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White Mountains—the next wilderness?



The majestic White Mountains.

Photo by Jim Eaton

By Roland Knapp

The White Mountains are the westernmost and highest of the Great Basin mountain ranges. Situated just east of the famed Sierra Nevada, the White Mountains rise 10,000 feet above the Owens Valley and stretch for nearly 60 miles along the California-Nevada border. White Mountain Peak (14,246 feet) is California's third highest summit and Boundary Peak (13,145 feet) is Nevada's highest. The area is divided into five Forest Service roadless areas which together encompass 346,445 acres (Figure 1). One of these, the White Mountains Roadless Area, is one of the largest unprotected roadless areas remaining in California, containing over 250,000 acres. In his book, *The Big Outside*, Dave Foreman says of the White Mountains, "This is perhaps the most important area, after the Sespe-Frazier (Ventura County), left out of the 1984 California Wilderness Act." Now is the time to ensure that this range is included in the next California national forest wilderness bill.

Natural History

The White Mountains are situated between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin and have floral and faunal characteristics of both. The alluvial fans at the base of the range support a sage community which grades into pinyon/juniper woodlands at higher elevations. Higher still, the pinyon pines and junipers are replaced with limber and bristlecone pines. These stands contain the oldest and most massive bristlecones on Earth, some over

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South Fork Roadless Area logging stopped

Landmark ruling protects Wild & Scenic River corridors

Christmas was made joyous for environmentalists when, on December 22, the lawsuit to save the South Fork Roadless Area from logging resulted in an important victory. Judge Lawrence Karlton permanently enjoined—forbade—the Forest Service's proposal to log 17,000 acres of pristine old-growth forest adjacent to the South Fork of the Trinity Wild & Scenic River in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) attorney Stephan Volker asserts "We will vigorously apply these rulings to protect old-growth forest adjacent to more than 1,200 miles of Wild & Scenic rivers in northern California."

In the SCLDF suit, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District agreed that the sale would have violated the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act because the Forest Service failed to:

1) designate the boundaries of the Wild & Scenic

River corridor;

2) adopt a river corridor management plan;

3) cooperate with the Environmental Protection Agency and California's water pollution control agencies to assure that the river's water quality and outstanding anadromous fishery resource were protected.

Issued as a "summary judgement," the decision, according to Volker, "laid to rest any lingering doubts about the precedent-setting value of its landmark ruling last year granting us a preliminary injunction" on the South Fork Roadless Area fire salvage timber sale. The arguments used in the suit have since been used in at least one other lawsuit protesting timber sales in Wild & Scenic River corridors for which there is no management plan.

SCLDF filed hundreds of pages of scientists' testimony on the adverse effects of the proposed timber sales on the river and its watershed. The plaintiffs in the case were The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, and California Trout. ♪

Inside this issue:

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— **BLM cancels Barstow-to-Vegas & other desert cycle races...page 3**

— **New "Trailshots" program teaches back country skills to Forest Service staffers...page 6**

COALITION PAGE

Monthly Report

Reflecting on 1989, there were a lot of successes and changes for the better. The California Wilderness Conference stands out as one of my best memories of the year. Winning our appeal of the Mt. Shasta Ski Area is another. The end of the Barstow-to-Vegas and other off-road vehicle events also stands out.

Along with those triumphs, good news is the increasing health of the California Wilderness Coalition. Although inflated with revenue from the conference and special fundraising for Mt. Shasta, it looks like our income for the year will exceed \$85,000—nearly double of that from the previous year. And this was done without any grants from foundations.

The cornerstone to the Coalition always has been its members. Many of our members have been with us since we formed in 1976. Every year, the renewals and donations from members are our major source of income.

With that in mind, we undertook a major membership drive last year. This program included our new position of Outreach Coordinator, first filled by Bill Burrows and now Nancy Kang.

With a few days remaining in December, we were a few new members short of my goal for the year. But with the remarkable number of memberships in the mail on December 30th, we reached a total of 502 new members. Contrast this to our prior best year, 1988, when our total was 83.

New members came from many sources, with direct mail being the best means of finding new blood. Other people joined as a result of the conference or because they found a copy of the *Wilderness Record* at an REI store, the Mono Lake Committee's

By Jim Eaton

visitor center in Lee Vining, or at an ecology center.

The *Wilderness Record* is a key to our membership expansion. It sells the work of the Coalition. Potential members are able to see what we do and what information they will receive from us.

Among last year's new members were 80 low income, 238 regular, and 168 sustaining members. One generous soul joined as a benefactor (\$100), while we also gained six business sponsors and nine new organizations.

Of course, there are a lot of family and friends who are members. The holiday season is a good example. Glenn Yoshioka (long time member based in San Jose) dropped by the office to buy a T-shirt. Wendy and I drove down to the Peninsula for dinner at Art Kulakow's house, stayed with Wendy's sister Lenore, and visited friends Chris Halvorsen and Jenny Fire-Halvorsen (Jenny and Wendy attended graduate school together). We spent Christmas eve with Beth Newman (former CWC Board member) and Dennis Coules (former CWC staff) and Christmas day with my parents (faithful members for years) and Don and Kathy Kennedy (even my ex-sister-in-law is a member). The next week we entertained Steve Evans (CWC President) and Jeanette Colbert (Conference Coordinator) and Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton. New Year's Eve was with Robin Kulakow and Bill Julian. All of the above are loyal CWC members.

But speaking of new members, we would like to welcome two new business sponsors, Hurricane Wind Sculptures of North San Juan and C.B. Maisel, C.P.A., of Hayward. Also, thanks to Nordic Voice for becoming our newest group member.

"Forgettable quotes" from 1989

Old-growth trees under dispute in Washington state "probably should have been hewed down over 100 years ago....they're just taking up good growing room in the forests."

— Dennis Daughtery, President of Contract Loggers Association, *The Union (Grass Valley)*; 11/7/89

"At a hearing in Redding last summer on the proposed listing of the bird as threatened, Humboldt County Supervisor Anna Sparks likened the spotted owl to such pests as the apple maggot and the Mediterranean fruit fly."

— *San Francisco Examiner Image section*, 12/17/89

"Tanks will actually enhance the soil because the tracks hold moisture."

— Colonel George Donnelly, *Montana National Guard*, on the expansion of military exercises on arid lands; *Sacramento Bee*, 11/12/89

"Here's a very weedy-looking plant. And what I'm really wondering is, why are we worrying about it?"

— California Fish & Game Commissioner Benjamin F. Biaggini, on the Nevada oryctes, denied "threatened" or "endangered" status; *Sacramento Bee*, 12/31/98



Sally Kabisch

Photo by Ron Stork

Good luck, Sally

The bad news is that the Coalition is losing a Board member. The good news is that we are gaining an experienced activist as an Advisory Committee member and a place to stay when visiting Homer, Alaska.

Sally Kabisch came to California from Alaska four years ago to be the Sierra Club's Northern California/Nevada Regional Representative. In that short time she left her mark on wilderness in California and especially Nevada. And she made a lot of life-long friends (all of whom will be visiting Alaska soon.).

But Sally's writer husband, Tom Kizzia, got an offer he couldn't refuse from the *Anchorage Daily News*. So her goal became getting the stalled Nevada Wilderness bill into law before she left. Always one to push deadlines, she somehow convinced President Bush to sign the bill just days before her scheduled departure.

The ghost of John Muir delayed her leaving when the volcano Redoubt spewed ash into the air and closed the local airport. But ignoring that meaningful sign to stay in California, Sally now is back in the wilds of the 49th state.

Letters

Senior member keeps busy watching over public lands

Dear Ms. Paley:

I have been a member of CWC for a number of years and at age 82 am a dedicated environmentalist/conservationist. During the time I am "in residence" I spend many hours amongst publications and voluminous reference papers developing letters to pertinent legislators, heads of bureaus, departments, and agencies.

When I am not at home I am traveling, alone, in a mid-sized RV. Since retiring in 1972 I have logged an average of 10,000 per year in our 11 western states, plus Texas and South Dakota. Also one foray to the New England region. I think of them as field trips *vis a vis* Bureau of Land Management/U.S. Forest Service management practices of our federal lands. In doing so I travel as little as possible on interstate and other federal highways. My last trip, in September, was in a part of the Mojave Desert which was for me a first time—the Barstow, Needles, Las Vegas triangle west of Rt. 95. After the holidays I plan to return for further "exploration." I found your article, "Opposing Desert Bill Introduced" (*CWC Wilderness Record*, Nov. 89) quite interesting. Thank you.

I have a thick packet of letters, replies to some of mine... To those of us who want to preserve and protect the desert our concerns are not addressed [in a letter on desert protection from Senator Pete Wilson]. The senator has been evasive, contradictory, fallacious throughout his letter.

As stated, my participation in issues of mutual concern

is letter writing, which includes plenty of homework. If you have any suggestions in this area I am receptive. I have very little formal education, I am self-educated. Taught myself how to type many years ago and now I am considering a word processor, at age eighty two!!

In harmony,
Harold M. Fetters
Santa Rosa, California

Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz

Question: answer on page 5

Name the three national forests that are partially in California but are managed from another state.



Desert mountain range.

Desert Races Cancelled

Tortoise's endangered status seen as major factor

Three controversial motorcycle races that brought thousands of tires digging and skidding their way across the fragile California desert will no longer be permitted, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced in early December. Future applications for the races will be disapproved, BLM claims.

"Finally BLM has recognized public concerns," said George Barnes, who has opposed the race since 1972. Environmentalists have fought the Barstow-to-Vegas race since its inception in 1967.

BLM state director Ed Hastey is thought to have been led to the decision by the emergency listing of the desert tortoise as an endangered species. The Barstow-to-Vegas, the California loop of the Parker 400, and the Johnson Valley-to-Parker, Arizona—termed "point-to-point" races by the agency—all run over tortoise habitat.

According to David Mensing of the BLM, the decision also was based on the effects the races have on other wildlife, past violations of BLM rules, and the inability of the race's sponsors to control the races. Along with the

BLM, volunteers with Citizens for Mojave National Park, Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society have monitored the Barstow-to-Vegas race each year for violations that result in damage to the desert.

While the American Motorcyclists Association, sponsor of the Barstow-to-Vegas race, disqualified almost two dozen riders from the race held last Thanksgiving for going out of bounds, many more riders strayed from the designated courses.

Barnes, while jubilant at the recent decision, is skeptical about the permanence of the BLM's decision, pointing out that this is the third time they have announced the



BLM's California Desert District

Barstow-to-Vegas course

Legislation

"John Muir Day" established by state lawmakers

Without a single opposing vote, the California legislature in fall 1989 passed a law establishing John Muir's birthday, April 21st, as an annual "commemorative holiday." Among other things, the law encourages schools "to observe the importance that an ecologically sound natural environment plays" in our lives, and to emphasize "John Muir's significant contribution to fostering of such an awareness."

Coming one day before Earth Day, this honoring of America's wilderness hero will focus on the human scale of what it means to struggle for the environment.

Harold Wood of Visalia, a Sierra Club activist who worked for passage of the legislation, says "John Muir had what we today recognize as a holistic view of ecology which saw man as a part of the natural world, not the center of it."

Biographical information and John Muir's complete bibliography are available from the Sierra Club office at 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

end of the race. In 1972, Barstow-to-Vegas was stopped for eight years, but was restarted in 1985. Barnes believes that if the desert tortoise is listed as endangered it "may help keep them banned."

The races' courses have been re-routed over the years, and in recent years have stopped crossing wilderness study areas (WSAs) such as the Turtle Mountains, Whipple Mountains, and Sheephole Valley WSAs. The BLM still allows motorcycle races in 16 "open areas" designated for off-road vehicles.

The American Motorcyclists Association and SCORE International, sponsor of the Parker 400, are contemplating legal action to try to restore the races. When the race was cancelled in the past, motorcyclists have run the Barstow-to-Vegas course illegally.

Roadless Areas

Old-growth roadless area at stake

Environmentalists sue Forest Service over Grider "salvage" sale

By Felice Pace

On December 14th a coalition of Northern California conservation and community organizations filed a complaint in federal court to halt logging and road building within the Grider Creek Roadless Area of the Klamath National Forest (NF) near the California-Oregon border.

The complaint, filed in the Eastern District of the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court, claims that Robert Rice, Forest Supervisor of the Klamath NF, violated federal law and Forest Service regulations in approving four timber sales in the roadless portion of Grider Creek, a tributary of the Klamath River.

Under Forest Service regulations instituted last year, the plan to log the area has been exempted from administrative appeal. The exemption has forced local groups to go directly to court to halt what they claim are illegal sales.

The local organizations, which include Marble Mountain Audubon Society, Salmon River Concerned Citizens,

Klamath River Concerned Citizens, and the Klamath Forest Alliance, are being represented in the case by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

The lawsuit is perhaps the first to focus on the allegation that the Forest Service failed to assess the area's importance as a biological corridor. According to Neil Lawrence, an NRDC attorney, the suit also is based on the "deceptive approach" the Forest Service allegedly took when modeling watershed impacts, and on the failure to follow spotted owl guidelines.

The Forest Service's plans to log within the Grider Creek watershed have been controversial for a long time. In the early 1980s the RARE II lawsuit stopped the Forest Service from logging Grider and other roadless drainages in California. A second attempt to put in roads and log the area was appealed in 1985 by Marble Mountain Audubon Society. That administrative appeal was upheld by the

Chief of the Forest Service on grounds that the Forest Service had not demonstrated how they would keep sediment produced from logging operations from degrading water quality and damaging salmon and steelhead spawning areas.

The present logging proposal was developed after the 1987 fires burned through 7,283 acres of the Grider watershed. While the Forest Service claims that 90 percent of the trees to be logged are fire-killed, groups challenging the logging say most of the trees marked for cutting are green and vigorous.

Activists who have visited the Grider Area several times since the fires believe the Grider burn was a classic example of an old-growth fire, with only the understory and weaker or diseased larger trees killed. In some of the stands marked for cutting it is difficult to tell a fire has been there.

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White Mountains await wilderness recognition

continued from page 1

4,000 years old. Several stands of Jeffrey, ponderosa, and lodgepole pine are scattered throughout the range, relics from the Pleistocene epoch when the climate was wetter and colder. Aspens and water birch line the meadows and perennial streams.

In all, at least 988 plants, including four sensitive species, are found in the range. Approximately 60 species of mammals, including martens, bighorn sheep, mountain lions, and perhaps wolverines live in the White Mountains. Over 100 species of birds breed in the range, including the Northern pygmy-owl, yellow-breasted chat, and the Scott's oriole. Twenty-five species of reptiles and two amphibian species can be seen, including the endemic Panamint alligator lizard.

Most of the White Mountains remain in a very pristine state. However, several small mines operate on the periphery of the roadless areas and a few unmaintained jeep trails separate the three roadless areas in the southern portion of the range from the White Mountains Roadless Area. Cattle grazing is permitted in many of the east-side canyons and meadows and has resulted in erosion problems in many areas. Despite these intrusions, the White Mountains still contain some of the wildest country remaining in California.

Forest Service Proposals

The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan proposes a mere 120,000 acres of the White Mountains for wilderness designation. The area proposed for wilderness lies within the White Mountains Roadless Area (Figure 1). The other four roadless areas, Sugarloaf (10,720 acres), Birch Creek (32,705 acres), Blanco Mountain (16,348 acres), and Black Canyon (34,804 acres) are not even being considered for wilderness designation.

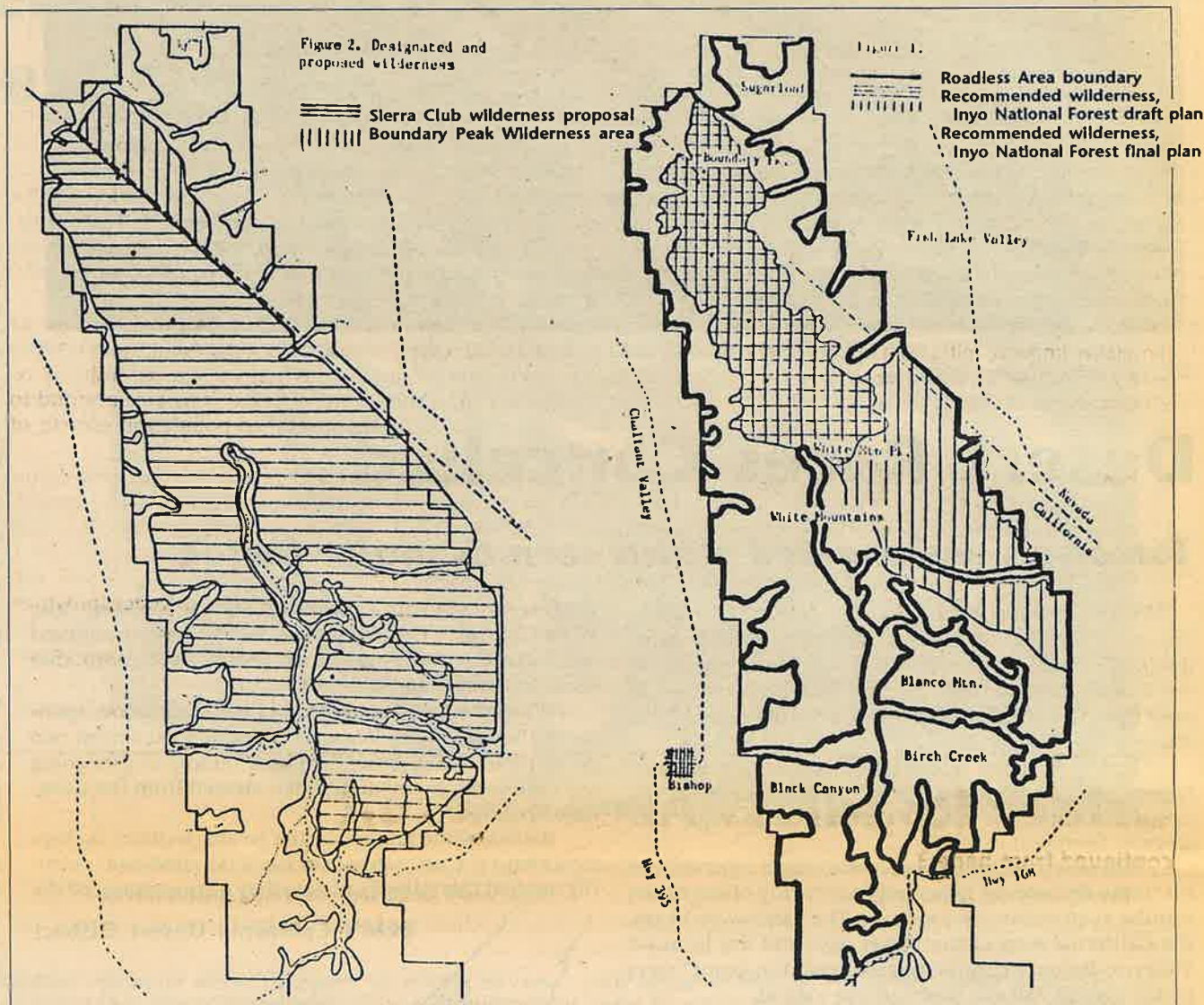
Although the plan's wilderness recommendation is a substantial improvement over the 52,874 acres proposed in the draft plan (Figure 1), it still represents less than 35 percent of the roadless acreage in the White Mountains and less than 50 percent of the White Mountains Roadless Area.

The wilderness boundaries proposed in the plan are, unfortunately, based on arbitrary categorizations of "scenic attraction" and "recreational challenge," instead of ecological importance and integrity. According to the plan, a portion of the White Mountains Roadless Area is proposed for wilderness because it "differs from many areas in that province by having outstanding scenic attractions and recreational challenges." Apparently, the western slope is excluded from the proposed wilderness because it does not satisfy these criteria despite its tremendous importance to the 100 resident bighorn sheep for whom the area is a critical winter feeding and lambing area.

The remaining four roadless areas apparently were not considered for wilderness designation because "there appears to be little wilderness-type recreation use in the Basin and Range physiographic province" and "opportunities for primitive recreation are low, as there is little diversity or challenge." The plan states, however, that "the natural appearance of the area has been influenced to a very low degree." This seems a rather arbitrary way of treating some of the most important roadless areas remaining in California.

Other Proposals

Several environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Friends of the Inyo, are in the process of drawing up their own wilderness proposals. The Sierra Club has proposed a 275,000-acre wilderness for California national forest lands (a contiguous 10,000-acre Boundary



Peak Wilderness was designated by the Nevada Wilderness Act on December 5, 1989). In the Sierra Club proposal, the Blanco Mountain Roadless Area is joined to the White Mountains Roadless Area by closing the Crooked Creek jeep trail. The Birch Creek Roadless Area is designated as a separate wilderness, and the Black Canyon Roadless Area is not included in the proposal.

California Congressional Representative Richard Lehman (18th District) publicly voiced his support for a

White Mountains Wilderness Area at a recent Congressional field hearing on the California Desert Bill, but it is unclear if he will support a proposal calling for more wilderness than that proposed by the Forest Service plan.

California Senator Alan Cranston stated in a recent letter, "I am interested in wilderness status for the White Mountains and hope we will be able to designate as wilderness more acreage than is being recommended by the Forest Service." Senator Cranston's California Desert Protection Act also would designate 11,200 acres of adjacent BLM land as the White Mountains Wilderness Study Area to ensure its protection until it can be added to a larger White Mountains Wilderness.

There is no better time to push for the full protection of this unparalleled Great Basin mountain range than now. Together, California wilderness advocates can make a BIG White Mountains Wilderness the focal point of the next California national forest wilderness bill and ensure that these mountains stay wild — forever.

Senator Cranston, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 and Representative Lehman, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

Roland Knapp is a graduate student in ecology at the University of California at Santa Barbara who has hiked extensively in the White Mountains.

A detailed 41-page report entitled "The White Mountains of California and Nevada: An Activist's Guide" is available for \$5.00 from the following address: Roland Knapp, 113 Vista Del Mar Dr., Santa Barbara, CA. 93109.

A bristlecone pine in the Schulman Grove in the Birch Creek Roadless Area. Photo by Jim Eaton



Editorial

Sherwin Ski Area proposal—the down side of skiing

"Son of Sherwin" is here—the revised version of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Sherwin Ski Area near Mammoth Lakes, California. Almost all of the Sherwin Bowl development would be in the Sherwin Roadless Area, adjacent to the John Muir Wilderness Area.

The first EIS, released in March 1988, was withdrawn when public comments indicated that it was insufficient in a number of ways. According to the new document, areas revised include "formulation criteria; alternatives considered; cumulative impacts; mitigation measures; and analysis of air quality, noise, wildlife, visual resources, water quantity, development economics, and market demand."

By Frank Stewart

A colossal ski area proposal stubbornly persists on the Eastern slopes of the beloved Sierra Nevada. It is called the Sherwin Ski Area, and would be built near the town of Mammoth Lakes, California.

As usual, the ski industry is incessantly beating the drum of "unsatisfied demand" for downhill skiing facilities. Although national demand trends are clearly in the decline, the industry claims there is strong regional de-

mand. Well, I've got news for downhill ski enthusiasts: welcome to the world of finite recreational opportunities!

Wilderness lovers learned long ago to live within a "recreation budget" when demand for limited resources exceeded supply. The wilderness permit is the best example of this. Another good example is quotas on float trips of popular rivers. In an overpopulated world (and state!) quotas are a fact of life.

According to my 1980 Texaco road map, at least 33 separate ski resorts have already gutted alpine ecosystems in California mountains. When will the ski industry be satisfied? And should the U.S. Forest Service respond to demand caused by the unbridled population growth of Southern California?

Ski resorts bring urbanization to the mountains. There is loss or fragmentation of wildlife habitat, deforestation, erosion of steep slopes, and permanent visual scarring. Also, new development occurs (condos etc.), creating air pollution from wood-burning stoves and autos operated on trips to cold, high altitudes for which they are not tuned.

Streams are polluted by runoff from "non-point" sources like city streets, parking lots, gas stations, and the like. Federal lands are pumped for domestic water needs.

Finally, increased pressure is put on the Forest Service to "trade out" public land around the edges of town into private ownership for condos and shops.

Every one of these examples has occurred, or is in the process of occurring, in Mammoth Lakes and its surrounding communities. Some of the damage is spin-off from the two existing ski areas, while some is occurring in anticipation of the new Sherwin Ski Area proposal.

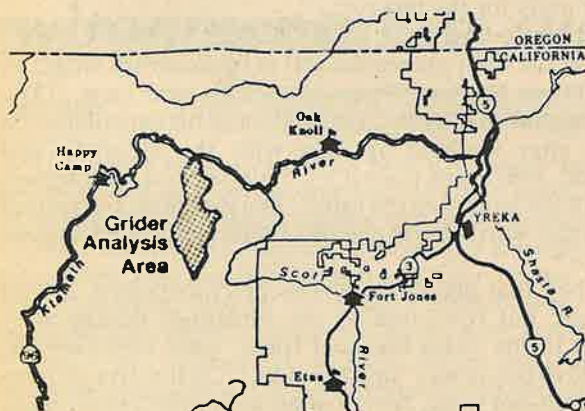
Friends of the Inyo would like to squash this proposal once and for all and needs your help to do it. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Sherwin Ski Area is currently available for public comment until February 7 (recently extended). Letters from around the state will convince the Forest Service that a broad spectrum of citizens is opposed to this proposal. The DEIS provides enough "rope" for us to hang the project. For more details and information on the DEIS write to: Friends of the Inyo, RT 1/Box 37, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Send your letter to Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514.

Frank Stewart is a volunteer with Friends of the Inyo.

Grider Roadless Area lawsuit

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Representatives of the four local groups also point out that since the fires of 1987, record numbers of logs have been cut in the Klamath NF and sent to nearby lumber mills. Log sales during 1988 and 1989 have equalled about 150 percent of what the Forest Service says can be sustained over the long term. "We've supported the salvage logging" said Peter Brucker of Salmon River Concerned Citizens. Brucker described an agreement worked out between local conservation groups, the timber industry, and the Forest Service which allowed salvage logging in the Salmon River area of the Klamath NF to proceed quickly while providing protection for streamside areas and anadromous fisheries. "But Grider's different," said Brucker; "here the Forest Service wants to destroy one of our few remaining pristine watersheds under the pretense of fire damage."



Susan Terrence of Klamath River Concerned Citizens points out that Grider Creek has one of the few significant runs of wild salmon and steelhead remaining in the Klamath basin. "Some of our members are fishing guides," she said, "and their clients want to catch wild fish." Terrence also maintains that wild fish populations will become increasingly important in the future. "Fisheries

biologists tell us we will need to use wild fish as breeders in our hatcheries to keep those hatchery fish healthy," she said.

The legal and moral responsibility of the Forest Service to ensure that native wildlife survive over the long term will be a key aspect of the Grider court case. The Klamath Forest Alliance has been advocating the use of riparian corridors to connect lands reserved for wildlife and other non-timber values as a means to make sure wildlife populations do not become isolated. Grider Creek has been identified as one of these corridors. Pointing to maps which show extensive areas where the Klamath NF has been roaded and clearcut, Pace stated that most wildlife biologists believe some species cannot survive in clearcut and second growth forests.

A document released in late November lists Klamath NF logging plans for 1990 and 1991 and shows that officials in charge of managing the Klamath Forest want to liquidate the area's last remaining ancient forests. Ukonom Creek, Dillon Creek, Clear Creek, and several other beautiful streams are marked for cutting.

Terrence, who works as a teacher at Forks of Salmon school, said local groups fear that by aiming its timber program at the largest stands of old trees the Forest Service could threaten community stability in Siskiyou County. "There's a good chance these sales will not go through either because Congress takes further action to protect ancient forest

or because of challenges by citizens," she said, "in that case local mills will be hard-pressed to find timber and the county road and school budgets will suffer." The groups who filed the suit to stop logging on Grider want the Forest Service to plan timber sales in those areas which already have roads and clearcuts. "There's plenty of timber out there in the areas that already have road systems," said Brucker.

The Forest Service has agreed to hold off awarding the sale until the judge decides whether or not to grant a preliminary injunction. Federal Judge Garcia will hear arguments on the merits of the case on February 2 in Sacramento.

For more information on the Grider litigation, contact: Felice Pace, Marble Mountain Audubon Society, P.O. Box 820, Etna, California 96027, (916) 467-5405.

Felice Pace is active in the Klamath Forest Alliance and is Vice-President and Conservation Chair of the Marble Mountain Audubon Society.

**Wilderness
Trivia
Quiz
Answer:**

from page 2

The Toiyabe (managed from Reno, Nevada), Rogue River, and Siskiyou National Forests (managed from Medford and Grants Pass, Oregon, respectively).

Wilderness management

Forest Service program teaches wilderness trail-building skills

By Vince Haughey

In 1989, the Sierra National Forest organized a pilot program called "Trailshots" to teach primitive methods of trail-building consistent with the wilderness ethic to Forest Service employees. Hoping to spread the use of backcountry, non-motorized skills, the trainees were recruited from five national forests and the Bureau of Land Management.

The name "Trailshots" was inspired by the agency's "Hotshot" fire crews, who are intensively trained to develop expertise and leadership.

Two months of classroom-type training sessions were followed by four and a half months of training in the field. Beginning with a week-long Outward Bound course on

Approximately 550 cubic feet of rock were crushed and 40 feet of rock and rubble walls, some up to five feet high, constructed for the bridge project.

basic survival, low-impact camping, and crew morale, the core crew of nine Trailshots trainees learned specific skills ranging from crosscut saw sharpening to blasting, rock wall building, livestock care, and other skills.

The crew was joined at times by others interested in specific topics. Two grueling field work projects were in the Ansel Adams Wilderness—with a week "off" to join fire-fighting efforts nearby.

The two wilderness projects were 1) the rehabilitation of Rattlesnake Bridge over the South Fork San Joaquin River, which was originally built as a 1930s New Deal project; and 2) the relocation and reconstruction of the Post Peak Pass Trail into Yosemite, a turn-of-the-century calvary trail where time and horses had worn ruts as deep as three feet into fragile meadows.

Although many tons of rock had to be moved throughout trail construction, blasting was kept to an

absolute minimum where necessary, according to crew supervisor Mike Ketscher. His "light on the land" philosophy meant that the crew bent over backwards to avoid mechanization, using pack mules instead of helicopters to bring in supplies and bridge materials, choosing natural materials wherever possible, and using prybars, teamwork, and just "hard physical labor" to move rocks.

Bridge approaches in the steep Rattlesnake Canyon had to be especially well constructed since the bridge is the

only access to most of the Ansel Adams Wilderness for cattle as well as hikers. Approximately 550 cubic feet of rock were crushed and 40 feet of rock and rubble walls, some up to five feet high, constructed for the bridge project.

"Every day was a learning experience," said Ketscher about the crew's season. "We tried so many things—thought we could accomplish so many things." His hopes for 1990 are that funding will come in time to recruit the best experts to train a new Trailshot crew, that the training will be more focused and specialized so that best use can be made of the field season, and that some of the original crew from this past year will lend a hand to provide some continuity for the program.

Larry Zellner, one of the pioneer Trailshots, took a season off from his regular job as backcountry ranger in the Tahoe National Forest to join the new crew. "The impression that sticks," says Zellner of his experience, "is that after working up here with the Eldorado and Tahoe...well down there it's serious business. Wilderness is half the ground of the forest. The people on the ground who deal with it day to day are so dedicated. That was good to see."

Not that people elsewhere aren't dedicated, Zellner assures, but compared to the wilderness management effort in the Sierra National Forest, what he'd been exposed to before was "small cookies." On his days off from the Trailshot work, Zellner often went hiking to see more country.

If it's funded, the project for the Trailshots this coming season will be building a log bridge on the Horns Lake Trail in the John Muir Wilderness.

Vince Haughey is a volunteer with the CWC who lives in Nevada City.



Trailshots trainees Karen Whitson and Mary McMillan use single jack drills to split rock while constructing the new Post Peak Pass trail. U.S. Forest Service photo



Boulders weighing up to 3 tons were moved during work on the Post Peak Pass Trail re-route; a total of over 180 tons of material were moved by hand over the course of the 1989 summer. U.S. F.S. photo

Book review

Blowing off the public lands

Wind erosion aids desert deterioration

Human Causes of Accelerated Wind Erosion in California's Deserts

by Howard G. Wilshire, Desert Protective Council, Inc., 16 pages.

By Stephanie Mandel

In his carefully referenced report on the human causes of wind erosion in the California desert—updated from a 1979 version—geologist Howard Wilshire seeks to establish that erosion from wind has as serious an impact on the California desert as erosion from water. Satellite photographs of dust storms and recent quantitative studies support this assertion.

Wilshire persists—despite pressure from his employer, the U.S. Geological Survey—in exposing government misuse of its responsibilities to protect public lands. Last spring, the 63-year-old Wilshire was in the news when his superiors threatened to suspend him for 28 days without pay for spending off-work hours protesting Forest Service approval of soil-eroding motorcycle races in the Eldorado National Forest. In the end Wilshire was not suspended, but an Interior Department opinion on his case left constitutional issues unresolved, such as the free speech rights of federal employees.

The human causes of wind erosion evaluated in the report include: roads and utility corridors, exposed agricultural fields, river channel modifications for flood con-

trol that leave soil exposed, urbanization, off-road vehicle disturbance, mining, and grazing.

Wilshire finds, not surprisingly, that the expansion of these disturbances has brought accelerated erosion. The ways that erosion deteriorates the environment are not covered extensively in the booklet, but in his introduction Wilshire notes that "unplanned and poorly planned human impacts are daily being felt by delicately adjusted systems in ways that overwhelm the natural balances. The systemic adjustments to such human impacts are bringing about widespread changes in the biological productivity of the land through destruction of the soil mantle, and concomitant deterioration of environmental quality."

Most of the disturbed land is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and Wilshire concludes that the agency's management simply has "not kept pace with the increasing rate of disturbance."

This report is available from the DPC Publications, Box 4294, Palm Springs, CA 92263.



New CWC T-Shirts!

Not one, but two CWC t-shirts! The animal design that Bruce (left) is wearing is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank (of Farley fame); it comes in beige and light gray for \$12. At right is our official conference shirt; it has no less than six colors and comes in yellow, light green (xlarge & small only), and peach (xlarge, large, & small only) for \$15. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on page 8, adding \$1.50 postage for the first shirt and 75 cents for each additional shirt.

CALENDAR

January 11 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the proposed listing of the desert tortoise as an endangered species. Send to: Listing Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 1002 N.E. Holladay St., Portland, OR 97232.

January 13 SHERWIN SKI AREA (proposed) PUBLIC HEARING, 9 a.m. at the Mammoth Ranger Station off Hwy. 203, the first building off the Mammoth Junction turnoff from I 395. For more information, contact John Ruopp, Recreational Staff, at (619) 873-5841.

February 7? (call number below for extended deadline date) DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the revised draft EIS for the proposed Sherwin Ski Area. Send to: Attn: Sherwin Ski Area, Inyo National Forest, 873 N. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514. For more information, contact John Ruopp at (619) 873-5841.

February 3 CWC ANNUAL MEETING in Davis. For more information, contact the CWC at (916) 758-0380.

February 3-4 ENVIRONMENTAL SYMPOSIUM sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League: "California 1990: Year of Decision;" featuring as keynote speakers U.S. Senator Pete Wilson and Attorney General John Van de Kamp; California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street. For more information, contact PCL at (916) 444-8726.

February 10 DESERT BILL HEARING in Los Angeles; the last of three Congressional field hearings on the Cranston/Levine California Desert Protection Act. For more information, contact Jeff Widen of the L.A. Sierra Club at (213) 387-6528.

March 16-18 RIVER CONFERENCE/FESTIVAL hosted by Friends of the River Foundation, at Dominican College, San Rafael, CA. For more information contact Merlyn Storm at (415) 771-0400 or F.O.R., Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123.

April 22 EARTH DAY



**California
Wilderness
Coalition**

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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The Wilderness Record

The *Wilderness Record* is the monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit would be appreciated. Subscription is free with membership.

The *Record* welcomes letters-to-the-editor, articles, black & white photos, drawings, book reviews, poetry, etc. on California wilderness and related subjects. We reserve the right to edit all work. Please address all correspondence to:

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Coalition Member Groups

Focus:

Marble Mountain Audubon Society

One of the smallest Audubon chapters in the country is the Marble Mountain Audubon Society (MMAS), numbering 61 individual and family memberships. But thinking small is not one the group's problems.

Based in Greenview, California, MMAS is active in the defense of the Klamath/Siskiyou bioregion, roughly some 7-8 million acres.

Besides the traditional Christmas bird count and birding field trips, the group works with other grassroots groups on issues ranging from wilderness management to recycling. They work closely with Forest Service wildlife staff, monitoring timber sales. Felice Pace, Vice-President and Conservation Chair with the group since its founding in 1980, says "we try to monitor timber sales to make sure they're environmentally sound." Of four major timber sale appeals, the group has won two and settled two through mediation.

Once a month MMAS offers educational programs, and they have helped with community service projects such as working with the Soil Conservation Service to plant willows for streamside shade.

The MMAS newsletter is available for \$5 a year from Ken Maurer, Membership Chair, MMAS, P.O. Box 820, Etna, CA 96027. Chapter membership is open to National Audubon Society members.

American Alpine Club; El Cerrito Ancient Forest Defense Fund; Ukiah Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club; Los Angeles Back Country Horsemen of CA; Springville Bay Chapter, Sierra Club; Oakland Butte Environmental Council; Chico California Alpine Club; San Francisco California Native Plant Society; Sacramento Citizens Committee to Save Our Public Lands; Willits
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