

# WILDERNESS *Record*

NEWS JOURNAL OF THE  
CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION  
FALL 2003

FEINSTEIN SUPPORTS  
NORTH COAST  
WILDERNESS BILL

NORTH COAST/KLAMATH  
WILDLANDS MAPPING

SIERRA NEVADA  
LOGGING TO TRIPLE?

NO GUZZLERS IN  
SHEEPHOLE  
VALLEY WILDERNESS!

HOUSE VOTES TO  
CURB NORTON'S  
RS 2477 POLICY

**BUSH ASKS SUPREME COURT TO OVERTURN  
PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO PROTECT WILDERNESS**



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*The Voice for Wild California*

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## WILDERNESS Record

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## When the going gets tough

It's hard not to become somewhat numb to all the bad news for the environment coming out of Washington—but at CWC it's driving us to be even more strategic and creative in our efforts to protect California's wild lands. This fall CWC is launching a new, proactive initiative—the Golden State Wilderness Campaign to expand California's State Wilderness Preservation System.



Mary L. Wells

While we continue to press for federal wilderness designations and to defend California's federal wild areas from unprecedented threats of drilling, logging, and road-building, CWC also sees an excellent opportunity to permanently protect California's state-owned wild lands. With our environmentally friendly state government and general public, great political will exists for preserving wilderness in California. Despite these trying times for conservation of federal lands, California can make great strides to protect its own.

California is one of just a few states with its own Wilderness Act and wilderness system. Currently, 443,000 acres are protected in the California State Wilderness Preservation System, but most of this is within the largest state wilderness, the 378,000-acre Anza-Borrego Desert State Wilderness in San Diego and Riverside counties. Hundreds of thousands more acres of state lands could qualify for new wilderness protection. Additionally, the state of California is rapidly acquiring new land through recent bond initiatives. CWC's preliminary survey has identified potential new Golden State wilderness areas all around the state.

We believe the Golden State Wilderness Campaign can permanently protect biologically critical state lands threatened by development; improve linkages between imperiled wildlife habitats by safeguarding state lands adjacent to or within federal wilderness areas; establish protected wild lands in areas where there is no preserved public land; and build greater support for wilderness in regions where federal wilderness designation is politically difficult. We hope to combat the anti-environmental initiatives in Washington with a good offense in California.

We're also very excited about CWC's Annual Autumn Celebration, which will be a truly special event this year. On Saturday, November 8th, CWC will present Senator Barbara Boxer and Congressman Sam Farr with our inaugural Phillip Burton Wilderness Award. This award honors elected officials, policymakers and opinion leaders who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to wilderness conservation in California, making them true champions for California's wild lands. Senator Boxer and Congressman Farr richly deserve such recognition for their steadfast efforts in passing last year's Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act, which permanently protected 55,000 acres of land in additions to the Ventana, Silver Peak, and Pinnacles National Monument Wildernesses.

Also at this event, the CWC Board of Directors will honor CWC's former Executive Director, Paul Spitzer, with our inaugural Jim Eaton Wilderness Award, named for CWC's co-founder, long-time Executive Director and one of California's most dedicated wilderness activists, Jim Eaton. This award recognizes exceptional efforts by an individual or organization in promoting the cause of California wilderness conservation. We look forward to honoring Paul for his vision for wild California that sparked the California Wild Heritage Campaign, and his commitment to CWC that built the organization we know today.

Please join us for this very special event for CWC. I look forward to seeing you in November!



**Conservation from the Field**

North Coast and Klamath Wildlands Project:  
 Creating a regional vision map.....4

Forest Service proposes to undo  
 Sierra Nevada Framework.....5

California Wild Heritage Campaign:  
 The summer's hard work pays off.....6

Wilderness legislation across the nation .....7

Highway robbery threatens 2/3 of public lands,  
 but Congress moves to block Norton's road rule.....8

Wilderness management: CWC leads  
 coalition to stop illegal guzzlers in the desert.....10

"No Wild:" Grappling with White House attacks  
 on Wilderness Study Areas .....11

**Departments**  
 Updates.....9

Coalition news: thanks Sally Reid, welcome Josh and Byron,  
 New CWC screensaver, wish list .....13

Coming soon: Autumn celebration  
 of the year's astonishing successes.....Back cover



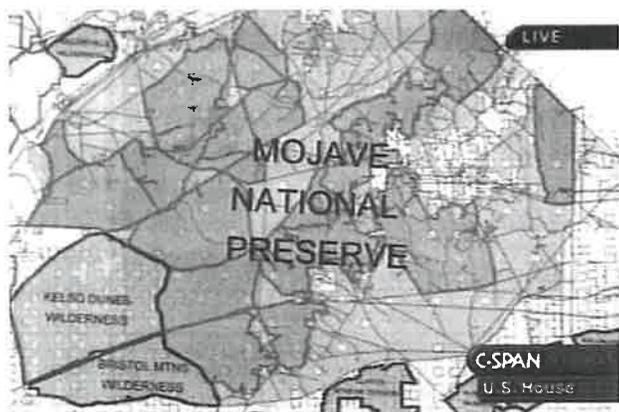
Jim Rose  
4



Pete Yamagata  
10



Bob Schneider  
11



*Congressman Mark Udall displayed CWC's map of RS 2477 "highway" claims in the Mojave National Preserve during the debate on his amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill. See story on page 8.*

front cover photo: Headwaters Forest. Bureau of Land Management photo.

**Our Mission**

CWC's mission is to protect and restore California's wild places. CWC works toward a healthy future for California citizens and wild landscapes. That future is one where wilderness, wildlands, and biodiversity are core values for all Californians. These values generate a profound respect and appreciation for the state's mountains and rivers, coasts and deserts, allowing each person to develop deep relationships with wild nature. A commitment to conserve all roadless lands and native plants and animals in a functional network of protected areas becomes the basis of California law, policy, citizen ethics, and action. For people who believe that wilderness holds a special place in the human spirit and has intrinsic value, the California Wilderness Coalition is the only statewide organization that brings together individuals and organizations in the vigorous defense of California's remaining wildlands.

# North Coast/Klamath Wildlands Project:

## Creating a regional vision map and habitat linkage assessment

by Pete Nichols

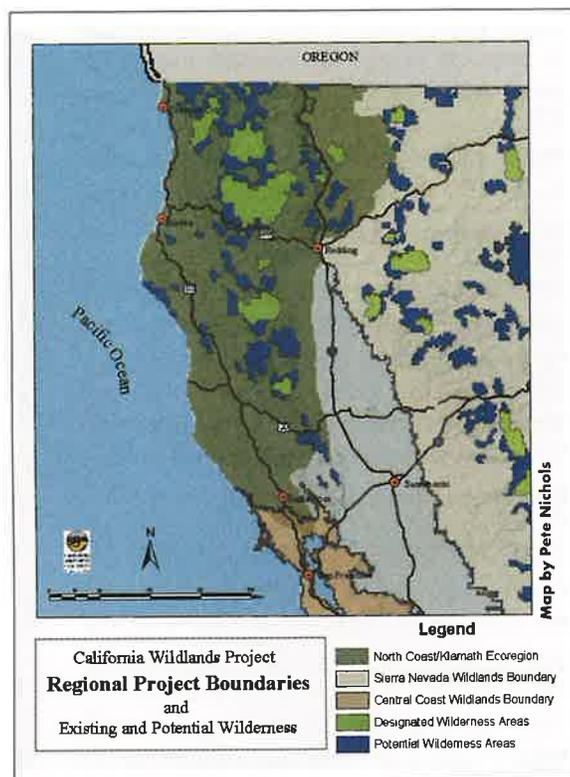
The north coast/Klamath bioregion of northwest California spans from Sonoma County to the Oregon border and east to Mount Shasta. Scientists convened by the World Wildlife Fund have designated both the north coast (as part of the Pacific temperate rainforest) and the Klamath-Siskiyou coniferous forest as "Global 200 Ecoregions" because of their globally significant biodiversity and current vulnerability to degradation.

Because of its biological diversity and unique evolutionary history, the World Wildlife Fund refers to the Klamath-Siskiyou as the "Galapagos of North America." The region harbors the most productive wild salmon and steelhead fisheries outside of Alaska, the largest concentration of wild and scenic rivers in the nation, the largest acreage of unprotected wild forest remaining on the West Coast, and 3,500 plant species (280 are rare or endemic).

To help protect the Klamath-Siskiyou's incredible biodiversity, the Siskiyou Project produced a landmark report entitled *A Conservation Assessment and Science-based Plan for the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion* (Strittholt, Noss, et al.) in 1999. Similarly, LEGACY-The Landscape Connection, funded by a mini-grant from the California Wilderness Coalition, developed a *Conservation Value Assessment of the California North Coastal Basin* in 2001.

The California Wilderness Coalition's California Wildlands Project is now combining the data

and results from these initial conservation analyses and building upon them. Utilizing data that identifies existing protected areas (for example, wilderness areas), as well as unprotected areas that also exhibit wilderness attributes (for example, CWC's Citizen Wilderness Inventory data, as well as the Siskiyou Project's GIS data), we will identify core conservation areas within the north coast/Klamath region.



Our next step is to analyze habitat linkages: how the most critically important habitat areas can be connected so that wildlife can migrate from one area to another. Based upon the habitat needs of selected "focal species" (imperiled wildlife species whose habitat best represents the region's overall biodiversity), we can then identify the priority habitat linkages.

Since each focal species (for example: Pacific fisher, marten, Roosevelt elk, mountain lion, and northern spotted owl) has specific habitat needs, we will also identify suitable movement corridors based on current distribution of vegetation across the region, which continually changes due to the impacts from industrial forestry, residential development, and other land use practices.

The project team will also analyze how well elements of biodiversity, such as rare and sensitive species, roadless areas, and endangered ecosystems, are represented in the core conservation areas and habitat linkages that make up our proposed reserve network. In addition, the team will conduct a vegetation representation analysis to assess the percentage of regional vegetation types represented in the reserve network.

Last but not least, the project team will be conducting a watershed prioritization analysis to identify sub-watersheds for restoration based on their road density.

The California Wildlands Project team is working with regional conservation groups to integrate information that will be useful in the implementation of a collaborative conservation vision for the region. Together, we can devise a strategy that supports a viable regional reserve network for this globally significant and ecologically rich region.

For more information, please contact Pete Nichols at (707) 442-8992.

**Pete Nichols is the California Wildlands Project's Science Coordinator.**

# Forest Service logging plan threatens Sierra Nevada forests

by Craig Thomas

**T**he Bush Administration has proposed to substantially weaken the Sierra Nevada Framework, increasing logging and reducing protection for old-growth forests and wildlife throughout the Sierra Nevada. The Framework is a landmark plan adopted by the Clinton Administration that protects species like the California spotted owl and Pacific fisher while allowing logging of small trees where necessary to reduce the risk to lives and property from wildfire.

The Administration's proposal will eliminate critical protection for the Sierra's old-growth forests. Under the existing Framework, all old-growth stands one acre or larger would be off-limits to most logging, and 4.25 million acres of land would be managed to promote old-growth values. The Administration's proposal would eliminate protection for old-growth stands and would allow widespread logging of medium and large trees within these areas.

The existing Framework plan allows logging only as a means for reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and restricts logging to selective thinning of smaller trees. The Bush plan would reopen the door to widespread commercial logging by sanctioning logging to address so-called "forest health" problems, which ostensibly affect millions of acres of national forest lands. The new plan is projected by the Forest Service to triple the volume of logging compared to the existing plan.

The Bush Administration proposal would also weaken protection for the spotted owl's habitat in numerous respects. (The California spotted owl is a sensitive species that inhabits old forests in the Sierra Nevada.) For example, the proposal would allow logging of trees up to 30" in diameter throughout the Sierra Nevada, would allow tree canopy



Jim Rose

cover to be substantially reduced, and would allow increased logging within the owl's home range core areas and nest stands.

In addition to negatively impacting the spotted owl, the proposal would also bode ill for the Pacific fisher. The fisher is a rare, imperiled furbearing mammal that is closely associated with dense, old forests and that once ranged widely in the Sierra Nevada and the Pacific Northwest. Logging and habitat fragmentation have contributed to the fisher's disappearance from most of its range. The isolated fisher population in the southern Sierra is unlikely to survive in the absence of habitat protection and restoration. The proposed logging plan would allow significant degradation of fisher habitat and would remove the Framework's specific protection for the southern Sierra fisher conservation area.

The Bush Administration proposal would also significantly weaken limitations on grazing, putting imperiled species at great risk. Commercial livestock grazing has numerous adverse environmental impacts, particularly in sensitive areas like meadows, streams, and riparian zones. The Framework requires that grazing be restricted and managed to

protect these fragile areas and to reduce adverse effects on imperiled species like the willow flycatcher, Yosemite toad, and mountain yellow-legged frog.

Last but not least is the Quincy Library Group (QLG) plan. The QLG plan would devastate national forests in the northern Sierra Nevada by allowing tens of thousands of acres of small clearcuts that will destroy and fragment forest habitat. The Framework limits the QLG plan because of its adverse environmental impacts, particularly on the California spotted owl. The Bush Administration proposal would require full implementation of the QLG plan, without regard to its ill effects.

The Forest Service received public comments on this proposal up until September 12. Many thanks to all who wrote expressing support for the Framework in its original format, and in favor of protection of ancient forests and wildlife. The Forest Service will respond to these comments in a final proposal in a few months.

For more information, contact Craig Thomas, (530) 622-8718 or [cthomas@innercite.com](mailto:cthomas@innercite.com).

**Craig Thomas is Campaign Director for the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign.**

**The Forest Service estimates that the Bush Administration's proposal would triple logging throughout the Sierra Nevada.**

# The summer's hard work pays off

by Tina Andolina  
and Ryan Henson

The California Wild Heritage Act of 2003 proposes to designate nearly 2.7 million acres of land as wilderness and other protected areas, and more than 428 miles of stream as wild and scenic rivers. It was first introduced in Congress in May 2002 by Senator Barbara Boxer with U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (D-Napa) and Hilda Solis (D-El Monte) introducing companion bills in the House of Representatives. On July 30, 2003, Senator Boxer re-introduced the bill as S. 1555. Last year, a portion of the bill covering U.S. Rep. Sam Farr's (D-Carmel) congressional district passed Congress and was signed into law by President Bush in December. That bill was known as the Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act.

## Tremendous progress in northwestern California

On March 27, 2003, Rep. Thompson and Senator Barbara Boxer also introduced the Northern California



Ryan Henson

From left to right:  
Anita Alexander  
of Humboldt  
County, Lake  
County Supervisor  
Ed Robey, Ukiah  
Vice-Mayor Phil  
Baldwin, and Mel  
Lynn of Mendocino  
County lobby  
Congress in  
support of  
northwest  
California's  
wilderness bill.

Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act in Congress (H.R. 1501 in the House and S. 738 in the Senate). The measure will protect more than 303,000 acres of land as wilderness and in other allocations, and preserve more than 19 miles of stream as a wild and scenic river. The

north coast bill is the portion of the larger Wild Heritage Act covering Rep. Thompson's First Congressional District. Conservationists hope that with Congressman Thompson's leadership and the House's traditional deference to a local member of Congress regarding legislation in his or her district, this bill could, like Congressman Farr's bill last year, pass Congress and be signed by President Bush in this Congress.

In June, an intrepid group of volunteer lobbyists

from Rep. Thompson's district traveled to Washington, D.C. to build support for H.R. 1501/S. 738. The volunteer lobbying team consisted of:

- Anita Alexander of Humboldt County, a retired north coast labor analyst for the state of California
- Ukiah Vice-Mayor Phil Baldwin of Mendocino County
- Mel Lynn of Mendocino County, a private landowner who lives next to the King Range proposed wilderness
- Supervisor Ed Robey, longstanding Lake County Supervisor.

At Senator Feinstein's weekly constituent breakfast in Washington, the Senator not only made a special point of recognizing Phil and Ed as fellow elected officials, she also announced that "I support Mike Thompson's bill."

Senator Feinstein's unequivocal endorsement of H.R. 1501/S. 738 is our greatest achievement thus far in our effort to win her support for any portion of the Wild Heritage Act. While



courtesy Emily Templin

Local wilderness supporters gather after the press conference in Fresno, where they delivered 65,000 signatures to Senator Feinstein.



this is a great leap forward, we will still be working to convince Senator Feinstein to follow up her spoken endorsement by officially cosponsoring S. 738 and by helping our champion Senator Boxer move it through the Senate. If you have not yet written to Senator Feinstein in support of north coast wilderness, please do so by visiting our web site at [www.calwild.org/action/alert\\_033103.php](http://www.calwild.org/action/alert_033103.php).

## *The rest of the state is still pushing hard*

With the re-introduction of the statewide wilderness bill, we now have a brand new opportunity to gather new support for protecting our wild places, building on the momentum created by the passage of the Big Sur bill. Since the start of the year, wild lands supporters have truly outdone themselves in the level of support they have mustered.

In February, activists statewide staged several media events to announce the incredible success we have had in gathering petitions. In San Diego, Fresno, and other selected cities, local elected officials, business owners, and other supporters held press conferences and announced that we were delivering 65,000 signatures to Senator Feinstein supporting the protection of our wild places. As of the end of July, signatures had eclipsed 80,000; we hope to have more than 100,000 signatures by the end of summer. Folks are still circulating these petitions; if you wish to help in this effort, let us know or go to [www.ipetitions.com/campaigns/Wild-Places/](http://www.ipetitions.com/campaigns/Wild-Places/) to sign the petition online.

We have also secured support from new elected officials throughout the state. One new county, Ventura County, and four new cities have passed resolutions supporting the Wild Heritage Act. These cities include Santa Paula, Ojai, San Luis Obispo, and Pleasanton. That brings our total of supportive elective officials to well over

300 statewide, with 160 supporting the entire bill and nearly 200 supporting their local areas.

All summer long, wilderness advocates and enthusiasts have been getting out into the backcountry, leading scores of hikes to their local wild places to educate others about the need for wilderness protection. These hikes have produced new letters of support and new volunteers working hard to pass the Wild Heritage Act.

There are still some hikes scheduled for the fall. If you would like to join us on any of these hikes, visit [www.calwild.org/events/index.php](http://www.calwild.org/events/index.php). Even better, if you'd like to lead a hike to your favorite wild place, just let us know and we will help you advertise and will set you up with any materials you may need to help participants write letters and get involved.

In addition to the delegation from the north coast, other folks from around the state have stormed Washington this summer to meet with Senator Feinstein to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the support we have for the Wild Heritage Act, and to talk about their favorite wild places. Local business owners, anglers, water experts, and others also met with dozens of members of Congress to win support for new wilderness.

Overall, this year has been an active time for the campaign, with momentum building daily. Now that Senator Boxer has re-introduced her statewide bill, we will continue to urge other members of Congress, including Senator Feinstein, to help get it passed. We expect that Reps. Thompson and Solis will re-introduce their companion bills in the House as early as this fall.

**Tina Andolina is Senior Field Organizer and Ryan Henson is Policy Director for the California Wilderness Coalition.**



## Wilderness bills across the nation

Following is a summary of positive wilderness legislation that has been introduced to date in the 108th Congress for states other than California. Additional legislation designating areas in Nevada, Colorado, and Vermont, among others, is possible in the current congressional session.

### **Morris K. Udall Arctic**

**Wilderness Act** (H.R. 770/S. 543): The measure would designate the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

**Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act** (H.R. 979): Would designate wilderness areas and provide other permanent legislative protections for more than 14 million acres of land on America's two largest national forests—the Chugach and Tongass National Forests.

### **Colorado Wilderness Act**

(H.R. 2305): Would designate more than 1.6 million acres of wilderness in western Colorado on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and some adjacent National Forest lands.

**Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Act** (H.R. 640): Would designate portions of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado as wilderness.

**Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act** (H.R. 1105): Would designate wilderness areas and wild and scenic river corridors among other things in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

**Caribbean National Forest Act** (H.R. 1723): Would designate the El Toro Wilderness area in the Caribbean National Forest in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

**America's Red Rock Wilderness Act** (H.R. 1796/S. 639): Would designate more than nine million acres of land managed by the BLM in Utah as wilderness.

**Wild Sky Wilderness Act** (H.R. 822/S. 391): Would protect more than 100,000 acres in the Wild Sky region in Washington's Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest as wilderness.

*Adapted from a summary by the Wilderness Support Center.*



# Highway robbery threatens 2/3 of public lands

## Congress moves to block Norton's road rule

by Amanda Dranginis

CWC continues to battle the Bush Administration's attempts to abuse the repealed 1866 mining law called RS 2477 to surrender our national parks and wilderness for road-building. This summer the "highway robbery" issue became a national debate.

### *DOI announces "disclaimer" policy: Open season on 2/3 of public lands*

Prodded by conservationists and political leaders, the Department of the Interior in May announced Secretary Gale Norton's policy for giving away lands under her new "disclaimer rule." Interior will only issue disclaimers for RS 2477 road claims under a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a state or county, and for the time being, these MOUs will not address any road claims in national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, or wilderness study areas (WSAs). Without an MOU, any RS 2477 disclaimers are still subject to a 1997 moratorium and won't be processed unless there's "compelling need."

Norton's approach is crafty, designed to appear limited and reasonable while smoothing the path for the governors of Utah and Alaska to begin making wholesale road claims. In fact, Norton's policy leaves more than two-thirds of our national public lands open to bogus highway claims, including our national forests, national monuments, and unprotected wilderness-quality lands. It doesn't protect military or tribal lands, or private lands, which have been invaded by county RS 2477 zealots in several western states. And it's only a temporary, voluntary



Vicky Hoover

**San Bernardino County has claimed this trail in the Mojave National Preserve as a future "public highway."**

policy—Norton can still use her new disclaimer rule in parks and wilderness in the future, at a whim.

DOI announced this policy in a reply to California Resources Secretary Mary Nichols. The state of California is not seeking an MOU, but CWC remains concerned that individual counties will get their own MOUs over the objection of the state. So far, Interior has dodged that question.

### *House votes to curb Norton's road disclaimers—A dangerous half-measure?*

Congress recently moved to curb the would-be highway robbers, but the outcome remains uncertain. During House debate on the Interior Appropriations bill, Rep. Mark Udall (D-CO) sponsored an amendment to block funding for RS 2477 disclaimers

for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, the Udall amendment did not pass intact. The weaker substitute that did pass, introduced by Rep. Charles Taylor (R-NC), would block RS 2477 disclaimers only in national parks, monuments, wilderness areas, WSAs, or wildlife refuges.

The House's half-measure is troubling. It would leave 400 million acres open to bogus highway claims, including national forests and wilderness-quality lands. Tribal, military, and private lands remain at risk. In addition, the Taylor amendment could even be interpreted as partial approval of Norton's illegal disclaimer rule.

Nevertheless, the House vote was a small victory that proved many House Republicans have grown skeptical of Norton's extreme anti-wilderness objectives. It speaks to the accomplishments of the many groups and individuals who have propelled the national campaign through their lobby work, media, alerts, contributions, contacting representatives, and excellent volunteer work. Many thanks to all of you who have participated in this ongoing effort!

Next the Interior Appropriations bill heads to the Senate, where CWC is urging Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to block any bad Senate language and pass the full Udall amendment barring any RS 2477 disclaimers.

### *Camp Rock road-kill—Can BLM "disclaim" desert tortoise?*

Although San Bernardino County infamously has claimed thousands of miles of RS 2477 rights-of-way including hiking trails, wash bottoms, and cow paths, the county has filed

only a single disclaimer application, for Camp Rock Road, a 42-mile stretch of well-traveled and maintained road connecting Daggett and Lucerne Valley. At this time, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) cannot process the Camp Rock application because the county hasn't entered into an MOU with Interior.

We recently learned of a very good reason why BLM should not "disclaim" all federal interest in Camp Rock Road: the county's maintenance activities are causing roadkill of the federally threatened desert tortoise, and BLM currently has the power to stop it.

Years ago the BLM recognized that county maintenance activities, including ground disturbance and overly steep or high berms, are causing problems for tortoise on several county-maintained roads, including Camp Rock. BLM has found that the county's methods "may impede the safe movement of tortoises, cause the collapse of tortoise burrows, or cause other disruptive events that may harm or injure the tortoises." BLM wildlife biologists have documented numerous tortoise fatalities on Camp Rock Road.

BLM has alerted San Bernardino County to this problem, and asked the county to adopt specific road maintenance protocols to reduce the unauthorized "take" (accidental killing) of the threatened tortoise, under the Endangered Species Act. But the county has ignored BLM's request; the county's public works department says that the disclaimer they seek would forever prevent BLM from putting such conditions on the county's maintenance of the road. A federal disclaimer of interest in Camp Rock Road would only entrench the county's resistance to BLM's efforts to save this threatened species.

## *Fieldwork continues—Volunteer for fall hikes*

Now that the summer heat has abated, it's time to get back out in the field to ground-truth phony highway claims in parks and wilderness. Field trips to scenic desert areas threatened by RS 2477 will begin as early as October. With your help we hope to finish fieldwork in the region by early next year. Please contact [amanda@calwild.org](mailto:amanda@calwild.org) to volunteer.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that Byron Kahr joined the CWC staff in September as our RS 2477 Field Organizer (see p. 13 for a brief bio). We are very excited to have him on board and are confident that he will be an invaluable asset to our RS 2477 campaign.

## *Duncan Canyon logging stopped...for now*

On July 1, 2003, a federal judge sided with the Center for Biological Diversity, the John Muir Project, and the Sierra Club, temporarily halting logging on 4,309 acres of forest in the Duncan Canyon Roadless Area on the Tahoe National Forest.

Most scientists agree that fire suppression, old-growth logging, and cattle grazing have caused pine forests in the interior West to have an excessive density of small trees under 12 inches in diameter. These trees increase fire danger and compete with large trees for nutrients and water. Thus environmentalists have supported thinning projects aimed at small trees, especially near fire-threatened towns. In contrast, the so-called "Red Star Restoration Project" shows how the Bush Administration is cynically using the fear of fire to log old-growth trees many miles from any town.

Instead of focusing on the small trees, the timber sale mandated the logging of all trees over 15 inches in diameter. Instead of directing resources to the needs of rural towns threatened by fire, the timber sale targeted a roadless area far from human habitation.

In issuing the temporary restraining order, the federal judge agreed that the logging would likely increase rather than reduce the threat of fire because of the enormous amounts of slash that would be left over from the logging.

*Courtesy of the Center for Biological Diversity.*

## *Senate Democrats cut bad deal on "Healthy Forests" bill*

On July 24, the Senate Agriculture Committee passed, on a voice vote, a worse version of the House's so-called "Healthy Forests and Restoration Act of 2003" (H.R. 1904). In addition to gutting environmental review, eliminating appeals for hazardous fuels projects, rigging the judicial process to favor timber production, and not including any real community protection guarantees, the Senate Agriculture Committee significantly expanded the legislation to include even more areas for unrestricted logging under the Act.

For example, the new bill broadens the definition of hazardous fuels to read: "vegetation (dead or alive) in the forest or rangeland ecosystem that is in excess of historic conditions or management goals and can cause wildfires." The new bill expands the areas of prioritization for fuels reduction to all watersheds, including all streams that flow into a watershed. And even more appalling, timber companies could receive taxpayer subsidies to log anywhere in National Forests hit by an ice storm.

As of press time, several Democrats in the Senate had cut a deal with Mark Rey, former timber lobbyist and now Undersecretary of Agriculture. The deal, if it goes through, would broaden definitions of what constitutes "hazardous fuels" and do little, if any, to protect old-growth. If the deal is approved by the Administration, the bill next heads for conference committee.

*Courtesy of American Lands and National Forest Protection Alliance.*

# BLM illegally approves guzzler in Sheephole Valley Wilderness

## CWC leads coalition to win halt on construction

by Keith Hammond

When you say wilderness, do you think of brand new concrete dams, vehicle routes, and excavations for gigantic water tanks and pipelines, to be continually re-filled by trucks, forever? Neither do we.

Unfortunately, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has proposed at least 93 of these construction projects across the California Desert Conservation Area—including at least 28 in designated wilderness areas—in order to build permanent artificial water sources known as “game guzzlers,” to boost populations of desert bighorn sheep. And the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has illegally begun approving these guzzlers.

We support restoring bighorn sheep where their populations have vanished, but in a careful and scientific way that protects other species and wilderness. Each new guzzler degrades the wilderness with permanent structures and vehicle incursions required for maintenance and continual re-filling. Guzzlers also have significant impacts on many species and their environment. Guzzlers can attract ravens (that prey on desert tortoises) and coyotes (that prey on lambs), and can also impact rare native plants.

Amazingly, DFG’s sweeping plan has had no environmental analysis. And even though BLM admits that DFG’s plans need a regional-level federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), at DFG’s insistence BLM has illegally “piecemealed” its environmental analysis, doing only a brief assessment of two proposed guzzlers in the Sheephole Valley Wilderness, while somehow ignoring the other 91.

When BLM recently approved construction of the first guzzler, CWC



A family outing in the Sheephole Valley Wilderness

organized a coalition to stop them in their tracks. With our partner groups, Wilderness Watch, Desert Survivors, Center for Biological Diversity, and Natural Resources Defense Council, CWC filed an appeal with the Interior Department, and on August 27 we won a temporary stay, stopping BLM from allowing the construction until an administrative judge can hear the case. The judge agreed BLM had failed to analyze the significant cumulative impacts of building new guzzlers.

DFG’s proposed construction of new guzzlers in wilderness violates CEQA, NEPA, the Wilderness Act, and California wilderness legislation. Congress in 1984 clearly stated that new guzzlers in wilderness are permitted “only when essential to wildlife survival.” The bighorn sheep population in the Sheephole Valley Wilderness is at historically high levels without any new guzzler—no one has even tried to show this guzzler is “essential to survival,” because it’s not. (Q: If the Sheephole bighorn herd is on the brink of survival, why does DFG sell hunting licenses for them?) In 1994, Congress specifically debated guzzlers in the California desert, agreeing that existing guzzlers could be maintained in wilderness—but nobody authorized DFG to build new ones.

CWC and our partner groups support efforts to restore bighorn

sheep where populations have been lost, and we support management activities essential for their survival. But in this case, no one has done the science.

We propose a practical solution: DFG could simply use temporary water sources such as removable tanks or troughs, if truly essential for wildlife survival, until DFG completes its bighorn sheep metapopulation plans—already in progress—and the necessary state and federal environmental analyses. Until then, we will vigorously oppose construction of permanent guzzlers in wilderness.

We have strongly urged the California Resources Agency, which oversees DFG, to refrain from building guzzlers until DFG completes the metapopulation studies and prepares a region-wide EIS documenting impacts and alternatives associated with its proposal to construct dozens of artificial water sources in the region. We hope DFG will save taxpayer dollars for managing wildlife rather than waste it litigating over construction projects that damage wilderness and that may turn out to be unneeded or even harmful for sheep and other critters. It would be best to know those kind of impacts beforehand—that’s why it’s the law.

**Keith Hammond is the California Wilderness Coalition’s Communications Director.**

# Conservationists, politicians, and the BLM grapple with White House attacks on wilderness study areas

by Ryan Henson

In April, Interior Secretary Gale Norton agreed to a court settlement with the state of Utah that has had a tremendous impact on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wild lands not only in Utah, but in California as well. Then, on July 18, the Bush Administration asked the Supreme Court to overturn a lower court's decision that permits the public to sue if wilderness candidate lands do not receive protection. Conservationists, the state of California, Senator Feinstein, and BLM staff are now struggling to deal with the fallout of the Bush Administration's "No Wild" campaign.

Secretary Norton's settlement with the state of Utah removes interim protections from all wilderness study areas (WSAs) that have been administratively designated by the Bureau of Land Management. (Wilderness study areas that have been legislatively designated by Congress are not affected by this case.) The settlement also means that the BLM will no longer conduct new wilderness surveys, and can no longer designate wilderness study areas.

The Bush Administration's request to the Supreme Court is a related tactic to undermine protections granted to wild public lands. If the Supreme Court agrees to hear the case, and agrees with the Bush Administration's arguments, their decision would probably have huge ramifications for not only Bureau of Land Management WSAs, but also for U.S. Forest Service roadless lands. It could even affect designated wilderness.

The Supreme Court is being asked to overturn a 10th Circuit Court of Appeals decision on a lawsuit filed by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA). SUWA



Bureau of Land Management

**Senator Feinstein sent a letter to Secretary Norton warning that if the Headwaters Forest, pictured above, is not protected, the Senator will introduce legislation to designate Headwaters as wilderness.**

sued the BLM for allowing off-road vehicle damage to occur in WSAs in Utah and ruining the areas' chances of becoming wilderness. Under current law, the BLM is supposed to maintain WSAs as wild and untouched—to prevent impairment of their wilderness character. In August 2002, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the public can sue the government when it fails to protect wilderness study areas from damage.

In appealing to the Supreme Court, the Bush Administration argues that federal land management agencies should be able to change their management of a certain patch of land without notifying the public, and that the public should not have the right to challenge how an agency

manages a certain patch of land on a day-to-day basis. The Bush Administration is trying to eliminate the public's power to influence public land management, granted by the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The Supreme Court is expected to decide this fall whether to hear the Administration's case. If the Court accepts, proceedings will begin sometime in 2004.

## *Californians strike back*

California Resources Secretary Mary Nichols sent a letter to Secretary Norton in July protesting that "cherished emblems of California's natural heritage" would be denied protection under the No Wild policy. Likewise, also in July, Senator Dianne Feinstein sent Secretary

Norton a strongly worded letter informing her that if the wilderness values of the Headwaters Forest Reserve in Humboldt County are not protected by the BLM, she will introduce legislation to designate Headwaters an official wilderness.

At the same time, conservation groups are suing the Department of Interior seeking to overturn the Utah settlement.

It remains to be seen whether the Supreme Court will even hear the case on wilderness study areas. National conservation groups have filed an objection, but right now it's up to the Court. Stay tuned to the Record for more details.

**Ryan Henson is the California Wilderness Coalition's Policy Director.**



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*Farewell and thanks,*

*Sally Reid*

Sally Reid was the primary mover behind the Condor Range and Rivers Act of 1992, which designated the Chumash, Garcia, Matilija, Sespe and Silver Peak Wildernesses and enlarged the San Rafael and Ventana Wildernesses. Her death marked the end of a remarkable career as an environmental activist.



Sally knew that the only real protection for public lands was to have them designated as wilderness. And so she set off to make that dream a reality, drawing on enormous reserves of persistence and patience.

Sally and her husband Les spent weeks, months and years surveying many parts of the Los Padres National Forest for potential wilderness sites. They drove to visit personally all proposed areas, mapping them carefully and considering the politics revolving around each one.

Politics and wilderness go hand and hand, so she became acquainted with politicians whose districts were involved. She knew their aides and often flew off to Washington to discuss with them the intricacies in passage of wilderness legislation. She had a wonderful sense of when to compromise and when to push.

Please remember and honor Sally when you enjoy the beauties of Los Padres National Forest's wilderness areas, particularly the Chumash Wilderness.

*We need your emails to protect wild California*

If you are interested in hearing the latest wilderness and wild lands news for California, send an email to [info@calwild.org](mailto:info@calwild.org) and we'll add you to our California Wilderness Alert email list-serve. You'll receive action alerts



Jim Rose

The Yuki proposed wilderness, one of the wild areas featured in the CWC screensaver

several times per month—together we can help generate the political will to protect wild California!

*New CWC screensaver*

CWC now has a PC screensaver featuring gorgeous photos of California's wilderness areas, last unprotected wild places and wildlife. You can download the screensaver from our web site by visiting <http://www.calwild.org/resources/screensaver.php>. Enjoy!

*CWC wish list*

CWC is working very hard to protect California's wild places...on an extremely tight budget. Here are some items that would really help us in our efforts to protect wilderness:

- Frequent Flyer miles (40,000 miles allows a staff person to go to Washington, D.C. and advocate for wilderness)
- Reliable 4WD vehicle or Jeep
- Digital cameras
- Slide scanner
- Lightweight RGB digital projector
- Drafting/map file cabinet
- Used PC laptops (Pentium III or greater; CD RW or DVD drive preferred)

*Please welcome Josh B-C and Byron Kahr!*

CWC is thrilled to welcome Josh Buswell-Charkow to our staff. Josh brings excellent experience in grassroots organizing to the California Wild Heritage Campaign. As a result of his work with the Alaska Coalition of Minnesota, 30 farming, labor, and environmental groups persuaded Senator Norm Coleman to cast a deciding vote against oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Recently, Josh worked as a Canvass Director for GreenCorps in New Jersey. He will be CWC's Outreach Organizer in northwest California.

We are also very proud to have Byron Kahr joining our staff as our new RS 2477 Field Organizer. Byron has already lobbied against RS 2477, for Defenders of Wildlife in Washington, D.C. With GreenCorps, Byron worked on several successful campaigns as an organizer. For Greenpeace, Byron recruited, trained, and supervised over 50 volunteers and interns to convince the University of California Board of Regents to invest in renewable energy on UC campuses.





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*The Voice for Wild California*

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## MEMBERSHIP

### Contributing to the Cause

The California Wilderness Coalition is, first and foremost, a community of people with common dreams. Whether our dreams are of scaling pristine peaks or waiting for the fish to bite on a glassy lake, knowing our grandchildren will have the chance to behold wildlife in its natural habitat or knowing simply that the habitat exists, we are bonded together by our passion for wilderness.

CWC provides the outlet to make our common dreams a reality, thanks to our community of members, activists, and supporters. As we step up our efforts to pass the California Wild Heritage Act, design a conservation blueprint for California, and defend our public lands from unwise uses, we need our network to be as wide and as deep as possible. Whether you're already a member of CWC, or are just learning about our coalition for the first time, there are many opportunities to strengthen your ties to our community.



Jim Rose

Enjoying a rafting trip in a proposed addition to the Marble Mountain Wilderness

### Volunteer

As a grassroots advocacy group, the activism of our supporters is essential to our success. Writing letters to public officials and local newspapers, attending public meetings, and leading hikes into potential wilderness areas are three ways to show your support for wilderness. In addition, our staff are always looking for volunteers and interns to lend a hand to our various programs and activities around the state. If you would like to receive information via email about volunteer opportunities in your neck of the woods, phone us at (530) 758-0380 or send a message to [info@calwild.org](mailto:info@calwild.org) including your name and zip code.

### Join the California Wilderness Coalition

The generosity of our members makes possible the protection of our state's last remaining wild places. Equally important, our membership demonstrates support for wilderness to those with the power to decide the future of our public lands. The more people we represent, the stronger our voice in California and in our nation's capital.

The CWC offers many levels of membership to serve the financial needs of our supporters. Members receive a subscription to the our quarterly news journal, the *Wilderness Record*, and periodic wilderness alerts.

### Become a Wildland Advocate

Membership in our Wildland Advocates program represents the most significant opportunity to contribute to the protection of California wilderness. This committed group empowers the staff and volunteers of CWC to be effective in our efforts to safeguard these lands. Giving levels for Wildland Advocates start at \$250 per year. Please contact Michael Gelardi at (530) 758-0380 if you have questions or suggestions about giving to protect our wild heritage.



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## Join the California Wilderness Coalition TODAY!

Your membership includes a subscription to our quarterly journal, the Wilderness Record, action alerts to keep you informed, and the opportunity for direct participation in our campaigns.

Enroll me as a new member of CWC. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my first year membership dues.

I am already a member. Here is a special contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help the Coalition's work.

Contact me about volunteer opportunities.

I would like to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month.

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*Please join us in honoring our wilderness champions*

## **California Wilderness Coalition**

### **Autumn Celebration**

*with honored guests Senator Barbara Boxer  
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*Saturday, November 8, 2003*

*Reception 4:30 to 7:00 pm*

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