Phil Farrell
[redacted]

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Wilderness Record

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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Mt. Shasta Ski Area Stopped Cold

Regional Forester Zane G. Smith, Jr., has ordered the preparation of a full environmental impact statement (EIS) for a proposed ski resort on Mt. Shasta. Shasta-Trinity National Forest Supervisor Robert R. Tyrrel earlier had approved the Mt. Shasta Ski Area project, but four environmental groups appealed his decision.

The appeal by the Mt. Shasta Resource Council, Mt. Shasta Audubon Society, Mother Lode Chapter Sierra Club, and the California Wilderness Coalition objected to the lack of an EIS on the project. Tyrrel had approved Phase I of the seven phase project on the basis of an environmental analysis which did not consider cumulative impacts of later phases or the *construction of "Lemuria Village"* on private land.

The environmental groups also were concerned about impacts on the adjacent Mt. Shasta Wilderness, threatened and endangered wildlife, and water quality.

Although he granted the relief requested by the appellants, Smith did not rule on the merits of the case. He did agree that the forest supervisor's decision was "inadequately based."

The EIS is to address issues raised by the appellants, including resource and adjacent wilderness impacts, an analysis of economic impacts, road access, and a "no action" alternative. Special attention is to be given to indirect effects and culmulative impacts of the proposal, including those reasonably forseen to occur outside national forest boundaries.

In an interview in the Redding *Record Searchlight,* Coalition executive director Jim Eaton responded that he was "delighted" with the decision.

"In this case the issues were so clear, the project so massive, that it requires an EIS, not separate environmental assessments [on each phase]," Eaton said. "That was the position we took, and that's what the decision states."

Smith's decision still is of concern the appellants as it requires the EIS to consider only the first four phases of the ski development project. Why all seven phases are not to be analyzed was not explained.

The decision will not affect the operation of the Mt. Shasta Ski Park, a ski development on the mountain which opened last year.

The Squaw Valley area of the Mt. Shasta Wilderness — Photo by Steve Johnson

But Old Draft is Not Recalled

Shasta-Trinity Plan to be Redone

Buckling to demands of the timber industry, Regional Forester Zane G. Smith, Jr., has ordered that a new draft forest plan be prepared for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

The existing draft plan was not withdrawn, however. The public is expected to comment on this document even though it will be replaced by a new draft that probably will not be completed until 1988. Public comment on the current, obsolete plan is due on January 17, 1987.

The current plan, issued in August, is riddled with errors. The timber industry argued that the document was unreadable and urged recall of the plan.

Conservationists are concerned that until a forest plan is made final, timber sales will continue under old plans that do not take into consideration environmental constraints which now are law.

"I think it's a regretable, avoidable delay," said Arnold Whitridge, president of Trinity County's Safe Alternatives for Our Forest Environment (SAFE). "It's too bad. They certainly did it under pressure by the timber industry.

Smith said he based his decision to have the draft plan reissued on a number of factors: the range of alternatives needs to be reexamined; uneven-aged timber management as a feasible silvicultural system needs to be more thoughtfully considered; the socio-economic consequences of each alternative need to be discussed in more depth; the forest's capability to provide biomass as an alternate energy source needs to be addressed; the data base needs to be verified; and constraints used in the development of alternatives need to be reexamined.

COALITION REPORT

by Jim Eaton

Last time I admitted to nearly losing a forest plan on my cluttered desk. Fortunately, several U.C. Davis students have taken pity on me and are helping to make order out of chaos.

One task was getting a six-foot high stack of forest plans off the floor and onto the already jammed bookshelf. That was accomplished one afternoon. Later that evening, while hunched over our Macintosh, there was a tremendous Boom! behind me followed by literally an avalanche of documents. The top shelf, all twelve feet of it, decided to give way. Needless to say, the cleanup project was set back many hours and my heart may be a bit weaker.

The Macintosh has quickly become essential to our operation. The membership list has been transferred to it, this newsletter is written using the machine, and volunteers are beginning to expand databases tracking all of our roadless areas. The Mac automatically dials my calls, and then it keeps tracks of the time I'm on the phone, allowing me to write notes and print them in a phone log. We use it daily logging onto Econet to send and receive electronic mail. Jennifer Wachter, the office cleanup artist, quickly prepared the forest planning charts and pie graphs found on pages 4 and 5.

I was sort of sorry to take the old Radio Shack TRS-80 (the ancient Model I) home. On that old machine, selecting the 260 members that are willing to write on Modoc Plateau issues for our recent Pit River Wilderness Alert would take about five minutes. On the Mac it took five seconds. I did it several times before I was convinced it really worked that fast.

We do have a problem, however. Ag Access, the friendly mail order book company down the hall with the Laserwriter, is moving to new quarters the end of the year. And we really have gotten used to using that remarkable printer.

Anyone out there have a spare Laserwriter they'd like to donate to a needy non-profit environmental group?

And while I am reminded about mailing lists, please check you label to be sure we have your name and address correct. There were a few glitches in transferring the data. Also, we do occassionally exchange our list with other organizations, but if you do not want your name given out we will honor your request. Drop us a card.

Thank you to Richard Karem, M.D., of Redding for becoming our newest business sponsor.

NEWS BRIEFS

Grider Creek Sale: Shades of the G–O Road

In an echo of the Gasquet-Orleans (G–O) Road decision, the chief of the Forest Service has directed the Klamath National Forest to "reassess" the environmental assessment for the Grider Creek timber sale at the northern end of the Marble Mountain Wilderness.

Forest officials had proposed to log both the roaded and roadless portions of the watershed after concluding two years ago that their plan would have no significant effect on the environment.

The Marble Mountain Audubon Society, Salmon River Concerned Citizens, and the Karuk Tribe of California appealed, claiming the agency failed to consider all alternatives or do adequate cost-benefit analysis, and that it wouldn't be able to mitigate damages to fisheries and wildlife from logging in sensitive headwater areas.

Their appeal relied heavily on the court decision in the G–O Road case, which stated that environmental assessments must demonstrate that logging and road building will not degrade water quality.

A key provision of that decision was that adherence to so-called Best Managment Practices (BMPs) does not satisfy the legal requirement under the Water Pollution Control Act to comply with water quality standards.

The state's Klamath Basin Plan calls for no unnatural discharge that would increase sedimentation beyond 20 percent above background levels —something one human-caused landslide, for example, can do.

The Forest Service, still unhappy with the G–O Road decision, still has time to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Ninth District Court of Appeals on July 22 reaffirmed its earlier decision halting the road because it would damage the First Amendment religious rights of the Yurok, Tolowa, and Karuk tribes and would violate several environmental laws.

As to the Grider Creek sale, Klamath National Forest has been directed to show how state water quality standards would be met if logging is allowed to proceed.

READER'S OPINION

Editor:

I received the July-August Wilderness Record today and, like always, it was a real breath of fresh air. It's great finding out what's happening all over the state! The work you are doing is more valuable than that of any other conservationist working on California issues. Keep it up—it's greatly appreciated!

Bob Kanne
Pasadena

UPDATE

Breakthrough at Sinkyone?

A tentative deal to expand the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park and save Sally Bell Grove was signed in late September by Georgia-Pacific timber company (G-P) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL).

Brian Holley, spokesperson for the non-profit, San Francisco-based trust, called the option to buy 6,936 acres on the "Lost Coast" in northern Mendocino County "the beginning of a process."

"We hope to achieve what years of struggle have aimed for," Holley said.

The deal hinges on finding Mendocino County timberland acceptable to G–P for trade and on approval from the county supervisors. The supervisors and a local woodworkers union are on record against any reduction in timber production land.

G-P will donate some of the acreage, Holley said, but exact dollar figures and who will pay what portion still are unsolved.

If the option is exercised by its December 31 expiration date, Holley said TPL hopes to pass on the the state as parkland 3,000 of the most environmentally and archaeologically sensitive acres—including the 75-acre Sally Bell grove where 22 protestors were arrested in 1983.

The remaining 4,000 acres could be put in private hands for a combination of resource protection and timber harvesting.

G-P said it will refrain from logging in the area while negotiations are underway. Meanwhile, a lawsuit by the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), the International Indian Treaty Council, the Sierra Club, and others has challenged G-P's plans to log the Sally Bell grove. A hearing is set for November 24 in Mendocino Superior Court.

But EPIC is "enthused about TPL being involved," according to Ruthanne Cecil, and confident in the trust's "ability to put this kind of land acquisition together in an environmentally sensitive manner."

—Andy Alm
Econews

I–80 Route for Powerline

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and Sierra Pacific Power Company have announced that their preferred route for a new trans-Sierra powerline is roughly parallel to Interstate 80.

Earlier alternatives explored by SMUD would have run through the Lake Tahoe Basin or Hope Valley. These routes also would have entered roadless lands proposed for wilderness by conservationists.

Peppermint Appeal Denied

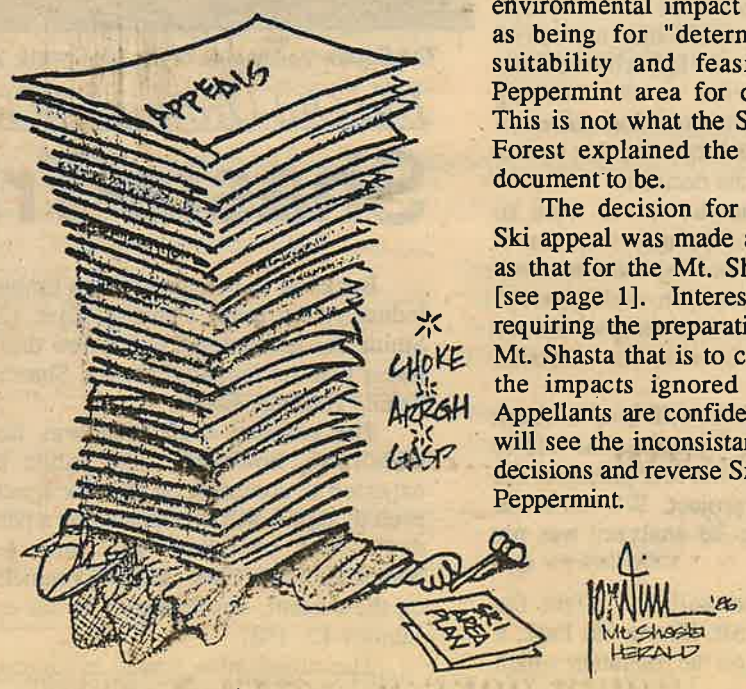
Regional Forester Zane G. Smith, Jr., has denied an appeal of the Peppermint Task Force to stop a new downhill ski area in the Sequoia National Forest. The proposed Peppermint Ski Area would be built in the Slate Mountain Roadless Area.

The appellants, including the California Wilderness Coalition, are now taking the appeal to the Chief Forester.

The appeal was based on numerous points of concern, including failure to adequately consider wildlife habitat (especially that of the California condor), sensitive plants, air quality, road problems, sewage treatment, economic issues, and housing. Environmentalists felt the proposal violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the American Indian Religous Freedom Act.

Smith disagreed with all the issues raised in objection to the ski development proposal. In his decision, however, he constantly referred to the environmental impact statement [EIS] as being for "determination of the suitability and feasibility" of the Peppermint area for downhill skiing. This is not what the Sequoia National Forest explained the purpose of the document to be.

The decision for the Peppermint Ski appeal was made at the same time as that for the Mt. Shasta Ski appeal [see page 1]. Interestingly, Smith is requiring the preparation of an EIS at Mt. Shasta that is to consider many of the impacts ignored at Peppermint. Appellants are confident that the Chief will see the inconsistancy of these two decisions and reverse Smith's decision at Peppermint.



courtesy of the *Mt. Shasta Herald*

Hopes for Kern River Boosted——But Time Grows Short

In a boost for environmentalists' hopes, an aide to California's U.S. Senator Pete Wilson has announced that the senator will "probably" introduce a bill establishing National Wild and Scenic River protection for portions of the Kern River. The Republican senator's apparent decision follows a unanimous decision by the House of Representatives to approve a Wild and Scenic package that would protect 151 miles of the Kern's North and South forks, editorial support by leading newspapers across the state, and thousands of letters to the senator by California citizens.

The September 20 issue of the Bakersfield Californian reported that Sen. Wilson's Washington, D.C. aide Jim Burroughs said "Wilson will probably introduce a bill when the 100th Congress convenes in January."

While Burroughs would not discuss details of the likely legislation, his statement is good news. Despite the Kern's popularity among river lovers, decision makers, and the media, Wild and Scenic Kern River legislation introduced by California's other senator, Alan Cranston, has not progressed due to a desire by the Senate's Republican leaders to await Wilson's decision.

Conservationists encourage Sen. Wilson to act to protect the Kern this year, rather than waiting until January. "While we greatly appreciate the work that Sen. Wilson and his staff have put into examining this issue," says Friends of the River (FOR) Conservation Director Betty Andrews, "waiting until the next Congress will require a time-consuming duplication of legislative efforts, as the bill will again have to clear the House."

Andrews notes that designating Wild and Scenic Rivers has historically been "a glacially slow process," and notes that the Kern was first proposed by Congress for possible designation in 1978.

The major reason that Kern protection has not moved more swiftly is local opposition that arose in the area after several local residents erroneously claimed that Wild and Scenic designation would result in confiscation of private property and the eviction of residents. The local paper publicized these false claims as fact, despite lengthy discussions on the issue with FOR staff and other activists. A few residents claimed that new dams were needed on the Kern, despite a lack of any current interest among developers. At a number of public hearings and discussions with residents and on local television and radio programs FOR publicized the facts about how Wild and Scenic designation would affect the Kern: all existing uses of the river would be allowed, including mining; property could not be acquired through condemnation; and Wild and Scenic simply provides the best way to ensure continued life for the river — a goal sought by the overwhelming majority of Kern River residents.

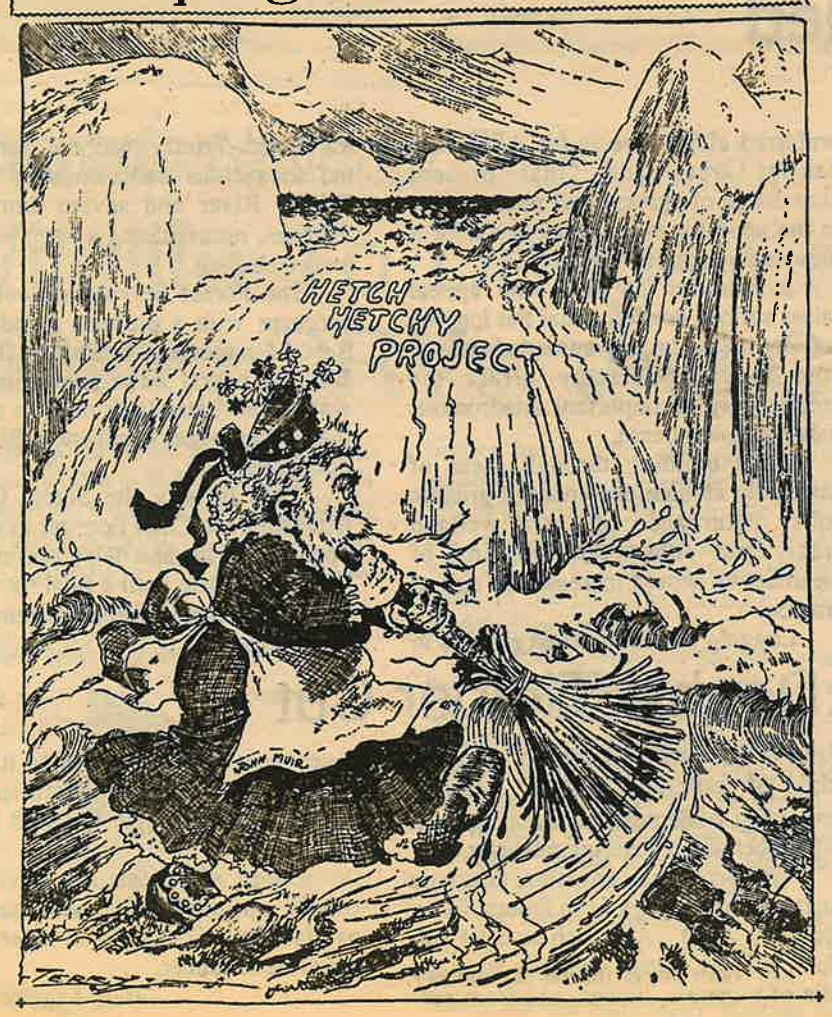
Rafting the Upper Kern River Photo by Bob Barnes

Kings Conflict Continues in House

As reported in the last issue of the *Wildernes Record*, in August Kings River-area Rep. Charles Pashayan (R—CA) faced mounting criticism following the revelation of his proposal to place the Army Corps of Engineers at the disposal of Kings River dam builders. At Rep. Pashayan's request, a representative from Minnesota quietly added vague language to the massive House Budget Bill that would have given the Corps (funded by taxpayers) part of the job of preparing studies of the proposed Rodgers Crossing Dam. While the language didn't mention dams, the Kings River, or even California, Rep. Sala Burton (D—CA) dug up the facts on the matter and exposed Rep. Pashayan's scheme.

Thanks to Rep. Burton, Rep. Tony Beilenson (D—CA), and other congress members concerned about the Kings, the language was removed in a committe vote on September 23. Meanwhile, Rep. Richard Lehman's proposal to add the Kings to the National Wild and Scenic River System now has the support of the Los Angeles Times, Fresno Bee, Visalia Times Delta, and Lemoore Leader newspapers, as well as 76 representatives who are co-sponsors of his bill!

Sweeping Back the Flood



Tuolumne Tributary

Clavey River May be Dammed

Once again developers are proposing dams on the Clavey River, one of the largest tributaries of the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne River and one of only 19 streams in California's unique Wild Trout Stream program. Tuolumne County and the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) are partners in a proposal to put a 400-foot concrete plug in the Clavey 20 miles above its confluence with the Tuolumne, and another sixty-foot dam 1.5 miles above the confluence.

The County's and TID's purpose is to cash in on publicly subsidized profits that can be reaped from hydropower projects. This project would dewater 18 miles of valuable and exceedingly rare wild trout habitat. Due to sudden surges in flow as the turbines crank into action, the project could also pose a threat to hikers, swimmers, and white-water boaters at the mouth of the Clavey.

Meanwhile, a private developer has applied for a permit to study a smaller project with a powerhouse located inside the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic corridor. Mutual Energy, a small energy development operation in Sacramento, has applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a preliminary permit to study a proposal for a 36-megawatt hydropower plant. The dam would be about 5 miles upstream from the confluence, with a powerhouse near the popular confluence area. The developer didn't do his homework when he decided where to build the powerhouse—he placed it right inside the Wild and Scenic corridor of the Tuolumne, along with his power lines and access road.

—Robert Canning

Wilson Kills Yosemite Water Bill

Senator Pete Wilson quietly killed a bill that would have required congressional approval of any plans by the city of San Francisco to flood new areas of Yosemite National Park.

The bill by Rep. Richard Lehman (D–Fresno), who has fought a lengthy battle with the city over the Hetch Hetchy water project in the park, also would prohibit construction of new dams in any national parks. The bill passed the House of Representatives this fall.

San Francisco has denied that it has any intention of raising O'Shaughnessy Dam on the Tuolumne River, which inundates 4,000 acres inside Yosemite National Park. But because Mayor Diane Feinstein opposed Lehman's bill, critics suggest that the city has such plans waiting for the right political climate to develop.

Mendocino National Forest Plan

Owls and Hawks Should Apply Elsewhere

Despite the fact that there are 12 roadless areas remaining in the Mendocino National Forest, the Forest Service considers the wilderness issue here "resolved." Since these dozen areas, totaling 165,000 acres, were "released" by the California Wilderness Act of 1984, no lands are recommended for wilderness designation in this forest plan.

Instead, the Forest Service proposes to increase timber cutting (clearcutting most of the trees), allow more grazing, and build more roads. Wildlife will suffer under this plan. In 50 years pairs of spotted owls will drop from 115 to 59 and pairs of goshawk will decline from 126 to 79.

In less than fifty years most of the Mendocino National Forest will be modified. The Forest Service estimates that in the year 2030 only 17 percent of the forest will appear undisturbed. Almost all of this wild land will be in the Snow Mountain and Yolla Bolly wilderness areas and the Middle Fork of the Eel River, a federal wild river.

Local environmentalists are meeting to propose a citizens' alternative to the Forest Service vision for the future of the Mendocino. Public comments will be accepted through January 2nd of next year, but an extension of this deadline is expected.

Comments should be sent by February 2, 1987, to:

Lyle Laverty, Forest Supervisor
Mendocino National Forest
420 E. Laurel Street
Willows, CA 95988

Mendocino National Forest

WILDERNESS AREAS

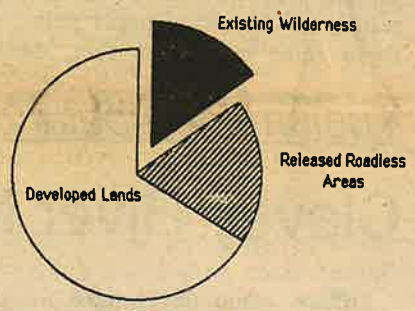
Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel	97,400 acres
Snow Mountain	37,000 acres

"RELEASED" ROADLESS AREAS

Roadless Area	1984 Acreage	1986 Acreage
Big Butte-Shinbone	21,100	21,100
Black Butte	17,800	15,200
Briscoe	7,283	6,700
Deer Mountain	12,003	11,700
Elk Creek	18,900	17,400
Grindstone	26,200	26,200
Reister Canyon	6,331	5,600
Skeleton Glade	9,700	9,300
Snow Mountain	15,500	12,300
Thatcher	12,900	12,900
Thomes Creek	17,280	15,900
Wilderness Contig.	10,700	10,700
"Released" Totals	175,697	165,000

Total Roadless Acreage: 165,000
Total Proposed Wilderness: 0

Mendocino National Forest



Yolla Bolly–Middle Eel Wilderness, Mendocino National Forest Photo by Mark J. Palmer

Horse Trail Timber Sale Appealed

by Tim McKay

A last-minute appeal to the chief of the Forest Service may halt a timber sale on North Trinity Mountain.

The Horse Trail Timber Sale would allow the logging of four million boart feet of timber in the headwaters of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Trinity River.

The Horse Trail sale is but one of at least eight timber sales proposed by Six Rivers National Forest in an 8,000-acre strip of roadless land between the Hoopa Indian Reservation and the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

The North Group of the Sierra Club's Redwood Chapter has maintained that the Forest Service should assess the effects of all the timber sales on old-growth dependent wildlife, the highly erosive soils in the headwaters of the area, and the traditional uses of the Hoopa Indians.

The Sierra Club believes that management policies are inadequate for protecting the forest's spotted owl population. A recent blue ribbon commission report by the National Audubon Society says the bird, as an indicator species, "involves more than the welfare of a single vertebrate species."

The Forest Service's Regional Six (Oregon and Washington) has acknowledged the owls' need for larger territories and has admitted that owl specialists lack the knowledge necessary to ensure a "minimum viable population" of spotted owls [see detailed article on page 6].

The Audubon Advisory panel on the Spotted Owl recommends protecting 2,500 acres of suitable habitat areas for each owl pair in Oregon and northwest California. Forest Service Region Five (California) policy only permits 1,000-acre territories in logging zones.

Across the state line in Oregon, Region Six Forester James James F. Torrance has told forest supervisors the preferred alternative is for 2,200-acre habitat areas and "that present knowledge of spotted owl needs points to the need for more protection than is provided by current direction..."

In addition to owls, the appeal raises serious concerns that the logging activity on the largely unroaded strip of land would adversely affect the productivity of important anadromous fisheries downstream.

Road building through areas of extremely erosive decomposed granitic soils, disturbance of small wetland areas, and subsequent burning of clearcuts all would increase the risk of erosion.

Logging on decomposed granites in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest has led to serious sedimentation of the Trinity River and severe damage to fisheries, necessitating a large publicly-funded cleanup.

The Forest Service answers such concerns with a promise to adhere to Best Management Practices (BMPs). But the courts have determined that water quality standards must be met and that mere pledges to adhere to BMPs are not enough.

That is why the Sierra Club is requesting the Chief Forester to stay the opening of bids and delay action on the Horse Trail sale until a final forest plan and environmental impact statement has been adopted.

Reagan Wants to Double Timber Cut

The Reagan administration, in its long-term blueprint for managing the nation's national forests, is proposing to double the amount of timber that could be cut annually and building an additional 260,000 miles of roads for logging trucks.

In recommending the plan to Congress, which must review it, President Reagan said that it adheres to "the principle of judicious balance" between protecting wilderness lands and harvesting timber and recovering minerals.

The proposals envision dramatic increases in earnings from federal forest lands by 2030. As much as $3.4 billion could be earned annually from the sale of minerals, timber, and from proposed new recreation fees in national forests, according to administration figures—almost triple the $1.3 billion this year.

Critics assert that the figures are overly optimistic because increased availability of timber will drive down the price of timber.

—Los Angeles Times

Sierra National Forest Plan

Rivers ¡Si!, Wilderness ¡No!

Wild river fans will have some cause to cheer the forest plan recently released by the Sierra National Forest. But the Forest Service believes it has enough wild land already protected and is not recommending any more wilderness designations.

One further planning area, the 48,668-acre Kings River roadless area was studied and rejected for wilderness. Eight other roadless areas totaling 128,030 acres were released by the California Wilderness Act of 1984 and their wilderness values are not considered by the Forest Service in this plan.

The rivers fare much better. A total of 227 miles of river were studied, and the Forest Service is recommending that all but two miles be designated as either wild, scenic, or recreational. River segments were studied for the Merced, San Joaquin, and Kings rivers. The two miles not recommended are along the main San Joaquin River that would be flooded should the Mammoth Pool Dam be raised.

Conservationists are pleased that the Sierra Forest is recommending wild river status for the North Fork of the San Joaquin River. A compromise included in the California Wilderness Act could allow dams and diversions within the Ansel Adams Wilderness. The Forest Service should be commended for recognizing that water development and wilderness do not mix.

Outside the wild and scenic river corridors, however, the forest will be devastated. Timber harvesting, clearcutting, and grazing all will be greatly increased. While deer numbers are predicted to increase, spotted owl populations will be nearly halved. Lands where timber is intensively harvested "will take on a more managed appearance."

While supporting the Forest Service's wild and scenic river recommendations (with some improvements), conservationists will be striving to protect roadless areas, limit clearcutting, and protect the wildlife resources of the Sierra National Forest.

Comments should be sent by January 12, 1987, to:

James L. Boynton, Forest Supervisor
Sierra National Forest
1130 "O" Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Sierra National Forest

WILDERNESS AREAS

Ansel Adams	138,660 acres
Dinkey Lakes	30,000 acres
John Muir	315,790 acres
Kaiser	22,700 acres
Monarch	20,788 acres

FURTHER PLANNING AREA

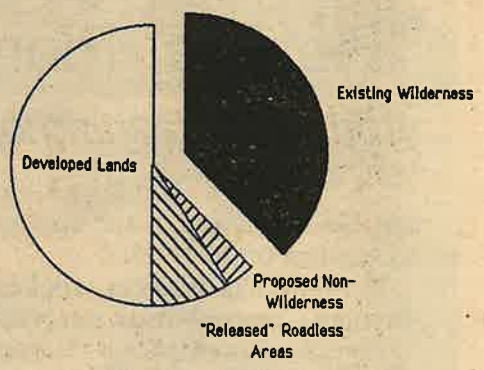
Roadless Area	1986 Acreage	Proposed Wilderness
Kings River	48,668	0

"RELEASED" ROADLESS AREAS

Roadless Area	1986 Acreage	Proposed Wilderness
Devil Gulch	30,300	0
Dinkey Lakes	29,930	0
Fergusen Ridge	6,100	0
Mt. Raymond	6,850	0
Rancheria	7,080	0
San Joaquin B	31,170	0
Shuteye	7,700	0
Sycamore Spring	8,900	0
"Released" Total	128,030	0

Total Roadless Acreage: **176,698**
Total Proposed Wilderness: 0

Sierra National Forest



Lower Twin Lake in Kaiser Wilderness, Sierra National Forest Photo by Phil Farrell

Eldorado National Forest Plan

Wildlife To Dodge Loggers, Skiers, ORVs, and Cows

The good news in the Eldorado National Forest is that the spotted owls and goshawks are supposed to maintain their current populations. The bad news is they will have live with increased timber harvesting, more clearcutting, additional grazing, expanded ski resorts, and new off-road vehicle trails. At least the Forest Service claims the wildlife will not be hurt by causing the wild lands in the forest to "take on a more modified appearance."

Of course, there are no new wilderness designations proposed for the Eldorado. Rather than protecting the 17,940-acre Caple Creek roadless area, portions of the area will be logged and a hydroelectric project will be approved. But in order to maintain the "wilderness attributes" of the area, after the area is logged the roads will be closed.

Six other roadless areas, totaling 63,337 acres, were "released" by the California Wilderness Act of 1964. The Forest Service incorrectly believes they cannot consider wilderness for these areas and is proposing varying amounts of development for them.

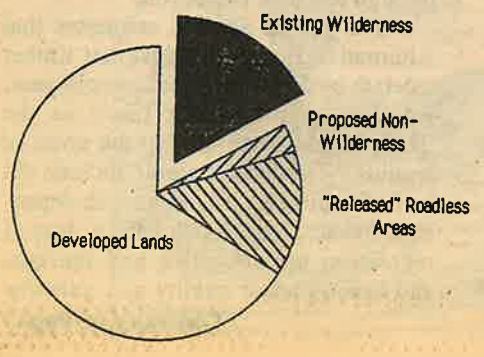
The only bright spot in the plan is the recommendation for protecting portions of the Mokelumne, Rubicon, and Cosumnes rivers. The Forest Service's preferred alternative proposes 18 miles of wild river, 29 miles of scenic river, and 46 miles of recreational river designations.

A conservationists' alternative for the Eldorado National Forest is being proposed by local environmentalists.

Comments should be sent by December 1, 1986, to:

Jerald N. Hutchins, Forest Supervisor
Eldorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667

Eldorado National Forest



Eldorado National Forest

WILDERNESS AREAS

Desolation	42,194 acres
Mokelumne	59,865 acres

FURTHER PLANNING AREA

Roadless Area	1986 Acreage	Proposed Wilderness
Caples Creek	17,940	0

"RELEASED" ROADLESS AREAS

Roadless Area	1984 Acreage	1986 Acreage
Dardanelles	8,000	8,000
Fawn Lake	1,100	1,100
Poison Hole	1,700	1,500
Raymond Peak	1,797	1,797
Rubicon	5,100	5,100
Tragedy-Elephants Bk	27,700	27,700

Total Roadless Acreage: 63,337
Total Proposed Wilderness: 0

Spotted Owl

"Flexible" Plan Jeopardizes Old-Growth Species

from the Washington Wilderness Coalition

"I know it sounds horrible, rotten and cruel [to disregard the possible extinction of the spotted owl], but who are we do decide the survival of the fittest?"

—Marla Marvin, spokeswoman for Pacific Lumber and Shipping Company in an interview with the Everett Herald.

Editor's note: Although this article applies to the Pacific Northwest Region (Oregon and Washington), preserving spotted owl habitat is a major issue in California's national forests.

For better or for worse, human beings every day make decisions defining which species are "fittest" for survival. As our cities and suburbs crowd the land and we rush to log, mine, drill and farm each square inch, the concept of survival of the fittest loses its connection to natural selection in a natural world. With the passage of the Endangered Species Act and other laws enacted for the protection of animal and plant species, our country recognized that survival of only those species adaptable to human-altered environments is synonymous with the loss of our natural heritage.

In the latest chapter of the ongoing struggle to maintain diversity and avoid wholesale extirpation of species requiring natural environments, the Forest Service in July released its draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the Pacific Northwest Regional Guide. The SEIS will set policy to be implemented in the forest plans now being prepared on each national forest, largely deciding whether to log or to save the remaining old-growth on 13 national forests in the Pacific Northwest, and specifically determining the fate of the northern spotted owl.

As the agency's chosen "indicator species" for old-growth habitat, the spotted owl is used to indicate the health of the old-growth environment. The owl is thought to have the largest habitat requirements of the known old-growth species. Therefore, it is assumed that if the spotted owl population remains healthy, so too will the populations of some 45 other species also dependent on old-growth forests.

Biologists first raised concern over the long term survival of spotted owl in the late 1960's, when it became evident that the destruction of old-growth by logging was rapidly diminishing the owl's habitat. Research completed since that time strongly suggests that the spotted owl population is heavily stressed by loss of old-growth habitat. Studies on reproductive rates and juvenile survival rates completed in 1985 by Dr. Russell Lande, a population geneticist at the University of Chicago, predicted that the Forest Service's current direction would likely cause the extinction of the spotted owl within 100 years.

In addition, as old-growth forests become more and more fragmented, research on the spotted owl's requirements for nesting and food gathering has shown that the owls require larger blocks of undisturbed old-growth than was first estimated. The mean home range needed by the owl is now thought to be over 2,200 acres per pair in Oregon and 4,500 acres per pair in Washington. The Forest Service in its 1984 Pacific Northwest Regional Guide, which sets policy for forest planning, took a minimalist approach to old-growth protection. The guidelines provided for protection of only 290 pairs of spotted owls with 300 acres of old-growth per pair. In 1985, the National Wildlife Federation, Seattle Audubon Society, Oregon Wildlife Federation, Oregon Natural Resources Council and Lane County Audubon Society successfully appealed sections of the Guide covering old-growth management. Conservationists argued that the agency's plans to protect old-growth were inadequate to assure that wildlife species dependent on old-growth habitat (specifi- Service's management indicator species) would not go extinct. The guidelines would, therefore, be in violation of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requirements that the Forest Service maintain suitable habitat to support viable populations. In response, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Doug MacCleery ordered preparation of the SEIS to study the effects of forest management on the spotted owl and set policy for future management of old-growth habitat.

Flexible Management–Minimal Protection

The draft SEIS presents 12 alternatives for managing spotted owl habitat, ranging from no formal protection, to preserving all remaining suitable habitat. The Forest Service's preferred alternative (Alternative F) would protect approximately 550 spotted owl habitat areas (SOHAs) of about 2,200 acres each. Among the many flaws of this latest attempt to set old-growth policy is the SEIS's definition of "old-growth". The definition has been stretched to include characteristics which can be found in low elevation second growth stands of only 50 to 60 years of age. Inclusion of mature second growth forests into the category of old-growth may produce overly optimistic projections for the future survival of the spotted owl and other old-growth dependent species.

A better definition of old-growth was drawn up by the Forest Service's own "Old-Growth Definition Task Group," a part of the agency's research branch. Their definition requires that there be at least 8 trees per acre which are greater than 32 inches in diameter or older than 200 years old to qualify as old-growth. The definition in the SEIS also should be modified to state that evidence of human activity must be substantially absent for a stand to qualify as old-growth. This would preclude any type of selective cutting, or "managed" old-growth as a condition of "old-growth".

Inventories used in preparation of the SEIS may have greatly overestimated the amount of old-growth left on national forest lands. In addition to the definitional problems, the Forest Service made use of "statistical inventory" techniques which may be largely inaccurate. A May 1986 letter from the wildlife biologist on the Okanogan National Forest in Washington shows that a similar statistical technique led to overestimating the amount of old-growth in that forest by some 60 percent. The final SEIS should require field checked inventories based on map-level data, using a realistic definition of old-growth.

The Forest Service's preferred alternative successfully avoids the question of how much old-growth will be saved. Of the 2,200 acres to be set aside in each SOHA, only 1,000 acres will be removed from the timber base. The remaining 1,200 acres will be included in the calculation of the amount of timber to be cut for each year, but will not be logged during the 10 to 15 years of this planning period. This gives the Forest Service the "flexiblity" to subvert the concept of sustained yield by maintaining high levels of logging on a smaller land base. This provision would accelerate cutting of old-growth forests outside designated SOHAs and increase the rate of fragmentation of old-growth habitat. Following the traditional Forest Service bias, Alternative F maintains flexibility for timber management, but reduces future options for providing more or larger SOHAs.

Economics of Old-growth Preservation

The costs of old-growth preservation are quantified in the SEIS as number of jobs lost and timber receipts reduced, encouraging some to estimate the "cost per owl" for the protection of old-growth habitat. This analysis ignores both the overall costs of logging and the savings possible through resource protection.

The Forest Service estimates that Alternative F would reduce net timber receipts by $18 to $21 million per year. Another approach, not taken in the SEIS, would be to add up the costs of logging. These costs would include the loss of habitat for all old-growth dependent species, loss of fish habitat, loss of recreation opportunities and tourism, and loss of water quality and quantity.

Continued on Page 7

Pit River WSA to be De-watered?

The Pit River Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is a rugged, spectacular, biological oasis in northern Lassen County. It fully qualifies for wilderness protection with rich raptor, archeological, riparian, wild river, botanical, wildlife, and recreational values. It is one of the few northern California areas being proposed for wilderness designation by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), although the agency is recommending protection for only 6,640 acres of the 11,675-acre WSA.

Now BLM is entertaining a proposal by Malacha Power Project, Inc., to divert water from the proposed wilderness area. The hydroelectric project would divert water from the Pit River upstream of the WSA, run it into a 22,000-foot long buried tunnel, and return it to the river downstream.

Despite previous statements from BLM that the diversion would occur during the winter months only, the current proposal would take 700 cubic feet per second of water from the river with the diversion season from "January 1 to December 31."

Several issues have yet to be adequately addressed. These include:

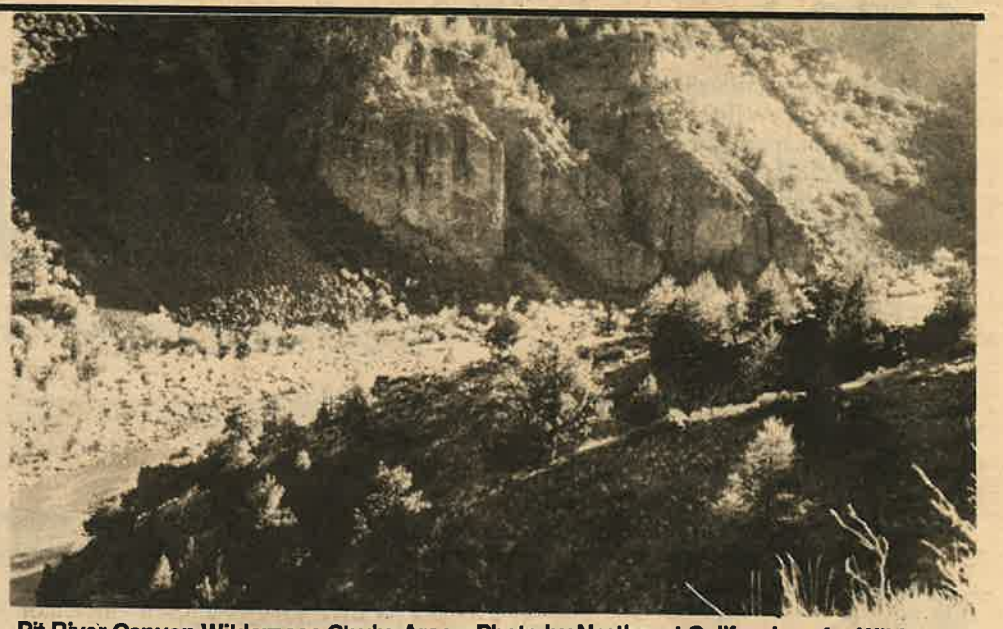
• The effects of reduced flows in the canyon on native fisheries, recreation potential, and wilderness qualities.

• The impacts of the project on the proposed wilderness, including the values of solitude, naturalness, and visual quality.

The developer has sweetened the pot by proposing to exchange private lands within the WSA for public lands along the pipeline corridor. A second exchange proposal would give the developer lands within the WSA, but BLM cannot consider this plan until Congress makes the final determination on the proposed wilderness.

Citizens concerned about the Pit River Canyon WSA should inform BLM of their views and request to be informed of further actions: Write:

Bureau of Land Management
Alturas Resource Area
P.O. Box 771
Alturas, California 96101



Pit River Canyon Wilderness Study Area Photo by Northeast Californians for Wilderness

Spotted Owl EIS

Continued from Page 6

Money would be saved which would otherwise be spent on restoring habitat and water quality, and on maintaining hatcheries to mitigate logging-related damage to fish runs. Forest economist Randal O'Toole estimates that, in addition to protection of these resources, this approach "frees up about $10 million of federal money per year which can be spent on other projects which would also produce local income and secondary benefits," such as creating new jobs.

What Fate for Old-growth?

The Forest Service is required by law to maintain viable populations of native species. Following the guidelines presented in the draft SEIS, the agency will likely fail to meet this obligation. Of the twelve alternatives presented, only Alternative L, which would set aside all suitable habitat, maintains a very high probability for the continued existence of the owl, and that is only for the first 15 years. All other alternatives incorporate varying amounts of risk to the continued existence of the species, leaving little leeway for coping with catastrophic events, should future research show that the owls require greater protection.

Similar to the CWC, the Washington Wilderness Coalition is a member of the Western Wilderness Network.

BLM Releases Final Wilderness Recommendations

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is beginning to issue final environmental impact statements for their wilderness recommendations outside the California desert. To date two documents have been issued, one for the Cedar Roughs and Rocky Creek-Cache Creek wilderness study areas (WSAs) and the other for WSAs in eastern San Diego County.

The 5,597-acre Cedar Roughs WSA is located in Napa County and the Rocky Creek-Cache Creek WSA totaling 33,582 acres is in Lake and Yolo counties. Neither area is recommended for wilderness designation, but instead BLM proposes "to preserve the natural amenities of these areas in the context of balanced multiple use." Conservationists are proposing both areas for wilderness.

This wilderness study was released in July 1980. Sixteen people testified at a public hearing on the proposals and 53 letters were received by BLM.

Two of the three areas in eastern San Diego County are recommended by BLM for wilderness designation. All of the 14,573-acre Carrizo Gorge WSA is proposed for preservation, 21,926 acres of the Sawtooth Mountain B WSA is recommended as suitable for wilderness (2,770 acres is non-suitable), but none of the 5,265-acre San Felipe Hills WSA is slated for protection. Both the Carrizo Gorge and Sawtooth Mountain B areas are adjacent to state wilderness inside Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

The draft wilderness recommendations were released in August 1980. Only 23 letters were received by BLM.

More final environmental impact statements for BLM wilderness studies are expected in the near future. Congress must make the final decision on whether or not to accept BLM's wilderness recommendations.

Imperial Sand Dunes Plan

A recreation area management plan and environmental assessment has been released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the Imperial Sand Dunes. The 300-foot high dunes are the most popular recreational area in the California desert, accounting for approximately one-sixth of the desert's use. On major weekends the area is commonly visited by between 10,000 and 15,000 off-road vehicle (ORV) enthusiasts.

Two wilderness study areas (WSAs) are found in the dunes, the North and South Algodones Dunes WSAs. Currently, the North Algodones Dunes WSA is designated as closed to ORVs while the other WSA is open. The management plan recommends that this use pattern remain.

BLM admits that "vehicle use in the dunes will result in damage to or death of plant species driven over. Likewise, reptiles, insects, and other small dune creatures will be injured or killed if hit by a passing vehicle." Despite this, BLM does not believe that ORVs degrade the wilderness values of the WSA.

Comments on the plan will be accepted until December 22. Contact:

Roger Zortman, Area Manager
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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 used and 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.

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From the northern rainforests to the Puerto Rican tropics, hikers have been spotted wearing T-shirts sporting the CWC logo of black mountains beneath a blue sky, with yellow sand dunes in the foreground. KEEP IT WILD rings the top of the logo, with CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION beneath.

T-Shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. Regular T-shirts are available in white, tan, blue, and yellow in small [S], Medium [M], Large [L], and extra Large [EX]. A limited number of French-cut style T-shirts are available in white, pink, and powder blue in women's small, medium, and large.

T-shirts are $8.00 to CWC members and $10.00 for non-members (sales tax is included). Use the order form on page 8. Clearly indicate if you want regular or French-cut, size, color, and a substitute color. Please add $1.25 postage and 75¢ for each additional T–shirt.

Join the Coalition

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