

WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

SUMMER 2009



Historic Wilderness Victory PAGE 4

An Activist's Reaction PAGE 6 Benefits of Giving PAGE 7 The Eastern Sierra Perspective PAGE 10



CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

The Voice for Wild California

HEADQUARTERS

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

info@calwild.org

DESERT FIELD OFFICE

167 North Third Avenue, Suite M
Upland, CA 91786
909-946-1855

NORTHEAST FIELD OFFICE

P.O. Box 993323
Redding, CA 96099
530-246-3087

STAFF

Associate Director
Kristi Davis

Policy Director
Ryan Henson

Desert Program Director
Monica Argandoña

Desert Field Organizer
Laurel Williams

Development Director
Bill Tieman

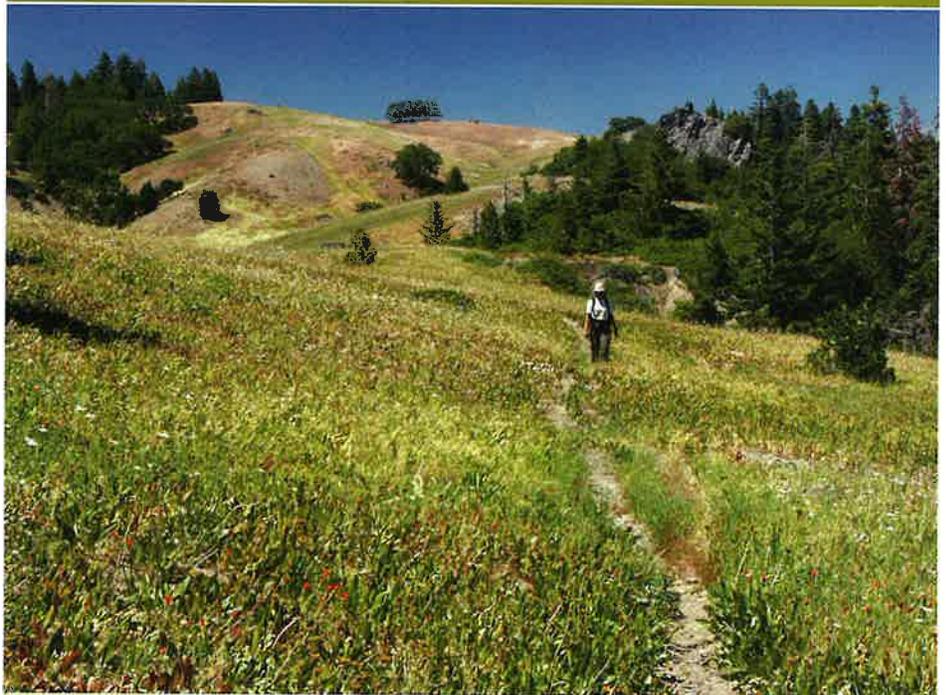
Development Associate
Angela Shih

GIS Coordinator
Julia Kernitz

Administrative Assistant
Erika Garcia

Interns
Jamii Barackman
Siobhan Lavendar
Ashley Warner

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.



WILDERNESS RECORD

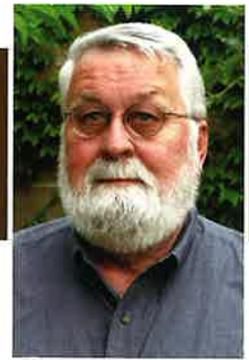
SUMMER 2009 | VOLUME ³⁴~~16~~ | ISSUE ²~~1~~ | ISSN 0194-3030

The *Wilderness Record* is published quarterly by the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles may be reprinted with the permission from the editor. Articles, photographs, and artwork on California wilderness, wildlife, and related subjects are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all work.

COVER: LAKE ON MACLURE CREEK LOOKING TO
DONOHUE PEAK CLOUDS - CWC ARCHIVE

DESIGN BY ISDN DESIGN/ISDNDESIGN.COM

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



On March 30, 2009, President Obama signed into law the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, protecting over 700,000 acres of California's federal lands as wilderness in the eastern Sierra Nevada, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks and Riverside County. It is the largest wilderness protection measure to be signed into law in 15 years.

The 111th Congress brings the best opportunity for designating wilderness in the California desert since President Clinton signed into law the Desert Protection Act of 1994. CWC has proven through the development of local bi-partisan support that a wilderness bill can be given the political clout and legitimacy it needs to pass through Congress and on to the President's desk. As you will read in this issue, CWC has worked in collaboration with grassroots activists, fellow wilderness organizations, business owners, community leaders, and politicians including Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack (R-Palm Springs), Representative Jim Costa (D-Fresno), Representative Buck McKeon (R-Santa Clarita) and Senator Barbara Boxer to protect and designate wild spaces.

In April, CWC held its annual fundraiser to celebrate recent legislative victories and to thank our members for their support. At the event, CWC honored Rick Ridgeway with the Philip Burton Award. Rick has been a leader in building public and private support for the preservation of essential wildlife corridors between wilderness areas in the US, including here in California. The celebration proved to be a tremendous success and allowed friends to gather and share in our recent victories.

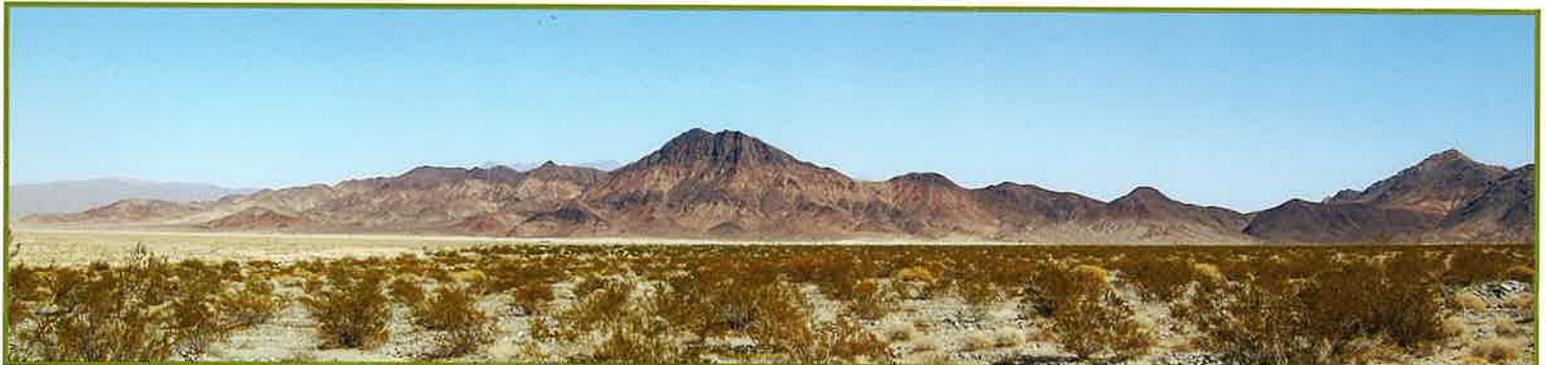
I have been honored to work with an organization such as the California Wilderness Coalition. After six years of volunteer service, I am leaving the Board. I have served with a wonderful group of board members and staff. Their passion for the mission of CWC is only matched by their dedication and service to the organization.

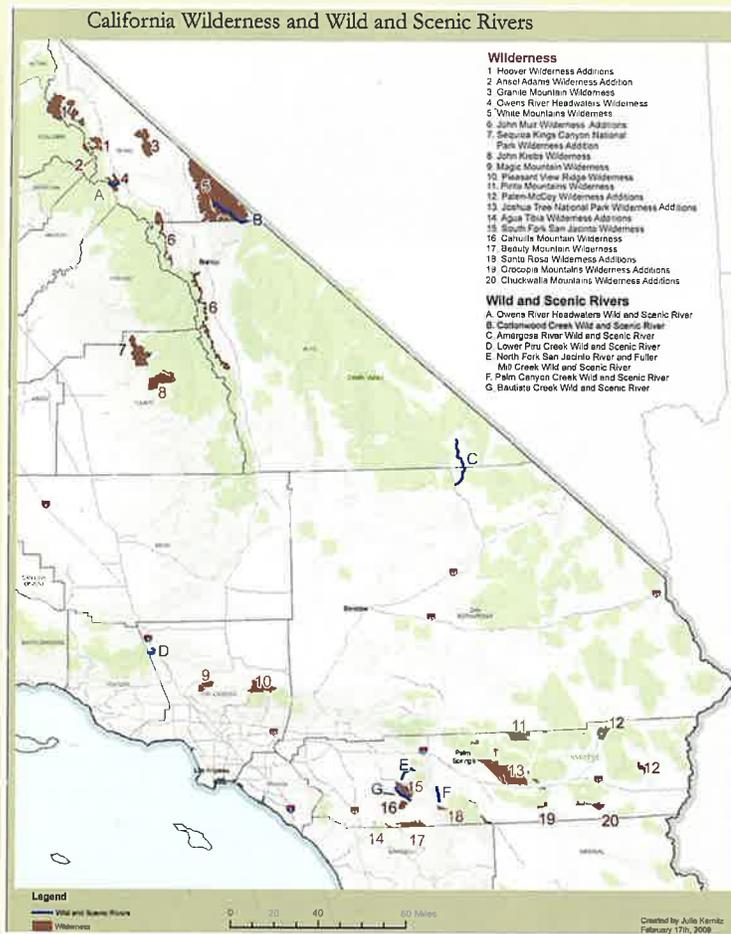
In addition to my departure, CWC has begun a transition in staff leadership with a newly-vacant Executive Director position. The Board has initiated a formal strategic planning process to examine both the CWC's mission and structure, and has elected to hold staffing actions until we have a clearer view of our needs. In the interim period, management responsibilities will be shared between our Associate Director (Kristi Davis), our Policy Director (Ryan Henson), our Desert Program Director (Monica Argandoña), and our Development Director (Bill Tieman), with the active involvement of our Board members.

We have a committed and highly-engaged Board of Directors, an excellent staff, and wonderful support in our community. As we assess the increasing threats to California's wild spaces, these core strengths will ensure that CWC remains well-positioned to meet the challenges to wilderness conservation that lie ahead.

In the coming months we will continue to keep you up-to-date on both our continuing and emerging work. On behalf of the board and staff, I thank you for your continuing participation and partnership in our efforts. We appreciate your friendship and support.

Jim Dodson, President, Board of Directors





and accomplish other important conservation goals in many states. These measures were rolled into a single piece of bipartisan legislation in order to thwart filibuster attempts by anti-environmental members of Congress.

The Omnibus bill contained the following California wilderness measures that had originally been proposed as stand-alone pieces of legislation.

Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act

Senator Barbara Boxer's (D-California) and Representative Buck McKeon's (R-Santa Clarita) Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act protected 468,854 acres by establishing four new wilderness areas covering 318,095 acres and adding 150,759 acres to existing wilderness areas, including the following wild lands in Mono, Inyo and Los Angeles counties.

Ansel Adams Wilderness Additions (528 acres): The addition preserves the mouth of Glacier Canyon below Mount Dana on the edge of Yosemite National Park. The area is dappled with wildflowers in the summer.

Boring name, glorious results: The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 protects vast stretches of wild California

By Ryan Henson, Policy Director

Our successes can be attributed to our grassroots strength—bringing together people, organizations, and decision-makers across our state to protect California's last wild places. Through our unique organizing efforts of developing a diverse constituency of support we spearheaded the efforts to designate over 700,000 acres of wilderness in California.

On March 30, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. The legislation protected over 743,000 acres (1,160 square miles) of California's federal lands as wilderness in the eastern Sierra Nevada, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks and Riverside County. It was the largest wilderness protection measure affecting California in 15 years.

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act contained over 160 bills sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats designed to improve water management, expand wilderness areas and parks, protect historic sites,

Granite Mountain Wilderness (34,342 acres): Granite Mountain is an important deer migration corridor, it shelters many raptor nesting sites and it is home to the endangered sage grouse. In addition, it has a wild horse herd. The area is fairly unique in that its Great Basin sagebrush steppe habitat is fairly rare in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Hoover Wilderness Additions (79,820 acres): Adjacent to Yosemite National Park, the Hoover Wilderness Additions are a classic high Sierra landscape of majestic peaks, glacial valleys, alpine lakes and pine forests. These areas include 10 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, the headwaters of the West Walker River, spectacular Mount Conness on the border of Yosemite National Park, bighorn sheep habitat and popular hiking and fishing destinations.

John Muir Wilderness Additions (70,411 acres): These additions protect the dramatic eastern scarp of the Sierra and trout-bearing streams which flow east into

the Owens Valley. This mountain is also a refuge for endangered bighorn sheep.

Magic Mountain Wilderness (12,282 acres): This wild land in the San Gabriel Mountains is cloaked in chaparral and bisected by oak-studded canyons.

Owens River Headwaters Wilderness (14,721 acres): The Owens and its tributaries drain much of the eastern Sierra and it was the focal point of the notorious water battles between the City of Los Angeles and local residents in pre-Second World War California. But as this land of lush meadows, cold, clear streams and stunning vistas proves, not all of the river is yoked to human uses.

Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness (26,757 acres): Pleasant View Ridge features 8,200-foot Mount Williamson and, as the name implies, offers commanding vistas of the California desert to the north and east and the Tehachapi Mountains to the northwest. The wilderness is an ecological transition zone between the forests and oak woodlands of the San Gabriel Mountains and the desert at the foot of the ridge. A beautiful section of the Pacific Crest Trail traverses the area.

White Mountains Wilderness (229,993 acres): The Whites are America's largest and highest desert mountain range, they contain the largest expanse of alpine tundra

in western North America and they are crowned by the highest peak in the Great Basin. The Whites were also the largest unprotected roadless area in the state prior to their being designated as wilderness. The superlatives do not end there--the range also hosts extensive groves of bristlecone pine, the world's oldest trees. Some bristlecones in the Whites are almost 5,000 years old.

Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park Wilderness Act

Senator Boxer's and Representative Jim Costa's (D-Fresno) Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park Wilderness Act protected nearly 85,000 acres of the park as wilderness and named a portion of the new wilderness after former Congressman John Krebs (D-Fresno) who was instrumental in saving the area from ski resort development.

California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act

Senator Boxer's and Representative Mary Bono Mack's (R-Palm Springs) California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act protected 190,000 acres of new wilderness in Riverside County. For a description of the wonderful wild areas protected by this measure, see the article on the bill in this issue.



Beauty Mountain - CWC ARCHIVE



A Long-time Activist's Reaction

By Jim Eaton

About ten minutes before the signing ceremony, I learned from Vicky Hoover [of the Sierra Club] that the event would be shown live on the White House website. Although I have worked on many wilderness bills over the years, I never have had the privilege of attending a signing ceremony. But there I was, watching Secretary Salazar and President Obama speak about the importance of this legislation. I was deeply moved.

Compared to previous wilderness victories, this was right up there with other blockbuster bills like the California Wilderness Act of 1984 and the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. I was particularly pleased for Ryan Henson of the California Wilderness Coalition, Paul Spitler of the Wilderness Society, and others who have worked nonstop for more than a decade to preserve many of the areas in the bill. They now know the elation that comes at the successful end of the long campaign.

Some of the areas in the bill have been waiting a very long time for designation. As a college student in 1967, I

recall working to stop a ski resort in Mineral King Valley proposed by the Disney Corporation. About ten years later, I arrived in Washington, D.C. to work on another wilderness issue. While there, I sat down with Chuck Clusen in the Sierra Club office. He suggested that we should go over to newly elected Representative John Krebs' office to talk about Mineral King. At that point a secretary interrupted us to tell Chuck that an aide to Krebs was on the telephone. And now, thirty years later, much of Mineral King is protected as the John Krebs Wilderness Area.

In the 1984 legislation, we were forced to give up some areas to reach a compromise demanded by Senator Pete Wilson. A relatively small White Mountains Wilderness was one of the areas dropped. For 25 years, Marjorie Sill (a mentor to activists who affectionately call her "Mother Wilderness") has reminded me of that omission. Now we have a White Mountains Wilderness of nearly 230,000 acres.

Though this is a great victory, there still are a lot of areas deserving of wilderness status. The current political situation is very promising for passing more wilderness bills. Perhaps the greatest wilderness challenge we currently face is protecting habitats and their flora and fauna, given the reality of global warming. Our core wilderness areas need to be large, and these lands need to be connected by crucial linkages to allow animals and plants a chance to find suitable habitats as ecosystems change due to climate change.

Jim Eaton is a founder of the California Wilderness Coalition and served as its executive director for 17 years. He previously was The Wilderness Society's California-Hawaii field representative. He stays busy with the regional group Tuleyome (based in Woodland), the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, and the Rewilding Institute. He and his wife, Wendy Cohen, live in Davis, California, with their Frisbee-champion canine companion, Coso.



The Benefits of Giving: A Major Donor Profile

By Bill Tieman, Development Director

Like every nonprofit, from community foundation to large university, CWC depends on gifts from individual donors—gifts beyond annual membership dues—in order to grow. In recent decades ever greater portions of individual giving totals come from ever smaller portions of donors. The “80/20 Rule” is something most fundraisers are very familiar with: about 80% of the gifts come from only 20% of the donors. Many will say that today a “90/10 Rule” is more accurate.

CWC has always been a grassroots organization. But while small-scale member contributions have always been a top priority, in the end we still depend on major gifts to stay within budget. Deborah Grubb Moskovitz is a member of CWC’s Board of Directors and one of our most generous supporters. We asked her to share some thoughts on philanthropy and on giving to CWC in particular.

Deborah was “born into a family that has conservation in its blood.” Not only had her parents met during a Sierra Club trip, her family built the Peter Grubb Hut (which the Sierra Club maintains) about 20 miles northeast of Lake Tahoe in memory of her uncle, an accomplished mountaineer who died tragically at 18. Deborah knew the area “even as a baby.” She took her daughter Renée’s first picture in the very place her own had been taken as a child.

Philanthropy was always important in Deborah’s family. Her mother taught her that giving not only carries tax benefits but also that it “makes you feel good, because you’re benefiting an organization.” Indeed, her giving is a very personal part of her life. A Peace Corps member to Honduras in 1992–1994, she was deeply moved by the devastation Hurricane Mitch left in 1998. She made her first major gift then, knowing that it would be used properly and specifically for hurricane relief.

Deborah feels similarly about CWC. As a Board member she understands our financial needs—and knows how well we put our gifts to use. And as a committed environmental advocate, she feels her contributions have a wide-reaching impact. Besides preserving wilderness for the future, CWC’s conservation work has immediate benefits, like improving air quality and helping to offset global

warming. And Deborah feels strongly that wilderness is especially important for children. “It’s really good to get children out to see beautiful land,” she says. “Many never get to see beyond four walls and the pavement.”

Deborah suggests that members with investment portfolios consider giving appreciated stock. Apart from income tax benefits, a gift of stock to CWC bypasses the capital gains tax incurred by sale on the market. Moreover, even in an economic downturn many long-held stocks retain their value accumulated over time—value that CWC can receive in full.

If you are thinking about increasing your philanthropy and would consider making a major gift to CWC, please contact us. We will gladly discuss options and work with you to find a giving opportunity that fits best with your interests.

CWC Receives Record Bequest

Earlier this year CWC experienced a special moment—one tinged with sadness, but also one that any organization like ours is fortunate to have. In July, 2006, the wilderness conservation community lost one of its greatest champions, Karen Fant, an early activist with CWC and co-founder of the Washington Wilderness Coalition. This past February CWC received a truly generous gift from Ms. Fant’s estate.

The Fant bequest will do much more than simply strengthen our finances this year. It is our hope that her legacy will be the cornerstone of a strong Planned Giving program for CWC. Karen’s gift serves as an example to the wilderness community of how individuals can make a powerful, lasting impact on our collective efforts.

CWC is deeply grateful to Karen and the Fant family for such generosity.

Rivers are the Arteries of our Nation

By Steve Evans

Steven L. Evans is conservation director for Friends of the River. He has more than two decades of experience with a wide variety of public lands and resource issues, including wilderness protection and river conservation issues. He is a recognized expert on wild and scenic rivers, federal land and resource management, and planning processes. He currently serves as chair of the steering committee for the California Wild Heritage Campaign, which is a coalition of more than 150 national, regional and local conservation organizations working to protect the state's last wild places.

Protecting rivers and streams in their free-flowing state is important for many reasons. Rivers flowing freely provide better water quality than developed rivers. Their ecosystems are healthier and they generally support more fish, wildlife, and plant species that are sensitive to development. Freeflowing rivers offer important outdoor recreation opportunities for hikers, anglers, whitewater boaters, equestrians, and mountain bike riders. Simply stated, water attracts people. Cleaner water, healthier ecosystems, and outdoor recreation

contribute to local and regional economic enhancement. They enhance tourism and contribute to a positive quality of life that attracts growth and economic development.

In California there are more than 1,400 dams, along with several thousand miles of levees, channels and canals that move water from where it falls to where it is desired. This vast hydrologic system certainly provides significant benefits in terms of water supply, power generation, flood control, and reservoir-based recreation. But it also has environmentally damaging consequences.

Dams harm aquatic ecosystems and degrade water quality by altering flows, modifying water temperatures, drowning habitat, and blocking the natural movement of species, nutrients, and sediment. The presence of an upstream dam has often encouraged development downstream, frequently with the construction of homes and buildings in areas that historically flooded.

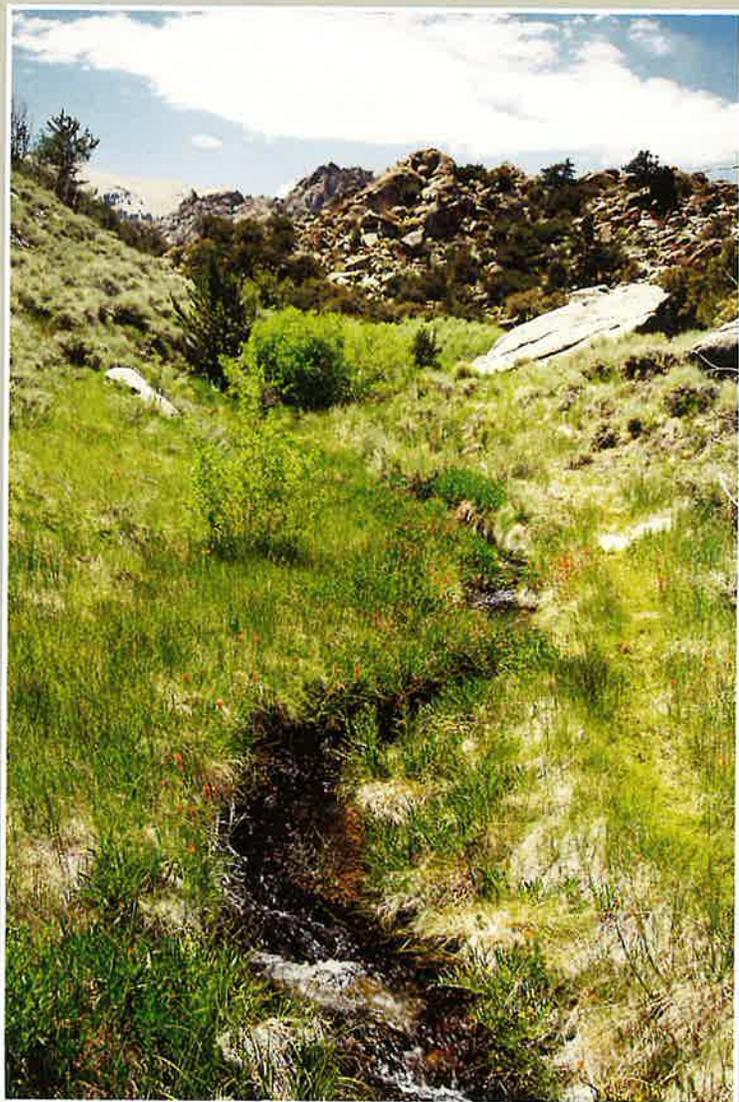
Those dams have played a major role in the decline and extinction of native fish species. Approximately 67 percent of California's native fish species are either extinct, in decline, or are of concern to biologists—more than any other state.

Streamside development also poses a threat to free-flowing rivers. Extensive road construction, logging, and soil disturbance in watersheds can reduce water quality and adversely impact fish populations, recreational use, and scenic quality.

Rivers are the arteries of our nation, providing the lifeblood for social, economic and natural life.

On March 30th, President Obama signed into law the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act. The package of more than 170 public lands and resource bills protected 105 miles of California streams as Wild & Scenic Rivers and preserved 750,000 acres of public lands in the state as Wilderness and National Monument and Park additions. Nationwide, the legislation protected more than a thousand miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers and two million acres of Wilderness.

Cottonwood Creek — STEVE EVANS





North Fork San Jacinto — STEVE EVANS

The bill protects portions of eight streams in California as Wild & Scenic Rivers, including the Owens River Headwaters in the eastern Sierra Nevada, Cottonwood Creek in the White Mountains, Piru Creek in the northern San Gabriel Mountains, and the North Fork San Jacinto River, Palm Canyon Creek, and Bautista Creek in the San Jacinto Mountains. Although the bill represents the largest single addition of California rivers to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System since 1987, there are still many unprotected rivers remaining in the state.

The wilderness protection component of the package also provides important watershed protection. The Hoover Wilderness Additions, Owens River Headwaters Wilderness, Magic Mountain Wilderness, and South Fork San Jacinto River Wilderness in the bill protect the

Each plan will establish final river corridor boundaries and segment classifications and ensure that the river's free flowing character and outstanding values are protected.

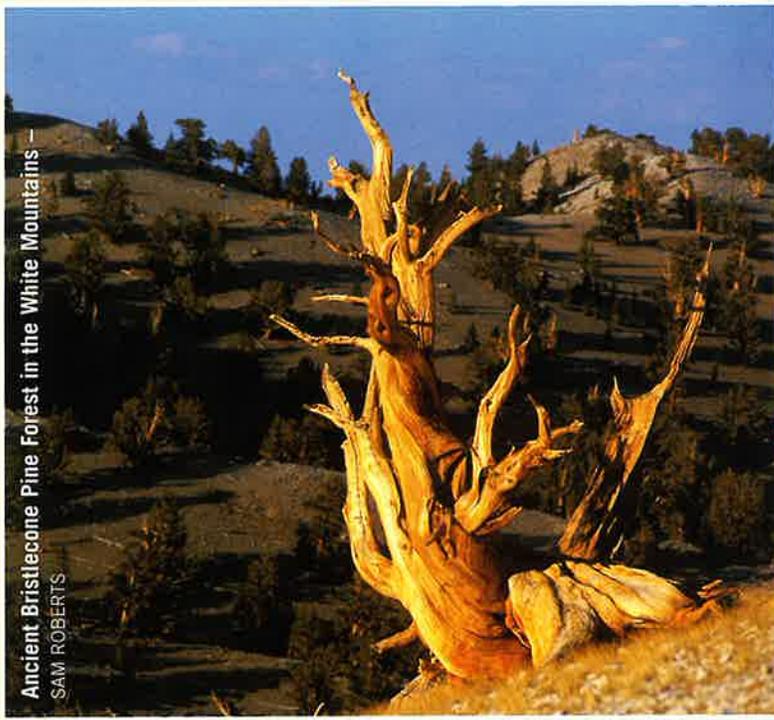
headwaters of some of California's most outstanding rivers, including the West Walker, Owens, Santa Clara, and San Jacinto.

The legislation not only protects rivers that provide spectacular public opportunities for hiking, backpacking, fishing, and hunting, it also protects habitat for many rare and endangered fish and wildlife species. Just to mention a few, these species include the Paiute cutthroat trout in Cottonwood Creek, the Yosemite toad in the Owens River Headwaters, the Amargosa vole on the Amargosa River, the mountain yellow-legged frog in the North Fork San Jacinto River, the Peninsular bighorn sheep on Palm Canyon Creek, and the Quino checkerspot butterfly on Bautista Creek. Many of the streams also provide clean drinking water for human use downstream.

Now that the eight streams are protected in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System, the federal agencies that manage the public lands through which the rivers flow will develop a comprehensive river management plan for each stream. Each plan will establish final river corridor boundaries and segment classifications and ensure that the river's free flowing character and outstanding values are protected. The public will have the opportunity to help develop each river plan, which is required by federal law to be completed within three years after designation.

The bipartisan success of the California bills bodes well as Friends of the River, the California Wilderness Coalition, and their coalition allies continue building support for future legislation for rivers and wild places throughout California. Wilderness and wild river advocates are currently developing comprehensive legislative proposals for wild places in the San Gabriel Mountains, northern San Diego County, the California Desert, and Monterey County. These may well represent the next generation of California's wild places to be protected by the end of the 111th Congress.

For more information about the Wild & Scenic Rivers protected in the omnibus bill or about the new legislative proposals under Friends of the River, phone: (916) 442-3155 x221, email: sevans@friendsoftheriver.org.



Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White Mountains —
SAM ROBERTS

The Eastern Sierra Perspective: Interview with James Wilson

By Erika Garcia

What was your first reaction to the passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act?

My first reaction to the passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Bill was a mixture of disbelief and relief. A group of Eastern Sierra citizen activists had been working on our part of this legislation for over 20 years. That is a long time and it took a little while for the immensity of the achievement to sink in.

What are the reactions of individuals from the Eastern Sierra?

The reaction depends on which user group we are discussing. There was a lot of joy from the environmental community. Thousands of hours of work, meetings with elected officials, public meetings, phone calls, letters to the editor, letters to elected officials, were made, solicited, written, etc. It was a lot of work. Like most areas, there was local opposition and they were not overjoyed. But I think as time goes on, and opposers of the bill find that almost all traditional access was preserved, they will be more accepting.

As a small business owner in Bishop, CA how does this passage affect you?

The primary product, if that is how you want to describe it, is that we offer visual and physical access to unspoiled lands in the Eastern Sierra. It might be a beautiful landscape in the distance if you are motor touring or unspoiled lands for hiking, climbing, bird watching, fishing and hunting for those who don't mind a walk. As California and the rest of the west continue to develop, these unspoiled lands will increase in value as they become scarcer. This is especially true in California and Western Nevada, which are the primary source of our visitors.

What are some of the cool places to go hiking, camping, rafting, etc. in the newly designated area?

There are numerous cool places to recreate in our newly designated lands. Some prime ones are the Bristlecone pine area in the White Mountains. It is inspiring to spend the day walking in the oldest trees on earth. The hike to the top of White Mountain Peak in the same mountains is also a classic. From the top, much of the Eastern Sierra and Western Nevada is visible. In spring or fall a day walk to the top of Granite Mountain in the newly created Granite Mountain Wilderness just east of Mono Lake will reward you with stunning vistas and a wonderful slice of the Great Basin. And another classic is the walk to Glass Creek Meadow just south of the town of June Lake. Known mostly by locals for many years, it is an amazing meadow with wonderful flowers, legions of butterflies in summer, and some of the most beautiful ancient forest on the eastside. Large Jeffrey Pines, Red Firs, and a huge forest of Lodgepole and White Bark Pine grace the slopes above the meadow. It can be hiked or skied with pleasure. It is not to be missed.

In your many years as a wilderness advocate, what are the valuable lessons you have learned regarding such victories?

There is no substitute for perseverance. You've got to keep on keeping on. You cannot eat an elephant in one bite. Public lands bills frequently seem like an elephant on your plate. I remember Ansel Adams saying he tried to do something for the environment every day. That is a good lesson.

What lessons have you learned from setbacks?

Well, sometimes you plant a garden and the seeds do not sprout. Or the birds eat the seedlings. Or the winds come and dry out the young plants. The answer

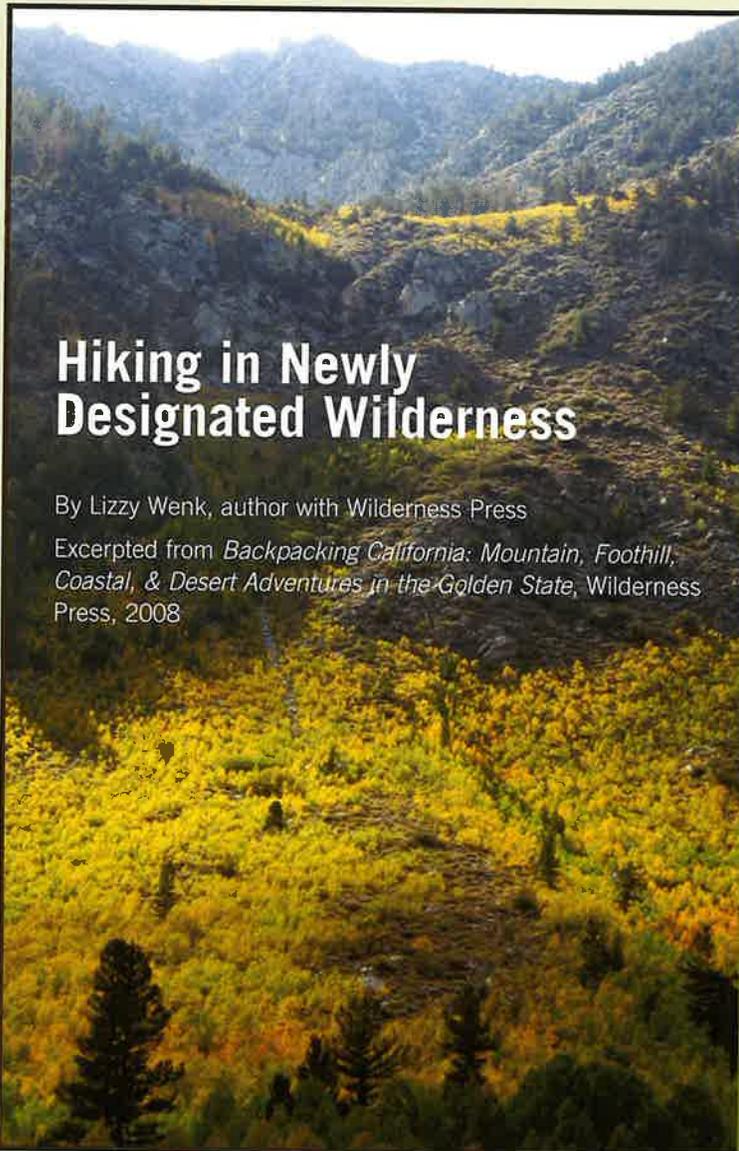
to the above is to plant more seeds. We need to advocate for wild lands consistently and persistently. America is changing and we need to strengthen and expand our constituency. We need people to love wild places as we do or we will have more problems. We like to think of Wilderness designation as a forever state. But it is only as perpetual as the people who make up our nation. Laws can be changed. We need a broad base of support.

Do you have any final comments?

Some folks think that when lands are designated as official Wilderness the battle is over. It is only the beginning. We need to monitor for misuse or inappropriate incursions. We need to be involved in the management plans for these areas. And we need to go visit them, walk, backpack, climb, bird, fish, hunt, all

of the quiet sports that they are set aside for. Ultimately for wild lands to persevere they need our attention. We are a part of the landscape when we visit. We learn to be better stewards and advocates while there. You can learn more from listening to the wind through the trees, observing flowers and butterflies in a meadow, or a walk along a ridge, than from any TV program or book. Go be outside. Listen to the chickadees.

A CWC board member since 2006, James Wilson has been involved in sporting goods retail for 40 years in the Bay Area and the Eastern Sierra where he and his wife Kay now own Wilson's Eastside Sports, a store catering to the self propelled adventurer. He has been on the boards of Death Valley Natural History Association, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, and Friends of the Inyo. A lifelong resident of the state of California, his favorite pastime is to walk in the woods watching wildlife.



Hiking in Newly Designated Wilderness

By Lizzy Wenk, author with Wilderness Press

Excerpted from *Backpacking California: Mountain, Foothill, Coastal, & Desert Adventures in the Golden State*, Wilderness Press, 2008

Cottonwood Basin is a magical landscape of granite towers and colorful meadows located deep in the White Mountains. It is the White Mountain's best-known backpacking destination, but due to its remote location you can still expect a high degree of solitude.

Most hikers leave their vehicles at a ridge top parking area and begin by following a steep 4WD road through scattered bristlecone pines and limber pines to an easy crossing of Poison Creek. After the second stream crossing, trend left to follow an old dirt road up the South Fork of Cottonwood Creek.

The road quickly diminishes into a well-traveled use trail. Alongside this first section, you are at the point where dolomite and granite meet. The dolomite, to your left, is the main substrate on which bristlecone pines grow, and this is the only place along this hike that you will encounter it (or these trees). Shortly, the main meadow trends left, while the use trail follows the narrower right-hand fork. Passing between walls of granite, you climb over a shallow saddle and drop into Granite Meadow. The spring-fed creek should always have flowing water, and during midsummer its banks are densely lined with colorful flowers.

Download the full route and map at calwild.org.

Bishop-based Elizabeth Wenk is the author of One Best Hike: Mt. Whitney, the co-author of John Muir Trail: The Essential Guide, and a contributor to Backpacking California (all Wilderness Press).

California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act protects Riverside County's wild lands

By Ryan Henson, Policy Director



Joshua Tree — CMC ARCHIVE

Senator Barbara Boxer's (D-California) and Representative Mary Bono Mack's (R-Palm Springs) California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act (nicknamed the "Riverside bill" because it only covered that county) was included in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 that was signed in to law by President Barack Obama on March 30, 2009 (see the article on the Omnibus bill in this issue).

The Riverside bill protected 190,000 acres of new wilderness. This would not have been possible without the outstanding leadership of Representative Bono Mack and Senator Boxer, who at times had to go to the mat to protect the bill from being watered-down or shrunk in size. After pushing the measure to its successful conclusion, **Representative Bono Mack** said that:

I am thrilled that these precious wild lands will be preserved for generations to come. This legislation is the result of many years of hard work and collaboration, and I applaud all who helped craft this bill in a way that will benefit our entire community. I especially want to thank Sen. Barbara Boxer and Sen. Dianne Feinstein for working with me in a bi-partisan fashion to ensure that this important legislative effort was successful.... This is a win for our community and for all who love the beautiful region that surrounds us, both now and into the future.

The bill's champions required conservationists, energy developers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and others to find some common ground when it came to the selection of the area boundaries to include in the measure. As a result, by the time that the Riverside bill passed it faced

very little opposition, despite the fact that it was still large and visionary.

Senator Tom Coburn (R-Oklahoma) was the main impediment to getting the bill passed in the Senate. All of America's 100 senators have the right to put procedural holds on bills, often with little or no reason. Mr. Coburn has exercised his hold privileges more than any other member of the Senate, supposedly for the purpose of protecting the taxpayers from irresponsible spending, though he often delays measures—like the Riverside bill—that do not even authorize any spending and face little opposition from any quarter.

The only way to overcome Coburn is to get substantial bipartisan support for a measure, and Senate leaders often achieve this by bundling Democratic and Republican bills together into a single piece of legislation, thus improving the odds of a favorable vote. That is why the Riverside bill was rolled into the Omnibus Public Land Management Act.

The following wonderful wild areas were included in the measure.

Agua Tibia Wilderness Additions (2,053 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, a phenomenon that has rendered the Agua Tibia area a haven for the rosy boa, coast horned lizard and other sensitive species. In rugged, shady canyons, north-facing slopes, and other sheltered places, small groves of pine and fir endure the hot, dry summers. Willow, cottonwood

and other hardwoods grow along the larger streams in the area and provide a cool refuge for wildlife. In the summer months, small pools of water in the canyon heat up, giving Agua Tibia its name—Spanish for “warm water.”

Beauty Mountain Wilderness (15,621 acres): As the name implies, Beauty Mountain is a scenic jewel draped in chaparral, fascinating rock formations and oak woodlands. The area is an ecological transition zone between Anza-Borrego Desert State Park 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. The California Riding and Hiking Trail crosses the area.

Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Additions (12,815 acres): This visually stunning area resembles a fortress of rock rising dramatically above the desert lowlands. It has an amazing variety of features, including a plethora of sensitive wildlife species such as the Nelson’s bighorn sheep, pallid bat, prairie falcon, western mastiff bat, and the chuckwalla, the large, potbellied reptile for which the region is named. Desert tortoise population densities of up to 150 individuals per square mile have been recorded in some places. The wilderness has many rock rings, petroglyphs and other indications of the thousands of years of Native American residence in the Chuckwalla Mountains.

Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Additions (80,000 acres): Joshua Tree National Park attracts visitors from around the world who come to experience this wonderland of sweeping valleys, craggy peaks, narrow canyons, fascinating rock formations, cactus gardens and astounding spring wildflower displays all under a seemingly endless blue sky. Visitors enjoy rock climbing and miles of hiking and riding trails. The seasonal changes in Joshua Tree can be extreme—from bone-baking heat in the summer to dustings of snow in the winter. The Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Additions preserve portions of two desert ecosystems: the Mojave and Colorado deserts. At lower elevations, the Colorado desert features natural gardens of creosote bush, ocotillo, and cholla cactus. The higher, moister, and slightly cooler Mojave desert is the special habitat of the Mojave yucca and Joshua tree. One of the park’s key attractions, the trademark Joshua trees are members of the yucca family that appear at first glance to have been designed by Dr. Seuss. The park and the wilderness additions are a critical refuge for bighorn sheep and desert tortoise.

Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Additions (4,635 acres): The wilderness was the site of much historic mineral prospecting, especially for gold. In fact, “Orocopia” translates into “plentiful gold.” The San Andreas Fault slices through this region and earthquakes through the millennia have twisted and broken the landscape into fascinating and colorful canyons, cliffs, jagged peaks and other features. The Orocopia Mountains shelter bighorn sheep, prairie falcon, Bendire’s thrasher, desert tortoise and a host of other species. This array of wildlife is matched by an immense diversity of plants, including desert fan palm oases.

Palen-McCoy Wilderness Additions (22,645 acres): The large Palen-McCoy Wilderness contains immense valleys and four steep mountain ranges. This dramatic landscape provides habitat for Bendire’s thrasher, California leaf-nosed bat, California McCoy snail, desert tortoise, hepatic tanager, Le Conte’s thrasher, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Nelson’s bighorn sheep, pallid bat, and prairie falcon. The region’s midland ironwood forest is the largest such ecosystem in the California desert.

Pinto Mountains Wilderness (24,404 acres): The rugged Pinto Mountains rise sharply up from the northern edge of the Pinto Basin, a gigantic alluvial plain in Joshua Tree National Park. The wilderness hosts a variety of rare and fascinating species, including American badger, Bendire’s thrasher, California leaf-nosed bat, desert tortoise, Nelson’s bighorn sheep and pallid bat. Portions of the Pinto Mountains have long been worked by miners. However, the proposed wilderness is comprised of the most rugged and least disturbed portion of the range outside of the park.

Santa Rosa Wilderness Additions (2,149 acres): Contains visible traces of the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla that used to occupy a vast region stretching from the Colorado River to the Santa Rosa Mountains. Native American footpaths can still be seen along the ancient shoreline, as can rock fish-traps and petroglyphs.

South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness (20,217 acres): The lush South Fork San Jacinto River Canyon is the centerpiece of this wonderfully wild place. Visitors are drawn to the wilderness by the popular South Fork Trail, which accommodates literally thousands of hikers annually. The trail offers a challenging hike to the river bottom with many impressive views along the way. Bautista Creek serves as the southern boundary of the wilderness. It is considered by many biologists to be one of the most ecologically important streams in the San Bernardino National Forest because of the number and variety of rare plants and animals it supports.



Solar in Wilderness

By Monica Argandoña, Desert Program Director

As the Desert Program Director, my hardest challenge can be convincing people that the desert is not just a vast wasteland, useful only for mining, military training, or dumping old refrigerators. For many, the desert is just a large and long annoyance on the drive to Las Vegas. The desert is too hot, too harsh, or too stark. Now, with the sudden push for renewable energy and California's energy portfolio requirements, I am often asked why the desert shouldn't be blanketed with solar troughs and wind farms. It is hot and sunny, so doesn't that make it the perfect place for solar? Shouldn't there be renewable energy development in the desert?

Yes, there should be some solar and wind development, and it should be in the appropriate places.

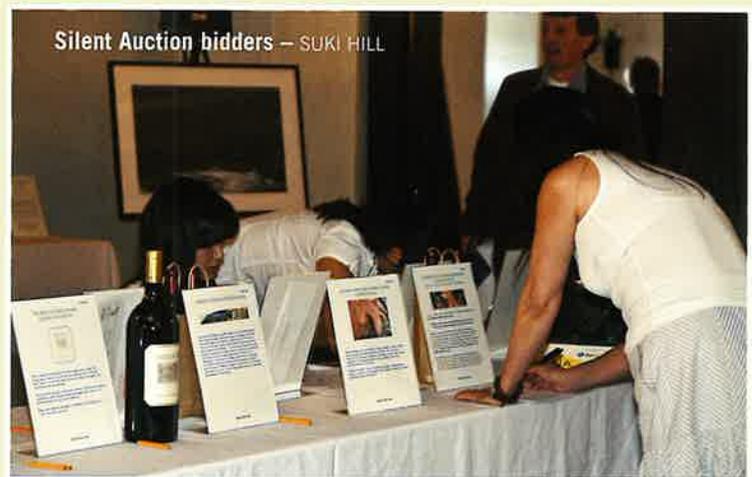
Where the majestic redwoods, the snowcapped Sierras, or the spectacular California coast easily sell themselves, the desert often requires more advocacy. It cannot be appreciated from Interstate 40 or the 15. You have to get off the highway and out of the car in order to explore this amazing and fragile ecosystem. The California desert is home to over 1,200 species of plants and over 350 species of animals each with their own unique ability to adapt to the incredibly harsh environment. There are large Joshua tree forests and beautiful desert lilies that appear out of nowhere as they burst through the sand. Although the desert can appear lifeless, exotic creatures like the desert tortoise and subterranean kangaroo rat make this unique landscape their home. The desert abounds with white sand dunes, painted rocks, deep canyons, and lush green watering holes from the Mojave River flowing underneath. There is also tremendous cultural significance and history as displayed in pictographs and petroglyphs, old mining

sites, and ghost towns. General Patton trained troops in the desert, leaving tracks still visible on the ground, proof that the desert is also slow-healing.

Global warming poses a very real threat to the natural global balance, and we must take immediate action in addressing our energy use and its global consequences. Renewable energy is one of the solutions, but we have to be smart about its implementation. A large coalition of environmental groups are working together to identify areas where solar and wind development are appropriate, such as already disturbed lands that are near highways and transmission corridors. Renewable energy development should also focus more aggressively on promoting photovoltaics and solar thermal panels on the rooftops of homes, large industrial parks, and commercial buildings. On-site energy production concentrates energy generation near the areas of greatest demand, without having to transport energy over vast desert landscapes through power corridors.

Global warming poses a very real threat to the natural global balance, and we must take immediate action in addressing our energy use and its global consequences.

I was in the Ecuadorian rainforest last summer. I lay under the mosquito net listening to the chorus of chatter, hollers, screeching, and buzzing that changed throughout the night and day as different creatures went to sleep and new ones took their place in the cacophony of sound. It never stopped. It was never quiet, and I found myself longing for the California desert with her clear night skies, beautiful still light and complete serenity and silence. If you haven't been to the desert, I hope you will take the time to visit.



Our Annual Wild Fundraiser Event was a great success!

On April 24, 2009, about 150 old and new friends joined us at the beautiful Presidio Officers' Club for our annual fundraiser. It was an evening of celebrating our recent achievement of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, paying tribute to distinguished Philip Burton Award honoree Rick Ridgeway and discussing our future priorities in the protection, preservation and restoration of California's wild heritage.

With delicious food and fine wine, celebrants shared in great conversations and competed to win amazing auction items. Many attendees congratulated CWC for its hard work in passing the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. All who attended left with a goodie bag filled with organic coffee, seeds, a CWC bumper sticker and a CWC historical wilderness designation map.

We thank our generous sponsors, in-kind donors, fierce auction bidders and all attendees for making this

a successful event. The funds raised contribute to the grassroots support needed to build upon our history of successful wilderness preservation in the Golden State.

For those who were unable to attend our Annual Wild Fundraiser, we hope to see you at one of our many future events. Stay tuned for information regarding upcoming house parties scheduled throughout California.

Interested in hosting a fundraising house party for CWC? Please contact Development Director Bill Tieman for information at (510) 451-1450 or btieman@calwild.org.



WANT TO HELP IN ANOTHER WAY?

Become a monthly member today!

By making a monthly donation, you will help us save precious dollars and plan more effectively. Go to our website and sign up today. Or call us at 510-451-1450. With a gift as little as \$11 a month, you'll be doing your part to protect wild California.

Monthly giving levels are \$11 \$15 \$20 \$35 \$50 \$100

New monthly donation members (with a minimum of \$11 per month) will receive a subscription to the *Wilderness Record*, CWC tote bag, invitations to wilderness events, Galen Rowell Wilderness note cards, and a calendar.

Each new membership adds to the grassroots strength that CWC needs to protect the last wild places in California.

Please fill out and mail envelope found in the center of the *Wilderness Record*.

CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

1212 Broadway | Suite 1700 | Oakland | CA 94612

Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

PERMIT #82



CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

The Voice for Wild California

 Printed on recycled paper.

Hikes & Outings

Join the CWC to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy some time in the wilderness! All hikes are free and open to the public. To reserve a spot, please email info@calwild.org or call 909-260-8833 for more information.

Saturday, July 18th

Spencer Meadow Trail Hike, Wild Cattle Mountain Proposed Wilderness Area

The Wild Cattle Mountain Proposed Wilderness Area is a spectacular treasure just west of Lassen National Park. Wild Cattle Mountain boasts old grove forests of fir, pine, and oak trees that line fresh water streams. CWC will host a moderate 13 mile hike on the Spencer Meadow National Recreation Trail.

Meet at the Spencer Meadow trailhead at 9AM on July 18th. The trailhead is just 4.8 miles east of the junction of Highways 36 and 89 just west of Lassen National Park. Visit CWC's website for more information at www.calwild.org. RSVP by emailing hike leader Julia Kernitz at jkernitz@calwild.org.



Castle Peak — PHIL FARRELL

Saturday, October 10th

Castle Mountain auto tour and hike

Meet at 8am at the Desert Discovery Center in Barstow, CA.

This trip will take us through the densest Joshua Tree forest in the world in view of castle-like rock formations with expansive views of the Mojave desert. We'll have a full day of driving with 2–3 miles of hiking. Bring your camera, a picnic lunch, 2 liters of water, sturdy shoes or boots, sunglasses, hat, and dress for the weather! Temperatures will likely be in the 70s.

The Castle Mountains are surrounded on three sides by the Mojave National Preserve. This unique landscape was once extensively mined, but is now recovering. CWC members and staff are advocating for its inclusion in the Preserve.