. His ability to fund important environmental measures, such as Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions, may be greatly reduced as the Republicans begin slashing the federal budget, however.

Around the State The good news is that many pro-environment votes in the California delegation will return, including representatives Lynn Woolsey, Nancy Pelosi, Ron Dellums, Tom Lantos, Pete Stark, Anna Eshoo, Tony Beilenson, Howard Berman, Henry Waxman, Bob Filner, and Lucille Roybal-Allard.

The bad news is that many anti-environmentalists are returning with seniority and perhaps chairing key committees: representatives Frank Riggs, Wally Herger, John Doolittle, Bill Baker, Richard Pombo, Ken Calvert, Bob Dornan, Randy Cunningham, and Duncan Hunter.

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

Wilderness history

Paving Pt. Reyes

continued from page 3

Limantour Estero (see map on page 3). A side road would allow motorists to drive to the top of Mt. Wittenberg.

The master plan also called for damming Limantour Estero, one of the most pristine estuaries on the west coast. Because the mud flats exposed at low tide inhibit swimming and boating, the estuary was to be dredged and converted to a fresh water lagoon stocked with fish, with the spoils used to stabilize Limantour Spit. Along the shores of the "improved" estuary would be a marina with docks, boat launching facilities, and a coffee shop designed to serve 3,000 people a day. The sand spit would be "enhanced" with a fishing pier, beach house, and parking for up to 2,100 cars.

A jetty from the eastern end of the peninsula would have provided a safe harbor for ocean-going vessels, deep-sea fishing concessions, boat fueling, and a restaurant.

Another proposed paved road began at Limantour Spit, hugging the shoreline along wave-cut terraces south to Double Point and terminating at Pelican Lake. This route connected to a road down Bear Valley and to a Highland loop road with a 400-site campground, a group campground, evening campfire programs, and picnic areas. "By express request" of the family of Representative Clem Miller (whose legislation made the National Seashore a reality), "no development will be considered within the immediate surroundings" of Miller's grave site. The planners responded to the request by designing a paved road to ring the burial site.

Roads were planned for the central and northern portions of Point Reyes as well. An expressway was to loop around Limantour and Drakes esteros, bridging Creamery

Bay, to rush visitors to their destinations. The road to McClures Beach was to be rerouted, although the road past Abbotts Lagoon was scheduled for obliteration.

This recreational utopia also would have included public hunting to control "surplus numbers of wildlife."

Obviously, most of the developments in this master plan never were built. Initially economics saved the Seashore; escalating land costs meant the Park Service could not afford all the private parcels in the area. The patchwork configuration of those lands that were acquired precluded road building and many developments.

In 1969 the Nixon administration proposed selling off a portion of the Seashore to obtain funds to purchase the rest. Outraged citizens organized to defeat that plan and obtain congressional funding to purchase the remaining private land. Half a million Bay Area citizens and hundreds of civic organizations signed petitions asking the president to save Point Reyes.

Concerned citizens then turned their attention to the outmoded master plan and convinced the Park Service to develop a new one—this time with public involvement. Meanwhile, environmentalists had persuaded the Park Service to review the Seashore's wilderness potential as required by the Wilderness Act. It still took years and lots of work to complete the new master plan and have the wilderness areas established.

Without the grassroots effort to preserve the area, Point Reyes would have been tamed to resemble Carmel's Seventeen Mile Drive rather than the wilderness coastline we enjoy today.

Jim Eaton has been visiting Point Reyes since the 1960s.



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Wilderness Trivia Answer

Coastal: Farallon and Phillip Burton wildernesses.

Marine: The 8,000 offshore acres Congress designated as future additions to Phillip Burton Wilderness.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

January 11 MEETING to develop a management plan for public lands along Cache Creek, including the proposed Cache Creek Wilderness. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. at the Southshore Municipal Court near Clearlake. For more information, call Gregg Mangan at the Bureau of Land Management, (707) 468-4000.

January 13-16 CONFERENCE of west coast forest activists in Ashland, Oregon. For more information about this fourth annual conference, contact Headwaters at P. O. Box 729, Ashland, OR 97520; (503) 482-4459.

January 20 COMMENTS DUE on the Clinton administration's proposed rules on R. S. 2477 rights-of-way (see September 1994 WR). The comment period has been reopened. Send comments to Secretary Bruce Babbitt, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Room 5555, Washington, DC 20240.

January 20-22 MEETING of the Sierra Nevada Alliance near Mariposa. Call the alliance office for details, (916) 542-4546.

January 25 COMMENTS DUE on the Park Service's plan to construct a ranger cabin in the Yosemite Wilderness (see article on page 5). Send comments to National Park Service, Superintendent, P. O. Box 577, Yosemite NP, CA 95389, Attn: LYV Environmental Assessment.

February 1 COMMENTS DUE on a plan to log the Tom Martin Roadless Area of the Klamath National Forest (see article on page 4). Send comments to Robert G. Lindsay, District Ranger, Scott River Ranger District, Klamath NF, 11263 N. Highway 3, Fort Jones, CA 96032.

February 4 ANNUAL MEETING of the California Wilderness Coalition in Davis. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.



**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* is published monthly by the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit is appreciated. Subscription is free with membership. Submissions on California wilderness and related subjects are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all work.

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—Wally Hickel, former Secretary of the Interior

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