



WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

Vol. 4

P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95616

September — October 1979

No. 5

Gulls Leave Mono Lake

The blasting attempt in early April to free Negit Island from the mainland was a failure. The National Guard worked hard throughout their three-day effort but working conditions were tough and unpredictable; the mud merely went up and came back down. Within six weeks after the blasting the lake had fallen over three inches in depth, leaving a channel only four to six inches deep and several yards wide. This was not enough to protect the nesting California Gulls.

The worst possible predictions of the gull situation at Mono Lake were fulfilled. California Gulls by nature nest only on islands where they are safe from mainland predators such as coyotes, bobcats, foxes and snakes. Prior to Negit's connection with the mainland, the island had none of these animals and had probably been a safe home for the gulls since its birth 2,000 years ago. This year a highway of coyote tracks led across the landbridge to the island. By following natural instincts into an unnatural situation the coyotes succeeded in destroying the entire breeding colony on Negit Island. Only dead adults, chicks, and smashed eggs remain where 38,000 birds nested before.

The birds coming to nest at Mono make up one-fourth of the entire world population of the California Gull. The loss of Negit Island colony, three quarters of Mono's nesting gulls, could represent an irreversible blow to the species. Mono's other 10,000 gulls breed on small

islets near Negit — these birds were able to nest successfully this year. But by next year, lowering lake levels will threaten these islets as well, exposing half of the remaining population to the hazards experienced on Negit Island this year.

The future of the California Gull at Mono Lake looks grim unless water diversions to the City of Los Angeles can be curtailed immediately. For while decisions are awaited and legal proceedings are underway, the lake continues to sink. If there is a year's delay without water, it will be another four or five years until Negit is safe again. Will the gulls that are left return to a safe Negit Island after several years of aborted nesting?

The Negit disaster may be the first of coming crises. Until this year, no major disaster had occurred at Mono Lake. For forty years the waters had quietly subsided, but were still able to support Mono's web of life. But as Mono continues to evaporate, its waters become increasingly saline and harsh for living organisms. These physical changes in the lake's chemistry threaten those organisms living in and feeding on this large inland area.

The food web system of Mono Lake seems surprisingly simple in comparison to other aquatic and terrestrial communities. Sunlight streams down long and hard in the summer months nurturing an abundant algal population. These microscopic plants in turn feed multitudes of tiny, half-inch brine

shrimp. Brine flies, which swarm the shoreline coating tufa and sand, also graze upon the many types of algae.

Birds are the next and highest step up the food chain. During late summer Eared Grebes stop to feed by the hundreds of thousands. They literally pepper the entire 100-square-mile surface of the lake. Wilson's Phalarope is a small sandpiper which stops at Mono to feed and refuel for its migratory journey. It is thought that one-third of the world's population of this species visits the lake. Many other birds also come to Mono's shores to feed, including,

of course, the California Gull.

As Mono's waters become saltier, most organisms in the lake will probably perish. Mono Lake is expected to drop another 55 feet if water diversions continue at the present rate. By then the lake will be ten times as salty as the ocean and thirty times as alkaline. Present experiments show high mortality rates of brine shrimp and brine fly long before these salt concentrations are reached. If numbers of these animals are substantially reduced or even eliminated, what will happen to the vast population

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California gull chick and egg by David Winkler

RARE II LAWSUIT

The State of California's lawsuit against the Forest Service over its RARE II decision is gathering national attention. The lawsuit is seeking to protect 41 areas totaling 991,247 acres designated as "non-wilderness" by the Forest Service.

According to **Public Land News**, industry expects the attack on RARE II to spread.

"I think the suit is going to be national in scope," said Evelyn Jarvis of the National Forest Products Association (NFPA). "The lawsuit talks of 41 areas in California, but it attacks the EIS in general. It could start similar suits in other states."

Jarvis said she had

begun a survey of the areas and it showed two areas due for timber sales in 1979 with the majority due in 1980. She said the Western Timber Association and a number of timber companies are entering the suit on the side of the Forest Service and that NFPA is considering it.

The big question is what will environmentalists and conservationists do? The government and the timber industry have feared lawsuits challenging the EIS since RARE II began.

John McComb, associate director of the Sierra Club's Washington office, said the club would not join California in the suit. McComb said the club

sympathizes with California in that "wilderness areas did not get a fair shake in RARE II" and the state wants to protect its interests. But he said, "Our preference is to seek a legislative solution. The courts can't create wilderness; only Congress can."

For further planning areas the situation could be different. The Sierra Club will use a number of weapons as individual land management plans are drawn. Those weapons include the possibility of lawsuits as well as public participation, McComb said.

While McComb admits the California suit may be picked up elsewhere, he thinks California is a

special case: "Here was the only Western state that came out for larger wilderness and further planning acreage than the Forest Service proposed. That in itself sets California apart from the other Western states."

Congress is just beginning to consider the Forest Service recommendations on RARE II. To that end House Interior Committee Chairman Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) requested the Forest Service do nothing to impair 77 areas in California until Congress had a good look at the areas. Agriculture Secretary agreed to place a hold on 60 acres, most of which were included in the California suit.

San Joaquin

The San Joaquin Roadless Area (5-047) lies astride the crest of the Sierra Nevada in Central California. It is extremely diverse in character, ranging from the deep, glacial-sculpted granite gorges of the three forks of the San Joaquin River to snow-capped San Joaquin Mountain.

Dramatic rock formations are an outstanding feature, with abundant evidence of geologically recent volcanic activity. Although crossed by the John Muir and Pacific Crest trails, much of the area is lightly used because of topographic barriers and rudimentary roadhead ac-

cess. This feature, combined with generous amounts of middle-elevation terrain, provides a unique haven for wildlife. Little wonder that the northern portion of this beautiful area was once (1890-1905) part of Yosemite National Park.

These lands now have special significance as the last unprotected link along the crest of the Sierra. For many years people viewed this defacto wilderness corridor as a potential highway route, which would sever the John Muir trail and sunder the longest contiguous wilderness in the lower 48 into two

fragments. Although support for such highway has waned, the threat will always remain so long as the land is unprotected. During the 93rd Congress, the U.S. Forest Service concluded its RARE I process and designated the North Fork and Minarets corridor areas for wilderness study. But the RARE II process has reopened the whole issue and brought matters to a head. Of the entire 159,000 acre San Joaquin Roadless Area, the Forest Service recommended only 47,000 acres for wilderness, the absolute

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San Joaquin Roadless Area

Photo by Rose Certini

Coalition Report

by Jim Eaton
Director

In recent months the State of California has taken a leading role in the preservation of wilderness. With other western states in the throes the so-called "sagebrush rebellion" it is gratifying to find the Brown administration listening to environmentalists.

Two major events are shaping the future of our wilderness resource. The first is the Citizens Committee report on the Forest Service, and the second is the lawsuit filed by the State to hold up some RARE II decisions.

The Citizens Committee was established by State Resources Secretary Huey Johnson to look into the way the U.S. Forest Service is managing one-fifth of the State of California. The report, published in July, concludes that the Forest Service is emphasizing timber harvesting to the detriment of other resources.

The findings of the committee corroborate what environmentalists have

been claiming for a long time. Best of all, the report documents many of the abuses of the RARE II process, citizen involvement, and mining on the National Forests. The report should be widely dispersed and publicized.

The RARE II lawsuit is another major action of this past summer. The State is the first to challenge the Forest Service in court over the methods used in determining the fate of over six million acres of wild land in California. While the lawsuit only mentions the 41 areas the State objects to being in "non-wilderness" the outcome of the case will be of national significance.

There is need for a note of caution, however. Reports and lawsuits can delay the developers, but it is the Congress of the United States that designates wilderness areas. Our strong state administration, led by Jerry Brown and Huey Johnson, are giving us a chance to

save areas whose futures looked bleak a few months ago. But it is going to take strong citizen action to make use of these reprieves.

One arena will be the Congress where an omnibus wilderness bill for California is expected to be introduced this fall. A lot of coordinated effort by wilderness supporters is needed if we are to overcome the well-funded opposition of the timber, mining, energy, and off-road vehicle industries. But the past few years' battles show it can be done.

The state administration cannot stand out alone in defense of wilderness. It is time for each of us to pledge to help protect wild places in whatever way we can. Write those letters when you receive an alert, attend those hearings, send money if you can, and become involved. Millions of acres of wilderness still need protection. Your efforts will make a difference.

Northeast California Wilderness Areas

In the intensive wilderness inventory released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on July 16, many little-known wild areas in the northeast corner of California and extreme northwest corner of Nevada were identified. (See August 1979 *Wild California* for details on the intensive inventory.) Many of these **de facto** wilderness areas are recommended for Wilderness Study Area (WSA) status by the BLM, but acreages of some of the areas have been cut and need to be reinstated. The Willow Creek Canyon and Tunnison Mountain areas are proposed to be dropped altogether from further wilderness study, over the objections of conservationists.

Following are descriptions of some of the areas involved. All are found in the BLM's Susanville District, which administers the greatest amount of the public domain in the state outside of the California Desert Conservation Area. The number following the area's name is its intensive inventory number.

Skedaddle Mountains CA-020-612. Proposed as a California bighorn sheep

reintroduction area, the Skedaddles are a rugged but accessible desert range lying within 45 minutes of Susanville. The 7,680-foot Hot Springs Peak towers over sheer canyons with intermittent streams, as in Wendel and Thousand Springs Canyons, with their riparian habitat. Golden eagles, falcons and other raptors find refuge here. Antelope are commonly seen in the alluvial flats and deer and wild horses in the higher meadows. The Skedaddles offer both strenuous hiking and diverse wildlife habitat — recreational and natural values.

Unfortunately, BLM has prematurely deleted over half the roadless area from wilderness study, leaving only the central mountain peaks in a small 28,480-acre core. BLM's rationale appears to exclude some private inholdings and some impacts they consider intrusive. It should be pointed out to them that these decisions should wait for the WSA phase. Skedaddle needs its perimeter for protection of both wildlife and recreation.

BLM also downrates Skedaddle because of bomb

detonation at the adjacent Herlong army base. It should be said that the wilderness designation will outlive the bombing, which can be halted at any time. And bomb blasts are fairly similar to sonic booms.

High Rock Canyon CA-020-913, 913A, 913B, 914. The Lassen Emigrant Trail bisects the proposed High Rock Wilderness complex, with its wealth of historical and archaeological resources. These enhance the stark desert beauty of the numerous canyons, cliffs, mesas and bluffs, different from anything else now in the Wilderness System. The wetter canyons are filled with jungle-like vegetation, and Great Basin wild rye in some meadows grows over your head — a vestige of pre-livestock days. Wildflowers, golden eagles and many owls thrive in the complex, which is also a potential bighorn habitat.

A battle is shaping up over the proposed 119,750-acre wilderness because BLM feels ORV influence on the land is heavy. It is, and it endangers the cultural resources. The Emigrant Trail is a segment of the proposed National Historic Trail, and a wilderness complex would complement it and further protect natural and archaeological values.

Hole-In-The-Ground and **Twin Peaks** CA-020-619 and 619A. These are virtual unknowns. Much conservationist research is needed on these contiguous units which straddle the Nevada state line. Twin Peaks is the largest BLM roadless area under review now by the California office (92,710 acres). It contains the perennial Buffalo Creek. Hole-In-The-Ground features four intermittent lakes, a 1,000-foot deep canyon and a mile-wide caldera bisected by a tributary of Buffalo Creek. Combined with a rugged topography and different vegetation types, their great size and unspoiled condition offer superior chances for solitude and primitive recreation. BLM feels they easily meet wilderness criteria.

Buffalo Hills CA-020-618. Contiguous to both of these is the proposed Buffalo Hills Wilderness, which continues eastward into the Winnemucca BLM District. Also carved out of high volcanic plateau, the hills are slightly wetter and offer more juniper stands. Again largely unexplored

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Citizen Committee Faults Forest Service

A report criticizing the U.S. Forest Service's management of public lands is becoming a major tool on the environmentalist's work bench.

"Today, Tomorrow: Report of Citizens Committee on U.S. Forest Service Management Practices in California" contains numerous examples of bad practices of the Forest Service on California's wild lands.

The committee was appointed by State Resources Secretary Huey Johnson last April after President Carter's RARE II decision essentially gave the Forest Service proposal a rubber stamp approval. The committee looked into the way RARE II and citizen involvement was conducted, into timber and mining practices, into fish and wildlife habitat programs.

The report is well documented with examples of poor management practices on the part of the Forest Service. The major conclusions and recommendations of the committee are:

*The basic statutes which govern the administration of the National Forests, with the exception of the 1872 Mining Law and amendments, are sound and should be retained.

*The Forest Service in California is emphasizing timber harvesting to the detriment of other resources. Other resources should not be slighted.

*Wildlife and fish habitat are being adversely affected by timber harvesting, fire suppression, and eradication of hardwoods and brushfields. The Forest Service should emphasize planning and carrying out development activities in such a way as to prevent or mitigate this

damage. Programs to restore fish and wildlife habitat, particularly for anadromous fish, should be emphasized.

*The Forest Service should identify potential erosion, landslide and slope stability, and sedimentation problems and prevent them from occurring or mitigate unavoidable impacts.

*Reforestation efforts on the California National Forests should be increased. Pre-commercial thinning and development of high quality trees for planting in the National Forests could increase yields over time. These programs, currently subject to the uncertainties of annual Congressional appropriations, should be assured by long-term financing. The Citizens Committee recommends the reinvestment, as needed, of timber harvest revenues from timber sales in California as a practical source of financing. Revenues from Forest Service timber sales in California substantially exceed all costs associated with those sales.

*The 1872 Mining Law and amendments, which govern prospecting for and producing hard rock minerals on the National Forests, should be substantially amended to provide for payment to the public for the minerals, protection of other resources, and retention of the mined land in the National Forest System.

*The Forest Service effort to inform the urban public of the Agency's programs should be broadened.

*Consensus building by mediation or negotiation should be used to resolve differences of opinion regarding major management decisions.

*The Regional Forester in California should assure that management objectives are met on all National Forests in California.

*The RARE II analysis and decision was an attempt to make a difficult and significant decision without adequate information in too short a time.

*The Forest Service should train and equip their personnel for effective law enforcement on the National Forests or reach agreements with and fund local law enforcement agencies to provide the enforcement.

*The Forest Service and State of California should sign a memorandum of understanding for Forest Service cooperation with State environmental programs.

*The Forest Service should minimize the decrease in management efficiency which can occur when professional personnel are transferred frequently.

This report is available from the Resources Agency, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, CA 95814. Telephone is (916) 445-5656.

Mono Lake

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of birds that depends on them for food? Mono Lake will become a sterile, quiet, chemical lake one fifth its natural size.

The loss of Mono's community of wildlife is but one of the misfortunes triggered by water diversions. The spectacular scenery of Mono's grandiose tufa towers, volcanoes and magic blue waters will be masked and shrouded by the ugly "bathtub" ring of the receding lake. Since water diversions began in 1941, the lake level has dropped forty-five feet, exposing a ring of alkali lake bottom in some places two miles wide. Alkali dust storms, caused by strong winds whipping across the exposed lakebed, have already reached as high as 20,000 feet into the atmosphere. These eyesores and health hazards to humans, other animals, and plants alike, can only get worse. The entire basin will show signs of death now seen in Mono's sister valley, Owens.

Mono Lake can be saved through simple measures of water conservation in the City of Los Angeles.

During the 1976-77 drought the people in Los Angeles conserved more than 12 percent, almost enough water to stabilize the lake at a safe level for the gulls.

If these citizens only knew the consequences, might they continue to conserve?

The Mono Lake Committee urges, as a compromise, that the lake be preserved at the 1970 level of 6,388 feet. At this level the gulls would be adequately safeguarded and Los Angeles would still be able to export one-sixth (15,000 acre-feet) of the amount they currently take. The Committee also advocates water conservation and reclamation statewide, for we have all been wasteful in our use of water. Los Angeles does not use more water per person than the rest of the state.

It is time we think about "Mono Lakes" everywhere. People must decide how willing they are to share the resources of the earth with other living beings. The health of our planet undoubtedly rides on the outcome of these decisions.



Skedaddle Mountains (CA-020-612)

Photo by Eagle Lake Audubon Society

***** Special Section *****

Kern Plateau Wilderness

Stretching from Yosemite National Park to the Walker Pass is one of the largest remaining expanses of wilderness in the lower 48 states. At the southern extremity of this expanse is the Kern Plateau, an area of incredible diversity where the transition is made from the High Sierra to the deserts of Southern California and influences from five major ecoregions meet. Wilderness preservation is vital to maintain the unique character of the Kern Plateau region, but cooperation and coordination will be necessary between the federal agencies involved — the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and even the Army Corps of Engineers.

The South Sierra Regional Conference, to be held October 6-7 in Kernville, will focus on the wilderness of the southern Sierra as well as nearby wild lands from Mono Lake to Death Valley and the Desert Tortoise Preserve in the Mojave Desert. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about the many proposed wilderness areas; wild and scenic rivers, and other natural resources of the region. Conservationists will be able to coordinate their efforts for protection of the region and plan to overcome the political obstacles involved. This supplement to the **Wilderness Record** is dedicated to the Kern Plateau region and on-going efforts to protect it.



KERN PLATEAU

Photo by Martin Litton

Golden Trout Country

The home waters of the Golden Trout, mainly within the Kern Plateau, have been a cause celebre for conservationists for over 40 years. The battle was first joined by author, poet and wilderness philosopher Ardis Walker of Kernville. Even though logging was only a distant threat to those remote wilderness retreats he had known as a boy, he was astute enough even then to see that the appetite of the loggers would be satisfied only when the last tree was cut.

For years Ardis and his wife, Gayle, were virtually the only advocates of wilderness preservation of the Golden Trout country. They were ignored by the Forest Service and regarded as cranks by the timber companies. Relentlessly the chain saws bit deeper and deeper each year into the remaining wilderness until others became concerned. The Sierra Club joined the fray in the early 60s, along with other organizations and individuals.

The U.S. Forest Service and the timber industry tried to stem the rising flood of protest by creating a 65,000-acre Domelands Wilderness, a beautiful area of granite domes but nearly devoid of commercial timber. This is a classic example of wilderness on the rocks.

Advocates proposed a Golden Trout Wilderness area south of Sequoia National Park to protect the native habitat of the two subspecies of Golden Trout. The Forest Service countered with a wilderness proposal of about half the size needed. Frustrated conservationists turned to Congress, which created the Golden Trout Wilderness as part of the Endangered American Wilderness Act. President Carter signed the bill into law in February 1978.

The 306,000 acres set aside as the Golden Trout Wilderness represent about 90 percent of what conservationists hoped for. Virtually the entire watershed of the Little Kern River, home of the Little Kern Golden Trout subspecies, was included. East of the main fork of the Kern River, the northern Kern Plateau down to the desert base of the eastern Sierra escarpment received protection. Thus most of the streams containing native Golden Trout were protected from threats of logging, roading and off-road vehicles.

The Golden Trout Wilderness is an area of extensive green meadows connected by small streams perched on a gentle landscape as much as two miles above the sea. Only the northern fringes of the

area experienced the glaciation that gouged out the rugged Sierra terrain to the north.

The Kern Plateau is an ancient landscape preserved from the rigors of the Ice Age, representing the gentle, rolling terrain that made up the entire range three to four million years ago, before the mountains were uplifted to their present height.

Now that the core of the Golden Trout area is adequately protected, conservationists are moving from defense to offense. There are extensive areas south of the Golden Trout Wilderness that also need Wilderness designation to protect their natural value. Many of these were identified as a part of the Forest Service RARE II inventory.

One of the most important of these areas is the South Sierra Roadless Area. The South Fork of the Kern River passes through here and contains what is probably the largest meadow in the entire Sierra. Monache Meadow is three or four miles across and more or less circular in shape. Standing in the middle of these huge Kern Plateau meadows, the open sky seems huge, as if one were at sea. Only the green grass underfoot and the distant low-lying timbered ridges are reminders of the mountainous terrain. Un-

South Sierra Conference

The wilderness happening of the fall is the South Sierra Regional Conference, October 6-7, in Kernville. The event will focus on the wild lands in the Sierra from Yosemite to the Kern Plateau and from Mono Lake to Death Valley.

The Kern Plateau Association, California Wilderness Coalition, and other organizations are sponsoring this gathering of wilderness supporters. Activists from several western states are coming, along with professionals from Washington DC.

The conference will be held at the Kernville Elementary School in Kernville. River lovers should try to arrive Friday evening for a special happening.

On Friday evening, October 5th, Howard Brown of the Washington DC-based American Rivers Conservation Council will conduct a workshop on protecting wild and scenic rivers. The Council has been an effective lobbying force for rivers and is

fortunately this area has become popular with off-road vehicle users, and loggers covet the marginally economic timber at its western edge.

The Woodpecker Roadless area lies adjacent to the northern edge of the Domelands Wilderness. Its largest stream, Trout Creek, contains native Golden Trout, which need wilderness protection to main-

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beginning a new campaign to preserve sport fishing streams.

Registration for the conference will be from 8:00 - 9:30 on Saturday morning, with participants urged to come early to visit the numerous displays and tables set up by conservation groups. The early comers will have a good opportunity to find out about the dozens of proposed wilderness areas,

Howard Wilshire will be there with his six projector multi-media display of off-road vehicles and the California Desert.

Time will be scheduled for participants to meet each other and the conservation leaders attending the conference. The Sunday session will end early so that those coming long distances may begin the trip home or spend the afternoon visiting some

Peter Behr, former State Senator and father of the State Wild and Scenic Rivers System, will speak at the conference on the proposed initiative to add an Environmental Bill of Rights to the California State Constitution.

wild rivers, and other places in the Southern Sierra region.

The registration fee is just about \$3.00. This will not cover food as there are many convenient eating establishments nearby. Campgrounds and motels also are close to the conference site (see list of facilities in this insert).

Beverly Stevenson will begin the conference with a overview slide show covering Mono Lake, San Joaquin, the Kern Plateau, and the Desert, including the Desert Tortoise Preserve. Bev is a renowned photographer who knows the region well.

Other presentations will be made by representatives of various environmental organizations fighting to protect parts of the Sierra and Desert.

of the spectacular sights of the Kern Plateau.

Kernville is just north of Isabella lake, northeast of Bakersfield. It is just off the Walker Pass Highway, State Route 178. Participants coming from Bakersfield will pass through portions of the Wild Kern Canyon with Forest Service roadless areas on either side.

Conference organizers would appreciate advance reservations so they can help plan the facilities. Send your check (\$3.00 per person) to the Kern Plateau Association, c/o Bob Barnes, P.O. Box 749, Porterville, CA 93258. There is no odd/even gasoline rationing plan in Kern County, but bring along some friends in a car pool. Where else can you find such an interesting weekend for only three dollars?

Golden Trout

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tain a viable population. Wilderness designation also would add variety to the Domelands wilderness, permitting hikers more overnight camping opportunities and somewhat changing the "wilderness on the rocks" aspect of the Domelands.

The Rincon Roadless area was deleted from the Golden Trout Wilderness in the final stages of congressional action. Its primary stream, Rattlesnake Creek, contains native Golden Trout, and the same watershed is important winter habitat for deer.

The small (1,100 acres) but important Domelands II Roadless Area should be added to the Domelands Wilderness. It contains a deep, rugged gorge occupied by the South Fork of the Kern River.

The southernmost extension of the Kern Plateau, the Scodie Roadless Area, lies south of Walker Pass. It contains one of the most significant, essentially unaltered pinyon pine forests in the southern Sierra. It is virtually unknown because of its inaccessibility. It, too, should be included in the wilderness package for

the southern Sierra.

If these roadless areas, along with Bureau of Land Management lands suitable for wilderness, were so designated, there would be a nearly continuous strip of wilderness from Sequoia National Park south to beyond Walker Pass. Only the road into Kennedy Meadows and Highway 178 would interrupt the wilderness. Although timber harvest and roads have penetrated many key areas of the Kern Plateau, there is still an excellent chance to preserve a good cross-section of southern Sierra ecosystems.



Near Walker Pass

Photo by Mike Henstra

Proposed Wilderness Areas



Golden Trout Expansion

The existing Golden Trout Wilderness is contiguous with large expanses of yet-unprotected wildlands to the south and west. Conservationists propose over 200,000 acres of additions to the 306,000 existing Wilderness, some of which was included in the original wilderness legislation, but later excluded.

The prime addition is the 86,510 acre South Sierra RARE II area, which contains some of the most gentle and beautiful terrain on the Kern Plateau. Large, grassy meadows connected by slow-moving trout streams and separated by low, rocky timbered ridges are typical of the area. It is traversed by the South Fork of the Kern River and contains Monache Meadows. This meadow is several miles across and one of the largest in the Sierra Nevada. Many of the streams contain Golden Trout. It is one of the easiest wilderness areas to hike in for those who prefer easy strolls to rugged backpacking. Off-road vehicle use is increasing and damage such as stream siltation, cut-up meadows and stream banks, and litter are found

in many places.

Adjacent to and south of South Sierra are BLM lands in various stages of wilderness review. These are CDCA #157, 157A and 157B, CA-010-031 and CA-010-029. Conservationists propose that the totality of the roadless area administered by both federal agencies be designated as Wilderness.

The Rincon RARE II area was part of the original Golden Trout Wilderness proposal, but it was dropped in the final legislative action that established the Golden Trout Wilderness. The main watershed is Rattlesnake Creek, which contains native Golden Trout. The area drops from an elevation of 8-9,000 feet on the east to the Kern River on the west at 2-3,000 feet. Only the eastern higher fringes are timbered. Most of it is brushy, forming the major winter habitat for the northern Kern Plateau and Sequoia National Park deer herd. Off-road vehicles presently use the area and the timber industry wants to log the small amount of timber.

Finally, the Moses and Dennison Peak RARE II areas form proposed additions to the west of the existing Wilderness.

Domeland Additions

The opportunity exists to expand the existing Sequoia National Forest 62,500-acre Domeland Wilderness by nearly 100,000 acres. Conservationists propose adding the USFS 44,400-acre Woodpecker RARE II area to the Wilderness on the north, BLMs

35,527-acre CA-010-029 on the east, USFS 1,100-acre Domeland Additions II and BLMs 2,209-acre CA-010-032 on the south and 7,000 acres of USFS Cannell RARE II area and the 3,100-acre USFS Domeland Additions RARE II area on the west. The new total would

bring the Domelands up to a magnificent and diverse 160,000-acre wilderness.

The southernmost range of Golden Trout in the Trout Creek watershed would be afforded permanent protection. Twenty miles of the flow of the South Fork Kern River, along with 100,000 acres of its watershed, would be protected. The finest fox-

Chimney Peak Wilderness

Every effort should be made to get the BLM Chimney Peak roadless area (CA-010-028) back in the wilderness running as it lies at the heart of BLM's South Fork Kern River acreage immediately between the proposed Three Pines Wilderness and proposed Domeland Wilderness additions. The gaping hole created by CA-010-028 may prove to be a hindrance to efforts to add the Three Pines and Domeland acreage to the Wilderness Preservation System.

CA-010-028 was included in the BLM's initial statewide wilderness in-

ventory, but is proposed to be dropped from further wilderness consideration in the intensive inventory. Although the Pacific Crest Trail crosses this unit, the BLM claims that opportunities for primitive recreation are not outstanding. The area is also proposed to be dropped on the basis of four separate pinyon conversion areas and associated debris which are said to "dominate the landscape".

Comments to restore the area for wilderness consideration will be accepted until October 15. (See the article on the status of BLM areas for details.)

Wild Kern Canyon Wilderness

Encompassing two potential wild and scenic study segments of the Kern River and four Sequoia National Forest Roadless Areas, the Wild Kern Canyon Wilderness proposal would protect 150,000 acres of prime lower elevation wilderness and over 100 miles of the Kern River.

The proposal includes two units: the North Fork Canyon above Lake Isabella and the main Kern River Canyon below the reservoir. The North Canyon is comprised of the Chico

Roadless Area (43,700 acres), the Kern River between Lake Isabella and the old Johnsondale mill. This segment of the North Fork Kern and that between Johnsondale and the river's headwaters has already been designated as a wild and scenic study river by the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978.

Chico and Cannell Roadless Areas were allocated to "non-wilderness" by the RARE II process despite receiving strong public support for wilderness, low

timber values and no known mineral resources. The areas contain tremendous scenic resources as a backdrop of the North Fork Kern, including Salmon Falls, which is one of the spectacular sights in the Kern Plateau region. Also present are undisturbed ecosystems which range from the Kern River to the Greenhorn Mountains, allowing unrestricted wildlife movement from the riparian zone to remote areas.

The Kern River Canyon unit contains the Mill Creek Roadless Area (29,900 acres), the Greenhorn Creek RA (29,600 acres) and the Kern River between Lake Isabella Dam and the mouth of the canyon. Here, again, the RARE II process ignored public sentiment and the absence of resource conflicts and designated the two roadless areas as "non-wilderness." The Kern River between these two areas has yet to receive consideration as a "Recreational River" under the Wild and Scenic River Act.

The two sides of this unit, having north and south exposures, provide complimentary diverse ecosystems. The Mill Creek

Area contains a grove of the rare Paiute Cypress and oak woodland ecosystems, which are poorly represented in the Wilderness System in California. The area's relatively low elevations make the Canyon accessible in the winter months when the rest of the High Sierra is snow-bound.

The Wild Kern Canyon wilderness proposal would allow domestic livestock grazing to continue. It could also permit fire management tools to be used to enhance wildlife populations by allowing the canyons to re-enter their normal fire ecology.

Several BLM-administered areas of less than 5,000 acres are also involved in this wilderness proposal. These include CA-010-033, adjacent to Mill Creek RARE II area, and three separate units of CA-010-047, adjacent to Greenhorn, Chico and Cannell. These BLM areas were dropped from further wilderness consideration during the initial inventory after the Forest Service allocated the RARE II areas to "non-wilderness" but the decision is under formal protest by conservation organizations.

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Big Whitney Meadow, Golden Trout Wilderness

PROPOSED WILDERNESS for the KERN PLATEAU REGION

GOLDEN TROUT WILDERNESS

- A1- Existing Wilderness
- A2- South Sierra R.A.R.E. II
- A3- Rincon R.A.R.E. II
- A4- Moses R.A.R.E. II
- A5- Moses R.A.R.E. II
- A6- Dennison Peak R.A.R.E. II
- A7- B.L.M. CA-010-031
- A8- C.D.C.A. No. 157A
- A9- C.D.C.A. No. 157B
- A10- C.D.C.A. No. 157
- A11- B.L.M. CA-010-027

THREE PINES (OWENS PK.) WILDERNESS

- B1- B.L.M. CA-010-026
- B2- C.D.C.A. No. 158

CHIMNEY PEAK WILDERNESS

- C1- B.L.M. CA-010-028

DOMELAND WILDERNESS

- D1- Existing Wilderness
- D2- Woodpecker R.A.R.E. II
- D3- Domeland Addition R.A.R.E. II
- D4- Domeland Addition II R.A.R.E. II
- D5- B.L.M. CA-010-029
- D6- B.L.M. CA-010-032
- D7- Portion of Cannell R.A.R.E. II

KIAVAH WILDERNESS

- E1- Scodios R.A.R.E. II
- E2- C.D.C.A. No. 159
- E3- C.D.C.A. No. 160

- E4- C.D.C.A. No. 160 C

- E5- C.D.C.A. No. 163

- E6- B.L.M. CA-010-030

- E7- B.L.M. CA-010-045

BRIGHT STAR WILDERNESS

- F1- Woolstaff R.A.R.E. II
- F2- Cypress R.A.R.E. II
- F3- C.D.C.A. No. 160B
- F4- B.L.M. CA-010-046
- F5- B.L.M. CA-010-047
- F6- B.L.M. CA-010-047

WILD KERN CANYON WILDERNESS

- G1- Chico R.A.R.E. II
- G2- Cannell R.A.R.E. II
- G3- Greenhorn Crk. R.A.R.E. II
- G4- Mill Creek R.A.R.E. II
- G5- B.L.M. CA-010-047
- G6- B.L.M. CA-010-047
- G7- B.L.M. CA-010-047
- G8- B.L.M. CA-010-033



Proposed Wilderness Areas

continued from page 4

★ ★ ★ Walker Pass Areas

Three proposed wilderness additions make up this diverse region. They are the Three Pines (Owens Peak) Wilderness of about 50,000 acres, Kiavah Wilderness of about 100,000 acres and Bright Star Wilderness of about 60,000 acres. The area is roughly bounded on the north by the Nine Mile Canyon Road, on the east by the the Nine Mile Canyon Road, on the east by the Los Angeles Aqueduct, on the south by the Jawbone Canyon/Dove Springs area of the Mojave Desert and on the west by the South Fork Kern River.

Some of the outstanding

features of the area are exceptionally fine stands of pinyon pine and joshua trees and a major stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail. But the feature that stands above the rest is the fact that five major ecoregions of America are mixed together on the south fork watershed and greatly influence the area. This rarely, if at all, occurs anywhere else in the Western United States.

The Sierra Nevada reaches its southern most point here. The Mojave Desert spills westward over the Sierra Crest at 5,200-foot Walker Pass and 5,300-foot Bird Spring Pass.

The Great Basin influence is concretely present in the extensive pinyon pines and associated biota found in the eastern portion of the watershed of the South Fork Kern.

The Southern California influence is found in the flora and fauna of the proposed Bright Star Wilderness. Finally, the Great Central Valley influence is found in the cottonwood-willow forest around the South Fork Kern River at the foot of Kiavah and Bright Star. This incredibly diverse area deserves careful attention when future additions to the Wilderness System are considered.

Three Pines Wilderness

The proposed Three Pines Wilderness encompasses over 47,000 acres along the Sierra Crest immediately north of Walker Pass. Owens Peak, extensive joshua tree forests, and a lengthy stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail are among many features of the Three Pines area.

From the summit of Owens Peak one can gaze north 50 miles to the High Sierra peaks of Sequoia National Park, east 15 miles to the vast expanses of the northern Mojave Desert, south 50 miles to the terminus of the Sierra Nevada at Tehachapi Pass, and west 10 miles to the existing Domeland Wilderness and South Fork Kern River water-

shed.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers the public lands comprising the proposed Three Pines Wilderness. Two BLM units are involved: the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Wilderness Study Area 158 (36,023 acres east of the Sierra Crest) and BLM statewide wilderness inventory unit CA-010-026 (11,366 acres west of the Crest). Both of these areas are still being considered for wilderness recommendation to Congress by the BLM. Strong efforts should be made to insure that CDCA 158 and CA-010-026 will be included in the final recommendation.

Kiavah Wilderness

The proposed Kiavah Wilderness contains roughly 100,000 acres immediately south and west of Walker Pass. The major administrative units of the area are the USFS Scodies RARE II area of 48,000 acres, BLM CA-010-030 and CA-010-045 of about 20,000 acres, and BLM CDCA #'s 159,160 and 163 of about 25,000 acres. **Wilderness Record** readers are asked to keep the Kiavah Wilderness proposal in mind during letter writing and political actions periods.

An extensive and dense forest of pinyon pine, several miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, and a significant portion of the South Fork Kern River watershed are found within Kiavah. On the political side, the timber industry, as part of a public relations move, stated their willingness to see possible future wilderness designated for the 48,000-acre Scodies RARE II area which lies in the heart of the Kiavah proposal. Lack of any timber value seems to be the motivation.



Sierra Crest at Olancho Pass



Photo by Phil Farrell

Bright Star Wilderness

The proposed Bright Star Wilderness of about 70,000 acres lies immediately west of the proposed Kiavah Wilderness and south of Isabella Reservoir. The U.S. Forest Service 44,300-acre Woolstaff RARE II area is the core of this proposal. Other units are California Desert Conservation

Area #160B and CA-010-046 and CA-010-047 of the BLM statewide wilderness inventory. Bright Star is known as a meeting place of Sierra Nevada and desert influences and as such is an important link in the diverse chain of Southern Sierra wilderness areas.



BLM area CA-010-026 in proposed Three Pines Wilderness

Photo by Mike Henstra

Kern Plateau: Botanical Crossroads

The Kern Plateau is botanically one of the most unique areas in North America. Five different floristic communities occur here in an area where influences from the Sierra, Great Basin, southern deserts and foothills merge. Over 1,274 species have been catalogued for the plateau, reflecting the great diversity of habitats and geographical influences present. The Plateau region is the meeting place of five physiographic provinces: the intermountain sage, American desert, Sierran Forest, California chaparral, and California grassland.

The Kern Plateau is the elevated, plateau area east of the Kern River, west of the Sierra crest, south of the Sequoia National Park and the John Muir Wilderness, and north of Walker Pass. It includes the Golden Trout Wilderness east of the Kern River and several Sequoia National Forest roadless areas, in-

cluding Sierra, Rincon, Woodpecker, Canell and Domeland additions.

The distinguishing characteristic of the plateau is its meadows, which are found in many varieties — wet, dry, small, broad, etc. The meadows are separat-

ed by granite ridges and domes, slowly gaining altitude as one goes north, from the 7,000-foot elevation of Pine Flat and Little Cannell Meadow to the 9,650-foot elevation of Big Whitney Meadow.



*Nine Mile Canyon
Phacelia*

The vegetation generally

forest, red fir forest, foxtail pine forest and alpine slopes.

The flora of the arid pinyon woodland is the most complex. This vegetative community extends from the south-eastern rim of the plateau to occupy all the area east of the South Fork Kern River to well north of Kennedy Meadow, including much of the domelands region. Due to the overlap of different ecoregions, the pinyon woodland here contains plants of the high desert, plants from the southern Creosote-dominated deserts, representatives of California's foothill flora (such as digger pines grow-

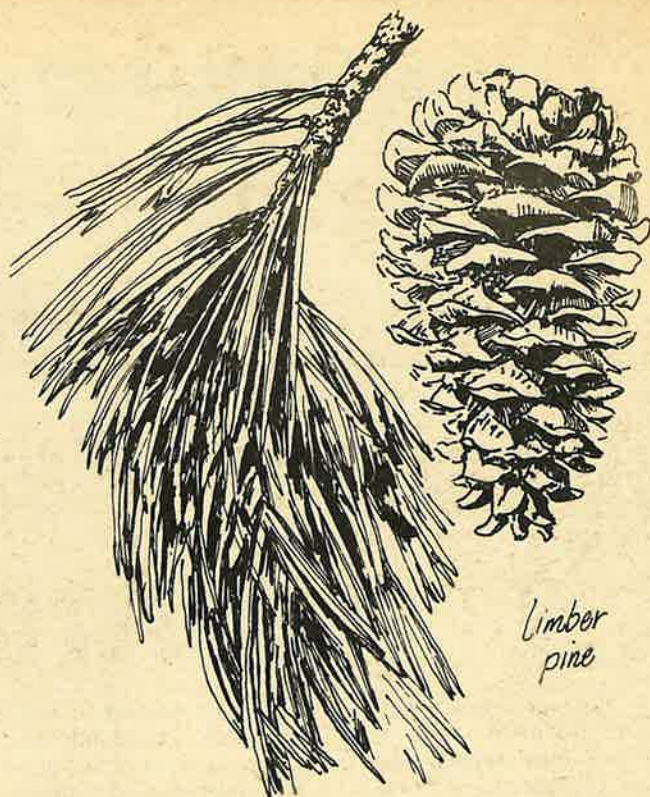
ing at more than 6,000 feet!), and typical Sierran forest plants, including a few alpine and subalpine species. An endemic plant is the Nine Mile Canyon phacelia.

North of Kennedy Meadows the pinyon woodland merges into the Jeffrey pine forest. The Jeffrey pine forest of the east side of the Plateau includes many east slope Sierra species mixed with plants from the Great Basin ranges and even species that range to the Rockies.

The red fir forest is a little more lush than the Jeffrey pine forest, but is not dense in this land of meadows. The forest usually occurs in a narrow band along the ridges in the south but becomes more extensive in the Monache region and the west slope of Kern Peak. Quaking aspen occurs in occasional colonies among the red fir.

The foxtail pine forest is unusually dense and unbroken on the Plateau, extending from south of Templeton Meadow to the Plateau's northern boundary at timberline. found here is the southernmost extension of the subalpine flora in the Sierra and North America.

The alpine slope floristic community occurs only sparsely on the Plateau, but includes dramatic scenes of stunted foxtails and lodgepoles on granite



slopes dominated by small appressed wildflowers. The plants here are small, bloom and mature their seeds quickly, and are widely spaced. Siberian Pass and Cottonwood Pass include good examples of this vegetative form.

Several regions of the Kern Plateau have been identified as particularly diverse. The summit ridge of Bald Mountain is a natural botanical garden with over 57 species on just a few acres, including an isolated grove of limber pine and the endemic Bald Mountain potentilla, whose nearest relative is found in the White Mountains of Inyo County.

The southernmost grove of foxtail pines on Sierretta Peak is one of the few places where five species of pine — foxtail, limber,

western white, jeffery and lodgepole — all occur on the same slope.

Big Meadow contains one of the richest floras of any Sierran meadow. Over 282 species have been identified in the meadow and its immediate borders, an area of less than 100 acres. These include subalpine to foothill species as well as aquatics.

All of these characteristics make the Kern Plateau a living botanical museum and evolutionary laboratory, according to Ernest Twisselmann, who has studied the flora extensively. As Twisselmann points out, "the botanical resources of the plateau should furnish material for decades of research, if we don't do as we often do — destroy it before we even understand it."



foxtail pine

San Joaquin

cont. from page 1

minimum necessary to prevent the long-fought Minarets Summit highway from becoming a reality. Even more disquieting, in its RARE II recommendations, the Forest Service designated all the remaining area for non-wilderness — not a single acre for further planning!

Eliminated from Forest Service wilderness recommendations were the entire south fork basin, an area of approximately 50,000 acres contiguous with and west of the existing John Muir Wilderness. Although not recommended for ski development by the Forest Service, the area west of the San Joaquin ridge remains a concern because any development there would be highly visible from within the existing Minarets and John Muir wilderness areas.

Earlier this year the San Joaquin Wilderness Association formed to lead the fight for the San Joaquin

Wilderness. The advisory council to the Association is composed of such conservation veterans as Raymond Sherwin, Genny Smith, George Whitmore, Hal Thomas, Norman B. Livermore Jr. and Martin Litton.

A new threat to San Joaquin is coming from the dam builders. The Terra-bella Irrigation District and ten other agencies have filed an application for a preliminary permit for a proposed water-power project. While much of the project would be outside the proposed wilderness, a diversion of the North Fork of the San Joaquin River is being considered.

Southern California Edison is also anxious to develop the river and is looking at a number of developments inside the proposed wilderness: dams, diversions, tunnels, pipelines and a powerhouse would cut into the heart of the roadless area.

As far as the U.S. Forest Service is concerned, the final decision against wilderness designation was made months ago for most of the Forest Service roadless areas of the Kern Plateau region. In the final Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) decision announced January 4, 1979, the Forest Service allocated 129,208 acres of Sequoia National Forest roadless lands south of Sequoia National Park to "Further planning" and 371,261 acres to "non-wilderness". No areas of the Kern Plateau region were recommended for "wilderness" designation.

This compares very poorly with the rest of California, where 13% of the RARE II acreage was recommended for wilderness, 43% for non-wilderness and 44% for further planning. And the overall California recommendations themselves were strongly criticized as totally inadequate by conservationists.

The final RARE II decision for non-wilderness means that those areas will never again be considered for wilderness designation by the Forest Service — a situation that only Congressional action can correct. Of the areas allocated to non-wilderness, 8 roadless areas in-

corporating 340,161 acres are included in conservationist-proposed National Wilderness Preservation System additions. These areas are South Sierra, Woolstaff, Rincon, Cannell, Chico, Mill Creek, Greenhorn Creek, and Domeland Additions II. Three other RARE II areas in the region — Black Mountain, Slate Mountain, and Lyon Ridge — were also allocated to non-wilderness, but are not included in the current conservationist proposals for new or expanded Wilderness areas.

Further planning allocated areas will hypothetically be given consideration for wilderness preservation during the Forest Service's regular land use planning process. Areas proposed by conservationists as part of new wilderness designations in this category are Cypress, Dennison Peak, Moses, Woodpecker, Domeland Addition, and Scodies.

Why did the Kern Plateau region fare so poorly in RARE II — as poorly, in fact, as the North Coast region so gluttonously coveted by the timber industry? The reason was certainly not a lack of public support for wilderness. For example, of the 648 personal letters that the Forest Service received on the South Sierra region,

602 (93% asked for wilderness designation. The Forest Service response: "non-wilderness." Woodpecker received 93% of personal comments in favor of wilderness, Rincon 89%, Moses 92%, and Scodies 94%. Yet not a single one of these areas was recommended for wilderness preservation.

The major official reason given for the non-wilderness allocation of the all-important South Sierra area immediately south of the existing Golden Trout Wilderness was to preserve the "community" of Johnsondale. But on March 23, 1979, the Johnsondale sawmill was closed **anyway**. American Forest Products, a subsidiary of Bendix Corporation, which owned the sawmill and "community" gave as their reason for the closure the creation of the Golden Trout Wilderness. But others have pointed out that the real reason for the mill closure was inefficiency and lack of competitive bidding. Of 32 timber sales made in the Sequoia National Forest in 1978, the Johnsondale mill owners won only three. If they were so interested in preserving Johnsondale, why didn't they bid more competitively? It is possible that the closure, occurring just three weeks prior to the final date for Congress-

ional comment on Forest Service recommendations, was timed to create ill-will toward further wilderness on the Sequoia National Forest.

Even if the Forest Service's concern for Johnsondale was legitimate, a wilderness/non-wilderness split would have been possible as most of the timber is on the west side. The Forest Service said they considered a split but that there were "too many conflicts with pro-wilderness ideas"! So they decreed it all non-wilderness.

The Forest Service explanation for further planning allocation rather than wilderness recommendation for Scodies was to relieve off-road vehicle (?RV) pressure on heavily-impacted Jawbone Canyon, outside the roadless area boundary. The Forest Service wants to let the ORV people have a nice loop trip from Jawbone to the pinyon pines of Scodies and then down again. So much for the 94% who wrote personal letters favoring wilderness preservation.

Whatever the Forest Service reasoning behind their RARE II allocations, one point is clear: conservationists cannot expect much if any support for their Wilderness proposals for the Kern Plateau region from this agency!

Status of RARE II Areas

South Fork Kern

The South Fork Kern River begins its course at the 9,600-foot level, two miles West of Trail Peak (11,623') in the Golden Trout Wilderness, Inyo National Forest, Tulare County. For about 15 to 20 miles the South Fork winds through the Golden Trout Wilderness by way of Ramshaw and Templeton Meadows and exits the wilderness about four miles west of Olancha Peak (12,123'). At this point the South Fork enters the RARE II designated 86,000-acre South Sierra Roadless Area for about 30 miles of its length.

The four-mile-long Monache Meadows complex is a major area traversed in the South Sierra Roadless Area section. By now the South Fork has dropped 2,600 feet to the 7,000-foot level and enters the Sequoia National Forest at Kennedy Meadows, where a paved road bridges the river connecting the desert with the Central Valley. South of the road the South Fork enters the RARE II designated 44,000-

acre Woodpecker Roadless Area.

Rockhouse Basin is perhaps the major area traversed along the 15-mile course through the Woodpecker Roadless Area. At 5,400 feet the South Fork enters the 62,000-acre Domeland Wilderness and proceeds through the Domelands for about 15 miles, exiting at the 2,800-foot level. Public land is now left behind, and for the next 15 miles the South Fork Kern River courses through the privately-owned South Fork Valley with a 200-foot drop in elevation. This is the location of an estimated 2,500-acre cottonwood-willow riparian forest which supports a fine population of the Yellow-billed cuckoo.

With the establishment of the Golden Trout Wilderness, the first 20 miles of the South Fork seem to be protected in a natural state. The next 30 miles, in the South Sierra Roadless Area, lies within an area heavily used by off-road vehicles. The Monache

Meadow area is a particular favorite of ORV groups. Some actions should be taken to preserve the natural integrity of the South Fork Kern River in this area — perhaps designation as a Wild and Scenic River along its entire length, perhaps by providing a buffer zone along both sides of the river with elimination of ORV use or any other detrimental use,

or through full support of efforts to add the South Sierra Roadless Area to the Wilderness System. The 15 miles of the South Fork in the Woodpecker Roadless Area also lie in an area of heavy ORV use. As the next 15 miles are within the Domeland Wilderness, the South Fork here seems to be protected. The last 15 miles are in private property.

Finally we reach the mouth of the South Fork Kern River at Lake Isabella with its osprey nest, shorebird habitat, migratory waterfowl habitat, wintering bald eagle habitat, etc. The options here seem to range from refuge status for the South Fork mouth, east end Lake Isabella zone, through walk-in fishing use, to status quo (boats zipping around the osprey nest, cars driving up to within 100 feet of the nest when the water level is down and general vehicular abuse).

Protection of the entire length of the South Fork Kern River, from the 9,600-foot level in the Golden Trout Wilderness to the 2,600-foot level at Lake Isabella, would preserve an immensely significant riparian-river system. From high mountain meadows, through sagebrush meadows bordered by pinyon forests, to perhaps the best remaining cottonwood-willow riparian area left in California and ending at the east end of Lake Isabella, an osprey and bald eagle use area.

Riparian Management

The South Fork Wildlife Management Plan proposed by the US Army Corps of Engineers includes 3,400 acres east of Isabella Lake. Among the primary purposes of the plan will be the maintenance and expansion of the willow and cottonwood forest found along the South Fork of the Kern River. The plan will ensure the protection of the fish, wildlife, recreation and aesthetic values of the river and adjacent flood plain.

The immediate phase of the management plan calls for the maintenance and enhancement of the riparian forest and associated wetlands within a 1,380-acre area. It includes provisions for the protection of the rare yellow-billed

cuckoo, osprey and other threatened wildlife indigenous to riparian ecosystems.

The plan recognizes that the riparian forest area have been severely overgrazed and reduced in size because of past agricultural practices, and that a continuance of this land use would be in conflict with the long-term goal of enhancing the areas natural values.

The initial phase of the plan calls for elimination of livestock grazing and the curtailment of agricultural activity adjacent to the forest. (Irrigated agriculture has contributed to the spread of the Brown-headed Cowbird, a brood parasite on many threatened native passerines).

Management techni-

South Fork of Kern River

ques applied within the past year to ensure the protection of the area's unique diversity of wildlife include the elimination of vehicle access, data collection and baseline studies of the flora and fauna, public education through interpretive programs, and the reestablishment of riparian vegetation.

The Corps has been encouraged in its management efforts by several conservation groups. It hopes to have the assistance and support of these groups in meeting their responsibility in the preservation of this valuable resource.



Photo by Mike Henstra

South Fork Fishery

The South Fork Kern River and its tributaries offer an excellent sports fishery to the wilderness angler. Set amid spectacular gorges and immense meadows (including 10,000-acre Monache), below unique granite formations, Olancha Peak and the Pacific Crest Trail, streams contain the extraordinarily beautiful South Fork Kern Golden Trout (*Salmo agui bonita*), thriving from the headwaters, just south of Sequoia National Park, downstream to Kennedy Meadows. Add to this the Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) and one has the makings of an experience

in blissful solitude for the willing fisherman.

A major portion of this fishery is in the **South Sierra** Roadless area (120,000 plus acres of Sequoia National Forest, which conservationists are trying to add to the Golden Trout Wilderness. Manter Creek, in the Domeland Wilderness, is suspected to have a population of Kern River Rainbow Trout. If this proves true, it is one of the few pure populations of this fish left in the **entire** Kern River drainage, both North and South Forks.

The most outstanding fishery in the South Fork Kern River watershed is

that found in the Woodpecker Roadless Area (44,400 acres) adjacent to the Domeland Wilderness. The Trout Creek complex (Trout Creek, Little Trout Creek, Snow Creek, and Machine Creek) is graced with a very unique (color and spotting) population of Golden Trout. As things stand now the boundary of the Domeland Wilderness is inexcusably in the middle of Trout Creek!

The wilderness must be expanded to include the entire Trout Creek watershed, in order to provide environmentally sound protection to the fishery resource.

Little Kern River Fishery Restoration

California Department of Fish and Game and the USFS are currently engaged in the most extensive fishery investigation ever undertaken. The site is the 112,000 acre Little Kern River watershed, located in the Golden Trout Wilderness in eastern Tulare County.

Misguided introduction of non-native a rainbow

trout in the 1930s resulted in widespread hybridization of the Little Kern Golden Trout. Surveys by fishery biologists in the late 1960s determined that only five small, isolated populations of genetically pure native goldens remained. Genetic purity was determined by chromosome count and protein analysis. Restoration of

pure populations involves constructing barriers to fish migration on tributary streams, chemically removing populations identified as hybridized and re-stocking with fish from the closest pure population. When this is finished, the entire watershed will be restored to its native trout fauna. The project is expected to last 10 years.



South Fork Kern riparian forest belt contrasts sharply with surrounding arid terrain.

Status of BLM Areas

Several areas administered by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are an integral part of, or surround, the Kern Plateau region. Many of these areas are contiguous with U.S. Forest Service RARE II areas.

The BLM lands are in various stages of wilderness inventory or study at this time. Those areas in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) are undergoing wilderness study if they were identified as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) during the desert wilderness inventory. Preliminary decisions regarding whether these areas will be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation will be released for public comment in the draft California Desert Plan to be issued January 1, 1980.

The BLM lands to the west of the CDCA (and between the CDCA and Forest Service lands in some cases) are now being reviewed in the California statewide intensive wilderness inventory. Some of these areas were dropped from further wilderness consideration during the initial wilderness inventory which was finalized on August 15, 1979. Unless formally submitted protests of the initial inventory decisions (which were required to be submitted by August 15) induce BLM state director James Ruch to change the initial inventory findings, these lands will receive no further consideration for wilderness study nor interim management.

Those areas that made it from the initial to the intensive inventory phases fall into two categories: (1) lands proposed by the BLM for Wilderness Study Area status, or (2) lands proposed by the BLM to be dropped from further wilderness consideration. The public has until October 15, 1979 to comment on the intensive inventory proposals. Lands which are finalized as WSAs will be recommended to Congress

as to their suitability for wilderness designation by 1991.

The areas of interest and their current status in the BLM wilderness review are as follows:

(1) **CDCA/157** — This is a 25,207-acre officially designated Wilderness Study Area adjoining the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada and consisting of valleys, canyons, alluvial fans and steep hills that lead to the rugged granite mountains. Major canyons include Portuguese, Sacator, Little Lake and Nine Mile. Immediately to the west of 156, separated not by a road but by the imaginary CDCA boundary, is CA-010-027, an 8,988-acre unit that is proposed for WSA status in the statewide intensive inventory. Both areas adjoin the South Sierra RARE II area to the north, which adjoins Golden Trout Wilderness, which adjoins... the total roadless area is tremendous! Proposed as part of the Golden Trout Wilderness additions by conservationists.

(2) **CDCA/157A, 157B** — These very small areas are separated from 157 and each other by roads but are contiguous with the South Sierra RARE II area to the west. They were dropped from further wilderness consideration by the BLM when South Sierra was allocated to "non-wilderness" under RARE II. The BLM has used this excuse to drop many small areas which adjoin RARE II "non-wilderness" areas, over the objections of conservationists who point out that the Congress, not the Forest Service, will make the final decision. Proposed as part of the expanded Golden Trout Wilderness by conservationists.

(3) **CDCA/158** — This is a 36,023-acre Wilderness Study Area. Combined with the proposed CA-010-026 WSA to the west (separated only by the CDCA boundary), this unit forms the conservationist-proposed Three Pines Wilderness, dominated by Owens Peak.

(4) **CDCA/159** — This 5,564-acre WSA adjoins the Scodies RARE II area, which was allocated to "further planning" (lucky for 159!). Along with the Scodies and other CDCA and non-CDCA BLM areas, this unit comprises the conservationist-proposed Kiavah Wilderness, of almost 100,000 acres.

(5) **CDCA/160** — This 4,067-acre WSA also adjoins Scodies and is part of the proposed Kiavah Wilderness.

(6) **CDCA/160C** — This 1,036-acre WSA is part of the proposed Kiavah Wilderness.

(7) **CDCA/163** — This 9,255-acre WSA also is part of the proposed Kiavah Wilderness. The California Wilderness Coalition and other organizations requested that the boundary of this WSA be extended to the south.

(8) **CDCA/160B** — This 6,826-acre WSA adjoins the Woolstaff RARE II area, which was allocated to "non-wilderness." It encompasses Kelso Peak and features large granite rock outcroppings and boulder-strewn valleys with dense stands of Joshua trees. Combined with Woolstaff and adjacent non-CDCA BLM areas, this unit forms the conservationist-proposed Bright Star Wilderness.

(9) **CA-010-026** — This 11,366-acre proposed WSA in the intensive inventory is the western half of the conservationist-proposed Three Pines Wilderness. The other half is CDCA/158.

(10) **CA-010-027** — This 8,988-acre unit is proposed for WSA status in the intensive wilderness inventory and adjoins CDCA/156 and the South Sierra RARE II area. Part of the conservationist-proposed Golden Trout Wilderness additions.

(11) **CA-010-028** — This 15,000-acre area, dominated by Chimney Peak, is proposed to be dropped from further wilderness consideration in the intensive inventory. See the article on the conservationist-proposed Chimney Peak Wilderness for more details.

(12) **CA-010-029** — A 35,527-acre unit proposed for WSA status in the intensive inventory adjoins the Domeland Wilderness and Woodpecker RARE II area. Along with other Forest Service and BLM units, this area is proposed as a part of a 160,000-acre expanded Domeland Wilderness. CA-010-029 itself consists of pinyon covered mountains along the Kern River South Fork drainage and a long, narrow, sage-covered valley.

(13) **CA-010-030** — A total of 5,847 acres of this unit is proposed for WSA status in the intensive inventory. Other portions of the unit are proposed to be dropped from further wilderness consideration for various reasons. Adjacent to Scodies RARE II area, this unit is part of the conservationist-proposed Kiavah Wilderness. Preservation of the region would better be served if the portions proposed to be dropped were reinstated in the WSA.

(14) **CA-010-031** — This unit consists of scattered parcels of less than 5,000 acres in the Kennedy Meadows area immediately south of the South Sierra RARE II area. It was dropped from further wilderness consideration in the initial inventory, after South Sierra was allocated to "non-wilderness." Currently this decision is under formal protest by CWC, the Wilderness Society and Friends of the Earth. Part of the conservationist-proposed Golden Trout additions.

(15) **CA-010-032** — A total of 2,209 acres adjacent to the southern boundary of Domeland Wilderness, proposed for WSA status in the intensive inventory. A portion is traversed by the South Fork Kern River with riparian forest. Part of the conservationist-proposed 160,000-acre expanded Domeland Wilderness.

(16) **CA-010-033** — A small parcel adjacent to the Mill Creek RARE II area which was dropped from the BLM's initial inventory when the Forest Service allocated Mill Creek to "non-wilderness." Decision under protest. Part of the Walker Basin, this area is included in the conservationist-proposed Wild Kern Canyon Wilderness.



(17) **CA-010-045** — 2,244 acres of this unit are proposed for WSA status in the intensive inventory. Forms the western portion of the proposed Kiavah Wilderness. Several thousand acres in the western part of CA-010-045 are proposed to be dropped from the WSA due to impacts that reduce the natural character of the area. Conservationists recommend that these lands be studied further and rehabilitation potential be considered.

(18) **CA-010-046** — 3,578 acres adjoining the Cypress RARE II area are proposed for WSA status. About 2,000 additional are proposed to be dropped by BLM. The heart of this unit is the Piute Cypress Grove Natural Area, a dense grove of relic dwarf Piute cypress. CA-010-046 is part of the conservationist-proposed Bright Star Wilderness.

(19) **CA-010-047** — Five separate portions of this unit radiate around Lake Isabella and are adjacent to the Greenhorn, Chico, Cannell and Woolstaff RARE II areas. All were dropped in the initial inventory for various reasons, particularly their small size combined with the fact that the adjoining RARE II lands were allocated to "non-wilderness." A protest has been filed on this non-inventory decision. These areas include parts of the conservationist-proposed Bright Star and Wild Kern Canyon Wildernesses.

Further information on the desert (CDCA) WSAs can be obtained from the Desert Plan Staff, BLM, 2610 Central Ave., Riverside, CA 92506. Ask for the desert wilderness inventory final descriptive narratives and to be placed on the Desert Plan public participation mailing list.

Information on the BLM statewide inventory is available from the BLM, California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2921 (Wilderness), Sacramento, CA 95825. Ask for the intensive inventory maps and documents.

Also, ask to be placed on the CWC's BLM wilderness alert mailing list: California Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95616.

Activist Groups

ACTIVIST GROUPS - KERN RIVER WATERSHED

THE KERN PLATEAU ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. Box 858
Kernville, California 93238

SOUTH FORK FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 951
Weldon, California 93283

KERN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 497
Wofford Heights, California 93285

KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 3581
Bakersfield California 93305

TULARE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 749
Porterville, California 93258

SOUTH FORK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 749
Porterville, California 93258

SAN JOAQUIN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION
P.O. Box 148
Springville, California 93265

PORTERVILLE AREA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
P.O. Box 588
Porterville, California 93258

SIERRA CLUB, KERN-KAWEAH CHAPTER
Star Route, Box 1142
Tehachapi, California 93561

Conference Accommodations

A wide selection of accommodations is available close to the conference site.

Forest Service camping facilities are located north of Kernville along the North Fork Kern River and include:

1. Headquarters Campground — 4 miles north of Kernville, 44 units, sanitary facilities, well water, \$3.00/day.
2. Hospital Flat Campground — 6.5 miles north of Kernville, 40 units, sanitary facilities, well water, \$3.00/day.
3. Camp #3 - 5 miles north of Kernville, 52 units, sanitary facilities, well water, \$3.00/day.

4. Chico Flat Campground — 6 miles north of Kernville, undeveloped sites, no charge.

For further information regarding these sites, contact U.S. Forest Service, Cannell Meadow Ranger District, P.O. Box 6, Kernville, CA 93238, (714) 376-2294 or 376-6261.

Army Corps of Engineers camping facilities are located south of Kernville off Highway 155 on the lake and include:

1. Main Dam — 10 miles south of Kernville, 50 units, sanitary facilities, water, no charge.
2. Pioneer Campground — 9 miles south of Kernville, 70 units, sanitary facilities, water \$3.00/day.

3. Hungry Gulch/Boulder Gulch Campground — 7 miles south of Kernville, 150 units, sanitary facilities, water, \$3.00/day.

4. Tillie Creek/Live Oak — 4 miles south of Kernville, 200 units, sanitary facilities, water, \$3.00/day.

5. Eastside — 3 miles south of Kernville (Sierra Way), undeveloped sites, no charge.

For further information regarding these sites, contact Corps of Engineers, Isabella Lake, P.O. Box 997, Lake Isabella, CA, 93240, (714) 379-2742.

For those preferring indoor accommodations, one of the following list of motels should provide what you need:

1. Hi-Ho Lodge, Sierra Way, Kernville, (714) 376-2671.
2. Lazy River Lodge, Sierra Way, Kernville, (714) 376-2242.
3. Lorey's Motel, 19 Kern River Drive, Kernville. (714) 376-6362.
4. McCambridge Lodge, 13525 Sierra Way, Kernville, (714) 376-2288.
5. Pala Ranches Motel, 11042 Kernville Road, Kernville, (714) 376-2222.
6. Pine Cone Motel, Sierra Way, Kernville, (714) 376-2666.
7. Riverview Lodge, 2 Sirretta, Kernville, (714) 376-6019.
8. River Kern Lodge, Sierra Way, Kernville, (714) 376-2131.

Tahoe Basin Wilderness

An August 1, a draft environmental Impact Statement was released for the 135,520-acre Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU). Five alternative plans are described in the draft E.I.S. The acreage of "further planning" RARE II areas to be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation in the alternatives ranges from zero to 44,400 acres. In the "preferred alternative" offered by the Forest Service, no new wilderness areas will be recommended. Currently 21,300 acres of wilderness are protected in the Management unit in the Desolation Wilderness.

The purpose of the Land Management Plan is to "describe, guide and coordinate the long-range strategy of management, development, road construction, motorized and non-motorized dispersed recreation, roadless area allocation and timber cutting." Alternative 5 is the "preferred" alternative.

Alternative 1 represents no change, and although no new wilderness areas would be recommended at this time, options for wilderness designation would be preserved for the four

RARE further planning areas in the basin, comprising 44,400 acres. A suspicious aspect of Alternative 1 is the statement that "some trees would be cut to maintain or enhance recreation, watershed, vegetation or wildlife values and to reduce fire hazard. The potential byproduct (emphasis added) of cutting in this alternative would be 1.74 million board feet of sawtimber." Quite a "by-product"!

Alternative 2 would concentrate most development and expanded facilities near existing highways and utilities. The Freel and Dardanelles roadless areas would be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation (30,100 acres within the LTBMU). The Pyramid and Lincoln Creek "would remain roadless and substantially undeveloped but would be managed without the severe restrictions of wilderness." They would not be given further wilderness consideration.

Alternative 3 would concentrate all new facilities near urban centers to connect with existing sewer and power service and transit. All four further planning roadless areas

would be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation (44,400 acres within LTBMU, 10,410 acres in adjacent national forests). Nonmotorized, primitive, wilderness associated recreational opportunities would be emphasized for much of the Tahoe Basin.

Alternative 4 calls for small and widely distributed recreation developments, some in sensitive valley bottoms. Downhill skiing would be favored, and none of the roadless areas would be considered for wilderness designation. The road system would be greatly expanded and motorized recreation emphasized.

Alternative 5, the alternative preferred by the Forest Service, would place most new recreational developments near Lake Tahoe, other lakes, or the Truckee River. Downhill ski use would increase by a potential 18,000 skiers from the present 10,000. None of the roadless areas would be recommended for wilderness designation nor considered further. Dardanelles "would be managed as a roadless, primitive recreation area without the severe restrictions of wilderness."

Roadless Areas of the LTBMU

The four further planning roadless areas within the LTBMU and that portion of their acreages within the Basin are Pyramid (8,400), Freel (15,600), Dardanelles (14,500) and Lincoln Creek (6,600). Additionally, 1,200 acres of Granite Chief within the LTBMU was allocated to "non-wilderness" during RARE II and is not considered for wilderness in this Land Management Plan. Wilderness designation for all of the remaining roadless areas in the Basin would greatly benefit water quality in Lake Tahoe it-

self by limiting erosion-including activities such as off-road-vehicle use and logging on these lands. Limnological studies have shown that inorganic sediment from man-caused erosion is accelerating eutrophication of the lake. As nutrient levels and eutrophication increase, the clarity of lake waters and the lake's aesthetic appeal are reduced. The Land Management Plan is inadequate in providing for the prevention of further soil instability and erosion.

The Basin's RARE II areas are presently heavily used for wilderness recreation, with the Dardanelles

receiving the greatest backcountry use. The remaining roadless areas provide habitat for martens, fishers, the Carson River deer herd and a large number of other wildlife species.

Public meetings are scheduled on the plan from September 11 to 19. Written comments will be accepted until October 28, 1979. To obtain copies of the draft E.I.S. or summary, details on the meeting or to send comments, write to W.A. Morgan, administrator, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, P.O. Box 8465, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95731; (916) 544-6420.



Searching for "solitude"—BLM claims this area does not meet "opportunity for solitude" criteria of Wilderness Act.

Northeast California

cont. from page 2

and untouched, Buffalo Hills easily meets the criteria. Public study and support will help it become wilderness, hopefully as part of a contiguous complex with 619 and 619A.

Pit River Canyon CA-020-103. Near McArthur in northern Lassen County, the Pit River has carved a spectacular chasm with near-vertical basalt walls up to 750 feet high. In spring with redbud blooming, the colorful wildflower display is not to be believed. Antelope

graze the sage-juniper canyon rims. Descent to the nearly inaccessible canyon floor is rewarded with views of falcons, hawks, other raptors and even geese in the river. Beautiful stands of blue oak and yellow pine line opposite walls of the gorge, with thick riparian habitat on the bottom. Though small, the canyon wilderness will be a wildlife and recreational refuge. BLM has already deleted a portion of the roadless area from the WSA, and no more should

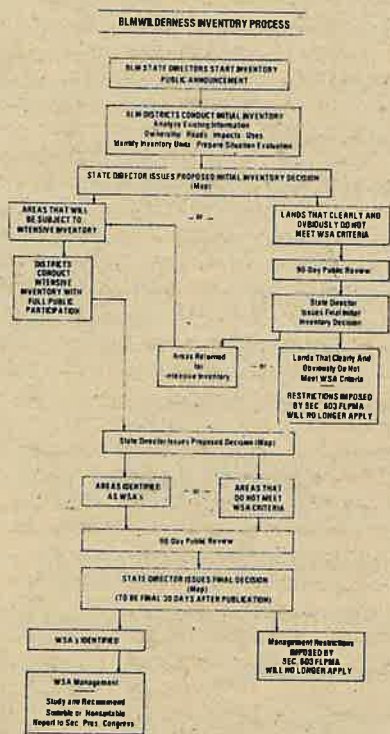
be subtracted from the 11,880-acre unit.

Willow Creek Canyon/Tunnison Mountain CA-020-311 and 312. BLM does not intend to study these adjoining areas because they say each lacks "immensity." Yet they are separated only by a jeep trail, the Long Canyon "road," which is actually a way (i.e. does not meet the BLM road criteria) for much of its length. The units should be combined and evaluated as one single large WSA featuring juniper-dotted mountain slopes, a year-round stream with challenging trout fishing, a deep meandering canyon and Indian petroglyphs.

Other WSAs in the Susanville District needing citizen study and support include Wall Canyon/Nolan Ranch (805), 49,090 acres of rugged topography, and South Warner Wilderness contiguous (708); on the east boundary of the wilderness. Fredonyer Peak (303) overlooking Eagle Lake was ruled out of wilderness study because of supposed unnatural intrusions.

Maps and texts are available free from the BLM at this address: California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2921 (wilderness), Sacramento, CA 95825.

Conservationists have started an "Adopt a Wilderness Study Area" program for the above areas. People are invited to select, visit, research, get to know, draw boundaries—in other words, study an area as wilderness. For details contact Northeast Californians for Wilderness, P.O. Box 391, Susanville, CA 96130; (916) 257-4431.



Coastal Protection

A new coalition is being formed to rescue the nation's coastline from overdevelopment, pollution and other degradation. The "Coast Alliance," chaired by Rafe Pomerance of the Friends of the Earth, is working on a national agenda for 1980, "The Year of the Coast."

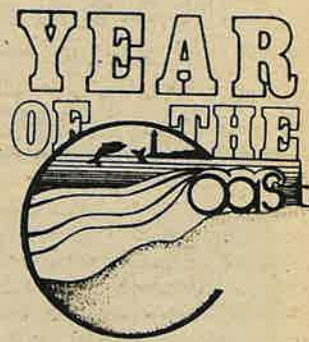
The Coast Alliance will bring together a wide range of people including environmentalists, scientists, economists, labor unions, union groups and recreation interests. It will educate Americans about the irreplaceable natural resources of the coast to stimulate action for protection of beaches, bays, dunes, islands, estuaries and wetlands.

Ideas are being developed for hundreds of activities to take place across the country during 1980 to highlight the importance of the coasts. Under consideration are a year-long walk around the entire coastline, tours of wet-

lands in each season, harbor festivals, special museum shows, a benefit concert by the Beach Boys, sailboat races and fish funerals.

Legislation will be a major focus of the Alliance. Proposals, still in the formative states, will emphasize new systems for protection rather than adjustments to existing management programs. Elements under consideration include: (1) a coast and inland preservation system modeled on the Wilderness Act to set aside critical areas, (2) a national coastal recreation system to address problems of beach access, (3) a national estuarine conservation system and (4) tax incentives to discourage overdevelopment of the coasts. The Alliance is shaping a bill that will gather the broadest constituency for its passage and effective implementation.

Individuals and organizations can take the



following action: (1) ask to be placed on the Alliance's mailing list, (2) think of Year of the Coast activities that your organization can develop, (3) make a list of goals you would like to see accomplished during the Year of the Coast and send a copy to the Alliance, (4) send your resume if you wish to work on the national staff. There will be openings for organizers, an editor, a press person, office manager and researcher. The Alliance's address is Year of the Coast, 620 "C" St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Wilderness Wildlife

Birds of the S Fork Kern River

by Dennis Coules

East of Lake Isabella along the South Fork Kern River lies the largest remaining cottonwood-willow forest in California. A representative of the deciduous riparian forest community that has been reduced to an estimated one percent of its former area in the state, this area provides refuge to an amazing variety of birds as well as other creatures. It is generally agreed that riparian forests contain the greatest wildlife diversity of any habitat type in California. Their importance to wildlife populations is tremendous.

Historically, lush jungles of cottonwood, willow, sycamore, ash, alder, walnut, oak and wild grape formed almost impenetrable walls of vegetation along the banks of the Sacramento, American, Santa Ana and many other streams and rivers along the stretches where sediments are deposited. By the late 1800s however, vast tracts had already been cut for building materials and firewood. Later thousands of acres were cleared for agricultural use. Using the Sacramento River as an example of the destruction of

our riparian forests, in 1972 only 12,000 of the original 775,000 acres of forests along the river remained. Statewide, riparian forests once covered millions of acres; now this habitat is found on a few thousand.

The riparian forest of the South Fork Kern stretches for 10 miles past the eastern end of Lake Isabella at about 2500 feet in elevation. The forest provides habitat for many species of birds including the rare yellow billed cuckoo and the wintering southern bald eagles, listed as a nationally endangered species. Several sightings have also been made of the critically endangered California condor in the South Fork drainage. The South Fork riparian forest also harbors several California "list of concern" species, including nesting osprey, red shouldered hawks, golden eagles and prairie falcons.

Over 217 species of birds are known to occur in the South Fork drainage. This high diversity is due not only to the unique riparian habitat, but also to the intermingling of Sierran, Great Basin, southern desert and foothill geographic

influences in the area. David Gaines, in search for yellow-billed cuckoos in the riparian forest, found the summer tanager and Weid's crested flycatcher as well, which are desert riparian birds.

The birds of this riparian forest fall into two general categories: breeding populations and overwintering species. Breeding populations of great blue herons, wood ducks, red-shouldered hawks, in addition to the previously mentioned species, have been observed, just to name a few.

Breeding bird densities in cottonwood-willow forests have been found to equal or exceed those in any California vegetation type for which census data is available.

Most of the migratory breeding species found in the riparian forest feed on foliage insects or catch insects on the wing. Species such as the yellow-billed cuckoo and northern oriole that depend on foliage-inhabiting insects depart before the autumn leaf fall. The migratory, breeding species are most abundant during the warmer months when insect food is most available.

Many of the resident breeding species feed off ground seeds and insects, bark insects, or are generally omnivores. These species, such as the California quail and Nuttall's woodpecker, must be able to find food during all seasons.

Overwintering birds include many species that breed in montane and northern coniferous forests. They often feed on insect pupae, seeds, or fruits. Ground dwelling species such as various types of sparrows and juncos become more dominant in the winter months when foliage has dropped and most insects entered non-active life cycle phases. The yellow-billed cuckoo is perhaps the most famous bird of the riparian forests. Once fairly common in California, this bird is now officially recognized as rare because it is restricted to broad expanses of cottonwood-willow forest. The South Fork Kern riparian forest is now a critical area for the survival of this species in California.

The yellow-billed cuckoo lives for most of the year in the Amazon



Yellow-billed Cuckoo Graphic by David Winkler

Basin and nearby locations in South America. In the summer months they arrive in the U.S., southern Canada and northern Mexico to raise their young. In California they seek out the riparian forests for breeding purposes in June, July and August, when large insects such as grasshoppers and caterpillars are in good supply. Because of their food requirements, only a few nesting pairs are generally found in hundreds of acres of forest. David Gaines counted a total of nine cuckoos in his reconnaissance of South Fork

forest in 1977.

The South Fork Kern riparian forest is currently threatened by overgrazing and agricultural expansion. As a valuable remnant of a once abundant natural community, its preservation is critical. A management plan of the Army Group of Engineers for part of the forest is described in the supplement to this issue of **Wilderness Record**. More information on the riparian forest and its wildlife values is available from the South Fork Watershed Association, P.O. Box 749, Porterville, CA 93258.

Conversations with Albert

by Mark J. Palmer

My, what a pretty night, I thought.

Albert squatted two yards away on pine needle duff, sheltered from the wind by a low Sierra Designs tent, vintage 1971, and fiddled with a Coleman white gas stove. The stove took some adjusting to get it exactly where Albert, with the patience of a seasoned outdoorsman, wanted it. Finally, with a terrific hiss, the burner burst into life, giving off a weird green glow.

Albert began dancing about the artificial flame which spewed from a tin-can contraption. With primal glee he gathered up plastic water containers and aluminum pans.

"Coptuous, coptuous," he muttered. "In the chips; in the chips!" His ritual continued. A Sierra Club cup contained Swiss Miss

chocolate powder; a plastic camp cup was on hand for wine, or soup, or tequila, or tea, or orange juice, or whatever. Albert's quarter of Indian blood took command in the woods. His face beamed. As the water on the Coleman began boiling, he chanted, "Mala mela, mala mela, mala mela," and broke into peals of laughter.

He was pleased with himself for wrestling his very sustenance from a Mountain House plastic, dehydrated bag.

I watched with fascination, silent. Albert was truly of the wilderness — enjoying it with the convenience of modern technology. Albert once told me he could never make it backpacking without the "new gear," but I wasn't so sure. As I saw

him prancing about, I imagined dirty prospectors and smelly fur trappers displaying much the same ecstasy over a bubbling cauldron of bear guts. The frontier was gone; why pretend otherwise? But still, the picture of a loin-clothed Albert bashing rabbits over the head with a stick kept recurring in my mind.

"Boy, this will make you turn around, head and tail erect."

Albert was grinning at me now, his meal laid out before him. He rubbed his hands, heightening his anticipation. I sighed and took out a cold chocolate bar. The wind and the pine needle duff and the fact that we were camping without a permit prohibited an open campfire.

Point Reyes National Seashore, just north of the

densely populated? San Francisco Bay Area, has a flaw. Once it was private ranch land and cow patties. It took several years to convert to a public recreation ground overseen by the National Park Service (the process is still ongoing; private land, long-term leases and — yep! — cow patties still remain within much of the Seashore boundary). Now, with federal ownership and access, the Seashore's popularity as a week-end retreat for hikers, bicyclists, and nature lovers of every stripe has grown by leaps and bounds. Week-end back-country use for camping is booked solid months in advance and limited to six camping areas. Here one encounters Boy Scouts, environmentalists, college students, joggers, young families,

senior citizens, rangers and a galaxy of others which defies descriptions. All of them at sickening densities. Noise, litter, erosion, pollution, and just plain hostility are the net result.

But the puzzlement I felt tonight, resting up against the trunk of a second-growth fir, shielded from sun, stars and snoopy rangers, is the same puzzlement growing among environmental advocates and resource managers alike — how do we use our dwindling wildlands? Silent, cud-chewing me and capering, grinning Albert were no better than the rest of humanity — or a cow patty, if one wants to get philosophical. Who is to use the land?

"Hmm-m-m-m-m-m-m," mused Albert, rubbing his beard. "Don't mind if I do!" He bent to transfer water in different states of molecular excitement from one vessel to another. "Eee-hee-hee-hee-hee..." His eyes rolled fantastically in the light.

Albert had a thing about backpacking equipment. He could roll off statistics and comparisons of Kelty, REI, Trapper Nelson, and a hundred other backpack bands like a biker discussing hogs. At night, he read himself to sleep with store catalogs and backpacking magazines. He could tell you in twenty minutes what to look for in a tent. He took great delight in discussing the merits of a cook hole. He owned two

backpacking stoves and was saving his meager income to buy another. He would shop in ten stores for a flashlight. He had eaten every manner of dehydrated stinking food and, furthermore, had lived to tell about it. He had a recipe for trail tea which included twenty-eight different ingredients.

Yet, only today, we were hiking on the popular Bear Valley Train surrounded by would-be picnickers, campers and speed racers, all swirling towards "the wilderness." Albert had been more upset than I, especially by the Boy Scout troop which had engulfed us.

True! When pretending to stoop and tie my shoelaces I had gathered up a handful of rocks — just in case the little green urchins came too close. But Albert was positively fuming.

"What if they start singing?" he hissed in my ear.

"Maybe we'll know the words," I suggested lightly.

"I only know the words to songs Boy Scouts aren't supposed to sing," he muttered darkly.

Now, hours later in the twilight of a late spring evening. It was I who was concerned about our precariously illegal camping spot, while Albert, taking great delight in rummaging, adjusting and doing light dance steps to inaudible melodies, was oblivious to any wrong-doing. A forest innocent.

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The **Wilderness Record** is the bi-monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Address all correspondence to: P.O. Box 429 Davis, CA 95616 (916) 758-0380. Articles may be reprinted. Credit would be appreciated.

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PURPOSES OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

... to promote throughout the State of California the preservation of wild lands as legally designated wilderness areas by carrying on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be preserved in the public interest by making and encouraging scientific studies concerning wilderness, and by enlisting public interest and cooperation in protecting existing or potential wilderness areas.

Albert cont. from page 11

Albert, I decided, was elite.

He had finished his bold repast, and, now standing, facing an unseen audience amongst the fir branches, he began reciting in a booming crescendo:

"I am Albert; Albert is I. Forest Fucker: Wonder of the Woods; Protector of the Plains; Defender of the Deadwood; Arch-enemy of Off-Road Vehicle Ass-holes.

"Yosemite's Yes-man; Sequoia's Savior; Tolumne's Troubador; Lassen's Last Hope.

This is my land, and I know it by heart. I know and feel the land."

His face now was oddly grim. His voice rolled thunderously out into the gathering night. His words came from his heart in a towering affirmation of the beauty and wisdom of conservation.

He scared the piss out of me.

"For Christ's sake, Albert, SHUT UP!" I squeaked. Albert beamed back at me, his eyes shining with religious zeal.

"O.K." he said.

I decided I would share my cultural hang-up with him.

"Albert, it isn't right for us to be out here without permission." He snorted in response, looking down at his toes.

"Well," he began, gathering steam, "I know what you mean. Everybody can't come out here, or it wouldn't be wilderness any more. You've got to restrict

people so they don't damage the land. And yet, the land belongs to everybody. You've got to limit them. There's just too many people, and not enough wilderness.

"But you know," he said, warming to his argument, "I like to think that I belong here more than others. I mean, you and I have fought for these lands to be set aside for wilderness, and we've fought for the preservation of wildlife.

"And we take good care of the area — we use stoves, not wood; we don't dump wastes or piss in streams; we pack out our garbage. Man, we even pick up other people's garbage!

"I tell you, we deserve some consideration. I may be elite, but I worked for this land. I know this land; it's a part of me. And, by God, I'm going to enjoy it!"

"But Albert," I remonstrated, "What about all the other people? What about the rest of the world?"

He shook his head slowly, his face suddenly sad. His voice now sank down.

"That's the thing, man. That's the whole thing."

Moments later, he livened up again. He cracked a new smile.

"But, then, I always like to pretend I know what I'm doing when I don't!" He grinned one last time at me, and disappeared with a chuckle into his elaborate tent, set up on a cloudless night — a monu-

ment to light-weight engineering and the art of backpacking.

The next morning brought a rude shock to my latent paranoia. We had packed everything and had emerged from our tree hide-out into open meadow dotted with dry thistles. As we strolled towards the trail, Albert startled me by bursting out into his loud chant:

"I am Albert, and Albert am I. Wilder than Wilderness; Son of the Sun; At One With the Land!

"Bears Find Me Unbearable; Deer Find Me Unendearable; Bass Find Me Debased; Bats Find Me a Fly-by-night; Bees Find Me a Honey; Pines Find me Sticky."

All at once his voice dropped as the low whine of an approaching jeep broke the stillness of the trail ahead. I flashed on our position — miles from a legitimate campground, without permit or Scoutmaster, and shockingly deranged looking. I bolted instinctively to the side, running for the cover of the trees.

"Run, Albert!" I shouted. Albert, glancing at me crazily galloping over the uneven meadow with a heaving backpack, continued walking unconcernedly towards the trail.

The trees were still distant when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the ranger's jeep around the bend and proceed over the meadow trail. I was careening wildly over the grass, in

full view.

My mind raced for some kind of comfortable explanation for my mad behavior. I could imagine the cold, police logic of my impending interrogation. No permit! No excuse! Suspect caught attempting escape — isn't that resisting arrest?

I suddenly stopped cold — the backpack on my back teetered drunkenly and almost threw me head-over-heels. I grasped a tiny flower sprouting from the meadow between my

sweaty palms and gazed at it with feigned awe. I tried to ignore the approaching ranger vehicle.

"My, what a pretty flower!" I said loudly.

Albert just waved casually. The ranger just waved back and was gone. He hadn't even braked the jeep.

With the fading drone of the jeep, my backpack, over-compensated, dragged me over backwards in appalling slow-motion. I lay on my back, arms and legs waving in the air, like a sick

turtle, trying to catch my breath. In my ears, Albert's rolling voice came to me as he ambled on up the trail into the trees:

"I am Albert; Albert am I.

"Ventana's Virtuoso; Shasta's Saint; Desert Rat; Mountain Man; Muel Skinner; Posey Plucker; Flower Punk!

"This is my land; and I know the land with my heart!..." His voice echoed in the distance.

"My what a pretty sky, I thought

Foresters vs Environmentalists?

The following letter appeared in the May 1979 issue of the *Journal of Forestry*.

"Environmentalist" as a Term in JF Usage

I find the term *environmentalist* appearing with regularity in staff-authored articles in the *Journal*. Almost invariably it is used in a pejorative context and sometimes it approaches name-calling. A "we-they" atmosphere is often implied, suggesting that environmentalists and professional foresters are two very different populations, and hold very different views or priorities as to both the benefits flowing from the forest and the means to manage the forest. At the very least, environmentalists appear to hold some forest values or protective activities are equal to more important than wood yields.

Journal articles also speak with regularity about the decline of influence that foresters have experienced with regard to national land-use policy.

An editorial by Luther J. Carter in the January 12, 1979, issue of *Science* pretty well summarizes the public's view toward environmental protection as measured by several public opinion polls, including one commissioned by the American Forest Institute. In a nutshell, the polls show broad public support

for strict environmental regulation, despite current enthusiasm for tax reduction. Substantial majorities favor higher protection standards, are willing to pay higher product prices to achieve them, and feel they are benefiting from wilderness areas and want more. Persons with income levels running from under \$6,000 to over \$30,000 per year did not markedly differ in these views.

Yet these views are very much the views that *Journal* articles ascribe to environmentalists — the "other" group that appears not to be inclusive of the forestry profession. I think this is instructive and suggests why foresters as a profession are not enjoying the approbation they once enjoyed. In the stream of benefits from the forest — wood, wildlife, water and recreation — the public associates the forester with the wood and very secondarily with the others. An examination of the budgets of public forestry agencies, a reading of the *Journal*, and perusal of forest experiment station publications strongly reinforce this view. Clearly the professional forester can get the wood out, is best prepared to insure a continued flow, and will be looked to by the public for leadership in this area. For advice on the other resources the public looks elsewhere.

Is it possible that a single profession is simply inadequate to meet a reordering of public priorities that puts other forest benefits on an equal footing with wood? William E. Towell in the September 1978 issue of *American Forests* makes a good case for solving wildlife, fish, and forest conflicts by making fish and wildlife *equal* partners with trees in forestland management plans. Could not as strong a case be made for water and recreation?

If the public at large looks at the forest through environmentalist eyes and the forestry profession views itself as excluding environmentalists, then there appears to be two choices: foresters either become environmentalists and practice multiple-resource management as desired by the public clientele, or specialize in the wood resource and become one of the several sources consulted before someone else makes the main decision. There is no middle ground.

At any rate, the *Journal* in its editorial material should very carefully consider its use of the term *environmentalist*. It just may be the best single descriptor of the people we serve.

Joseph S. Larson, *Professor of Wildlife Biology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.*

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Red Buttes

Congressman Jim Weaver (D-OR) introduced the Red Buttes Wilderness Act of 1979 on June 7. The bill would establish the 84,000 Red Buttes Wilderness on the Oregon-California border. The area is on three national forests (Rogue River, Siskiyou and Klamath) and also includes a small amount of land managed by the BLM and the Oregon Caves National Monument. The bill number is H.R. 4383.

Letter to Editor

30 July 1979
Ettersburg Star Route
Whitethorn, California 95489

Huey Johnson, Secretary
The Resources Agency
Sacramento, California

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I would like to applaud your stand on the inadequacy of the Forest Service's treatment of wilderness in RARE II.

However, I am struck dumb by the glaring hypocrisy of that stand when contrasted

with the state of California's wilderness record. This record is epitomized by the callous disregard accorded the Sinkyone Wilderness. I strongly suggest you push hard for acquisition of the remaining parcels of that Wilderness. Otherwise, I can only conclude your public stance is a cheap publicity grab to convince the nation's environmentally conscious that the Emperor indeed has clothes.

Sincerely,
Robert Sutherland

California Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95616

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