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East Tannen Lake in the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Photo by Dave van de Mark

Sierra Nevada ancient forest proposal unveiled

By Steve Evans

After months of intensive work, the California Ancient Forest Alliance has released a detailed proposal to establish a series of protected ancient forest reserves and wildlife corridors in the nine national forests of the Sierra Nevada. More than 2 million acres of reserves and corridors in the Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Toiyabe, Stanislaus, Sierra, Inyo, and Sequoia national forests would be protected if the proposal is incorporated into legislation currently being considered by Congress.

The intent of the proposal is to identify and protect the remaining ancient forest stands, adjacent virgin forests, critical wildlife corridors, and watersheds which make up the functioning ecosystems of John Muir's celebrated "Range of Light." With submission of the proposal to Congress, the Sierra Nevada now becomes a major issue even as legislators struggle with various bills addressing ancient forest protection in Washington, Oregon, and California.

Developed by a number of organizations and activists, the proposal consists of a map and narrative for each national forest in the Sierra Nevada. The maps were created using satellite images, available data on boundaries and resources, and the site-specific knowledge of local activists. Principles of conservation biology, watershed boundaries, and known habitat for the Pacific fisher, spotted owl, and other rare, threatened, and endangered species were some of the primary considerations in defining reserves and corridors.

Some forest-specific proposals are more complete than others. Activists are still working on maps for the Sierra National Forest, the Lake Tahoe Basin

continued on page 4

Four new wilderness plans released

By Jim Eaton

The U.S. Forest Service is asking for public comment on management plans for the San Gabriel, Sheep Mountain, Trinity Alps, and Siskiyou wilderness areas.

The 36,500-acre San Gabriel Wilderness suffers from its proximity to Los Angeles, just ten miles away. Problems, such as vandalism of trail signs, are compounded by the lack of sufficient Forest Service personnel. Summer use is concentrated in the lower halves of several canyons which offer shade and a convenient supply of water.

Sheep Mountain Wilderness, a 43,600-acre wil-

derness 14 miles northeast of Los Angeles, receives most use from weekend hikers. No permits currently are required, except on the highly-used East Fork trailhead. The area has an extensive herd of bighorn sheep and an active tungsten mine, complete with tunnels, water diversions, dust, noise, and vehicular traffic.

The Angeles National Forest has issued a workbook citizens can use to offer suggestions for the management of the San Gabriel and Sheep Mountain wilderness areas. Forest planners will hold workshops in the spring with citizen interest groups.

The Trinity Alps Wilderness protects 500,000

continued on page 5

Inside this issue:

CWC considers opposing wilderness grazing.....2

Development threatens the Carrizo Plain.....3

Agency tactics threaten spotted owl.....4

Mining, and roading, the John Muir Wilderness.....5

COALITION PAGE

MONTHLY REPORT

Since the U.C. Davis Ecology Center closed nearly two decades ago, there has been no central meeting place for environmentalists in this town. But thanks to the tireless work of Bob Schneider and others, the Yolo Environmental Resource Center (with the awful acronym "VERC") will hold its grand opening on November 7th.

The center already has been put to use. Representatives from various environmental organizations meet weekly for a "green bag" lunch. Last weekend three dozen forestry activists had two day-long meetings there, although they had to sit on desks and borrow chairs from the bar downstairs.

Not content with two days of meetings, many activists spent Saturday evening at my house for dinner and yet another session.

The topic was the protection of Sequoia National Forest's ancient trees. Activists came from as far away as Los Angeles and the north coast; they ranged in age from the youthful to the venerable (Martin Litton). Two CWC board members, Frannie Wald and Lynn Ryan, were present. Maps were spread over tables and taped to the walls.

Martin gave a briefing on the history of the preservation of the Kern Plateau and nearby areas. While he mentioned our successes, he spent most of his time pointing out sequoia groves and other places that desperately need protection. Martin mentioned one particular tract that needed to be preserved. "The off-road vehicle people will scream about it unless we guarantee them access to it," said one listener. "They can have access to it," replied Martin, who is not known as a compromiser, "if they walk."

Not all our meetings have been in Davis. I jumped at the opportunity to speak at a wilderness management conference at Mammoth Lakes. The entire CWC staff thought it was such a good excuse for a trip that all three of us journeyed to the east side.

It was wonderful to get out of the heat and foul air that plagued the Central Valley for much of October. The drive across Sonora Pass was spec-

BY JIM EATON

tacular, and we camped among the aspens along Molybdenite Creek. We made the obligatory stop at the Mono Lake Committee's visitor center in Lee Vining and came out with postcards, maps, and new books.

The conference was interesting, and I suppose we could have learned a lot by attending the whole thing, but we yearned to get back to Mono Lake before sunset to begin the project we dreamed up once we had the excuse to cross the Sierra: a video of the proposed Bodie Hills Wilderness.

Davis Community Television was trusting and kind enough to allow us to take their video equipment out for this excursion. We spent the late afternoon at the south tufa towers shooting the Bodie Hills across Mono Lake. Then off to Sally Miller's for dinner.

Sally had great chili and great suggestions about places to explore in the five wilderness study areas that comprise the proposed wilderness. Nancy, Lucy, and I then set off across hill and dale with our heavy technological load.

It was a perfect day for exploring. Potato Hill and Bodie Mountain could be seen from many vantage points. Views of Mono Lake, the White Mountains, and the Sierra Nevada were stunning. The starkly-white Sweetwater Mountains loomed to the north. And everywhere, the turning colors of the aspen and willows were a delight.

The return home was a day of extremes. That morning, Inyo had to break ice to drink from a stream (dogs don't seem to worry about *giardia*), but we returned home to record-breaking 100° temperatures.

If we can find room in our schedules for some studio time, we'll finish the video in a month. In the meantime, volunteers at the *Record* mailing party will see the out-takes: a pretty view that Inyo trots into, a stunning sunrise over Mono Lake inadvertently shot in black and white, pans shot so fast you feel like a figure skater in a spin, and background sounds (Inyo again). America's Funniest Home Videos, here we come!

Cows in wilderness?

By Alan Carlton and Trent Orr

Although grazing is explicitly allowed in federal wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act, most of us who venture into wilderness areas have seen the detrimental effects of grazing. We have seen the erosion and loss of vegetation that result from overgrazing and the damage grazing causes to wetlands and riparian habitats. We know that grazing can impede the reintroduction of native plant species and the regeneration of oaks. We have stepped around manure and slogged across cow-churned mudholes that once were trails. Many of these problems in national forests are documented in a recent study of the effects of grazing on National Forest lands in the western states by the General Accounting Office, a government oversight agency.

At its October meeting, the California Wilderness Coalition's Board of Directors began a discussion of a proposed policy on grazing in federally-designated wilderness. Director Lynn Ryan proposed that the

continued on page 6

Letters

An article which appeared on page 3 of our October 1991 issue included the statement that "regrettably, mountain bikers are discovering the remarkable recreational opportunities of Cache Creek." A CWC member wrote us objecting to the "regrettable" characterization, which was not, regrettably, explained in the article. Below are author Jim Eaton's response and Dr. Weinstein's subsequent reply.

Dear Dr. Weinstein:

Like you, I too am an environmentalist and own a mountain bike. My wife rides a mountain bike, as do most of the members of the Coalition's Board of Directors.

However, both the state and federal wilderness acts are very explicit regarding the use of mechanical transport in wilderness areas—it is not allowed. It was not clear in your letter if you understood (or agreed with) this or if you believe wilderness areas should be off-limits to mountain bikes.

A problem wilderness advocates face is the establishment of new uses, such as mountain biking, in areas long proposed for wilderness designation. Once allowed in an area, new users often are vociferous against wilderness since it would prohibit their form of transportation.

State and federal agencies usually do nothing to limit the establishment of new uses in areas undergoing a wilderness study. Over the years, officials have allowed four-wheel drive vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, and mountain bikes into areas being reviewed for wilderness classification, including areas mandated by Congress for

continued on page 6

Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What Sierra peak was named for a Civil War Union warship?

Answer on page 7.



On location in Bodie WSA, Jim and Nancy confer.

BLM's not-yet Wilderness Study Areas

California's rare grasslands need protection

By B. "Moose" Peterson

California's grasslands and alkali sinks have all but vanished from our landscape. We have lost 94 percent of our historic grassland communities in the last century, mostly to agricultural conversion. The Carrizo and Elkhorn plains on the west side of the Temblors (see map) and LoKern on the east side are the last shining examples of our grassland communities.

What makes these plains different from other grasslands? A combination of rain, heat, soil alkalinity, and topography has created an environment found nowhere else. The desert conditions have shaped a plant community tolerant of heat and able to subsist on water that in many places is saltier than that found at a salt marsh.

One hundred years ago, the region teemed with life. Grizzly Adams recorded in his journal stories of vast bodies of water surrounded by large beds of the native bulrushes called tules where vast herds of tule elk grazed. Gray wolves and grizzly bears prowled nearby. Herds of pronghorns were seen dashing through the surrounding grasslands.

Today, the gray wolf and grizzly bear are long gone. The tule elk population plummeted to just 29 animals before they made a comeback; pronghorns are still on the path to recovery. The grasslands that vanished were once home to many creatures. Today those species are just as endangered as the habitat.

The Carrizo and Elkhorn plains and LoKern reward the visitor's perseverance and patience. Most people explore the plains in winter, when the lesser sandhill cranes come to Soda Lake. The skies fill with wintering raptors that feed on the abundant ground squirrels. In spring, the plains come to life with color. At night, the winsome kangaroo rats emerge from their burrows to forage.

The grasslands are home to many endangered species. Pivotal to the ecosystem is the giant kangaroo rat which digs burrows, plants and harvests seeds, provides homes for two other endangered species, and is a prey source for a third, the San

Joaquin kit fox. The blunt-nosed leopard lizard and San Joaquin antelope squirrel depend on the burrow of the giant kangaroo rat for protection.

Mammals are not the only endangered species eking out an existence on the plains. The California jewelflower, San Joaquin woolly thread, San Joaquin woolly star, and Kern mallow are newly-listed endangered plants. These plants epitomize diversity. The jewelflower is tall and showy; the woolly thread is barely two inches tall in a good year. The mallow likes water; the woolly star does not. What they have in common is their dependence on soil conditions which, like the plants, can be found nowhere else in the world.

Birds have not fared much better. The California condor, once regularly seen flying overhead, now flies only in the memory of old-timers. The burrowing owl is vanishing alarmingly, and the shy LeConte's thrasher is under study by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to see if it needs protective listing.

The BLM now owns more than 90,000 acres and is persistently adding to its holdings. Until recently, the BLM leased land for grazing. The BLM also oversees oil exploration and production in the region.

On the Carrizo and Elkhorn plains and at LoKern, oil exploration has occurred, at times illegally, but there are no current plans or proposals threatening these areas.

Exploration alone can cause permanent damage because the massive trucks used for seismic testing compact the soil, obliterating any burrow system and its inhabitants.

The BLM has supported research on the biodiversity of the plains. BLM rangers patrol frequently and BLM biologists keep close tabs on the ecosystem. In 1990, when a pair of prairie falcons nested on Painted Rock, the BLM closed the area to visitors until the birds successfully fledged their four young.

Another important landowner is the Nature Conservancy, which owns 90,000 acres on the west edge of the Carrizo Plain and 1,994 acres at LoKern. Like the BLM, the conservancy is seeking to expand its hold-

ings. Together, the organizations are working to educate the public about this unique and endangered area. But threats to these grasslands remain.

Encroaching urban areas, foreign species, habitat fragmentation, and the drought all threaten native species. LoKern especially is vulnerable to urban encroachment and recreationists. One of the problems is packs of dogs gone wild. As their numbers increase, their toll on the San Joaquin kit fox worsens.

Non-native species supplant natives. The red fox is now found in kit fox habitat where it may be preying on the smaller kit fox. Exotic grasses introduced for feed have outcompeted the natives for decades and are only now being eradicated.

The Tipton kangaroo rat, an endangered species that lives on the east side of the Temblors, is predicted to be extinct by the year 2000 because its habitat is so fragmented that inbreeding will finally do it in. Fragmented habitat has resulted from agriculture, water projects, and development moving closer to the remaining grasslands.

None of these areas has been given wilderness status. (In the BLM's 1979 final inventory of wilderness study candidates, the BLM's then 7,000-acre parcel in the Carrizo Plain was excluded from consideration because a dirt road bisected the parcel.) Environmentalists envision a great preserve encompassing the Caliente Range and the 18,000-acre Caliente Mountain Wilderness Study Area (which the BLM has recommended for non-wilderness use) as well as the Carrizo and Elkhorn plains and LoKern.

I have been fortunate enough to sit fifty feet away from a kit fox den and watch the pups play. Watching the comical and frantic activities of the giant kangaroo rat has been a six-year passion. The smells of the spring bloom and winter rains are forever etched in my memory.

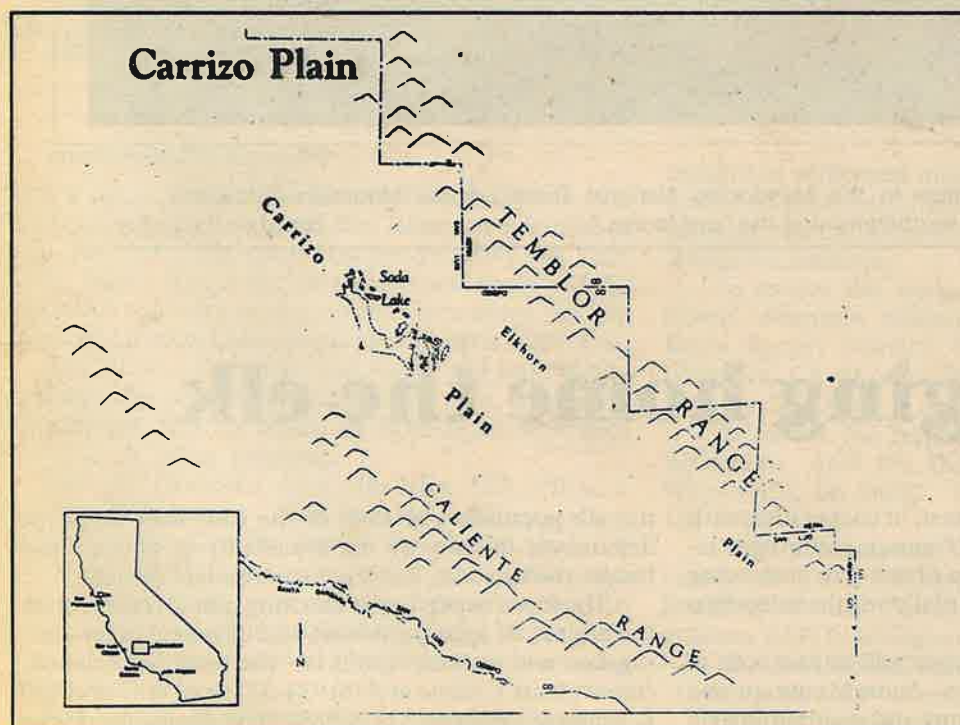
These are experiences available to anyone with a little

continued on page 4



Tule elk

Photo by Mark Palmer



California Nature Conservancy map

Ancient forests

Agency plans leave owl out on a limb

By Tim McKay

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) took different tacks last month in their efforts to log public lands while under the constraints of protecting the northern spotted owl.

The Forest Service unveiled a new environmental impact statement (EIS) to satisfy a court order that blocked timber sales in owl habitat until the agency developed a management plan to ensure the viability of the threatened bird, a denizen of old-growth forests. Forest Service timber sales in the Pacific northwest were stopped last May by Judge William Dwyer.

The agency's plan examines four alternatives. The preferred alternative, A, would allow the most logging, about 3.2 billion board-feet of timber to be sold annually from the "owl forests" of Washington, Oregon and northwestern California. The other three choices are 1.8 billion board feet, 1.4 billion, and 809 million.

The Forest Service proposes to adopt alternative A although it meets only the criteria for protecting the northern spotted owl; the hundreds of other sensitive species dependent on old-growth habitat are not protected under this alternative.

Comments on the EIS for the northern spotted owl are due December 27 and should be addressed to Jerald N. Hutchins, Team Leader, Northern Spotted Owl EIS

Ancient forest maps

continued from page 1

Management Unit, and one non-Sierra forest, the Modoc.

Some of the largest proposed reserves are located in the northern Sierra forests, including the Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, and Eldorado. Acreages protected in reserves and corridors in these forests range from 49 percent of the Lassen to 67 percent of the Eldorado. Further south in the drier and less-forested areas of the Sierra Nevada, the reserve/corridor proposals range from less than one percent of the Toiyabe to 17 percent of the Sequoia, although protected acreages in the southern forests are expected to increase as the proposal is refined.

How much of the ancient forests and corridors will actually be protected depends on what bill is eventually approved by Congress and signed by the President.

Steve Evans is a member of the California Ancient Forest Alliance executive committee and a CWC board member.

Carrizo Plain

continued from page 3

exploration and imagination. The big question is whether the experiences, and the plains themselves, will die with our generation or be preserved for future ones. I invite you to venture out to our grasslands, smell the flowers, see the wildlife, and get involved.

B. "Moose" Peterson is a wildlife photographer working to safeguard endangered species.

Team, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623.

BLM invokes God Squad

The Bureau of Land Management announced it would seek exemptions from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). When the BLM found that 44 of its 52 proposed timber sales in southern Oregon would jeopardize the owl, it announced it will seek from the Endangered Species Committee an exemption from the dictates of the ESA. The committee, termed the "God Squad" because it has the authority to grant exemptions from the ESA, is composed of the secretaries of Agriculture, the Army, and the Interior, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, the administrators of the EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and a governor-appointed representative of Oregon.

This committee has 30 days after receiving a report by

an administrative law judge to render a decision. If five of the seven members concur, the timber sales could be exempted from the Endangered Species Act.

The agency actions came while as many as a dozen forest reform bills moved into the Congressional hopper. Among them was Washington Representative Jim McDermott's Pacific Northwest Forest Community Recovery and Ecosystem Conservation Act of 1991, a companion to the Adams bill in the Senate. Both bills call for a mix of economic benefits and ecosystem protection. The McDermott bill, however, does not address the issue of log exports, which was the subject of a measure introduced the day before by Rep. Peter Defazio of Oregon. Defazio's bill would allow states to impose an export tax of up to 10 percent of the value of unprocessed timber. The taxes would accrue to a trust fund that states could use to boost



Milk Ranch meadow in the Mendocino National Forest's Snow Mountain Wilderness. The Mendocino is the southernmost of the "owl forests." Photo by Phillip Kay

Bringing home the elk

The Mendocino National Forest, in cooperation with the state Department of Fish and Game, is planning to reintroduce elk to the forest. Two of the four sites being considered for the project are partially within wilderness boundaries.

The Elk Re-establishment Project will impact both of the Mendocino's wilderness areas—Snow Mountain and Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel. Introducing and maintaining elk populations might involve "transplanting procedures," radio monitoring, and habitat "management." The size of

the elk population at each of the four sites would be determined initially by the availability of animals and forage, the location, and the "management strategy."

The forest supervisor is soliciting public comment on the project, its appropriateness, and its potential for causing user and resource conflicts. For more information, contact Janet S. Moser at (916) 934-3316 ext. 1147 or at 420 E. Laurel St., Willows, CA 95988. Send comments on the project to Daniel K. Chisholm, Forest Supervisor, at the same address, before November 12.

Wilderness management

Prospects for Muir road uncertain

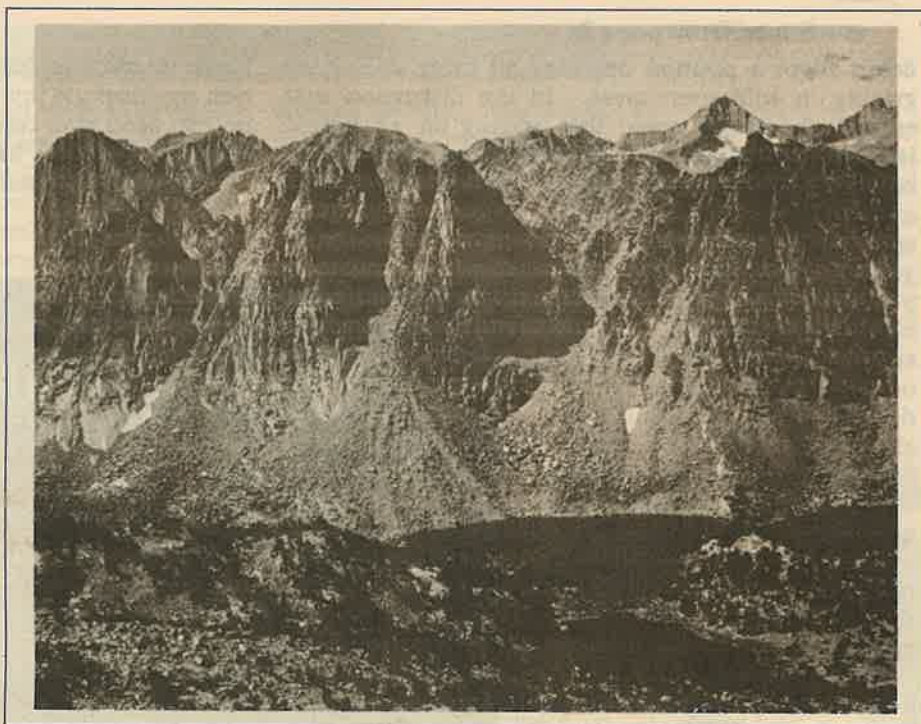
A proposal to build a mile of road up a thousand feet into the John Muir Wilderness has raised eyebrows and concerns. The Mt. Whitney Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest has begun scoping on a proposal by the Rex Montis Silver Company to extend an existing road that penetrates the John Muir Wilderness west of Independence. The proposal, which District Resource Officer Ron Keil characterizes as "very incomplete" and "complex," also alludes to possible future tramway construction and power development.

Rex Montis is seeking access to three mining claims it owns near Kearsarge Peak. Since the mines are on private land, only the proposed road is now subject to environmental review by the Forest Service (FS). The scoping process presently underway will determine what form the review will take. At the same time, district personnel will be requiring Rex Montis to submit a more detailed proposal.

If the FS should eventually allow construction of a road, the road would be temporary and subject to reclamation. Rex Montis would be required to post a costly reclamation bond.

The sketchiness of the Rex Montis proposal, combined with the expense of high-elevation road construction and the low price of silver, has led to speculation that Rex Montis may be maneuvering to have the FS acquire its claims. According to Keil, acquisition is one option the FS will be considering.

Environmentalists will be asking the FS to write an



Kearsarge Pinnacles in the Kings Canyon Wilderness, just a few miles from Kearsarge Peak and the proposed road. Photo by Phil Farrell

environmental impact statement (rather than the less-intensive environmental assessment) and to consider alternatives to the road. Environmentalist concerns, according to Stan Haye, chair of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada mining committee, include the road's impact on scenery, wildlife, soil, and vegetation.

Comments received before December 31 will be considered as part of the preliminary scoping. Address comments to: Arthur L. Gaffrey, District Ranger, Mt. Whitney Ranger District, P.O. Box 8, Lone Pine, CA 93545.

Limits imposed on Sierra wilderness parties

"To minimize confusion," administrators will soon be standardizing the size of groups entering the wilderness areas of the central and southern Sierra. As proposed last April, campsites in 16 wilderness areas will be restricted to parties of 15 people or fewer with no more than 25 stock animals. The new policy takes effect on January 1, 1992. A year-long phase-in will allow time for managers to educate users and commercial outfitters to make necessary changes.

The uniform size limits are being adopted because "a majority of users object to large parties even [though] such parties are not common." With different wilderness areas having different limits [see WR article, May 1991], confusion has resulted when parties travel from one area to another. The impacts of group size on fragile areas will be addressed in individual management plans which may establish lower limits as necessary.

After January 1993, exceptions to the maximum group size will be granted by forest supervisors or park superintendents only "for public purposes with special circumstances." Field managers will have the authority to allow extra stock when grazing restrictions necessitate the carrying of feed.

The wilderness areas affected by the new policy are Dome Land, South Sierra, Sequoia-Kings Canyon, Golden Trout, Jennie Lakes, Monarch, John Muir, Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, Kaiser, Yosemite, Hoover, Boundary Peak (in Nevada), Emigrant, Mokelumne, and Carson-Iceberg. Where lower group size limits are already established in portions of the wilderness areas (the untrailed areas of Yosemite, for instance), the lower limit will remain in effect.

Participation in planning imperative

continued from page 1

acres of land in Siskiyou and Trinity counties. With over 80 named (and numerous smaller) lakes and 500 miles of trails, portions of the wilderness receive heavy use. Currently, Trinity Alps is the only wilderness north of Lake Tahoe that requires a wilderness permit for entry. Mining claims and livestock allotments exist in parts of the area.

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest will hold public meetings this month on the Trinity Alps Wilderness Management Plan, for which an environmental impact statement is being prepared.

East of Crescent City lies the 153,000-acre Siskiyou Wilderness. The forested mountains are drained by the Klamath, Smith, and Illinois rivers. A fascinating association of rare plants and endangered animals makes the area unique. At issue in the management plan are rehabilitation of the former G-O (Gasquet to Orleans) jeep road and spiritual use of areas by Native Americans.

The Siskiyou Wilderness Plan is being developed by the Six Rivers National Forest. No schedule has been released for completion of this plan.

Among the topics raised for discussion in the devel-

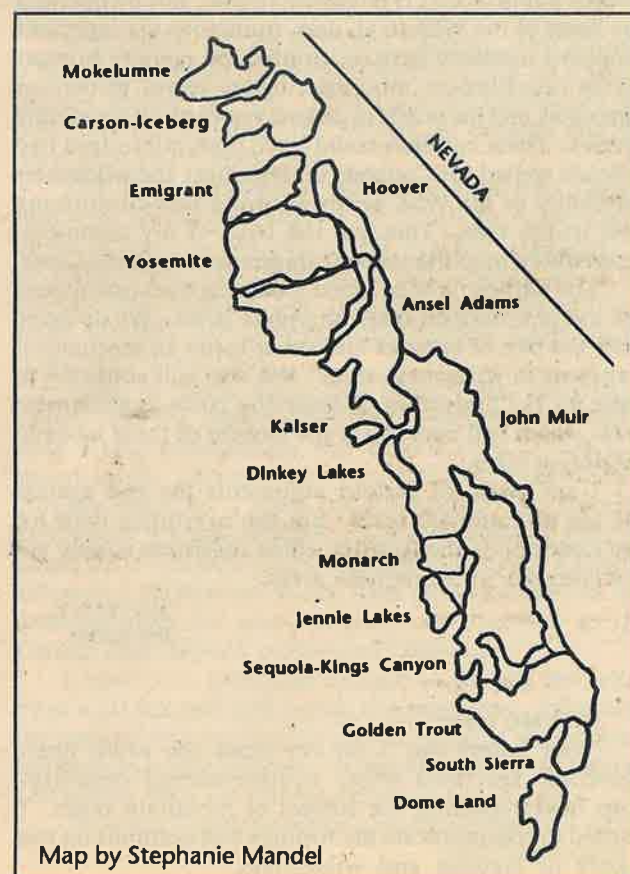
opment of wilderness management plans are fire policy, roads and trailheads, trails and campsites, water quality, fisheries, cultural resources, minerals, recreation, and the wilderness resource.

To receive the workbook for the San Gabriel and Sheep Mountain wilderness areas, contact the Mt. Baldy Ranger District, 110 North Wabash Avenue, Glendora, CA 91740. The deadline for comments is January 3, 1992.

To receive the response form for the Trinity Alps Wilderness, write the District Ranger, P.O. Box 1190, Weaverville, CA 96093. Comments are due December 15, 1991.

Public meetings for the Trinity Alps plan will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the following locations: Redding: Monday, Nov. 18—Shasta-Trinity forest headquarters, 2400 Washington Avenue; Eureka: Wednesday, Nov. 20—Red Lion Inn, Humboldt Bay Room; Weaverville: Thursday, Nov. 21—Weaverville Victorian Inn.

To be involved with the Siskiyou Wilderness Management Plan, contact Don Pass at (707) 457-3131 or at the Gasquet Ranger District, Six Rivers National Forest, P.O. Box 228, Gasquet, CA 95543.



Map by Stephanie Mandel

Wilderness news

Historic progress for Desert Bill



Cattle drive Board to think

continued from page 2

After five years, five hearings, and testimony from more than 500 witnesses, the California Desert Protection Act has finally moved out of Committee and onto the floor of the House of Representatives. Following two months of hectic activity, including visits by California wilderness activists, the legislation is expected to be debated by the full House in early November.

While the House debate is likely to be fierce, passage of the bill is predicted. Representatives Mel Levine, Richard Lehman, and George Miller—desert champions, all—have forged a workable compromise that currently has over 60 cosponsors and the support of 34 cities and 15 counties in California.

From the House, the bill moves to the Senate and waits for California's newly-appointed Senator John Seymour to make up his mind. From his seat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Seymour can play an important role in moving this legislation to enactment.



Board adopt a position opposing all cattle and sheep grazing in wilderness areas. In the discussion that ensued, the Board noted that grazing on all federal lands amounts to less than two percent of United States beef production and that grazing in wilderness areas is a very much smaller percentage. Thus, a ban on wilderness grazing would not affect the price of either hamburger or filet mignon. It would, of course, affect the income of the holders of grazing allotments in wilderness areas. It would also affect, positively, the income of the Forest Service because the fees for the allotments are quite often below both the Forest Service's cost to administer its grazing programs and the fair market value of the grazing resource.

The Board did not make a decision on this important issue at the October meeting but decided to consider it more fully at the California Wilderness Coalition's annual meeting in early February. The Board

hopes to adopt an official position at that time. Coalition members are invited to comment on this proposed policy. Send your comments to: Grazing Policy, CWC, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.

Alan Carlton and Trent Orr are CWC directors.



A downed section of fence allowed cattle access to the meadow behind this sign in the Bodie Wilderness Study Area.

Letters

continued from page 2

such studies.

In the case of Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA), public access is relatively recent. But by opening the heart of the WSA to all uses, numerous management problems suddenly have confronted the agency: hunters versus non-hunters, mountain bikers versus wilderness advocates, and the public in general versus sensitive wildlife species. These conflicts could have been minimized had officials waited for Congress to determine the wilderness suitability of the WSA before allowing non-conforming uses in the area. This was the basis of my comment, "regrettably, mountain bikers" are discovering Cache Creek.

The California Wilderness Coalition does not oppose the use of mountain bikes on public lands. We do agree with the ban of bicycles and other forms of mechanical transport in wilderness areas. We also will continue to work for the protection of deserving lands as wilderness areas which will necessitate the closure of these lands to mountain bikes.

I am aware of various arguments for and against the use of mountain bikes. But the overriding issue for the Coalition is the fact that these machines simply are not allowed in wilderness areas.

Sincerely,
Jim Eaton

Dear Mr. Eaton:

[Your letter] was a far cry from the often hysterical reactions other environmental organizations have regarding the subject of mountain bikes. I wanted to communicate my feelings and opinions on the matter of bicycles and wilderness.

I do understand the rules regarding what is allowed in wilderness areas. However, I also feel that just because something is a law or rule, this does not make it just or reasonable. Specifically, I refer to lumping together mountain bikes, a human-powered enterprise, with combustion-engine propelled vehicles. My understanding is that this occurred as an administrative interpretation, rather than as a specific part of any wilderness act.

The debate on what constitutes wilderness is impossible in a letter like this. However, once it is determined that an area is truly and indisputably wilderness, then I feel that what should define permissible uses should be the impacts that the sundry uses have on the wilderness environment. Currently, permissible uses are defined as foot and horse traffic (though I am aware there are some "wilderness" areas that, for one reason or another, still have grazing, mining, and logging going on).

So what is meant by "impacts"? One could be the degrading effects of an activity on a trail system. Every soil study I am aware of has concluded that mountain bikes are only slightly more erosive than hiking boots, and far less so than a horse's hoof. Safety is another oft-raised concern, but again, the accident surveys that have been done simply do not support the popular assumption that mountain bikes are a danger to other users. Another sort of impact to consider is what I think of as the "Stupidity Index." It is my experience and opinion that mountain bikers are no more likely than anyone else to jeopardize a fragile area. Just because someone is on foot or on a horse, this does not qualify him or her for a higher moral plane.

My feeling is that if an area meets criteria of being special, fragile, and irreplaceably unique, it obviously merits wilderness classification. It is my further opinion

that any areas that survive the debate to become true wilderness [should] be restricted to foot traffic only. Sorry if this steps on toes (or hooves), but it [is illogical] to me to restrict a thirty-pound bicycle from an area, but allow a half-ton horse.

I also feel that there are places that, though special, should allow multiple uses. By this, I mean the non-motorized recreation areas, like Grouse Lake or the Tinker's Knob area by Donner Lake. These would get a wilderness designation, but of a lower level. I think one major problem many mountain bikers have with the wilderness designation system is that it is black and white. I'm sure there are considerable "grey" areas in our spectacular backcountry that can easily [and] safely accommodate all uses that do not involve the use of an internal combustion engine.

In your return letter to me there is a phrase, "mountain bikers versus wilderness advocates." Please understand that the great bulk of mountain bikers are, and will continue to be, wilderness advocates. But I don't think any cyclist will support bans based on unfair and unreasonable criteria.

As to the other point you raise in your letter, where governmental agencies originate all these problems by allowing multiple uses and then trying to shut them off, the only comment I have is that's what happens when a country's resources are managed politically, rather than with science, logic, and, most of all, caring.

Sincerely,
Burt Weinstein, D.C.

Book reviews

Place Names of the Sierra Nevada

By Peter Browning, Wilderness Press, Berkeley, 253 pp., 1991, \$12.95.

Subtitled "From Abbot to Zumwalt," Peter Browning's *Place Names* is a must for those of us intrigued by the colorful and unusual appellations bestowed upon the natural features of the Sierra Nevada. Building upon Francis Farquhar's 1926 classic *Place Names of the High Sierra*, this book contains nearly 3,000 entries (including Mount Farquhar, named in 1989).

A feature I find particularly useful is that each place name is accompanied with the name of the topographic map on which it is found. Often, I am given the name of a lake or peak that I need to locate; this reference allows me to quickly find the right map without depending upon my fading memory.

A number of my wilderness trivia questions are derived from Erwin Gudde's *California Place Names*. Peter Browning has given me material for many years.

—Jim Eaton

Tee-sells

Dick field tests our six-tone anniversary shirt; it comes in light blue, yellow, light green, or peach for \$15. The animal design Lisa samples is by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige or light gray for \$12. All the shirts are 100 percent double knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.



Pocket Guide to Wilderness Medicine

By Paul G. Gill, Jr, M.D., Simon & Schuster, 204 pp., 1991, \$9.95.

This small, five ounce reference may prove to be a popular stocking stuffer this holiday season. But after reading this guide, I'm tempted to stay indoors to avoid all the ailments and injuries I might sustain in the great outdoors.

For example, Dr. Gill describes in graphic detail the early effects of a rattlesnake bite: "enzymes ravage muscle fibers and fat, denature proteins, rupture cell walls, and lay waste to the landscape, like Sherman marching through Georgia. Within hours, your arm or leg swells up like a balloon and turns shades of blue and purple rarely seen on this planet."

Or on water quality: "Drinking surface water in the wilderness is a roulette game....But you've got to ask yourself, as you raise that tumbler of ice-cold mountain spring water to your parched, quivering lips, 'Am I feeling lucky today?'"

This is a comprehensive medical guide. Among the topics covered are snake, reptile, spider, and insect bites; sprains, fractures, and dislocations; soft-tissue injuries and infections; heat- and cold-related conditions; and motion and altitude sickness.

Although the pocket guide easily can be carried into the wilderness, the vivid and humorous descriptions make it a fun book to read. There also is a wealth of background information and preventive medical advice that might save you from harm if you read it *before* going into the wilderness.

Wilderness Trivia

Quiz Answer:

Kearsarge Peak, in the John Muir Wilderness, was named for the USS *Kearsarge* which sank the Confederate *Alabama*. The Union ship had been named for a New Hampshire peak.

from page 2

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 7 & 13 SCOPING MEETINGS regarding future use of the Eldorado N. F. Echo Summit Ski site, adjacent to the proposed Echo-Carson wilderness in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The 11/7 meeting is at the Eldorado N.F. Supervisor's Office, 100 Forni Road, Placerville. The 11/13 meeting is at Valhalla, Tallac Historic Site, South Lake Tahoe. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

November 12 COMMENTS DUE on the Mendocino National Forest's Elk Re-establishment Project which could impact the Yolla Bolly and Snow Mountain wilderness areas. Send to: Daniel K. Chisholm, Forest Supervisor, 420 E. Laurel St., Willows, CA 95988. (Article on page 4.)

December 27 COMMENTS DUE on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on management for the Northern Spotted Owl. Send to: Jerald N. Hutchins, Team Leader, Northern Spotted Owl EIS Team, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623. (Article on page 4.)



**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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