

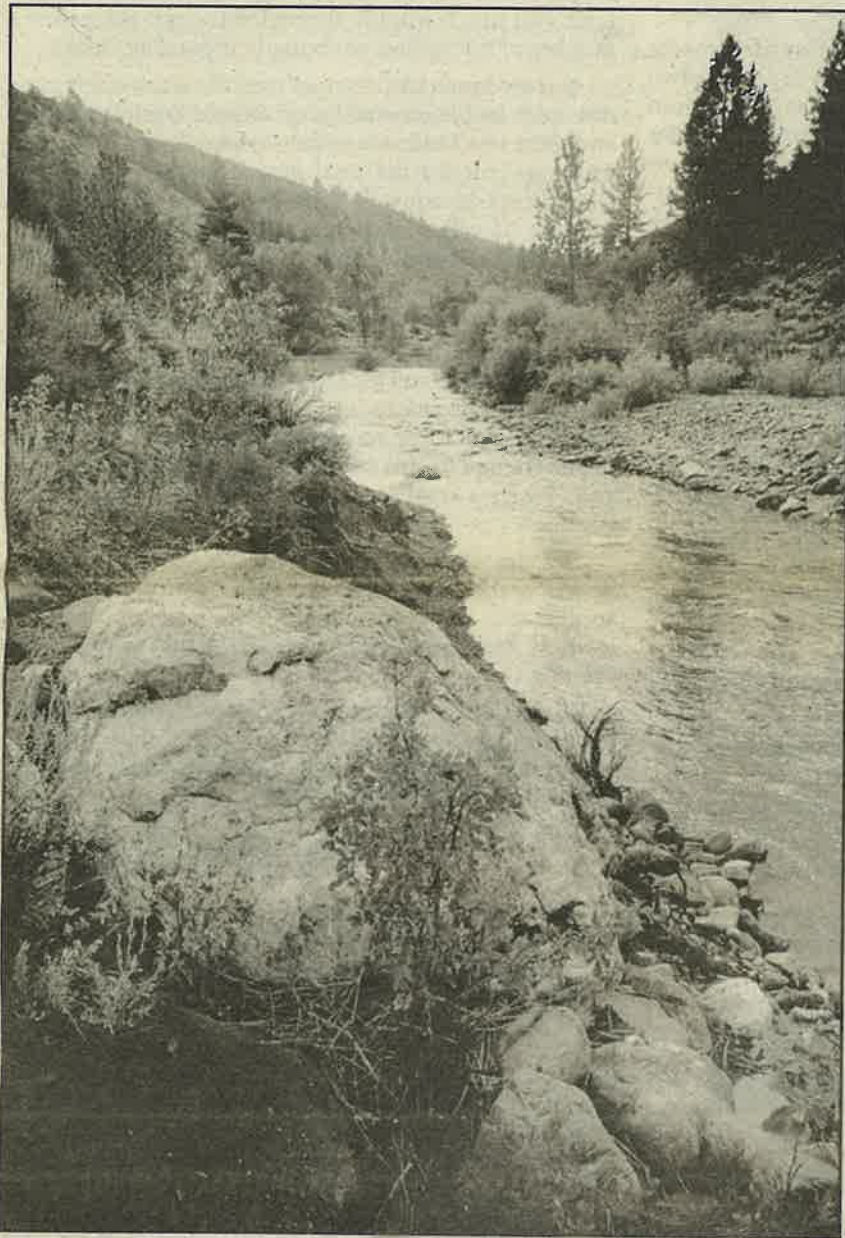


WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

June 1997

Forest planning looks at potential Wild & Scenic Rivers



The West Walker River, Toiyabe National Forest. Approximately 48 miles of the river were found eligible for Wild and Scenic status, which would prohibit destructive activities in and near the river. Photo by Tim Palmer.

By Steve Evans

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is the nation's primary river conservation tool. The free flowing character of rivers included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are protected from dams while publicly owned lands along the river are managed to protect and enhance their outstanding values. Federal agencies such as the Forest Service are required to identify and recommend to Congress potential additions to the system.

Plumas National Forest

The Plumas National Forest in the northern Sierra Nevada is the location of one of the first rivers federally designated by Congress in 1968—the Middle Fork Feather National Wild and Scenic River. In response to a successful appeal by river conservationists of the 1988 Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), the Forest Service agreed to conduct a forest-wide assessment of potential Wild and Scenic Rivers in addition to the already designated Middle Fork Feather River.

The Forest Service completed the first stage of its forest-wide assessment in 1994, identifying 28 river and stream segments totaling nearly 200 miles as eligible for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic system. Most of the eligible river segments are located in the Feather River watershed, although two streams in the North Yuba River watershed were also identified.

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Rider attacks wildlands—again

Letters needed to stop the "Pave the Parks" rider

By Herb Walker

In the wake of last winter's floods, as Congress worked to pass an emergency flood-relief bill, some lawmakers saw an opportunity they could not pass up. With billions of dollars in relief money at stake, Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) decided now would be a good time to resurrect a clause from the Mining Act of 1866. Known as RS 2477, this archaic law allowed road construction through public lands that were not being used for resource extraction or military purposes. Originally intended to allow settlers to build roads on federal lands, the law was repealed with the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in 1976. Now, Senator Stevens is holding hostage \$5.6 billion dollars of flood aid until he gets his "roads rider" passed.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt told Stevens the rider "could effectively render the federal government powerless to prevent the conversion of foot-paths, dogsled trails, jeep tracks, ice roads, and other primitive transportation routes into paved highways." Babbitt has called on President Clinton to veto the bill if it is passed with the rider attached.

The road rider would legitimize states' claims of right-of-way on public lands. Legally, paved roads and highways could then be constructed on cleared trails, primitive roads, or pack animal routes through wilderness areas, national parks, monuments, and Indian reservations. Alaska and Utah would be particularly devastated, where there are already thousands of right-of-way claims pending passage of the rider. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance blasted the underhanded way Senator Stevens is trying to get roads built in wilderness areas and other public lands by saying "Putting the RS-2477 Pave the Parks Rider in a flood relief bill is cynical and opportunistic politics at its worst."

This measure was not included in the House version of the flood-relief bill. Unable to reach a decision by Memorial Day, lawmakers will work out the final bill in conference after their recess. According to Senator Stevens, the Clinton Administration is proposing negotiations on rights-of-way to determine which ones are valid.

The last time Clinton signed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill, our public lands were left with the ruin of the logging rider. We can't let this

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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

Inyo and I have been itching to get into the Sierra this year, so I didn't turn down a chance to attend a public meeting in Mammoth Lakes recently. I've long had a policy never to decline an opportunity to travel to the east side of the Sierra. Going to Los Angeles? Highway 395 may not be the fastest route, but it certainly is the most scenic.

I also wanted to see the bypass around the Walker River Canyon. The floods of January obliterated U.S. 395 through the canyon, necessitating a detour into Nevada along the east side of the Sweetwater Mountains. The Sweetwaters, much abused by mining, have fascinated me ever since I saw their blanched summits looking like distant permanent ice fields. Their eastern side is every much as scenic as their western side.

We had hit the road early enough that we had time for a hike, so I decided to retrace my steps of a trip nearly two decades ago to Glass Creek Meadow in the San Joaquin Roadless Area. In 1978 a number of environmentalists and Forest Service officials took a week to examine portions of the roadless area. We hiked up Mammoth Mountain, visited Reds Meadow, and walked to Glass Creek Meadow. We then drove over to the west side to look at parts of the roadless area along the South Fork of the San Joaquin River.

Wendy and I have vivid memories of that hike. One was of our huffing and puffing (despite our youth) to keep up with long-legged Ike Livermore, then in his 60s. I remember how the summer sun blazed down on us and was reflected by the bleached pumice as we crunched our way up the trail. We ascended false summit after false summit with no meadow in view. The only green was that of the scattered Jeffrey pines that offered scant shade. With San Joaquin Mountain looming closer as we climbed up the valley, there seemed to be no room left for a large meadow.

Finally, there it was. On that hot afternoon, the verdant oasis was a welcome sight indeed. It became one of our special wild places. Others, like board member Sally Miller, have been enchanted by this seemingly ordinary, yet outstandingly remarkable place.

Nineteen years ago the struggle was still in the high country, not out here on the eastern flanks. The Forest Service and some business interests in the Fresno area

were continuing their campaign for an all-weather highway across the Sierra. With unlikely champions like Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon, the highway was stopped. In 1984 the core of the roadless area became the Ansel Adams Wilderness.

I remembered those days as we drove past Glass Creek Campground and cast a worried look at my canine companion. Inyo has been out of sorts lately. I'm not sure if its doggy old age or depression with the record heat we set each month here in the Sacramento Valley. But when he got out of the truck, the puppy reemerged and led the way up the trail.

The sky was thankfully overcast, and the welcome breeze cooled our ramble through the volcanic wonderland. Not much wildlife showed, although there were a number of butterflies, particularly mourning cloaks.

Not too much had changed over the years. A few more dirt roads had been established around Obsidian Dome, and there was a hideous microwave tower on a ridge. But when we reached the final medial moraine, there was Glass Creek Meadow, a shimmering sea of green with splashes of yellow buttercups. Inyo cooled himself in some banks of snow while I took in the magnificent scene.

That evening I joined a standing room crowd of over 100 at a public meeting regarding the public land between Mammoth and June mountains. The Forest Service's "desired future condition" for part of this area is a downhill ski resort. They wanted to hear what projects the public wanted in this wild area. The words "wilderness" and "roadless area" were not part of the Forest Service vocabulary.

But almost everyone attending this meeting wanted no part of the Forest Service's "desired future condition." Speaker after speaker demanded that the agency leave the roadless area alone. Wilderness was the word of the evening.

Glass Creek Meadow. A quiet, unassuming place. Clearly it has touched the hearts of scores of people who will defend it from development schemes and work to see the land protected as wilderness.

By Jim Eaton

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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 a writing sample to:

California Wilderness Coalition
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis,
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Accepting resumes until position is filled.

Wilderness Trivia Question

Where did the Plumas in Plumas National Forest come from?

Answer on page 7

Wilderness Planning

Wilderness yet to be: millions of acres of wildlands waiting for protection

Part I: Forest Service lands

By Jim Eaton

When the California Wilderness Act passed Congress in 1984, some thought the struggle for protecting wildlands managed by the U.S. Forest Service was nearly over. Hardly.

The bill passed by the House of Representatives would have protected 2.4 million acres of wilderness. The Reagan Administration wanted only 1.2 million acres preserved. Then-senator Pete Wilson figuratively cut the baby in two by insisting on a compromise of 1.8 million acres.

Negotiations in reaching the final compromise were long and complicated. Faced with a loss of wilderness acreage, environmentalists worked to give up lands with the fewest threats to them while protecting areas facing the bulldozer and chainsaw. The result was good protection for forested wilderness areas such as the Siskiyou and Trinity Alps. Alpine, chaparral, and sagebrush areas did not fare so well.

As a result, the White Mountains, Caples Creek, Pyramid Peak, and Mill Creek, among many others, still await wilderness designation.

The compromise resulted in 1.8 million acres of wilderness in lands managed by the Forest Service. The decision on another 1.8 million acres of roadless lands was deferred; these "further planning areas" were to be studied again by the Forest Service. Another 2.7 million acres of wild land were "released" for uses other than wilderness.

In the late '80s and early '90s, the 14 California national forests with further planning areas studied these lands as part of their forest planning process. Most of these plans were appealed by the California Wilderness Coalition and other environmental groups, especially for their lack of thorough wilderness study.

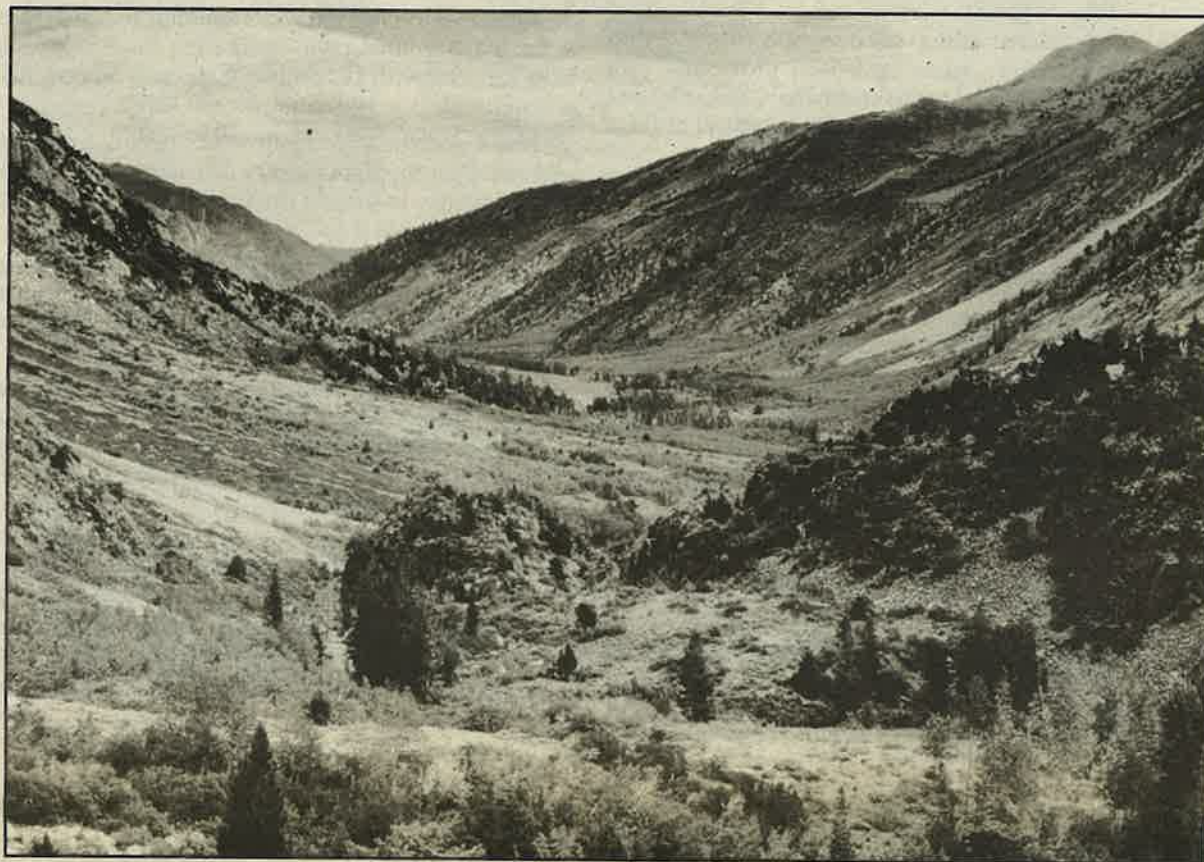
During the past 14 years, many of the "released" roadless areas have been threatened with road building, logging, off-road vehicle events, and other development projects. These wild places, especially the forested ones, have been vehemently defended by environmental organizations, especially in recent years.

After passage of the 1984 California Wilderness Act, many environmentalists focused their attention to the struggle to protect the California desert. That effort culminated with President Clinton signing the California Desert Protection Act in 1994. It is time now to begin planning to preserve the wild places still needing protection.

The last 14 years

As predicted by environmentalists, the Forest Service only recommended a portion of their further planning areas for wilderness. Of the 63 roadless areas studied, portions of only 18 areas were recommended for wilderness. This was a scant 27 percent of the further planning acreage.

After passage of the 1984 California Wilderness Act, many environmentalists focused their attention to the struggle to protect the California desert. That effort culminated with the signing of the California Desert Protection Act in 1994. It is time now to begin planning to preserve the wild places still needing protection.



Buckeye Canyon in the Toiyabe National Forest has been recommended by the Forest Service for addition to the Hoover Wilderness. Photo by Tim Sherburn.

Congress addressed the roadless areas in the Los Padres National Forest in 1992 by passing the Condor Range and Wilderness Act. The Forest Service proposed protecting four areas totaling 192,179 acres. Congress responded by designating as wilderness eight areas totaling 402,000 acres. One area, Silver Peak, had been released in 1984 but survived to become wilderness eight years later.

Congress designated three more Forest Service areas as wilderness in the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. A portion of the Paiute Roadless Area became part of the much larger Inyo Mountains Wilderness. The Scodies area, not recommended by the Forest Service, became part of the larger Kiavah Wilderness. And the released Granite Peak Roadless Area became part of the larger Bighorn Mountain Wilderness.

What remains wild

Congress has yet to address roadless areas recommended for wilderness by the Forest Service in the Eldorado, Inyo, Lassen, San Bernardino, Sequoia, Stanislaus, and Toiyabe national forests. And as has been true since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, Congress responds to the public's support of preserving wild areas by enlarging Forest Service proposals and designating lands not recommended by the agency.

About 1.3 million acres of further planning areas

remain wild yet not protected as wilderness. A quarter of that acreage is in the Los Padres National Forest that Congress recently debated. However, as long as the lands remain wild, they can later become wilderness (the Ventana Wilderness, for example, has been enlarged four times during the past 28 years).

Most of the 2.7 million acres of released areas also remain roadless, thanks to the vigilance of environmental groups. A small number of these released areas were actually recommended for wilderness by the Forest Service but released by the compromise reached in the 1984 wilderness bill. These lands are Excelsior and Deep Wells east of Mono Lake and eight roadless areas adjacent to the John Muir Wilderness.

Between the further planning and released roadless areas, there remain more than four million acres of potential National Forest wilderness areas. They range in size from the 350,000-acre-plus White Mountain roadless area to tiny areas adjacent to existing wilderness areas. Popular Sierra additions to the Carson-Iceberg and Hoover wilderness areas need to be preserved. Hundreds of other wild places, from San Diego County to the Oregon border, await the attention of activists.

Editor's note: next month the Wilderness Record will look at potential new wilderness areas in lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Wilderness News

A belated and partial victory for the coho salmon

By Tim McKay

In a non-delayed ruling, coho salmon earned a split decision last month, winning federal protection as a threatened species along the northern California and southern Oregon coasts, but losing in a political deal for the rest of Oregon that left activists fuming.

The decision, likely to have a greater impact on logging, mining and other activities than restrictions for the northern spotted owl, was a triumph of persistence for twenty-four environmental and fishing groups.

The two dozen organizations began prodding the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in 1993 to protect the coho, or silver salmon. The prized fish, as big as three feet long and weighing thirty pounds, shimmer silvery blue in the ocean and are tinged with red as they swim upstream to spawn and die.

Announcement of the intended protection under the Endangered Species Act came within days of a report saying that the millions of dollars being spent on in-stream habitat restoration projects are being wasted.

Once one of the most commonly taken salmon, coho populations have plummeted. In California, fewer than 10,000 came back to spawn, compared to half a million historically. In central Oregon, native runs that once numbered 1.5 million fish have dropped to about 80,000 spawners.

Volunteerism?

Nevertheless, NMFS bowed to political pressure from Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber and made an unheard-of deal regarding the waters north of Port Orford. Listing was delayed there for further review in three years while the state implements a 2,700 page plan seeking "voluntary changes" in land use involving the coho.

The plaintiffs who forced NMFS into its belated action gave the agency a 60-day notice of their intent to sue, saying the deal was a capitulation to the timber industry.

Logging is believed to have a giant impact on in-stream habitat quality.

Kitzhaber lobbied Oregon's Republican legislature to adopt a \$15 million coho-restoration funding package, to be matched with \$15 million from the timber industry on condition that the coho was not listed.

NMFS and the state spent weeks negotiating a deal, and called on the state forestry officials to adopt tighter forest practices to protect the fish by June, 1999, or face having the species listed.

But Doug Heiken of the Oregon Natural Resources Council said the 1999 deadline was dropped from the final agreement, giving the timber industry no real reason to accept tough stream-protection rules.

"We really think the decisions under the Endangered Species Act ought to be based on good science," said David Bayles, conservation director of the Pacific Rivers Council in Eugene, Oregon. "This decision seems to be based on deal making."

A deal also was feared by activists in California, who have accused the Wilson administration of trying to short-circuit the coho listing. North Coast Senator Mike Thompson wrote to the Governor in late April requesting that he make no agreement with NMFS about listing until legislators have been briefed and can discuss any proposal.

What's next

Even more important than the listing itself is what steps are going to be taken to recover the coho salmon.

After a two-month waiting period, NMFS will look at guidelines for curtailing impacts on coho habitat that could include restrictions on gravel mining, road-building for logging, rural subdivisions, grazing and water diversions for power and agriculture.

Big Timber, the sixth-largest industrial sector in the U.S., has enjoyed the least restrictions of all in stemming the coho's decline, according to fisheries experts.

"If California's forest practice rules were working, we wouldn't be in the crisis we're in," says Pat Higgins, a consulting fisheries biologist in Arcata.

Zeke Grader, with the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, added that commercial fishers have not been able to catch coho for four years. Where 1.5 million coho used to be the average catch on the West Coast, only 12,500 will be available this season—and then only in a small area off the state of Washington.

How to restore

Meanwhile biologists with the American Fisheries Society, the nation's leading organization of fisheries biologists, issued a report saying that up-slope watershed repair is key to the recovery of salmon threatened with extinction.

"If we truly want to restore, we're going to have to make some fundamental changes in land and water use," said one of the authors, Jeff Dose, a Forest Service fish biologist. He said efforts to save the salmon must shift from projects that focus solely on restoring in-stream habitat to an approach that seeks to restore the overall health of watersheds.

The report concluded that most small-scale projects to repair habitat have been ineffectual, largely because they assume that the ecosystem as a whole is intact and that enough fish are left to recolonize the improved areas.

Of the 7.9 million acres of coho habitat in northern California and southern Oregon, 3.5 million are federally owned, 2.5 million are ranches and farms and 1.9 million are held by private timber companies. Although restrictions will be severe on federal actions, the bulk of the coastal streams that historically supported coho are in timber company ownership.

Since juvenile coho spend up to fifteen months in the streams where they were born before beginning their migration to the ocean, they are particularly vulnerable to adverse changes in their freshwater habitat.

Tim McKay is the Director of the Northcoast Environmental Center.

Forest plans offer grazing activists a chance to corral the stampede

By Dano McGinn

Domestic livestock grazing is the single most damaging human-related activity on western rangelands. The vast majority of rangelands occurring throughout California are grazed. Poor grazing practices are extremely destructive, leading to trampled streambeds, damaged riparian vegetation, excessive erosion and poor water quality, all of which can be devastating to fish, wildlife and plants.

Numerous planning efforts involving grazing management on national forest lands within California are currently or shortly underway, providing concerned citizens an opportunity to state their issues and viewpoints. Well researched and constructive comments throughout the planning process can help the protection of natural resources by curtailing harmful grazing practices.

The federal land management agencies, including the Forest Service, continue to produce planning documents which dictate grazing management devoid of sound scientific support. The results are grazing strategies which

will predictably result in continued impacts to soil, water, vegetation, fish and wildlife and economic efficiency, as well as recreational opportunities. Lack of general public awareness and involvement in grazing planning allows the status quo to continue.

Below are some immediate opportunities for involvement in grazing management. To play an active part in shaping grazing decisions on public lands, contact these agencies and request to be placed on their mailing lists:

- The Tahoe and Eldorado national forests are currently amending their Land and Resource Management Plans' (LRMP) Range Standards and Guidelines (S/Gs). These national forests have received public scoping comments and are putting together their Environmental Analysis (EA) at this time. By contacting either Forest you will receive the planning processes for both. Write to: Tahoe National Forest; Attention: Range Amendment; P.O. Box 6003; Nevada City, CA 95959 or call (916) 265-4531.

- The Plumas National Forest is currently reviewing its LRMP to decide whether it needs to be changed to

reflect contemporary public concerns and demands, scientific research or other significant information as required by the National Forest Management Act. Changing the LRMP could mean an amendment or an entire revision of the plan. The sooner they hear the public's concerns, the better. Contact: Plumas National Forest; P.O. Box 1150, Quincy, CA 95971 or call Dennis Clemens at (916) 283-0555, or Lee Anne Schramel Taylor or Frank Ferguson at (916) 283-2050.

- The Sequoia National Forest has reopened the public comment period for its draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) entitled "Grazing Management for the Sequoia National Forest." This is an LRMP amendment for grazing in the forest. This extended opportunity came about from the hard work of environmentalists who monitor this national forest. Contact the Sequoia National Forest by July 26, 1997 to request a copy of the DEIS and be placed on the mailing list. Write to Sequoia National Forest; Attn: Julie Allen, Forest Planner; 900 West Grand Ave; Porterville, CA 93257-4744 or call (209) 784-1500.

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Ancient Forests

The last days of an ancient forest

A walk among the condemned giants of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest

By Paul Spitler

Dust clouds rise from my tires as I head up route 28N10 in the southeast end of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Flowering dogwoods fly by as I blaze along the winding dirt road. I would love to pull over, set up camp and stay awhile. But I am not here vacationing. I have come to view a forest sentenced to death.

My map showing the location of the See Horse timber sale is grossly inaccurate—like the project itself, the map dates back over a dozen years. Instead, I use instinct and common sense to find my way. After passing Dead Horse Ridge, route 28N10 drops down to the North Fork of Beegum Creek then begins climbing again. As the altitude increases, so does the diameter of the trees. When I get to an area surrounded by big trees, I pull over, park the rental car, and begin to walk.

The slopes here are incredibly steep. Sweat builds on my face and back as I scramble up an old skid road towards what I believe to be the timber sale area. I am climbing through oak forest, but ahead I can see towering stands of pine and fir. With the big trees as my compass, I trudge on. Eventually, the black oaks give way to conifers. At the exact moment that I enter a lush stand of gigantic sugar pine and Douglas fir trees, I see a small plastic tag and blue ribbon attached to a tree. It reads "See Horse, Unit 27."

I cannot help but to stare up at the ancient trees and marvel. These trees have survived eons of wildfire, drought and flood. They were here long before us, and will survive long after we go. If we let them. Nearby, I count 325 rings on a stump of a large Douglas fir tree and note in my fieldbook that much larger trees are marked to be cut in the See Horse timber sale. Hundreds of years of life ended with a single chainsaw's roar. I should not be surprised when I visit a pristine old-growth forest that is slated to be logged. But I am. I am not only surprised, but saddened and outraged as well. I wonder about the judgement of a government that willingly cuts down trees far older than our country.

Logging any old-growth forest is, in my opinion, immoral. In this case, it is also illegal. Both the Horse and See Basin timber sales (later combined into one project, named See Horse) were planned and approved by the Forest Service in the early 1980s. Although approved, the projects were never sold. They simply languished on the shelf, waiting to be dusted off and sold at a future date. Now, the agency has decided that the time has come. And herein lies the problem.

The Forest Service Handbook directs the agency to revise an environmental assessment of a timber sale if "new information or changed circumstances" warrants such a change. Certainly the listing of three species as threatened and a proposed listing of a fourth, the Wild and Scenic eligibility of two rivers, numerous timber sales on both private and public land, the President's Northwest Forest Plan, the Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan, a dozen years of research into the significance of old-growth forests, and heightened public concerns about the fate of ancient forests, constitute new



These pines and firs are slated for the chainsaw after the Shasta-Trinity National Forest illegally resurrected a timber sale from fourteen years ago—without any environmental review. Photo by Paul Spitler.

information and changed circumstances. Yet, the agency has issued no supplemental environmental documents and is making no new decision.

I have asked Forest Service officials several times to explain how they can legally sell a fourteen year-old timber sale but have received no answer. Several years ago, the Eldorado National Forest in the Sierra Nevada was faced with a similar predicament. In that case, agency officials attempted to revive twenty-four ancient timber sales with no new environmental review. After first denying any irregularity existed, the agency was eventually forced to withdraw all the projects—essentially its entire timber program—and to pay millions of dollars in breach of contract claims to timber companies. Perhaps the agency has institutional amnesia. Meanwhile, the See Horse project plunges forward.

I finally make my way back to my car and head down the dusty road towards home. Along the way I come across a snake sprawled out across the road. I approach it and see that it is a rattlesnake whose body forms a perfect question mark, with the rattle at the tip of the mark. As long as I watch it, it does not move. It just lies there, questioning. Perhaps it wants to know how humans can be so naive and arrogant to destroy something as unique and precious as an ancient forest. Staring up at the tender giants overhead, I have no answer.

What you can do:

Write to:
Sharon Heywood
Forest Supervisor
Shasta-Trinity National Forest
2400 Washington Avenue
Redding, CA 96001

Ask her to withdraw the See Horse Timber Sale. Remind her that the project is in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) because there is no adequate analysis of the impacts to water quality, cumulative effects, proposed Wild and Scenic Rivers, wildlife and old-growth habitat. Urge her to uphold the letter and spirit of NEPA, the National Forest Management Act, and the President's Northwest Forest Plan by cancelling this old-growth clearcut.

You can also send a copy of your letter to:

Jim Lyons
Assistant Secretary for the Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th St. and Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

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

Nearby, I count 325 rings on a stump of a large Douglas fir tree and note in my fieldbook that much larger trees are marked to be cut in the See Horse timber sale. Hundreds of years of life ended with a single chainsaw's roar. I should not be surprised when I visit a pristine old-growth forest that is slated to be logged. But I am. I am not only surprised, but saddened and outraged as well.

National Forests

Congress considering key forest votes

Efforts underway to eliminate all funding for new timber roads

By Paul Spitler

Congress will vote on several key measures this month that could have dramatic impacts on California's national forests. Congressmen Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) and John Porter (R-IL) will introduce an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill that would eliminate all Forest Service funding for new logging roads in national forests. Also, the Administration has proposed a new fund that would be used to conduct restoration activities on national forest land. The fund would require legislation to pass and will likely be voted on this month.

The Kennedy-Porter Amendment on Timber Roads

Each year, the U.S. Forest Service loses \$200-400 million selling trees from our national forests. A major reason why taxpayers lose money logging public land is that we pay for the construction and maintenance of all roads used for logging. To date, taxpayers have funded the construction of 379,000 miles of roads in national forests—over eight times the mileage of our interstate highway system. Despite that the vast majority of these roads are used almost exclusively by private timber companies, taxpayers foot the bill for every mile of road carved through our national forests.

Of course, building the most extensive road network on Earth is not without its costs. Over two thirds of all National Forest roads are in disrepair, creating a maintenance backlog totaling \$440 million. Further, forest roads are a leading cause of landslides, cause severe fragmentation of wildlife habitat and drastically increase sedimentation to rivers and streams. A survey of the landslides that occurred in southern Oregon after last year's storms found that over a third were associated with roads. A 1991 Forest Service study found that roads cause 26 to 326 times the amount of sedimentation and erosion as unroaded areas. This sedimentation severely degrades salmon habitat, and is an important reason why many California salmon runs are nearing extinction.

For several years, a coalition of environmental and taxpayer organizations has pushed for the elimination of federally funded logging roads. Last year, Representatives Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), John Porter (R-IL) and others introduced an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill that would end government funding for new logging roads. The amendment passed, 211-210, but was brought up again the following day where it lost on a tie vote, 211-211. The amendment garnered considerable bipartisan support as fiscally conservative Republicans joined with Democrats to vote against the costly corporate subsidy.

In introducing the amendment last year, Representative Kennedy chastised the federal government for subsidizing timber giants like Weyerhaeuser, Georgia Pacific and International Paper. "If the new roads for logging purposes are warranted, practical and profitable, why should not the corporate giants build their own roads?" Kennedy asked on the House floor.

Representatives Kennedy and Porter are committed to introducing the timber roads amendment again this year when the Interior Appropriations bill comes up in the House. To avoid another tie, we need to push every Representative to support the Kennedy-Porter amendment on timber roads.

The Forest Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance Fund

Each year, the Forest Service spends over \$1 billion of taxpayer money that is, in essence, accountable to no one. This money is contained in what is known as "off-budget" funds—funds that are not appropriated by Con-

gress, and thus receive little to no Congressional oversight. (See side-bar at right for a description of several off-budget funds). This lack of oversight is especially problematic for an agency with a checkered history of wasting taxpayer resources while causing tremendous damage to forests, water quality and wildlife habitat.

Because these funds are not accountable to Congress, they are often heavily abused. By tucking money away in unaccountable slush funds, the Forest Service officials have found a way to bolster shrinking budgets—at the expense of taxpayers and our forests. The agency routinely takes 40-50 percent of all money from these funds for administrative overhead. This leaves many projects unfunded as little money actually reaches the ground where it is most needed. Comments like the following, from the Canyons timber sale environmental impact statement, are becoming increasingly common. "It is unlikely that any revenue generated from the sale will be available for reforestation." Why? Because the agency plans to keep all revenue (after sending 25 percent to the county government, as required by law) to carry out future salvage sales.

This year, President Clinton's administration has proposed a new fund, the Forest Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance (FERM) Fund. The fund will be given \$121 in startup funds and will be maintained by siphoning off 10 percent of all timber sale receipts. Also, any money that is generated by FERM fund projects will go back into the fund. Thus, the fund will be wholly dependent on timber sale revenue.

Having a restoration fund dependent on timber sale revenue is like making the American Lung Association budget dependent on cigarette and cigar sales. Tying restoration funding to increased logging is bound to cause more degradation of forest ecosystems. In California, Forest Service land managers routinely justify timber sales by stating that they need the money from the sales to carry out restoration projects. In an extreme case of irony, agency officials in California's Tahoe National Forest justified a timber sale that included streamside trees by stating that the money from the sale was needed to fund a much needed restoration project for an adjacent stream that was damaged by past logging.

Decades of logging and road building have taken their toll on national forests, and have left many forest ecosystems in dire need of restoration. The question is, "How are we going to fund such activities?" Instead of tying restoration funding to logging (and thus creating another perverse incentive to log), Congress should appropriate the money for restoration. Currently, only \$30 million is appropriated for restoration nationwide in national forests. This is woefully inadequate. Appropriating more money for restoration will assure that the money reaches the forest where it is most needed and will allow Congress to maintain oversight as to how the money is spent. Creating a new FERM fund will only repeat past mistakes, diminish agency accountability, and create new environmental problems in national forests.

What you can do:

We may not be able to convince a Republican Congress to protect our precious forests, but we can convince them to stop wasting tax dollars. Write your Senators and Representative and ask that they work to restore fiscal and environmental accountability to the U.S. Forest Service. In particular, ask that they:

- Eliminate all funding for new logging roads in national forests. Our national forests contain too many roads already. Taxpayers should not be forced to pay for roads that are used exclusively by logging companies.

- Oppose the creation of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance fund. The Forest Service heavily abuses the funds it already possesses. Creation of a new fund will lead to future abuse, and will create new incentives to log.

Contact:

Senator Feinstein/Boxer

Your Representative

U.S. Senate

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20510

Washington, D.C. 20515

"Slush" Funds used by the Forest Service

The Forest Service has 23 special accounts, ranging in size from \$100,000 to \$300 million. The accounts contain more than \$1 billion and amount to more than 30 percent of the total money spent by the Forest Service each year. The funds are called "off-budget" funds because they are not appropriated by Congress. Three of the larger funds are the Knutson-Vandenberg (KV), brush disposal (BD) and Salvage Sale Funds. These funds are described below.

Knutson-Vandenberg Fund

The Knutson-Vandenberg (KV) fund was created in 1930 to pay for reforestation and other restoration activities after a timber sale. The fund is supported by money generated by timber sales. At the start of 1997, the KV fund contained over \$180 million. District personnel determine what percentage of timber sale receipts will be deposited in the Knutson-Vandenberg fund (and, in turn, how much will be left over for the U.S. Treasury). Since cash-strapped Ranger Districts decide how much KV money they will keep, they often retain large amounts of timber sale revenue, thus assuring that taxpayers lose even more money on timber sales. Further, the funding system that makes restoration work dependent on timber sale dollars, creates a new, perverse incentive to log.

Brush Disposal Fund

The brush disposal (BD) fund was created in 1916 to pay for the clean-up of the branches, limbs, tree-tops and other debris left behind after a timber sale. When a timber company makes a bid on a National Forest timber sale, it must also put down a deposit for brush disposal. This deposit is entered into the BD fund and used to pay for debris cleanup following the timber sale. Often the required debris disposal does not occur due to inadequate funding. This problem could be solved by requiring timber companies to properly dispose of the debris left behind after a timber sale as a part of the sale contract.

Salvage Sale Fund

The Salvage Sale fund was created in 1976 to pay for the preparation and administration of salvage sales. (A salvage sale is a timber sale that removes supposedly dead or dying trees. In reality, many "salvage" timber sales log perfectly healthy, living trees.) Started with seed money of only \$3 million in 1977, the Salvage Sale fund has grown to over \$155 million today. Receipts from salvage timber sales flow directly back into the Salvage fund to carry out future salvage sales. Because the Forest Service is allowed to keep all money generated by salvage sales, these sales are perpetual money losers. The Congressional Research Service has stated that "No Forest Service budget documents have identified transfers of excess collections from the Salvage Sale fund to the U.S. Treasury."

Wilderness News

Wild and Scenic Rivers

continued from page 1

River segments tentatively identified as eligible include portions of the North Fork Feather River from Caribou dam to Oroville reservoir. Also identified as tentatively eligible were several North Fork tributaries, including Chips Creek, Little Indian Creek, Yellow Creek, Squirrel Creek, Indian Creek, Last Chance Creek, Squaw Creek, and Silver Creek.

Tributaries of the Middle Fork Feather Wild and Scenic River identified by the Forest Service as tentatively eligible include Frazier Creek, Jamison Creek, Little Jamison Creek, Nelson Creek, East Branch Nelson Creek, West Branch Nelson Creek, Dixon Creek, McCarthy Creek, Onion Valley Creek, Bear Creek, South Branch Middle Fork Feather River, Little North Fork Feather River, and the Fall River. Eligible North Yuba River tributaries include Slate Creek and Canyon Creek.

More than half of these eligible streams are located in the most undeveloped and pristine regions of the Plumas National Forest and possess outstanding primitive recreation, scenic, historic, cultural, botanical, ecological, fishery, wildlife, and geological values. Many of these streams flow from or through wildlands threatened with road building and logging, including the Chips Creek, Middle Fork, Blue Nose, West Yuba, and Lakes Basin roadless areas. Protection of these streams as Wild and Scenic would not only provide a high level of watershed integrity, it would also balance the existing and extensive system of hydro-electric development which dominates much of the remaining Feather River watershed.

Budget cuts, staff reductions, and other management priorities have prevented the Forest Service from completing the eligibility assessment and taking the next step in the process — the suitability study which results in agency recommendations to Congress as to which eligible river should be added to the system.

The ten year revision to the Plumas Forest LRMP which the Forest Service recently proposed to initiate provides an excellent opportunity for the agency to complete its river study and make recommendations to Congress as to which of the 26 eligible river segments on the Plumas Forest should be added to the federal system.

Toiyabe National Forest

In response to public input, the Forest Service has determined portions of the East Carson River, West Walker River, and East Walker River to be eligible for National Wild & Scenic River status. Suitability studies for these



Indian Creek in the Plumas National Forest is eligible for Wild and Scenic status. Photo by Tim Palmer.

Grazing opportunities

continued from page 3

• The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be revising its LRMP, which affects some of California's most beautiful east-side Sierra Nevada country. The revised LRMP will provide less specific overall guidance to the entire forest. Twelve geographical areas within the forest will develop more specific "ecosystem plans" in the form of LRMP amendments. These two efforts will occur simultaneously in some areas. The "Northern Sierra Area" amendment includes the east-side Sierra Nevada from Sierra to Alpine County. This planning process is now getting underway. For information about the Humboldt-Toiyabe LRMP Revision contact: Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest; 1200 Franklin Way; Sparks, NV 89431. For the "Northern Sierra Area" contact: U.S. Forest Service, NOSA Planning Team; 1536 S. Carson St.; Carson City, NV 89701 or call (702) 884-8153.

When submitting detailed comments to the Forest Service, the following points may be helpful in informing your analysis:

- Demand no continuous season-long grazing in uplands or riparian areas;
- demand the inclusion of the Forest Service's commitment to monitor and achieve Properly Functioning Condition riparian areas and the need to meet water quality standards and guidelines in applicable state water quality basin plans.
- Ask for avoidance of livestock during critical birthing and rearing periods, as well as strong enforcement.

The California Grazing Reform Alliance (CalGRA) is inviting interested parties to our 4th annual Grazing

river were to be completed during the implementation of the 1986 Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). Due to budget cuts, staff reductions, and other management priorities, none of the suitability studies for these three rivers were ever initiated or completed.

More than 57 miles of the East Carson River, from its source in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness to a point just upstream of the Gardnerville/Minden area were determined eligible for federal status in recognition of the river's outstanding scenic, recreation, fish, and wildlife values. Approximately 48 miles of the West Walker River from its source in the Hoover Wilderness to the Topaz Lake Valley were determined eligible for its outstanding recreation, fish, and wildlife values. The Forest Service also identified 35 miles of the East Walker River from Bridgeport reservoir to the National Forest boundary in Nevada as eligible due to its outstanding scenic, recreation, historical, cultural, fish, and wildlife values.

The proposed ten year revision of the Toiyabe National Forest LRMP provides an excellent opportunity to complete the suitability studies of these important eastern Sierra Nevada Rivers and recommend them to Congress for federal designation.

The LRMP revision provides an opportunity to study other rivers and streams not assessed in the 1986 LRMP, including the lower Truckee River from the town of Truckee to the Nevada border. In addition, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has identified several eligible streams in the Walker River watershed which flow through BLM and National Forest lands, including Mill Creek, Green Creek, Dog Creek, Virginia Creek, and Rough Creek. It would be appropriate for the Forest Service to examine the eligibility of these segments in cooperation with the BLM.

Steve Evans is the Conservation Director for Friends of the River and a CWC Board member.

Editor's note: Watch for further updates in the Wilderness Record on Wild and Scenic rivers in these and other national forests.

Calendar

Aug. 2 and 3: Grazing Activist Workshop, sponsored by the California Grazing Reform Alliance (CalGRA). Topics include: fish and wildlife, riparian areas, soil, water quality, economics, wilderness area management and values, and wild and scenic rivers. The workshop is free. For more information contact Dano McGinn at (916) 645-3288.

Activist Workshop on Aug. 2 and 3, 1997. This year we are trying something different. We will be meeting with Nevada grazing activists, the U.S. Forest Service, and grazing permittees around an actual ongoing grazing plan for the Bagley Valley and Silver King Allotments involving the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness and the Wild and Scenic eligible East Fork Carson River. This outing will present unique and valuable opportunities to see how the system works, as well as partake in it. Many recurring issues will be dealt with that widely apply to all geographic areas, including: grazing strategies to incorporate the needs of fish and wildlife, riparian areas, uplands, soil, water quality, aspens, willows, economics, wilderness area management and values, and wild and scenic rivers. All this will take place within a spectacularly beautiful area recently placed under public ownership of the Toiyabe National Forest thanks to persistent citizen efforts. Come and see the fruits of your labor and help protect this new piece of the public landscape. This trip will allow vehicle access onto non-wilderness areas closed to public vehicles. Those who wish to go by horse or backpack are welcome. The workshop is free and hand-outs will be available. For more information contact Dano McGinn; 1673 Fruitvale Road, Lincoln, CA 95648 or call (916) 645-3288.

Dano McGinn is a northern California grazing activist.

"Pave the Parks" rider

continued from page 1

back-door hand out to the extractive industries happen again.

What you can do

Please contact President Clinton and urge him to oppose the RS 2477, the roads rider and veto the flood-relief bill if it is passed with the rider attached. The White House Comment Line is (202) 456-1111 or you can send an e-mail to president@whitehouse.gov.

Wilderness Trivia Answer

The Feather River was known as *Rio de las Plumas* (River of Feathers) when California was under Mexican rule.

Please send a complimentary copy of the *Wilderness Record* to:

Name _____

Address _____

Area of interest (if known) _____

May we use your name? _____

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

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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
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Peppermint Alert; Porterville Placer County Cons. Task Force; Newcastle Planning & Conservation League; Sac. Range of Light Group, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club; Mammoth Lakes Redwood Chapter, Sierra Club; Santa Rosa The Red Mountain Association; Leggett Resource Renewal Institute; San Francisco San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club; San Diego San Fernando Valley Audubon Society; Van Nuys
Save Our Ancient Forest Ecology (SAFE); Modesto
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Tulare County Audubon Society; Visalia Tule River Conservancy; Porterville U.C. Davis Environmental Law Society Ventana Wildlands Group; Santa Cruz Western States Endurance Run; S. F. The Wilderness Land Trust; Carbondale, CO The Wilderness Society; San Francisco Wintu Audubon Society; Redding Yolano Group, Sierra Club; Davis Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

"If the new roads for logging purposes are warranted, profitable and practical, why should not the corporate giants build their own roads?"

— Representative Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), introducing his road-building amendment to Congress last year. See article on page 6

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NAME _____

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2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5
Davis, California 95616

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