



# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

Vol. 7

P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95617

March-April, 1982

No. 2

## Mining Moratorium a Trojan Horse

# Watt Plan a Fraud

Many conservationists who picked up their newspapers in February to read the headlines "Big Switch By Watt on Wilderness Areas" thought it was too good to be true. It was.

While a few hasty environmental spokespeople quickly commended the apparent reversal by Watt, others were more cautious. The Sierra Club's John McComb said, "it could be a Trojan horse for releasing the proposed wilderness areas."

Within hours of reading the Monday headlines, environmentalists knew the Watt plan was a disaster for wilderness. While Watt was proposing an unneeded mining moratorium, he also was planning the greatest assault ever on unprotected roadless areas.

"We spent most of the day talking to reporters," said Jim Eaton, executive director of the California Wilderness Coalition. "Many of them were skeptical about Watt becoming a wilderness lover, but it was a challenge convincing them how bad the Watt plan really is. They thought he really might be offering a compromise."

Watt's proposal was introduced in the House of Representatives by Manuel Lujan of New Mexico as the "Wilderness Protection Act of 1982", but no Senator yet has followed suit.

"The wilderness proposal ... is a complete fraud and

deception," said Rep. Phillip Burton. "If the Watt proposal passes, the Congress no longer will have any role in protecting these wilderness areas. The president by a stroke of a pen could remove protection."

### THE TROJAN HORSE

At first, conservationists were puzzled by the proposed moratorium on mining until the year 2000. The existing Wilderness Act places wilderness areas off limits to new mining and exploration on January 1, 1984. "Watt has the power to deny the lease applications before him," said Tim Mahoney,

*We confess to being eager to believe such miracles were possible. What had seemed to be a tactical retreat (indeed, a brilliant one) turns out to be a new assault on the natural heritage the interior secretary is supposed to be preserving.*

-The Sacramento Bee

Washington representative of the Sierra Club. "All he has to do is restrain himself for two years. Instead he is telling Congress, 'help me, I'll have to mine unless you stop me.'"

The Watt proposal would close wilderness areas to

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Blue Creek will be logged and roaded if the G.O. Road is completed

Photo by John Hart

## G.O. Road Conspiracy Charged

Spokespersons for the Siskiyou Mountains Resources Council (SMRC) have charged federal bureaucrats with conspiring to violate the constitution and a number of federal statutes in an effort to cover up an ill-planned pork barrel highway that threatens Native American religious freedom, jobs, salmon fisheries, and wildlife.

The remarks came in response to an announcement by Six Rivers National Forest

conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreationists.

After lengthy research, the Sierra Club Legal Defense (SCLDF) has decided not to challenge the snowmobile decision in court. Staff attorneys believe that a lawsuit would take longer to resolve than the so-called "one-year test period" of the snowmobile decision. SCLDF will be monitoring the "test" results and preparing for whatever final decision the Interior Department may make concerning snowmobiles in the national parks.

Steve Evans is a CWC Director and a leader of the Northstate Wilderness Committee.

officials that they intend to construct the controversial Chimney Rock section of the Gasquet-Orleans (G.O. Road). The road would cut through the headwaters of Blue Creek, the most important salmon stream on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation.

SMRC President Chris Jenican said she was "saddened by the agency's apparent contempt for the religious freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution," and that she had "hoped the rule of law would guide the Forest Service decision" which has been pending since 1976. "The agency," she added, "has spent hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the highway will assure the destruction of the Indian churches. Experts from around the nation have testified that the Forest Service project will violate the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom as well as the Native American Religious Freedom Act of 1978."

The Native American Religious Freedom Act requires that federal projects not interfere with the practice of Indian religion. The G.O. Road is designed to facilitate logging in watersheds adjacent to the

highway and will impact the prayer sites.

Bill Devall, chairman of SMRC, detailed what he called the "bureaucratic mendacity" of the Forest Service in their effort to conceal the real impacts of the project from the public. "Calling the G.O. Road a scenic recreational drive is clearly a façade to cover the bureaucracy's intent to facilitate logging and calling their action road reconstruction is equally false," Devall said.

In his statement, Devall continued, "We believe that the Forest Service is clearly in violation of the Multiple Use Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Multiple Use Act requires the Forest Service to manage public forests for the benefit of the multiples values they provide, and yet the Forest Service is intent on completing this highway and logging the sacred Indian high country which will impact salmon and steelhead fisheries, because of the geologic instability of the Blue Creek watershed, and further displace forest-related wildlife.

"Additionally, the National Environmental Policy Act is

cont. on page 5

## Snowmobiles Displace Skiers at Lassen

By Steve Evans

Statistics compiled by the National Park Service indicate a decrease in cross-country skiing in Lassen Volcanic National Park since Interior Secretary James Watt gave the green light for snowmobile use there last December.

Since January 1, snowmobiles have been allowed to operate on a 19-mile segment of the main park road from Manzanita Lake to Kings Creek Meadows during the first seven days of each winter month. Supposedly the Park Service is "testing" the physical and social impacts of snowmobile use for a one year period.

Initial data collected by rangers indicates that 2,102 cross-country skiers were forced to share the park road with 82 snowmobilers since the first of January. Although no formal comparison of ski use this year with previous years has

been made, Park officials are admitting that the number of people skiing in Lassen Park has declined this year.

Chief Ranger Al Schneider said fewer skiers were using the park despite excellent weather and deep snow. "Only 38 skiers registered in at the Manzanita Lake entrance on Saturday (March 6)," Schneider stated. He added that "considering the conditions, normally an awful lot more would be skiing." March 6th was within the seven day period allowed for snowmobile use during March.

Schneider indicated that visitor levels at the downhill ski facility near the south park entrance also were down, speculating that the "state of the economy" might be affecting travel.

Environmentalists believe that ski use levels are down and will be significantly lower than previous years because of the inherent



# Coalition Report

By Jim Eaton

It is a strange time to be working on the behalf of wilderness. Never, before have so many enemies of the preservation concept been in charge of our public lands. At the same time, public support of wilderness is at an all-time high.

A good example of this dichotomy can be seen in Secretary James Watt's recent pronouncement of a moratorium on mining in wilderness. We all really wanted to believe that miracles do happen; we hoped that Watt had finally recognized that this country is founded on the principles of balance and compromise.

Newspapers ran the surprising "reversal" of Watt's policies on the front page. A few environmental leaders even spoke out in support of the mining moratorium.

Other more skeptical leaders began to look closer at Watt's plan. And sure enough, it was simply another raid on our Nation's roadless areas thinly cloaked under the banner of wilderness preservation.

Then the editorials against this sham began appearing. The major dailies expressed outrage at this attempt to fool the public.

Perhaps most importantly, citizens throughout California are now aware that Watt and his cronies have no intention of working towards balanced use of our federal lands. The despoilers of our public trust know their days are numbered, and they plan to steal all they can while they are in charge.

Our challenge is to make Congress stand up to its responsibility to protect our air, land, and water. We are beginning to succeed -- only one California congressman currently is backing the Watt proposal.

The assault on our wild lands is fierce now. Your help is needed more than

ever. But if you do nothing else, please become involved in this year's elections. Your vote, combined with those of wilderness supporters everywhere, will be heard by those in Sacramento and Washington. And we will stop this senseless pillaging of our wilderness.

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Those of you with sharp eyes may have noticed that our Advisory Committee has slowly been expanding. Over the past few months we have been rounding out the committee with advisors from these paths in the wilderness:

- Just mention the name of Julie E. McDonald and watch Forest Service officials shiver with fear and respect. Julie is an important member of the legal team working for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc. in San Francisco. Behind many of the issues mentioned in the Record you will find her handiwork. For example, Julie is an integral part of the long struggle to protect Blue Creek and stop the G.O. Road in the Siskiyou, and she recently filed the appeal of geothermal leasing in three California national forests. Her expertise as an attorney working on wilderness and forest issues is a great value to the Coalition and other wilderness supporters.

- A stalwart supporter of the proposed Siskiyou wilderness, Tim McKay has long been the CWC's contact on the North Coast. When information is needed on wilderness or rivers in the redwood region, Tim either knows the answer or who among his vast array of contacts is the expert. As coordinator of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata, he has a varied job covering recycling, the publishing of Econews, herbicide spraying, to the protection of the tall trees. Tim has been the Coalition's key contact for a number of

years; we hope he can continue to exist as a subsistence environmentalist for many more.

- Bern Shanks is a man with many hats: professor, author, and now Assistant to the Secretary for Resources for Federal Land Policies. Bern has been defending the State's interest in federal land issues -- oil and gas leasing, geothermal drilling, wilderness designations, and disposal of public land -- working under Huey Johnson. He is an expert on BLM lands and the Sagebrush Rebellion and is an avid outdoorsman. His book Wilderness Survival is a compendium of techniques to learn for exploring our wild mountains, forests, deserts, and waters.

We also have added a new member group this month, The Save Our Creek Committees of America. The group's founder, 78-year young Roland Hauck of Sonoma, has been working to have all urban stretches of California creeks designated as mini-wilderness strip parks for public education and enjoyment. Those of us who spent happy childhood days along creeks near home are delighted that Roland is defending our urban wilds from vegetative removal, channelization, and even complete paving over.

Wilderness Digest is our newest business sponsor. For those of you not familiar with this publication, the Digest is a must for those using our wilderness areas in California, Arizona, and Nevada. Editor Don Deck supplies you with permit procedures, rules, addresses, phone numbers, sources of maps and books, and well as other helpful information and hints -- all for \$2.95 in your local backpack store. We'll give you more information in the next issue of the Record, including mail order information.

## Coalition in Action

### WATT HATH GOD WROUGHT

Exposing the "Wilderness Preservation Act of 1982" and debunking the myth that Interior Secretary James Watt is now a champion of wilderness has been a top activity at the CWC.

Immediately after the first reports of Watt's "mining moratorium" in wilderness, Coalition staff and volunteers began calling reporters to run follow-up stories to correct misconceptions about Watt's plan. Most major newspapers did run rebuttal articles, although none of them were front page items like the original news. Jim Eaton and the CWC were mentioned by the Los Angeles Times, Sacramento Bee, and San Francisco Examiner.

The Coalition also mailed a Wilderness Alert to selected members in the Sacramento area after the Bee ran an editorial supporting the Watt plan. The Bee was gracious enough to run another editorial a few days later saying they were fooled by Watt's rhetoric until they saw the

details of his proposal, and that they now are appalled by his action.

### GEOTHERMAL APPEAL

The California Wilderness Coalition joined the Sierra Club in appealing the Forest Service's approval of geothermal leasing on the Lassen, Klamath, and Shasta-Trinity National Forests. Julie E. McDonald of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund filed the notice of appeal and request for extension of time in early February.

The Forest Service would allow geothermal exploration up to the boundary of Lassen Volcanic National Park and inside several existing and proposed wilderness areas. The CWC and the Club are objecting to the finding of "no significant impact" for the leasing of these fragile lands.

### CAL NICKEL

Executive Director Jim Eaton joined a crowd of Northcoast wilderness and river activists for a strategy meeting in Ukiah at the end of February. A major topic was the massive California

Nickel project to mine along the Smith River. The project would disrupt a roadless area, dam the only completely free-flowing river in the State, and cause numerous other problems in this remote region. A future issue of the Record will explain the impacts of this project and the values that would be lost.

A special Thank You! to Michael Remy of the Planning and Conservation League for providing Jim transportation to the meeting.

## Help Set a New Record

Your donation of \$300.00 or more can pay for the typesetting, printing, and distribution of an issue of the Wilderness Record.

Our "angels" for the January-February issue were Anne and Bob Schneider of Davis. Nobody came forward to help this edition, but there's still time to sponsor the April-May issue!

Your tax-deductible donation will allow us to expand our efforts to protect California's wilderness heritage.

# Update

## Desert Plan Amendments

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) currently is considering amendments to the California Desert plan. A number of proposals would weaken the existing rules now only a year old.

In addition, BLM intends to open the Desert plan this summer for major modifications. In a meeting

with conservationists, State Director Ed Hastey said he thought area managers and other Bureau personnel would have amendments to make the plan easier to implement. Hastey wants to review the plan to "make sure it complies with the policy and philosophy of this administration."

## Geothermal Leasing Results

Interior Secretary James Watt issued a directive to the Bureau of Land Management to lease by September 30, 1982, all Known Geothermal Resources Areas (KGRAs) where leasing is environmentally possible.

Recently, five areas were leased in California. The areas are: 42,544 acres in the Coso KGRA for high bids of \$6,744,770, 25,290 acres in

the Mono-Long Valley KGRA for \$2,118,232, 11,678 acres in the East Mesa KGRA for \$29,804, 14,064 acres in the Randsburg and East Brawley KGRAs for \$2,785,834.

The leases were issued for ten year terms, with extensions possible if warranted by production. Annual rentals are \$2 per acre, with royalty rates of ten percent.

## Echo River Calendar

Echo, The Wilderness Company has a great action shot of a raft coming through Clavey Falls on the Tuolumne River on their 1982 calendar.

For an unfolded copy, send \$2.00 for postage and handling to them at 6529 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609.

## T-Shirts For Sale



CWC T-shirts are selling fast! Maybe it's because we have such a low price (\$7.00) for a three color design. Our advisors are telling us to raise the price to \$10.00! But for the next few months, we plan to help keep inflation down.

Our inflation fighter T-shirts feature the CWC logo of black mountains outlined beneath a blue sky, with yellow sand dunes in the foreground. KEEP IT WILD rings the top of the logo, with the CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION beneath.

T-shirts are 100% double knit cotton, and are available on white, tan, light blue, and yellow. Sizes are S, M, L, and XL. \$7.00 to CWC members; \$8.00 for non-members (tax included). Please add \$1.00 postage; 50¢ for each additional T-shirt. If you will accept a substitute color, please indicate so.

T-shirt	size	color	amount
Subtotal			
Shipping			
TOTAL			

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_



# BLM Wilderness Studies Underway

By Steve Evans

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) currently is studying over a million acres of roadless land in California and northwestern Nevada for its wilderness potential. Over 90 wilderness study areas (WSAs) were designated by the BLM after an intensive inventory conducted in 1979.

While BLM is not required by law to complete these wilderness studies until the 1990's, Interior Secretary James Watt has ordered an accelerated review. As a result, the fate of most WSAs in California will be decided in the next few years.

More than a dozen WSAs are slated for review in 1982. The areas are on the Redding, Susanville, Ukiah, Riverside, and Bakersfield districts. Also, 35 WSAs adjacent to Forest Service roadless areas slated for further planning will be studied this year.

Conservationists are aware of rumors that Secretary Watt wants to rescind wilderness recommendations for the California Desert since this review was completed prior to the Reagan Administration.

The Redding District in central northern California has 32,919 acres in four WSAs up on the decision block in the district planning

effort scheduled for completion in January, 1983.

Three WSAs comprising 32,855 acres on the Susanville District are being integrated into the Alturas resource area plan which will be finished in late 1982 or early 1983. Other areas on that district await a decision in 1984-85.

The Ukiah district will be studying the 33,982-acre Rocky Creek - Cache Creek WSA in Lake and Yolo counties and the 7,183-acre Cedar Roughs WSA in Napa County.

The El Centro Resource Area of the Riverside District will conduct the "Western Counties Wilderness Study Project" for 30,883 acres in San Diego and Riverside counties.

The Bakersfield District will be looking at the South Sierra, Sheep Ridge, Milk Ridge, Owens Peak, and Paiute Cypress WSAs.

## HOW TO HELP

Citizen participation in the BLM wilderness study process is crucial. Because of the monumental task of monitoring millions of acres of roadless land the state, the California Wilderness Coalition is organizing the "Adopt a WSA" program in cooperation with the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society.

We are encouraging individuals and groups to "adopt" one or more Wilderness Study Areas and monitor their progress during the BLM study. This includes participating in the BLM study of the area, "watchdogging" the area to ensure that BLM does not allow activities that would

damage its wilderness quality, and providing support during the public comment period.

To participate in the program, return the form on this page to the state coordinator Jim Eaton at the California Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95617.

Conservationists concerned about the wilderness study effort on the Susanville and Redding Districts recently met in Susanville to plan strategy for the accelerated review and the needed public constituency for the remote high desert areas in California and Nevada. Active conservationists are needed to hike and explore WSAs that are up for decisions this year and to organize for the public involvement opportunities that will follow.

A combination meeting, car camp, and exploration is being planned for May 8-9. The camp and meeting will be on the boundary of the Tunnison Mountain - Willow Creek WSA just north of Susanville. Excellent opportunities for hiking, trout fishing, and a chance to get involved will abound for those who would like to attend the best of both worlds: a meeting to deal constructively with an important conservation in a wilderness setting.

For more information, contact Steve Evans (Chico) at (916) 891-6424 days or 343-6547 evenings, Stan Weidert (Shingletown) at (916) 474-3679, or Curt Spalding (Susanville) at (916) 257-4431.

Steve Evans is a CWC Director and a leader of the Northstate Wilderness Committee.



Low elevation scene in the Rocky Creek - Cache Creek WSA  
Photo by Phil Farrell

## Decisions Coming This Year

# Wilderness Study Areas

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) that are under study for decisions this year by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are found from San Diego to Modoc counties.

### REDDING DISTRICT

Redding District Wilderness Study Areas set for review in 1982 are:

**Timbered Crater:** Located in Modoc County, this 18,690-acre WSA consists of a lava flow covered with ponderosa pine, digger pine, and brush species dominated by an extinct volcanic crater. The WSA is adjacent to a 4,400-acre Forest Service RARE II area recommended for wilderness status by the Carter Administration.

**Lava:** This area is another Modoc Plateau lava flow, and the 11,632-acre WSA contains unique geologic and botanical features as well as excellent wildlife habitat and opportunities for primitive recreation.

**Tunnel Ridge:** 2,397 acres of forested ridges and creeks make up this WSA which is adjacent to the Weaver Baldy RARE II "Further Planning" area in Trinity County (a potential addition to the proposed Trinity Alps wilderness).

**Ishi Caves:** Although only 200 acres, this WSA is adjacent to the 41,000-acre Ishi Wilderness recommendation of the U.S. Forest Service. The area includes archeological sites left by the remnants of the extinct Yahi Indian tribe.

### RIVERSIDE DISTRICT

The areas in the "Western Counties Wilderness Study Project" are:

**Agua Tibia:** This 360-acre area is bounded on the south by the existing Agua Tibia Wilderness on the Cleveland National Forest.

**Beauty Mountain:** Chaparral covers much of Beauty and Iron mountains in the 11,342-acre WSA.

**Combs Peak:** This small area was inventoried because the 71 acres are adjacent to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

**Hauser Mountain:** 5,489 acres of dense vegetation, rolling plateau areas, and steep, rocky mountain slopes comprise this area.

**Western Otay Mountain and Southern Otay Mountain:** The rare and endangered tectate cypress is part of the chaparral cover for these two WSAs that total 13,692 acres.

### SUSANVILLE DISTRICT

The three areas included in the Alturas resource area plan are:

**Pit River:** The deeply cut Pit River Canyon, etched with rimrock and surrounded by volcanic buttes and flat grasslands is the core of this 11,575-acre WSA. The rare Prairie Falcon has been sighted here.

**Tule Mountain:** This 16,950-acre WSA is dominated by the 7,000 foot summit of Tule Mountain, a prominent landmark for the surrounding region. Covered with sagebrush-juniper, ponderosa pine, and mountain mahogany, this area was included in the wilderness study program

because of a formal protest by the California Wilderness Coalition and other groups.

**South Warners:** Adjacent to the existing South Warner Wilderness on Modoc National Forest are nine separate parcels totaling 4,330 acres. They are part of a steeply eroded mountain scarp reaching from fir and ponderosa pine vegetation to the lower sagebrush and grassland.

### UKIAH DISTRICT

The two areas under study in the Ukiah District are:

**Rocky Creek - Cache Creek:** Rafting and kayaking are popular through this 33,982-acre WSA in Lake and Yolo counties. A Tule Elk herd inhabits the northern portion of the area, and several rare plant communities have been identified. With elevations as low as 1,200 feet it is accessible most of the year.

**Cedar Roughs:** This 7,183-acre WSA is located west of Lake Berryessa in Napa County. This unique area is a large serpentine mound covered by a large stand of sargent cypress.



The Tunnison Mountain - Willow Creek WSA in Lassen County  
Photo by Northeast Californians for Wilderness

## How To Adopt A BLM Wilderness Study Area:

Fill out this form and return it to Jim Eaton, California Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95617.

( ) I want to adopt a WSA. Please send me the name and number of an area.

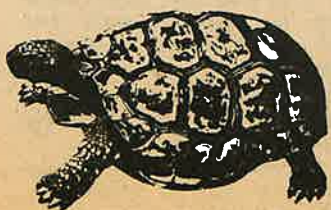
( ) I am interested in adopting \_\_\_\_\_ WSA, # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

The state coordinator will send you a WSA name and number, and the address for the appropriate BLM District Office to write for information on your adopted area.





# Watt Plan Exposed

## Wilderness Destruction Act of 1982

Interior Secretary James Watt's proposal for opening wild lands for development under the guise of protection was brought to the House of Representatives in February. Congressman Manuel Lujan of New Mexico and seven other Republican co-sponsors (including Chip Pashayan of Fresno) introduced H.R. 5603, the "Wilderness Protection Act of 1982."

Although Lujan's bill is similar to Watt's proposal, there are several sections that are worse. For example, Lujan proposes that Congress be given 60 days to object to a Presidential opening of wilderness areas to mining, but a bill halting the mining could then be vetoed by the President!

By mid-March there still was no companion bill in the Senate. Even avid anti-wilderness Senators shied away from Watt's plan.

Sources on the House Interior Committee indicate that they want the Senate to take up this issue first. "If Watt can't get a bill through the Senate with his own party in charge, he shouldn't bother us," commented a staffperson.

The Lujan (Watt) bill will accomplish the following:

### WITHDRAWALS AND EXEMPTIONS

- \* Withdraws from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and

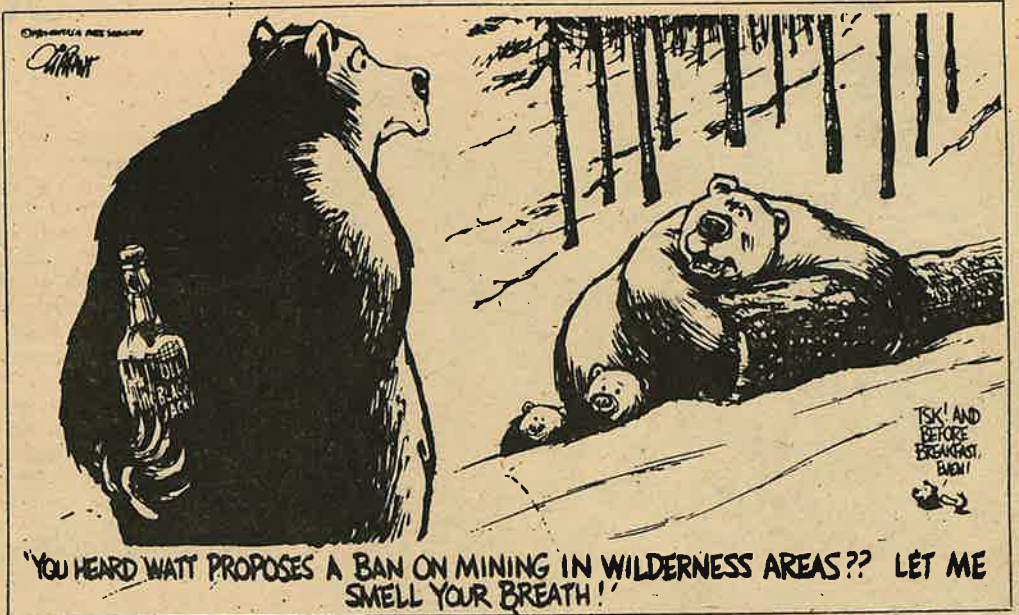
disposition under all mineral leasing laws the following lands: areas currently designated as wilderness, BLM Wilderness Study areas already designated, RARE II areas recommended for wilderness designation, and Congressionally designated wilderness study areas.

- \* Provides for the reopening of withdrawn lands by the President upon a finding of an urgent national need. The Congress has sixty calendar days to pass a bill (which the President could veto!) reversing the President's decision.

- \* Provides for prospecting, seismic surveys, and core sampling in the withdrawn areas but prohibits road construction, improvement of existing roads and exploratory drilling of oil and gas wells. Any information gathered may be kept confidential by the government.

- \* Exempts certain lands from the withdrawals. These include: RARE II and BLM Wilderness Study Areas released by a statewide bill or other Act of Congress already in effect or hereafter enacted, BLM and RARE II lands released elsewhere in this bill, and Alaska lands.

- \* Provides for mining and mineral leasing in withdrawn lands if it can be done without surface occupancy and allows the the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to promulgate



regulations and stipulations with respect to mining or mineral leasing on lands adjacent to withdrawn lands.

- \* Protects all valid existing rights in withdrawn areas. Individuals would be allowed to perfect their claims.

### RELEASE OF AREAS

- \* Provides for the release of BLM Wilderness Study Areas determined unsuitable for wilderness. The release takes effect upon submittal of a recommendation by the President to the Congress. Areas recommended for wilderness to the Congress must be enacted within two years or they are

automatically released.

- \* Provides for the immediate release of RARE II non-wilderness lands not heretofore designated as wilderness by the Congress, RARE II lands recommended as wilderness but not so designated by the Congress by January 1, 1985, and RARE II further planning areas not recommended for wilderness by September 30, 1985 or designated as wilderness by the Congress by January 1, 1988.

- \* Prohibits any lawsuits contesting the sufficiency of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for RARE II and overturns existing cases (California v. Bergland). No further statewide,

regional, or national roadless area review may be conducted.

### BUFFER ZONES

- \* Prohibits the creation of buffer zones around any wilderness areas.

### REPORT TO CONGRESS

- \* Requires a Report to Congress every five years on the energy and mineral potential of withdrawn areas together with recommendations concerning resource inventory programs, and the need for exploration programs.

- Jim Eaton, John Hooper, Tim Mahoney, and Doug Scott.



## Mining 'Moratorium'

cont. from page 1

mining, but they would be reopened in the year 2000. The Wilderness Act would close them permanently in 1984. In addition, Watt would give the President power to declare a "national need" to open wildernesses to mining during the moratorium.

The real threat to wild lands in the Watt plan is the "release" of millions of acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service lands, and the establishment of impossible deadlines for Congress to designate future wilderness areas.

Watt has incorporated the anti-wilderness Hayakawa bill into his proposal by immediately releasing all "non-wilderness" Forest Service roadless areas (including those under injunction in lawsuits) to other multiple uses. Congress would have two years in which to formally protect "wilderness" recommendations or else these areas would automatically become open to

development. "Further planning" areas not recommended for wilderness by the Forest Service by September, 1985, would be opened; recommended areas would then have to be approved by Congress by the end of 1987.

Considering the ease of blocking pending legislation, environmentalists feel these

*The olive branch that Secretary Watt seemed to extend in the fight over the nation's wilderness turns out to be a cactus. Watt should acknowledge that he is wrong on the issue, and stop trying to force his way into the wilderness disguised as a friend of nature.*

-Los Angeles Times

provisions would result in the development of millions of acres of wild lands.

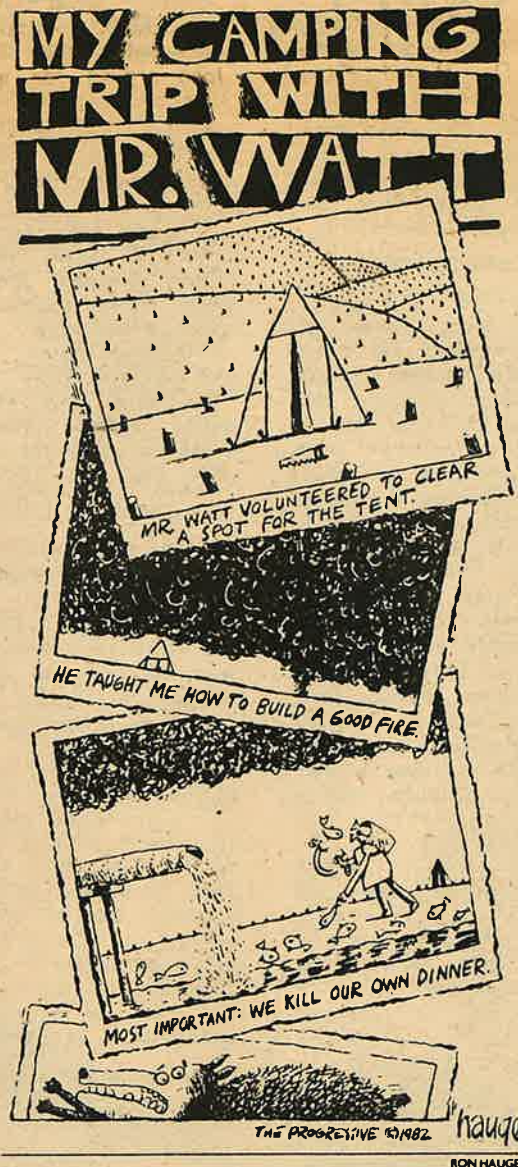
An additional provision requires that lands released never again be considered for wilderness in planning efforts of the Forest Service, even if

these areas somehow remain wild in the future.

Watt also goes after BLM Wilderness Study Areas. These areas currently must go before Congress for a final decision on whether or not they should become wilderness. The Watt plan would allow the President to release areas the administration felt were "unsuitable" for wilderness without going to Congress. For those areas recommended as "suitable," Congress would be given two years to designate them as wilderness or else these areas, too, would be released to development.

### DECEPTION & SUBTERFUGE

"The bill supported by the administration literally is putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop. It demonstrates to me that Secretary Watt is truly a wolf in wolf's clothing when it comes to protection that should be afforded our wilderness areas," Burton said.



"This is just the latest in a series of attempts by Watt to defuse this politically hot issue," said Mahoney. "Having created this leasing threat to wilderness areas in the first place, Watt has come up with a draft bill that places in serious jeopardy every acre of potential wilderness conservationists are striving to see designated."

Copies of the "Wilderness Protection Act of 1982" and a Sierra Club analysis of the bill are available from the

California Wilderness Coalition. Please send \$1.00 to cover printing and postage.

*We'd advise Congress to go over Secretary Watt's proposal with a sharp and wary eye. As for conservationists, they'd be wise not to welcome Watt into the fold just yet. The secretary may be singing the hymns, but that doesn't prove he's got religion.*

-San Jose Mercury



## Roadless Areas

### Fare Poorly

# Highlights of the Sierra Forest Plan

By Dave Weiss



Proposed San Joaquin Wilderness on the Sierra National Forest

Photo by Rose Certini

## G.O. Road (Again)

cont. from page 1

intended to be full disclosure legislation in that bureaucracies are required to provide a complete statement of a project's impacts for the public and other agencies. The G.O. Road Final Environmental Impact Statement not only uses deceitful language to obscure the full impacts of the project, but the Forest Service is denying access to the EIS by attempting to charge the public for copies of the document. Not only is this action contrary to the letter and spirit of NEPA and FOIA, but it violates the public trust.

The environmental statement concludes that completion of the G.O. Road will cost Humboldt County a total of 203 jobs as timber will be diverted to mills in Del Norte County, but no mention of this fact is made in the summary which the Forest Service is feeding to

the public. Expected job losses in Siskiyou County resulting from construction of the highway are completely ignored," Devall concluded.

Council President Jenican also noted that SMRC has long argued for a balanced economic policy for the region that must include maintenance of the area's irreplaceable assets and added that the Chairman of the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Alexander Aldrich, hit the nail on the head when he said, "the Forest Service has created an unnecessary conflict between economic development and preservation." Aldrich also said that the G.O. Road matter was a "... case study of inept agency planning and decision making ..."

"The public is left no choice short of expensive litigation or direct action if it wishes to see the laws of the land upheld," Jenican

said. "The Siskiyou Mountain Resources Council intends to take every measure possible to see that justice is done."

The Siskiyou Mountains Resources Council is a coalition of individuals and over 30 organizations dedicated to the protection of the unique cultural and biological attributes of the Siskiyou Mountains. Members reside throughout northwestern California and the United States who continue work on over two decades of effort aimed at establishing biological and cultural preserves in the Siskiyou.

## BULLETIN

We have just learned that Representative George Miller of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs plans to hold hearings in the State on oil and gas leasing in wilderness areas.

The hearings are tentatively set for April 12 in Los Angeles and April 16 in San Francisco.

A complete report on the hearings will appear in the next Wilderness Record.

That means that American sportsmen can now legally hunt leopards, and the Fish & Wildlife Service hopes they will do just that. As a spokesman for the agency explained, leopards have little value in Africa because the U.S. bans import of leopard skin products. But if hunters begin bagging them, Africans will see the animals as a "potential business and take better care of them."

-National News Report

**JOB HAZARD:** Art Sedlack, who became a folk hero in 1974 when he shot a snowmobile operating illegally in Glacier National Park, has been released from the National Park Service. Sedlack admitted his job in recent years had lost some of its thrills - his task has been to mark "hazardous" trees in the park - but he protested the firing. However, he clearly has had difficulties.

"What's a hazardous tree in the woods?" asked Sedlack, after four years on the hazardous tree beat.

-High Country News

**DESERT JUSTICE:** A 27 year old Phoenix man was killed last month when a saguaro cactus he had been shooting at fell on him. Police said a 23-foot section of the 27-foot high saguaro fell on the shotgun-firing man, crushing him.

The man had already shot down another saguaro beforehand, which is a misdemeanor in Arizona.

-Econews

**SPORTS NOTE:** An Idaho judge said he won't stop the infamous Rexford, Idaho "rabbit drives," in which Idaho farmers club jackrabbits to death. He did, however, prohibit "bunny baseball," in which the drive participants threw the rabbits up in the air and hit them with baseball bats.

-High Country News

**KILL 'EM TO SAVE 'EM:** The Office of Endangered Species in the Department of the Interior has changed the status of leopards in 18 African countries from "endangered" to "threatened."

are asking for the adoption of a wider range of indicator species matched to a variety of wildlife habitats.

### TIMBER

The plan reduces timber harvest levels and increases timberland regeneration efforts in order to manage the timber resources on a long-term, sustained-yield basis. This is a commendable move towards sound forest management -- especially given the strong pressures being placed on the forest to raise timber production. There is, nevertheless, room for improvement.

The Forest Service will use timberland management techniques including liberal herbicide spraying, conversion of oak woodland to conifer forest, clear-cutting, and harvest rotations as short as 60 years. These practices will impair visual quality, maximize timber production in the near term future only, and as with all reductions in plant diversity lead to much lower animal diversity.

Conservationists feel the Forest Service should mitigate aesthetic and wildlife impacts by incorporating management guidelines to:

- allow for longer rotations with calculations based on board feet and with periodic thinnings;

- encourage hand applications of spray herbicides when herbicides must be used;

- leave 1/2 mile buffer strips between clear-cuts;

- use clear-cuts five to twelve acres large;

- replant with more trees;

- leave the forest's only Black Oak woodland in oak rather than attempt to convert it all to conifers;

- set up buffer zones to protect small wetlands under one acre in extent; and

- ensure the forest has hard snags, soft snags, snag regeneration, and sufficient downed logs for wildlife habitat. Long rotations allow growing snags and logs to a size useful to wildlife.

### RANGE

The plan calls for a modest increase in grazing. Conservationists are urging the Forest Service to clarify and strengthen guidelines for reducing conflicts between livestock and wildlife, particularly in riparian zones.

### MINERALS AND ENERGY

The plan fails to confront these issues; conservationists are letting the Forest Service know this is a major omission.

### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

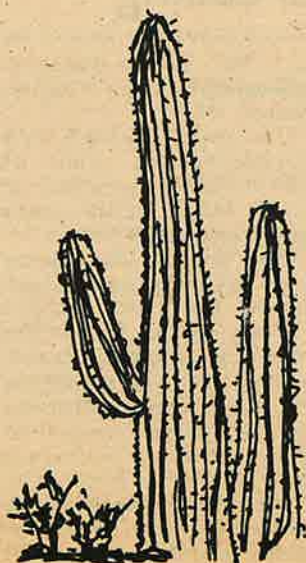
The plan limits off-road vehicles to designated routes only. Conservationists support this and urge that any new routes be put in already developed parts of the forest, not roadless areas.

### SUMMARY

Tremendous pressure is being placed on the Forest Service by industry and the Reagan administration to increase commodity output from America's national forests. The Sierra Forest Plan is a pivotal document in National Forest management.

Individuals and groups wishing more information on participating in the forest planning process should drop a note to the California Wilderness Coalition.

Dave Weiss is an intern with the Sierra Club in San Francisco.





# Mountain Lion Moratorium Ending

On January 1, 1983, the existing moratorium on trophy hunting of mountain lions in California will expire. The lions' present semi-protected status in this state is based on 1971 legislation which temporarily changed the cougar from a game animal to a protected nongame mammal. Senate Bill 1333, recently introduced by Senator Robert Presley, would make the trophy hunting ban permanent and classify the mountain lion as a "fully protected mammal."

Under the 1971 legislation the taking of individual lions which kill domestic livestock was allowed by permit. SB 1333 would continue to allow the killing of depredating lions, while tightening the restrictions on killing them.

A 1977 California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) report said that the existing depredation policy appeared adequate to handle the low-level predation on domestic stock. In 1981, for example, 41 incidents were reported statewide, most involving sheep and goats. Eleven lions were killed under depredation permits issued by DFG. This is put into perspective by the count of 900,000 stock sheep and 700,000 additional lambs produced in California for a typical year -- 1977.

SB 1333 will first be heard before the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee, which may have held a hearing and vote as early as February 23, 1982 -- or perhaps after you read this paper! One member of the committee, the notorious H. L. ("Gun Owners of America") Richardson, unsuccessfully pushed legislation in 1979 to allow an open season on lions in any county where depredations were reported.

If SB 1333 survives the committee, it will then be considered on the Senate floor. A similar bill was expected to be introduced in the Assembly.

Major opposition to SB 1333 comes from the National Rifle Association, the "California Houndsmen for Conservation," and the Committee for Reestablishment of Mountain Lion Hunting in California, as well as a few ranchers.

Numerous conservation organizations are supporting the legislation. Further information may be obtained from either Richard Spotts, Defenders of Wildlife, 5604 Rosedale Way, Sacramento, CA 95822 (916-442-6386) or the Mountain Lion Coalition Campaign Committee, 345 South McDowell Blvd., #330, Petaluma, CA 94952.



## 1080 Ban Reversed

By Dennis Coules

On January 28, 1982, President Reagan reversed the 10-year old executive ban on the use of chemical compound 1080 to kill coyotes and other predators. Compound 1080 and other toxicants were banned from use in predator control on public lands in 1972 by Executive Order 11643 of Richard Nixon. This was followed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suspension of the use of 1080, thallium, strychnine and cyanide for predator control, also in 1972.

It is suspected that the EPA suspension of 1080 will also be lifted this year, as one EPA official has already predicted "there will be some use of it" allowed again.

Before President Reagan's action, only a portion of the 1972 toxicant bans had been tampered with, when both EPA and President Ford approved the use of sodium cyanide for M-44 "coyote-getters" in the mid-1970s. Some experimental use of 1080 in toxic collars on sacrificial lambs has also been permitted.

Environmentalists have charged that there is no justification for the Reagan reversal, and fear that widespread poisoning of wildlife in the name of "predator control" may again become commonplace. The

major objection to 1080 is that the poison kills not only the major target -- coyotes -- but also foxes, bobcats, hawks, eagles, weasels, badgers, bears, endangered black-footed ferrets, wolves, San Joaquin kit foxes, and every other predator or scavenger which eats the poisoned bait. In addition, the carcasses and even vomit of predators poisoned by 1080 also become toxic, further spreading deaths and injuries far from the target zone.

Conservationists have attacked the entire concept of "prophylactic" predator control, whereby poisoned baits, steel-jawed traps and other methods are used to reduce the predator population in a given area and presumably automatically reduce predation on livestock.

The effectiveness of such methods can be short-circuited by increased reproductive capacity in predator populations subject to "control." Even if successful, predator destruction may result in outbreaks of rodents and other varmints which compete with livestock for forage. These outbreaks may then be used to justify new poisoning campaigns to kill the rodents.

Even some relatively selective control methods, such as steel collars spiked with toxins intended to kill

only the individual predating coyotes, also have the problem of secondary poisoning via carcasses.

Control of 1080, although likely to be nonexistent soon at the federal level, is theoretically possible at the state level. The state actually funds many of the federally-operated predator control operations through annual and increasing contributions to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Animal Damage Control Program (ADC). It is reported that Governor Brown plans to appoint a task force to study predator control issues.

State Resources Secretary Huey Johnson has called 1080 "one of the worst possible poisons because it is passed through the food chain to innocent wildlife." In a memo to the governor, Johnson stated that "the entire predator control program is a subsidy to the range livestock industry."

However, State Department of Food and Agriculture Director Richard Rominger countered that this program is "no different than a lot of programs that assist various segments of the population." He requested further funds for ADC if 1080 use were to be reinstated, and plans to support 1080 at upcoming EPA hearings.



## Mountain Lion Status

The highest estimate of mountain lion numbers in this state remains at 2400, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) projection based on a three-year tagging study in Monterey County. Independent tracking studies by the late Dr. Carl Koford indicate a much smaller population of 1000, with only 300 females capable of reproduction.

Low reproductive capacity (two offspring per female every two years on the average), high mortality of juveniles and population-suppressing territorial interactions between lions, provide natural limits to growth of this small population.

Dr. Michael Kutilek and his students have studied the cougar for three years and found an alarming decline in suitable habitat due to residential subdivisions, freeways which isolate sub-populations, and other developments. This is because highest population densities occur not in protected wilderness areas, but rather in the lower elevations and the largely unprotected Coast Ranges where deer are abundant.

An opportunistic carnivore, the mountain lion preys primarily on deer, but also eats rodents, rabbits, wild pigs, opossums and occasional domestic animals. Cougars have not been a significant factor in depressing deer herds, the size of which depend much more on the condition of the habitat than on either natural

predation or licensed hunting. However, the mountain lions serve an important role as a key predator in preventing prey populations of all kinds from exceeding the carrying capacity of their environment and destroying their own habitat.

As development continues to degrade lion habitat in our state, the low population of mountain lions is likely to decline further. The addition of trophy hunting to these rising pressures could spell the end to viable lion populations in California.

-Dennis Coules

## Pronghorn Antelope Population Increasing

Northeastern California's pronghorn antelope population has moved closer to the 7,000 mark, according to the latest winter census of the animals conducted by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Pronghorn roam a number of potential wilderness areas in Lassen and Modoc counties, including the Skedaddle, Five Springs, and Tule mountain areas.

DFG is proposing a special hunt for 620 buck antelope and depredation permits for 30 doe antelope.

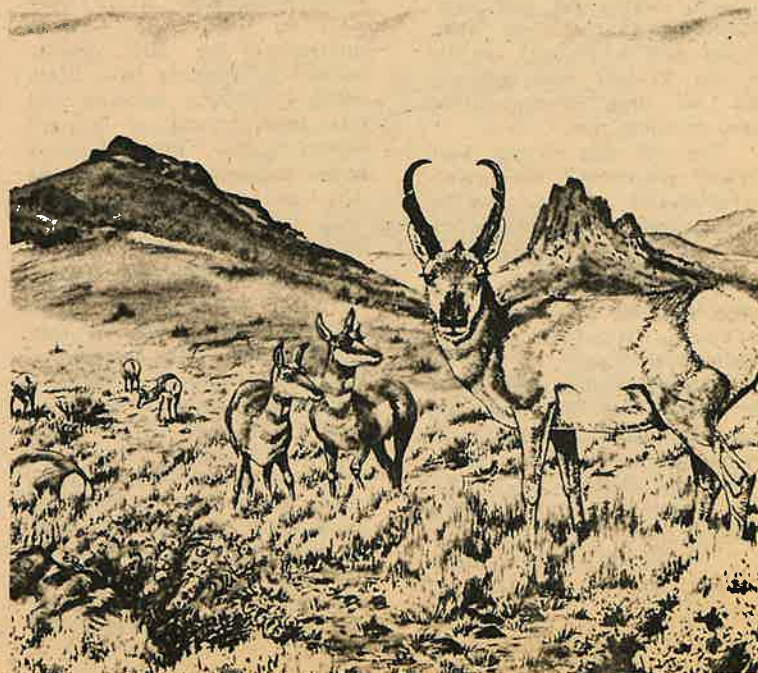
A five-day aerial survey turned up a total of 6,984 animals, the highest count since the present census system was begun 29 years

ago. The largest herd, in northwestern Lassen County, numbered 457.

The count exceeds the previous record count of 6,910 pronghorn recorded in January 1980. Last year's survey found 6,905 animals.

From the January census and a sex-ratio count each summer, the DFG gathers data to help guide its management program. During the last 18 years, special hunts have been authorized under a limited number of permits based on the census data.

The survey also noted the presence of eight coyotes on antelope winter range. Last year's coyote count was six.



Pronghorn antelope roam potential wilderness areas in northeastern California



# Wilderness Wildlife

## NEWTS

By Dennis Coules

Pacific Coast newts (genus *Taricha*) are familiar to many who visit natural areas in the relatively humid portions of California. Newts are conspicuous due to their relatively large size, bright orange or red ventral surface, and habits of crawling overland during the daytime and remaining exposed to view when underwater.

### Toxic Defense

The newt's lack of concern for secrecy is well-founded -- its skin, muscle, and blood contain tetrodotoxin, one of the most potent toxins known. Of the eleven species of true newt (family *Salamandridae*) known to contain tetrodotoxin worldwide, the three California species are the most poisonous. The only other organisms known to contain this toxin are the 40+ species of poisonous puffer fish, which have caused numerous human fatalities when eaten in Japan and the South Pacific.

Newt tetrodotoxin was first isolated at Stanford University from California newt (*T. torosa*) eggs found near the campus. When purified, one milligram is potent enough to kill 7,000 mice. The substance interferes with transmission of nerve impulses by blocking the sodium conductance of nerve and muscle cell membranes. The result is paralysis. In severe poisoning, death results from paralysis of heart muscle and the autonomic nerves controlling respiration, causing oxygen starvation of the brain. Newts are harmless to observe or handle, but I wouldn't recommend putting one in your mouth!

Some newts take on a characteristic "swoyback" defense posture when disturbed which exposes their bright ventral surface - perhaps an

example of warning coloration.

Somehow the newt has developed immunity to tetrodotoxin at the level of its own nerve cells. In experiments, newt nerve cells could continue transmitting impulses when bathed in tetrodotoxin concentrations 25,000 times greater than that which blocked transmission in frog nerve cells.

### Range and Habitat

The California newt (*Taricha torosa*) is the most widely distributed of the three species found in the state. Its two subspecies are the Coast Range newt, which is found from Mendocino to San Diego County, and the Sierra newt, which occurs on the western slope of the Sierra. The two subspecies' populations are separated by the Central Valley, where no newts occur.

In the northern Coast Range, the distribution of the Coast Range newt overlaps with that of the rough-skinned newt (mentioned below), however, the Coast Range newt is more abundant on the arid eastern slope of the range. This habitat may be covered with douglas fir/oak or even digger pine/blue oak forests, as compared to the dense redwood/douglas fir forest of the western slopes which are preferred by the rough-skinned newt. In southern California, the Coast Range newt may be seen in chaparral areas. The Sierra subspecies occupies forests that also are relatively arid when compared with the western slope of the Coast Ranges.

The rough-skinned newt (*Taricha granulosa*) is distributed from southeast Alaska to southern Santa Cruz County in California. The largest populations are in the humid portions of the

Coast Ranges, but it also is found in the Sierra foothills as far south as Butte County. Although characteristically a forest dweller, the rough-skinned newt also is established in the hilly coastal grasslands stretching north from San Francisco Bay.

The red-bellied newt (*Taricharivularis*) has the most restricted range, occurring only from the Russian River and Clear Lake areas north to Honeydew in Humboldt County. Its habitat consists of the coastal coniferous and mixed evergreen forests near rivers and streams.

All three species of newts in California are terrestrial most of the year, with adults entering the water only during the breeding season.

### Seasonal Activities and Food

During the summer and fall, most adult newts are terrestrial, living under objects on the ground, inside logs, or underground in rodent or other burrows. After the first heavy fall rains, they may be seen wandering around on the ground surface. In winter or early spring, adults migrate to bodies of water to breed. The timing depends on temperatures and water flow characteristics; ponds are entered earlier than streams because of the greater danger of flooding in streams during the winter.

The red-bellied newt remains in the water only for a short breeding period, while the California newt may linger in water for several additional weeks, even as late as July in southern California. Some individuals of the rough-skinned newt may remain aquatic throughout summer and fall, becoming terrestrial only during the coldest months (December and January), or



*Taricha rivularis*

possibly, remaining permanently aquatic.

The California and rough-skinned newts will utilize both lentic waters (ponds, ditches, lake edges) and lotic (streams, rivers) habitats for breeding, while the red-bellied newt almost always chooses flowing waters where it prefers the quiet pools and backwaters.

After clasping and swimming around with a female newt for awhile, the male deposits a spermatophore in the water, which is a gelatinous mass topped by a capsule of sperm. The capsule is then taken into the vent of the female. Thus fertilization is internal without actual mating taking place.

The eggs are laid underwater in clumps (California and red-bellied newts) or singly (rough-skinned newts), and the aquatic larvae usually metamorphose to the terrestrial adult by the end of summer. Sometimes transformation may not be completed until the following year, especially in cold regions with permanent water bodies. The recently metamorphosed newts are highly terrestrial and may drown if forced to stay underwater.

Newts eat just about any invertebrate small enough to swallow -- snails, earthworms, crustaceans, spiders, insects, etc., and also feed on amphibian eggs, algae, and other plant material. Larvae also may eat detritus (decomposing organic matter).

### Conservation

Newts in California are in no danger of extinction as a group and are fairly widespread. As with most wildlife species, populations may be destroyed by land use practices which alter the natural landscape, especially

housing developments, shopping centers, etc. Other threats to newts include pesticide spraying, road kills while migrating to breeding areas, and overcollecting for pets.

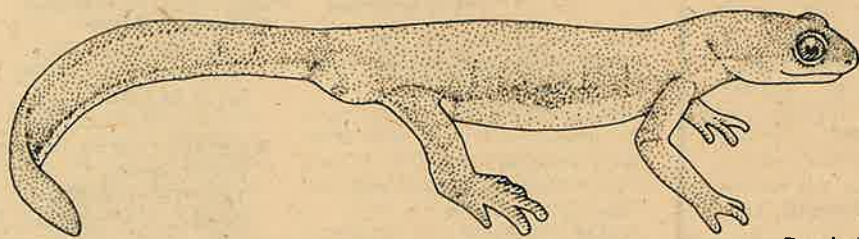
The critical factor for newt population survival is suitable aquatic habitat for breeding. Siltation of streams and rivers due to poor logging and roadbuilding practices may reduce survival of eggs and gilled larvae, particularly of *T. rivularis*. Draining or polluting of small ponds for mosquito control or whatever reason also may take its toll.

Newts have long been popular study animals for zoologists, particularly physiologists and developmental biologists. The discovery of newt tetrodotoxin aided in determining the manner by which nerve cells transmit impulses. The substance is particularly useful in the study of action of anaesthetics (most of which also block nerve transmission) and someday may be used as a local anaesthetic when it becomes possible to prevent rapid diffusion to other parts of the body where it damages non-target tissues. Thus, newts provide another example of the practical value to humans of the often ill-considered "lower" organisms, and consequently the importance of the preservation of all species.

### Further Reading

Frederick A. Fuhrman (1967): "Tetrodotoxin." *Scientific American* 217 (2): 60-71.  
Robert C. Stebbins (1951): *Amphibians of Western North America*. University of California Press, 530 pp.

Dennis Coules is the Coalition's consultant for wildlife and desert issues.



*Taricha torosa*

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The Wilderness Record is the bi-monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Please address all correspondence to:

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Typesetting is done on a Radio Shack™ Model I TRS-80 with a Daisy Wheel Printer II; headlines by the *The California Aggie*; printing by Majestic Publishing Company.

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It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature

# Mono Craters Planning Comeback?

From the Mono Lake Committee

(Editor's note: The Mono Craters is a Forest Service roadless area directly south of Mono Lake. This potential wilderness was designated "non-wilderness" by the Forest Service and recently was dropped from the Mono Lake National Monument bill due to local opposition from miners and off-road vehicle users.)

A recent increase in local earthquake frequency and the discovery of a 10-inch bulge near Mammoth Lakes have led scientists to speculate that an eruption in Mono County's Long Valley Caldera is likely in the near future. Long Valley, which contains Crowley Lake Reservoir, is situated 35 miles south of Mono Lake.

A geologist who predicted the March 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens is now predicting a possible eruption in Long Valley within a year.

Dr. Roy Bailey, leader of a United States Geological Survey (USGS) team studying the Mono Craters-Long Valley region, says that eruptions have taken place every 200 or 300 years over the past 1500 years in this area. The last major eruption occurred between 200 and 250 years ago in the Inyo Craters, which the USGS classified as being a southern extension of the Mono Craters. The recent increase in earthquakes, including four

6.0 magnitude temblors in the Mammoth area within the past two years, has been linked by some scientists to the recently discovered ten-inch-high bulge along a 22-mile stretch of Highway 395.

The bulge's peak, at Casa Diablo Hot Springs, coincides with a site of much geothermal activity. The bulge is thought to be the result of a dome-shaped swelling of a chamber of molten rock several miles underground. Researchers duplicated the bulge by injecting hot molten material into a model of the Long Valley Caldera, at a simulated depth of six kilometers. The simulation, producing results similar to what was being observed in nature, lends credence to the theory. The uplift may have triggered seismic action along existing faults.

An opposite view is held by Dr. Alan Ryell, a seismologist at the University of Nevada. He feels the quakes originated along Hilton Creek Fault, a little-studied rift near Mammoth Lakes, and that the temblors themselves caused the bulge by altering the shape of the underground magma chamber which allowed more molten rock to enter from deeper levels.

Whatever the cause, the events of the past two years have prompted the USGS to issue a hazards watch, the second of three levels of

hazards information formally issued by the USGS which notifies state, local, and federal officials that "a potentially catastrophic event of generally predictable magnitude may occur within an indefinite time," possibly months or years.

This summer, the USGS will conduct a full-scale hazard assessment study to better understand the past volcanic history of the Mono Craters-Long Valley Caldera and to assess more accurately the hazards associated with the region. The geologists will be updating studies done from 1975 to 1978 as well as conducting further leveling investigations which will map additional bulges or sags in the earth's crust, should any occur.

Bailey theorizes that an eruption in the Mono Craters chain of 26 craters would be a more intense but less explosive blast than that which took place at Mt. St. Helens. The event could result in the vertical removal of a large part of the present craters' structure. Much ash and pumice would be spread across the landscape, posing a threat of fire in forest, range, and towns.

Will nature undo what man has wrought at Mono Lake? A volcanic disturbance in the Mono Craters could seriously disrupt or stop the diversion of Mono's lifeblood, its

tributary streams. The diverted water travels through an eleven-mile tunnel under the potentially active volcanic chain, tempting nature and fate to reverse the decades of degradation and allow the life-giving streams to resume their natural course into Mono Lake.

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