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The southern Inyo Mountains, the only area recommended for wilderness by the Bureau of Land Management in the Bishop Resource Area, is part of a potential 300,000-acre wilderness Photo by Joe Pollini

Bishop plan wrought with faults

By Sally Miller

The Bishop Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released a draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will direct the management of 750,000 acres of BLM land in the eastern Sierra region for the next ten to twenty years. The previous planning documents, the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan, were completed in 1982 and 1983, respectively.

Four alternatives are presented, including a "no action" and a preferred alternative. The document also considers designation of a new east-west powerline corridor in the Inyo Mountains, the study of which is a joint effort between the BLM and Inyo National Forest.

The RMP addresses major issues such as mining, wildlife and fisheries management, recreation, and land acquisitions and disposals. Grazing is given cursory treatment. The RMP recommends a portion of the Inyo Mountains for wilderness; the existence of other Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) is barely acknowledged.

Wilderness Study Areas

Over 38 percent (288,618 acres) of the Bishop Resource Area is designated as WSAs. These lands encompass some unique and varied Great Basin habitats, including the Slinkard Valley, adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, much of the Bodie Mountains, Granite Mountain east of Mono Lake, the Volcanic *continued on page 6*

Stanislaus forest plan neglects wilderness

By John Buckley

To most campers, backpackers, skiers, and tourists that drive through the Stanislaus National Forest along any of its main highways, it may seem strange that environmental groups are so worried about this national forest.

What's to worry about? There is a sea of green trees all across the mountains, there are huge trees along the sides of the highway, and only a few clearcuts in the distance show any sign of humans having disturbed the beautiful forest.

Yet those that truly know the Stanislaus National Forest have gone beyond the narrow scenic corridors that are designed to show a pretty face to the passing public. They have really looked at this 900,000-acre forest. And what have they found?

A forest on the brink

On the side roads and back roads, on the back sides of ridges or down in rugged canyons, thousands and thousands of acres of once-beautiful conifer forest are now cut over, devastated clearcuts or hillsides of even-aged, monoculture tree farms.

In 1987, major wildfires ripped through the entire

southern third of the forest, fed by decades of accumulated logging slash and fuel build-up. Most of these burned acres still stand stark and empty—salvage-logged, but not yet replanted.

And across the main timberlands of the forest years of intensive logging have left thickets of small to mid-sized trees, with most large trees sprinkled along roadways for the benefit of tourists.

New draft forest plan released

Despite lots of publicity, colorful maps, slide shows, and talk of a "new vision" for the Stanislaus National Forest, the newly-released draft forest plan continues to let logging dominate.

Conservation groups were deeply disappointed by the plan which, when finalized, will decide what happens to the forest for the next 10 to 15 years.

For three years environmental groups have worked to persuade the Forest Service decision-makers to switch from a "logging-first" mentality to truly looking at multiple-use of the public forest. But after looking at the proposed plan, a coalition of conservation organizations *continued on page 5*

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COALITION PAGE

MONTHLY REPORT

As an election junkie, I usually stay up until the wee hours awaiting the results of many of the races and initiatives. In recent years, I tend to fall asleep as most of my candidates/issues lose and a few I support cling to narrow margins in the early morning hours.

The last election I really celebrated was in 1976 (and since I was on the East Coast, I had to wait long into the night for Hawaii's votes to put Jimmy Carter over the top—Alaska was saved!).

This year was among the worst. Apart from the retirement of Chip Pashayan from Congress, there was little reason for cheer. Although it was clear in the weeks before the election that Big Green would go down in defeat, the "anti" mood of the electorate also brought down Forests Forever. Even without much party support, Patricia Malberg almost knocked off John Doolittle. And our activist environmental Attorney General John Van de Kamp was being succeeded by Dan Lungren.

What a bummer!

The day after the election, I called the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata to get their reading of the defeat of Representative Doug Bosco. (Although generally disliked by local environmentalists, Bosco had achieved the passage of the Smith River National Recreation Area, which also ended the threat of the long-fought Gasquet to Orleans (G-O) Road by placing the lands into the Siskiyou Wilderness.) In the background of the NEC office, I could hear a cheerful party going on.

When I got hold of Tim McKay, I asked why the party, in light of the big losses suffered by environmentalists. He explained that they celebrated the

BY JIMEATON

end of the 1990 elections with a large cake inscribed:

"Another election has come and gone. But we're still here!"

This is the attitude that keeps environmentalists going through the worst of times. Last week the supporters of Prop. 130, Forests Forever, got together. Rather than giving up after their heartbreaking defeat, they planned their 1991 legislative and legal strategy.

Years ago, Friends of the River poured its heart and soul into an initiative to stop the filling of New Melones Reservoir. They lost by a narrow margin. Although they saw the flooding of a river that some were willing to give their lives to save, they did not quit. Today they are working on their 100 Rivers Campaign to preserve creeks and rivers throughout the state.

The women and men volunteering their time to protect wild lands cannot afford to be disappointed by a single election. They are working to preserve an *enduring* resource of wilderness, one that will pass from generation to generation. Our wilderness must be secure enough to endure short term changes in public opinion, recessions, depressions, and even wars. We are visionaries who look at the big picture, the long run.

I have been working for wilderness preservation for more than two decades. I have worked under Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush (all of whom have signed bills adding to California's wilderness system). Five of the six presidents have come and gone.

But we're still here!

Get ready for..

CWC's 15th Birthday Celebration!

February 2, 1991
in Davis, California

—A lighthearted evening—

Special guests, including Martin Litton and
David Brower

&

Honoring our founders and early years

Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What wilderness area has
had its boundaries altered
four times?

answer on page 7

Letters



Castle Mtn. a loss to the public

Dear Sir:

Although your article on Castle Mountain in your November 1990 issue seems to indicate a victory for environmentalists, in truth was a complete loss to the public.

The Bureau of Land Management gave over four square miles of beautiful desert, never to be seen again, to process ore from only 135 acres (1/5 square mile) of mineralized area. I am sure that even those who made up the Mining Law of 1872 could not have contemplated such abuse of that law.

In addition, the Bureau decided the open pits would not have to be backfilled because the project would not be economical. In other words, by circumventing the complete restoration of the area, they have made waste rock into ore.

With this policy, all natural areas are in jeopardy in this lust for gold.

Yours truly,
William W. Savage
San Diego, California

Saving species isn't enough

Dear CWC,

I am an Australian who has been living in California for a little over 18 months. While in Australia, I played a small role in a number of wilderness campaigns and, even though separated by half a world, continue to do what I can to preserve the remaining wilderness in that country.

The purpose of my writing to you, however, is to try to state my concerns about the legislative basis through which environmental groups such as this one are attempting to protect the surviving wild areas in the United States. While a novice in these matters, and acknowledging that political support is an essential part of any successful campaign, it is still apparent that the way in which an ecosystem is protected will be defined by the means through which that protection was sought. Thus, to make the continued existence of a wilderness area contingent on the presence of a single species, as the Endangered Species Act appears to do, seems to me to lead toward an obtuse and confusing form of environmentalism.

Any natural environment, such as a forest, is an intrinsically complex system where the whole reflects the interdependence of the species that are part of it with other geographical and climatic features. To stand this natural order on its head and say that the whole is limited by and dependent upon the survival of a single species is the unlikely result of a combination of inappropriate application of reductionist methodologies and poor law-

making.

The *Wilderness Record* has been giving superlative coverage of the ancient forests debate, but I cannot help feeling from reading these reports that by making the preservation of the spotted owl the means by which the forests were to be safeguarded that only a precarious and limited form of protection of the forests has been achieved. It will continue to be difficult to secure the future of wilderness in this country so long as environmental organizations attempt to do it species by species. This is especially true given the endangered status of the ESA itself. Only when there is broad recognition that we have not inherited this planet from our ancestors but borrowed it from our children that both the law-makers and the environmentalists will move toward the sane and necessary goals of biosphere conservation.

Very truly yours,
Ed Newbigin
Oakland, California

Editor's note: Thank you for bringing up these excellent points, which raise in my mind questions about the history of proposals for "endangered ecosystems" protection legislation. Perhaps we will do a story on the subject for a future issue of the *Wilderness Record*.

Headlines

Cyclists defy restrictions, take forbidden routes

By Sally Miller

On November 10 and 11, 1990, approximately 90 motorcyclists staged a "protest ride" through an extremely sensitive part of the Inyo Mountains. The riders were in the eastern Sierra to partake in California Trail Rides' (CTR) Inyo 250 Dual Sport Motorcycle Ride, organized by Larry Langley of Bellflower, California. The protest ride was organized in response to the Inyo National Forest denying CTR access through the Inyo Mountains for its off-road vehicle (ORV) event.

This past summer Langley filed an application with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a special use permit to conduct the ride. In 1989, 40 persons affiliated with CTR rode the Inyo 250 Dual Sport under a Special Use Permit from the Mt. Whitney District of the Inyo National Forest. In this year's application, Langley asked to expand the event to include 150 participants. The route of travel he specified was along a variety of routes, ranging from extremely primitive trails to maintained roads. The ride was to start in Independence, head north through the Inyo Mountains (USFS), head northeast through several BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) proposed for wilderness in the California Desert Protection Act, head northwest through the Wyman Canyon WSA in the White Mountains, travel west through a Forest Service roadless area (Birch Creek) in the White Mountains to the ancient bristlecone pine forest, and from there head down to Bishop. The route was to be reversed the following day.

The Forest Service and BLM solicited public input on

the proposed event and received numerous comments from concerned individuals and environmental and Native American organizations. Environmentalists' concerns centered on the WSAs, ancient bristlecone pine forest, and Birch Creek roadless area. Members of the Bishop Paiute-Shoshone and Big Pine Paiute-Shoshone tribes raised concerns about the ride going through the Inyo Mountains. Papoose Flat in particular is a sacred area to the tribe, and the entire area is rich in archaeological resources. The



Motorcycles lining up for the ride.

Photo by Linda Reynolds

proposed ride route went directly through Papoose Flat.

The White Mountains Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the ride. Local environmental activists were surprised and pleased to read in the Forest Service's Decision Notice for the EA that the entire portion of the ride from Independence to Big Pine through the Inyo Mountains was denied. The reason given was that "the low amount of dispersed use occurring at the present time is resulting in slow but significant degradation of a highly

significant area." The Forest Service also denied the riders access through the WSAs and Birch Creek roadless area. They allowed access through the bristlecone pine forest, however.

Over 100 riders began the event not in Big Pine (the permitted start for the ride), but in Independence, 35 miles to the south. The Forest Service, alerted to the impending protest ride, was present in Independence, but did not attempt to dissuade the riders. CTR had provided all riders with "release forms" that contained a disclaimer stating that each person was riding the Inyo Mountains portion of the ride as an individual, and not in affiliation with CTR. Riders also were provided with "Last Minute Rider Instructions" which delineated the approved and denied routes and explained that "individuals" were legally allowed to use either. One Forest Service employee noted, "This is the most cynical nod at compliance (with an agency permit) I have ever seen." Eighty-nine riders went through the Inyo Mtns. on November 10th and 66 had the nerve to repeat their performance the following day, riding back to Independence.

The protest ride crossed part of a roadless area (Paiute further planning area) that was designated for "multiple
continued on page 4

Barstow-to-Vegas race closure strongly enforced; few protest

By Eric Knapp

The willingness of the Bureau of Land Management to enforce the closure of sensitive desert tortoise habitat has given environmentalists hope that the end is near for the controversial Barstow-to-Vegas off-road motorcycle race.

Traditionally taking place during the Thanksgiving weekend, the race has been bitterly opposed by environmentalists, who object to the destruction of fragile desert lands by thousands of motorcyclists.

In 1990, due to the listing of the desert tortoise as a threatened species, sponsors of the race were unable to obtain a permit for the event. Angry off-roaders, led by the Sahara Club (a group linked to harassment and death threats directed at environmentalists), spread rumors of a protest ride. A letter sent by the Sahara Club to environmental groups threatened "you will be responsible for 25,000 or more infuriated riders on Thanksgiving weekend...riders with an attitude!"

There have been race cancellations in the past; from 1974 to 1982 more than one thousand motorcyclists rode the 150 miles illegally. Until this year, the BLM had done little to enforce any cancellation of the race.

This past Thanksgiving weekend, however, the BLM, assisted by other law enforcement agencies, made its presence known near the traditional starting line, 25 miles northeast of Barstow. Only 100 protest riders showed up and even fewer decided to defy the BLM's desert closure order. Many off-roaders apparently instead chose to

attend the permitted "Battle to Victory" race in the Johnson Valley off-highway vehicle area, the proceeds of which the American Motorcycle Association plans to use for legal fees in the fight to have the Barstow-to-Vegas race reinstated.

At one point in the Barstow desert standoff, four dirt bikers sped around the BLM rangers. One stalled in the sand not far away and the other three, including Sahara Club leader Rick Siemens, were chased 25 miles into the desert. They rode through desert tortoise habitat (according to BLM officials) before running out of gas and being arrested. All four had their bikes impounded and they face one year in jail and a \$100,000 fine. In all, 10 motorcyclists were arrested. Twenty-one assorted vehicles did cross the finish area, apparently after being dropped off near the end of the traditional course. None of these vehicles were observed to have strayed off of pre-existing tracks and dirt roads, and apparently little damage was done.

Environmentalists were pleased by the weekend's turn of events. George Barnes, chair of the Sierra Club ORV Task Force, called it "BLM's finest hour," and a major victory for the environment. "For the first time BLM stood up to the outlaw racers. This may be the turning point in permanently outlawing the race," Barnes added. According to Tim Read of the BLM, the agency plans to study the race's impacts in an environmental impact statement.

Eric Knapp is pursuing a graduate degree in genetics at the University of California at Davis and is actively involved in student environmental groups.

Key wild river decision overturned

Greatly disappointing environmentalists, in early November a federal appeals court reversed an earlier ruling that had disallowed logging near Wild and Scenic rivers for which no management plan has been prepared.

The original decision was considered an important precedent, and has already been used to ward off other controversies over logging near Wild & Scenic rivers.

Attorney Stephan Volker of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in San Francisco has petitioned the court to rehear the case, and remains confident that the original decision by Judge Lawrence Karlton will prevail in the end. "I doubt the area will ever be logged—there are a number of reasons under the law why it cannot be," Volker said.

One such reason is that the court still must rule on whether the logging would pollute the river and whether the Forest Service followed a legal requirement to cooperate with other federal and state agencies. Also, the facts in the case might warrant a logging ban for scenic reasons, Volker feels. He believes the appeals court decision ignored important Forest Service regulations, and that the law requires Wild & Scenic river management plans regardless of agency regulations.

If the appeals court refuses to rehear the case (a decision on rehearing is expected by the end of December), Volker will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to consider the case.

The appeals court ruling only affects some of California's federally-protected wild rivers—the five that were designated in 1981 by the Secretary of the Interior (Eel, Klamath, North Fork American, Smith, and Trinity). Management plans are being prepared for California's other Wild & Scenic rivers.

Roadless areas



One timber sale or 2 wilderness areas?

The dreams of a 9,000-acre Echo-Carson Wilderness and a Caples Creek Wilderness in the northern Sierra may be in trouble. The Forest Service is considering logging dead and dying insect-infested timber from the Caples Creek and Dardanelles roadless areas, proposed for wilderness by environmentalists since at least 1970.

Part of the Caples Creek roadless area was recommended for wilderness in the El Dorado National Forest plan. The Forest Service also is looking at portions of the Pyramid roadless area next to Desolation Wilderness for logging. Logging also is proposed for the canyon of the upper South Fork of the American River, which is being studied for suitability as a Wild & Scenic river.

An Environmental Assessment for the "Longshot" and "Hotshot" timber sales is now being prepared by the Placerville Ranger District. Comments may be sent to: District Ranger, (Attn.: Mike Grimm), Placerville Ranger Station, 3491 Carson Court, Placerville, CA, 95667. Project leaders are Mike Grimm and Dave Boyer at (916) 644-2324.

Wild & scenic river watershed in trouble

By Steve Evans

The Six Rivers National Forest is soliciting public comments in response to the Castle Rock Compartment draft Environmental Impact Statement. The EIS attempts to justify logging 3.9 million board feet of timber from wildlands adjacent to the South Fork Trinity Wild and Scenic River. Approximately 170 acres would be logged and three miles of road constructed in the Underwood roadless area.

An area of extremely steep canyon slopes, dotted with numerous rock outcrops, rocky ridges and landslides, the Underwood roadless area was "released" for multiple-use by the 1984 California Wilderness Act. Predictably, the Forest Service has defined multiple-use as a mandate for logging and roadbuilding.

Issues of concerns include the impacts of logging and roadbuilding on threatened and endangered species (confirmed nesting sites for spotted owl and Peregrin falcon) as well as erosion and sedimentation impacts on the South Fork Trinity's anadromous fisheries. In 1989, only seven spring run chinook salmon were counted in the river. The river's fishery has been dramatically degraded by logging throughout the watershed.

In addition to destroying the wilderness qualities of the Underwood roadless area, conservationists fear the impact on the South Fork's Wild and Scenic values (see article on South Fork Trinity decision).

Concerned citizens should write a letter to District Ranger Laurence Cabodi, Lower Trinity Ranger District, Six Rivers National Forest, P.O. Box 68, Willow Creek, CA 95573. In your letter:

* Support Alternative Z in the Castle Rock Compartment draft EIS—the no action alternative.

* State your concerns about the impacts of logging on threatened and endangered species (spotted owl, Peregrin falcon), wilderness values of the Underwood roadless area, and the Wild and Scenic values of the S. Fork Trinity River. Alternative Z would best preserve these important resources.

Comments must be received by December 21, 1990.

By Charles Coleman

Plan preference for Mt. Vida area disclosed too late

On November 7, 1990 the Forest Service held a two-day work group session to present the proposed preferred alternative for managing the Mt. Vida Planning Area draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Alarming, the preferred alternative includes the construction of a new road which divides the Mt. Vida roadless area into two parts, neither of which would meet the minimum 5,000-acre guideline for inclusion in the wilderness system. The road would destroy the roadless character of the Mt. Vida roadless area and probably preclude it from future wilderness designation.

The Mt. Vida roadless area is comprised of 9,100 acres of unroaded land characterized by

The Forest Service chose not to announce its selection of a preferred alternative for the Mt. Vida Planning Area draft EIS until after it received public input on the proposed alternatives (due on August 27, 1990), and on the proposed preferred alternative presented at the November 7-8 work group session.

However, this delay violates the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Only those present at the work group session were made aware of the specifics of the proposed preferred alternative. This approach to public participation in the decision-making process precludes meaningful analysis.

In addition, the Forest Service violated NEPA documentation requirements in the draft EIS. First, the document fails to discuss adverse environmental effects which

cannot be avoided and irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources. The construction of a two-lane, paved arterial road through the Mt. Vida area qualifies as an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

Second, the draft EIS fails to disclose and discuss all major points of view on the environmental impacts of the alternatives. The discussion of the effects of the proposed arterial road on the Mt. Vida roadless area in the summary, alternatives, and environmental consequences sections are inadequate and misleading.

Third, the document fails to state that bisecting the Mt. Vida roadless area into portions of less than 5,000 acres is an important impact on wilderness suitability. In fact, it does not mention the Wilderness Act or the minimum 5,000-acre guideline.

In light of this flawed approach to public participation in decision-making, combined with the inadequate and misleading discussion of the environmental consequences of the proposed arterial road on the Mt. Vida Roadless Area, the decision makers and public must be given an opportunity to comment on a revised draft EIS. The Wilderness Society has requested that a new draft of the Mt. Vida Planning Area DEIS be prepared. Further requests from the public are needed.

Charles Coleman is a Public Lands Analyst with The Wilderness Society in San Francisco.

Inyo Mountains protest ride

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use" by the 1988 Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (a portion of the Paiute FPA, away from the ride's route, was recommended for wilderness in the plan). The multiple use prescription allows for ORV use on existing and new planned routes. This designation was appealed by Friends of the Inyo et al, who had asked the agency to recommend the bulk of the area for wilderness. In the appeal, Friends voiced concerns about the possible "disastrous consequences" to the wilderness character of the area under a multiple use designation. The appeal is unresolved.

Numerous witnesses were present at the ride, including Forest Service employees, a member of the Big Pine Paiute-Shoshone tribe, a volunteer from the Eastern Sierra Museum, a member of the local Audubon Chapter, and a California State University (Fresno) geologist collecting field data. District Ranger JoEllen Kiel, who signed the Decision Notice, also was present. Reports vary as to the extent of damage done. Kiel notes that there was damage to archaeological sites. Other witnesses claim that some riders were travelling at high speeds, off roads, and up adjacent canyons. Photographs were taken, which will help substantiate these reports.

Local environmentalists, Native Americans, and archaeologists are outraged. Despite numerous pleas for punitive action against CTR, the Forest Service has taken no immediate action. "We are considering our options," says District Ranger Kiel. The Forest Service claims that they might have no legal handles on CTR because the protest ride was outside the purview of the permitted ride,

the riders signed "release" forms, and because they cannot deny individuals access to public lands.

Environmentalists strongly disagree, believing that action must be taken against the riders' refusal to respect the Forest Service's restrictions by riding through the Inyo Mountains en masse, travelling off road, damaging archaeological sites, and violating the Native American Religious Freedoms Act.

Adding insult to injury, an attorney representing CTR is appealing the Decision Notice for the EA. Activists intend to intervene in this process and also are considering legal recourse. Statements and photos from witnesses and other documents are being gathered.

This protest ride is very unsettling to environmentalists in the eastern Sierra. They have feared that there would be escalating pressure on the natural resources of the eastern Sierra, especially by ORVers, with the perception afoot that they are being "locked out" of California desert lands. The Inyo Mountains protest ride has sadly borne out these fears.

What you can do: Call or write Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, to express your outrage. Ask what punitive action the Forest Service is going to take against CTR. State that you expect them to take a strong stand so that the Inyo ride does not become the Barstow-to-Vegas of the eastern Sierra. Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA, 93514, (619) 873-5841.

Sally Miller is an activist with Friends of the Inyo.



Old trees in the Stanislaus National Forest dwarf this visitor.
Photo by John Buckley.

Stanislaus plan

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agreed that the plan still lets high timber sale levels damage wildlife, water, wilderness, and recreation values.

Wild places at stake

The roadless areas and "further planning" wild places in the Stanislaus are typical of the forest's problems. Eagle, Carson-Iceberg, Waterhouse, and Bell Meadow roadless areas get thousands of visitors each year, but all face logging and new roads under the new forest plan.

North Mountain is perhaps the best example of how Stanislaus officials view wild, old-growth forest groves. North Mtn. roadless area lies against Yosemite National Park, south of Lake Eleanor. Its spectacular ancient forest includes sugar pines 400 years old, giant cedars, ponderosa pines, and huge white firs.

Completely isolated from any roads, only a single old, abandoned jeep trail cuts into the North Mtn. area, and most of that trail is blocked from use by Yosemite. But Stanislaus officials have still designated North Mtn. as "general forest," which means that clearcutting and road-building will both be allowed.

Members of the Friends of Stanislaus Forest are working to save North Mtn. and other threatened roadless areas. Letters from individuals will help show the Forest Service



that people do care about this Sierra Nevada neighbor to Yosemite.

Write to: Janet Wold, Forest Supervisor, Stanislaus National Forest, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, California, 95370. Some issues to mention are:

- 1) Ask that the annual timber sale level be reduced from 90 million to less than 70 million board feet.
- 2) Tell why roadless areas are important to you, and ask for complete protection for all the remaining roadless areas in the Stanislaus National Forest.
- 3) Mention that clearcutting and shelterwood cutting should be reduced.

John Buckley works with Friends of the Stanislaus Forest.

Sherwin ski plan appealed

By Frank Stewart

An appeal of the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Sherwin Ski Area (SSA) has been filed by a group of five conservation organizations: Friends of the Inyo, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, California Wilderness Coalition, and Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation. The California Department of Fish and Game also has filed an appeal.

The proposed SSA, which would be located near Mammoth Lakes in the Inyo National Forest, would serve 8,000 skiers at once, increasing local downhill ski capacity by a third.

The environmentalists' appeal centers on several issues. The first is the failure of the EIS to consider off-site, private land real estate developments that will be built at the base area. "Snowcreek Village" will include the ski area base lodge, 150,000 square feet of commercial space, and 2,332 condominium units. Appellants contend that the impacts of these activities should be considered in the EIS.

Various other "connected actions" and "indirect effects" also would be induced by the approval of SSA. Chief among these are a golf course on federal lands adjacent to the base area and a water supply and storage scheme. In order for the town of Mammoth Lakes to grow along with the newly-approved ski area, it needs more water. The local water purveyor wants to get this water from Inyo National Forest lands. The total package will include as many as three separate well fields, water conveyance lines several miles long, and storage reservoirs in a nearby basin. The environmental review of this water project is going on in at least three separate environmental assessments (EAs) (the golf course has its own EA). Water needs for snow-making have been drastically underestimated. Because the base area will be at only 8,000 feet (this is low for the east side of the crest), snow-making will play

a big part in allowing the ski area to open for Christmas.

The SSA will occupy two major mule deer migration corridors that cross the Sierra Nevada crest. The EIS defers critical decisions on mitigation measures to avoid impacts to these deer until a Master Development Plan is completed. Similarly, information regarding site grading is absent, and is supposed to appear in a Master Plan. Environmentalists argue that this information should be in the EIS so that the Forest Supervisor can make a truly informed decision on whether to approve the ski area.

The appellants also object to the manipulation of data used to verify demand for downhill skiing in California. If there is such a great demand for skiing, why do existing ski resorts have such low utilization rates for most of the ski season? How come ski resorts reach their capacities only three or four times a season? Crowding during holiday periods is poor justification for new development. The Forest Service needs to start using quotas to control crowding when demand outstrips supply, just as they have done with wilderness users for well over a decade.

Finally, the appellants believe there may be alternatives for expanding downhill skiing capacity besides the SSA. Possibilities are expanding existing ski areas, developing only a portion of the SSA, and considering other sites in the Inyo National Forest.

Under the new appeal regulations, it is likely that a decision on the appellants' request for a supplemental EIS will be made by early next summer. They are hopeful, yet realize that there is tremendous political pressure being applied by the ski industry to sacrifice this part of the Sierra Nevada to downhill ski development. This is evidenced by the Inyo Land and Resource Management Plan's prescription for connecting ski developments along the San Joaquin Ridge all the way from Mammoth to June Mtn. ski area, seven miles to the north. This proposal would dwarf the Sherwin Ski Area and replicate the existing town of Mammoth Lakes. More about that in a future issue of the *Wilderness Record*.

Frank Stewart is a member of Friends of the Inyo.

1990 political wrap-up: Congress & the elections

Good news for ancient forests, mixed election omens

Congress wrapped up its work for 1990 with major progress for ancient forests. While legislation protecting ancient forests did not pass, other significant victories bode well for the future:

- The Interior Department appropriations legislation passed with no riders limiting judicial review.
- The Packwood Amendment, designed to convene the Endangered Species Act "God Squad," was defeated by a 62-34 margin.
- The AuCoin-Hatfield National Forest Plan Implementation Act (also known as the Timber Dominance Act) died in committee.
- Congress ended with 129 cosponsors on Jim Jontz's H.R. 4492, the Ancient Forest Protection Act.
- Rep. Mel Levine became a champion for Sierra Nevada ancient forests through his efforts to add a strengthening amendment to Rep. Bruce Vento's ancient forest bill, H.R. 5295.

A number of election developments also will have effects on ancient forests and other environmental issues:

- In an upset, Rep. Doug Bosco (D), who represented California's northern coast, was defeated by Frank Riggs (R). Riggs made many early overtures to the environmental community and ran as an environmentalist.
- Republican Chip Pashayan, whose district included

the Sierra and Sequoia national forests, was turned out by Calvin Dooley (D), presenting an opportunity to cultivate a champion for the Sierra Nevada.

- Agriculture Committee environmental champion George Brown fought back a strong challenge and retained his seat.
- Indiana Rep. Jim Jontz (Mr. Ancient Forest), targeted for defeat by the Carpenters Union, successfully fought off a very tough challenger.
- In Washington state, Rep. Jolene Unsoeld beat a pro-timber industry candidate by a solid margin, demonstrating that an environmentalist can hold a seat in a Pacific Northwest timber district.
- In Oregon, Rep. Denny Smith (R) was trounced by Mike Kopetski (D), whom conservationists supported. Kopetski has a more balanced approach to the old-growth issue than the fanatical Smith.
- Also in Oregon, Senator Mark Hatfield was re-elected, fighting off a strong challenge by Harry Lonsdale, whose support for protecting old-growth was a key part of his campaign.

Reprinted from the California Ancient Forest Activist, a newsletter published by the Sierra Club Northern California/Nevada Field Office.

Land management planning

Bishop plan found full of faults

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Tablelands-Fish Slough area north of Bishop, and 50,000 acres in the southern Inyo Mountains.

In 1987 the BLM completed an EIS for wilderness recommendations in the Bishop Resource Area vicinity. The EIS recommended for wilderness in the Southern Inyo WSA only 27,420 acres, less than 10 percent of the total WSA acreage. This recommendation has been carried over to the RMP.

The RMP does not even identify the 17 other WSAs that can be considered for wilderness. Instead, the BLM proposes "business as usual" within these lands, including mineral exploration on Potato Peak, the highest peak in the Bodie Mountains, new off-road vehicle (ORV) "route connectors" throughout the Bodie Hills, and increased ORV use in portions of the Volcanic Tablelands.

The law requires that WSAs be identified in the RMP and treated as *de facto* wilderness until Congress makes a final determination on BLM wilderness in California.

Grazing

The BLM initially decided not to include grazing as a major issue in the RMP. However, due to outcry from the public and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the BLM has acknowledged impacts due to grazing and recommended improvement of key wildlife and fishery habi-

tats that have been severely degraded by past grazing practices. What the BLM does not do in the RMP is address grazing in the entire area. Instead, livestock decisions such as stocking levels (AUMs), utilization rates, and seasons of use are incorporated in the document by reference to the EISs for the pre-existing plans.

The RMP fails to clearly document the declining condition of the range over the past ten years. Disclosure of this data would clearly point out the need for an

overhaul of the outdated grazing EISs. The BLM also needs to strengthen its position on grazing to include management for optimum habitat on all BLM lands.

Mining

The BLM has the authority to withdraw lands from eligibility for new mining claims. The BLM initially proposed in its pre-draft preferred alternative to withdraw over 30,000 acres of land from locatable mining. This included portions of the Bodie Mountains and all lands in the Inyo Mountains that host habitat for plant and animal species that are candidates for federal threatened or endangered species listing (including the Inyo Mtns. slender salamander). They also proposed the withdrawal of 35,000 acres of land from geothermal leasing, including a three-mile buffer zone around the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. The preferred alternative in the RMP proposes just 1,900 acres of land for mineral withdrawal and minimal acreage for geothermal leasing withdrawals.

The BLM attempts to compensate for its weak position on the mining issue by requiring that the visual quality of 46 percent of the resource area be preserved. However, any proposed mine that would degrade visual values could still be allowed by a plan amendment to change the visual classification of the area in question.

Activists from Friends of the Inyo, Desert Survivors, the California Wilderness Coalition, and The Wilderness Society will be reviewing the RMP and EIS more thoroughly and formulating detailed comments in the coming month. The BLM expects an onslaught of public comment from miners, ranchers, utilities, and ORV groups. In order to induce positive changes in the RMP, it will be very important for the BLM to receive a large number of comments from the environmental public.

The deadline for comment is January 17, 1991. Address comments to Mike Ferguson, Area Manager, BLM, 787 North Main Street, Suite P, Bishop, CA 93514. To receive a copy of the RMP call (619) 872-4881. If you would like to be on the mailing list to receive an action alert which will help you write your comments, or if you have further questions on the RMP, contact Sally Miller, P.O. Box 22, Lee Vining, CA 93541, (619) 647-6411.

Sally Miller of Lee Vining, California, is an active member of Friends of the Inyo.



The volcanic tablelands north of Bishop

Photo by Joë Pollini

Powerline corridor proposal: more study needed

The inclusion of a powerline corridor study in the RMP is one of the most confusing aspects of the plan. Utility companies have been pushing for years for another utility corridor designation in the eastern Sierra. The companies want an east-west corridor from unnamed sources in Nevada to tie in with existing powerlines in the Owens Valley, and thence to Los Angeles. There is no logical reason why the corridor study was put in the RMP.

An analysis of the "need" for an additional corridor is presented in the RMP; this analysis is prepared by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), one of the proponents. LADWP argues that adding capacity to the existing Owens Valley corridor would reduce the risk of a major power outage by better splitting the power load entering Los Angeles. Currently, the majority of Los Angeles' power supply enters via Las Vegas. LADWP also stresses the demand for additional power by stating that "the need for additional electricity in Southern California is expected to increase dramatically." This statement contradicts recent findings that southern California has an ample supply of electricity.

The preferred alternative is designation of a corridor through Soldier Canyon, a 45,000-acre roadless area "released" by the passage of the 1984 California Wilderness Act and subsequently designated for "multiple use" other than wilderness by the Forest Service. Soldier Canyon is virtually unroaded and contains significant archaeological resources, rare plant habitat, and tule elk calving habitat.

The length of corridor studied is about 12 miles, beginning in the town of Big Pine and ending abruptly at the boundary between the Inyo National Forest and BLM's Ridgecrest Resource Area, overlooking Deep Springs Valley. A logical extension of the corridor east would have it passing through Deep Springs Valley and the 60,000-acre Piper Mountain WSA, which is proposed for wilderness in the California Desert Protection Act.

The extended route has the potential to significantly impact archaeological and visual resources, mule deer migration corridors, a proposed bighorn sheep reintroduction site, raptor populations, and wetlands associated with Deep Springs Lake. This lake supports populations of two candidate species for federal listing as threatened or endangered species: the snowy plover and the black toad.

The only manner in which to adequately assess the cumulative impacts of any proposed corridor is to study its entire length. This glaring attempt to piece-meal the corridor study in order to minimize significant environmental impacts makes the Soldier Canyon corridor susceptible to defeat (though environmentalists want to take care not to dump the corridor into the Montgomery Pass area, either). Furthermore, the corridor study warrants an EIS on its own. The powerline project is of sufficient scope, having impacts well outside of the Bishop Resource Area, to necessitate a full-blown EIS.

More Tahoe appeals

Eighteen appeals have been filed contesting the final Tahoe National Forest Plan. In addition to the appeal of the CWC, Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society, the appeals include:

- Nevada County Forest Issues Group
- Ski Touring Section, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
- Western States Endurance Foundation, Inc.
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- California Native Plant Society
- Friends of Plumas Wilderness
- California Trout, Inc.
- Scenic Shoreline Preservation Conference, Inc.
- Julie McDonald, Attorney
- Department of Fish and Game

Additional appeals were submitted by the timber industry, Alpine Meadows Greenbelt & Recreation Committee, and several individuals.

Attorney General John Van de Kamp asked to intervene on 12 of the appeals. The timber industry is contesting their request. The Chief of the Forest Service will rule on the intervention requests.

Book review

The Grizzly—wilderness incarnate

Grizzly Years:

In Search of the American Wilderness

By Doug Peacock; Henry Holt and Company, New York, 228 pages, \$22.95.

"A familiar alertness crept up my spine, squelching my initial curiosity. I looked around with the sensate concentration that automatically turns on when I come across bear signs, even old ones. It is immediate, mandatory humility, something you do not get any more hiking down the Sierra Crest or anywhere now in Colorado, Utah, or Arizona. When you shoulder your backpack there and step down the trail, you are top dog. But in grizzly country, human status is second-rate, and these places are the last ones on the continent where a person can enter an ecosystem and not be the dominant critter."

During the past two decades, Doug Peacock has lived among the grizzlies remaining in Wyoming and Montana. During this time he has learned their habits, their needs, and their personalities. And he has learned to respect this great predator.

But *Grizzly Years* really is two books in one. While most of it chronicles Peacock's observations of grizzlies, there are a number of flashbacks to his Vietnam experiences. These windows into his past help the reader understand the man who chooses to spend much of his life away from other humans, in the wilderness.

Many of you may not realize that you already know much about Peacock. In the *Monkey Wrench Gang*, Edward Abbey modeled his character George Hayduke after former Green Beret medic Peacock. Although a gourmet cook, he also has a Spartan John Muir streak in him as he wanders off for extended times with little more than granola and protein powder for sustenance.

"I do not advocate anyone's leaving the well-used trail systems. The more we leave wilderness places alone, the better. But I hate trails and love to bushwhack, though I have an indolent nature that keeps me thinking about

adventure more often than living it. When I do step off the human-traveled trails, I find myself leaving behind conventional expectations, launching myself into the thicket, pawing at the brush with anticipation, smelling discovery."

Peacock's wandering in the wilderness are akin to the rugged marches of Muir, Robert Marshall, and today's members of Desert Survivors. I recall Abbey writing that it is not *true* wilderness unless there is a chance of one being killed and eaten by the inhabitants. These are the places Peacock loves to explore.

"Wilderness" is what keeps conventional wildlife management from speaking up for grizzlies. There is no paycheck in wilderness, nothing to manage. Yet human intolerance keeps anything less than true wilderness a deadly battleground where grizzlies always lose and die. We don't maintain a culture that allows us to live with another clever and predatory species. So for now, grizzlies must have wilderness.

"And that is fortunate because humans need it too...Grizzlies need big, uncompromised wilderness with no trails, scenic flights, human conveniences, human management, or 'improvement' of any kind. The wilderness has to be there for its own sake, and for the grizzly..."

"Grizzlies are wilderness incarnate. If we are to succeed in saving grizzlies with all their wildness, we will not do it by changing the bears to meet our needs. For the first time in our relatively short history on this planet, we will have to be the ones to bend."

Amen.

—Jim Eaton



CWC T-Shirts!

The animal design that Ron Stork (l.) is wearing is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige and light gray for \$12. Bob Barnes (r.) is wearing our anniversary shirt; it has no less than six colors and comes in light blue, yellow, light green, and peach for \$15. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on page 8.

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 15 COMMENTS DUE on the Hotshot and Longshot timber sales in the El Dorado National Forest. Send to: District Ranger, Attn.: Mike Grimm, Placerville Ranger Station, 3491 Carson Ct., Placerville 95667. For more information contact project leaders Mike Grimm or Dave Boyer. (Article on page 4.)

December 21 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the Castle Rock compartment draft EIS on logging the Underwood roadless area. (Article on page 4.)

January 17 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the Bishop Resource Area Management Plan and EIS, covering BLM lands east of the southern Sierra Nevada. Send to: Area Manager, BLM, 787 N. Main St., Suite P, Bishop, CA 93514. (Article on pages 1 & 6.)

January 31 SCOPING COMMENTS DUE on timber sales proposed for the Hartley, White Wing, and Glass Creek compartments of the Inyo National Forest.

February 2 CWC's 15th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION in Davis. A lighthearted evening honoring the CWC's founders and featuring special guests including Martin Litton and David Brower. Look for more information in the January 1991 WR.

February 26 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the Stanislaus National Forest draft plan and EIS. Send to: Janet Wold, Forest Supervisor, Stanislaus Nat'l. Forest, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, CA 95370. (Article on pages 1 & 5.)

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

from page 2

Ventana Wilderness. Originally designated in 1969, added to in 1978 and 1984, and modified again in 1990.



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* 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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