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King Range burned and raided

Lightning fires and the military find the Lost Coast

Slow-burning lightning fires and a quick marijuana clean-up struck northern California's coastal King Range for two weeks each in August.

Approximately 3,500 acres burned in the proposed wilderness area in blazes that started August 8. Acting Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Area Manager Barron Bail described the blazes as "very slow, fairly cool," with mainly understory burning while trees and heavier brush were not damaged. Conditions were optimal for fire control, with foggy nights and damp days.

However, as part of the fire containment effort, the Smith-Etter Road was newly bulldozed and widened for use as a fire line. Conservationists have long been trying to close this road, which almost slices the wilderness in half. A fire break was cleared along Bearwallow Ridge, also in the King Range National Conservation Area, and the King Crest Trail was bulldozed at its junction with the Smith-Etter Road.

Lynn Ryan of the Sierra Club describes a big, ugly scar on the trail, visible from the wilderness. "That was an error," Ryan claims. She questions the way BLM handles fires in the King Range, commenting that the area is "managed by fire."

Ryan explains that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, who BLM contracts with to handle its fires, is too "intrusive" and machine-oriented to properly work on wilderness fires. "This time they didn't need to be as aggressive as they were," she contends.

Green Swept Away

Earlier in the month the King Range was visited by the California National Guard and U.S. Army, who worked with the BLM on "Operation Green Sweep." The two-week marijuana elimination effort was staged from a grassy plateau inside the Chemise Mountain Wilderness

Study Area (WSA), which BLM officials claim was the "only good place."

Helicopters were used to remove irrigation pipes, wire, drying sheds, and even a surfboard—12 tons of equipment in all—along with marijuana plants. "I don't think anyone expected to get that much equipment," commented Bail. Bail said that for years the BLM has raided marijuana gardens in the King Range, but normally only has crews cut plants and leave.

The BLM has drawn criticism for using military support, for the cost of the raid, and for not working with local law enforcement agencies or six-year pot raiding experts CAMP, the Campaign

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The King Range at the mouth of the Mattole River.

Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management

Plastic claim stakes threaten wildlife

By Lawrence F. LaPre, Ph.D.

Tens of thousands of songbirds and small animals are being entrapped and killed in plastic pipes used to mark hardrock mining claims across the West. As gold mining exploration increases throughout this region, the use of these plastic deathtraps is growing dramatically. In this article, Dr. Lawrence LaPre documents the implications of this problem in the East Mojave Desert and discusses possible solutions. Dr. LaPre is an activist and consultant on environmental affairs based in Riverside, California.

The East Mojave Scenic Area is a remote part of the California Desert known for its abundance of wildlife, Indian rock art (petroglyph) sites, rockhounding opportunities, and spectacular scenery. As part of the Sierra Club's Adopt-A-Wilderness program, I make periodic visits to Wilderness Study Area (WSA) #271, the Woods and Hackberry Mountains, to

report on any disturbances that might impair wilderness values.

The Discovery

During the Christmas holidays of 1989, I traveled to the Hackberry Mountains. I noticed a substantial increase in the number of mining claims present in the area—several hundred new polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes were being used to mark mining claims. They were four-inch diameter black or white perforated pipes, about four feet tall, placed at each corner of the claim, and sometimes at the discovery point and along the centerline of the claim boundary.

When I investigated the claim information within one pipe, five dead birds

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fell out. I stared in disbelief, figuring that someone must have been target shooting and dropped the bird carcasses in the claim pipe. I inspected several other PVC pipes and found more dead birds, mostly flycatchers and wrens. After 18 dead birds had been found in 10 or 15 pipes, I

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COALITION PAGE

MONTHLY REPORT

Last month I mentioned the three trips I was going to take in August—to Emigrant with the Forest Service, Mt. Shasta with the CWC Board of Directors, and Caribou with my neighbors.

Well, one out of three isn't so bad, is it? Since we couldn't get a quorum together for our Board meeting, we cancelled that trip. Instead, Steve invited us up to Wilbur Hot Springs, where I managed to sprain my ankle (I really don't want to tell you how). Needless to say, I wasn't able to make the Caribou trip (where my neighbors enjoyed poor fishing, soaking tents and sleeping bags, and neo-Nazis).

I did make the trip with the Forest Service to look at wilderness management problems. We covered 45 miles in three days—on horseback.

The last time I was on a horse was 20 years ago when my old girlfriend Linda conned me into riding bareback. This consisted of me clinging in terror to the animal's mane while she gleefully cackled "make him canter!"

The packer at Kennedy Meadows was not pleased with CWC's appeal to remove the dams in the Emigrant Wilderness, so I was afraid he might retaliate by putting me on a wild pony. Knowing of my inexperience on horses, he brought me Mike.

Mike was an enormous beast—a cross between a Clydesdale and a woolly mammoth. The stirrup was chest high. Lacking the crane they used to lift knights onto their horses, I learned that the best way to mount this behemoth was to park him by a log or boulder.

But Mike was a gentle beast. All I needed to do to turn him was to gently lay the reins on his neck. That is, if Mike *agreed* with my choice of direction. If not, he shook his enormous head. Then no amount of pulling, tugging, or shouting would convince him to go where I wanted to go.

I learned a lot on this trip. It was nice to have someone else watch the road so I could look at the

BY JIM EATON

scenery. I could see why a certain standard of trail is needed for safe stock travel.

I also felt guilty every time we passed backpackers, leaving them covered with a fine dust. I sympathized with the campers who were kept awake by the constant clanging of bells on the stock (later Wendy took a trip to the proposed Echo-Carson Wilderness, where the cacophony from the cows "sounded like we were perpetually stuck at a railroad crossing with the bells ringing").

I was caught in the middle between the Forest Service officials from the Regional Office and those in the field. At the site of a proposed bridge, the district ranger and his staff argued that they could get the pre-assembled materials for the bridge brought in in a day or two by helicopter. The staff from San Francisco argued that wilderness management must be pure, and that if it took dozens of trips by string of stock to do the same thing, so be it.

When asked what I thought, I told them that I would closely question the need for the bridge in the first place. If, after careful scrutiny, it was decided that the bridge must be built, then I preferred the method which caused the least impact to the wilderness, including the use of helicopters if that were deemed the least damaging.

It was a worthwhile trip. I could see the problems and concerns of the wilderness managers. It was clear that commercial packers bring enormous pressure on the Forest Service to build trails and bridges to accommodate stock. I saw excellent trails being reconstructed by an elite crew from the CCC.

But I am not convinced that the dams should be retained to allow the maintenance of an artificial fishery. I still am willing to listen, learn, and change my mind if I can be shown an overriding reason that recreational fishing is more important than a pristine wilderness.

Wilderness primer, part VI:

How much wilderness?

A coalition member's question gave us the idea for this month's primer—wilderness acreages. In California, there are approximately 6,366,000 acres (995 square miles) of designated wilderness, federal and state.

| Managing agency | wilderness acres | proposed by agency |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Forest Service | 3,920,102 | 500,000 |
| National Park Service | 1,990,699 | 1,908,000 |
| Bureau of Land Mgmt. | 15,216 | 2,333,000 |
| Fish & Wildlife Service | 14 | 8,640 |
| State of California | 439,610 | 46,620 |

The Forest Service's proposed wilderness areas are included in the 19 or so national forest plans.

The BLM is proposing 62 areas which it has found to be suitable. The total proposal package is currently being reviewed by the Interior Department in Washington, D.C. According to Jeff Jarvis, California BLM Wilderness Coordinator, the package contains "no surprises," but lists areas that can be found in previously published reports.

The largest wilderness area in California is Sequoia-Kings Canyon (National Park) Wilderness, with 736,980 acres (1,152 square miles), followed by Yosemite (National Park) Wilderness with 677,600 acres. The John Muir Wilderness of Inyo and Sierra National Forests has 580,675 acres, Trinity Alps of the Klamath, Six Rivers, and Shasta-Trinity National Forests has 495,377 acres.

In Memory

Tom Maloney left a trail worth following

On August 8th, Tom Maloney died in Willows at the age of 75.

I doubt that many readers ever heard of Tom. Yet he was instrumental in the establishment of the Snow Mountain Wilderness.

Tom and his wife Hilda moved to Willows in 1949. He was Outdoor Editor for the *Willows Daily Journal* in the 1960s where he exposed the subsidies on coyote killing and wrote about outdoor recreation. About that time he and Hilda began collecting gems and minerals.

Tom often described himself as "an old fossil." In his house and shed, he had a better fossil collection than I have seen in a university or museum—anywhere. While he sold fossils, the best always went to the museums and universities. Most of his finest material now is at Humboldt State University in Arcata.

Last fall, Tom called me about Forest Service plans to log the headwaters of the South Fork of Stony Creek, just outside the Snow Mountain Wilderness. He thought the area should be added to the wilderness. I agreed and told him to keep bugging me to do something about the issue.

Tom did more than that. He did keep bugging me, but he also wrote letters and organized a meeting of locals who care about Snow Mountain to plan our strategy.

Someday we will add the South Fork of Stony Creek to the wilderness. Meanwhile, we hope to honor Tom by naming something at Snow Mountain, perhaps a trail, in his memory.

—Jim Eaton

Letters

Send Records to Bucharest

Dear friends,

I was reading the latest copy of *W.R.* and saw the letter from Dan Popa of Bucharest, Romania. I certainly hope that you will be able to respond to his request and in so doing encourage the fledgling conservation movement in that country. If nothing else, Chernobyl demonstrated that environmental concerns are not confined by borders...

Yours,

Ed Newbigin

Get exposure

We know you wilderness photographers are out there, and we need your help. We are unable to send staff all over the state to obtain photos, and recently members have been demanding better photos of what's really going on. So please send us your black & whites (or even color photos with good contrast). Thanks.



Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

In what wilderness will you find the Santa Margarita Mountains, Bluewater and Tenaja canyons, and Potrero de la Cienega?

answer on page 6

Headlines

BLM requires bonds for mining

Faced with criticism of its management of cyanide-using heap leach gold mines and other hard rock mining operations on federal lands, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced new reclamation bonding and other requirements at an August press conference.

After a phase-in period, the agency will require mine operators on tracts of more than five acres—approximately 1,300 of them—to post a bond to pay for restoring the land after mining. Smaller mining operators eventually will also be required to post bonds.

"The old rape-and-run days are gone," said BLM Director Cy Jamison in a *Sacramento Bee* article. However, environmentalists criticize the agency for not going far enough in its new rules.

Glenn Miller of the Sierra Club points to the new bonding requirement for exploration roads, which is a maximum of \$1,000 per acre. Up to \$2,000 an acre would be required for mining activities. Miller contends that this

is far less than what is needed and that the BLM should require all operations to post bonds for the full cost of reclamation. Mine operators with a record of not complying with reclamation regulations must be bonded for the full cost, as must those using cyanide or other chemicals in heap leach methods.

Miller says that although the new regulations duplicate state law to some extent, they're "almost adequate" for monitoring cyanide heap leach gold mining.

Although BLM has rarely required bonds in the past, Congress' General Accounting Office has reported that it

will cost at least \$280 million to clean up after past mining operations on public lands.

According to staff of Senator Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.), only 20 percent of mining operations are on over five acres. The other 80 percent will not be affected by the BLM's new policy until a federal rule-making process, which can take 18 months or longer, is completed. Western Mining Council President Greg Ouellette said the new policy will be "devastating" for small-scale miners in the California desert, who can't afford to post several thousand dollars in bonds.

Spotted owl update:

912 timber sales allowed in owl habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has okayed logging in 912 timber sales that contain spotted owl habitat, finding that even though the logging will harm some owls, the species will not be in danger of extinction.

The 912 are the Forest Service's unlogged pre-1990 timber sales and those planned to be sold by the end of fiscal year 1990 (September 30).

Whenever logging is planned for spotted owl habitat the Fish and Wildlife Service must be consulted and must give its biological opinion on whether the action would put the owl in "jeopardy" of extinction.

Jobs or owls to be protected?

As the *WR* was being mailed, the Bush administration was finalizing its plan to protect the spotted owl, as required under the Endangered Species Act.

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan told the press at the end of August that "Environmentalists are not going to like it [the plan], but you have to have balance. You can't throw 21,000 people out of work and not give it consideration...I fully expect one side or the other to sue me over the plan."

Which side that will be is clear. Lujan said that under the new plan timber industry job losses will be far less than the 20,000 estimated to be at risk if the owl protection recommendations of an interagency scientific committee, known as the Jack Ward Thomas Committee (after its Chair), were adopted.

The Thomas plan would ban logging on three million acres of northwest public land forests.

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) in Seattle, Washington has already sued the administration for violating the Endangered Species Act by not designating critical habitat at the time the owl was listed as threatened. "We don't think they should take any additional time," said SCLDF attorney Andy Stahl, explaining that the Thomas plan clearly maps the owl's critical habitat.

Lassen County Army Depot goofs:

Stray bomblets found near proposed Skedaddle wilderness

Like a nightmarish Easter egg hunt, Sierra Army Depot troops lined up and, on command, charged onto public lands to look for baseball-sized, "anti-personnel bomblets" that had strayed from the Army base.

Parts of the Skedaddle Wilderness Study Area (WSA), a portion of which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has recommended for wilderness, were included in the 12,500 acres of public land near the military base that were closed while the bomb search took place. No bombs were found within the WSA boundaries, however.

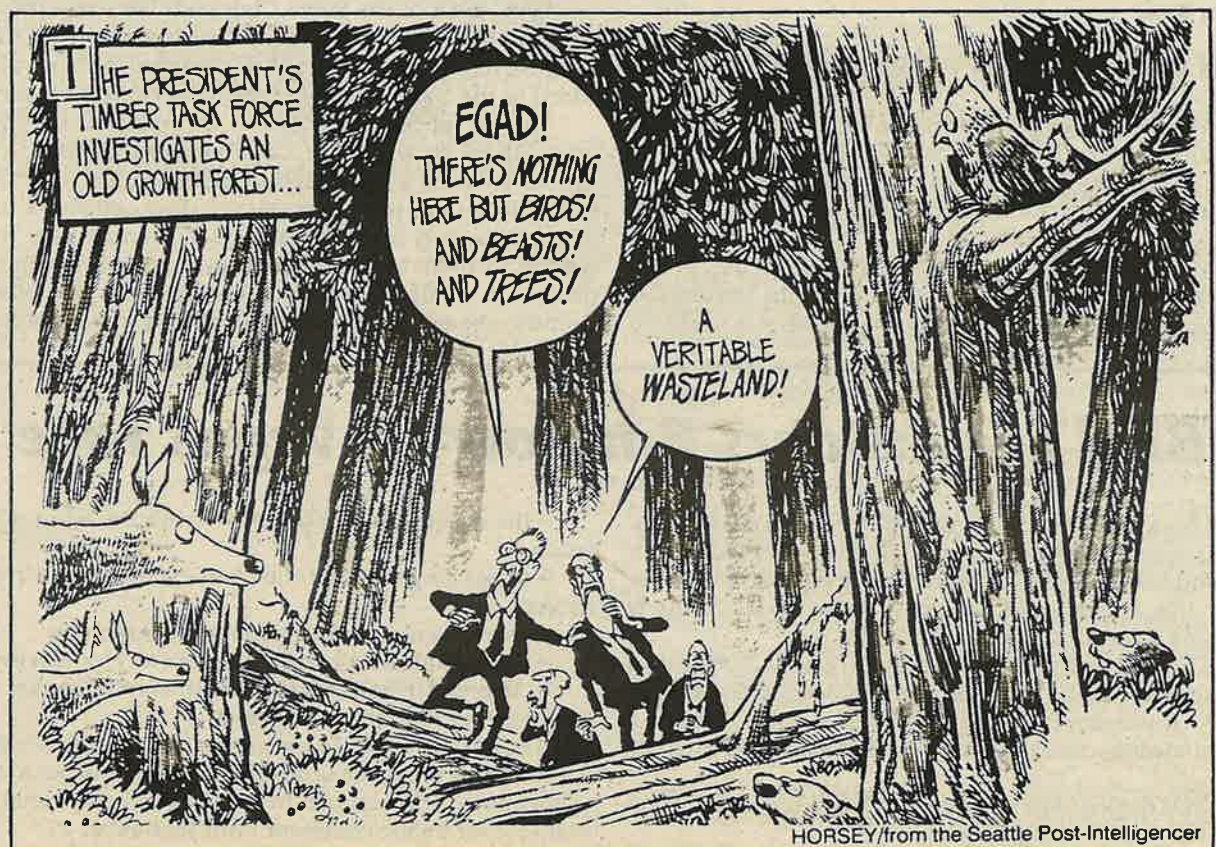
The undetonated bomblets plopped onto the BLM land while the military was destroying outdated ammunition. Larry Rogers, Army Depot spokesperson, said detonation instructions outlined in an army manual were being followed. "We can only surmise that those who

wrote the book should take a closer look," Rogers concluded.

The bomblets were discovered by firefighters assigned to a brush fire on this dry, sagebrush area. Members of a Sierra Army Depot fire crew found the steel balls and refused to go into the area to fight the fire.

The depot has combed the BLM land, and lines of soldiers only an arm's width apart found over 800 bomblets, the furthest 4,000 feet outside the base boundary. Rogers says the land is now "as clean as is humanly possible." BLM, however, has refused to certify the area safe, as bombs may still remain. The Army may request to withdraw the affected land from BLM management and add it to the base.

Most of the land will be re-opened to the public on September 15.



Fires—the natural cycle strikes Ishi, Yosemite, and Yolla Bolly Wildernesses

In early August 80 to 90 percent of the Ishi Wilderness was burned in the Campbell Fire, which apparently was started by a PG&E (Pacific Gas & Electric) power line. CWC President Steve Evans surveyed the damage by airplane and found that the trees were primarily unharmed. Riparian areas in the deep canyons were also still intact and an 8,000-acre area just north of Mill Creek was untouched by the fire.

Evans reports, "Fortunately, no fire lines were dozed in the wilderness except in the vicinity of Devils Den (south of Deer Creek near Ponderosa Way). Some dozers did use the Lassen Trail to escape eastward to Ponderosa Way after the fire went out of control on the west boundary. The Forest Service is already preparing plans to revegetate mechanically disturbed areas, but the wilderness will be largely left to recover on its own.

"The Forest Service should be commended for generally staying out of the wilderness."

Evans, an original member of the Ishi Task Force set up to work for designation of the wilderness, writes, "As we all know, the Ishi ecosystem is one based on periodic fires. Let's hope that years of fire suppression did not result in any permanent damage.

"Although my heart cried out when I heard of the fire, I have been mentally preparing myself for this event for many years. I'm looking forward to a good wildflower display in Ishi country next Spring."

Yosemite fires

All roads are now open again in Yosemite National Park, which was partially closed for ten days of its peak season due to the worst fires in its history. Over 60 fires were started from lightning strikes that hit during an August 7 storm. Over 11,000 acres, roughly two percent of the park, were burned, including many small backcountry blazes that required little or no suppression.

Two of biggest fires were on the west side of the park, in the El Portal and Crane Flat areas. Around Badger Pass, 5,280 acres burned, while 650 acres burned in the Aspen Valley area.

Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness fire

A fire in the southern end of the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness at Mt. Linn burned 207 acres between August 8 and 20. Air tanks, helicopters, and ground crews working to put out the fire faced steep terrain and winds, and three firefighters were injured.

As throughout California, fire is a natural part of the ecosystem in the Yolla Bolly Mountains, but the Mendocino National Forest felt with the dry conditions it was unsafe to let the fire go unchecked.

BLM reconsiders Barstow-to-Vegas race

Like a many-headed hydra, the infamous Barstow-to-Vegas motorcycle race is hard to kill. Even after the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) came to its senses to stop the race, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is pushing for the event one more time.

The race had been banned in 1974 after 3,000 riders severely damaged the desert, but BLM lifted the ban in 1983. It was not until the desert tortoise was listed as a threatened species earlier this year that BLM reinstated the ban.

BLM denied AMA's request for a Thanksgiving weekend race for the following reasons:

- unacceptable cumulative effects



12 tons of growing equipment, along with the marijuana, were removed from the King Range National Conservation Area in the August raid. Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management

King range raid

cont. from page 1

Against Marijuana Planting.

Lynn Ryan of the Sierra Club said, "We have fought long and hard for the Wilderness Study Areas in the King Range to remain primitive and undamaged so they will be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System."

The use of federal troops to enforce civil laws was made illegal by the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. Dr. Arnold Trebach, a national drug policy expert, said "The thought that our president and our drug czar think they can send armed American troops in combat gear with combat weapons to search for drugs, especially marijuana plants, in a relatively peaceful, and calm part of the country, should be considered an affront to every Ameri-

can citizen." (*San Francisco Examiner*)

BLM reports that of 28 gardens raided, 26 were rehabilitated by the National Guard trainees, who carried weapons but no ammunition.

A pre-existing road leading into the WSA was used to move trucks in and gravel was laid down to make a wet area passable. The troops, over 200 of them, also left behind a small kerosene fuel spill, approximately three feet in area and six inches deep, according to BLM. Bail said the contaminated soil has been removed and covered, and after testing will either be put back or removed. Bail said the soil is a dense clay and thought none of the fuel, used by helicopters, had gone through to ground water. "Other than the spill, there were no impacts to the area," Bail claimed.

Jeff Jarvis, BLM's statewide wilderness coordinator, said the vehicle trail into the WSA will be ripped up and returned to its natural condition. A locked gate now prevents further entry into the area.

Jarvis feels Operation Green Sweep was an overall improvement to the King Range, saying, "Taking all that trash out and that exotic vegetation (marijuana) is going to make the place more natural."

- the sponsor could not comply with the event stipulations
- about 57 percent of the course is in desert tortoise habitat
- there are no known reasonable alternatives
- BLM could not commit scarce resources to this event
- The event had eroded public confidence in the BLM's ability to protect the desert

The AMA then filed a lawsuit against BLM for denying the race, and the judge ordered BLM to reconsider AMA's application. This resulted in an environmental analysis available for public comment until September 21.

District Manager Gerald Hillier has made a prelimi-

nary finding that the proposed race will have a significant impact on the human environment therefore requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). If, after public comment, Hillier reaffirms this position, the race cannot be run this year since there is not adequate time to write an EIS.

If you would like to express your support for cancelling the Barstow-to-Vegas race, write to: District Manager (CA-060.2), California Desert District Office, 1695 Spruce Street, Riverside, CA 92507.

Wilderness Management

Mining claim markers kill wildlife

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concluded the pipes were acting as bird traps. Twenty additional markers yielded 36 dead birds and 18 dead lizards. Nearly all of the pipe markers checked contained dead insects, in some cases hundreds of wild bees. I again visited the Hackberry Mountains area in March; I inspected 21 claim markers, finding nine that contained three dead birds and seven dead lizards.

Reporting the Results

Upon my return, I reported these findings to the Sierra Club and the Mineral Policy Center, describing the animals being trapped by the claim markers. I also discussed it with a reporter for the *San Bernardino Sun*. In California, BLM rangers surveyed 730 mining posts and discovered 168 dead birds and lizards.

Biological Considerations

The number of animals trapped in the claim markers is dependent on the local habitat and the resident bird species. The birds are more frequently killed in areas where cavity-nesting species are common. Ash-throated flycatchers, rock wrens, and an American kestrel are all species that nest in holes in yuccas, the tallest plant in this part of the desert. Cactus wrens construct woven nests shaped like a horizontal tube, and this species was also found in the claim markers.

Although woodpeckers are the main excavators of cavities in the yuccas, no woodpeckers were found in the

pipes because they cannot perch in their characteristic vertical posture and because they do not create or enter horizontal openings. Where the vegetation changed to desert scrub without rocks and yuccas, many fewer birds were discovered.

Unfortunately, nearly all of the preferred habitat for cavity-nesting birds in the Hackberry Mountains is covered with mining claims marked with perforated PVC pipes. My earlier research on breeding birds in this area showed that the territory size of ash-throated flycatchers was from 25 to 50 acres for each nesting pair. The density of claim markers exceeds the density of flycatchers, resulting in several pipe markers being present within each nesting territory.

The observed rate of entrapment could lead to the entire local population of flycatchers being eliminated. The species has very likely suffered major losses already. These migratory birds depend on desert nesting areas to replenish population losses from natural causes. Combined with the loss of wrens and other susceptible species, areas containing many mining claims and high-quality habitat may become "empty" with respect to birds, leading to the scenario of a silent spring in the desert.

Insects are the animals most frequently affected. All of the pipes contained some number of dead insects. Certain insects appeared to be particularly vulnerable: cicadas, solitary bees, a type of iridescent wasp, and many beetles, including wood-boring species not often encountered by entomologists. Piles of hundreds of bees were found in some pipes; both dead and live bees were found in the pipes in March, a time when these insects are active in this region.

Implications

The trapping of small animals by PVC claim markers is a very serious and potentially widespread problem. Although the Hackberry Mountains was found to be a "hot spot" for the bird deaths, mining claims across Western states could manifest the same problem.

BLM reports that 1.2 million mining claims are recorded on public lands, with 395,000 new claims filed in the past three years. Every state except Montana allows the use of PVC pipe for marking claims. BLM estimates that several hundred thousand PVC claim markers are in use today. Clearly, tens of thousands of birds are at risk of being trapped in these claim markers. I believe thousands have already succumbed. In areas where cavity-nesting birds are common, the markers could selectively remove

these species from the local ecosystem.

While the loss of insects may seem like a minor biological problem, the large number of bees killed will affect the pollination of desert plants, which are often quite specific with respect to their pollinators.

Agency Reaction

In response to reports of small animal deaths, the BLM Washington office issued a press release and asked state offices to investigate the situation. The California BLM issued a policy requiring covering all pipes with caps or tape by July 1, 1990 (this deadline was recently postponed to September 1). Taping of the pipe is not recommended, but is allowed.

Some mining companies are retrofitting their claim markers by capping the pipes... This is a good start, but I am still concerned that thousands of open pipes marking other claims are exposed and many more birds will die before the problem is solved.

Solution

A markerless system for mining claims would solve these wildlife problems. The rights of claim holders can be fully protected by paper recordation of claims. There is no need to endanger wildlife or litter scenic landscapes with unnecessary claim stakes.

Until a markerless system is made the national standard, regulations are needed to protect wildlife hazards on public lands. Today, the method of marking claims is determined by each state rather than by Federal law or regulation, resulting in a fragmented approach to the problem. To correct this problem, the Federal government should establish uniform claim marker regulations that reflect important wildlife and scenic values.

Recommendation

Immediate action is needed on three fronts to prevent further needless loss of wildlife:

First, existing open-top PVC markers must be covered with permanent plastic caps. Taping the perforations or top as the BLM has allowed is not acceptable, since weathering will lead to quick loss of the tape.

Second, prohibit further use of uncapped or perforated PVC pipe.

Third, the Federal government should establish a program to document wildlife deaths in mining claim markers, and it should coordinate uniform data gathering.

Because hundreds of thousands of the PVC pipe markers are in place today on public lands, we need an effort by individual citizens to report the findings of small animal deaths. If you can survey claim markers in your area, you should report to the Mineral Policy Center the exact location of the claims studied, the date, the claim holders, and any animals found in the claim stakes (or none). Be sure to leave the claim marker in place when you are through and respect the rights of the claim holder. The inspection and reporting of wildlife kills in mineralized areas, and publicity about the findings, will compel the agencies to act.

The BLM has acted too slowly and too casually to prevent another year of needless bird deaths in the 1990 nesting season. We must press them to swiftly cure this simple, unnecessary wildlife hazard, so we are not faced with additional silent springs on public lands in years to come.

In the long run, we must press Congress to reform the 1872 Mining Law and do away entirely with on-site claim staking. It is expensive, dangerous to wildlife, and ugly. It is a remnant of mining tradition that should be eliminated.

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San Mateo: A plan for an atypical Wilderness

The Cleveland National Forest has released the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness Implementation Plan. The plan will guide the management of the 39,691-acre wilderness adjacent to the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base.

The San Mateo is not like your typical high Sierra wilderness. It is a major travel route of undocumented aliens. "Due to law enforcement efforts in Northern California," marijuana cultivation is an increasing problem. Mountain bicycles ignore the law and invade the wilderness daily. And the military has encroached on the wilderness with fires, vehicle use, target shooting, aircraft landings, and low overflights.

Many standard policies for wilderness management are incorporated into this plan. No camping is allowed within 100 feet of streams, hikers are limited to 15 persons per group, and equestrians are limited to 8 persons per group.

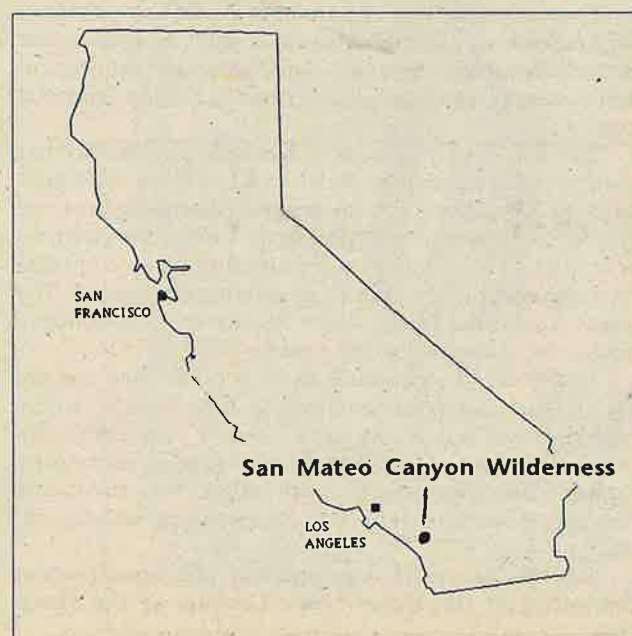
Because of fire danger in the area, prescribed fire will be used to reduce fuels to an acceptable level. A type converted fuelbreak even is proposed for a portion of the wilderness.

The area is heavily used in the spring and fall months, mostly by day users (including equestrians). Because overnight camping and open fires were prohibited in the past, few users are camping at present—only 42 permits were issued to overnight camping last year.

Despite the heavy day use, there are no proposals for instituting a wilderness quota at the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness. New trails and trailheads are proposed to disperse wilderness use.

Efforts will be made to acquire private land within the wilderness area.

The Forest Service currently is undertaking a study to determine the effects of aircraft overflights in the wilderness.



L.A. appeals Forest Service's decision on Mono Lake level

By Sally Miller

The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Comprehensive Management Plan and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), released by the Inyo National Forest on March 16, 1990, was appealed by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) in June. Preparation of the plan and its accompanying EIS were authorized by Title III of the 1984 California Wilderness Act, which created the Scenic Area. The Forest Service's preferred alternative emphasizes restoration and maintenance of a healthy ecosystem, while allowing interpretive activities to continue. The preferred alternative also recommends a lake level range between 6,377 and 6,390 feet, with a management level in the midpoint of the range.

DWP contends that the plan violates the California Wilderness Act because it identifies a recommended lake level range. DWP interprets this as interfering with its existing water rights, and thus contrary to the enabling legislation, which states that nothing in the Act shall interfere with existing water rights. DWP also claims that the final EIS for the plan does not comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in that the EIS fails to consider any realistic range of lake level alternatives.

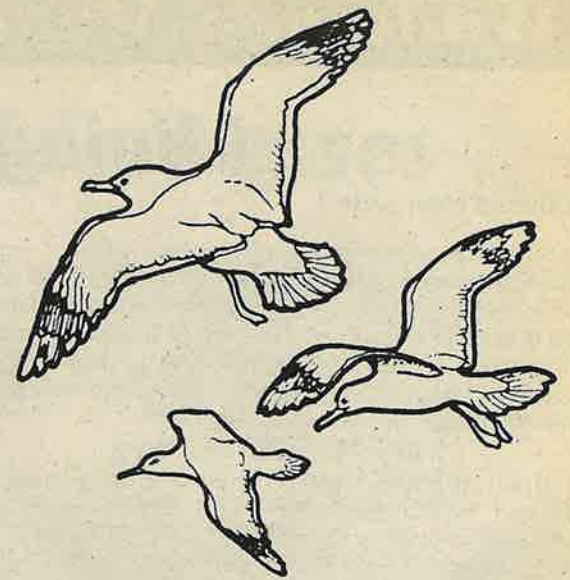
Numerous parties were granted intervenor status and have submitted comments on the appeal. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund is representing the Mono Basin Scenic Area Coalition and the Sierra Club as intervenors. The former group is comprised of environmental organizations with a long-term interest and involvement in the Mono Lake issue. Participating groups include the California Wilderness Coalition, Mono Lake Committee, National Audubon Society, The Wilderness Society, California Native Plant Society, Friends of the River, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Mono Lake Foundation, and local Sierra Club and Audubon Society chapters. Also intervening in the appeal are California Department of Fish and Game, State Lands Commission, Great Basin Air Pollution Control District, and California Garden Clubs.

The Mono Basin Scenic Area Coalition believes that not only does the Forest Service's identification of a recommended lake level range not violate the law, but that the Forest Service has riparian water rights under state law that are senior to DWP's water rights. The Coalition also believes that the Forest Service adequately followed the mandate of NEPA in preparing the EIS for the plan, and that the identified range of lake levels in the final EIS constitutes an adequate range of alternatives.

DWP appealed the plan and EIS to Regional Forester Paul Barker (Pacific Southwest Region). It is likely that the

appeal will go to the Chief, for discretionary review, and that DWP will lobby heavily in Washington to change the plan.

Sally Miller is Mail and Membership Director of the Mono Lake Committee in Lee Vining, California.



Legislation



House okays funds for Grouse Lakes & Castle Peak lands

By John K. Moore

There is good news on Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriations to buy private lands in the Grouse Lakes and Castle Peak roadless areas, favorite and highly scenic recreational areas in the Tahoe National Forest.

The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee has recommended appropriations of \$4.1 million for Castle Peak and \$2 million for Grouse Lakes, thanks to the large volume of supporting letters from California environmentalists. These amounts are not enough to complete the purchases, but they are a significant step forward. The money for Grouse Lakes, which has not received funding previously, is especially important.

The House recommendations, good as they are, are just the first Congressional step. The Senate, where California has much less clout, usually cuts LWCF appropriations for California projects. Without very strong support from Senators Cranston and Wilson, the Castle Peak and Grouse Lakes appropriations may be severely cut.

John K. Moore is a member of the Conservation Committee of the Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club.

New old-growth bill shunned

More than six million acres of old-growth timber in Oregon, California, and Washington would be set aside in an "ancient forest preserve" under terms of a bill introduced in Congress July 19 by Rep. Bruce Vento (D-Minn.).

The bill would ban logging on about half of the unprotected old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest, placing 2.7 million acres off limits to cutting.

"It is hypocritical for our nation's leaders to dictate that other countries stop destroying the fragile ecosystems of rain forests when we are destroying the fragile ecosystems of ancient forests," said Vento, who chairs the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee.

Vento's bill received a less than enthusiastic welcome from environmentalists, who are pushing the stronger Ancient Forest Protection Act introduced by Indiana Rep. James Jontz. Environmentalists criticized Vento's proposal for not going far enough and for diluting the focus on the Jontz bill, which has 144 House co-sponsors. The Vento bill requires the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to sell about three billion board feet per year to prevent job losses, while the Ancient Forest Protection Act would put all ecologically significant old growth off limits to logging.

Vento's bill would start with a three-year interim period in which eight million acres would be safe from logging while government agencies inventory old-growth stands and draw boundaries around the amount of acreage necessary to protect the spotted owl. Other ancient forest-dwelling species' habitat needs are not addressed, although some are very different from the spotted owl.

The bill also directs the Forest Service to adopt "new forestry" methods in their plans for managing old-growth stands outside the protected area.

To relieve the pressure on counties used to receiving fat checks from Forest Service timber cuts, the bill includes provisions for a five-year period in which affected counties would receive 50 percent of the money from the Forest Service timber sales instead of the current 25 percent. It also directs the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture departments to establish community assistance task forces at the national and local levels to provide displaced workers with retraining, job counselling, and job placement.

Reprinted from the July 1990 issue of Forest Watch, newsletter of Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants (CHEC).

Wilderness
Trivia Quiz
Answer:

San Mateo Canyon
Wilderness

from page 2

Wilderness beyond

Antarctica: Congress debating protection for world's largest wilderness

Note: An international treaty governing the uses nations may make of Antarctica is due to run out in 1991.

Several bills relating to the future of Antarctica, the largest wilderness left on Earth, are finally being discussed on Capitol Hill this year. H.R. 3977, The Antarctic Protection and Conservation Act of 1990, introduced by Rep. Silvio Conte (R-MA), will ban U.S. mineral resource development activities, press for the negotiation of a permanent ban on mineral activities in the region, and regulate tourism.

H.R. 3977 was recommended to the floor by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and still must pass the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "Passage of this bill would send a clear signal that the House supports protective measures for Antarctica and believes mining is incompatible with a protection regime for the region," said Beth Marks, Chair of the Sierra Club's Antarctica Task Force.

Two other pieces of legislation are scheduled for discussion in the House committees—H.R. 4210, the Antarctic Environmental Protection, Cleanup, and Liability Act of 1990, introduced by Rep. Walter Jones (D-NC), and H.R. 418, introduced by Rep. Wayne Owens (D-UT), which calls for the full protection of Antarctica as a global ecological commons. No hearings were held this year on

H.R. 4514, the Antarctica World Park and Protection Act, introduced by Rep. Bruce Vento (D-MN).

In the Senate, the Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing July 27 regarding three measures also dealing with protection of Antarctica.

"The Sierra Club is totally opposed to the development of Antarctica's mineral resources," said Marks in House testimony. The hearing focused on a Senate resolution introduced by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) that calls for the protection of Antarctica but tacitly endorses the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Minerals Resource Activities, which would open Antarctica to mineral resource exploitation. Industrialization of Antarctica would end the 30 years of cooperation among nations active in the region. "We believe Antarctica should be declared an internationally protected area, dedicated to science and other peaceful uses, where no mining can occur," state Marks.

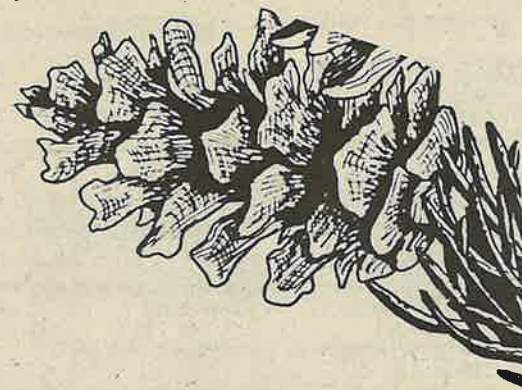
"Rather than focusing its energies on CRAMRA, Congress should be focusing on the legislation currently in Congress which contains many important provisions to protect Antarctica's environment," said Marks.

Reprinted from the Sierra Club's National News Report, August 6, 1990.



CWC T-Shirts!

The animal design that Jim (right) is wearing is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige and light gray for \$12. Wendy (left) is wearing our official conference shirt; it has no less than six colors and comes in yellow, light green (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. Please add \$1.50 postage and 75 cents for each additional shirt.



DATES TO REMEMBER

September 21 DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS on the BLM's Environmental Analysis and preliminary finding that the Barstow-to-Vegas motorcycle race will have "a significant impact on the human environment." Send comments to or ask for a copy from: District Manager, California Desert District Office, 1695 Spruce Street, Riverside, CA 92507-2497. (Article on page 4.)

September 23 CWC BOARD MEETING in Davis; contact the CWC for more information.

October MONTH of DISSENT AND RESISTANCE; all groups are being asked to plan at least one action or demonstration. For more information, contact Earth Action Network, 1711 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94705, (415) 843-4306.

October 18 DEADLINE FOR APPEALS of the Tahoe National Forest forest plan and final EIS. For a copy of the documents or more information, contact Acting Forest Supervisor Frank Waldo, Tahoe National Forest, Hwy. 49 and Coyote St., Nevada City, CA 95959, (916) 265-4531.



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: Mono Lake Committee

If you know what tufa towers are you probably have the Mono Lake Committee (MLC) to thank. Born from a love affair with the truly unique and spectacular lake, MLC was formed in 1978 by the late David Gaines and a few energetic friends who recognized an ecosystem on the verge of collapse. Never mind that their adversary was the largest megalopolis in the west (Los Angeles). L.A. was diverting the water from tributary streams that used to replenish the lake.

MLC has succeeded in getting politicians and agencies at every level of government to work for preservation of Mono Lake and restoration of its feeder creeks. They have won important legal battles to establish our "public trust," our responsibility to future generations to keep the lake healthy.

They have enlisted 20,000 members and have an L.A. office staff very actively doing political outreach and educating the public about conservation. The MLC Visitor Center in Lee Vining is a friendly and informative place, a model for other activist

groups. It is also the hub for the variety of walks, canoe tours, photography workshops, and other interpretive activities that the MLC organizes every summer. Currently, the eleventh annual L.A. to Mono Lake bike-a-thon is underway to symbolize the return of L.A. water back to its origins and to raise approximately \$100,000.

Perhaps more than any other organization, MLC has succeeded in spreading awareness that our daily use of resources has a direct impact on fragile ecosystems. With all the growth and accomplishments of MLC, the struggle continues to overcome the ravages that the last 50 years have brought to the Mono Lake Basin.

For more information, write to: *Mono Lake Committee, Lee Vining, CA 93541.*

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

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