

# WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

SPRING 2007



Sacramento River National Conservation Area

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*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.*



PHIL FARRELL

Madrone in the rain, Upper Loop Trail, Feather Falls Proposed Wilderness

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**“All you do is yap-yap and say bad, bad, bad, bad!  
Well I have my rights sir, and I’m telling you  
I intend to go on doing just what I do!”**

As I’m reading *The Lorax* to my daughter, I always have to chuckle when I get to this part. Dr. Seuss perfectly captured the essence of so many conservation debates, which unfortunately haven’t changed in the last 35 years since the book was published. Sure, we can think of ourselves as the Lorax, speaking for the trees, but we sound to many people like we’re just constantly complaining. If you’re a Onceler—or a mountain biker or an off-roader, you can just ignore environmentalists because they disregard your rights and always say the same old thing. There has to be a way out of this mess.

When CWC first helped create the Alliance for Responsible Recreation to curb illegal off-road vehicle use, there were some grumblings about the name. Some folks think that off-road vehicles can never be used responsibly. That’s certainly not CWC. This is what makes the future of the state’s off-highway vehicle program so problematic. Saying that off-road vehicles are just plain bad takes you out of the debate.

You’ll read in this issue of the Wilderness Record that we need to make sure that there is a conservation component to the off-highway vehicle program.

CWC is hosting our first “Ride for the Wild!” bike ride on Saturday, May 19 through the back roads of the gold country. Some folks think it’s odd that CWC would host such an event and have told us so. CWC continues to be a forceful advocate to keep mountain bikes out of wilderness, but we certainly aren’t opposed to bikes as a rule. Indeed, we’ve supported the creation of appropriate mountain bike trails and even helped build them on occasion. The North Coast wilderness bill would never have been signed into law without our willingness both to fight against mountain bikes in wilderness and to support bike trails elsewhere. So please join us in Nevada County in a few weeks—you can ride your bike and speak for the trees!

***Mary Wells is the Executive Director of CWC***



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PHIL FARRELL



**Molybdenite Creek, Hoover Wilderness Proposed Additions**

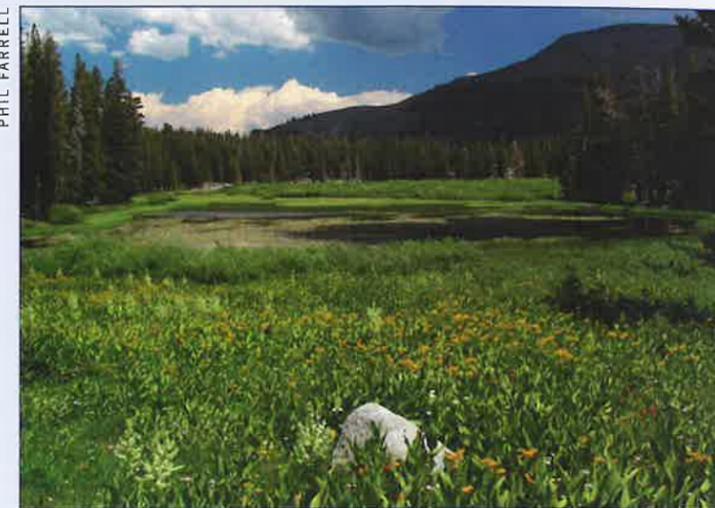
# California National Forests Implement Route Designation

Off-road vehicle use is exploding across California's open spaces and wild places. More and more hikers, campers, anglers and backpackers are confronting the growing damage and disruption caused by unfettered off-road vehicle recreation.

After years of allowing uncontrolled cross-country motor vehicle travel, the Forest Service is finally designating off-road vehicle routes, and making it illegal for vehicles to travel off these routes. The pro-conservation majority on the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Commission has approved \$8 million in grants to California's 20 national forests to complete route designation by 2009.

As a result, every national forest in California has inventoried existing vehicle routes and will be holding public meetings and conducting environmental reviews to decide which routes will be kept open for motorized travel. A preliminary report by the Forest Service found over 11,000 miles of unplanned and user-created roads and

routes in California's national forests. Conservationists have a once-in-a generation opportunity to protect wild places by keeping motorized routes out of potential wilderness and setting in place a sustainable route system that can be



Meiss Meadows Proposed Wilderness, Eldorado and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests

enforced to protect wildlife habitat, water quality and traditional outdoor recreation. Once route designation is complete, routes that are not designated will become candidates for restoration or remain open to non-motorized recreation.

As the route designation process moves forward we are seeing early signs of conservation gains. The Smith River National Recreation Area and Orleans Ranger District recently issued a final decision to decommission hundreds of miles of roads that were fragmenting habitat and increasing sediment loads in local rivers. The Tahoe National Forest is proposing to add only 60 miles of new off-road vehicle routes after their inventory discovered over one thousand miles of unplanned and user-created routes throughout the forest. The California Wilderness Coalition is working with conservationists throughout the state to monitor and improve route designation proposals as they move forward.



Mule Ears and Lupine, Castle Peak Trail, Castle Peak Proposed Wilderness, Tahoe National Forest

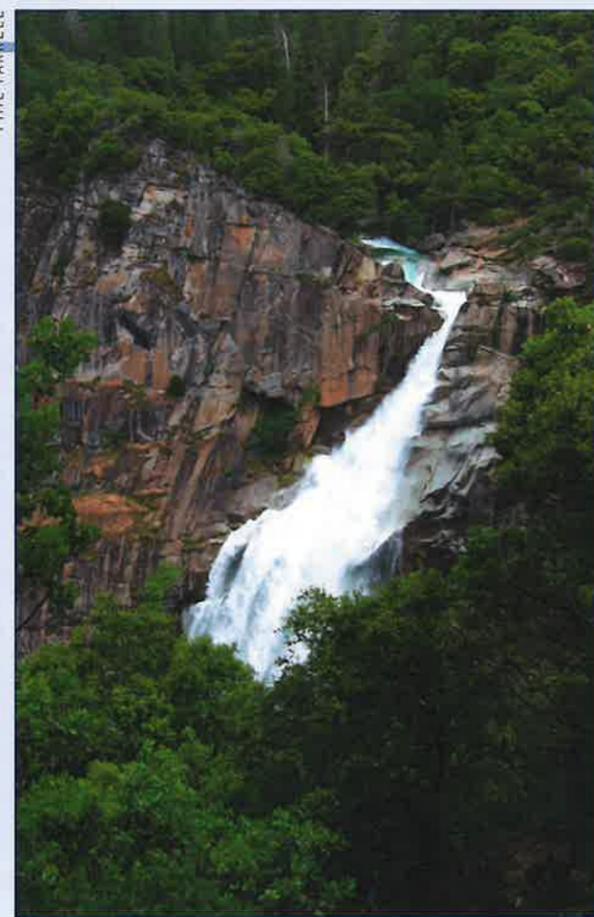
## State OHV Program Reforms Needed

California's national forests are leading the nation in route designation efforts primarily because of the leadership and funding provided by the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Commission. The commission allocates an annual grants budget of \$18 million to manage off-road vehicle recreation on California's public lands. Funds from these grants support important law enforcement and habitat restoration work to protect California's natural splendor from illegal and inappropriate off-road vehicle use. This funding will be critical to the implementation of route designation on all of California's public lands.

As we reported in the last issue of the Wilderness Record, the State Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program that funds these grants, as well as the operations and maintenance of six State Vehicular

Recreation Areas, is set to expire on January 1, 2008. The program is up for renewal in the State Legislature, and off-road vehicle industry groups are working to undermine environmental programs that prevent and repair off-road vehicle damage to California's wildlife habitat, waterways and wilderness.

California State Senator Darrell Steinberg has introduced Senate Bill 742 to renew and reform the State OHV Program. We are hopeful that Senator Steinberg's bill will provide for reasonable motorized and non-motorized recreation while strengthening law enforcement and restoration programs that protect wild lands and communities from off-road vehicle damage. However, SB 742 currently fails to fund traditional outdoor recreation and would hand more authority to the OHV Division, which focuses on providing off-road vehicle recreation often at the expense of restoration and non-motorized recreation. CWC and its coalition partners are urging Senator Steinberg to accept conservation amendments to SB 742.



Feather Falls, Feather Falls Proposed Wilderness, Plumas National Forest

### TAKE ACTION!

Contact Senator Steinberg today to express support for conservation reforms to California's OHV Program.

Senator Darrell Steinberg:  
State Capitol, Room 4035 / Sacramento, CA 95814  
PHONE (916) 651-4006 / FAX (916) 323-2263  
EMAIL [Senator.Steinberg@senate.ca.gov](mailto:Senator.Steinberg@senate.ca.gov)

Ask Senator Steinberg to support the following revisions to SB 742:

- Increase restoration funding to repair public lands, outside of State Vehicular Recreation Areas, that have been damaged by off-road vehicles and oppose any attempts to weaken the definition of "restoration."
- Include reforms to make sure that restoration projects are efficiently and effectively funded. Do not give the OHV Division, which focuses on expanding off-road vehicle opportunities, increased authority over the restoration program. The restoration grants should be managed by a state agency with habitat restoration expertise, such as the Wildlife Conservation Board.
- Create a non-motorized recreation grants program to make sure that the hikers, campers and anglers that pay into the OHV Trust Fund through the CA fuel tax benefit from the program.
- Enact law enforcement reforms that protect private property owners and public resources. This includes increased fines for illegal riding and a license plate requirement to enable better enforcement.

## Celebrating North Coast Wilderness

JASON FRIED



On Friday, April 13th, CWC members, activists, and supporters gathered at the California Historical Society to celebrate the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act at our annual Spring Celebration.

Congressman Mike Thompson (D-Napa) was honored with the Phillip Burton Wilderness Award for his steadfast work to pass the wilderness bill. As he accepted the award, the Congressman remembered that Phil Burton really wasn't an outdoorsman. In fact, Burton himself used to joke that the only reason he went outside was for a cigarette. But Burton worked tirelessly for wilderness, because his constituents were so passionate about it. Representative Thompson instead shares his constituents' love of the outdoors, and it shows in his dedication passing the North Coast wilderness bill.

STEVE EVANS

### A Job Well Done



Former CWC Executive Director Jim Eaton surveys the newly designated Cache Creek Wilderness with his dog, Coso.

Wilderness activists Lynn Ryan, and David and Ellen Drell were honored with the Jim Eaton Wilderness Award for their tireless efforts to protect the wilderness of California's North Coast, and Mendocino County, respectively. Since arriving in Humboldt County in the early 1980s, Lynn Ryan has been a dedicated advocate for North Coast wilderness, particularly the newly designated King Range Wilderness. In addition to diligently submitting comments on countless management plans, Lynn has led over 200 public hikes along the North Coast, educating and motivating a multitude of current and future wilderness activists with her passion for the lands she loves.

David and Ellen Drell have been actively involved in the struggle to protect unique places in the Mendocino National Forest for more than thirty years. They achieved their first major victory in 1984 when their efforts led to the addition of 42,000 acres to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. Over twenty years later, they can celebrate again with the addition of 27,000 more acres to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness through the North Coast bill. In their quest to convey the importance of wilderness, the Drells are known for their unique ability to reach out to people from all walks of life.

The California Wilderness Coalition would like to thank the following individuals and business sponsors for helping to make the evening a wonderful success:

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## Senator Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Hilda Solis Introduce California Wild Heritage Act of 2007

On February 6, 2007, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Congresswoman Hilda Solis (CA-32) re-introduced the California Wild Heritage Act. This important legislation would protect over 2.2 million acres of federal public lands in California as wilderness and 21 rivers as Wild and Scenic. This past October, Senator Boxer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Congressman Mike Thompson saw the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act, forever protecting 273,000 acres of California's forests, chaparral, and coastline. The lands had been included in Senator Boxer's original California Wild Heritage Act that she introduced in 2002.

"I am excited to build on last year's successes and continue efforts to preserve even more of California's magnificent wild lands for future generations," Senator Boxer said. "These places are the natural treasure of California."

Senator Boxer plans to continue her successful strategy of working district by district with members of the House of Representatives. She plans to continue the efforts begun last year with Representative Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (CA-25) in the Eastern Sierra Nevada and desert portions of his district and to work with Representative Mary Bono (CA-45) to protect the wild lands of Riverside County.

"Last year we proved that protecting wilderness is a bipartisan issue. This year, I want to continue that bipartisan effort by working with Representatives McKeon and Bono to protect California's spectacular Eastern Sierra and vast desert treasures. Today's legislation represents only the first step in that effort this Congress," Senator Boxer said.

The legislation was developed after years of consultation with local communities, elected officials, recreation organizations, businesses, federal and state agencies and local property owners. CWC is excited to continue our work at the local level to build broad constituencies for wilderness.



GORDON JOHNSON

Lassen Volcanic National Park Proposed  
Wilderness Additions

### In Memorial...



*This past summer, the wilderness conservation community lost a true hero. Karen Fant, a founder and former executive director of the Washington Wilderness Coalition passed away in her home in Seattle.*

*Born in California, Karen attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where she studied earth sciences. Her experiences as a child hiking through the high Sierra Nevada helped to cement her love for wild lands. Prior to moving to Washington in 1971, Karen attended the first wilderness workshop sponsored by*

*the budding California Wilderness Coalition. CWC co-founder and former executive director Jim Eaton remembers Karen's passion for wilderness preservation: "For years she was the driving force behind the Washington Wilderness Coalition...she leaves a huge hole to fill."*

*In the late 1970s, Karen and fellow environmental activist Ken Gersten envisioned an organization that would help people across the state to strengthen existing groups or establish new ones, with a specific focus on protecting wilderness areas. Karen, Ken and others founded the Washington Wilderness Coalition in 1979. Karen and Ken became the organization's first co-directors. In 1984, Karen became executive director and served until 1990.*

*Karen's work throughout the state with grassroots organizations was instrumental in the passage of the 1984 Washington State Wilderness Act designating more than one million acres of new wilderness. Most recently, Karen was focusing her efforts on Washington's proposed Wild Sky Wilderness, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives in April of this year. Karen was also an avid international traveler. Her commitment to wild lands and critters and her compassion for people worldwide were an inspiration to all who knew her. Her passing is a great loss to the conservation community, but her legacy of wilderness will forever be enjoyed.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON WILDERNESS COALITION

# Ride for the Wild!

Join us for CWC's Ride for the Wild,  
a scenic road bike ride through  
Nevada County's gold country to  
support California's last wild places.

Saturday **May 19th** 2007

35-mile road ride through Nevada County

Check-In begins at 9 A.M.

Ride begins at 10 A.M.

\$100 tax-deductible registration fee



North Fork American Proposed Wilderness

CWC ARCHIVES

Your registration fee includes an afternoon barbecue reception with food and local wine at Suncrest Vineyards in Penn Valley. Bring three or more friends and receive the "Party of 4" reduced rate of \$75 each.

Ride the scenic back roads of Nevada County's gold country and help protect California wilderness. This beautiful ride will begin and end at Suncrest Vineyards in Penn Valley. You will wind through the rolling Sierra Nevada foothills with a stop in historic downtown Nevada City.

Please visit [www.calwild.org](http://www.calwild.org) for more information, or call (510) 451-1450.

To register, print and mail the online registration and liability forms with payment to CWC's Oakland office.

## CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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