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WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

Vol. 7

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July-August, 1982

No. 4

52 Senators Sign On

Wilderness Mining Ban Passes House

Conservationists scored a major victory on August 12th when the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to ban most mining in wilderness and candidate wilderness areas. The vote on H.R. 6542, the Wilderness Protection Act, was 340-58.

A week later, fifty-one Senators joined Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-WA) as co-sponsors of S. 2801, identical to the House-passed measure. As well as a majority of the Senate, a majority of the senators on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee are cosponsors. The bills withdraw

wilderness areas and national forest proposed wilderness and further planning areas from oil, gas, oil shale, coal, phosphate, potassium, sulphur, gilsonite, and geothermal leasing. Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas are not protected, and the bill does not apply to hardrock (metals and uranium) mining.

On the House floor, Rep. Don Young (R-AK) attempted to pass two weakening amendments. The first, to allow seismic blasting for energy exploration in wilderness areas, was

defeated by a vote of 115-281. The second amendment, to end temporary protection for Forest Service wilderness candidate areas, was defeated on a voice vote.

Congressman Leon Panetta spoke against the second Young amendment, stating that "my district's Los Padres National Forest would be severely affected by this amendment." In arguing for protection of candidate wilderness areas, Panetta noted that "wilderness designation and hydrocarbon development are simply incompatible."

Also speaking for

wilderness was Rep. Pete Stark who said, "for the administration to turn around and say that Government is dutybound to examine development opportunities in these areas goes outside the realm of sensibility - and could only come from the mind of someone who could hold a private, illegal cocktail party on the graves of our Nation's war dead." Stark added, "that is voodoo environmental policy, and as with any voodoo policy, it holds no water because it has been stuck full of holes."

Other California Representatives testifying

on behalf of the bill were Jerry Patterson and Norman Mineta.

In the Senate, the bill faces a rough time getting out of the Energy Committee. Despite a majority of Senators backing the measure, Senator James McClure (R-ID) likely will try to add a "release" provision to S. 2801. Earlier this year California Senator S.I. Hayakawa introduced a nationwide "release" bill to speed development of roadless lands and wilderness study areas.

"The Hayakawa release language erects barricades to any future wilderness designation,

making it nearly impossible for deserving areas to be added to the wilderness system," said Tim Mahoney, a Washington, D.C. representative of the Sierra Club. "If Secretary Watt's allies are successful, they will kill the Wilderness Protection Act. It is crucial that Senators learn about our strong opposition to release language."

Kern Conference Approaching

There still is time to preregister for South Sierra 3, the only California wilderness conference this year. The gathering will be near the shores of Lake Isabella in Kernville on October 22, 23, and 24.

"I'm thrilled with the number of people already signing up for the conference," reports Bob Barnes, CWC President and one of the coordinators of South Sierra 3. "It will be a great weekend for learning about wilderness and having a good time."

Mike Henstra, the other coordinator, has a long list of issues to be covered at the conference. Among them are park, forest, and desert wilderness proposals, wildlife studies, forest planning, wild and scenic rivers, off-road vehicle problems, fire ecology and archaeology. Dan Christenson will present a program on the restoration of the state fish, the golden trout, and Phil Pister will have a major slide show on the South Fork of the Kern.

Citizens Against



Learn about Little Kern River country at the South Sierra 2 Conference

Photo by John Modin

Waste will have spokespeople present to talk about what conferees can do during the final ten days of the "Bottle Bill" campaign, and supporters of proposition 13, the water initiative,

will be on the program. Congressional candidates from the 17th, 20th, and 35th districts also have been invited.

Resource people include Artis Walker, Bev Stevenson, Russ Shay,

Phil Pister, Harry Love, Mike Henstra, Joe Fontaine, Jim Eaton, Dan Christenson, and Bob Barnes. Weekend activities will be a mix of lectures, slide shows, forums, small meetings,

and organizing.

Many national, state, and local groups will be represented. Displays are promised from the Sierra Club and chapters, Audubon Society and chapters, California Wilderness Coalition, California Native Plant Society, Kern Plateau Association, South Fork Watershed Association, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Department of Fish and Game.

Do your early holiday shopping for books, posters, T-shirts, calendars, and other items. There will be a Saturday evening art auction, and raffles and prizes will be distributed throughout the conference. Martin Litton has donated trip for one down Idaho's Salmon River to add to the list of gifts to be offered.

Grand Prize drawing will be a free 3-day, 2-night raft trip down the Kern River from the Forks of the Kern, one of the wildest and most

challenging rivers in California, courtesy of Chuck Richards' Whitewater Inc. of Lake Isabella. If you preregister by October 1st you will get one free ticket to this fantastic drawing.

The gathering will begin on Friday evening, October 22nd, at the Kernville School. No meals will be provided, and participants must arrange their own accommodations. There are numerous eating establishments nearby, however, and beautiful campsites are available along the Kern River.

To preregister, send your name, address, telephone number, and a check for \$5.00 made out to the Kern Plateau Association, to:

South Sierra 3
c/o Kern Valley
Wildlife Association
P.O. Box 2180
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

Coalition Report

By Jim Eaton

Our sharp-eyed readers will notice a return to six columns and a different paper width this issue. These tough economic times have wiped out our headliner, and our previous printer was forced to close his Woodland press. But we have been fortunate enough to return to the Davis Enterprise for publishing the Wilderness Record, although the format will change slightly.

Also, after this four-page issue we will return to our eight-page format in the September-October edition. If our current plans hold, we will be bring you a special insert on the proposed amendments to the California Desert Plan, including BLM's plans to "un-recommend" some of their earlier wilderness proposals.

Speaking of BLM wilderness proposals, CWC's intrepid president, Bob Barnes, has been looking over the Owens Peak WSA down by Walker Pass. Bob joined former Sierra Club president Joe Fontaine for a flight over the roadless area along with an on-the-ground inspection. They report that this fascinating area has four ecotones and lots of interesting values - several of which were

left out of the BLM's wilderness proposal. A large stand of Joshua Trees along Walker Pass should be in the wilderness, along with all of Chimney Creek.

Bob and Joe reported that off-road vehicles are a problem here, and that most primitive roads in the area should be closed and placed in the wilderness proposal. There is also a need to acquire some private lands.

Unfortunately, rumor has it that BLM will be rescinding their earlier suitable recommendation for the portion of the Owens Peak WSA within the California Desert Conservation Area. This might lead to a nonsuitable as well for the lands in the Kern watershed. Obviously, this area needs protectors to keep these wild lands wild.

During my summer stint as house builder, Bob Barnes has done most of the conservation work for the California Wilderness Coalition. He is a co-coordinator of the South Sierra 3 conference being held this October. Bob also has been meeting with BLM officials regarding off-road vehicle problems and is working with individuals and groups to elect pro-wilderness

representatives in November.

Bob also has been setting up media events, especially for the Bottle Bill and Water Initiatives on the fall ballot, and he has worked with Joe Fontaine to fight the privatization of public lands - especially the Pixley Horse Pasture in the San Joaquin Valley. Although only a few hundred acres in size, this patch of public land is prime habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

Now that summer is ending, you can look for additional activity from your Coalition. We'll be present in force at the Kernville conference, and we'll be hitting some other public hearings and meetings set for fall. Also, publications like the Record will be coming a little more promptly to your mailbox.

There is much to do, and we'll be asking for your help. We need to get the Wilderness Protection Act through the Senate, stop BLM from giving away our wilderness study areas, and get heavily involved in forest planning to preserve the further planning RARE II areas. You'll hear from us soon on these subjects.

We would like to welcome the Marin Conservation League as our newest member group.

Update

CWC Appeals Desert Amendments

The California Wilderness Coalition has joined the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and Natural Resources Defense Council in an appeal of oil and gas leases in the California Desert. The leases were approved by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 31 designated areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs).

In their appeal the groups stated that in May BLM announced that currently pending oil and

gas lease applications included applications affecting three million acres within the California Desert Conservation Area. Since that time, several efforts to obtain detailed information on these leases has met with little success. District Manager Gerald E. Hillier noted that BLM was "uncertain as to the exact number of leases that have actually been issued."

Although BLM has not yet supplied the groups

with the detailed information requested, the appeal was filed so that procedural requirements would be met.

In addition, the California Wilderness Coalition has preliminary information that oil and gas leases are proposed for sixty-seven wilderness study areas in the California Desert. More information on these proposals will follow in the next Wilderness Record.

Citizens Blast BLM At Wilderness Hearing

Testimony was 17 to 1 against Bureau of Land Management (BLM) "No Wilderness" recommendations for two areas in the Clear Lake Resource Area. BLM made their preliminary recommendations for the Cedar Roughs and Rocky Creek-Cache Creek Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

"From the rationale given in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, it is clear that these decisions are purely political and not based on good land management," said CWC Executive Director Jim Eaton. The Coalition requested wilderness status for both WSAs as well as another look at the previously rejected Blue Ridge area close to Cache Creek.

The August 2nd formal wilderness hearing in Woodland attracted about fifty people, but BLM officials present were only the wilderness coordinator and the hearing officer. Almost all the speakers took BLM to task for their

non-wilderness proposals despite the Bureau's own glowing reports of the wilderness values and lack of conflicts for the two WSAs.

According to the BLM, the Cedar Roughs Wilderness Study Area currently has "no conflicting land-uses." The visible character "is generally one of a pristine natural landscape." The Sargent cypress stand "is unique both in character and expanse," "appears to be the largest in existence," and "there are no other large stands in established or candidate wilderness areas."

The Rocky Creek-Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area's "primitive and undeveloped state has been retained." The area "has special value for its undisturbed 'typical' landscape." "The Cache Creek corridor provides excellent boating opportunities in a scenic setting." The WSA "contains a serpentine chaparral component of some 5,100 acres...to our knowledge, there are no

other wilderness areas or candidate areas that contain any significant representation of serpentine chaparral."

Regarding both areas, the BLM study points out that "these two WSAs are closer to the San Francisco Bay Area than all but one existing or potential wilderness areas." "It should also be noted that a great deal of the wilderness areas accessible from the population centers are in high elevation zones with very short use seasons."

Others speaking in favor of wilderness included representatives of the Napa Valley Foundation, Napa County Land Trust, Citizens Council for Napa Tomorrow, and the Napa Group, Yolano Group, and Bay Chapter Wilderness Subcommittee of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club representatives supported a partial wilderness alternative for the Rocky Creek-Cache Creek WSA. Citizens from Napa, Davis, and Berkeley spoke in favor of wilderness for both areas.

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Reader's Opinion

Dear CWC:

Just a note to tell you how much I appreciate your work at CWC. And Wilderness Record seems to get better and better with each issue.

State Parks & Recreation Commission hearings on the Sinkhorn Wilderness are slated for 4 October in Garberville. Love to see you there. Let us know and we'll try to dig out some more floor space for you.

Much enjoy Dennis Coules' wildlife notes in the Record. Regarding note on sculpins: thought it might interest you that the Mattole River has two species, prickly and "coast range," but the latter is very atypical and may be a new taxon, in the opinion of Peter Moyle.

-The man who walks in the woods
-Whitethorn

CWC Member Spotlight

Porterville Area Environmental Council

A new member group of the California Wilderness Coalition is the Porterville Area Environmental Council. The Tulare County organization has worked on local environmental issues for several years.

Among other projects, the Council led the drive to designate the 186 acre Yaudanchi Ecological Reserve of the Department of Fish and Game, near Porterville, supported the Golden Trout Wilderness with an emphasis on protecting the Little Kern River watershed, supported

placing Mineral King in the National Park System, and assisted the U.S. Forest Service in a Tule River cleanup.

Current activities include support of the Bottle Bill initiative and of preservation of wilderness and wildlife values of South Fork Kern River.

Council Chairman Dick Chamberlain went to Washington, D.C. last year to testify in behalf of Phillip Burton's California Wilderness Bill, H.R. 7702.

Key Contacts

R.H. Chamberlain, Chairman, 33250 Success Valley Dr., Porterville, CA 93257 (209) 781-0587.

Don Zuckswert, Vice Chairman, 189 E. Chase, Porterville, CA 93257 (209) 784-4099. Mrs. E.O. Mankins, Treasurer.

Membership Dues

Membership in the Porterville Area Environmental Council is \$5 per year. The Council meets quarterly and issues a quarterly newsletter.

Porterville Area Environmental Council
P.O. Box 588
Porterville, CA 93258

Wilderness Wildlife

Roosevelt Elk

By Dennis Coules



The Roosevelt elk, *Cervus canadensis roosevelti* is a subspecies of American elk or wapiti that now ranges from extreme northwestern California to Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The elk was much more widespread in California in the recent past. It was completely extirpated from most of its territory by a combination of hunting for meat, hides, and tusks (for sale to Elks Lodge members) and domination of former habitat by man and domestic animals.

RELATIONSHIPS

The name "elk" is actually a misnomer for our North American species, as this name properly belongs to the European counterpart of the American "moose" (genus *Alces*). The American "elk" is so closely related to the red deer of Europe that it is considered to be the same species by some taxonomists. The term "wapiti" has been used to designate a large group of animals of the genus *Cervus* occurring throughout the world. The group is thought to have entered North America from Asia sometime during the Pleistocene.

Up to six recent subspecies of *Cervus canadensis* have been distinguished for North America. Those naturally occurring in California are the Roosevelt elk and the tule elk. The tule elk, which was formerly abundant in the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and other interior valleys, is considered to be a separate species by some biologists.

The Roosevelt elk is darker and larger than the Rocky Mountain elk.

It is markedly larger than the tule elk, which is North America's smallest and palest form.

DISTRIBUTION/HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Roosevelt elk formerly ranged throughout the Coast Ranges from the Oregon border to as far south as San Francisco Bay and eastward at least to the region of Mount Shasta. The Pt. Reyes-Tomales Bay region was the center of a large elk population until 1870. The elk were also quite widespread before the time of heavy settlement by Yankees, ranging through nearly the entire San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys. The two forms of elk probably intergraded at their population boundaries, such as in the redwood region of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Today the distribution of Roosevelt elk is much more restricted. The north coast population is estimated at about 2,000. The largest free-ranging populations are concentrated in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties between Eureka and the Oregon border. The most important populations are found in two areas: Big Lagoon-Maple Creek and Prairie Creek/Gold Bluffs, both in Humboldt County. Over the years the California Department of Fish and Game has trapped elk at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park for introductions to other parts of the state. A population of 50 elk introduced into Shasta County in 1913 numbered 350 by 1980 and is the only significant herd in the Sierra Nevada. The most recent introductions have been to BLM-administered lands in the King Range in southern Humboldt County. (The tule elk has become even more restricted and is now found only in a few preserves in California although reintroductions are being attempted.)

The elk as a genus is capable of occupying a wide range of habitats from the hot interior valleys of California and arid mountains of Arizona to the dense rain forests of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. Our Roosevelt elk is best adapted to the moist forest of both mountains and lowlands near the Pacific Coast.

Contributing to the elk's broad range of habitat tolerance is the fact that it is both a grazer (of grasses and forbs) and a browser (of trees and shrubs). The Prairie Creek population subsists largely on grasses and salmonberry. Twigs of diverse tree and shrub species are utilized in other elk populations that have been studied. Competition for food with other ungulates such as deer is a very real possibility for such a generalized feeder. Elk and domestic stock compete directly for many plants, which was one reason for the drastic decline in California's elk population.

LIFE HISTORY

In many areas the elk is migratory. Migrations occur between summer and winter ranges. The elk population formerly centered from the Siskiyou Mountains to Mount Shasta was migratory. High mountain meadows were used in the summer with movement to river valleys and other low-elevation areas in the winter.

In elk ranges with little or no snow cover or year round access to forage populations may be sedentary. This is true for many populations of Roosevelt elk that occupy the coastal lowlands, such as the herd at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

The reproductive behavior of the elk is well known. The breeding period or "rut" begins in early fall. The older bulls herd the cows, calves and yearlings into small bands of 6 to 30 or more and attempt to control their movements while driving away competing bulls. All this is accompanied by prolonged bugling, which is particularly intense during the early morning and evening hours.

Sparring with antlers or hooves occurs frequently but serious injuries are relatively rare. The rivalry between males has been seen to extend even to other species, as tame elk bulls in the presence of domestic cattle may aggressively prevent the domestic bulls from mating with their own species.

The gestation period is about 8 1/2 months. Most births are single

although twins are occasionally produced. A calf may begin feeding in vegetation when less than a month old, but milk feeding continues throughout the summer. During the non-breeding period, groups of cows with juveniles of both sexes form fairly stable associations, while less cohesive bands of males one year of age or older may overlap the female ranges.

A cow does not normally breed until the third rutting season after birth. The bulls are sexually mature after two years of age but become more competitive when older. Full male antler development (usually six points) occurs during the fourth year. The antlers are shed each year in early spring. The moment of antler dropping has been observed to startle the elk and may start a

short stampede as it clatters to the ground. New growth begins soon after shedding.

Each year's antlers are initially covered with "velvet," a skin-like layer that serves to promote the growth of the bony antlers until they are completely ossified. At that point, usually in late summer or early fall, the velvet dries and is rubbed off.

FUTURE IN CALIFORNIA

The original factor leading to the large-scale extirpation of Roosevelt elk in California - market hunting - has been largely curtailed although poaching is a major cause of mortality today. A new threat is the poaching of elk for their antlers in velvet for sale to largely Asian markets where they are considered to have aphrodisiac properties. Accidents

including road kills are another leading cause of death, as is malnutrition among calves.

Mountain lions and black bears may take occasional elk in this state, especially calves. However, their most effective natural predators - wolves and grizzly bears - are extinct in California. Natural predation is thus not sufficient to keep elk populations within the carrying capacity of their ranges. Protected herds are now thinned by hunting or relocations to prevent the severe oscillations in populations that might otherwise occur.

Increased road construction, traffic, and recreational use may be detrimental to elk populations, especially if reproductive behavior is disrupted. Some studies have reported elk being displaced as far as four miles as a result of road building and logging. Snowmobiles were particularly disruptive to one population studied in the Rockies. Such human disturbances are most disruptive of elk behavior in hunted population. Protected populations rapidly becoming less wary and less concerned by human proximity.

The range of Roosevelt elk in California will probably never equal its former extent, but reintroductions may expand the present distribution somewhat.

FURTHER READING

Boyce, Marks and L.D. Hayden-Wing (eds.), 1979. *North American Elk: Ecology, Behavior and Management*. U. of Wyoming 294pp. Murie, Olaus J. 1951. *The Elk of North America*. Stackpole Co. 376pp.

Wild and Woolly

WILDLIFE KNOWLEDGE: According to a poll prepared for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a majority of adult Americans believe that the koala is a bear, spiders have ten legs, and raptors and iguanas are insects.

-High Country News

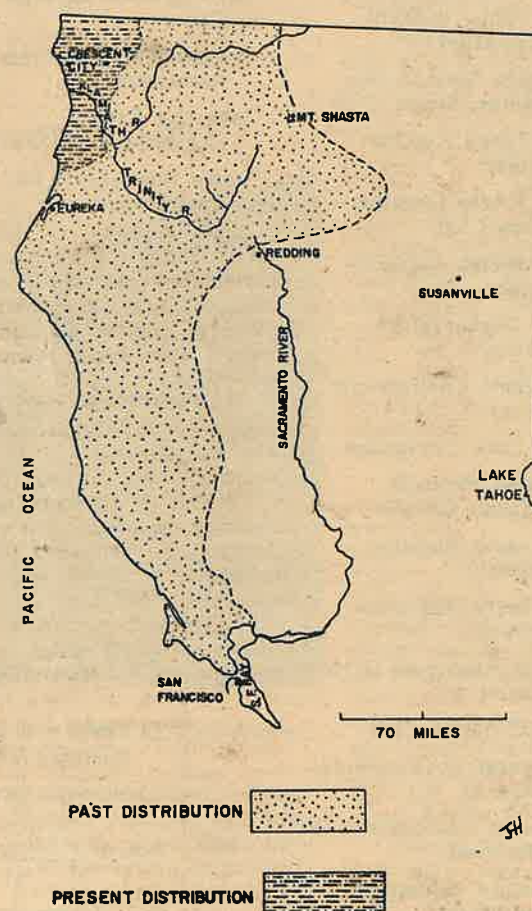


FIG. 1. Past and present distribution of Roosevelt elk in California.

Wildlife Management Institute

