



# WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

May 1997

## Destructive mining still menaces the Mojave National Preserve

By Jason R. Patrick

At the interface of our nation's three major desert ecosystems, the Mojave desert in southeastern California holds some of our most spectacular desert wilderness. The power and purity of the mountains, canyons and open spaces of the Mojave have long been treasured by those aware of this unique, sensational landscape. However, these same mountains, canyons and spaces have also long attracted those looking to exploit the areas's mineral resources. With the intensified exploration during the gold rush, and through increasing pressure with the development of the railroad, wartime mineral demands, and booming industrialization, the Mojave has felt the bite of mining for many years.

With the passage of the Desert Protection Act on October 31, 1994, 1.4 million acres of the eastern Mojave was finally granted protection as a National Preserve, transferring jurisdiction over the area from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the National Park Service (NPS) and closing it to new mineral claims. Yet many existing claims in Mojave retained some legal rights for exploration and extraction of its mineral resources. In fact, at the time of Park Service designation, the Mojave contained more recorded mineral claims than the rest of the National Park System combined: 9,206. Many of these claims have long been forgotten; indeed, over 7,000 have already been determined to be abandoned or otherwise invalid under federal law. However, there are a number of active operations seriously impacting the Preserve today, and others which threaten to do much more damage.

An NPS study during the transition of the Mojave's management identified seven active operations within the Preserve which qualified for "temporary approval for continuation" until the operators could submit new plans of operation which comply with NPS regulations. Of these, three were exploratory operations which have

yet to request further approval to advance their operations and are apparently inactive—though all require obligatory reclamation work. One other, the Colosseum mine on Clark mountain, is now involved in long-term reclamation, including water monitoring and tailings impoundment water treatment. The remaining three are all active operations which are impacting the resources and integrity of the Preserve in many ways. Cima Cinder is extracting cinders west of the famous Cima Dome without completed NPS or state-required plans of operation; Zzyzx is operating (including unauthorized road construction and fuel storage) in the middle of an expanse of legislatively-designated wilderness at Soda Lake; and Golden Quail has explored their nearly 4,000 acres of claims at the mouth of Caruthers Canyon and has recently filed for approval to begin digging an open pit.

Amazingly enough, Park Service documents indicate that there are also several active mining operations in the Preserve operating without NPS approval of any kind. An inspection of the Aiken Cinder site (by an NPS Geologic Resources Division official) in December 1996 showed recent activity despite the claims being declared null and void by the Interior Board of Land appeals and the BLM. Cyanide leach extraction has gone on at the Morningstar site despite an NPS determination that the operation's plan was inadequate. And the operator of the Goldome site near Ivanpah Pass has admitted to "minor" milling of ore, though the operations has never had any official approval or recognition.

The Park Service in Mojave has also received proposals for new operations on existing claims. Plans for relatively small operations have been submitted for the Adams claims in the Providence mountains (currently under validity review) and for the Blond Beauty claims in the Kelso mountains and the Wheeling claims at locations throughout Mojave. These last two have been rejected as inadequate and have thus far been kept in check. The proposal for three large open pits on the Pleuss-Stauffer claims in the New York mountain wilderness is potentially much more serious—imagine an entire ridge in the most botanically diverse area of the Preserve stripped out. The NPS turned down the initial plan as inadequate, but it is likely that this multinational corporation will try again.



Caruthers Canyon in the New York Mountains is one of the most botanically diverse—and popular—areas in the Mojave Desert. Two proposed mining operations seriously threaten this area. Photo by Nobby Reidy

When the NPS took administrative control late in 1994, many were optimistic that the Mojave would receive the level of protection it deserves—illegal mining activity would be shut down and legal operations would be compelled to run clean. While the Preserve has seen extraordinary pressure from Representative Jerry Lewis (R-Redlands) and others in Congress (including an unbelievable \$1 operating budget proposed for fiscal year 1996), NPS management of mining activities has certainly been insufficient. Since November 1995, there has

*continued on page 7*

### In this issue:

**California Desert threatened from the outside.....3**

**Logging trend dips.....4**

**Wilderness Guide.....insert**

**Animal Damage Control.....5**

**Conservation biology.....6**

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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

If you haven't already heard, you might have noticed the *position available* notice below. Yes, it's true, I've decided to resign as executive director of the California Wilderness Coalition.

As you can imagine, this has not been an easy choice to make. Having helped organize CWC 21 years ago, and serving as the executive director for the past 16 1/2 years, the organization is a major part of my life.

But as the Coalition has grown, the duties of the executive director have changed. Once I worked mainly on issues, edited the *Wilderness Record*, and handled the membership tasks. Now we have a talented staff doing each of these things. Ryan now superbly handles issues, Herb does a remarkable job with the *Record*, and Kathy not only carries on membership duties, but she also helps with fundraising while organizing CWC's role in The Wildlands Project.

Don Morris recently told me he refers to this new generation of activists as Werbachians, in honor of the youthful president of the Sierra Club. They grew up as activists. As an elementary school student, Adam Werbach circulated petitions against Interior Secretary James Watt. Although I took my first backpack at that age, I didn't begin working on environmental issues until I entered college.

Over the last decade and a half, my role as executive director has evolved to that of a fundraiser, administrator, and staff manager. In most larger organizations, this is the task of the executive director. But these are not duties for which I am well trained; I'm a wilderness activist with a degree in geology. And after returning from a refreshing vacation in Chile, it became clear to me that fundraising and managing is not what I want to do with my life. I so notified the board of directors, and they are now searching for a replacement for me.

My dear friend Dave Forman was of great assistance in helping me reach this decision. After hearing my grumbling about the job, he offered a simple suggestion: "Maybe it's time you thought about a career change." That evening I discussed his advice with Wendy, and we decided Dave was right.

This will be a good thing for the Coalition. The right person will raise the necessary funds and lead the CWC to new heights. Of this I am sure.

This will be a good thing for me. I can return to the things I want to accomplish. In addition to working on issues, I want to get back to video editing and working on a neglected house and garden. I plan to escape into the countryside each new moon to explore the cosmos with my new telescope.

This will be good for wilderness. I know I will be working more on The Wildlands Project, a program near and dear to my heart. I can get back to working on specific wilderness proposals: Cache Creek, the King Range, and the White Mountains come quickly to mind. Maybe it's time to help organize the next wilderness conference.

For now, I don't know what my future role with the Coalition may be. I want to allow this transition to take place, let the dust settle, and see if there is a place for me in the organization, perhaps as a volunteer. Hard as it may be, I need to let go of CWC and let those who remain as directors and staff chart the course. I cannot conceive that I will not serve a future role, but for now that function is unknown.

As the news of my departure leaked out, old friends came out of the woodwork to express their feelings. Former director Sari Sommarstrom dropped by for a visit. Email arrived from past *Wilderness Record* editor Stephanie Mandel and well as David Orr, Tim McKay, and Mary Menconi. Don Morris gave me a call, in addition to Russ Shay and Vicky Hoover. Letters recently came in from CWC founder Phil Farrell, Ike Livermore, Sue Smith, and Jerry Meral.

The CWC board of directors has been especially supportive of my decision and is working to make the smooth transition to a new leader. And my neighbors (all CWC members) Lacey and Rob Thayer, David and Jeannette Robertson, Sheila and Jack Kenward, Rick Jorgenson and Mary Ryan, and Bob Schneider and Liz Merry all have extended helpful suggestions (although I detected a hint of envy regarding my impending free time).

I recently had the honor of joining Bob and Liz in marriage (as an official "Marriage Commissioner of the Day"), returning the favor Bob performed for Wendy and me nearly 15 years ago. Bob is a founder of CWC, and at his reception another patriarch, Don Morrill, dropped by. The CWC clan has not dispersed, it has just grown over the decades.

So it is with a sense of oddness, not sadness, that I move on from the Coalition. But I leave CWC in great hands—the board, the staff, and whoever is chosen as the new executive director are destined to achieve great things. They deserve your continued support.

And me? I hope to see each of you along the trail someday soon.

**By Jim Eaton**

### Wilderness Trivia Question

Name the three Executive Directors that the California Wilderness Coalition has had?

Answer on page 7

### Position Available

#### Executive Director

The California Wilderness Coalition seeks a motivated individual with proven experience in conservation, fundraising, staff management, and administration.

Terms: Full-time, salary \$30,000 per year.

Mail cover letter, resume with professional references, and writing sample by May 31 to:

California Wilderness Coalition  
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis,  
CA 95616



## Desert Wilderness

# The California Desert Protection Act may have passed, but threats abound outside protected areas

By Helen Wagenvoord

After twenty years of political battles, heated negotiations and tremendous grassroots action, Congress passed the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA), a sweeping piece of legislation covering 9.2 million acres of the California desert. This move tripled federal park and wilderness acreage, elevated Death Valley and Joshua Tree national monuments to national parks, established Mojave National Preserve and sixty-nine new wilderness areas. The California Desert was once considered to be largely a wasteland, but has since become coveted real estate where wilderness protection and resource extraction co-exist as uneasy neighbors. While the CDPA established a higher standard of protection, shielding the protected areas from neighboring threats is an ongoing challenge. Three of the primary external threats to the California Desert are the world's largest landfill next to Joshua Tree National Park, the military's attempt at a land grab adjacent to Death Valley National Park, and the Molycorp's rare-earth mine near Mojave National Preserve.

### Eagle Mountain Landfill

A private development company, Mine Reclamation Corporation, is looking to reclaim an old iron ore mine site by installing the world's largest landfill.

In addition to the environmental threats this operation poses both to the park and the region, it also raises serious economic concerns. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors is in the midst of deciding whether to permit the establishment of the landfill, and has reservations about the impact of the landfill on the region. County planners are apprehensive that the siting of a large landfill next to Joshua Tree National Park will negatively impact tourism and the local economy. Joshua

***The California Desert was once considered to be largely a wasteland, but has since become coveted real estate where wilderness protection and resource extraction co-exist as uneasy neighbors. While the CDPA established a higher standard of protection, shielding the protected areas from neighboring threats is an ongoing challenge***

Tree National Park draws over a million visitors annually who spend nearly twenty-one million dollars on food and lodging alone. The State Building and Construction Trades of California (a member of the AFL-CIO) opposes the landfill as the few jobs created by this endeavor are far outweighed by the enormous risks facing future generations of working Californians.

Eagle Mountain is part of an unchecked proliferation of landfills competing for California's trash. In Califor-

nia, the rate of waste generation is decreasing and the number of landfill contracts is increasing, making the need for this additional mega-landfill questionable.

Throughout southern California, there has been a surfeit of landfill proposals, and as landfill operators charge cheaper rates to remain competitive, they threaten to reverse waste reduction trends and jeopardize the growth of the recyclables market. In turn, this will undermine state legislation which calls for substantial and timely reductions in the California waste stream, including the

goal to reduce the volume of the waste stream by fifty percent by 2000. For more information on the Eagle Mountain Landfill, see the April 1996 *Wilderness Record*.

### Ft. Irwin National Training Center

The military already controls 3,000,000 acres in the California Desert, including the Fort Irwin National Training Center. The army is actively promoting a decade-old desire to expand the National Training Center by taking over 300,000 acres, including significant wildlands and five wilderness study areas. The army has not credibly justified the need for this expansion. A military analyst has asserted that the current training area is adequate and new systems technology can be implemented through the increased use of simulations and still provide sufficient training. Unlikely bedfellows have united against the proposed expansion, including ranchers, miners, hunters, ORV users and local communities which fear that access to the park will be restricted during secret military maneuvers and will deal a blow to tourism in the region. See the April 1996 *Wilderness Record* for more information on the National Training Center's land grab proposal.

### Molycorp Mountain Pass Mine

Another neighboring problem is the Molycorp mine just north of Mojave National Preserve. For forty years Molycorp has mined and processed various lanthanide compounds for industrial uses. This is the largest rare earth mining project in the United States and ranks as the number one toxic polluter in California, and the twelfth in the nation. Last summer a Molycorp pipeline leaked on both Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and

National Park Service (NPS) lands. While Molycorp described the spill as fresh water, further investigation revealed that the spill actually contained both radioactive and hazardous waste. Despite pressure from a range of federal, state and regional agencies, Molycorp has failed to identify and clean up the spill which occurred in critical desert tortoise habitat.

The CDPA specifically calls for Molycorp's activities to be conducted in a manner which will minimize the impact on preserve resources. However, it is very clear

that this mandate is not Molycorp's top priority. The company is in the process of circulating a plan to expand their operations by fifty percent. The expansion proposal

glosses over its proximity to the preserve and the hazardous and radioactive nature of its pollutants. Furthermore, the expansion proposal does not address the cumulative impact of this mine, along with three proposed golf courses and the continued operation of the Viceroy Castle Mountain Mine. Instead Molycorp asserts that it will provide an alternate source of water

if impacts are excessively degrading. However, the standard for this action is not clear and there is no mention as to where this extra water in a desert region will be found. The Molycorp Mountain Pass Mine poses a threat to public health and nationally significant resources. Several agencies, including the BLM and NPS are investigating a number of legal questions raised by Molycorp's actions.

The battle for the California Desert Protection Act was won due to tireless grassroots effort. Successful implementation will depend on similar efforts combined with ongoing vigilance.

### What you can do

Please write a letter to the following targets and include these points:

- Molycorp must fully analyze and disclose the impacts of its current operation and immediately clean up after its recent spills.
- Molycorp needs to improve its track record and accountability prior to any expansion.

- This mine poses serious hazards to nationally significant resources and public health. Strict, science-based mitigation requirements must accompany its continued operation.

### Write to:

• Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20240

• Randy Scott, Planning Manager, County of San Bernadino, Planning Department, 385 N. Arrow-

head Avenue, Third Floor, San Bernadino, CA 92415-0182 (Note: The County of San Bernadino is the lead agency considering Molycorp's possible expansion)

• Roger C. Beach Chairman and CEO, Unocal Corporation, 2141 Rosecrans, Suite 400 El Segundo, CA 90245. (Note: Unocal is the parent company of the Molycorp Mountain Pass Mine)

For more information, contact the National Parks and Conservation Association at 510-839-9922.

Helen Wagenvoord is a staff member of the National Parks and Conservation Association.

***Molycorp mine, just north of Mojave National Preserve...is the largest rare earth mining project in the United States and ranks as the number one toxic polluter in California, and the twelfth in the nation.***

***Last summer a Molycorp pipeline leaked on both Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service (NPS) lands. While Molycorp described the spill as fresh water, further investigation revealed that the spill actually contained both radioactive and hazardous waste***



# National Forests

## Perspectives

# The best way to save rural economies is to protect our national forests

By Paul Spitler

Every logger who has lost their job in the past five years knows exactly what put them out of work: those darn spotted owls and the tree-hugging druids that care more about wildlife than people. The mass media, with its unyielding eye for sensationalism, dutifully reports that spotted owls are making ghost towns out of Pacific Northwest communities. And conservationists wring their hands and worry about being perceived as anti-economy and thus anti-American.

To hear the timber industry tell it, for every spotted owl protected from extinction another logger will be forced onto the welfare rolls. The statistics tell another story. Despite the spotted owl protections, Oregon has added over 100,000 jobs in the last year alone and is enjoying the lowest unemployment rate in a generation. In the past five years, rural northern California communities have gained twenty jobs in services, retail and other sectors for every timber job lost. The economy of the Pacific northwest is "remarkably healthy and vibrant" according to one economic report, and economic growth in the region is two to three times the national rate.

Herein lies a little known irony: despite the often hyped controversy of jobs versus the environment, study after study has shown that the best way to ensure long term economic health is to protect natural resources. As an MIT economist stated in a 1992 paper, dependence on

resource extraction is "the best predictor of a slowing economy." Diversify the economy away from logging and other extractive industries, and you increase economic strength, reduce unemployment, raise wages and increase the standard of living. This diversification is already taking place in Washington, Oregon and northern California, thanks in large part to the dogged efforts of conservationists who receive little credit for the economic value of their work.

Despite the reality that a healthy economy and healthy environment go hand-in-hand, the misperception still exists that most jobs in rural America depend on resource extraction. Contrary to popular mythology, the vast majority of rural America is not dependent on logging and it probably never will be. In California, national forest logging plays an extremely minor role in the economies of all but a few regions. National forest logging in the Sierra Nevada, for example, accounts for only two percent of all jobs. In the ten northern California counties affected by the northern spotted owl, national forest logging provides less than one half of one percent of all jobs.

By contrast, recreation provides four times as many jobs in the Sierra as does national forest logging. Nationwide, recreation and wildlife viewing in National forests provide 2.9 million jobs each year—over 35 times the amount provided by logging. The extensive cutting of our national forests hurts the industries and economies

that are dependent on recreation. People don't like to camp in clearcuts.

As the economic performance of Oregon and Washington have shown us, any job loss in timber due to logging reductions can easily be made up for in recreation, services and other sectors. The current high levels of logging are possible only because of millions of dollars of government subsidies for the timber industry. President Clinton recognizes that subsidized logging hurts rural economies. His 1997 economic report to Congress calls for a more honest assessment of the true costs of using public lands. "By encouraging overinvestment and overproduction in the livestock, mining and timber industries," the President's report concludes, "subsidies attract resources away from other, more productive sectors of the economy and reduce overall economic well-being."

Environmentalists, economists and even the President of the United States agree: dependence on logging harms rural economies. Vibrant economies, like healthy ecosystems are diverse, varied and sustainable. Do not be fooled by the rhetoric that argues we must choose between a healthy environment and a healthy economy. Instead, rest easy with the knowledge that in saving some trees for our future, we are saving our rural communities as well.

*Paul Spitler is the California Organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign*

# Logging takes a downturn in California's national forests . . . for now

By Quinn Moody

After nearly a decade of intense debate over the destructive level of timber sales in California, recent information released from the Regional office of the Forest Service indicates that environmental efforts are paying off substantially. The Forest Service timber sale target for 1997 for all California national forests is 502 million board-feet (mmbf), about ten percent lower than the last three year average, which includes elevated levels for last year due to the salvage logging rider.

In the 1980s, timber sales in California national forests, which include the Sierra Nevada, Klamath, and Southern California regions, averaged 1,642 mmbf annually. There are 5,000 board-feet to each logging truck. So, in the 1980s the amount of trees logged each year was equal to 328,400 logging trucks. By the end of 1996, the average annual timber sale for the period 1990 through 1996 had fallen to 914 mmbf: almost half the amount harvested in the preceding decade. This year's target of 502.5 mmbf represents an impressive 75% decrease over the previous decade.

However, all the news is not rosy. Despite the relatively low timber sale targets for this year, the Forest Service seems determined to increase logging in the years ahead. Most notably, the agency's projected annual sales level for the Sierra Nevada in both the Cal Owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the unreleased Revised DEIS would result in substantial increase over the 1997 targets. Viewed through these, the Forest Service has once again demonstrated its determined intent to increase logging while targeting the remainder of old-growth forests.

The Cal Owl DEIS was to supersede the California Spotted Owl Interim Guidelines (CASPO) which are currently in place. CASPO is a science-based policy amended into all of the forest plans in the Sierra and is designed to preserve habitat for the California spotted owl and reduce the risk of wildfire. Because the initial Cal Owl draft EIS proposed to weaken forest protection in the Sierra without any scientific justification, the agency was forced to revise its draft EIS. In the meantime, Sierra Nevada ecosystem Project (SNEP) study was released. SNEP is an independent scientific assessment of the ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada and was released in June 1996 when the status of the Cal Owl EIS was unclear. (see *Wilderness Record*, July 1996) At the time SNEP was released, the Forest Service was preparing the revised DEIS. This document also met with intense opposition because it blatantly ignored the findings of SNEP and recent owl studies that showed the continued decline of the California spotted owl. Thus, the Forest Service was ordered by the Administration to stop work on the revised owl plan.

Under existing CASPO policy, logging levels in the Sierra Nevada would be about 385 mmbf. Yet, the 1997 Forest Service timber sale targets for the Sierra are 318 mmbf, 21 percent less than the CASPO estimate. The Preferred Alternative in the Cal Owl DEIS would allow for 417 mmbf in timber sales, an increase over the current 1997 target of 31 percent. Despite this significant increase, the logging levels in the Preferred Alternative of the unreleased Cal Owl RDEIS would be even greater - a whopping 620 mmbf which is a 61 percent increase over the current allowable level.

Equally disturbing is the size of trees targeted for logging by the Forest Service. The RDEIS targets a signifi-

cant amount of old-growth forest for logging. The Forest Service uses tortured reasoning and nonsensical logic in reaching the conclusion that logging trees 30" to 39" wide would have no significant impact on wildlife, and therefore these trees would be equally as suitable for timber sales as younger stands. This entire premise is contrary to the large volume of scientific evidence on the subject of old-growth dependent species, and stems solely from unpublished data from industry scientists and out of context statements by a SNEP biologist. Fortunately, the Administration prevented the Forest Service from releasing the revised draft EIS.

As things stand now, the Administration is convening an advisory committee to compare the revised DEIS, SNEP and new owl population data, and to recommend a plan of actions. The EIS process might start from scratch or some other "draft" might be issued. Regardless of the process, the public will have opportunities for input. SNEP has excellent information about old-growth forest reserve systems. Activists should arm themselves with the good information in SNEP and be prepared to weigh-in on the Cal Owl planning process to keep the logging levels declining toward a sustainable level—one that is based on cutting only the smaller trees where necessary to reduce fire risk. Continued vigilance is essential to prevent the Forest Service from rolling back the clock to the days when timber was king. We've made some significant progress but we can't rest—yet.

*Quinn Moody is a resource associate with The Wilderness Society's California-Nevada office.*





## Wilderness News

# Animal Damage Control: subsidized slaughter of wildlife Federal program has a foothold in California

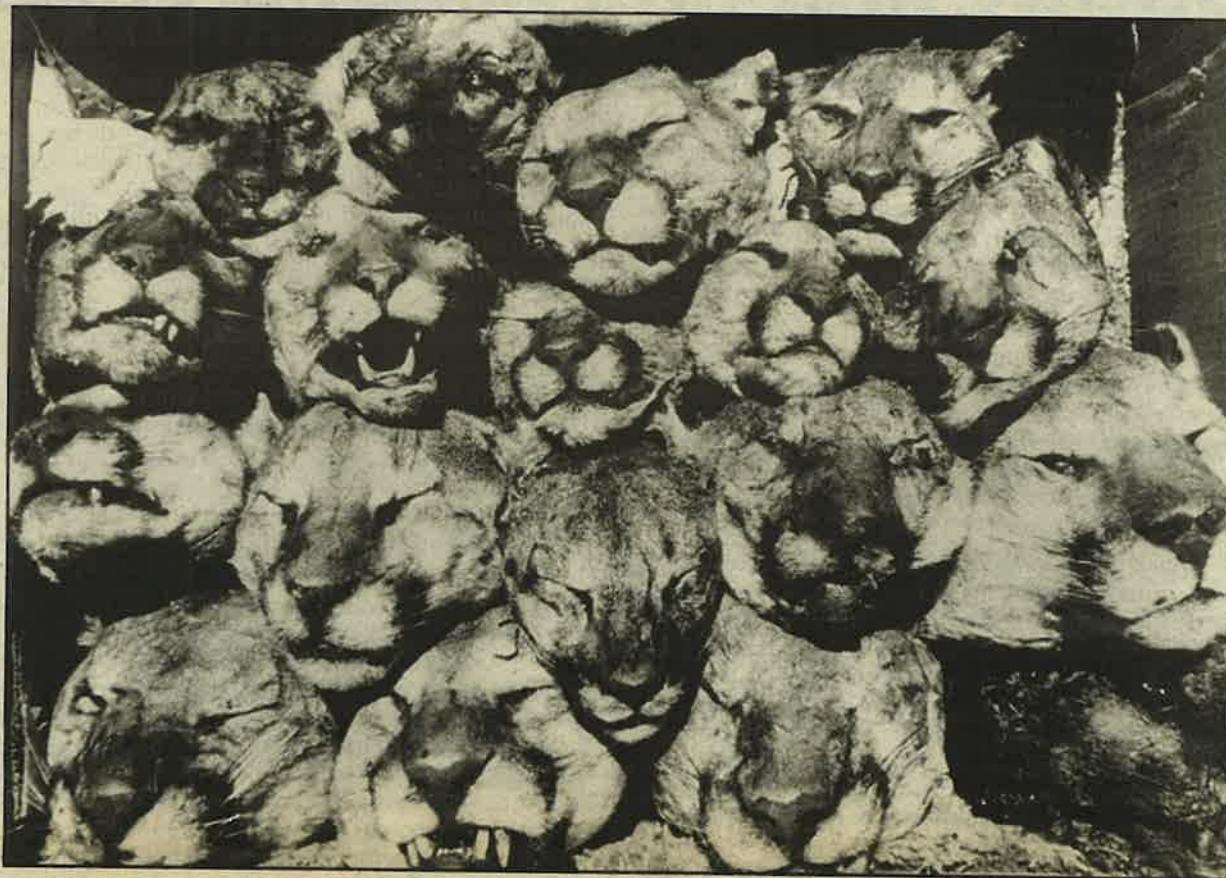
By Tom Skeele

What do seventy-one mountain lions, fifty-six bobcats, thirty-two black bears, three hundred and thirty foxes and over 7,300 coyotes all have in common? They were all killed in California in 1994 by the federal Animal Damage Control program. Worse yet, you helped pay for this killing with both your federal and state tax dollars.

Created in 1931, the Animal Damage Control (ADC) program was designed for providing "wildlife damage control in order to protect America's agricultural, industrial and natural resources, and to safeguard human health and safety." The ADC program works to protect seven different categories of resources: aquaculture, livestock, forest/range, crop, human health and safety, human property, and natural resources. However, the primary focus of ADC's work has always been killing predators in an attempt to protect livestock in the seventeen western states.

ADC uses a myriad of lethal methods to control predators, listed here in descending order of animals killed by each method during 1995: aerial gunning, M-44's (a baited device which sprays sodium cyanide when bitten), neck and leg snares, leg-hold and cage traps, shooting, and calling and shooting, and denning (smoking coyote pups out from their dens). Presently, ADC has received authorization from various states, including California, to use the Livestock Protection Collar, a collar equipped with two "bladders" containing the poison Compound 1080.

Until recently, ADC's policies have stated that field agents used non-lethal practices whenever practical. In their nation-wide environmental impact statement, ADC claimed that "preference is given to practical non-lethal methods." Even Vice President Al Gore stated that "ADC policy is geared toward giving primary consideration to



These mountain lions were killed by the Animal Damage Control program in a small area of south-eastern Arizona, probably all within one year. Photo by Steve Johnson, courtesy of Wildlife Damage Review.

the use of non-lethal methods of predator control whenever practical." It is likely that Mr. Gore's office received that information directly from ADC, since a 1995 congressional report by the General Accounting Office found that the ADC program uses "lethal means in essentially all instances to control livestock predators." It came as no surprise that ADC was deceiving the public by claiming that they focus on non-lethal control methods for predator control. If ADC was really committed to using non-lethal methods as its first course of action, it would not have to kill over 100,000 predators every year. ADC responded to this congressional report by changing its policies to meet its practices, rather than visa versa. In a recently released Environmental Assessment for northern California, ADC proposed to maintain the status quo with respect to methods used for lethal predator control.

In 1995, the ADC program spent \$19,590,281 to directly administer predator control nationwide (this does not count the funds used for ADC's national and regional offices, its research facilities, or its supply depot). Ninety-eight percent of those funds were spent in the western seventeen states, and resulted in over 100,000 predators being killed. Worse yet, ADC's own figures show that cooperating ranchers only reported losing \$4,577,290 worth of livestock in those seventeen states (or twenty-three percent of the funds spent to reduce those losses). Those same ranchers directly paid for less than one percent and livestock associations paid only thirteen percent of the cost of ADC's program. Meanwhile, federal tax dollars accounted for fifty-one percent of ADC's costs and state tax dollars accounted for twenty-two percent.

All this highlights the simple but impactful problem with the ADC program: public money is used to kill publicly-owned wildlife, often on public lands, for the benefit a small percentage of private ranchers, and those ranchers are neither required to conduct any control (lethal or non-lethal) themselves prior to receiving ADC's services nor pay directly for those services.

In California, ADC has been most active on public lands on the Toiyabe and Tahoe national forests. The above-mentioned EA for northern California states that "ADC conducts control activities on BLM's Eagle Lake, Alturas, Surprise, Arcata, Clear Lake and Redding Resource Areas and the Tahoe National Forest. Control work on the Modoc, Shasta-Trinity and Klamath National Forests is limited to bear and lion damage control. . . However, in the future ADC may conduct coyote control on the Modoc National Forest. In addition, ADC may receive future requests to provide assistance in other National Forests including Lassen, Plumas, Mendocino and Six Rivers."

Meanwhile, ADC is now pushing the use of the above-mentioned Livestock Protection Collar with ranchers in Marin, Sonoma and Mendocino counties, and for the first time since President Nixon banned the use of Compound 1080 in 1972 the poison is available for use in California in those counties.

### What You Can Do:

Write to Senators Boxer and Feinstein, as well as your Representative, and request that they oppose all funding for the ADC in the next budget cycle. Mention some of the facts discussed above to support your position.

#### Write to:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein/Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510.

To contact your representative (if you do not know the name of your representative, please call CWC) write to:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515.

Tom Skeele is the Director of the Montana-based Predator Project.

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## Biodiversity

# Conservation biology: melding science with environmental ethics

By Kathy Brennan

Conservation biology, while a fairly young discipline, has great relevance for anyone concerned with the maintenance of biodiversity on the Earth. According to one text, the two primary goals of conservation biology are research of human impacts on biodiversity, and the application of what is learned to solve problems that lead to human caused extinctions.

It integrates methodologies from a variety of fields, and this interdisciplinary approach is one of the distinctions between conservation biology and other sciences. Conservation biology links applied fields such as management and wildlife biology with more academic fields of study such as genetics. It also takes into account social and economic factors which influence impacts on ecosystems.

Much of conservation biology research has as its goal understanding problems such as habitat fragmentation, degradation and destruction that are affecting biodiversity on the planet. One branch deals with the design of reserves, and with how best to protect what remains of intact ecosystems. Another branch focuses on the importance of maintaining genetic diversity, and how dwindling numbers of plants or animals in a population may lead to a compromise in genetic diversity. This could lead to mutations, and so indirectly reduce the ability of a species to survive.

Conservation biology differs from ecology and biology in two important ways. The first is that it considers human activities as major components of modern biological systems. Traditional research in these fields focuses on plants and animals in pristine areas, and attempts to understand systems separate from any human induced affects. Conservation biology recognizes that it is inevitable that human activities have both direct and indirect impacts on natural systems. Any management is a direct impact, as is any extractive industrial use of land. These may lead to any number of other consequences. The politics that govern the increasingly global economy have indirect impacts, some of which may not be immediately apparent.

There are many examples of the complexities of these causal relationships, and the importance of understanding them. Conservation biologists study fragmentation and edge effects among other physical factors influencing ecosystems. One such example of habitat fragmentation affects grazing animals that depend on different kinds of vegetation at different times of the year. In the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep have dietary preferences that change according to the season. If a sheep is physically unable to get to an area that has food which is necessary for survival over winter, it could affect the survival and reproduction of the population. Bighorn sheep are not known to migrate very well to begin with. In a population which has already been impacted to the point of tenuous survival a human caused impact could end up pushing them over the edge. Another example that relates to edge effects includes forest carnivores who are dependent on old-growth forest characteristics. When these forests are logged, obviously the trees (and what plant ecologists call forest architecture which is the structure of the canopy and understory) are gone, and with this dramatic change comes changes in the microclimate (that is the temperature, humidity, light, and other localized conditions which are unique to ancient forests). Changes that originate along edges have repercussions within the forested areas that remain as well. These edge effects have a variety of ecological impacts which detrimentally affect the ability of trees to come back, and so

reduce the ability of creatures that need particular microclimate conditions to survive.

The second way conservation biology differs from ecology and biology, is that it is inherently value-laden. The inclusion of the word conservation implies that conservation is the ultimate goal. This is confirmed in generally accepted "assumptions [that] represent a set of ethical and ideological statements" laid out by Richard Primack in one of the best known texts available. These represent a framework within which conservation biologists work. These are:

- Diversity of organisms is good.
- The untimely extinction of populations and species is bad.
- Ecological complexity is good.
- Evolution is good.
- Biological diversity has intrinsic value.

Including such statements in a scientific text or journal is somewhat revolutionary in the sense the recognition of the ethical and value-grounded basis of the discipline is a departure from the traditional scientific allegiance to absolute objectivity. Although there is a difference between objectivity in research, applications of information learned in research, and the ethical beliefs of the researcher this is still a difficult subject for some scientists. Whether or not conservation biologists should be openly opinionated, or active in conservation is a subject of debate within the conservation biology community, and will likely continue to be for sometime to come.

For activists, this is an important discussion because the application of hard data can make for more effective conservation work. A scientific undertaking which works towards the same goals as conservation activism can be a powerful tool. To understand exactly why and how the ecological repercussions of certain activities such as logging, mining, and grazing affect ecosystems and the species that inhabit them is a critical step towards stopping the destruction of precious remaining wild lands.

One example of this is the information gathered in the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project report. While not overtly a work of conservation biology, this document has provided much useful information which is being actively applied to problems facing the ecosystem of the Sierra. It is especially important because it lends credence to claims of conservationists: there is peer reviewed data from University of California researchers which proves that there are serious problems resulting from activities such as logging, grazing, development, and fire suppression in the Sierra. The research into all aspects of the Sierran ecosystem was able to explicate causal relationships. It examined historical and current human uses and impacts on the ecosystem, economics that determine how land is used and why, and other factors which inevitably contribute to the well being of plants and animals in the region. This evaluation of an entire ecosystem is unprecedented in California, and is critical for understanding the complexities which shape the land and affect the ecosystem. Conservationists need to push for this kind of ecosystem-level analysis for all parts of the state.

As mentioned, conservation biology is a fairly young discipline, and as such is still involved in a process of self-definition. Conservation activists need to form alliances with conservation biologists whenever possible, and learn to use concepts such as habitat fragmentation to educate the public, our Congressional representatives, and land management agencies about the importance of maintaining biological diversity and intact ecosystems.



## WILDLANDS

THE WILDLANDS PROJECT

### UPDATE

In April environmental activists around the country celebrated Earth Day. This year's theme in Northern California was "Forests for the Future." While important, it could also have been "Ecosystems for the Future." Forests are certainly important, and their protection is critical, but equally critical is the protection of all remaining pristine wild places, and the restoration of areas that have been degraded in the past so that we have native biodiversity and the last of California's wilderness in the future.

In *Saving Nature's Legacy*, Allen Cooperrider and Reed Noss outline four objectives that follow from a goal of preserving biodiversity in perpetuity:

Forests seem to face the most immediate threats from logging, and so they receive a great deal of attention, as is evident from the Earth Day theme. Equally important however, are the ecosystems that face threats from development, mining, and other kinds of exploitation. For this reason activists need to have a vision for the future they envision for California. This is the primary goal of the Wildlands Project.

Even today in popular media conservation activists are portrayed as being "anti-": anti-logging, anti-mining, anti-growth. The list is as long as the rhetoric. Activists still spend so much time and energy being reactive.

To counteract this we need to create a positive vision of where we want to be years into the future. We need to draw the lines on a map and show people what we know it should look like. Currently the longest management plan public agencies use looks ahead ten years into the future. What is ten years in the life of a blue oak? In terms of evolutionary processes and geologic time 10 years is the blink of an eye. It is not long enough to plan for the maintenance of biodiversity.

In the past many areas set aside for protection as wilderness were evaluated based on wilderness characteristics that primarily valued aesthetics and recreation. While these are viable criteria, we now understand more about biological processes and the complexities of ecosystem level interactions. At the same time, we know there is too much that we do not yet know or understand to limit ourselves to these criteria in the future. One of the best ways to counteract the trend towards the destruction of habitat and ecosystems is to plan for the protection of wilderness and biodiversity "hotspots" based on credible science.

The Wildlands Project integrates principles of conservation biology with local on-the-ground knowledge to determine where these areas are in each region, and to plan for their permanent protection.

Regional efforts to begin the process of planning for the future of California's wilderness are critical. If you are interested in being involved in your region please contact Kathy Brennan at the CWC office.



# Wilderness Forum

## Letters

### Floodwaters not enough to save Yosemite

Bob DeNike's letter about Yosemite (Wilderness Record, March 1997) was of special interest to me. As a long time Yosemite and public lands activist, I too participated in the planning process leading to the creation of the 1980 General Management Plan. The writer refers to "Yosemite Valley was swept clean." Based on the media's representation of post-flood Yosemite, I understand his perception.

However, having visited Yosemite numerous times before and after the Valley reopened, I'd like to advise people that from the viewpoint of human-made structures, they will not notice much of a difference in their next visit to Yosemite. Bob DeNike proposes that we now choose between a "silent valley of glistening rock....or a valley of tawdry shacks and shabby tent-cabin slums." With all due respect for his viewpoint, I must point out that shacks and tent cabins, while unsightly, do not constitute a serious threat to Yosemite compared to others that receive little or no attention.

Yosemite's natural values are endangered by pollution from outside and inside Yosemite, degradation of

ecosystems and abuses by some of every "user group" (including backpackers, RV'ers, tent dwellers, lodging dwellers, day users, etc.).

It is not clear to me how such plans as day-use reservations, touted by many to be a solution for Yosemite, will help Yosemite's natural values. Time will tell. It is clear, however, that we must focus on efforts that improve ecological integrity. Attention must be brought to implementing the Resources Management portion of the 1980 General Management Plan, which heretofore has been ignored in discussions of funding and use of funds. Many in the National Park Service are anxious for this segment to be implemented on behalf of Yosemite. They need support from all of us in the form of letters to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389.

Lastly, we must all be aware of how we "work" with or against natural Yosemite in our visits to this magnificent place.

Georgia Stigall

Native Habitats, Woodside

## Hydro-project plan blocked in Caples Creek Roadless Area

By Jim Eaton

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recently denied a rehearing on a developer's long-standing plan to build a hydroelectric dam on the Silver Fork of the American River, within the proposed Caples Creek Wilderness.

In its 1988 Eldorado forest plan the Forest Service recommended all of the 17,900-acre Caples Creek Roadless Area for wilderness designation. The recommendation was cheered by environmentalists, not only because it set a likely minimum size for the future wilderness area and included the dam site, but also because the Forest Service protects the areas it recommends for wilderness designation from destructive activities like logging and road building.

Last June, FERC dismissed the license application filed by Joseph M. Keating for the Foottrail Project at the confluence of Caples Creek and the American River. FERC ruled that the California Wilderness Act of 1984, which classified the roadless area as a further planning area and the Forest Service's subsequent recommendation for the entire area to be designated as wilderness, precluded the hydroelectric project.

FERC also noted that Keating had appealed the Forest Service's wilderness recommendation. But after reopening the wilderness decision, the Forest Service received 132 letters commenting on the issue, with only 8 supporting the project. The Forest Service stuck by its original decision.

Keating also unsuccessfully tried to obtain legislative deletion of the project site from the proposed wilderness.

Final protection for the proposed Caples Creek Wilderness will not occur until Congress finally designates the area as wilderness.

## Mining still a treat in the Mojave

continued from page 1

not been anyone familiar with mining issues in Mojave at the Preserve: the NPS has relied on their Geologic Resources Division hundreds of miles away in Denver.

The Park Service in Mojave is to be commended for having the grit to force the illegal operation on the Vulcan claims at Foshay Pass to shut down or face a court-ordered injunction, and for ordering (in its first regulatory action) the replacement of a leaking water line supplying the huge Molycorp operation on the Preserve's northern border. Yet they must recognize the legal obligation—and the moral authority they often espouse—to enforce their own regulations. With the recent hiring of a minerals engineer to oversee mining operations (and reasonable funding for park management), and with the increasing public awareness of the shameful mining activity occurring amidst the splendor of Mojave National Preserve, we may yet see action.

### What you can do:

Write to the Mojave National Preserve and voice your concerns about illegal and inappropriate mining activities and ask to be informed of mining proposals and actions within the Preserve.

Write to:

Superintendent Mojave National Preserve 222 East Main Street Barstow, CA 92311

For more information, contact:

The Wilderness Society P.O. Box 29241 San Francisco, CA 94129-0241 (415) 561-6641

Jason R. Patrick is a resource associate with The Wilderness Society's California-Nevada office.

## Wilderness Trivia Answer

Phil Farrel, Dave Brown and Jim Eaton.

## Calendar

**May 15-16: Endangered Species in California: Evolving Regulations and Emerging Trends.** This conference provides a forum for anyone involved in both federal and state ESAs to share information and participate in panel discussions. Legal credit is offered. Contact Linda Pike at (916) 757-8878 for more information.

**May 17-18: BLM's Adopt a Wild Horse or Burro program comes to the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa.** Call the BLM at (707) 468-4000 or 1-800-545-4256 for more information.

**May 26: Comment deadline for Long/Damon Butté Timber Sale in the Modoc National Forest.** Write to Paul Bailey, Devil's Garden Ranger District, 800 West 12th Street, Alturas, CA 96101. See article in November 1996 *Wilderness Record*. For more information call Ryan Henson at (916) 758-0380.

**May 29: Sustainable Sierra Project Outreach Forum in Chico.** This forum of environmental groups will discuss current watershed and fire prevention issues in the Sierra Nevada, as well as exploring guidelines for future project evaluations and funding sources. Presenters from more than a dozen organizations will attend. For more information call the Planning and Conservation League Foundation at (916) 444-8726, ext. 82.

**May 30-June 1: Conference on Siskiyou Ecology.** The conference, to be held in Kerby, Oregon, will focus on the ecology of the Siskiyou, as well as the Klamath Mountain region. Presentations will cover a broad range of topics, including flora and fauna, unique geological features and historical changes influencing the integrity of the region. There will also be educational workshops and field trips to areas of ecological interest. Contact Jennifer Beigel or Eric Jules at (541) 592-4459 or ejules@umich.edu. The conference's web site is <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~bartj/siskiyou>.

**June 3: Comment deadline on the Fort Irwin draft EIS.** See article in April *Wilderness Record*.

**June 4: 100th Anniversary of the Organic Act,** which opened up national forests to logging. Events will be happening around the state to mark this infamous date. Contact the Western Ancient Forest Campaign at (916) 758-0380 for more information about events near you.



## Coalition Member Groups

Ancient Forest Defense Fund; Branscomb Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club; Los Angeles 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  
Committee to Save the Kings River; Fresno Conservation Call; Santa Rosa  
Davis Audubon Society; Davis  
Desert Protective Council; Palm Springs  
Desert Subcommittee, Sierra Club; San Diego  
Desert Survivors; Oakland  
Eastern Sierra Audubon Society; Bishop  
Ecology Center; Berkeley  
Ecology Center of Southern California; L. A.  
El Dorado Audubon Society; Long Beach  
Friends Aware of Wildlife Needs (FAWN); Georgetown  
Friends of Chinquapin, Oakland  
Friends of Plumas Wilderness; Quincy  
Friends of the Garcia (FROG); Point Arena  
Friends of the Inyo; Lone Pine  
Friends of the River; Sacramento  
Fund for Animals; San Francisco

Golden Gate Audubon Society; Berkeley  
Hands Off Wild Lands! (HOWL); Davis  
High Sierra Hikers Association; Truckee  
International Center for Earth Concerns; Ojai  
Kaweah Flyfishers; Visalia  
Keep the Sespe Wild Committee; Ojai  
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Kern River Valley Audubon Society; Bakersfield  
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Klamath Forest Alliance; Etna  
League to Save Lake Tahoe; South Lake Tahoe  
LEGACY-The Landscape Connection; Leggett

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The Wilderness Land Trust; Carbondale, CO  
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Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

*"It's a little bit like allowing gays into the military, but not if they admit they're gay. Allow wolves into Yellowstone, but only if they don't behave like wolves."*

— one of 160,264 comments received by Yellowstone National Park on their proposal to reintroduce gray wolves to the Park and central Idaho.

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