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WILDERNESS RECORD

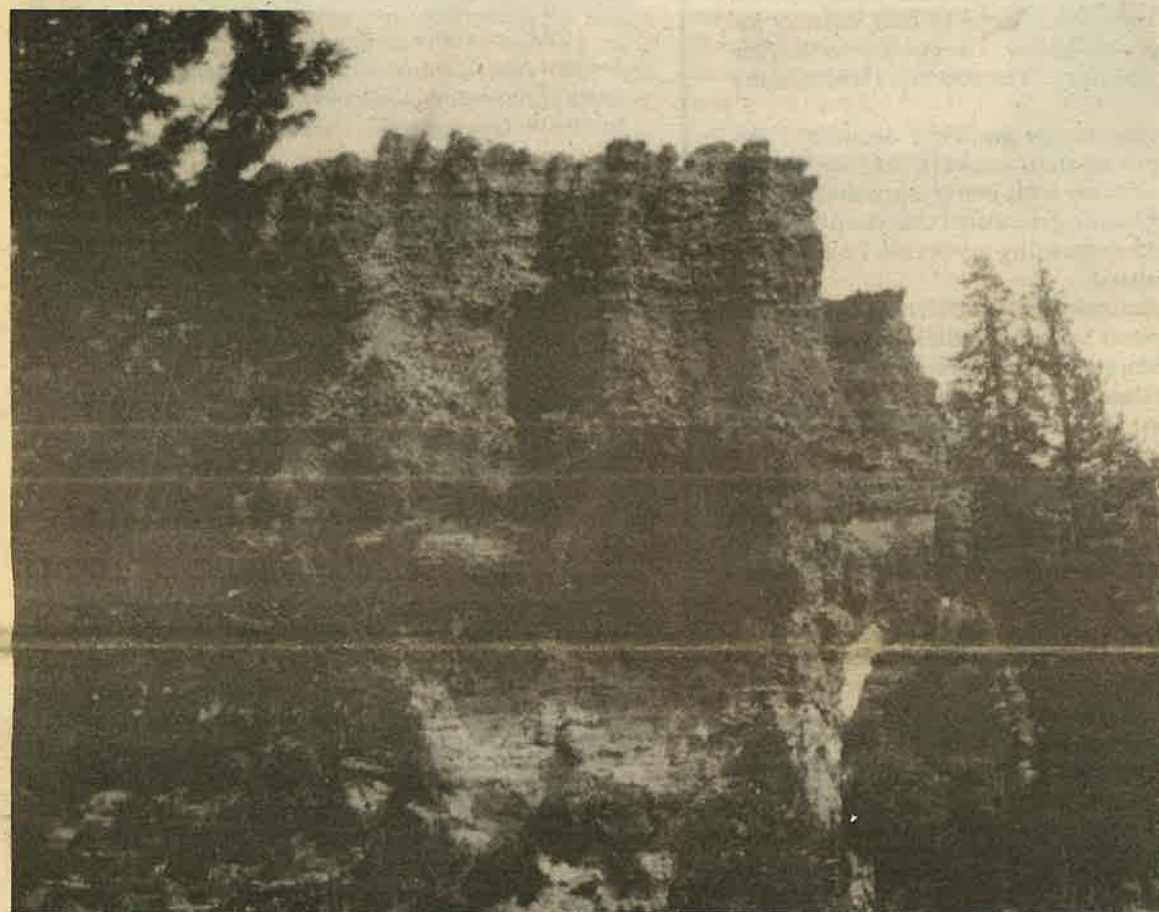
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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The Forest Service won't be logging Horsethief Canyon in Freel Peak Roadless Area or the nearby Raymond Peak Roadless Area after all. Photo by Lucy Rosenau

Victory!

Salvage sale gets the axe instead of Freel Peak, Raymond Peak roadless areas

By Ryan Henson

A few miles east of Hope Valley along the West Fork Carson River are the isolated and extremely rugged Raymond Peak and Horsethief (better known as Freel Peak) roadless areas of the Toiyabe National Forest. Together, these wildlands contain thousands of acres of rare, eastside Sierra old-growth forest—primarily Jeffrey and ponderosa pine with clusters of red and white fir. The areas are also important for recreation, with the spectacular Horsethief Canyon Trail and several cross-country ski routes around Sorensen's Resort.

The scarcity of old-growth ecosystems along the eastern Sierra front makes the Raymond Peak and Horsethief roadless areas extremely important for sensitive plant and wildlife species. The roadless areas provide habitat suitable for fisher, marten, wolverine, California spotted owl, and Sierra Nevada red fox. The areas are being studied as possible re-establishment sites for the endangered Lahontan cutthroat trout, and Raymond Peak Roadless Area has been proposed as an addition to the Mokelumne Wilderness it abuts.

With elevation gains of 2,700 feet per mile in some places, the roadless areas are virtual cliffs. The old-growth stands cling to the few places stable enough to hold soil and water. Many of these groves are scarred and battered by centuries of landslides and avalanches. This is no place for logging or road construction—not if we want to keep the region's precariously balanced rock, soil, and snow in place.

In recognition of the roadless areas' rugged topography, the Forest Service declared the region unfit for logging in its 1985 Toiyabe land and resource management plan. Unfortunately, the plan's prohibition against logging does not apply to salvage sales, the removal of supposedly dead and dying trees. In response to recent drought-induced mortality of young firs, the Forest Service proposed logging three to five million board feet of trees that appear to be dying in the roadless

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Bring back the griz!

Mountain Lion Foundation calls for feasibility study

By Mark J. Palmer

The Sierran national parks were created just a few years too late to save the grizzly in California, unlike Yellowstone and Glacier national parks in Wyoming and Montana which safeguard the last Rocky Mountain grizzlies. Indeed, there were reports of a female grizzly with a cub sighted in what is now Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park in 1924.

In recent years, with expanding public awareness of wildlife issues and the plight of endangered species, California has been able to restore some species once on the verge of extinction. These include both the Roosevelt and tule elk, Nelson bighorn sheep, and pronghorn. More recovery efforts are underway for species now listed as endangered or threatened by the state and federal government.

With increased public sympathy for wildlife, we have a chance to bring the grizzly back to our state. The biological and political objections are formidable, but re-establishing the grizzly bear is a bold affirmation of our deep caring for wild nature and our willingness to defend our wildlife heritage.

Why bring back the griz?

The grizzly once inhabited most of the state, except for the sparse desert areas of eastern Modoc and Lassen counties and the California desert itself. Much of the grizzly's range overlapped the mountain forest range of the black bear but also included large areas of grassland, chaparral, and oak woodlands.

Apart from the purely conservationist goal of restoring a lost species to California's fauna, there are other benefits to bringing back the grizzly. The grizzly is at the top of the food chain. As such, it has a tremendous impact on the ecosystems in which it resides. By scavenging carcasses, preying on injured and sick animals, and digging and rooting about for food, grizzlies help recycle important nutrients through the food chain. The grizzly has been missing from California for 70 years; its return restores a piece of the fabric of nature.

There also are practical benefits. Tourism is the second largest industry in California, bringing in an estimated \$54 billion in direct spending in 1991 and employing an estimated 773,000 people. The grizzly is a major draw for visitors to Yellowstone National Park and other areas where it lives today. The excitement a successful re-establishment program would generate can translate into hard cash from visitors, nature lovers, photographers, and naturalists.

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Coalition news

Monthly Report

The Coalition's staff seems to be taking the writings of Edward Abbey to heart, especially his admonition to get out into the wilds we are working to protect. The excuse Lucy and Ryan concocted was a weekend workshop for grazing activists—hosted by Dano McGinn of the California Mule Deer Association—in the eastside community of Walker.

After the great work they put into our fundraiser honoring Senator Alan Cranston, I readily agreed they deserved a night or two out.

So we left a couple of days early, accompanied by longtime CWC supporters Mary Tappel and John Graham. Ryan has had limited experience with the lands across the Sierra, so it was incumbent on us to show him the sights.

With Monitor Pass open, we stopped to enjoy the magnificent Sierra vistas from Freel Peak south to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Then we drove south (stopping at Mono Lake, of course) until we reached Bishop.

I had convinced the group to explore the Chidago Canyon Wilderness Study Area, part of the volcanic tablelands just north of Bishop.

This area always fascinates me. Born of fire when a volcano exploded with phenomenal fury and left behind a caldera 22 miles in diameter, the tablelands stand in stark contrast to the snow-mantled White Mountains and Sierra that rise to 14,000 feet in the east and west. Petroglyphs and other archaeological sites remind us of those who lived here before.

My first stimulating moment came after stumbling upon an ancient hunting blind. An unusual set of rectangular petroglyphs was nearby, and as I traced their shape with my finger, a Great Basin western rattlesnake warned me of my impending doom should I not cease and desist. I had been looking for the critters as I stepped over rocks, but I hadn't expected to meet a pair of rattlers at eye level.

The next day we hiked down Chidago Canyon, a cleft through the tablelands that seemed like a good place to explore. The flowers were great and so dense that all of us had scratched legs (except sensible John who wore long pants). As the canyon got deeper and the walls steeper, plants gave way to larger and larger boulders. With our party stretched out, I hopped up on a large rhyolitic rock to scout for Ryan.

In Mother Nature's perspicuous comment on my weight, the boulder broke in half, casting me down onto the rocks below. The good news was the video camera was okay. The bad news was that my ribs weren't.

As my companions gathered around, I detected the depth of their concern and apprehension. Concern for my well-being; apprehension at the prospect of hauling me out of that deep canyon. Fortunately, after regaining my breath I was able to hike out unassisted.

For the remainder of the afternoon, we drove north amid Forest Service roadless areas and Bureau of Land Management wilderness study areas: Casa Diablo, Glass Mountain, Benton Range, and Dexter Canyon. We settled on a campsite between Granite Mountain and Deep Wells.

I was not feeling particularly chipper, but the view overpowered my discomfort. As the sun set over the Sierra, I gazed out upon Granite and Glass mountains with the snowy White Mountains beyond.

Then the stars came out with an intensity I have seldom seen. I recognized more than a score of constellations. In the silence, I reflected on how great it is to be alive.

The staff has set the date for the June hike. I wonder if they will let me come along this time?

By Jim Eaton

Double your donation

Challenge grant ends June

\$10,000

A generous and crafty supporter has offered to give the California Wilderness Coalition \$10,000 if we can raise an equal amount by June 30. In the first month of the challenge grant, the Coalition raised \$4,925 (almost half for the mathematically impaired). To meet the challenge, we need to raise \$5,000 and change in the second month.

So we're groveling.

Many of our members already have responded to the challenge with timely (and tax-deductible!) donations. We thank and applaud them. If the press of spring chores and the enticements of spring hikes have kept you from responding yet, please hurry. If you're broke, we understand (and how!).

This year the Coalition went out on a limb (old-growth, of course) to hire our first full-time conservation associate. Having Ryan on staff has galvanized us: we are doing more work than ever before, and agencies are taking notice.

If we can raise the full \$10,000, we'll have \$20,000—enough to keep us working all summer and into the fall. So send what you can by June 30 (the address is 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616). You will not receive a mug or any other fine gift, but you will be helping wilderness, doubling your dollars, and getting a tax break to boot. Such a deal!



CWC executive director Jim Eaton (right) presents Senator Alan Cranston with a plaque honoring his 24 years of protecting wilderness at the Coalition's annual fundraiser (see page 7). Photo by Jack Kenward

Where we're @

The California Wilderness Coalition has a new e-mail address: jeaton@dcn.davis.ca.us

September memorial at Tuolumne Meadows for Carl Sharsmith

Carl W. Sharsmith served as a ranger-naturalist in the Tuolumne Meadows of Yosemite National Park for 62 summers. He was the oldest and longest-serving ranger in the history of the National Park Service and inspired thousands to love and care for Yosemite. Carl died peacefully at his home in San Jose on October 14, 1994, two months after returning from his last season in Yosemite.

A program to honor the memory of Carl will be held on September 9 at 11:00 a.m. in the area of Parson's Lodge at Tuolumne Meadows. Please bring your lunch and, if you wish, a mat or folding chair.

Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by sending a postcard (include the number of people who will attend) to Georgia Stigall, P. O. Box 2152, Sunnyvale, CA 94087-0152. As you share this information with others, please ask them to RSVP as well.

—Georgia Stigall

Corrections

The fax number that appeared in recent issues of the *Wilderness Record* was incorrect. Faxes for the CWC should be sent to (916) 758-0382. We apologize to people who were inconvenienced by the mistake.

We regret that the photo of Mt. Stanford that appeared in the May *WR* did not do justice to the slide from which it derived. Unfortunately, our tight schedule made it impossible for us to have a new print made; we apologize to the photographer, Eric Knapp.

A primer on salvage logging in the May issue erroneously cited Warner Creek in the Willamette National Forest as an example of a good salvage sale. We were misinformed.

Wilderness Trivia Question

How many California grizzlies roamed the state when western settlers arrived?

Answer on page 7

Understanding fire

Natural fire ecology of the Sierra Nevada

We all want to restore the Sierra Nevada to a more natural condition, but no one is certain just what that condition was. In this fourth installment of our series, *Understanding fire*, John Buckley summarizes what is known about the natural fire ecology of the Sierra Nevada and how Native Americans managed it.

By John Buckley

Historically, lightning fires burned freely throughout the range, whenever and wherever the continuity and dryness of fuels allowed them to spread. The Me-Wuk people and other Native Californians certainly didn't jump in a fire engine and go racing up the mountainside to put out lightning fires. On the contrary, they are believed to have lit fires to keep open the oak woodlands, brushlands, and pine/mixed-conifer forests of the lower and middle elevations.

Various estimates have been given by researchers and fire experts as to how often natural fires probably burned through any particular patch of forest. Some have said as frequently as every 5–10 years in the ponderosa pine forest (Martin, 1982) and 6–15 years in mixed conifer forest (Wagener, 1961). But no matter what the statistical average may have been, the fact that fires burned without controls means that the forests were in far different shape before fire suppression than they are today.

Take any lightning fire that ignited in the middle-elevation forest of the western slope of the range during the era prior to fire suppression; how it burned depended on variables of weather, fuels, and topography. So each fire would have had varying impacts. There are certain things we can assume were limiting factors, however.

First, unlike arson fires or accidental wildfires that often start today during incredibly hot, dry weather conditions, most lightning fires would have started in late spring, early summer, or fall—times when lightning naturally occurs most often in the Sierra Nevada. If fires ignited during the early season, the fuels were not fully dry, the temperatures were rarely as hot as later in the season, and many areas still would have had green grasses and lush vegetation which slow the spread of fires and lessen their intensity. If fires started in the fall, dry fuel moisture conditions would have been ripe for much hotter fires.

No matter when the fires started, if that section of forest had burned within a few years previously, there would have been very low levels of fuel to carry the new fire or to provide a fuel ladder up into the crowns of the trees.

If only an inch of pine needles or branches had accumulated on the forest floor since the last fire burned through, for instance, the next wildfire could burn only at low intensity. Without flames pushing through aerial fuels, such a fire would not produce many embers and might go out as soon as it hit bare patches or clusters of green bushes or green grass. Only if fires had somehow missed an area for many years would there have been sufficient build-up of dead, down fuels and sufficient growth of young trees, brush, and ground covers to provide a continuous fuel ladder into the canopy of big trees.

Accordingly, there would have been relatively little damage to the bigger trees, large down logs, or snags from any fire that burned where other fires had burned fairly recently. Such fires could have burned only the pine needles, branches, or live fuels that had been deposited since the previous lightning fire.

In many cases, an early season wildfire would not have gone out just because of cool nighttime temperatures or occasional spring or early summer showers. Instead, such a fire might have continued to spread throughout the summer season, as long as there were fuels available for the fire to consume. Natural limits to the spread of wildfires (like streams and rivers, wet meadows, bare ground, or

rocky terrain) were easily leapt across by embers carried on the breeze. If one side of a river canyon were burning, it would have been rare for some sparks not to have carried to the slope across the river.

So logically, some fires were still burning when summer conditions got extremely hot, when winds were strong and gusty, or when drought and insect infestations combined to create unusually heavy fuel loading. Thus, when a slow-moving fire worked its way onto a dry, warm, south-facing slope, it could spring to life and create hot fire runs all the way up to the ridge tops. Yet even those hot fires would have been limited by how recently a fire had burned through the area previously.

Since at least a few lightning fires start almost every season in every major watershed of the Sierra Nevada, it is difficult to see how flammable hillsides at the low or middle elevations could have escaped fires for more than 10–15 years during times when no one ever put out fires. More likely, fires burned frequently enough that they were limited by their own success.

What the forest looked like

Part of the open, parklike forest that Muir and other early explorers described may have been the result of intense fires lit by early cattlemen and sheepherders, but the fact that large trees were growing all across the open forest indicates there was not a fuel ladder to take fires up into the crowns of the large trees.

Most of the forest before fire suppression would have been dominated by fire-tolerant species of trees, bushes, wildflowers and ground covers. Although some of those plants would have been killed or set back by hot fires, these species quickly resprout from their roots or from seeds buried in the soil.

Young conifer trees in a "frequent fire" forest would have faced difficult odds of surviving long enough to mature, but if they did reach 30–50 years of age, they were likely to survive to be old-growth. Even a creeping, low-intensity fire will kill a young tree if the heat cooks the cambium layer or scorches the crown. Because small trees have almost no bark to protect against heat and their crowns are so close to the burning ground fuels, frequent fires would have killed off the vast majority of young trees that had sprouted since previous fires.

Under the frequent, low-intensity fire scenario, the forests would have been open; the fire-tolerant, sun-loving ground covers like bear clover, lupine, ferns, and grasses would have regenerated quickly; sun-loving hardwoods would have resprouted rapidly from their stumps; and the potential for devastating crown fires that destroy big trees would have been lower.

The consistent spread of low- to medium-intensity fires would have maintained an evolving mosaic of vegetation throughout the lower and middle elevations of the range. Frequent low-intensity fires would have continually exposed patches of bare soil but also left much of the deeper, moister layer of duff and humus unburned. The mosaic that fires left would have been changing constantly, but the overall open, parklike forest of large to giant trees amid ground covers and patches of vegetation



Forest Service managers set prescribed fires to recreate the open, parklike groves that once typified the Sierra. Photo by John Buckley

would have characterized most of the pine and mixed-conifer stands.

Before logging began, ponderosa pines and sugar pines were the predominant trees in the lowest-elevation belt of forestland on the west slope of the range. The huge pines towered over young conifers and hardwoods in almost all early pictures. Sugar pines still stand as remnant, towering old-growth trees in the midst of most remaining unlogged patches on the west slope. But few old-growth ponderosa pine stands have survived since they grew at the most accessible, lowest elevations and were an especially profitable wood product.

The white fir, Jeffrey pine, and red fir forests of the higher elevations were far less affected by fire—in part because of weather and in part terrain. In the higher reaches of the mountains, granite outcrops, boulders, and ridges provide natural barriers to the spread of fire. In these high mountain forests, the snow lingers and fuels are less flammable, so fire seldom would have spread as fast or as far as it did in the lower elevations.

The lower flammability of fuels and natural barriers in the high-elevation red fir-lodgepole pine forests were counterbalanced in some ways by a far greater incidence of lightning strikes, however. Many years as much as 80–90 percent of lightning strikes occur at the upper elevations, although precipitation accompanies the lightning more often than it does at lower elevations. So red fir, Jeffrey, and lodgepole forests received many ignitions each year, but the factors that determine fire behavior—the quantity and condition of fuel and the type of terrain—almost always limited the fires to low or moderate intensity. Since lightning clearly is "hit or miss" and fire spread was limited, many rocky terrains may never have burned within a tree's lifetime.

Native Americans and fire

The Me-Wuk and other Native Californians burned the oak woodlands around their villages to reduce insects in their acorn crop, to improve visibility in their hunting grounds, and to kill off thickets of conifers competing with the favored black oaks. Accidental fires must have occurred occasionally too (although Me-Wuk children would have been playing with fire-starting sticks rather than matches).

Fires started by the Me-Wuk spread up-slope and up-canyon into the ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests above. There is no evidence that Native Californians used fire as a precise tool. Did Me-Wuk elders consider weather,

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Ancient forests

After 10 years and 3 rewrites, Shasta-Trinity plan is back to where environmentalists started out

By Susan Bower

When planning first got underway for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, many rural residents of mountainous Trinity County and some neighbors in Shasta and Siskiyou counties were frustrated and disheartened by the Forest Service's almost exclusive focus on logging. Even the soil base and the network of life the trees depend on were disregarded. Many more trees were being logged annually than were growing or being planted. The predominant method of logging was clearcutting followed by herbicide spraying, with devastating results.

When, thanks to the National Forest Management Act and its mandated forest planning procedures, the Forest Service began preparing a land and resource management plan for the Shasta-Trinity, 50 of these residents met. In the planning process they saw the opportunity to help reverse the destruction and promote the health of the national forest. They formed a coalition of environmental groups and individuals and took the name Citizens for Better Forestry (CBF).

The planning process was long and sometimes tedious. When the first draft of the Shasta-Trinity plan was released in 1986, CBF responded with an alternative plan to better manage the national forest. Of the 1,300 public responses to this draft, 85 percent supported adoption of Alternative CBF as the Shasta-Trinity forest plan. The Forest Service withdrew the draft plan in response to lawsuits over spotted owl habitat, however, and forest officials requested that CBF work with them to design an alternative for the next draft plan, which was released in 1990. Although the Forest Service did not adopt it as its preferred alternative, Alternative CBF again was favored by 85 percent of respondents. Lawsuits caused the new draft to be withdrawn, but CBF members continued working with Forest Service staff and a revised Alternative CBF was included in the third draft plan. It was released in 1993 (see December 1993 *WR*). This draft was then modified to be consistent with the president's Northwest Forest Plan, dubbed Option 9. A final version of the Shasta-Trinity plan was finally released in May.

Alternative CBF was not modified for the final plan, nor was it chosen as the preferred alternative. Nonetheless, CBF members are gratified that significant progress has been made toward desperately needed improvements.

A gap will exist between the Trinity Alps Wilderness and old-growth reserves to the south because Little French Creek Roadless Area, which presently connects them, is unprotected.

The last, best Shasta-Trinity plan

Fewer acres of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest are now devoted to commercial wood production. The late seral stage of vegetation—commonly referred to as old-growth—was fast disappearing under the agency's former "tree farm" mentality. Under the new Shasta-Trinity plan, old-growth will be protected or fostered in about 75 percent of the forest because such vegetation is emphasized under four different land allocations, including wilderness. CBF has advocated this type of management from the outset.

Protection for streamside areas is greatly increased from former management practices and earlier plans. Now, watercourses, wetlands, and unstable riparian areas are protected by buffers 300 to 600 feet in width.

These new protection standards closely reflect measures advocated by CBF since its beginning. Though the buffers may not seem large, they could cover as much as one third of the forest.

Roadless areas

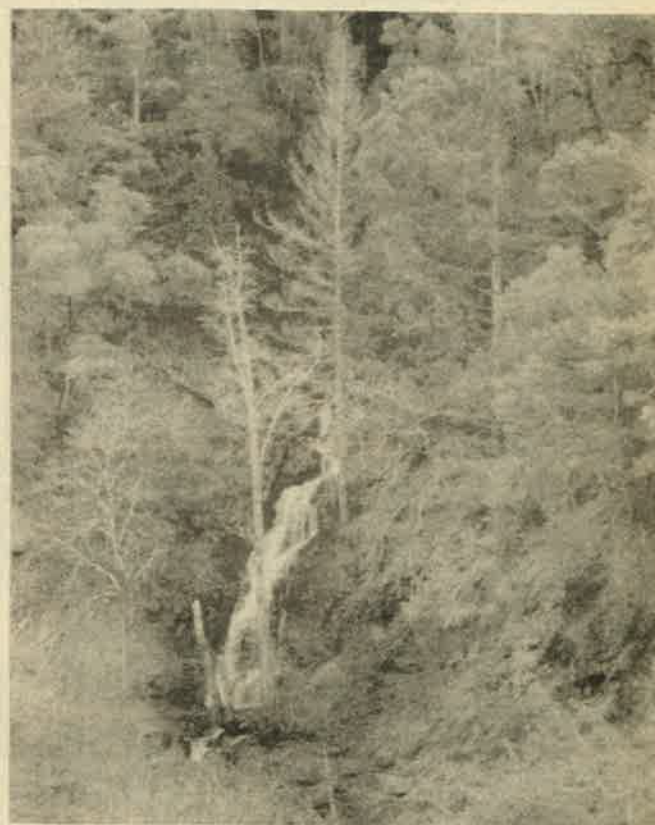
There are 30 roadless areas in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest totalling about 306,000 acres. The forest plan allocates

51 percent of this acreage to old-growth reserves, primitive recreation, and research natural areas, designations that will help roadless areas retain their undeveloped character (see chart). The remaining acreage is vulnerable to logging, road construction, and other development, however, and none of the roadless acreage is recommended for wilderness. By allocating more than 50 percent of its roadless lands to primitive recreation and other protective designations, however, the Forest Service is recognizing their wilderness potential.

CBF supported protection of the 30,000-acre Pattison Roadless Area as a "wildlife population reservoir," an island of natural conditions amid extensive roaded and logged lands. Pattison arguably contains the best remaining anadromous fish habitat in the once-famous South Fork Trinity River system. According to the forest plan, 55 percent of the roadless area will be managed for primitive recreation, 15 percent as an old-growth reserve, and the rest opened to development.

In the early 1990s, CBF members developed and mapped an extensive wildlife corridor system for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Corridors of old-growth are needed to provide for the migration of species and the mixing of gene pools. This new forest plan protects much of the corridor system, but not all of it. Some significant gaps remain. One such gap will exist between the Trinity Alps Wilderness and old-growth reserves to the south because the 11,000-acre Little French Creek Roadless Area, which presently connects them, is unprotected. This steep, rugged roadless area contains magnificent old-growth forest.

The Forest Service has been studying only one roadless area, Mt. Eddy, as a potential wilderness. This unique and spectacular area between the Trinity Alps and Mt. Shasta offers dramatic views of both. The forest plan allocates 90 percent of Mt. Eddy to primitive recreation and research natural area, a tacit endorsement of its wilderness character.



Trinity River waterfall in Panther Roadless Area, Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Photo by Jim Eaton

Apart from Mt. Eddy and Pattison, only three of the forest's 30 roadless areas are granted meaningful protection as primitive recreation areas under the final plan. About 90 percent of West Beegum Roadless Area is protected, 80 percent of East Beegum, and 70 percent of the South Fork Roadless Area.

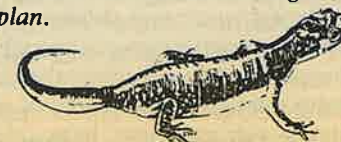
Wild-and-scenic rivers

The forest plan recommends adding 80 miles, in six segments, to the existing 106 miles of designated national wild-and-scenic rivers in the forest. This is significantly short of Alternative CBF's recommendation for including 117 additional miles, however. The Forest Service's recommendation is important because it usually represents the minimum Congress will designate.

Several roadless and wilderness areas now contain recommended wild-and-scenic river corridors and the increased protection that comes with the recommendation. Beegum Creek (in the East Beegum Roadless Area), Hayfork Creek (Pattison Roadless Area), South Fork Trinity River (South Fork and Penney Ridge roadless areas), and Canyon Creek, North Fork Trinity River, and Virgin Creek (Trinity Alps Wilderness) all are newly recommended for protective status. Proposals to protect other important riparian areas, like the headwaters of the Sacramento River in the Mt. Eddy Roadless Area, are rejected by the plan.

The Shasta-Trinity forest plan has the potential to improve how this national forest is managed. But continued vigilance and citizen involvement is necessary to ensure that the plan is properly implemented and that damaged forests and fisheries are rehabilitated quickly and wisely. The use of herbicides is still permitted. Serious loopholes and inadequacies still exist. Much pressure to subvert this plan is being exerted, and appeals are likely. But the experience of CBF proves that diligent, perseverant, caring effort can have positive results.

Susan Bower worked on the original Citizens for Better Forestry plan.



The fate of Shasta-Trinity National Forest roadless areas

Protected	Total acres	Percent
primitive recreation	48,960	16
old-growth reserve	100,980	33
research natural area	6,120	2
Total	156,060	51
Unprotected		
motorized recreation	45,900	15
wildlife management	42,840	14
logging	61,200	20
Total	149,940	49

Chart illustrates how the 306,000 acres of roadless areas in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest are allocated under the final forest plan. Since approximately one-third of the forest is somewhat protected in riparian reserves, portions of the otherwise unprotected roadless lands enjoy some restraints on logging, road construction, and other developments. Chart by Ryan Henson

Good news for wildlands

Reversal means Toiyabe roadless areas are (mostly) safe

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areas as part of the Woodfords salvage sale.

Since death and sickness are as natural in tree populations as they are among humans (and even less preventable), conservationists objected to the Forest Service's characterization of the situation as an emergency requiring large-scale helicopter logging in the roadless areas and old-growth groves. Their objections to the proposal were bolstered by several observations made during field visits to the area: for the most part, only small fir trees in previously logged areas above Highway 88 were dead or dying, and there was very little mortality in old-growth groves in the roadless areas.

The California Wilderness Coalition (CWC), Sorensen's Resort, and the Wilderness Society, with the assistance of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, appealed the Forest Service's logging plans in September 1994. Though the results of the appeal were mixed, it did succeed in postponing the project by forcing the Forest Service to analyze how logging would affect the roadless areas—something the agency had refused to do before. The refusal was based on the contention that the roadless areas "no longer exist" because the Toiyabe National Forest management plan determined that the areas do not meet "roadless area criteria" like opportunities for solitude and other purely aesthetic concerns (the forest plan does not consider the ecological value of roadless areas).

To help prepare the roadless area analysis required by the appeal decision, the agency held a public meeting in February to discuss how the proposed sale would affect the roadless areas.

The public meeting, well-attended by local citizens and activists, quickly became a referendum on the sale itself. Those present were especially concerned about how

the sale would increase fire danger in the area by creating logging debris and replacing old, fire-resistant trees with crowded saplings (dense stands of young trees are known to burn faster and hotter than groves of large, well-spaced trees like the ones in the roadless areas). Citizens encouraged the Forest Service to redesign the sale to avoid old-growth groves, roadless areas, and other sensitive lands and concentrate instead on logging and thinning small trees in previously logged areas to improve the vigor of the remaining trees while reducing overall fire danger.

The CWC followed up the meeting with a formal written proposal (signed by the three appellants and additional groups) calling for the thinning and salvage logging of small trees only along the edge of Highway 88 and around homes and businesses. This kind of logging would preserve old-growth ecosystems, save the roadless areas, and reduce the fire danger posed by the small, crowded stands of trees left after past clearcutting. Unfortunately, the Forest Service rejected most of the CWC's



The steep slopes of Raymond Peak Roadless Area are ill-suited for logging, but they are eminently suitable additions to the adjacent Mokelumne Wilderness.
Photo by Lucy Rosenau

proposal, claiming instead that the Woodfords sale represents low-impact logging at its best.

In mid-May, however, Forest Service representatives called to say that they had changed their minds. Apparently, the officials who decided the appeal had mistakenly dismissed the conservationists' argument that the agency is required to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) before logging roadless areas. To its credit, the Forest Service declined to prepare an EIS and decided instead to stay out of old-growth groves and the roadless areas and—as conservationists had originally proposed—restrict logging to small trees around developments and along Highway 88.

This is a great victory for eastside Sierra wildlands. The spectacular old-growth groves and other pristine ecosystems of the Raymond Peak and Horsethief roadless areas are, for the time being, spared the chainsaw. The appellants, as well as the other groups and citizens who helped defeat the sale, are rightfully proud. The Forest Service deserves credit for backing off its logging plan.

The only unfortunate consequence of the victory is that the Forest Service now plans to prepare an EIS for another salvage sale in the Raymond Peak Roadless Area, about eight miles southeast of the Woodfords site. The agency had planned to write an environmental assessment for the Poor Boy salvage sale, but the appellants' arguments against the Woodfords sale convinced the agency to prepare an EIS (conservationists had hoped that the Poor Boy sale would be abandoned after they won the Woodfords appeal).

The Poor Boy sale has many of the same problems as the Woodfords sale, and conservationists will work hard to convince the Forest Service to spare the roadless area once again.

What you can do

Write Guy Pence, District Ranger, Carson Ranger District, 1536 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701 and thank him for sparing old-growth groves, sensitive soils, fragile watersheds, and the Raymond Peak and Horsethief roadless areas by altering the Woodfords salvage sale. Also request that he exclude the Raymond Peak Roadless Area from the proposed Poor Boy salvage sale (and all future timber sales) so that the area's unique ecological and recreational values are protected until it can be added to the Mokelumne Wilderness.

Ryan Henson represented the CWC in its efforts to defeat the Woodfords sale.

BLM protects its North Coast wildlands

By Ryan Henson

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Arcata Resource Area includes nearly 200,000 acres of scattered lands from central Mendocino County to the Oregon border. With old-growth forests, salmon and steelhead streams, and hundreds of sensitive habitats, these lands protect what few pristine ecosystems remain in northwestern California outside of the national forests and parks.

Just a few years ago, these wildlands were threatened by countless proposals to log and construct roads. The Cahto Peak-South Fork Eel River area adjacent to the University of California's Coast Range Reserve in northern Mendocino County was threatened by timber sales that would have destroyed irreplaceable old-growth habitat. Today, things have changed for the better.

In 1994, President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan (known as Option 9) designated over 70,000 acres of old-growth forest in the Arcata Resource Area as protected reserves and completely changed how mining, off-road vehicle use, grazing, and other activities are managed. Now, the BLM has a new draft management plan for the Arcata Resource Area that would protect even more wildlands.

The plan calls for designating seven areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) comprising nearly 25,000 acres of old-growth forest and healthy watersheds. It also protects 27 stream and river segments (including the popular Mattole River) found eligible for wild-and-scenic river status—nearly 85 miles of riparian areas and surrounding habitat. Moreover, the plan calls for the acquisition of thousands of acres to protect old-growth forests, wild rivers, and threatened and endangered species. To the delight of conservationists, the plan would ban or severely restrict off-road vehicle use throughout the resource area.

Nearly all of the Arcata Resource Area's most important wildlands would gain several layers of protection. For

example, the once-threatened Red Mountain area is now nearly completely covered by overlapping wilderness study area, old-growth reserve, key watershed, and ACEC designations, as well as several eligible wild-and-scenic river corridors. The Eden-Thatcher, Cahto Peak-South Fork Eel River, Big Butte, and Gilham Butte regions are similarly well-protected under the plan. The popular King Range Recreation Area is not covered by the draft plan because it has its own management plan, approved last year.

The only bad news is the BLM's failure to call for additional land acquisitions in the Eden-Thatcher area. This critical wildland adjacent to the Mendocino National Forest is the only region in the resource area with the potential to become a large (over 100,000-acre) wilderness. Purchasing lands in this region would greatly benefit old-growth dependent species and the endangered salmon and steelhead runs of the Middle Fork Eel River. The Eden-Thatcher wildlands are part of the California Wilderness Coalition's proposed Yuki Wilderness (see June 1993 WR).

The plan is certain to face stiff opposition from off-road vehicle groups and mining, grazing, and logging companies. The BLM's progressive management of the Arcata Resource Area must receive public support if it is to be sustained.

How you can help

Write Lynda Roush, Area Manager, Arcata Resource Area, 1695 Heindon Road, Arcata, CA 95521-4573 by June 16, 1995 (letters must be postmarked by that date). Request that:

- The BLM continue to support Alternative 2 of the Arcata Resource Area Management Plan Amendment because it will protect threatened old-growth ecosystems and wild rivers and authorize the acquisition of other important lands; and
- The management plan recommend the purchase of additional lands in the Eden-Thatcher area.

Thank the agency for its progressive planning, and encourage the BLM to withstand opposition.

Wilderness news

Mining planned at Bighorn Mtn. W'ness

A proposal to expand a mine next to the new Bighorn Mountain Wilderness in the San Bernardino National Forest is worrying local conservationists who fear expanded operations at the mine will increase traffic and pollution and leave a 37-acre scar where endangered plants now grow. Before the Forest Service writes an environmental impact statement for the proposed mine expansion, it must solicit information relevant to the project from concerned citizens; written comments on the mine expansion will be accepted through June 23.

In particular, the Forest Service wants to be advised of issues it should consider now that the area east of the mine has been designated wilderness and several native plants—California milk vetch, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk vetch, Parish's daisy, Parish's oxytheca, and San Bernardino bladder pod—have been added to the endangered species list. A previous analysis indicated that a population of endangered plants grows at the Lone Valley site where a mining company now wants to expand its limestone mining operation. The mine currently occupies less than two acres but will be expanded to cover 37 acres if the Forest Service agrees to the company's plan.

The expanded mine would be visible from the wilderness, which was one of the 70 new wilderness areas designated by the 1994 California Desert Protection Act. Because the wilderness designation is recent, Bighorn Mountain is a Class II area under the Clean Air Act. Class II areas are supposed to have air quality that, though not pristine, is among the best in the nation. Whether the expanded mine qualifies as a point source of air pollution that will degrade the wilderness is one of the questions the Forest Service will be required to address in its environmental analysis.

Comments on the proposed mine expansion should be sent by June 23 to Hal Seyden, Planning Program Leader, San Bernardino National Forest, 1824 South Commercenter Circle, San Bernardino, CA 92408-3430.

For more information, contact Raj Daniel at the Forest Service's Mill Creek Station, 34701 Mill Creek Road, Mentone, CA 92359; (909) 794-1123.

Fire ecology

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fuel conditions, and their knowledge of fire when determining when fires should be lit? Did they decide to light in late spring or in late fall just before rain storms? It is unlikely that they would have done anything to kill off the black oaks that produced acorns, their main food source. But under all situations, the fires lit by Native Californians burned uphill—unchecked—to spread until fall rains or natural barriers eventually extinguished them.

We can conclude, then, that fires burned frequently across the lower and middle elevations of the west slope of the Sierra Nevada. Whether lit by humans or lightning, such fires would have been limited to the most recent deposits of needles, branches, and other accumulated fuels left since the previous fire. The longer the time between fires, the higher the intensity would have been, especially if the fires burned at the end of summer or during dry fall weather.

Because of the fire frequency, the forest had a far more open canopy in the pine and mixed conifer forests than we see today. Black oak probably was more vigorous in the ponderosa pine habitat, and white fir certainly was less prevalent in the mixed conifer forest. Fuel loading was much lower, and brush more sparse. And few portions of the pine and mixed conifer forests were dominated by thickets of incense cedar and white fir as they are today.

Next month: Fire history of the Sierra Nevada, from the 49ers to the present.

A former Forest Service fire fighter and author of Hotshot, John Buckley now directs the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center in Twain Harte.

Clinton pledges to veto increased salvage logging

Reacting to a widespread public outcry, President Clinton pledged to veto the recently passed rescissions bill, a purported budget-cutting measure that contains an amendment exempting many kinds of logging from environmental law and mandating the doubling of logging in national forests and other public lands. The amendment would open wildlife refuges to logging and redefines "salvage logging" to include trees that may die, burn, or become diseased. This redefinition of salvage logging would allow literally every tree on America's public lands to be logged, ostensibly for the good of the forests.

The rescissions bill also includes an amendment exempting livestock grazing on public lands from federal environmental laws. This and other anti-environmental provisions of the bill prompted President Clinton to condemn it in a recent speech, declaring that the bill would "essentially throw out all environmental laws and the protections we have that surround...timber sales."

The president's promised veto is a victory for conservationists because he had agreed to sign the Senate version of the bill which also included a salvage logging amendment. The fight over the salvage logging amendment is of enormous symbolic importance because it shows that timber industry sympathizers in Congress believe the environmental community is too weak to defeat such measures after last November's elections. As Representative Don Young (R-Alaska) recently claimed, "Environmentalists are non-players in this Congress."

Despite Representative Young's confidence, the phone calls, faxes, electronic mail, and letters that deluged President Clinton over the logging amendment demonstrated that conservationists are down but not out. The backlash against the rescissions bill could help slow recently introduced legislation to sell "surplus" national parks, destroy the Endangered Species and Clean Water acts, and otherwise gut protections for our nation's wildlands.

continued from page 1

In addition, a successful introduction of the grizzly will have an impact throughout the world. Many countries are struggling to retain their precious wildlife in the face of development pressures, poaching, and human population growth. California can lead the way once again by demonstrating successful coexistence with the animal that is our state symbol.

Grizzlies are large, formidable animals that dominate the habitats they live in. They tend to be solitary, except for mothers with dependent cubs and during the brief mating period.

Storer and Tevis (1995) believe that the California grizzly was not only one of the largest grizzly subspecies but also that it was largely a lowland species inhabiting the vast areas of brush that dominate California's coastal hills and Sierran foothills.

The grizzly is an omnivore, eating a wide range of plant matter, and meat when available, chiefly as carrion. A grizzly occasionally will kill animals for food, including squirrels, fawns, livestock, reptiles, and amphibians. Grasses, berries, nuts and acorns, roots, clover, and other plants are consumed. According to Storer and Tevis, "It ate almost anything and everything that was available."

Grizzlies den in the winter, although in California's milder climate they may have been active year-round. Similarly, California's bear population may have bred and given birth to cubs year-round, although in Yellowstone and other areas with more pronounced seasons, breeding generally takes place in the summer, with the female giving birth in the winter den in January.

Grizzlies are pugnacious. Herrero (1985) identifies at least four circumstances when grizzlies attack: a mother defending her cubs; bears surprised by people at close range; bears habituated to humans, especially through eating food in campgrounds, at cabins, or in rural garbage

dumps; and bears who consider humans as a possible food source. All four causes of bear attacks can be avoided, and the National Park Service has active programs of educating park visitors, controlling food and garbage around bear habitat, and closing areas to public use when aggressive bear activity is noted.

Can we bring back the griz?

The Mountain Lion Foundation proposes that the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) conduct a feasibility study on re-establishing grizzly bears in California. There are four basic questions the study should address.

First, it should determine where grizzly bears might be introduced in California. Much of the bear's original habitat has been converted to agriculture or housing. Even in national parks and forests, livestock grazing and recreational use may cause problems for grizzly introduc-

tion. Enough habitat is needed to maintain a viable population of grizzlies—even states like Montana and Wyoming are hard-pressed to maintain so much open space.

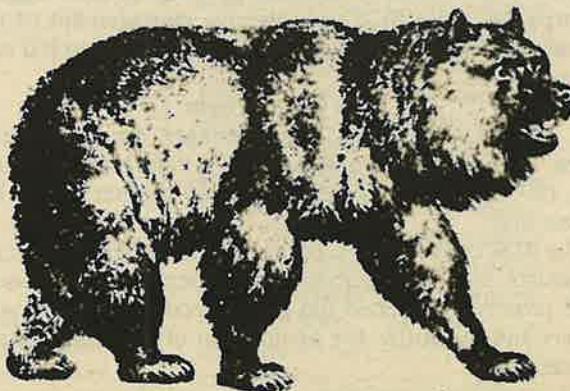
Second, the study should determine where populations of grizzly bears might be located that can be transplanted to California. The California grizzly is extinct, and all remaining grizzly populations in the lower 48 states are threatened with extinction. Alaska and Canada still have viable populations, however, and the British Columbia population is probably the closest genetic match that still survives in large numbers.

Third, the study should determine how to reduce potential conflicts between grizzlies and people and their livestock. This issue is likely to be politically "hot;" many people already fear the mountain lion, which also rarely attacks people and livestock. A public education program to address such concerns is an important part of a grizzly re-establishment plan.

Finally, the study must estimate the cost of re-establishing grizzlies in California. The DFG is financially strapped, but the costs of introducing grizzlies are low compared to other programs and may even be covered by voluntary contributions from wildlife enthusiasts.

The grizzly bear can come back to California if we let it. The major obstacles are political, surely a poor excuse for inaction. The California state legislature can take a remarkable and historic step by directing the appropriate state agency to develop a feasibility study for the re-establishment of grizzly bears.

Adapted from a Mountain Lion Foundation proposal to bring back the grizzly. For more information or a copy of the proposal, contact the foundation at P. O. Box 1896, Sacramento, CA 95812; (916) 442-2666. Mark Palmer is the foundation's conservation director.



The California grizzly inspired fear and awe—and fanciful depictions like this Charles Nahl drawing.

Tribute to Alan Cranston

CWC fundraiser honored Senator Cranston

The California Wilderness Coalition's annual fundraiser was a modest success, raising \$4,000 to support our ongoing programs. About 100 people turned out on Mother's Day to honor Senator Alan Cranston, the father of California's wilderness system. But if the crowd was small, the smiles were not. When Senator Cranston arrived, the room lit up.

The evening's highlights included a rousing speech by Dave Foreman, who included Senator Cranston in his pantheon of wilderness leaders, and a slide show sampler of the splendor and diversity of the Cranston legacy of wilderness.

Finally, it was the senator's turn to speak. In an extended speech on topics ranging from wilderness to nuclear disarmament to Murphy's law, he described his work for world peace through the Gorbachev Foundation.

The memorable evening would not have been possible without loyal volunteers (particularly Diane Clark and Don Morrill, who worked tirelessly) and the generosity of the businesses and individuals who sponsored the event.

Thanks also to the photographers—Wendy Cohen, Bill Duddleson, Jim Eaton, Steve Evans, Eric Knapp, Roland Knapp, and Nell Patterson—who allowed us to use their stunning slides.

Finally, we thank Dave Foreman, who extended his sojourn in California to attend, and Senator Alan Cranston, who gave us so much wilderness to enjoy.



Smiles abound: Senator Alan Cranston; Candace Cross-Drew, Bob Schneider, and Dave Foreman. Photos by Jack Kenward

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CWC T-shirts

Senator Alan Cranston admires our new T-shirt. The \$15 shirt features our logo in three colors on a background of jade, royal blue, birch, or cream.

Still available are our six-tone landscape shirt in jade, fuchsia, light blue, or pale green for \$15 and our animal design by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank (beige or light gray) for \$12. All shirts are 100 percent double-knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.



Calendar

June 15 & 16 PUBLIC FORUMS on implementing salmon and steelhead (PacFish) management guidelines in the Lassen National Forest and Bureau of Land Management's Redding Resource Area. Both meetings run from 7:00–9:00 p.m. The BLM's June 15 meeting will be held at the agency's Redding office, 355 Hemsted Dr., Redding. The Lassen meeting is at the Chico Area Recreation District (CARD) Arts and Crafts Room, 545 Vallombrosia Ave., Chico, on June 16.

June 16 COMMENTS DUE on the Bureau of Land Management's plan for wildlands in the Arcata Resource Area (article on page 5). Send to: Lynda Roush, Area Manager, Arcata Resource Area, 1695 Heindon Rd., Arcata, CA 95521-4573.

June 23 COMMENTS DUE on a proposed mine expansion next to the Bighorn Mountain Wilderness (article on page 6). Send to: Hal Seyden, Planning Program Leader, San Bernardino NF, 1824 S. Commercenter Circle, San Bernardino, CA 92408-3430.

July 10 COMMENTS DUE on the CalOwl EIS, the Forest Service's plan to manage spotted owl habitat in the Sierra Nevada (article in April 1995 WR). Send to: Janice Gauthier, EIS Team Leader, 2999 Fulton Ave., Sacramento, CA 95821.

July 21–23 ANNUAL MEETING of the Sierra Nevada Alliance at June Lake. The conference will address sustainable Sierra communities. For more information, call the Alliance office at (916) 542-4546.

Wilderness Trivia Answer

The California grizzly population was estimated at 10,000 bears.

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**California
Wilderness
Coalition**

Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

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

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"There seems to be a tacit assumption that if grizzlies survive in Canada and Alaska that is good enough. It is not good enough for me. Relegating grizzlies to Alaska is about like relegating happiness to heaven; one may never get there."

—Aldo Leopold

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