

WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

SPRING 2006

30 YEARS OF PROTECTING WILD CALIFORNIA



Acorn woodpecker

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**CALIFORNIA
WILDERNESS
COALITION**

The Voice for Wild California

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The California Wilderness Coalition protects the natural landscapes that make California unique, providing clean air and water, a home to wildlife, and a place for recreation and spiritual renewal.

CWC is the only organization dedicated to protecting and restoring California's wild places and native biodiversity on a statewide level.

Since 1976, we have empowered local communities and conservationists to be the voice for wild California.



JIM ROSE

The Kings River flows through the wildlands of the Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Forest

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CWC at 30



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

RYAN HENSON



White-headed woodpecker

2006 marks the 30th Anniversary of the California Wilderness Coalition. As we always say, since 1976, CWC has been the only organization dedicated solely to protecting California's wild places. Sitting around Anne Schneider's kitchen, a few inspired individuals, Jeff Barnickol, Jim Eaton, Phil Farrell, Don Morrill, and Bob Schneider, started CWC because of their passion for wilderness. You can read more about that inspiration in Phil Farrell's article in this Wilderness Record. That enthusiasm for wilderness has resulted in the permanent protection of over 11 million acres of California's natural beauty.

In the last 30 years, CWC has grown to be an organization of 5,000 members with 4 offices across the state. Our field offices allow us to integrate into the communities near those lands we all care so much about. We have been able to strengthen the political support for wilderness by building the necessary local constituencies to protect wild places as our fight for wilderness becomes more difficult.

The conservation community has been hugely successful at preserving much of California's own "purple mountain majesties" such as the Trinity Alps and Sierra Nevada. These are beautiful areas that are so iconic, but remote, that garnering wilderness protection was easier. The more acquired taste of the stark, but equally stunning Colorado, Mojave, and Sonoran Deserts has required more time to earn wilderness designation, and we continue in that fight. Later you can read about CWC's latest publication, "Desert Legacy—Guide to the Wild Mojave"; that we are using to promote wilderness conservation in the desert.

Our current efforts to protect lower elevations of pristine landscapes pose a more difficult struggle. These lands are equally spectacular, and arguably much more biologically important than mountain peaks because they have a larger and more diverse fish and wildlife population. Unfortunately, these areas also face aggressive development pressures. Once again, though, our grassroots organizing has built a strong voice to combat those pressures. That voice made it possible for our North Coast Wild Heritage Wilderness Act to pass the US Senate.

Our broader vision for California's wild places is largely embodied in Senator Barbara Boxer's California Wild Heritage Act (S. 2432) reintroduced this March. The bill's ambitious goal of protecting an additional 2.7 million acres of wild California faces an equally fierce opposition. Yet, CWC's voice for wild California will remain strong as we continue our fight for California's last wild places for the next 30 years and beyond. And as we always say, this work cannot be done without people like you. We truly appreciate your support!

Mary Wells is the Executive Director of CWC

Governor Schwarzenegger's Roadless Promise

The U.S. Forest Service in 2001 issued the landmark conservation measure, the national Roadless Area Conservation Rule. In California, it protected 4.4 million acres of pristine, roadless national forest from most road-building, logging and drilling. Before the Roadless Rule, these 4 million acres had little to no protection from irresponsible development. This is twenty percent of California's national forests—including many of the last, best places in the state. Roadless forests provide Californians with clean water, opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing and hunting, buffers from fires, as well as essential habitat for wildlife.

In May of last year, the Bush Administration overturned the Roadless Rule. In its place, the Forest Service announced that governors could file petitions with the Forest Service by November 2006 to give stronger protections for each state's roadless areas above any current safeguards in a forest plan. At the time, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger told the press "California's forests are one of our state's most treasured and valued resources. I am committed to protecting the vibrant health and sustainable future of our forests...roadless areas in California will remain roadless."

Since then, the Forest Service issued final management plans for Southern California's Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests. With the repeal of the Roadless Rule, the southern California forest plans would allow road construction in over 90% of the region's 1 million acres of roadless area. With a quarter of all of California's last roadless forests at stake, conservationists were up in arms and ready to appeal the plans. At the final hour, though, the Forest Service pulled the plans due to a "technical error." The Forest Service is expected to re-issue the plans in the coming months; it is unclear if they will take this opportunity to improve them.

The Schwarzenegger Administration has a mixed record so far in keeping the Governor's promise to keep California's roadless forests roadless. The state Resources Agency stood up for the wild places in the Los Padres National Forest when they were faced with oil drilling, and the conservation community thanked the Governor for that strong stand. They have now written a letter to the Forest Service expressing their concerns with the four southern forest plans. We appreciate their engagement, but the letter doesn't match the unequivocal pledge from the Governor in May of last year.

Governor Schwarzenegger must act on his promise now. The Forest Service needs to hear loud and clear that he will appeal the plans for the four Southern California national forests if they do not protect the forests' 1 million acres of roadless lands. Additionally, the Governor only has until this November to tell the Forest Service to protect all of California's 4 million acres of pristine woodlands throughout the state. Governor Schwarzenegger needs to keep his commitment to be an advocate for our pristine forests.

ANDREW HARVEY



Scenic roadless areas in the Cleveland National Forest are in danger of road development

Energy Corporations Target California's Roadless Areas

The U.S. Department of Energy is working with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to designate new energy corridors, called the "West-Wide Energy Corridor," on public lands throughout the West.

Oil, gas and electric utility companies are lining up to build electric lines and oil pipelines across California's most pristine natural landscapes. A recently released map of industry-proposed energy corridors shows incursions into as many as 24 designated wilderness areas, 4 national parks, 6 BLM wilderness study areas, and 26 Forest Service unprotected pristine roadless areas.

The California Wilderness Coalition is working with a broad coalition of conservationists from around the state to make sure that all future energy corridors are located outside of California's last remaining wild places. With our allies, we alerted the California Energy Commission to the imperiled wildlands. The California Energy Commission has told the Department of Energy to adopt a process to identify and avoid environmentally sensitive lands unsuitable for energy corridors. This process would benefit important public lands not only here in California, but across the West. The Commission also alerted the Department to all the wild places at risk in California.

While it is unlikely that corridors would ultimately intrude into existing wilderness areas or national parks, thousands of acres of potential wilderness lands within our national forests are in danger of development. From the chaparral canyons of the Magic Mountain potential wilderness in the Angeles National Forest to the ancient forests of the Mill Creek roadless area in the Lassen National Forest, California's roadless forests are prime targets for energy corporations.

Before the Bush Administration repealed the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, wild places like the Magic Mountain potential wilderness were off-limits to road construction and infrastructure projects. Now, more than ever, California citizens need to contact their government officials to

ONLY THE SUN SHOULD RISE IN ANZA-BORREGO

Last year, CWC members and other conservationists were successful in ensuring that Anza-Borrego Desert State Park's unique natural and cultural resources would be protected for generations to come when we urged the State Parks and Recreation Commission to approve a strong general management plan for the Park. The Park now holds over 400,000 acres of state wilderness. Yet less than a year later, the Park faces a new threat.

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is seeking permission from the California Public Utilities Commission to build a new high-voltage power line from the Imperial Valley to western San Diego County. Called the "Sunrise Powerlink," the 500kV line would cut through the heart of Anza-Borrego running roughly along Highway 78 and exiting the Park at Grapevine Canyon. The towers for this line would be the size of an 18-story building.

While California certainly needs electricity, this is a foolish waste of our natural resources when there are other ways to meet our electrical needs. In this case, there are numerous alternatives that SDG&E refuses to seriously consider. By establishing Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the public and the State of California have already expressed their will that this is a place to be protected from development. To date, the California Department of Parks and Recreation has expressed neutrality on the powerline which is unacceptable. Their mission is to protect this Park and its wilderness. The Department must say no to a project that will surely degrade the Park's heritage it is meant to protect. Please call or write Ruth Coleman, Director of State Parks, at (800) 777-0369 or

Department of Parks and Recreation
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ask Director Coleman to stand up for Anza-Borrego.

voice their support for wild places. Call or write Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and ask him to keep his pledge to keep California's roadless forests, roadless at: (916) 445-2841 or

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

1976 – 2006: CWC Celebrates its 30th Anniversary

CWC WAS FOUNDED IN 1976 with the goal of protecting California's state and federally-owned lands as designated wilderness. This made CWC unique since unlike organizations that focus on the country as a whole or on a small area, or those that take on other conservation and environmental causes, CWC became the only statewide organization dedicated solely to preserving wilderness in the Golden State.

CWC co-founder and current Board Member Phil Farrell recently reflected back on the heady days of 1976 and offered these thoughts.



It is kind of a surprise to me that CWC has not only lasted for 30 years, but grown and prospered and been really very successful. I've thought a bit about why it has been so successful. I went back to the very first issue of the Wilderness Record which came out two months after we started organizing. I think the key to our success was right on the first page. Let me quote the relevant sentences: "The California Wilderness Coalition has as its single goal the preservation of all remaining wilderness lands in California," and "Wilderness lovers will need to be well-organized to save any or all of these unprotected wild lands."

All the guiding principles for the Coalition's success were in those two sentences in the very first issue of the Wilderness Record. The first sentence says that we have a single goal, meaning that we will work with anyone who shares this value, without needing them to agree with us on anything else. That is essential to have a functioning coalition—keep the focus on where we agree. Otherwise, we can easily fracture into bickering groups who then lose all political influence. The sentence next states that goal in uncompromising terms: "the preservation of all remaining wilderness lands in California." This is a radical manifesto, and really, something that differentiated us from the established conservation groups of the time.

All of us who participated in the founding of CWC, both the five initial directors and the core volunteers, had experience already in the conservation movement in both local grassroots organizations and the national organizations. What we had found was that these groups were lacking a big-picture vision. They were focused on this wild area or that wild area or on what they thought the Forest Service might accept here or there. They were not relating their actions to an overall vision of what could be or needed to be.

We drew a line in the sand and said: development and exploitation has gone far enough.

Included in this first issue of the Wilderness Record were maps and lists describing the results of the first statewide wilderness inventory that I had researched and produced, which found about 14 million acres of remaining wilderness qualifying lands in California, of which only 2 million were protected. As I said in the inventory insert, "It is time to stop considering protection of our remaining wilderness in terms of exceptions to a general rule of development, and to consider development proposals only as exceptions to a general rule of preservation." This was our crucial difference.

Well, we had a grand vision, which you need to be successful, but you also need a method. And the second sentence I quoted above laid out the method: wilderness lovers need to be well-organized.

From the start, the focus was on organizing and empowering citizens to make a difference in the political process. Yes, we could do research and education and provide services and keep an eye on the big picture and respond to the latest threats, even to the point of legal action, if needed. But real, lasting protection requires public support in the broadest sense, and particularly in the local communities around the wild areas.

What is amazing to me is to realize how successful we have been. By "we," I mean the greater wilderness conservation community, of which CWC is an essential and in many ways driving force.

California currently has about 14 million acres of protected designated wilderness. In 1976, we had only 2 million acres, and we thought the total inventory of qualifying lands was 14 million acres. By the numbers, we have completely achieved our initial goal of protecting all remaining wild areas. But of course, our inventory was flawed. CWC's subsequent organizing and research has turned up considerable additional potential wilderness areas in California—another 7 million acres. Still, we have achieved about two-thirds of the goal and that is really something to celebrate.

Of course, even if we get every remaining wild area into some legally protected status, we won't be done. There will be a need for a CWC long into the future, to monitor the management of our protected areas and hold the line against the proposals for compromises and exploitations that are coming, many of which we can't even imagine yet, just as we couldn't imagine in 1976 the extent of the off-road vehicle abuse, the push for oil and gas development on public lands, the demands for cell towers and utility corridors, and even the aggressive mountain bikers, all of whom threaten the integrity of our wild lands today.

If we don't keep the community of wilderness lovers strong, then ultimately we lose the general public support and then we lose the wilderness itself. As Thomas Winnett, founder of Wilderness Press and one of our early supporters says, "The price of wilderness, like liberty, is eternal vigilance."



Late spring rains bring poppies and other beautiful wildflowers to the California landscape



Mule deer near Charlotte Creek, in the Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park

Bush Administration Proposes to Sell 80,000 Acres of National Forest Land in California

In what is perhaps a new low for an administration that has specialized in finding innovative ways to undermine protections for our public lands, President Bush is proposing to sell off nearly \$1 billion worth of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands to raise money for the federal treasury.

Not all of the details of the president's budget are clear, but we do know the administration has set its sights on selling roughly 300,000 acres of Forest Service land in 35 states and possibly as many as 500,000 acres of BLM land in the west.

The BLM parcels have not been identified yet, but a list of Forest Service parcels has been made public and it includes roughly 80,000 acres in California—more forest land than any other affected state.

Some of the key national forests at risk include:

ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST

A 298-acre parcel located on the North Fork Cosumnes River which is the only un-dammed river remaining in the Sierra Nevada. It has been recommended for National Wild and Scenic River status by the Forest Service in recognition of its outstanding hydrological value.



This portion of the Ishi Roadless Area in Lassen National Forest is proposed for sale by the Bush Administration

CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION



KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST

Another sale is 3,337 acres designated as “late-successional reserves” which is habitat for the northern spotted owl and other species dependent on old-growth forest to survive. According to Forest Service regulations, land exchanges of these reserves will be considered “if they provide benefits equal to or better than current [old-growth habitat] conditions.” The question is how selling these lands—and then seeing them heavily logged—will result in beneficial conditions for the northern spotted owl.

LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST

One 698-acre parcel is located in the Ishi Roadless Area adjacent to the existing Ishi Wilderness. The area contains important historical and cultural values. Ishi was the last member of the Yahi tribe. When the Yahi were massacred by bounty hunters, he survived in caves in this area. There is another 280 acres to the north within the Polk Springs Roadless Area and adjacent to Deer Creek. This stream is one of the best remaining habitats for threatened spring run chinook salmon and steelhead trout in the Sacramento River watershed. Ironically, the Forest Service under President George H.W. Bush proposed to Congress that Deer Creek be designated as a wild and scenic river in recognition of its Native American cultural values and imperiled fish populations.

RYAN HENSON

SIX RIVERS NATIONAL FOREST

The administration is proposing to sell 1,295 acres in the Redwood Creek watershed which drains north into Redwood National Park. California's redwoods, the tallest trees in the world, grow just a stone's throw from the creek's edge, which makes them vulnerable to floods. In sharp contrast to the proposed sell-off, state and federal agencies have been working since the 1970s to acquire land in the watershed and to restore it so that road and logging-induced flooding will no longer topple the Park's giants.

While the idea of trading or selling public land is not objectionable in and of itself, ecologically or culturally important lands should never be sold. In addition, proceeds from land sales or trades should go to the Forest Service or BLM so they can use them to acquire important lands elsewhere. Unfortunately, Bush proposes to sell public lands merely to patch holes in the federal budget.

(TOP LEFT)

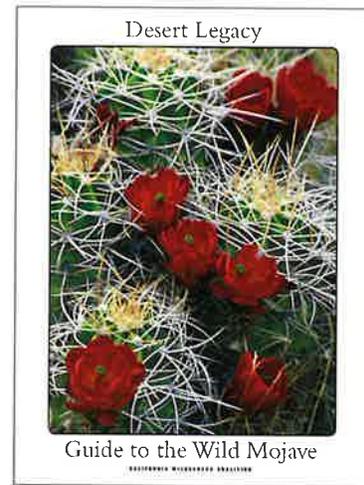
Portions of the Klamath National Forest proposed for sale are home to the northern spotted owl

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please call and write letters to Senator Dianne Feinstein and Senator Barbara Boxer to thank them for their opposition to the Bush administration's proposal to sell federal lands to make up for its poor management of the federal budget. Ask them to work with other senators to derail Bush's plans. In your letter, you should explain why our public lands are important to you and why you object to selling them off to the highest bidder.

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
One Post Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104
(202) 224-3841

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
1700 Montgomery Street, Suite 240
San Francisco, CA 94111
(202) 224-3553



DESERT LEGACY: GUIDE TO THE WILD MOJAVE

With the help of a new, one-of-a-kind reference guide, visitors to the Mojave Desert's spectacular Wilderness can walk in the footsteps of ancient Native Americans, and view panoramic landscapes that remain largely untouched after thousands of years.

This spring, CWC released, "Desert Legacy: Guide to the Wild Mojave," an indispensable reference for anyone who loves the desert or wants to learn more about it. Accompanied by breath-taking photographs and first person accounts of life and lore in the desert, this comprehensive Guide details the Mojave's fifty-five wilderness areas. It includes descriptions of each landscape's outstanding qualities and information on how to enjoy them, including permits, quotas, fire use, pets, vehicle access, and contact information. Accounts from people who live and work in the Mojave are filled with insider information that can't be found anywhere else. Ranging from an artist who finds inspiration in desert light, to a University of California botanist who conducts plant research, these personal narratives illustrate the draw of the wild desert.

Darla Gerner, Executive Director of the Barstow Chamber of Commerce says, "People come from all over the world to visit the desert wilderness and experience a place where life is simple and discoveries are still possible. Preserving these wild places is important not just because they bring business to neighboring communities, but because they are part of our American heritage."

The Guide is available on the CWC website at:
<http://www.calwild.org/resources/pubs/desertlegacy.php>

Or call the Oakland office at (510) 451-1450
to request a hard copy.

Off-Road Vehicle Abuse Threatens California's Public Lands

The California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission provides crucial policy guidance for the management of off-road vehicles (ORVs) on public lands in California. It also provides an important forum for public input on the state's off-road vehicle program. The Commission manages and disperses ORV management grants funded by California fuel taxes, off-highway vehicle registration fees and vehicle recreation area entrance fees. The Commission funds various ORV programs including increasing ORV recreational opportunities, but it also provides money for restoring ORV damaged areas, preventing pristine places from harm, and confining ORV use to the appropriate, designated locations.

Unfortunately, the health and sustainable future of our public lands are threatened by ill-conceived proposals to dismantle this important commission. Irresponsible ORV interests are pushing proposals to turn off-road vehicle management over to political appointees in the Schwarzenegger Administration. We would lose the Commission's important check and balance to the state's ORV program. These proposals would leave California's streams, deserts and forests vulnerable to increased off-road vehicle abuse.

The desert tortoise is a frequent victim of illegal ORV use in the California desert



BARNES MILLER



RYAN HENSON

The California Wilderness Coalition is working to renew the Commission to help make sure that California's public lands are protected from ORV abuse.

You can help protect California's natural splendor by calling the following state legislators to voice your support for the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission.

Joe Baca Jr. (San Bernardino) (916) 319-2062.

Rudy Bermudez (Los Angeles and Orange County) (916) 319-2056.

Ron Calderon (Montebello) (916) 319-2058.

Ed Chavez (San Gabriel valley) (916) 319-2057.

Barbara Matthews (Stockton) (916) 319-2017.

Gloria Negrete-Mcleod (Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona) (916) 319-2061.

Nicole Parra (Bakersfield) (916) 319-2030.

Tell your legislator that you support the renewal of the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission because:

- The Commission has worked to protect and restore California's sensitive forests, deserts and streams from off-road vehicle abuse.
- The Commission provides transparency, public input and legislative oversight for California's off-road vehicle recreation program
- The Commission oversees important law enforcement programs that protect local communities from noise pollution, property damage and off-road vehicle trespassing.

For more information contact Brent Schoradt at bschoradt@calwild.org or (510)451-1450.

(TOP LEFT)

ORV damage to a meadow in the Mendocino National Forest in Lake County

(RIGHT)

Elegant Brodiaea can be found from northern Oregon to southern California



JIM ROSE

Desert Abuse or Proper Use

The California Wilderness Coalition continues to work with local communities to address off-road vehicle abuse in the California desert. This March, CWC co-hosted its third ORV Conference in Ridgecrest titled "Desert Abuse or Proper Use?". The conference was a resounding success as over 60 desert residents and conservationists worked to develop new strategies to protect public and private lands from off-road vehicle abuse.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUMMER FIELDWORK

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has launched an effort to map all off-road vehicle (ORV) routes in the state's national forests and to decide by 2008 which of them should be closed or kept open to vehicles. CWC will be working hard to protect wild places through this "route designation" process, and we could use your help!

Next summer we will be surveying areas used by ORVs to document evidence of erosion and other problems that could convince the USFS to close as many routes as possible.

We could use your help with these surveys.
If you'd like to pitch in, please contact:

Brent Schoradt
CWC

1212 Broadway, Suite 1700
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 451-1450

bschoradt@calwild.org

30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

30 years of protecting wild California



Honoring California State Assemblymember Lois Wolk and Senator Dianne Feinstein

Featuring the California Academy of Sciences' exhibit
HOTSPOT: California on the Edge and the Steinhart Aquarium

Friday, April 28, 2006

6:30 – 9:00 PM

California Academy of Sciences
875 Howard Street • San Francisco • California
(POWELL STREET BART STATION)

Wine + Buffet

\$35 suggested donation; all contributions are welcome and tax deductible.
Please respond by April 21. Call (510) 451-1450 with any questions.

*We gratefully acknowledge the California Academy of Sciences
for the generous use of its facilities.*

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