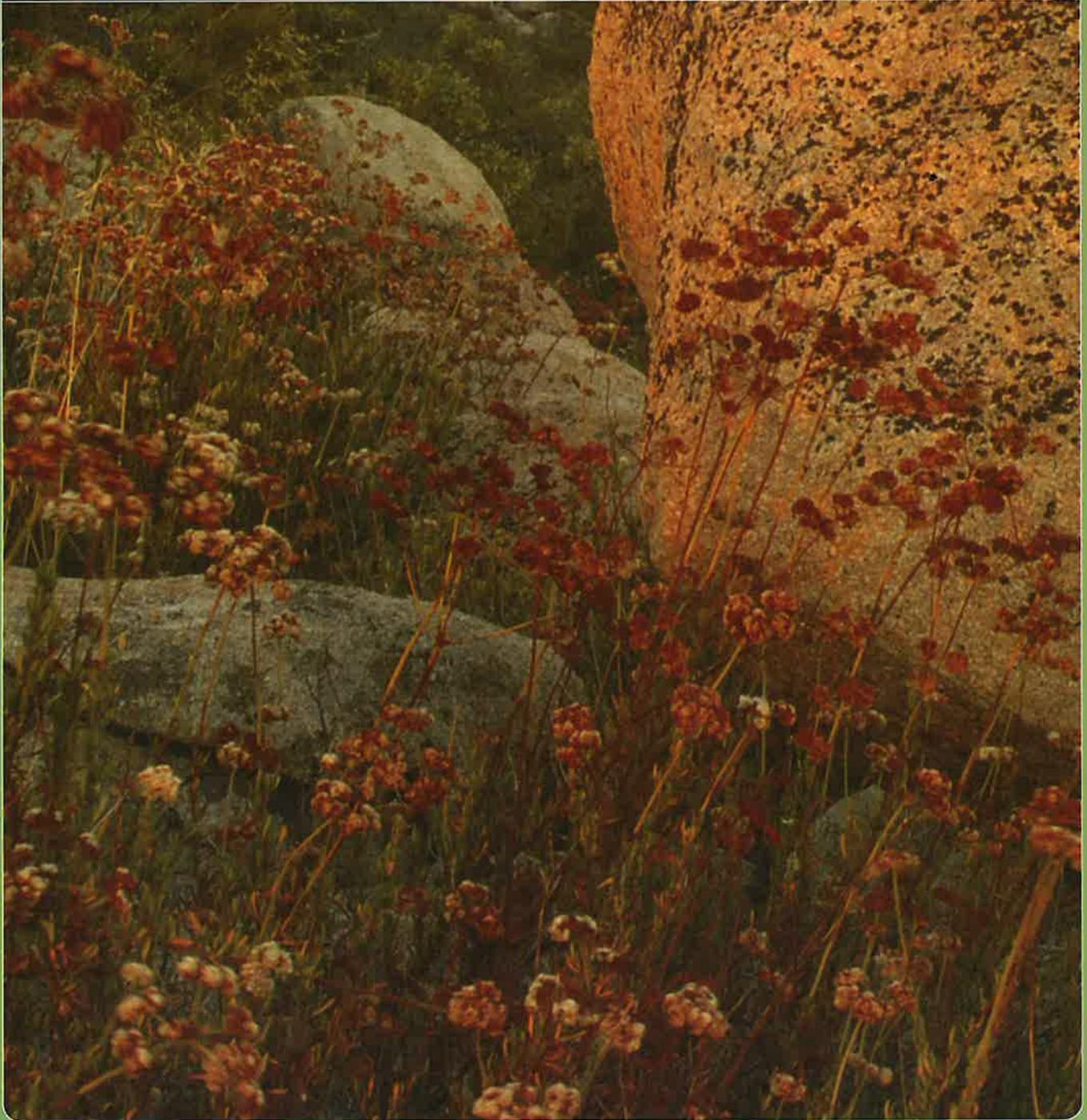


WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

WINTER 2007



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California Desert and Mountain
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WILDERNESS
COALITION**

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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.



DOUG STEAKLEY

South Fork San Jacinto Proposed Wilderness

WILDERNESS RECORD

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COVER PHOTO BY DOUG STEAKLEY

Design by Maia Wilkinson/maiawilkinson.com

A New Congress, New Opportunity!

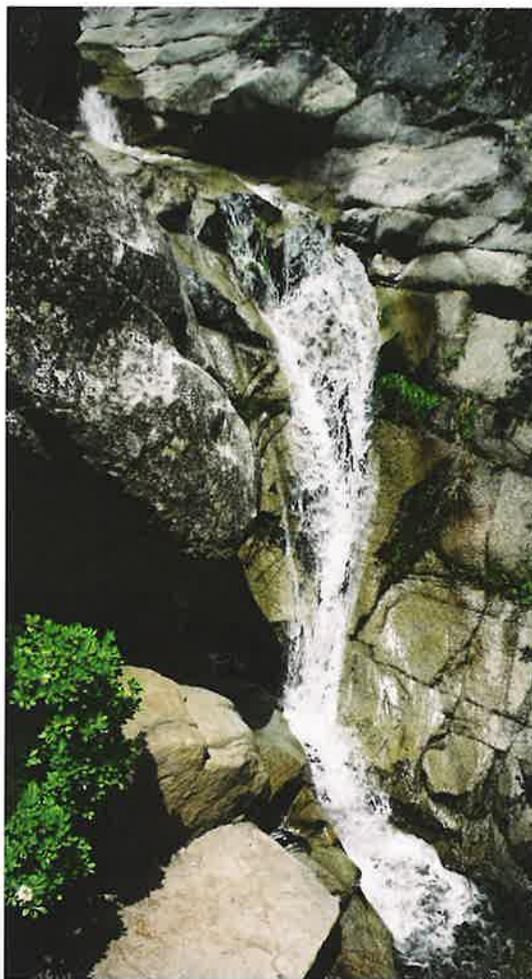
The last issue of the Wilderness Record was a tribute to the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act—enacted by a Congress and President hostile to protecting public lands. In 2007, things have changed! The 110th Congress brings the best opportunity for designating wilderness in the California desert since President Bill Clinton signed into law the California Desert Protection Act in 1994.

It's been proven many times before that wilderness is a bi-partisan issue from the county level on up to Congress. Yet with anti-conservationists running Congress for the last 12 years, passing wilderness bills was a tall order. This was a group with such a different perspective on the environment that they took the word "natural" out of the name of the committee which oversees wilderness and other public lands issues, making it simply the Committee on Resources. If you didn't know the history of the committee, you might have thought that it dealt with budget issues. One of the first acts of the new Congress was to change the name back to the Committee on Natural Resources. We hope the new committee lives up to its name.

Already, Senator Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Hilda Solis have re-introduced the California Wild Heritage Act which would permanently protect 2.4 million acres of California's wild lands. We expect as in the past, though, that regional wilderness bills will be the ones to move first. It's the development of local, bi-partisan support that gives a wilderness bill the political clout that it needs to pass through Congress and on to the President's desk. As you'll read inside, late last year

Congresswoman Mary Bono (R-Palm Springs) introduced a wilderness bill for her Riverside County district—the California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act. The bill would designate roughly 125,000 acres of wilderness, including Beauty and Cahuilla Mountains and lands in Joshua Tree National Park and San Bernardino National Forest. We're hopeful that in this Democratic Congress, we can make this another successful, bi-partisan effort to protect California's public lands!

Mary Wells is the Executive Director of CWC



North Fork San Jacinto Proposed Wild & Scenic River

COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF THE RIVER



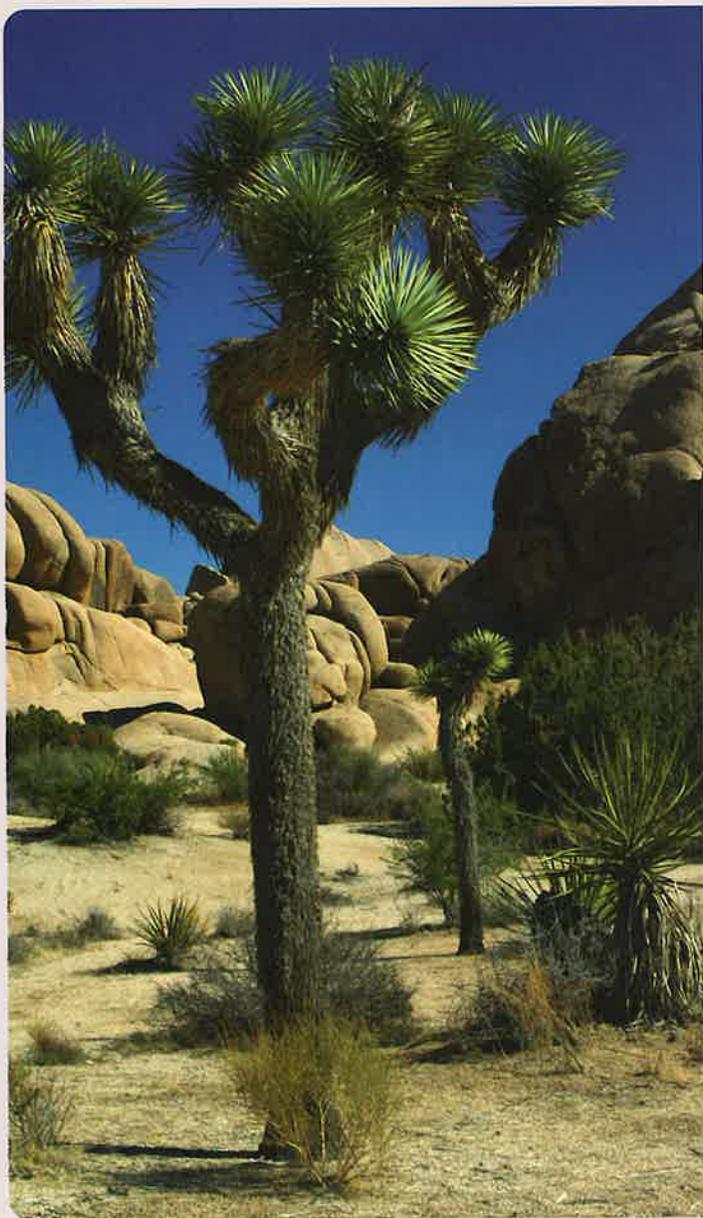
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Representative Mary Bono Introduces Wilderness and Wild River Protection Bill for Western Riverside County

In October 2006, Representative Mary Bono (R-Palm Springs) introduced the California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act, H.R. 6270, which will protect more than 125,000 acres of forests and desert as wilderness in her Riverside County district.

The special places proposed for protection in H.R. 6270 represent some of the best remaining wild areas in southern California and include:

DOUG STEAKLEY



Agua Tibia Proposed Wilderness Additions

(1,950 ACRES)

A land of steep canyons cloaked in coastal sage scrub habitat, this once-common plant community is quickly being replaced by development in much of southern California. This phenomenon has rendered the Agua Tibia area a haven for endangered plants and animals.

Beauty Mountain Proposed Wilderness

(16,700 ACRES)

The Beauty Mountain area is an ecological transition zone between the desert on the east and the endangered coastal sage scrub habitat of the Coast Range on the west. As such, it serves as a critical bridge for migrating wildlife in a rapidly urbanizing region. The Bureau of Land Management considers Beauty Mountain's Million Dollar Spring to be one of the most pristine watersheds in all of southwestern California.

Cahuilla Mountain Proposed Wilderness

(7,131 ACRES)

Visitors who climb to the top of the mountain are greeted by spectacular views in all directions. Spring wildflower displays are magnificent. Cahuilla Mountain is the setting for the novel *Ramona* by Helen Hunt Jackson, a historically important work published in 1884.



Agua Tibia Proposed Wilderness Addition

Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Additions

(78,150 ACRES)

A wonderland of craggy peaks, narrow canyons, fascinating rock formations, cactus gardens and astounding spring wildflower displays all under a seemingly endless blue sky, the additions are a critical refuge for bighorn sheep and desert tortoise.



South Fork San Jacinto Proposed Wilderness

(21,760 ACRES)

The lush canyon of the South Fork San Jacinto River is the centerpiece of this wonderfully wild place. The popular South Fork Trail offers a challenging hike to the river bottom with many impressive views along the way.

In addition to the proposed wilderness areas, the bill would add 3,500 acres to the existing Santa Rosa/San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and would protect Palm Canyon Creek, the North Fork San Jacinto River, Fuller Mill Creek and Bautista Creek from dam construction by designating them as federal wild and scenic rivers. In announcing the introduction of her bill, Representative Bono noted that the legislation "...is the product of many discussions between our office and community and environmental stakeholders. By continuing to work together and forge ahead, we will get this bill to the President's desk."



(LEFT) Joshua Tree National Park Proposed Wilderness Additions (ABOVE) Cahuilla Mountain Proposed Wilderness



JIM ROSE



JIM ROSE

2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule is Back!

In the spring of 2005, the Bush Administration repealed the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule that banned logging, road-building, and other development in roadless areas in national forests. Since that time, America's wild forests have been open for business. The repeal of the Roadless Rule left 20 percent of California's national forests at risk for development. Along with our allies, CWC took a two-prong approach to protect our roadless woodlands. First, we worked within the Bush Administration's new petition process through which individual states request a specific federal rulemaking for the management of their forests. In July 2006, after hearing from tens of thousands of Californians, Governor Schwarzenegger petitioned the Forest Service to protect California's 4.4 million acres of roadless areas.



JIM ROSE

(TOP LEFT)
Sespe Roadless Area,
Los Padres National Forest

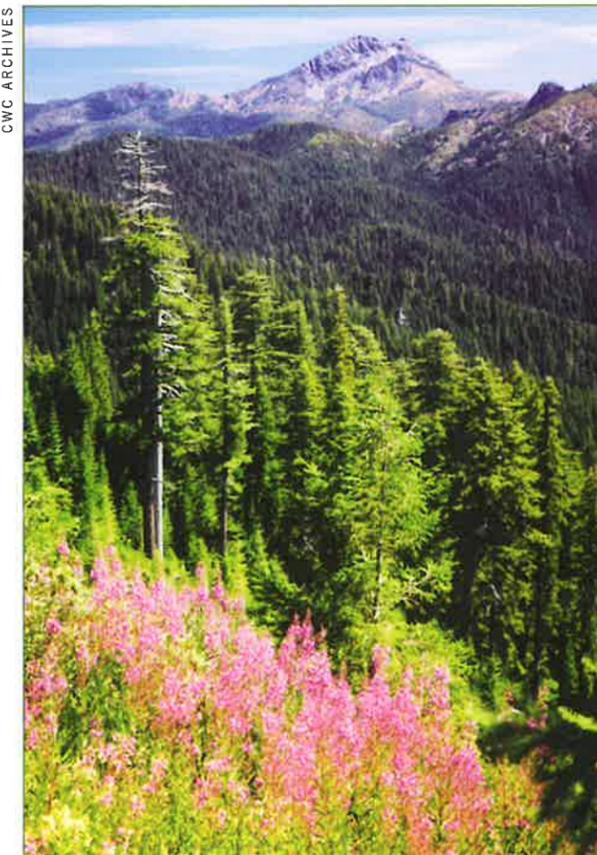
(LEFT)
Duncan Canyon Proposed Wilderness,
Tahoe National Forest

(TOP)
Castaic Mountains Potential Wilderness,
Angeles National Forest

(RIGHT)
Recently designated Siskiyou Wilderness Additions,
Klamath and Six Rivers National Forests

Concurrently, the states of California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington and a slew of national and regional conservation groups, including CWC, filed suit against the Bush Administration for arbitrarily repealing the 2001 Roadless Rule. In September 2006, federal Judge Elizabeth LaPorte ruled that the Administration illegally repealed the 2001 Roadless Rule. Judge LaPorte's ruling subsequently threw out the Bush Administration's petition process, and reinstated the original Roadless Rule. Now once again, roughly 60 million acres of all of America's national forests are off-limits to most development.

The wonderful lawyers at Earthjustice, who represented the environmental groups, and at the California Attorney General's Office should be thanked for their remarkable performance. The Bush Administration continues to maneuver itself around the ruling, but in the meantime, the Roadless Rule is back!



CWC ARCHIVES

COALITION news

CWC wishes all the best to Dave and Bryn!

After achieving a tremendous victory with the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act, **Dave Reckess** has left CWC. He has returned to his native upstate New York to join his fiancé, who began law school there this past fall. Dave's enthusiasm, positive attitude and skills as an organizer will be missed, but we are sure he will be a success in his future endeavors.

As CWC's Desert Program Director for nearly three years, **Bryn Jones** was a strong voice for wilderness in the California desert. This fall, she left CWC to begin work as a law clerk at the Arizona Court of Appeals in Tucson. Bryn's commitment to desert wilderness contributed to the addition of nearly 56,000 acres to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park wilderness and the creation of *Desert Legacy: Guide to the Wild Mojave* which forged connections between activists, business owners and outdoor enthusiasts. We will miss Bryn's dedication, warmth and leadership, but we wish her all the best in this new chapter!

Welcome Chieko and Monica!

Chieko Plotts joins CWC as our new GIS Coordinator. She earned her B.S. in Conservation Resource Studies from UC Berkeley, and received a M.S. in Natural Resources Planning at Humboldt State University. After spending many peaceful years in the redwood forests, Chieko is happy to return to the Bay Area. Much of her research has focused on threatened species and habitat, and she looks forward to using her talents for the preservation of wilderness.

CWC welcomes **Monica Argandoña** as our new Desert Program Director. A life-long Southern Californian, Monica has traveled extensively throughout California. She studied cattle ranchers in Modoc County for her M.A. thesis in applied anthropology and directed and produced a documentary called *Where the West Still Lives*. For two years she worked for Senator Dianne Feinstein in Washington, D.C. and is currently a doctoral candidate in environmental anthropology and political ecology at UC Riverside.

We are excited to have Chieko and Monica on board!



Chieko



Monica

“Give ‘Em Hell, Sally Bell”: Sinkyone Wilderness State Park Gets the Protection It Deserves

Established in 1973, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, located along the southern stretch of California’s iconic Lost Coast, can finally live up to its name. In November 2006, after hearing the impassioned pleas of Native American elders, local conservationists and other ardent supporters, the California State Park and Recreation Commission voted unanimously to designate 7,100 acres of Sinkyone as wilderness. Despite its name, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park had long existed with no designated wilderness.

TREES FOUNDATION ARCHIVES



The striking coastline of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park

The striking scenery that brings visitors to the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park left the land largely undeveloped for so many years. The steep, foggy coastal cliffs connecting Mendocino and Humboldt Counties rise sharply up from the sea. It is a landscape so rugged that the engineers who designed Highway 1 decided that the better part of valor was to retreat inland to find an easier route. This gap in California’s famous coastal highway has since been known as the “Lost Coast.”

The land’s basking seals and sea lions, fluttering shorebirds, and misty forests appear peaceful. Yet conflict has left its mark over the last two centuries. In the 1800s, bounty hunters slaughtered Native Americans for a reward from the State of California. Near the park’s Needle Rock, a group of the vigilantes fell upon members of the Sinkyone Tribe and massacred them. The sole survivor, given the name Sally Bell by a white couple who eventually adopted her, hid in the woods for months after watching the murder of her family.

Later, conservationists clashed with logging interests in a fight to preserve the park. Timber companies clearcut choice old-growth forests nearby. By the mid-1980s Georgia-Pacific Corporation was on the verge of liquidating the last ancient redwoods in the area. While some activists filed suit, others chained themselves to trees in an old-growth forest they dubbed the “Sally Bell Grove.” In 1986, after receiving a favorable court ruling and financial help from the Save the Redwoods League, the Trust for Public Land, the California Coastal Commission and other interests, the park was expanded to its current size and special places like the Sally Bell Grove were finally spared. North Coast activist Darryl Cherney commemorated this struggle with his catchy folk song, “Give ‘Em Hell, Sally Bell.”



BOB WICK

Roosevelt elk are just one of the many species of wildlife found in the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park

The activists who helped defend Sinkyone in the 1980s continued to pressure the California Department of Parks and Recreation to officially protect the park as wilderness. At last, these efforts paid off this past November. Just weeks before, President Bush created the first ever Lost Coast wilderness when he signed into law the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act which included 42,000 acres of wilderness in the King Range National Conservation Area, adjacent to Sinkyone. The two areas of public land border each other and share the 50+ mile Lost Coast Trail. Both the governments of the State of California and the United States have finally given the historic and beautiful Lost Coast the permanent protection it deserves.



JIM ROSE



In Memorial: California Conservation Legend Norman "Ike" Livermore, Jr.

*California conservation legend
Norman "Ike" Livermore, Jr.
passed away on December 5, 2006
in San Rafael. He was 95.*

Ike Livermore served as Governor Ronald Reagan's Secretary for Resources from 1967–1975. As the long-time treasurer of Humboldt County's Pacific Lumber Company, Livermore seemed perfectly suited to the job of rolling back environmental protections in favor of industry. Instead, Ike Livermore became a true conservation hero who worked tirelessly to protect the Sierra Nevada highcountry from development, to establish Redwood National Park, and to save the Middle Fork Eel River in Mendocino County from a massive, ill-conceived dam proposal. Amazingly, given Governor Reagan's later environmental record as president, Livermore accomplished all of this without ever openly contradicting the governor or his policies.

The recently passed Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act contained several areas that would be under a giant reservoir today if it were not for Ike Livermore's tireless work.



Yuki Wilderness, part of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act, would be under a reservoir today if it were not for Ike Livermore's work

Growing Coalition Looks to Reform California's OHV Program, Promote Restoration and Traditional Outdoor Recreation

California's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program is currently up for renewal in the State Legislature. In response, a growing coalition of conservationists, outdoor recreationists, and private property owners is urging legislators to promote traditional outdoor recreation, provide for restoration of lands damaged by off-road vehicles, and create a lasting framework to protect California's communities and environment from increasing off-road vehicle abuse.

The State of California's \$60 million OHV Program is funded primarily through the portion of the fuel tax that is generated from vehicles driving off-pavement. A new Fuel Tax Study released by the Department of State Parks in December 2006 found that California campers, anglers, and hikers pay millions in taxes to subsidize off-road vehicle recreation on California's public lands. The study found that only a small minority of public lands visitors use dirt bikes, ATVs, and other off-road vehicles.

Currently, more than two-thirds of OHV Fuel Tax receipts are spent to provide opportunities for ATV and motorcycle recreation at State Vehicular Recreation Areas. Only one third is spent on local assistance grants to prevent and clean up the damage wrought by illegal vehicle trespass. None of the fuel tax receipts go to provide traditional outdoor recreation opportunities like hiking, fishing, backpacking and bird-watching.

The California Wilderness Coalition is working with wilderness advocates from throughout the state to promote restoration, law enforcement and traditional outdoor recreation as the OHV program is reformed in the State Legislature.



Join us for a meeting with your legislator!

Contact Brent at (510) 451-1450 or bschoradt@calwild.org to learn how you can help protect California wilderness from off-road vehicle damage.

BEFORE

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



AFTER



California's OHV Restoration Program recently funded the removal of illegal off-road vehicle routes in the Jawbone-Butterbredt Area of Critical Environmental Concern in the Mojave desert

Litigating Lines on a Map

The Civil War-era law known as R.S. 2477 has been revived again in Inyo and San Bernardino Counties by extreme off-road vehicle users and politically driven county officials. This time they have gone directly to federal court, forcing CWC and our partners in the desert to intervene in the cases in order to protect some of the crown jewels of California wilderness.

The first suit was filed in August 2006 by off-roaders who claim that Surprise Canyon—a surprise oasis of waterfalls beside Death Valley National Park—is a “constructed highway” to which off-roaders have a right-of-way under R.S. 2477. While Congress added part of Surprise Canyon to Death Valley and designated the land around the canyon as wilderness in 1994, Congress left a narrow strip of canyon bottom out of the wilderness for access to mining claims at the top of the canyon. Extreme off-road vehicle users used the strip to climb the canyon by cutting down trees, filling the stream bed with rocks, and using winches to pull vehicles up waterfalls.

JASON FRIED



Surprise Canyon

The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service closed the canyon in 2001 and 2002 respectively in order to evaluate the impact of off-road vehicle use and other management practices on endangered wildlife, settling a lawsuit by conservationists to protect the canyon. In 5 years, Surprise Canyon has rebounded ecologically. Cottonwoods and willows trees are flourishing, and endangered birds such as the Inyo California towhee have returned. It is this reemergence of natural life that is at stake in this case as the off-roaders press to have the canyon re-opened.

In October 2006, both Inyo and San Bernardino Counties chose to make a political point by filing two separate suits against the National Park Service asserting that the counties have rights-of-way in Death Valley National Park in Inyo County and the Mojave National Preserve in San Bernardino County. The Inyo County suit alleges that three routes are theirs to open, maintain, and even construct two-lane highways in the designated wilderness of Greenwater Canyon, Greenwater Valley and Last Chance Canyon. At the Board of Supervisors meeting approving the litigation, the Inyo Board decided that making a political point was more important than taxpayer dollars. The Board decided that the litigation’s cost of upwards of \$300,000 was not an issue despite the fact that the county is currently running a deficit. Instead, many board members said the rights of the county are more important than costs. CWC and our local partners intervened in January 2007 to fight for Death Valley’s wilderness.

San Bernardino County filed a similar suit alleging that they have 14 rights-of-way in the Mojave National Preserve. The Board of Supervisors is taking a beating in the local press. The San Bernardino Sun recently chastised the Board for filing the litigation and sided with the National Park Service saying that the judge should dismiss the suit. The Sun’s editorial calls the litigation “the road to nowhere,” further saying “it’s hard to see what exactly the county is hoping to preserve, other than some bogus claim to power over the preserve.”





Join Us in Celebrating North Coast Wilderness

The California Wilderness Coalition invites you to celebrate
the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act

Honoring Congressman Mike Thompson with our Phillip Burton Wilderness Award

Featuring the California Historical Society's *Past Tents: The Way We Camped*,

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