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WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

April 1996

Agency on the loose

**Eldorado scandal
tarnishes what's left of the
Forest Service's reputation**

By Paul Spitler

When Jack Ward Thomas took over the Forest Service in 1991, his first official act was a promise: the Forest Service would tell the truth and obey the law. Five years later, with the Forest Service rocked by scandal, Thomas is imposing strict new limits on the release of information and curtailing public access to agency documents.

The scandal that broke the Chief's back was chronicled in a recent report by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a government watchdog group. The report describes a series of violations of law in the Eldorado National Forest—and an ensuing cover-up—that could leave taxpayers with a \$30 million tab.

The fiasco came to light in the early 1990s when forest activists in the central Sierra learned of several planned timber sales, sales for which they had not received notice. After inquiring about the environmental documents that must accompany logging plans, they found in some cases that no environmental analysis had been done and in others that the analyses were more than a decade old.

The missing and aged documents violated a federal law, the National Environmental Policy Act, that requires new analyses when environmental conditions change. Five years of drought, catastrophic wildfires, salvage logging, and new requirements to protect the California spotted owl certainly qualified as environmental change. But the Forest Service, in an attempt to meet logging quotas, decided to proceed with the sales anyway. And then the trouble began.

Placerville Ranger District timber management officer Pat Ferrell understood this back in 1991. In an interoffice memo she wrote, "Most of our EAs do not meet today's standards....If we are put into a position to redo EAs (as is required by law) or respond to a multitude of appeals, then we will be unable to produce volume for sale in '92." Ferrell's pleas to redo the environmental analyses fell on deaf ears. Forest Supervisor John Phipps already had decided to offer the sales for bid.

Environmentalists were outraged at the flouting of federal law. In response to their complaints, Phipps sent a letter to forest activist Erin Noel stating that none of the sales in question would be offered and that each was being reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of scientists. Both statements were false. Trees continued to be sold, and the only review taking place was a file review by timber management officer Rex Baumbach.

The pressure from environmentalists continued, and eventually Phipps agreed to create a scientific review team. The team met immediate resistance from timber officers



The proposed Echo-Carson Wilderness is a serene contrast to the lawsuits and scandal bedeviling the Eldorado National Forest. Photo by Kathy Blankenship

and district rangers eager to "get out the cut." After meeting with the scientists, USDA General Counsel Jack Gipsman wrote to the regional forester that they had complained of "undue pressure" to "backdate documents" and "change opinions as to the effects of a project on threatened or endangered species." Gipsman continued, "They expressed feelings of intimidation and jeopardy to their careers if they stood against such pressure."

The scientists were right about the potential impacts of the projects. Subsequent reviews of 24 sales found they would have destroyed the old-growth forests that are critical habitat for the spotted owl, caused extensive erosion and sedimentation, and further imperiled rare forest-dependent species like the goshawk and fisher.

Finally in 1994, after conceding that numerous sales lacked the required environmental analyses, the Forest Service was forced to suspend the 24 approved and sold but still-uncut timber sales. The suspension of over 110

continued on page 6.

Cleveland's twin wilderness areas overrun with smugglers

**Forest Service cautions
recreationists**

By Lucy Rosenau

The ironies are ineluctable. We go to the wilderness to escape the travails of everyday life. So do they. We seek solitude. So do they. We understand the importance of migration corridors. So do they.

"They" are illegal immigrants and drug smugglers who now are using two Southern California wilderness areas in such numbers that the Forest Service is warning recreationists who choose to visit Hauser or Pine Creek wilderness in the Cleveland National Forest not to confront anyone suspicious. An internal Forest Service report put it more bluntly: "The entire Hauser Wilderness is in the control of the smugglers. The public should not use that part of the forest because of the dangers associated with trafficking drugs and smuggling aliens."

Because of their proximity to the California-Mexico border (see map on back page of Wilderness Guide), the wilderness areas have been used by immigrants and smugglers in the past. But stepped-up enforcement at other parts of the border are driving illegal immigrants and drug smugglers into ever more remote wildlands. In 1995, the Forest Service apprehended 511 of the 774 illegal immigrants sighted in the forest and seized 160 pounds of cocaine and almost 1,000

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...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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Coalition news

Monthly Report

I never know quite what to expect when filling a position here at the Coalition. It's not a frequent event; we have but few paid jobs, and our employees stay with us for a long time.

But I was surprised when 16 people applied to be the editor of the *Wilderness Record*. We expected many would be newly-graduating students looking for a first job; instead we found an amazing array of seasoned and experienced people. I don't know if I should be flattered that such talented folks want to work for the Coalition or alarmed at the current state of the economy which drove them to our low-paying, part-time job.

Assuming that our salary would dissuade those not living close to Davis, we advertised the position mostly locally. For a while it seemed that we would not look far for Lucy's replacement—many applicants were from here in Village Homes, with three from her street alone.

Résumés make fascinating reading. Some cover letters showed the love of wilderness and fire in the belly I want in a Coalition staffer. We had folks with varied backgrounds: an attorney, former professors and administrators, a store manager, writers, and activists. After sifting through the papers and conducting interviews, we settled on an editor.

Herb Walker should make a smooth transition to the Coalition. As editor of *Friends of the River's Headwaters*, he produced a paper similar to ours. Already used to Macintoshes and PageMaker, he can concentrate on the content of the *Record* rather than the mechanics.

But as important as his background is, we felt Herb also fit the team we have assembled. The editor not only works with our staff and volunteers to produce the *Record*, she (now he) works with Lora on fundraising letters and grant applications, with Ryan and me on wilderness alerts and reports, and with interns developing their writing skills. I intend to have Herb also increase our media presence which has been mostly reactive in recent years.

During the interviews, I had to turn my back to the blue skies and flowering plums outside the glass doors. Spring fever was biting me, and it turns out that wasn't the only thing that would.

Before the Department of Fish and Game closed the Cache Creek area to public entry (it's fawning season here in the flatlands), I found a day to hike down Harley Gulch. Accompanied by intern Kathy and office dog Inyo, I had a great day. We saw a bald eagle and two goldens as well as tracks of raccoons, bobcats, and a very large bear. It also was tick season.

Inyo pioneered the cross-country route for us, so he gleaned the majority of the critters. I combed well over a hundred off him that afternoon, and in the following days found at least that many feasting on his blood. And despite frequent tick checks, one dined on me.

With a red ring forming around the bite, my doctor asked questions like a Clue player: when, where, and who? When I told her yesterday in Lake County by a deer tick, she told me I would be taking tetracycline (and cautioned me not to get pregnant). You don't mess with Lyme disease.

Armed with my vial of tablets, I journeyed with Ryan to Joe Fontaine's house in Tehachapi for a gathering of activists convened by biodiversity organizer John Hopkins. It was a good meeting, and it led to a September date for a Wildlands Project workshop in Kernville.

But we didn't drive all that way just to come right home, so Ryan got his first taste of the Mojave Desert. We camped next to the El Paso Mountains Wilderness, where in the clear, crisp desert air we watched in awe the comet Hyakutake.

Then after circumnavigating the Owens Peak Wilderness by truck, we hiked up the Pacific Crest Trail to the Jim Jenkins plaque on the peak named in his honor. It was a beautiful day. To the northwest we could see across the Dome Land Wilderness to the peaks above Mineral King; in the northeast were ranges all the way to Telescope Peak.

Have a meeting planned for a remote part of California? Ryan and I always are interested in receiving invitations.

By Jim Eaton

Meet your new editor

Herb Walker joins us this month as the California Wilderness Coalition's new editor. Herb spent four years at *Friends of the River*, working in the membership department before becoming editor of that *other* newsletter, *Headwaters*.

Making the transition to dry land should be easy because, he confesses, he'd just as soon hike along a river as raft it. His favorite places to backpack are "just about anywhere in the Sierra," southern Utah, the Mojave Desert, and Alaska. We think he'll fit in just fine.

A CWC member for several years, Herb sees the Coalition as vital to the state's conservation movement. In particular, he cites our role as a watchdog for public lands and our efforts to educate the people who use them.

As for the *Wilderness Record*, he promises not to water it down, to float some new ideas, and to stay current. Whether he'll deluge us with bad puns, too, only time will tell.

Your Coalition needs you

If you work for Hewlett-Packard, that is. The Coalition needs a Hewlett-Packard employee to sponsor our request for a new printer from the company's Community Donations Program. If you can help, please contact Lora Leerskov at the Coalition office, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616; (916) 758-0380.

CWC is going GIS ... Gee!

The California Wilderness Coalition is going high-tech (by our decidedly modest standards) thanks to a \$12,000 grant from the Conservation Technology Support Program of the Conservation Research Center in Virginia. The grant of geographic information system (GIS) equipment and training will enable the Coalition to better map and protect the network of core wilderness areas, buffer zones, and migration corridors needed to preserve California's biological diversity.

Though primarily intended to support our work on the California portion of the Wildlands Project, the computer equipment from the Conservation Technology Support Program will be a boon to everything we do. In human terms, the Coalition staff will no longer have to fight over who gets to use the Macintosh LC (we'll fight over who gets to use the PowerMac, instead). Ah, progress.

Wilderness Trivia Question

In what California wilderness would you find Finger Rock, Great Arch, Indian Head, and Sugarloaf?

Answer on page 7

Cattle grazing

Overgrazed? Nonsense. In the Sequoia, they call it a fuel break

By Jane Baxter

Grazing on public lands is managed by numbers, and the numbers in a draft amendment to the Sequoia National Forest plan do not look good. Intended to clarify and supplement the Forest Service's existing guidelines on grazing and range management in the Sequoia, the amendment is inadequate on both counts.

Brett Matzke of Cal Trout commented, "The proposed alternative falls way short of providing the direction needed for this forest. The figures for desired future condition are politically based, not science-based."

The plan's inadequacies can be traced to the agency's determination that only 10-20 percent of the stream reaches in the forest need remediation. Local activists familiar with riparian conditions find this figure excessively conservative, even when the Forest Service's definition of desired condition for streams, which underemphasizes the role of vegetation, is taken into account.

A deficiency of botanical expertise has long plagued the Sequoia National Forest, and the proposed grazing amendment reflects the lack of long-term botanical monitoring and the lack of botanical input in determining desired future condition of riparian areas and upland native plant communities. The natural return of native shrubs to their original habitats (where they flourished prior to bush clearance for livestock) is chronicled in the amendment as "losing some open areas to dense brush."

The Forest Service's proposed alternative would allow the Sequoia's streams to have width-to-depth ratios of 20 to 1, even though most scientists consider the still-shallow 10 to 1 the highest ratio possible for a healthy stream. A deep, narrow, U-shaped stream, the kind that provides good habitat for aquatic species, can have a ratio of 4 to 1 or less. The Forest Service also would tolerate bank disturbance in the Sequoia at a rate of 25 percent a year, a figure higher than in any other forest plan in the region that addresses the problem. Water quality would be monitored only by temperature; bacteria, nutrients, turbidity, and sedimentation will be ignored.

A team of outside range experts brought in by the Forest Service to review its range program and local

activists both have identified overutilization of browse as a key problem in the Sequoia National Forest, one with important implications for wildlife. Browse is the woody



A healthy stream along the trail to Cottonwood Lakes in the Golden Trout Wilderness. Many Sequoia National Forest riparian areas don't look this good, and if the Forest Service adopts its proposed range plan, grazing will continue to degrade the forest's streams. Photo by Bob Barnes

scrub species that cattle—and deer—like to eat. In addition to being an important food source for native species, scrub provides shelter from summer's heat and winter's cold. The preferred alternative addresses the issue not as an indication of serious range management problems but as a useful tool, saying overbrowsed areas "will...meet objectives for fuel breaks and other open areas."

In the environmental impact statement that accompanies the draft amendment, the Forest Service did consider two alternatives that would improve range conditions. But better monitoring means increased administrative cost; the agency's preferred alternative involves only a minor increase in cost. The cost of good management is not addressed as an issue.

Activists criticized an earlier draft of the grazing amendment for focusing only on riparian areas. Now the plan addresses uplands and annual grass/oak habitats, but in the most superficial way. There is no meaningful direction for managing livestock in oak woodlands, annual grasslands, or chaparral. Even lower-elevation annual grassland riparian areas are not adequately addressed.

What you can do

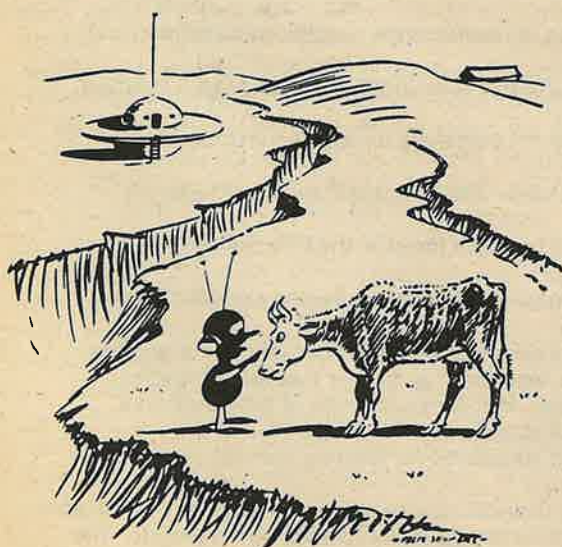
Because grazing management plans, with their arcane terminology and references to "pounds of square matter left on the ground," can be intimidating even to committed activists, Range Watch will be providing some help to people who want to submit comments on the draft Sequoia amendment. By mid-April, Range Watch will have available an information packet on the deficiencies of the plan and a video that shows current conditions in the Sequoia National Forest. You can reach Range Watch at Rural Route 1, Box 450, Posey, CA 93260; (805) 536-8668.

Comments on the Sequoia grazing EIS are due May 3. Write to Forest Supervisor Art Gaffrey, Sequoia National Forest, 900 West Grand Avenue, Porterville, CA 93257-2035. Tell him to:

- use a more realistic assessment of stream damage in the forest;
- allow only 10 percent of streambanks to be disturbed by cattle; and
- reduce the amount of browse utilization allowed.

Jane Baxter is the director of Range Watch.

Another agency herd from



"Why don't you people practice range conservation?"

Soil Conservation Service graphic

A glossary of grazing

Allotment: an area of land, 40 to a million acres in size, based on traditional and often obsolete ownership, fence, and grazing patterns that is designated for livestock grazing

Animal unit month (AUM): the amount of forage and/or browse required to feed a cow and her calf, a horse, or five sheep or goats for a month. In practice, AUMs vary from 600 to 1,000 pounds of herbage.

Browse: leaves and twigs on shrubs and trees

Forage: all browse and herbaceous plants that are available to grazing animals

Grazing permittee: an individual who has been granted written permission (a grazing permit) to graze livestock for a specific period on a range allotment

Herbage: leafy plant material of any kind

Range: land that provides forage for grazing or browsing animals

Range condition: the ability of land to support various levels of productivity. Depends on soil quality, forage values, wildlife habitat, watershed and plant communities, and the degree to which the plant community resembles that of the desired condition for the site.

Range improvement: an activity or program designed to improve production of forage, change vegetative composition, control use, provide water, stabilize soil and water conditions, or improve conditions for wild horses and burros or wildlife

Riparian area: an area of land adjacent to a creek, stream, or other body of water where vegetation is strongly influenced by the presence of water

Upland: all rangelands other than riparian or wetland areas

Sources: How Not to be Cowed (Natural Resources Defense Council and Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance); Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan; Waste of the West (Lynn Jacobs)

Ancient forests

Mixed news on salvage rider repeal effort

By Ryan Henson

The salvage rider has been described as "the most anti-environmental piece of legislation in history." Whether or not it is worse than its closest rival (the 1872 mining law), even its supporters cannot deny its impact: ancient forests are falling to the chainsaw every day, and the pace of the destruction is expected to double this summer when the snow recedes.

Opposition to the salvage rider continues to grow in Congress, but the response from the White House has been slow, tepid, and muddled. In February, President Clinton offered some of his first remarks on the rider since signing the measure into law last year. The president admitted that approving the rider (which was attached to a large—and popular—budget bill) was a mistake and seemed to call for its repeal. From his speech it was unclear, however, whether he supported a full repeal or just a repeal of the amendment's most egregious provisions. Forest activists and some members of Congress, particularly representatives George Brown (D-San Bernardino) and Elizabeth Furse (D-WA), urged the president to support full repeal in the days following his speech. The president finally clarified his position and called for full repeal in early March.

Nevertheless, the Clinton administration has done little to stop the Forest Service from abusing its discretion under the salvage rider. Indeed, many activists complain that the Forest Service has become a rogue agency under the rider. A few weeks after the Department of Agriculture assured activists that the proposed Barkley salvage sale in the Lassen National Forest would be cancelled, the Forest Service said the logging would go forward. This left conservationists wondering who really is in charge of the Forest Service.

Until the rider either expires at the end of this year, as it is supposed to, or is repealed by Congress, activists believe their only recourse is for the White House to police more vigorously how the Forest Service is implementing the rider's requirement that a stipulated level of logging be maintained. Nothing in the rider prevents President Clinton from stopping most salvage sales in old-growth groves and roadless areas and instructing the Forest Service not to plan more.

Meanwhile, efforts to repeal the rider in Congress continue. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich refused to allow Rep. Furse's repeal bill to reach the floor for a vote in February, but she continues to fight. Rep. Gary Condit (D-Ceres) is expected to introduce a bill that would restore the right to challenge salvage sales and expedite uncontroversial projects.

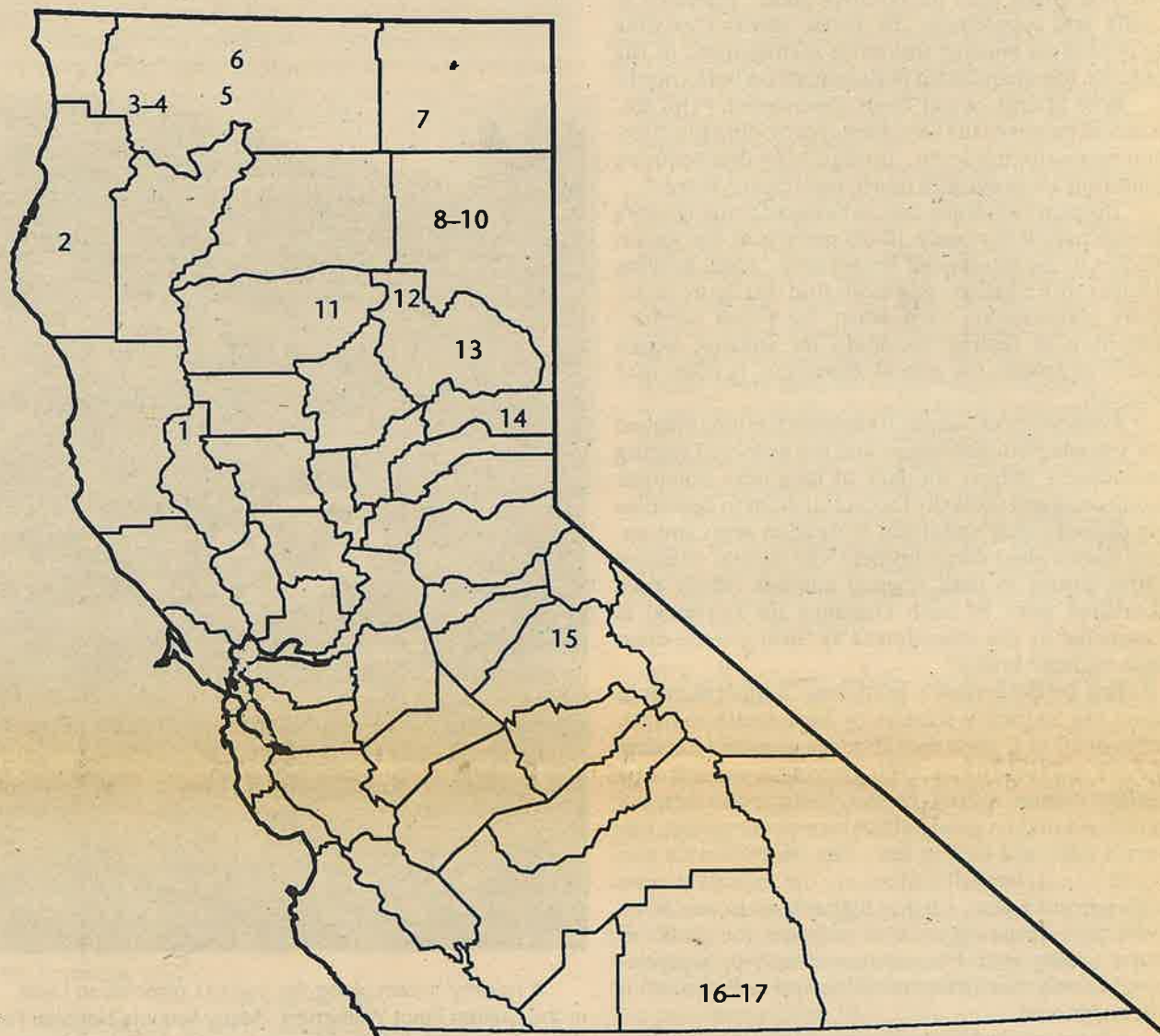
In the Senate, Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ) recently introduced a repeal bill, and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) has advanced a bill that would repeal the salvage rider but substitute different pro-salvage language in its place. This provision of her bill raised the ire of many activists, though most accept it as a vast improvement over the status quo. The Murray bill was defeated on March 14 by a vote of 54 to 42, but she is expected to try again. Both California senators Feinstein and Boxer support repealing the salvage rider.

Thus far, California's forests have been spared the destruction visited on Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and other states. Only one roadless area has been clearcut (Bald Mountain in the Tahoe National Forest), but many others are on the chopping block (see map). The salvage logging proposed for the Sierra Nevada alone is expected to double this year even as scientists are urging more protection for the range, not less.

What you can do

President Clinton has the discretion to order the Forest Service to cancel destructive salvage sales, especially in California where there are no court-mandated logging projects. Call or write the president and urge him to

The worst salvage sales in California



1. Mendocino National Forest: Saddle Timber Sale*—Will log old-growth forest adjacent to a Northwest Forest Plan late-successional (old-growth) reserve in the sensitive Eel River watershed.
2. Six Rivers National Forest: Pilot Creek Timber Sale*—Will log in riparian areas and in the Pilot Creek Roadless Area despite at-risk fishery downstream.
- 3-4. Klamath National Forest: Pony and Dillon Salvage Sales—Will log a Northwest Forest Plan late-successional reserve and the Siskiyou Roadless Area and remove trees from unstable slopes despite at-risk salmon and steelhead fisheries.
5. Klamath National Forest: Specimen Salvage Sale—Will log in riparian areas despite at-risk salmon and steelhead fisheries.
6. Klamath National Forest: Lick Salvage Sale—Will log on unstable soils and in the Tom Martin Roadless Area despite at-risk salmon and steelhead fisheries.
7. Modoc National Forest: Poison Spring Salvage Sale—Region considered for logging includes rare California spotted owl habitat and at-risk fish habitat.
- 8-10. Lassen National Forest: Eastside analysis area salvage sales—Rare eastside Cascade old-growth habitat at risk.
11. Lassen National Forest: Barkley Salvage Sale—Will log old-growth forest in the Polk Springs Roadless Area despite at-risk salmon and steelhead fisheries.
12. Lassen National Forest: Almanor Ranger District Windthrow Salvage Sales—Region considered for logging includes Heart Lake and Chips Creek roadless areas.
13. Plumas National Forest: Moonlight Peak/Indian Creek project areas—Region considered for logging includes rare old-growth forest habitat hosting pine marten, wolverine, and other threatened species.
14. Tahoe National Forest: Treasure and Davies Salvage Sales—Will construct miles of new roads in a watershed already heavily damaged by logging and road construction.
15. Toiyabe National Forest: Poor Boy Salvage Sale—Region considered for logging includes rare eastside Sierra old-growth and the Raymond Peak Roadless Area.
- 16-17. Sequoia National Forest: Tule and Hot Springs Ranger Districts' salvage programs—Regions considered for logging include old-growth forest hosting rare sub-populations of pine marten, fisher, and wolverine. The Agnew, Jennie Lakes, and Slate Mountain roadless areas also are being considered for logging. May violate the Sequoia Mediated Settlement Agreement between the Forest Service and conservationists which requires the protection of sensitive areas.

* Though not salvage sales, these logging projects are covered by the salvage rider.

Map by Jim Eaton and Ryan Henson

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Ancient forests

New fire policies spark little optimism

By Kathleen Brennan

If Smokey ever gets a new motto, it won't be "Burn, baby, burn." The Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are adopting new policies on how their land-managing agencies—the Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management—will respond to wildfire, and suppression still carries the day.

The new policies are the result of a collection of recommendations, the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, by an interdisciplinary team of scientists. The recommendations seem progressive, but the policies mostly support the status quo.

The report recommends that fire, "as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans on a landscape scale, across agency boundaries" and acknowledges that fire suppression diminishes "the long-term sustainability of the land." But the policies the agencies are adopting do not seem significantly to advance the one or correct the other.

For the Interior Department and the Forest Service, all fires are either wildfires or "prescribed" fires that, whatever the source of their ignition, meet agency criteria as beneficial. The Interior Department says "all wildfires will be suppressed" on the lands administered by its agencies—the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. The Forest Service requires an "appropriate suppression response."

Consequently, how the agencies determine which fires are prescribed is all-important. For the Interior Department, fire is prescribed only when it is part of a defined plan, and a lightning fire will be allowed to burn if it is "provided for in a management plan, a valid prescription exists, and the fire is monitored." The Forest Service encourages the use of prescribed fire, managed or natural, and would allow lightning-caused fires to fill "their natural ecological role in wilderness." Although the report repeatedly acknowledges the role of fire in ecological systems, when it comes to policies, management and administrative considerations take precedence over scientific ones.

Fire has long been an integral part of the ecology of many areas. Naturally-occurring fires clear away accumulated vegetative debris and release nutrients into the soil. In addition, Native Americans ignited fires for centuries before Europeans arrived on this continent.

In areas which are fire-adapted, fire is integral to the ecosystem. Plants, animals, and even soils have biochemical adaptations to fire. In some ecosystems, fire is essential to the reproductive cycles of plants. Fire, or the absence of fire, dramatically changes the vegetation of an area over time. Fire-adapted vegetation in areas where fire has been suppressed may be more susceptible to insects and disease. Other more wide-scale effects of fire suppression are changes in wildlife populations, hydrological processes, soils, and nutrient cycling. These effects may be compounded if, as a result of many years of fire suppression, an extremely severe fire burns.

The report also acknowledges that the importance of fire regimes is not well-recognized at the local offices of land-managing agencies where decisions are made. Local managers decide which fires meet agency criteria for prescribed fire, and hence which fires will be allowed to burn and which will be suppressed. Another problem is the fragmentation of land ownership. Although this report strongly emphasizes interagency cooperation, the variance between the specific policy goals of the Forest



New federal policies could restore the role of wildfire to wildlands like Lava Wilderness Study Area on the Modoc Plateau, but local managers still have the final say.
Photo by Jim Eaton

Service and Interior Department is a roadblock.

However disappointing the new federal fire policies are, the real test is how they will be implemented locally. Clearly, before fire is allowed to play its vital role in fire-adapted ecosystems, there is much work and education that still needs to be done.

Kathleen Brennan is an intern at the California Wilderness Coalition. Copies of the report can be ordered from the Office of External Affairs, National Interagency Fire Center, 3833 South Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705-5354 or downloaded from the Internet (<http://www.fs.fed.us/land/wdfire.htm>).

Seventh forest congress a first for conservationists

By Steve Holmer & Ryan Henson

The Seventh American Forest Congress brought 1,200 people to Washington, D. C., in February to try to develop a common vision for America's forests. For the conservation activists who attended, the specter of the salvage rider, which exempts certain forms of logging on public lands from citizen appeals and federal environmental statutes, loomed large over the event and poisoned the debate. With the rider allowing so much of our nation's remaining ancient forests to be logged, it was hard for activists to concentrate on rosy visions for the future.

Though sponsored by the Yale School of Forestry, the forest congress receives most of its financial support from the timber industry, which has complained loudly about the need to reform environmental laws it finds contradictory and burdensome. That conservationists participated at all is a testament to the congress's significance: the six previous forest congresses (in 1882, 1905, 1946, 1953, 1963, and 1975) led to major revisions in natural resource law and policy. When the forest congress speaks, the U. S. Congress listens.

The 1996 congress was the first to include conservationists, who comprised 20 percent of the attendees. The activists' minority status was troubling because majority vote determines which forest management principles are adopted by the gathering. Though badly outnumbered, activists were able to broadcast their message about the need to repeal the salvage rider. Every press conference

held by the organizers of the congress was dominated by the rider, and much of the resulting media coverage focused on this issue as well.

Activists succeeded in garnering approval for several general principles that undercut the salvage rider's chilling effect on public involvement in the management of federal lands. One principle endorsed by the congress states that "citizens and interests have the right to seek administrative and judicial review to ensure that land management decisions comply with existing laws...." Another says changes in environmental laws should be pursued through an open legislative process allowing free and fair debate (the salvage rider was stealthily attached to a large, must-pass budget bill, with little debate or consideration).

An attempt to gain approval for a principle that calls for the repeal of the salvage rider faced opposition on both ideological and process grounds (many participants felt it was too specific to be a general forest management principle). The principle was voted down 711 to 252, a tally which reveals just how badly outnumbered conservationists were. Despite the highly unrepresentative nature of the congress, the timber industry touted this vote in the national press as an indicator of wide support for the rider even though several principles the congress adopted roundly condemn everything the salvage rider represents.

When the forest congress speaks, the U. S. Congress listens.

Initially, some of the strongest supporters of the salvage rider at the congress were unionized pulp and paper workers. Many of them were convinced to oppose the rider when conservationists asked them how they would feel if workplace health, safety, and collective bargaining laws were suspended by a hastily written, hastily passed rider on an appropriations bill.

Other key principles passed at the congress called for the preservation of biological diversity, the maintenance and restoration of healthy aquatic ecosystems, and the protection of ancient forests on public lands.

Unfortunately, a principle calling for the protection of roadless areas failed to pass. Given the overwhelming industry presence at the congress, the 40 percent of the vote the principle won was a pleasant surprise.

The timber industry, which ran ads in the *Washington Post* calling on the forest congress to endorse substantial changes to our nation's environmental laws, was unable even to have these issues discussed in the face of conservationist opposition. Off-road vehicle enthusiasts also were losers—even the timber industry voted against the principles they proposed.

For the California activists who attended, the most useful outcome of the congress was the many new allies they discovered. Activists found they had much in com-

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Wilderness news

Cleveland wilderness areas in the hands of smugglers

continued from page 1

pounds of marijuana, according to the report. The increase is also attributed to the recent collapse of Mexico's economy.

The rugged terrain of the wilderness areas and budget limitations mean that despite increased enforcement by the Forest Service and Border Patrol, the smuggling will not easily be stopped so long as there is an economic incentive to reach the United States. The Forest Service report details the economics and logistics of the smuggler's trade:

"[A]lien and drug smuggling is very lucrative. The aliens that are smuggled into the United States already have some family members living here. A fee is charged for each alien, approximately \$400 per male and \$600 per female. Females cost more because they are considered slower for the smuggler.

"If they get into the United States, they are taken to a safe house where the smuggling operators call the family...and advise them they may come pick up [their relative] for the price. The family...usually makes payment. If no payment is made,

the person is basically put out on the street.

"When the smuggling occurs [in] the forest, members of the party that fall behind are left behind. This usually includes the very old, very young, or sick. We will probably be locating bodies of those that didn't make it.

"Smugglers are in it for the money. If one or more in the party cannot keep up, it jeopardizes the entire group.



Pine Creek Wilderness, Cleveland National Forest Forest Service photo

When groups of 25-100 are being smuggled through the forest, one or two that are left behind are no worry for the smuggling operation.

"Each smuggler knows the terrain and how long it takes to get to the pick-up points. Since the initiation of Border Patrol checkpoints, smugglers know what parts of the forest they can use,...which routes to take, and how many days it takes to get to their first destination. The wilderness areas are prime routes for the smuggler for both drugs and aliens."

The human toll of the smuggling is accompanied by an environmental toll. According to the report, "resource damage continues to increase with each group that is smuggled across the Cleveland National Forest. With each group, more trash is strewn, more items are left, more one-gallon plastic containers are thrown about, more sanitation problems develop, more unauthorized trails are made, and those that are constantly being used are widened and deepened." Only when the smuggling is under control and the danger to Forest Service personnel lessens will the agency turn its attention to rehabilitating the "tremendous amount of resource damage" in the wilderness areas.

If you're considering a trip to either wilderness area or neighboring portions of the Cleveland National Forest, check with the Descanso Ranger District (3348 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901; (619) 445-6235) for current conditions.

Eldorado scandal

continued from page 1

million board feet was the largest in U.S. history. Eldorado National Forest spokesman Frank Mosbacher explained the suspensions in a well-publicized remark in 1993, "In some cases we have no options other than to follow the law."

The suspensions opened the door to a barrage of breach of contract suits. In January of this year, the Forest Service paid \$400,000 to settle three claims, but more suits are underway. According to the Forest Service, the total cost to taxpayers from these suits could reach \$30 million.

The unofficial Forest Service response to the pricy affair is "hear no evil, see no evil." The officials responsible for the mess have retained their positions or been promoted. The biologists, soil scientists, and hydrologists who risked their careers to point out the environmental dangers associated with the sales have been stripped of their responsibilities under a reorganization plan. And the Eldorado's timber program continues without reform.

Meanwhile, Jack Ward Thomas issued a new policy that no documents that could affect "prospective or current litigation" are to be released to the public, a policy in contradiction with the Freedom of Information Act which requires that, with a few specific exemptions, all government records and documents are to be accessible to the public. Documents that could affect prospective litigation are not exempt.

Activist Erin Noel discovered the illegal timber sales. She says that the new policy of withholding information sets a dangerous precedent: "That the Forest Service responded by removing information and preventing the public from being informed about what's happening on public land is a serious problem." If the new policy had been in effect in the early 1990s, she points out, the agency's actions might never have come to light. "This is ... why we need to have public access to information. This was happening up and down the Sierra. We just caught the Eldorado."

Paul Spitler is an intern at the California Wilderness Coalition. Copies of the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility report on the Eldorado scandal, "Business as Usual: A Case Study of Environmental and Fiscal Malpractice on the Eldorado National Forest," are available for \$5 each from PEER, 2110 S Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009-1125.

Thank the BLM for cleaning up its act

The differences between the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) grow wider every day. While the Forest Service squanders its budget (and the national treasury) selling off our old-growth forests and punching roads through wildlands, the BLM (at least in California) appears to be increasing its efforts to protect wildlife and wilderness.

Witness the BLM's recent proposal to remove buildings, debris, and trash and clean up a dump site in the Little Picacho Wilderness. The agency also proposes to erect barriers to prevent off-road vehicle trespass into the wilderness.

The BLM currently is seeking public comments on these proposals, though oddly, the agency does not want letters of praise. According to the BLM, "Simply agreeing or disagreeing...does not help us to identify and correct problems."

Thousand Lakes additions in the clear—instead of the clearcut

The Forest Service says it will not log two Lassen National Forest roadless areas that the California Wilderness Coalition wants protected as suitable additions to the Thousand Lakes Wilderness. Responding to a flurry of letters from Coalition members who opposed the agency's plan to log the Devil's Garden and Cypress roadless areas as part of the Wilcox and Bellow salvage sales, the Forest Service announced that logging would be limited to forestlands outside the roadless areas.

The only remaining wildlands adjacent to the Thousand Lakes Wilderness, the roadless areas are vital to future efforts to establish a migration corridor linking Lassen National Park with wildlands to the north. Thanks to everyone who wrote letters, the roadless areas will live to see another day.

We think otherwise: our land management agencies should always be praised when they do the right thing. We look forward to the day when we can send a nice letter to the Forest Service.

What you can do

Write to Joy Gilbert, Area Manager, Yuma Resource Agency, 3150 Winsor Avenue, Yuma, AZ 85365. Thank the BLM for proposing to restore the wilderness character of the Little Picacho Wilderness and working to prevent off-road vehicle trespass into the area. Encourage the agency to conduct similar restoration projects in California's other desert wilderness areas.

Salvage rider repeal

continued from page 4

prevent the Forest Service from offering any salvage sales in roadless area or old-growth groves until the salvage rider is repealed or expires. You can reach President Clinton at:

The White House (202) 456-1414
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue fax (202) 456-2883
Washington, DC 20500 president@whitehouse.gov

Forest congress

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mon with urban tree planters, small woodlot owners, "eco-friendly" logging companies, progressive foresters, conscientious government officials, recyclers, outdoor sports enthusiasts, scientists, and academics. So while activists did not achieve everything they had hoped for at the congress, at least the timber industry failed to get its legislative agenda endorsed, and the conservation community reached out to many new friends.

Steve Holmer and Ryan Henson represented the Western Ancient Forest Campaign and the California Wilderness Coalition; respectively, at the Seventh American Forest Congress.

Wilderness forum

Book reviews

The Farallon Islands: Sentinels of The Golden Gate

By Peter White, Scottwall Associates, San Francisco, 1995, 133 pp., \$17.95.

I have long been fascinated by the Farallons, having peered at them from Pt. Reyes and once sailed around them on a whale watching cruise. But I didn't know much about the one California wilderness area we're not allowed to visit.

All that has changed. *The Farallon Islands* is chock full of interesting history, from their modern discovery by Sir Francis Drake in 1577 to the 1969 designation of the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge. The book covers 200 years of human occupation of the islands, including the early fur traders, gold rush-era egg gatherers, lighthouse tenders, and wildlife researchers.

Though Drake and other explorers gave the islands formal names, Spanish sailors referred to them as the *farallones*, their word for rocky promontories rising from the ocean. By the mid-1800s, the name Farallons had passed into common use.

Marine mammals and seabirds enjoyed the run of the islands for many years. It was not until the 1800s that Yankee seamen, followed by Russians, began decimating the wildlife. Later, phenomenal numbers of murre eggs were gathered (500,000 in just two months in 1854!) for sale in the growing city of San Francisco.

Rabbits were introduced in the 1850s and quickly became a nuisance, leading to a 1920 rabbit war between the rodents and 60 sailors armed with clubs. The rabbits endured until they finally were eradicated in 1975.

So that "bleakness will be replaced by greenery," a 1949 forestation project planted 397 apple, eucalyptus, and pine trees. But between the rabbits and the poor soil, the sole survivor after one year was a wind-pruned Monterey pine still thriving today. Three cypress trees later planted are known as the "Farallon forest."

Past and current conservation problems are detailed, including the shooting of the wildlife by fishermen, dumping of oil and radioactive waste, and the military's use of Middle Farallon as a target. But with the protections currently in place, wildlife in the Farallons are making a strong comeback.

Peter White's thorough and documented research makes this complete and interesting history of the Farallons a joy to read. Nearly 100 photographs, sketches, and maps complement the text.

My only complaint is a minor one: the 141-acre Farallon Wilderness is not mentioned. But this is a small quibble with an otherwise fascinating book. —Jim Eaton

Mount Shasta: Where Heaven and Earth Meet

Edited by Jane English and Jenny Coyle, Earth Heart, Mt. Shasta, 1995, 120 pp., \$19.95.

As a picture book alone, *Mount Shasta* is a pleasure to browse. Over 150 images by two dozen photographers capture the many moods of the mountain and the creatures that populate its slopes. A number of spectacular full-page pictures in this 12"x9" volume, especially those by Jane English and Michael Zanger, stop you in thrall of this magic mountain. For the photographs alone, this modestly priced book is a bargain.

But there are words, too. The book features interviews with scores of people who live near or have been greatly influenced by California's 14,162-foot Cascade volcano.

You will encounter many different points of view. There are climbers, Native Americans, new-age seekers, ski area developers, environmentalists, loggers, ranchers, and others. In their own words, they tell why Mount Shasta is important to them. No doubt readers will closely identify with some points of view and find others completely foreign.

Jennifer Hall states that "many come to the mountain on spiritual journeys: Christians, Buddhists, Jews, channelers, new agers, shamans, and others of many different practices. The spirit of the mountain knows no religion and accepts all without prejudice."

Including Siskiyou County Sheriff Charlie Byrd, who likes the mountain but believes "there's nothing spiritual about that mountain, though."

And the mixture of science and awe from Richard Lucas, describing the warm water in the fumaroles near the summit: "The mountain is hot, and is a thermal channel down to where the Pacific continental plate, going under the North American plate, becomes liquid rock, here and there bubbling up to become the Cascade volcanoes. When I look at the mountain, I know that it's just the tip of a volcanic crystal that's 100 miles deep."

The contrasting views help explain why the management of this world wonder remains controversial. —JE

Letter

Much to-do about what to do

One of the aspects of your publication I've always appreciated, over any other environmental publication in circulation today, is your "What you can do" section following the main article text. While reading the most recent issue (March 1996), I became a little panicked because I couldn't find that section in any of the articles. (I finally did find one, but only for one of eleven articles which were alerting us to dangerous environmental loss and destruction.) I was especially interested in trying to help take action on the loss of wilderness land to snowmobiles in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness.

So, my request is: Please, *more* "What you can do" sections in your publication. Being informed but impotent is a terrible feeling.

David Silva
Oakland

A number of our readers have told us they too want to know what they can do, and the more specific the better. We provide guidance whenever possible, but unfortunately some comment deadlines fall within our "dead zone," the period between the publication of the *Wilderness Record* and the date it arrives in your mailbox.

With regard to snowmobile trespass in the proposed Carson-Iceberg additions, there was no "What you can do" section because the public comment period had ended (in October 1994) and the Forest Service had issued its

decision. At that point, the only thing left to do is file an administrative appeal, if you have the standing to do so (the Coalition did). The Forest Service has scheduled an April meeting to negotiate a settlement to our appeal. We'll keep you apprised.

The alternative to the agency's appeal process is legislation: Congress can designate the area as wilderness or otherwise forbid its use by snowmobiles. The Coalition's non-profit tax status limits how much lobbying we may do, however, so only rarely will you see a "What you can do" section that asks readers to write their senators and representatives.

Some of our members elect to receive Wilderness Alerts from the Coalition. When an important comment deadline cannot be included in the *Wilderness Record*, we mail alerts to Coalition members who have expressed interest in doing more to protect wildlands. If you would like to be added to our Wilderness Alert mailing list, contact the Coalition office. —Ed.

Wilderness Trivia Answer

The Farallon Wilderness.

Calendar

April 12-14 ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL in San Francisco. For more information about The Big Green Screen, call Food First at (510) 654-4400.

April 13-14 MEETING of the California Ancient Forest Alliance to plan its Sierra Nevada campaign, in Davis. For details, call Jim Eaton at the CWC, (916) 758-0380.

April 15 COMMENTS DUE on a coordinated management plan being developed for the California and Arizona wildlands along the lower Colorado River. To submit scoping comments or request a copy of the draft plan, write to Ron Morfin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management, 3150 Winsor Ave., Yuma, AZ 85365.

April 22-25 PUBLIC MEETINGS to discuss issues relevant to the development of management plans for the Caribou, Ishi, and Thousand Lakes wildernesses of the Lassen National Forest. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. in Chester (April 22 at the Almanor Ranger District conference room), Chico (April 23 at Holiday Inn), and Redding (April 25 at Red Lion/Hilltop).

April 27-28 WORKSHOP on monitoring forest ecosystems, at Feather River College in Quincy. For details, call Hannah Kerner, Cooperative Extension, U. C. Berkeley, at (510) 642-2360.

April 27-28 KERN VALLEY FESTIVAL, celebrating bioregions, in Weldon and Kernville. For information about field trips and workshops, call the organizers at (619) 378-2407.

May 13 COMMENTS DUE on the draft management plan for the Emigrant Wilderness in the Stanislaus National Forest (article in May WR). Send to: Summit Ranger District, #1 Pinecrest Lake Road, Pinecrest, CA 95364 Attn. Lisa Gowe. For a copy of the plan, call the ranger district at (209) 965-3434.

May 17 COMMENTS DUE on new wilderness management plans being developed for the Caribou, Ishi, and Thousand Lakes wildernesses. Send your ideas about what issues the plans should address to: Wilderness Plan Amendment, Lassen National Forest, 55 South Sacramento Street, Susanville, CA 96130.

May 18-19 WORKSHOP on grazing reform sponsored by the California Grazing Reform Alliance, in Sonora. For more information, call the California Mule Deer Association at (916) 645-3288.

May 19 FOREST CONFERENCE at Farnsworth Park in Altadena, organized by the Ancient Forest Task Force of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. Speakers include Jeffrey St. Clair, Jeff DeBonis, and Tim Hermach. For details, call the chapter at (213) 387-4287.

Coalition Member Groups

Ancient Forest Defense Fund; Branscomb Back Country Horsemen of CA; Springville Bay Chapter, Sierra Club; Oakland Bay Chapter Wilderness Subcommittee; S. F. California Alpine Club; San Francisco California Mule Deer Association; Lincoln California Native Plant Society; Sacramento Citizens for Better Forestry; Hayfork Citizens for Mojave National Park; Barstow Citizens for a Vehicle Free Nipomo Dunes; Nipomo
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Friends of the River; Sacramento
Friends of the River Foundation; S. F.
Fund for Animals; San Francisco
Hands Off Wild Lands! (HOWL); Davis

High Sierra Hikers Association; Truckee International Center for Earth Concerns; Ojai
Kaweah Flyfishers; Visalia
Keep the Sesse Wild Committee; Ojai
Kern Audubon Society; Bakersfield
Kern River Valley Audubon Society; Bakersfield
Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club; Bakersfield
Klamath Forest Alliance; Etna
League to Save Lake Tahoe; South Lake Tahoe
Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club; Palo Alto

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"In some cases we have no options other than to follow the law."

—Eldorado National Forest
spokesman Frank Mosbacher
(article on page 1)

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