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# WILDERNESS RECORD

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## FS prescription for Duncan Canyon is bad medicine

By David Orr

The U.S. Forest Service (FS) recently released its long-delayed final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the Duncan/Sunflower Timber Sale in the Tahoe National Forest. Apparently ignoring the overwhelming show of public sentiment opposed to any logging in the Duncan Canyon Roadless Area, the agency's new "Alternative B (modified)" proposes extensive tractor and helicopter salvage logging in acknowledged furbearer habitat.

The FS intends to allow logging of 1,900 acres to extract up to 4.2 million board feet of "dead and dying timber" by 1994.

Despite public opposition to its original plan to road and clearcut the upper end of the canyon, the FS refused to back down and instead now proclaims its new preferred alternative exempt from appeal as an emergency salvage operation. However, comments are being accepted on the FEIS through October 19.

Duncan Canyon, a steeply-sloping narrow valley located in the Foresthill Ranger District, is a tributary of the Middle Fork American River. Situated at

about 6,000 feet in elevation, the area is home to extensive, dense stands of true fir and mixed coniferous forests and harbors known populations of rare furbearers, including the highly elusive wolverine.

The release of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) in early 1991 prompted an unusually strong reaction opposing the agency's preferred alternative (E). Individuals and conservation groups responded to the DEIS with pointed and probing comments.

The long list of respondents notably includes the Placer County Board of Supervisors, which voted to oppose all logging in Duncan Canyon. The Placer County Agriculture Department protested the proposed logging, expressing the fear that some of California's only known remnant populations of wolverines and other furbearers would suffer.

Many commenters pointed out the agency's logically inconsistent statements regarding the logging proposal. Citing FS internal policy which prohibits fragmentation of old-growth forest habitat, several puzzled citizens asked why the FS proposed to log in areas vital to the preservation of scarce old-growth habitat. The agency response was to redesign the logging plan to avoid the construction of permanent roads and the use of even-aged silvicultural practices.

The Tahoe forest plan, under appeal for more than a year, is cited by the FS as the basis for logging in the roadless Duncan Canyon. While the FS appears uninterested in the comments, it is *continued on page 5*



Black bears can look menacing, but there are few reported attacks on humans. Photo courtesy of Ca. Department of Fish and Game

## The dangerous animals of California wildernesses

By Jim Eaton

*"In all of nature, there is no sound more pleasing than that of a hungry animal at its feed. Unless you are the food."*

—Edward Abbey

Many people fear the wild because of a cultural bias that wilderness is a place harboring "wild beasts." That prejudice often stems from a lack of experience in the outdoors rather than actual encounters with dangerous animals.

Humans find comfort in their mistaken belief that they sit on top of the food chain. But we are humbled

when confronted with a larger, more powerful, or more terrifying creature. As Roger Caras notes in his book, *Dangerous to Man*, "in one's mind is the reserve idea that if things get too bad, we can always humble ourselves, beg for mercy, and be spared. Instinctively, we know that no such plan will work with a mute, carnivorous beast."

So how dangerous are California's wild lands? Not very. They certainly do not meet Edward Abbey's standard that in a true wilderness you run the risk of being killed and eaten by a local resident.

Far and away, the greatest menace to your health is the transportation necessary to reach a wilderness area. Your chances of being injured or killed en route to the trailhead *continued on page 6*

### Special issue: Fire management

**Salvage logging alone is not the answer. But what are the questions? .....4**

**CDF bulldozed its way through Pit River to contain a fire that threatened nothing.....5**

## COALITION PAGE

### MONTHLY REPORT

BY JIM EATON

In this issue of the *Wilderness Record*, you will learn about Ike Livermore, one of the elders of our movement. He has been a supporter of the Coalition since its inception, although he is willing to criticize us when he feels we have taken a wrong turn. A valued member of our advisory committee, Ike is generous with his counsel and cash.

Now Ike has presented me with a challenge, and I need your help. In a recent conversation, we discussed roads that never should have been built, such as the Sherman Pass road. A paved trans-Sierra highway across the Kern Plateau, the Sherman Pass road traverses lands that should have remained forever wild.

We tossed around some other candidates for removal: the road across Minaret Summit to Reds Meadow, the Coffee Creek road in the Trinity Alps, and Highway 1 south along the Big Sur coast. Ike suggested we publish a list of ten roads in California that should be returned to nature.

So I would like your thoughts on candidates for this honored list. Tell me why you think a particular route should be obliterated and revegetated. I'll report on our nominees next month.

\*\*\*\*\*

As I write this, the Cleveland fire is blistering its way up Highway 50. Houses have been destroyed, and forests are being burned. When the smoke clears, the chain saws will start salvaging the scorched trees.

Just last week I drove up Highway 299 east of Redding, through the woods blackened by the Fountain Fire. Since almost all of the land was private timberland, the salvaging had already commenced. I met 28 logging trucks headed down the hill, all before 8 a.m.

I am not opposed to salvage logging. But we must be cognizant that these catastrophic fires are reducing the timber inventory used to calculate sustained yield levels of logging. Although the spotted owl gets the blame from the Bush administration and the timber industry, fires from 1987 to the present have wreaked havoc on the timber base.

It is clear that we vastly overcut our forests in recent years, without concern for old-growth forests and wildlife. Protecting ancient forests will, rightfully, reduce the timber cut. Tree mortality from fire and drought will decrease further the long-term availability of timber.

The answer lies not in decimating roadless areas like Duncan Canyon under the guise of salvage logging. The Forest Service and the timber industry must admit that they overcut our forests in the past and are continuing to try to log at a level that makes sustained yield a joke.

This is the way things are. We should recognize the problem and begin the transition that will occur whether we protect our remaining ancient forests or log every last tree.

### Wilderness contest has a lot to answer for

Congratulations to Bill deJager and Eric Knapp, winners of the California Wilderness Contest! Bill deJager answered 45 of the 50 questions correctly, winning our grand prize (a year's free membership in the California Wilderness Coalition) and impressing us mightily with his encyclopedic knowledge. (He even sent some questions of his own to challenge our judge.) Eric Knapp, the runner-up, won the t-shirt of his choice.

Below are our answers to the quiz, along with the other correct (or entertaining) answers submitted.

1. B. Lake Aloha is a reservoir.
2. E. Machesna Mountain Wilderness, at less than 100,000 acres, is not a "big wilderness." Also D. Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel was designated by the 1964 Wilderness Act and C. Trinity Alps Wilderness is in three national forests and A. Sespe was designated by the 1992 Condor Range and Rivers Act.
3. D. Silver Peak Wilderness is not in the Sierra Nevada and was designated by the 1992 Condor Range and Rivers Act. Alternatively, E. Jennie Lakes adjoins a national park.
4. B. The Hoover Wilderness was not designated under the 1984 California Wilderness Act. Or E. Santa Rosa is in southern California or A. Red Buttes is in California and Oregon.
5. C. The Ventana Wilderness was not named for a person and is in the Coast Range.
6. D. Agua Tibia Wilderness is entirely within a single national forest. Also B. Mokelumne was designated by the 1964 Wilderness Act.
7. A. Santa Lucia Wilderness does not adjoin a national park and is in the Coast Range. B. Caribou was designated by the 1964 Wilderness Act.
8. C. The Pacific Crest Trail does not pass through the Kaiser Wilderness. A. Dome land was, yes indeed, designated by the 1964 Wilderness Act.
9. A. Ishi Wilderness is not in the Coast Range.
10. B. NOPA (a notice of proposed action) is not a conservation group.
11. Dome Land (alternatively Domeland)
12. 'San'
13. Golden Trout, Caribou, Joshua Tree...
14. Aldo Leopold
15. Ronald Reagan
16. Roderick Nash
17. Edward Abbey
18. Aldo Leopold (Bonus: The three books are half of Dave Foreman's "six-pack" of recommended wilderness reading. And, as Alexander Gaguine pointed out, it's a safe bet none is on Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan's shelf.)
19. The wilderness acres designated in California by the original Wilderness Act of 1964.
20. The designation of the Ansel Adams Wilderness forever stopped this trans-Sierra highway.
21. (top photo) Castle Crags from Interstate 5 (photo by Jim Eaton)

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### Letters

In our August 1992 issue, we reported that permits now are required in the Mount Shasta Wilderness and that "worsening environmental degradation" may necessitate more stringent management techniques—permits, quotas, and closures—in many of California's wilderness areas. Here is one reader's reaction.

Dear Editor:

"Worsening environmental damage?" Maybe at Avalanche Gulch on Shasta it's a problem, but maybe not a U. S. Forest Service problem? Are we being protected from ourselves again? Not much else to hurt up there. I'd like to see more people when I hike. Without people the wilderness has a pretty thin constituency.

Sincerely enough,  
Cress Kearny  
Oakland



### A houseful of maps and a headful of knowledge made him a winner

Bill deJager, the winner of the California Wilderness Contest, never planned to become a wilderness expert. But when your favorite pastimes include backpacking and poring over maps, you can't help but absorb a wealth of knowledge.

Now an ecologist with the Army Corps of Engineers, deJager studied biology at the University of California at Davis where, coincidentally, he often gazed northwest, "with longing and frustration (at not being able to go)," toward what is now the Snow Mountain Wilderness (contest question 34). He finally got to Snow Mountain and a lot of other places as well. Although his preference is exploring areas he doesn't know, deJager does have some old favorites: the Klamath Mountains, the Sierra (from Yosemite south), and the Inyo-Mono region.

A long-time California Wilderness Coalition member, deJager was the only respondent who found our contest too easy. "Any person can become an expert in any subject with enough time and effort," deJager says. He should know.

### Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What potential wilderness, located near "The Round Barn," has such interesting place names as North Spring, First Butte, Second Butte, and Muck Valley?

Answer on page 7.

## Wilderness history

# Tales of a persevering preservationist

Norman B. "Ike" Livermore, Jr. has been called "a walking contradiction." A wilderness defender who became a timber industry executive, Livermore is the former state Resources Secretary (appointed by then Governor Reagan) and Fish and Game Commission Chair whose license plate reads "SESPE." At 81, he is still fighting—against unneeded roads, against excessive use of helicopters in national parks, and, always, for wilderness.

Livermore must have sat around many a campfire in his day: he explored the Sepses as a boy, first on horseback from his aunt's cabin on the Big Sur coast and then from the Thacher School in Ojai. During college, he worked the Sierra as a commercial packer, eventually becoming head packer for the Sierra Club. Livermore remembers Mono Lake as it looked before Los Angeles began diverting its water; he remembers Long Meadow before it was inundated by Crowley Lake. He remembers the days when he could drink Sierra water without first filtering or boiling it and the time before Highway 1 was built through Big Sur, a time when residents and residences alike had to be packed in. Recently, he shared some of his stories and some of his memories with the *Wilderness Record*.



If the Forest Service had hired Livermore onto a trail crew, he might never have become a packer. But jobs were scarce in the 1930s, and Livermore, who arrived in the Sierra that first summer by motorcycle, a college student looking for a job, hired on instead with a commercial packer working out of Mineral King.

His second summer packing, Livermore had an encounter that would change his life. On reaching a camp in the Minarets, "expecting Shangri-la," Livermore and his

see other people....It is getting increasingly difficult to 'get away'....Last summer I guided a party into a favorite camping spot, far up in the upper headwaters of the Kern River, a long three days' pack to a supposedly secluded spot, only to find two other parties already camped there. To one expecting to find his wilderness camp unoccupied and waiting for him, such an experience is little short of tragic."

That same year, Livermore told the Commonwealth Club "the trouble with making wildernesses 'accessible' is that they are then no longer wildernesses."



The Minarets Road, Livermore's first great peeve, still exists, but Livermore himself had a significant role in squelching a proposal to link the road with a west side road to create a new Sierra crossing. After unexpectedly being appointed Secretary of Resources in 1967, Livermore was able to testify before Congress against the proposed Forest Highway 100 which he considered "bad economics" as well as "bad conservation." Four years later, with political support for the highway eroded and at Governor Reagan's urging, the Forest Service dropped its plans to road what became, in 1984, the Ansel Adams Wilderness.



In the 1960s Livermore launched a campaign he would not win. He proposed that a new word was needed to describe a school of conservationists who, unlike the preservationist purists, believed that multiple use of public lands could work if appropriately and actively managed. Livermore coined the word 'proservation,' explaining that proservationists were "pro" rather than "con." "While the preservationist sits in reverie," he wrote in *American Forests*, "the proservationist builds the trails, wrangles the pack stock, and builds the campfire." It was a good idea that died a quick death when San Francisco *Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen slyly asked what Livermore would do with the word 'constitution.'



In 1980, when Livermore proposed that the Fish and Game Commission adopt a resolution supporting the designation of a 335,900-acre Sespe-Frazier Wilderness, he was accorded another, less euphonious label. A Ventura County resident opposed to wilderness designation characterized Livermore and fellow wilderness supporters David Brower and Representatives Phil Burton and Morris Udall as "manifest destiny lock-up obstructionists." Although the Commission did adopt his resolution, Livermore would wait another 12 years to see the Sespe Wilderness, now only 220,000 acres, protected.



With most of his beloved Sespe protected, Livermore is redirecting his energies toward a handful of other battles old and new. He is concerned that hikers are becoming increasingly militant about protecting wilderness at the expense of the commercial packers. He takes issue with the Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park's assertion that helicopters are a more economical way to move supplies in wilderness than packers. He questions the wisdom of restricting party size in wilderness, believing that a few large parties such as the Sierra Club used to run are less damaging than many small parties. And, as ever, he inveighs against "uneconomic" roads.

## Contest answers

### continued from page 2

22. (left) Mount Shasta and Shastina (right) from the north (photographer unknown)
23. (right) Banner (left) and Ritter Peaks (both left of sign) from Island Pass, looking south (photo by Jim Eaton)
24. (bottom) The Palisades from the north. Eric Knapp identified specific peaks, which is more than we could do. (photo by Pete Yamagata)
25. National Environmental Policy Act (pronounced "knee-puh")
26. Federal Land Policy and Management Act (a.k.a. the "Organic Act;" pronounced "flip-muh")
27. National Forest Management Act ("niff-muh")
28. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund ("skull-duff")
29. Endangered Species Act
30. California Wilderness Coalition
31. environmental impact statement
32. wilderness study area
33. California Wilderness Act
34. Snow Mountain Wilderness
35. Campfires are not allowed in Emigrant Wilderness above 9,000 feet. We liked Eric Knapp's answer: "[You] shouldn't have a fire at Iceland Lake—not enough wood."
36. Rep. Burton effected the passage of the 1984 California Wilderness Act in the face of considerable opposition.
37. Sen. Seymour has blocked Senate passage of a desert bill which would protect significant amounts of the California desert as wilderness.
38. We included this question to satisfy our own curiosity. As winner Bill deJager put it, "Dick Smith explored the Santa Barbara backcountry, becoming an authority on the area. The Dick Smith Wilderness was named for him."
39. Stewart is the Regional Forester for the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest region, which includes all national forest lands and most wilderness in California. As such, Stewart has final say on a variety of land use issues.
40. LBJ signed the Wilderness Act of 1964.
41. The plight of the northern spotted owl (*strix occidentalis*) is preventing the roading and logging of potential wilderness areas in northwestern California.
42. Public Law 88-577 is the Wilderness Act of 1964. The first number refers to the 88th Congress, which passed the legislation.
43. At 141 acres, the Farallones Wilderness is California's smallest. Generally, wilderness designation will not be considered for areas smaller than 5,000 acres.
44. For the time being, Joshua Tree is the only federally designated wilderness in the California desert. A number of our entrants pointed out that the Joshua Tree Wilderness will be expanded when the desert bill is enacted.
45. California Wilderness Coalition
46. Bureau of Land Management
47. Friends of the River
48. The Wilderness Society
49. Earth First!
50. Forest Service



Ike Livermore at home in San Rafael

companions instead found automobiles.

In 1936, Livermore submitted to the Stanford Graduate School of Business his study, "The Economic Significance of California's Wilderness Areas." In it he delineated the economic potential of wilderness-dependent businesses like packing and inventoried 33 *de facto* wilderness areas in need of protection. Both the businesses and the wildernesses were at risk, he maintained, from automobiles.

"Not so long ago," he wrote in his study, "one could pack back into the High Sierra country and rarely, if ever,

## Fire management

# Ten questions to ask about salvage logging

"Salvage logging to solve forest health problems? It's not like locking the barn door after the horse has left, it's locking the door after he's been turned into Alpo."

—Forest Service planner

*These ten questions were developed by Forest Service employees (all members of the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics) troubled that the agency's first—and sometimes only—response to forest health problems is salvage sales. We think these are questions that should be raised by citizen activists every time a salvage sale is proposed.*

*For the benefit of Wilderness Record readers unfamiliar with the science and terminology of forestry, we've added (with help from Felice Pace) some definitions.*

### 1. Who benefits?

Huge salvage logging programs and massive insecticide campaigns will swell the regional budget in the Forest Service but overlook cheaper, more environmentally sensitive, and possibly more effective techniques that could employ local people.

Who stands to gain from these programs? Are solutions being overlooked that would generate more local jobs, as well as promote the long-term health of the forest?

### 2. Is salvage logging the ultimate goal, or is it one tool for improving forest health?

The ultimate goal for restoration forestry should be to imitate nature's patterns and re-establish a healthy forest ecosystem. Salvaging may have a role to play in the ecological restoration of forests, but we should focus the debate on how we can create functioning, healthy ecosystems instead of how much wood we can salvage. For example, instead of using salvage logging as an excuse to cut large overstory trees, we can reduce fuel loadings to lower the risk of catastrophic fires by removing "ladder fuels" from the understory. It is important that we examine where the incentives lie for Forest Service managers.

## So what's the story on overstory?

Salvage logging is the removal of trees that are dead or dying, regardless of cause. Most salvage logging in California is the result of drought, not fire.

The overstory is the biggest, tallest trees in the stand, those that form the upper layer of the forest canopy. Under natural conditions (which may no longer exist in California because of fire suppression), the overstory rarely burns.

Beneath the overstory is the understory, all the other vegetation in the forest. Underburning involves setting fires to reduce the fuel loading, the fallen trees and limbs that have accumulated in the absence of fire, in the understory. Logging itself creates a lot of litter, called slash, which—if untreated—is considered heavy fuel loading.

Ladder fuels or fuel ladders are the most dangerous form of heavy fuel loading. As the forest canopy closes, shutting out light to the understory, lower limbs die, and a ladder of fuels—from the ground to the overstory—forms. Fuel ladders also result when the understory has not been allowed to burn naturally. When ladder fuels are present, the overstory will burn.

Stocking levels refers to the number of trees on a site, whether a "natural" forest or a plantation. Natural fuels management means allowing natural fires to burn under certain (safe) conditions.

Do incentives encourage the abuse of salvage logging, or do they foster a truly ecological approach?

### 3. Have management agencies come up with a restoration blueprint and desired future conditions for at-risk forests?

How did these at-risk forests get to be in such bad shape? Past forest management has played a big role. For years, foresters have suppressed fire, removed the overstories, encouraged overstocking of trees, allowed the overgrazing of livestock and the over-roading of many watersheds. All these factors have contributed to forests which are now "at risk."

Many members of the public, understandably, do not trust the Forest Service to manage these areas properly in the future. And given that fire management and logging are responsible for the current situation, it seems paradoxical to suggest that logging and fire management will provide the solution. At a minimum, the agency must produce an ecologically sane blueprint for future management before enthusiastically embracing salvage logging as the solution to forest health problems.

### 4. Will the restoration efforts mimic natural conditions?

Healthy trees are a reflection of the health of all parts of a forest system. Land managers must deal in a realistic and honest fashion with soils, water, plants, animals, insects, microorganisms, fish, and a host of other forms of life. This does not even consider the array of complex relationships among all of these.

Instead of beefing up efforts to cut trees, what is really needed is increased inventory work, data collection on habitat types, increased knowledge of ecosystem characteristics, identification of stocking levels through time, development of fire histories, and formulation of models to understand these complex factors. Future prescriptions, such as stocking levels and fire frequency, should be designed to mimic pre-settlement conditions. Examples of functioning ecosystems that can serve as ecological blueprints should be identified and protected from logging, road building, and grazing.

### 5. Will funding stop at salvage logging, or will other remedies such as silviculture and prescribed fire receive funding too?

Because of the way money is budgeted in the Forest Service, money earmarked for salvage logging may not be available for other things necessary to forest health. For instance, fire is a necessary contributor to healthy forests, and salvage logging may or may not improve forest health in the absence of fire. Funds to improve long-term forest health must not be dependent on how much timber is taken out.

Rather, money must be appro-

riated so agencies have the resources to do true and sustainable ecosystem restoration. Historically, if the forests had been managed, instead of just the trees, such expenditures of taxpayers' money would not be necessary today. The problem will only get worse if programs such as underburning and natural fuels management are not implemented as soon as possible. Massive salvage programs alone are not going to solve forest health problems.

### 6. Will the salvaging exclude a public process?

Since many salvage logging programs attempt to "capture the mortality" of standing trees (in other words,

cut trees down while they still have marketable value), the programs sometimes exclude a public input process, are exempt from administrative appeals, or both. It is false to assume that salvage sales will have "no significant impact."

The public has a right to be involved in any proposed

management program in their national forests. In addition, the documents required for salvage sales by the National Environmental Policy Act should address the cumulative effects of all the proposed management activity.

### 7. Will the salvaging be monitored?

In the case of small salvage sales, periodic logging sometimes is not monitored at all. In this case, there is no way to track how many trees have been removed, whether natural regeneration is occurring, or what effect multiple entries have on the forest ecosystem.

### 8. Will Forest Service management actually increase the risk of pests, epidemics, or catastrophic fires?

Although logging "overstocked" forests sometimes is seen as a way to prevent catastrophic fire and insect and disease outbreaks, the full-scale logging operations associated with salvaging present new risks to the forest. Road building—even the temporary roads authorized for some salvage sales—can interrupt streams and harm fisheries, causing increased run-off, erosion, and evaporation of precious water.

Correcting the problems caused by historic logging and fire suppression by authorizing still more logging could result instead in the further degradation of over-stressed ecosystems. A more careful, ecological approach is needed to solve the problems.

### 9. Has the death and disease been overstated?

A pattern of recurrent outbreaks of insect and disease infestation and subsequent recovery has been documented throughout North America by forest ecologists. Areas which have experienced outbreaks in the past not only have recovered but thrive today. Furthermore, the tree species now dying are present, for the most part, because of past fire suppression in ecosystems that are fire-dependent. Death among understory trees can be seen as nature's way of correcting the imbalance caused by fire exclusion.

Data documenting the extent of the "crisis" are difficult to interpret. Citations of "acres infested" with insects are meaningless in some cases since they provide no measure of the severity of the problem. More in-depth analysis is needed to determine the true state of these forests.

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**Given that fire management and logging are responsible for the current situation, it seems paradoxical to suggest that logging and fire management will provide the solution.**

## Fire management



The Forest Service proposes to leave the "three largest trees per acre and downed logs" for the furbearers and spotted owls that now live in Duncan Canyon. That might look something like this clearcut off Mosquito Ridge Road near Duncan Canyon.

Photo by David Orr

## Fire "management" is the pits

By Jim Eaton

On August 13, a lightning storm crossed over the Pit River Canyon in western Lassen County. Flames started in the canyon and slowly spread up the canyon wall. A California Department of Forestry (CDF) [now known as Calif. Department of Forestry and Fire Protection] crew responded quickly.

A bulldozer dug a road across the lava flats to the canyon rim. Hand crews shoveled a fire line near the brink. The fire was contained. Water was brought in to quench the crawling flames.

The quick response stopped the fire before it burned many acres. Another success story in the struggle to keep California green. Or was it?

The fire began in the Pit River Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), an area identified by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as having potential for wilderness designation. Indeed, Pit River is one of the few areas in northern California the BLM recommended to Congress for preservation.

Rich Burns, Alturas Area Manager for the BLM, gave me a call explaining the situation and inviting me to see the problem. In late September we visited the WSA and looked at the damage done fighting the fire.

The bulldozer had left the paved highway and carved a road 400 feet long into the WSA. Already, tracks of pickup trucks were visible in the dust as explorers in their mechanical horses felt compelled to check out this new route.

The hand line grubbed by the crew was fairly inoffensive. The fire also was relatively innocuous, having burned through the grass and shrubs, blackening some ponderosa pines and oaks along the way. Lightning is a frequent visitor to these lands, and fires are not uncommon.

I shared Burns' concern about the road. The BLM

plans to remove the berms created by the bulldozer, recontour the route, and block it so pickups and all-terrain vehicles cannot enter. Burns is hoping to get some inmate crews to help: "They love to work outdoors and do a thorough job in restoring the land."

But Burns was concerned about why this road was built and how to stop future scars. He felt that since the fire was burning so slowly in an area where nature is supposed to be allowed to take its course, there was no need to respond the way the CDF did. "They just don't care about wilderness and cultural values," he explained.

The real problem is the CDF. The road here is not an isolated incident; similar roads have been bladed in many areas, including the Merced River and King Range WSAs.

Several years ago I spoke with a CDF fire chief in the King Range about the agency's policy of suppressing small fires that would otherwise slowly burn the undergrowth. "By stopping these small fires, aren't you allowing the vegetation to build up so there will be a catastrophic fire you can't stop?" I asked.

"Yes," was his reply. "But we have no choice."

I'm sure the residents in the Burney area, recently devastated by the Fountain Fire, are on the CDF's side. That ravaging inferno raced through the second-growth timber, burning homes and trees alike. I expect they would argue that the only good fire is an extinguished fire.

Yet the decades of a Smokey Bear policy for fire management has created much of the predicament in which we find ourselves today. Severe fires wrack the state each summer, and as the drought intensifies, so do the conflagrations.

As frightful as the fires are, we must begin thinking about a rational fire policy. We need to return the lands to a condition that allows natural fires to reduce natural

## Duncan Canyon salvage sale

continued from page 1

ested in resolving the appeals, it nevertheless intends to implement the plan's provisions immediately.

The FEIS map of the area indicates a substantial percentage of the currently-roadless acreage will be subject to disturbance. Though the planned logging will not directly impact the Western States Trail, trail users certainly will be aware of the work and its effects.

Although research on the California spotted owl, a canyon resident, is incomplete, the FS predicts that no impairment or degradation of owl habitat will occur as a result of the proposed logging. An interim amendment to the FS Regional Guide on spotted owl management is not due out for another month.

By leaving the "three largest available snags per acre and downed logs," the FS expects to "meet the requirements for the furbearers, spotted owls, and other old-growth dependent species."

Time will tell. But in the interim, please let the Tahoe National Forest know how you feel. Write: John H. Skinner, Forest Supervisor, Tahoe National Forest, P. O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959-6003, Attn: 1950.

David Orr is a local activist interested in preserving ancient forests.

## 10 questions

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Remember too that dead trees play a crucial role in forest ecosystems. They provide food sources for wildlife, nesting sites for insect-eating birds, and reservoirs for water. Logs and woody debris play an important role in nutrient cycling, reduction of soil erosion, and creation of microhabitats for small but essential forest dwellers. The value most at risk from "dying forests" is fiber production.

10. Is salvaging being used as a vehicle to open up roadless areas?

As it depletes the resources of areas managed for timber production, the Forest Service increasingly is opting to enter roadless areas to meet its timber targets. Yet most of the remaining roadless areas remain roadless precisely because they are submarginal for timber production. These same areas are immensely valuable when left intact as some of the country's last remaining native ecosystems.

Roads are the major culprit when it comes to introduced sediment, increased water yields, and early run-off. Furthermore, roads have been cited as the leading threat to animal diversity in forests because they make access by humans easier.

To solve forest health concerns, we need roadless areas left intact as ecological blueprints of native, functioning ecosystems.

Reprinted from the September 1992 issue of the AFSEEE Activist, a publication of the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, P. O. Box 11615, Eugene, OR 97440.

fuels, and we should stop building houses in areas that are going to burn.

But most of all, we must allow the wild to return to wilderness. To the extent possible, we should allow natural fires to run their course.

## Wilderness news

### Dangerous

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are hundreds of times greater than any danger you face in the wilds. Tens of thousands of Americans are killed annually on our highways; deaths in the wilderness are extremely rare.

In my experience in California's wild places, there are two main risks, neither stemming from animals. They are water and lightning.

The closest I have come to dying in the backcountry has been during stream crossings. Water can be a powerful force, and rising water in streams and rivers can become dangerous during storms. Although many hazardous crossings now have bridges, there still are numerous fords or log traverses.

Lightning can be a threat, especially at higher elevations. And you are more likely to be struck by lightning than win the lottery. However, you may be comforted to learn that half of the lightning fatalities in this country occur on the golf course.

But this is supposed to be an article about dangerous animals. So let us begin with bears.

#### Bears

The bear on the state flag, the California grizzly, was a dangerous animal. It was known to attack humans, especially when it was wounded.

But the California grizzly was hunted to extinction, so our only remaining member of the *Ursidae* family is the black bear. This bear can look menacing, but there are few reported attacks on humans. My experience with bears is that they flee as soon as they catch sight or scent of you. But then I seldom backpack in national parks.

Park bears are a different animal. They have learned about the free lunch brought in on the backs of men and women, and some bears are outright aggressive about sampling the wares. Many belligerent bears are destroyed.

Like many animals, bears will attack if you torment their young. Common sense and careful storage of food can usually prevent any adverse encounters with bears.

#### Mountain Lions

One of the highlights of my life was seeing a mountain lion in the wild. It was walking up a wash in the Whipple Mountains near the Colorado River when it saw us. We were able to watch it for several minutes as it rapidly worked its way out of the wash and away from us.

Hunting and trapping reduced the population of this magnificent animal to about 2,000 individuals before the citizens of this state voted to protect it. Male lions average over a hundred pounds in weight; females are slightly smaller. Deer are the primary prey of this opportunistic carnivore, although rabbits and rodents also are eaten as well as wild boar, opossums, and occasional livestock. Humans are not a preferred food item. There are only a few known instances of mountain lions attacking humans; the last two victims were small children in southern California. Although there have been more sightings of lions in recent years, this may be a result of the drought driving the cats into developed areas.

#### Deer

Bambi *dangerous*? There are a number of reports of people being slashed by deer hooves, probably by does protecting their young. Any large, hooved animal can be dangerous and should be approached with caution.

#### Rattlesnakes

California is fortunate enough to host six species of rattlesnakes. Hikers in the Sierra Nevada, Klamath Mountains, or coast ranges north of Los Angeles are most likely to encounter the western rattlesnake, a variably-colored, blotched snake that rarely attains a length greater than five feet.

In the desert, you should be aware of the sidewinder, speckled, western diamondback, and Mojave rattlesnakes. The diamondback, which brandishes a "don't tread on me" attitude, should be respected since it can reach a

## Desert bill gone but not forgotten

For what may have been the last time, Senator John Seymour successfully blocked the progress of a bill intended to protect the California desert. In late September, Sen. Seymour again prevented Sen. Alan Cranston's desert bill from reaching the Senate floor, ensuring that no legislation to protect the desert will be enacted this Congress.

Conceding defeat for the time being in the face of what he called Sen. Seymour's "short-sightedness and environmental illiteracy," Sen. Cranston issued a statement saying:

"Senator Seymour appears to view the environment as a luxury of minor importance in comparison with economic considerations, nothing more than pretty scenery for a weekend family outing.

"The political consequences...will be decided this November by California voters.

"California deserves to be represented by senators who understand that environmental discipline is essential to human survival."

Sen. Cranston expressed confidence that legislation to protect the desert would be passed next year. Both of California's Senate seats are up for election this year since Sen. Cranston is retiring and Sen. Seymour, an appointee of Governor Wilson, must be elected in

order to serve out the remainder of former Sen. Wilson's term.

Sen. Cranston's bill, which is supported by Senate candidates Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, would have designated 8.5 million acres of National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management wilderness.



Storm clouds gather over Mt. Inyo (left) and Keynot Peak (center) in the Southern Inyo Wilderness Study Area. This area would have become wilderness had Sen. Cranston's desert bill passed. Photo by Pete Yamagata

length of seven feet and inject a large amount of venom.

Special mention should be given to the Mojave rattler, a greenish snake with well-defined, light-edged diamonds. Its venom contains a highly neuro-toxic component which can cause respiratory failure.

Few people die from rattlesnakes, but a bite can ruin your day. Intense swelling causes excruciating pain and may result in localized tissue damage. But as a local doctor recently told me, all the victims he and others have seen in Sacramento have had one thing in common—they were drunk and apparently harassing the snake.

#### Gila Monsters

The gila monster is the only venomous lizard in the United States. It is extremely rare in California, but there have been sightings in the Clark Mountain area of the East Mojave. Though it is poisonous, you would have to go out of your way to get bitten by this rare reptile.

#### Sharks

Until recently I hadn't thought of sharks as a wilderness animal, but a recent experience at Pt. Reyes National Seashore changed my attitude. On a hot afternoon my wife Wendy considered wading in Limantour Estero but was deterred by mud and murky water. From the cliff above we later saw more than a dozen sharks, six to eight feet long, within a few yards of the shore. They were sand tiger sharks, not usually aggressive toward humans, but potentially dangerous nonetheless.

Many sharks, including the great white, patrol the waters in and around the Phil Burton Wilderness at Pt. Reyes. While shark attacks are rare in California, the results of such encounters often are serious.

#### Rabies

Most animals fear humans and avoid our presence. But animals infected by rabies will approach and bite people. Rabid bats, skunks, coyotes, squirrels, and even mountain lions have attacked humans. Without immediate treatment, the disease is nearly always fatal.

#### Other Diseases

Several diseases transmitted by animals are getting much attention. Lyme disease, transmitted by ticks, is found in much of California. Treatment is not difficult provided that the disease is discovered soon after infection. If you have been bitten by a tick, you should consult your physician.

Bubonic plague flares up from time to time, especially in the Tahoe basin. Though plague is transmitted by fleas, the host animal is usually the ground squirrel. But most of the outbreaks seem to occur near campgrounds where squirrel populations are high, so perhaps the lower density of rodents in the wilderness negates this problem.

#### Should I Stay Home?

Most of the wild places in California are safe to visit. The main lesson is to respect wildlife—do not annoy, torment, pester, molest, or tease the animals you encounter.

Remember, for better or worse, we have subdued our wilderness. Most dangerous animals have been eliminated or severely reduced in numbers. Our sanitized wilds are much safer than our communities.

When thinking about the hazards of wilderness, I identify with Steve McQueen: "I'd rather wake up in the middle of nowhere than in any city on earth."

## Book review

# Time travels at Tahoe

### Stopping Time: A Rephotographic Survey of Lake Tahoe

By Peter Goin, C. Elizabeth Raymond, and Robert E. Blesse, University of New Mexico Press, 1992, 134 pp., \$50 hard cover, \$25 paperback.

This book about the Lake of the Sky is fascinating on many levels. By matching archival photographs of the Lake Tahoe area with modern photographs taken from the same vantage point (where possible), the book offers a unique and disturbing visual record of human impact on a beautiful and fragile place. At once history, geography, hydrology, anthropology, ecology, and coffee-table book, *Stopping Time* presents an important chapter in the evolution of environmental cultural awareness.

The early photographs offer a disgusting record of rape and pillage of the land. The Tahoe area was "strip-timbered" to build the mines that removed the gold and silver from beneath Virginia City. It was so thoroughly denuded of its lush ancient forest that the lumber mills had to close up shop because there was no more wood to process. Many of the rephotographs were taken 100 years later, and it is appalling to witness, even from a distance, the domination-of-nature ethos. After being totally exploited and abandoned, the earth had a chance to regenerate, though with a preponderance of fir trees, less desirable than the highly prized sugar pines. Tahoe is still a

fragile environment, but today's threats come from highway building and the pollution and recreational development which follow in its wake.

Even though this is a "picture book," it hands you nothing easily. The photographs allow you to think about the area in an organic, holistic way; still the complexities can be overwhelming. I was as uncomfortable as I was fascinated. The inherent conflict and sacrifices are laid out for all to see. The losses, tragic and deplorable as they were, served as a catalyst to the early environmental movement. And alongside the old photographs documenting these losses are hopeful new photos documenting the earth's stunning ability to heal. With management, care and protection, and a lot of time, I concluded, healing is possible, but not guaranteed.

As there is more talk of finding the right "balance" between economic development and environmental protection, *Stopping Time* can provide the "time out" we need to develop a collective judgment about the legacy we are handing to our grandchildren. Throughout the book we receive spiritual whispers from the Washoe Indians. As we begin to see the Lake through their eyes, we begin to understand why we must take action only after contemplating its impact seven generations hence. Where will our environmental evolution go from here?

—Linda Turnquist

## Make friends and influence people in a CWC t-shirt

Vicky (r.) likes our our six-tone anniversary shirt which comes in light blue, yellow, light green, or peach for \$15. The animal design Larry wears 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.



**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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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**October 7 HEARING** by the Palo Alto Utilities Advisory Commission on the Ramsey-French Meadow Hydro project proposed for the potentially wild & scenic North Fork Stanislaus River. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Palo Alto City Hall. If you cannot attend, send letters to: Paul Grimsrud, Chair, Utilities Advisory Commission, c/o Richard Young, Dir. of Utilities, 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301.

**October 19 COMMENTS DUE** on a proposed salvage sale in the Duncan Canyon Roadless Area of the Tahoe National Forest. Send comments to: John H. Skinner, Forest Supervisor, Tahoe N. F., P. O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959-6003, Attn: 1950. (See article on pages 1 & 5.)

**October 24 CONFERENCE** on "The State of the Sacramento River" in Red Bluff. For details, contact the Sacramento River Preservation Trust at (916) 345-4050.

**November 3 ELECTION DAY**

## Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

Pit River Canyon  
Wilderness Study Area

from page 2

### 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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