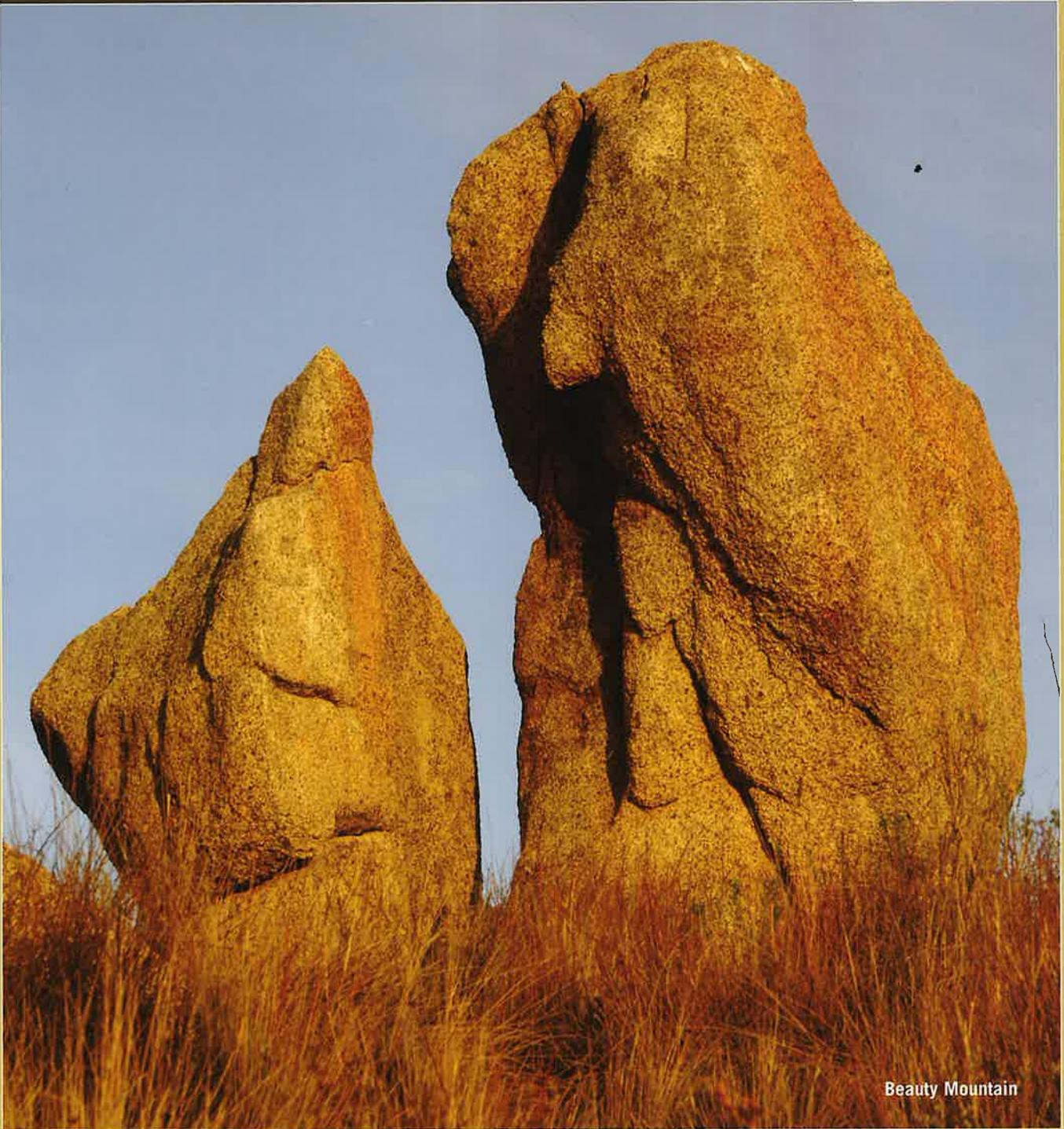


WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

FALL 2007



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**CALIFORNIA
WILDERNESS
COALITION**

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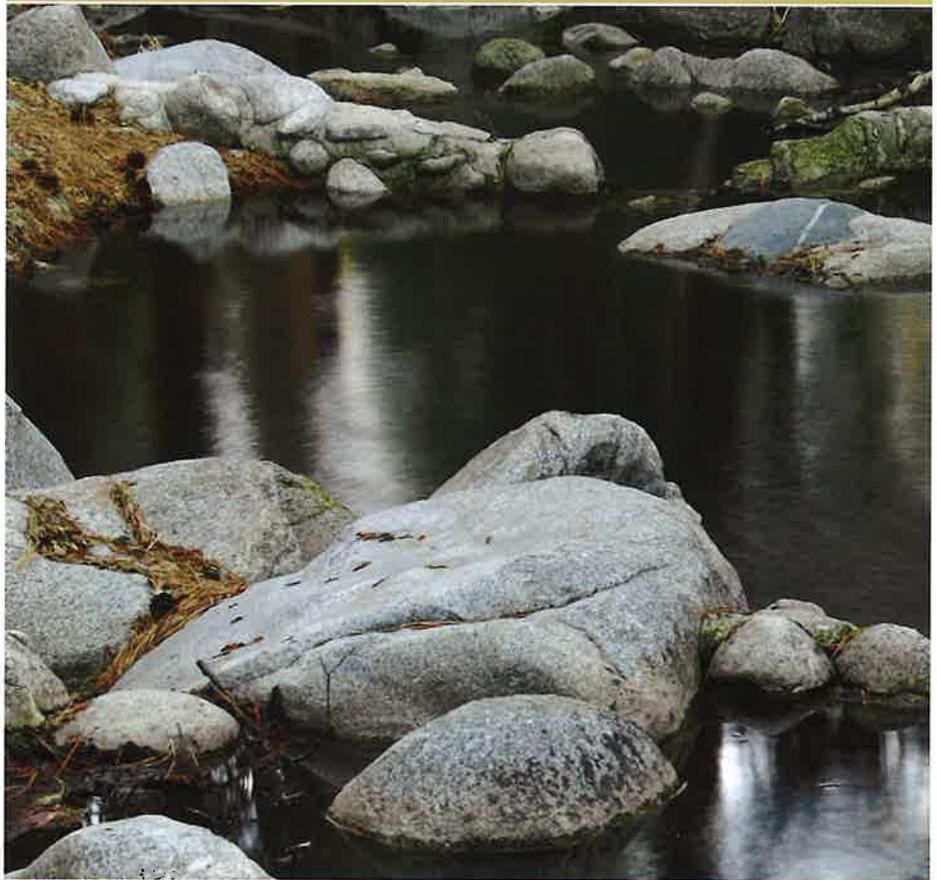
Deputy Policy Director
Brent Schoradt

Desert Field Organizer
Laurel Williams

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

WILDERNESS RECORD

FALL 2007/VOLUME 32/ISSUE 4/ISSN 0194-3030

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Members and Friends,

In August, Mary Wells, who has served so ably as our Executive Director for the past five years, announced that she would be leaving CWC to assume the position of Deputy Conservation Director at the Sierra Club.

This is a natural career move for Mary that takes her skills and leadership to the national environmental policy level. We wish her the very best as she begins her new position in November, after spending precious family leave time with her new baby daughter, Anna.

Mary significantly increased the presence and impact of CWC statewide, and built and supported an outstanding team of professionals. During her tenure, Congress passed a major wilderness bill for the North Coast and introduced a large piece of bi-partisan wilderness legislation for Riverside County. Mary also helped convince Governor Schwarzenegger to lobby the Bush administration to protect over four million acres of roadless areas in the state.

During this transition period, the staff will be led by Ryan Henson, Policy Director, and Meredith Eilers, Associate Director. The capable, collaborative team that Mary assembled will continue working towards our mission to protect and preserve California's remaining wild places. Mary will continue to assist us during this time as a consultant.

We are confident that CWC is in a strong position to attract another capable leader. We hope and expect to have the new Executive Director selected in January of 2008.

On behalf of the board and staff, thank you for your continuing participation and partnership in our efforts. We appreciate your friendship and support!

Sincerely,



Don Morrill
President, Board of Directors

A Farewell Message from Mary

After five years at CWC, I'm moving on. My time at CWC has deepened my love of California's outdoors. My appreciation for the natural beauty of our state is matched only by my genuine admiration for the passion, dedication, and enthusiasm of wilderness activists. While I have loved my work to protect California's last wild places, it's the people that I will miss the most, especially CWC's staff and board. The board members are wonderful, many with an encyclopedic knowledge of California's landscapes, flora, and fauna, and all with a deep devotion to supporting the staff and making CWC a stronger organization.

I have been most privileged, though, to work with such a great staff—smart, shrewd, and funny as hell. They have motivated me to excel at my job just to keep up with them. In particular, Ryan Henson is an inspiration to anyone who spends even a short time with him. Ryan has been with CWC 13 years and still wakes every morning excited to spend the day working to protect the lands he loves so dearly. We all owe him a thank you for his efforts.

While I won't be working with the CWC staff and board daily anymore, my new job at the Sierra Club will keep me in contact with these great folks and with many of you. Now, with the current political climate, is a great opportunity to work for California's wild lands. I look forward to seeing great successes for wilderness in the future, and I look forward to enjoying those lands as they're protected forever.

Mary Wells is the former Executive Director of CWC





GORDON JOHNSON

Golden State Wilderness

CWC's recently completed Golden State Wilderness Inventory revealed that the state of California currently manages approximately 500,000 acres of unprotected wilderness lands. These unprotected wild lands provide critical habitat for endangered species, protect California's drinking water and provide spectacular outdoor recreation opportunities for millions of Californians. Much of the inventory consists of state-owned wilderness in-holdings, completely surrounded by or adjacent to existing federal wilderness. Designating these state in-holdings as wilderness will expand and protect the integrity of existing federal wilderness and assure greater habitat continuity for imperiled species.

The California Wilderness Coalition has begun working with grassroots activists and conservation partners to begin planning for future wilderness designations that would permanently protect California's state-owned wilderness lands. Our goal is to protect the most significant wilderness lands managed by the three major state land management agencies: the California State Parks Department, the State Lands Commission and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The California State Parks Department manages a total of 1.4 million acres across the state, including many potential wilderness jewels. One potential wilderness jewel is Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park, which contains roughly 2,400 acres of spectacular wilderness quality lands bordering the Bureau of Land Management's Timbered Crater Wilderness Study Area. The park surrounds the headwaters of Fall River, a legendary native trout fishery, and provides spectacular views of northern California's volcano country. The nearby snow-capped peaks of Mt. Lassen and Mt. Shasta are visible from much of the park.

The California State Lands Commission manages roughly 470,000 acres of state school lands that were granted to California from the U.S. government in 1853. State law requires these lands to be managed to benefit public education. Any revenue generated goes to support the State Teacher's Retirement System. More than half of the school lands are located in the California desert, many of which are wilderness in-holdings surrounded by or adjacent to existing federal wilderness lands.

Throughout the United States, only seven states have their own state wilderness acts to permanently protect state-owned lands as wilderness. Fortunately for such breathtaking gems as Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, California is one of those states. The California Wilderness Act of 1974, which created the California Wilderness Preservation System, is similar to the federal Wilderness Act with a few important distinctions. While wilderness on federal lands can only be designated by Congress, state wilderness can be designated by both the California State Legislature and the State Park and Recreation Commission. Over the past several years, the commission has designated new wilderness in both Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Sinkyone Wilderness State Park to bring the total acreage of state-owned wilderness to approximately 500,000 acres.

Yet work remains to be done. Under the California Wilderness Act, the state land management agencies such as the Department of Fish and Game, the State Parks Department and the State Lands Commission are required to provide the Legislature with wilderness recommendations for state lands located adjacent to or within federal wilderness areas designated after 1975. While Congress has designated several million acres of new federal wilderness, California's state land management agencies have not prepared many of the required wilderness recommendations, nor has the state Legislature approved new wilderness since the original California Wilderness Act in 1974.

For example, the State Lands Commission manages over 50,000 acres of in-holdings within the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and 17,000 acres of wilderness in-holdings in Joshua Tree National Park.

The California Department of Fish and Game manages over 1 million acres of land throughout California, none of which is protected as wilderness. However, some of the state's most biologically important potential wilderness lands lie within the jurisdiction of the Fish and Game Department. For example, the 8,000 acre Knoxville Wildlife Area in Napa County contains habitat for many uncommon, rare, or unique wildlife species including tule elk, prairie and peregrine falcon, badger, ring-tailed cat, California thrasher, pygmy owl, roadrunner, golden eagle, great-horned owl and foothill yellow-legged frog.

CWC has begun working with grassroots activists and conservation partners to explore future wilderness legislation that would permanently protect California's state-owned wilderness lands. Please contact Brent Schoradt at (510) 451-1450 or bschoradt@calwild.org if you would like to be involved in this effort.

(LEFT)
Castle Crags State Park

(BELOW)
Knoxville Wildlife Management Area



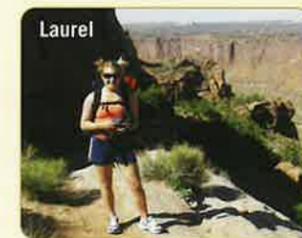
GORDON JOHNSON

COALITION news

Welcome Laurel and Meagan!

Laurel Williams is our new Desert Field Organizer. Based at our Riverside office, she will work with desert communities to build support for desert wilderness. Originally from Portland, Oregon, Laurel first discovered the beauty of the wild California desert while earning her bachelor's degree in environmental studies and anthropology from Pitzer College. Having spent the last two years as a field organizer on environmental issues in the Pacific Northwest, Laurel brings a considerable amount of experience to her work in the desert.

Meagan Rossi is our new Operations Manager. Originally from Massachusetts, she majored in environmental history and government at Smith College. Meagan developed her administrative skills and commitment to environmental advocacy through an internship with Friends of the Earth in D.C., and later served as an environmental action volunteer with the Peace Corps in Benin, Western Africa, where she focused on erosion issues. Meagan is looking forward to working for environmental protection in California.



We are excited to have Laurel and Meagan on board!

Wanted: Schoolteachers for Wilderness!

Are you a California public school teacher or retired teacher who wants to see California's wilderness protected for future generations? We need you to stand up for California's wild places. California currently manages 470,000 acres of state school lands that were granted to the state in order to benefit public education. Many of these lands are located within national parks and federal wilderness areas but are not permanently protected from future development threats. CWC is looking for public school teachers interested in permanently protecting state school lands. For more information contact Brent Schoradt at bschoradt@calwild.org or (510) 451-1450.

California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act, Expanded and Reintroduced

On September 27, 2007 Representative Mary Bono (R-Palm Springs) and Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California) introduced the "California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act," a major wilderness, wild and scenic river and national monument bill that will protect over 315 square miles of Riverside County wild places for future generations.

The legislation, officially known in the House of Representatives as H.R. 3682 and in the Senate as S. 2109, proposes to:

- Establish four new wilderness areas encompassing over 69,000 acres;
- Add almost 125,000 acres to six existing wilderness areas;
- Add over 8,300 acres to the San Jacinto-Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument, and;
- Protect 31.5 miles of streams from dam construction and new water diversions by having them designated wild and scenic rivers.

Descriptions of the areas included in the legislation can be found at

http://desertmountainwild.org/docs/fact_sheet_09-27-07.pdf

Significantly, the 2007 version of the bill contains over 55 percent more wilderness than that proposed by Representative Bono in the 2006 version of the bill. She and Senator Boxer agreed to add five desert roadless areas to the legislation as a result of field work, research, and political organizing coordinated primarily by CWC. Similarly, the size of the proposed additions to the San Jacinto-Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument have more than doubled in size since 2006.

As the name of the legislation implies, the bill includes a wide range of desert and mountain ecosystems including Joshua tree forests, groves of cedar and pine, oak woodlands, steep river canyons, chaparral thickets and cactus gardens. These areas are home to many rare species including desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, bald eagle and the quino checkerspot butterfly, among others.

While crafting the bill, Representative Bono and Senator Boxer reached out to a variety of interests including Native American tribes, water districts,

fire safe councils, local elected officials, equestrians, and others, and worked hard to take their concerns into account. They were assisted in these outreach efforts by a coalition of conservation groups including the Campaign for America's Wilderness, Friends of the River, National Hispanic Environmental Council, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and CWC.

RYAN HENSON



Thank Representative Mary Bono and Senator Barbara Boxer

Representative Bono and Senator Boxer richly deserve our thanks for proposing to protect some of Riverside County's most important wild lands. Please take the time to express your gratitude by writing to the addresses below. If you are familiar with any of the wild places included in the California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act, share with Representative Bono and Senator Boxer why protecting them is personally important to you.

The Honorable Mary Bono

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Fax: (202) 225-2961

To send an e-mail, go to:

<http://www.house.gov/formbono/issue.htm>

The Honorable Barbara Boxer

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Fax: (415) 956-6701

To send an e-mail, go to:

<https://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm>

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park Needs Your Help!

Areas included in the California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act

NEW WILDERNESS AREAS

Beauty Mountain Wilderness: 16,700 acres
Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness: 7,131 acres
Pinto Mountains Wilderness: 24,080 acres*
South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness: 21,540 acres
Subtotal: 69,451 acres

ADDITIONS TO EXISTING WILDERNESS AREAS

Agua Tibia Wilderness Additions: 1,950 acres
Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Additions:
14,480 acres*
Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Additions:
81,178 acres
Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Additions:
3,760 acres*
Palen-McCoy Wilderness Additions: 20,320 acres*
Santa Rosa Wilderness Additions: 3,300 acres*
Subtotal: 124,988 acres
Wilderness total: 194,449 acres

*Areas that were either not in the 2006 version of the bill or that were increased in size since 2006.

ADDITIONS TO THE SAN JACINTO-SANTA ROSA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Santa Rosa Peak (3,507 acres)
Snow Creek (50 acres)
Southeast Area (4,679 acres)*
Tahquitz Peak (131 acres)*
Total: 8,367 acres

*Areas that were either not in the 2006 version of the bill or that were increased in size since 2006.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Bautista Creek: 9.8 miles
Fuller Mill Creek: 3.5 miles
North Fork San Jacinto River: 10.12 miles
Palm Canyon Creek: 8.1 miles
Total: 31.52 miles

(PHOTO, TOP LEFT)

Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Additions

(PHOTO, RIGHT)

Illegal off-road vehicle trespass in
Sinkyone Wilderness State Park

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park is perched on the fog-shrouded, forested cliffs jutting out over the Pacific in northwestern Mendocino County. Along with the Bureau of Land Management's adjacent 58,000-acre King Range National Conservation Area to the north, Sinkyone is a treasured part of California's "Lost Coast" where for a distance of over 45 miles only a handful of roads reach the coast.

In October 2006, Congress protected most of the King Range as wilderness. Later that year, in November 2006, the California State Park and Recreation Commission designated over 90 percent of Sinkyone as wilderness, including all but a short segment of the park's oceanfront.

Despite this welcome protection, Usal Beach at the southern end of Sinkyone Wilderness State Park continues to suffer from frequent and very damaging vehicle trespass. Trucks and other vehicles have illegally entered the protected wilderness, crushing native vegetation, plowing through streams, and creating visual blight with tracks and trash. These unwelcome intruders have even driven other visitors off the beach.

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

The California Department of Parks and Recreation must take immediate steps to protect Usal Beach from illegal vehicle use. Ask them to prevent ecological harm, halt the degradation of scenic and recreational values, and make it abundantly clear to irresponsible park visitors that vehicle use will not be tolerated in a designated state wilderness.

PLEASE CONTACT:

Ruth Coleman, Director
California Department of Parks and Recreation
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX (916) 657-3903
E-MAIL rcole@parks.ca.gov

Ask Director Coleman to allocate the personnel, funding, and other resources necessary to protect Sinkyone Wilderness State Park's Usal Beach from illegal off-road vehicle use. Please remind her that vehicle trespass should never be tolerated in a designated state wilderness. If you have ever visited Sinkyone, please take a moment to tell her why it is important to you.

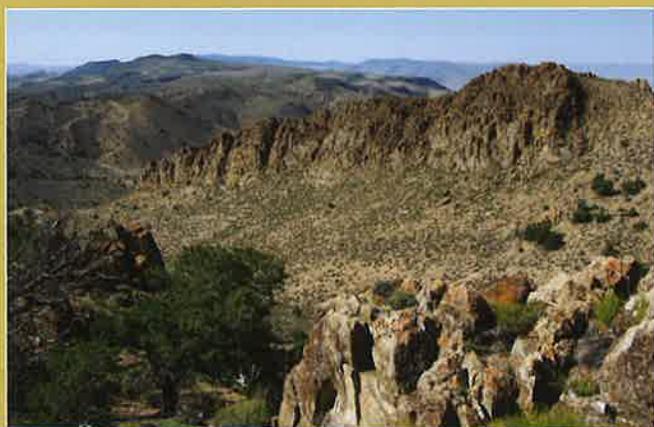
JON GELBARD



Take a Hike in the Inyo Mountains!

A suggestion from CWC's Desert Program Director, Monica Argandoña

The rugged, bold Inyo Mountains of eastern California separate the Owens and Saline Valleys, just north of Death Valley National Park. With peaks reading over 9,000 feet, the Inyos were once home to the ancestors of the Owens Valley Paiute, who gave these mountains their name. Inyo means "dwelling place of the great spirit." My two favorite hikes in this region are to Conglomerate Mesa and Malpais Mesa. They both provide stunning views of Mt. Whitney, diverse flora, and interesting geological features. This time of year is perfect for exploring the area. Malpais Mesa will be featured in the next issue of the Wilderness Record.



MONICA ARGANDOÑA

Conglomerate Mesa

Conglomerate Mesa, with an elevation of 7,700 feet, is named for its abundance of conglomerate rock. From the top, visitors take in amazing views of rolling badlands, verdant meadows, and beautiful Joshua tree forests.

Maps: Maps: Keeler, Santa Rosa Flat, Cerro Gordo Peak, and Nelson Range 7.5 minute topo or Darwin Hills and Saline Valley 1:100,000 scale topo.

Directions: (A 4wd vehicle is recommended to reach the tailhead.) From the junction of Highways 190 and 395 at Olancha, drive 14.7 miles east on Highway 190 to the junction of Highways 190 and 136. Continue right on Highway 190 for 17 miles to the Saline Valley Road. Go north (left turn) on the Saline Valley Road, which is sometimes paved and sometimes dirt. Be careful to avoid large potholes and washed out sections. Drive 8.2 miles through a beautiful Joshua tree forest. Take the left fork at White Mountain Talc Road and go 3.8 miles to another junction. Stay left and continue on White Mountain Talc Road as it crosses over a pass to a dirt road on the left. Follow the dirt road about 1.5 miles and park. The hike trail up to the mesa is approximately five miles round-trip with an elevation gain of 1,500 feet.

CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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