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A northern spotted owl perched on a tan oak in the Nature Conservancy's Northern California Coast Range Preserve. Photo by Cameron Barrows, courtesy of MAP RAP

Spotted owl endangered by new habitat plan

By Tim McKay

The long-running controversy over the fate of the threatened northern spotted owl took another twist this month when the federal government offered a final plan for "critical habitat" that could result in the deaths of about half of the 6,000 birds that remain.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (F&WS) proposed 6.88 million acres of critical habitat for the owl, down from the 12 million acres proposed last May and a pared-down eight million acres proposed in August.

The latest critical habitat plan closely parallels an April 1990 report known as the Thomas plan, which envisioned a 40 to 60 percent reduction in the species. The F&WS plan would create habitat conservation areas (HCAs) more or less evenly spaced across the federal forestlands of the Pacific Northwest.

The F&WS plan stipulates a certain density of trees, the "50-40-11" rule, in forests lying between the HCAs: in every quarter-township, 50 percent of the land would have 40 percent canopy closure with trees at least 11 inches in diameter. This condition would provide connective migration corridors for juvenile owls as they leave their birth territories. In many areas the 50-40-11 rule cannot be applied, however, because the forests have

been so heavily cut.

It is commonly agreed that anywhere from 60 to 88 percent of suitable habitat has been lost already. Even worse, F&WS experts say that if the owl forests are not protected, they will disappear in 15 to 30 years, given the logging levels of the last few decades. What's more, fragmentation of the ancient forests that still exist may have changed their nature so fundamentally that old-growth dependent species may be doomed already.

Critical EPA report quashed

In Oregon, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has petitioned the so-called "God Squad" (formally known as the Endangered Species Committee) to consider exempting 44 BLM timber sales from the Endangered Species Act and, therefore, from the critical habitat plan. A decision is expected in March.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added to the furor as the new year dawned by releasing so scathing a critique of the 44 proposed BLM sales that pressure from the Bush administration has since led the agency to remove itself from the God Squad hearings. The EPA report found that the sales could significantly affect environmental quality, that the BLM's plans were outdated, and that the BLM had failed to evaluate the effects of

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Yosemite concessions plan—short on details and vision

By Lucy Rosenau

In December the National Park Service released a draft plan and environmental impact statement for concession services in Yosemite National Park. The alternative preferred by park planners departs from the 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) and defers site-specific planning. For these reasons and others environmentalists are asking the Park Service to reject the draft plan which has been described by Marc Francis, Chair of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee, as "the last nail in the park's coffin."

While most commercial activity is concentrated in Yosemite Valley, a few concessions operate in the high backcountry, only yards from the wilderness. And if Yosemite Valley, with its summer crowds and gridlock, seems the antithesis of wilderness, its very popularity has profound effects on the wilderness. Because so many of the valley's visitors arrive by car (a problem identified by the 1980 plan but still unsolved), they contribute to the air pollution that is borne by prevailing winds up into the Sierra and the wilderness areas located there. Consequently, all park concessions, directly or indirectly, have the potential to impact the wilderness.

Yosemite National Park is home to the Yosemite Wilderness, designated in 1984 by the California Wilderness Act. At 706,348 acres, the wilderness comprises 94 percent of the park. In general, the wilderness boundary was drawn 100 feet from existing structures, developments, and roads.

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COALITION PAGE

MONTHLY REPORT

BY JIM EATON

The day after Christmas Jeanette Colbert and Steve Evans, Nancy Morton and Dave Foreman, and Wendy, Inyo, and I took a long day hike into the proposed Cache Creek Wilderness an hour and a half from home. It was a good hike: the hazy sunshine was nice, we found an old Indian village site, and we were charmed by bald eagles.

It enhanced my enthusiasm for finishing a video on the area.

When Nancy Kang and I took the introductory courses at Davis Community Television a year and a half ago, our first undertaking was to be a documentary of the proposed Cache Creek Wilderness. But despite the drought, several of our field trips last year were rained out. We had some good scenery shots ("B-roll" in the trade), but we lacked the *essence* of Cache Creek. We wanted to capture some of the principle wildlife of the area, especially the tule elk and bald eagles.

Nancy tried for weeks to gather up a crew (the television equipment requires a minimum of four strong backs), and finally in the middle of January she succeeded in finding two volunteer producers, Charlie Carroll and Gaye Watanabe, who had the weekend free. In addition, Gaye's friend Pablo joined us for his first backpacking experience.

It was good to get out of the endless Central Valley fog and into the bright sunlight. It was positively warm! We hiked up the Red Bud Trail, crossed Cache Creek without getting our feet wet (courtesy of the drought), and eventually found our way to a great overlook of Wilson Valley. There we set up the camera and tried to play movie director while Pablo snoozed in the afternoon sun. On the way we made the day of a photojournalist working for BLM; he was able to snap two Asian women and a Hispanic man backpacking on the public lands. We expect to see them gracing the cover of *BLM Newsbeat* in the future.

We dropped steeply down to Rocky Creek where we found a comfortable campsite. We ate dinner and taped the nearly full moon rising. Then we sat around the campfire telling the obligatory war stories.

Before 10 p.m. the rest of the crew was crawling

into their sleeping bags. Since I am just coming into my prime then, Nancy suggested that I take a walk by the moon.

This year's "old moon" (the full moon after Yule) was at perigee, the closest full moon to Earth this year. It was incredibly bright. I could make out the main stars in Orion, nearby Sirius and Aldebaran, Cassiopeia, Ursa Major, and a few miscellaneous stars. That was it. The land was moonlit from horizon to horizon.

I set off down Wilson Valley at a fast clip, due to the nippy temperature, the occasional star thistle stinging my thighs, and my mind keeping beat to Led Zeppelin's *Black Dog* ("been so long since I've walked in the moonlight"). Nearby coyotes kept me company with their barking and howling (no doubt communicating the position of the nocturnal human). I returned several hours later to the tent I shared with the Panasonic camera and dreamt some tremulous dreams.

Charlie (sleeping out in the open) and I woke before dawn to the growling of an animal, but after determining it really was snoring from the other tent we arose to videotape the sunrise. Charlie has good artistic sense and captured some great shots of sunlight on ice-covered Rocky Creek.

After a communal breakfast we marched down Wilson Valley, startling a bobcat that was too fast for the camera. We got some good footage of Cache Creek and the valley, but no wildlife.

While crossing the confluence of the north and main forks of Cache Creek we stopped for a final shooting of the creek. As we began taping, a bald eagle flew up the creek. A comic moment ensued (I couldn't find the raptor in the viewfinder), but finally we captured the bird on tape as it soared effortlessly upstream. Our spirits soared as well.

We still would like to find some tule elk. The elk are skittish since hunters are in the area year round (our audio tape is punctuated periodically by the booms of guns), but we hope to find some during our final filming this spring.

Also, we would like to capture some scenes of people rafting down the river, but until the rains return this seems to be an amusement of the past.

Board profiles



New CWC Board member Frannie Waid is welcomed by old(er) members Nobby Riedy (l.) and Alan Carlton.

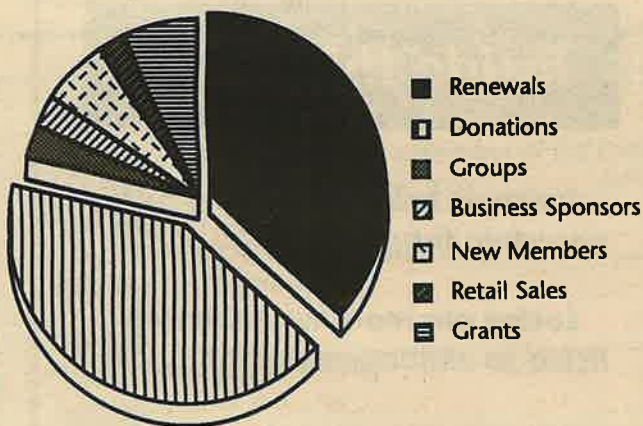
New CWC Board member has a great range of experience

New Board member Frannie Waid has lived a lot of her life on the slopes and peaks of the Sierra Nevada. She went on her first Sierra Club outing at age four and climbed her first peak, Mt. Lyell, at age 7; by the time she was 20, she had climbed the 246 peaks on the Club's Sierra Peaks Section list of prominent peaks in the range.

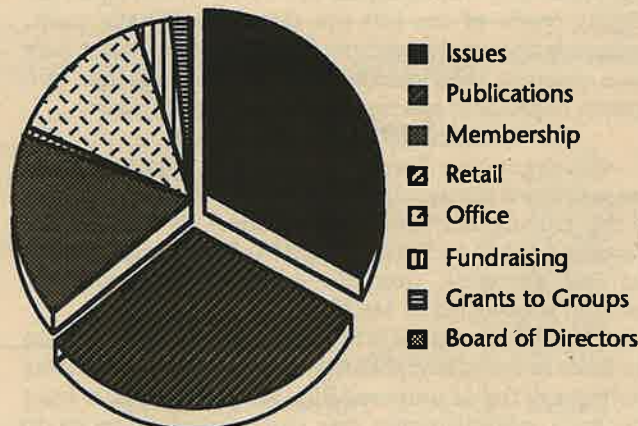
Frannie's involvement with CWC dates from 1986, when she began her tenure at the Sierra Club's Northern California/Nevada/Hawaii Field Office, first with Sally Kabisch and later with Barbara Boyle, themselves former CWC Board members. Why does an overworked environmentalist volunteer her time as a CWC Board member? "CWC serves as a cohesive, focussed umbrella organization that pulls together the strengths of all its member groups," says Frannie, "so we can use those strengths to full advantage for the benefit of California wilderness." Frannie particularly values CWC's emphasis on wilderness and wild lands.

Her own favorite wild lands lie high in the Sierra, above timberline, wherever sky pilot blooms and marmots scamper and whistle.

1991 Income



1991 Disbursements



The Coalition was only slightly hurt by the recession last year, bringing in \$53,000—\$2,000 less than in 1990. As always, most of the income is derived from renewals and donations. Most of it is spent on issues and the

Wilderness Record. The large chunk in Membership is required to send our renewals, prospect for new members, and service requests. The Office category pays the rent, basic phone bills, for office machines, and for insurance.

Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What wilderness study areas have Wild & Scenic rivers flowing through them?

Answer on page 7.

BLM wilderness study areas

Tablelands wilderness—because it *is* wild

By Jim Eaton

If you are looking for high mountains, this is not the place. But there are spectacular 14,000-foot peaks to both the east and the west.

If you want deep, clear lakes, this is not the place. But it provides an essential aquifer recharge to Fish Slough, a very critical wetland habitat just east of the proposed wilderness.

If you enjoy fishing, this is not the place. Despite its name, Fish Slough is not full of trout, but it is home to the tiny and endangered Owens pupfish and Owens tui chub.

If you like well-marked, graded trails, this is not the place. But the terrain allows for cross-country travel, and hiking up the washes is easy.

With the White Mountains and Sierra so close at hand, why should anyone care about the volcanic tablelands region east of the southern Sierra Nevada?

Because it is wild.

This is a landscape born 700,000 years ago when a volcanic eruption 560 times larger than that at Mt. St. Helens ejected enough material to build another Mt. Shasta. The phenomenal blast blew ash as far as Washington, D.C., and in the Owens Valley a tsunami of magma flowed over the land.

Erosion over the succeeding millenia has left rolling hills, volcanic terraces and cliffs, fumarolic mounds, and the deeply incised Chidago and Red Rock canyons. Much of the region is composed of Bishop tuff, a pinkish rock born in that antediluvian explosion. Only the granitic uplands of 7,912-foot Casa Diablo Mountain tower above the extrusive rocks.

The area is world-renowned for its significant archaeological resources, including petroglyphs, pictographs, rock shelters, seed collection sites, hunting camps, lithic scatters, and village sites.

Wildlife of the tablelands include pronghorn, mule deer, numerous raptors, and many small mammals. Fish Slough is wetland habitat for birds, snails, and endemic flora. The vegetation is a mix of Great Basin and high desert shrubs: indigo bush, desert peach, goldenbush, cacti, and others. The spring wildflower display is spectacular following a wet winter.

During the wilderness review process, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) identified four wilderness study areas (WSAs) here (see map): Casa Diablo, Volcanic Tablelands, Chidago Canyon, and Fish Slough. (The "Petroglyph Parcel" was not accorded WSA status because it was determined by the BLM not to have outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreational values.) Casa Diablo, which contains Forest Service lands inventoried during the BLM's review, is separated from the other areas by a power line; the remaining WSAs have only dirt roads dividing them. The entire complex of wild areas comprises about 70,000 acres of public land.

There is some ranching, some mining, and some off-road vehicle use in the area. The BLM has received proposals to mine decorative stone from the Bishop tuff, but there is ample rock in the region outside the wild areas. Illegal off-road vehicle use and vandalism of archaeological sites occur despite BLM efforts to protect the WSAs.

But on the whole, the tablelands remain relatively untouched. Roads could be closed to fully restore the integrity of this land. The power line poses more of a problem, but it could remain as a narrow corridor dividing two wilderness units.

The area may never attract hordes of backpackers; a tablelands wilderness would, however, protect a unique assemblage of plants, wildlife, archaeological features, and a landscape spawned in one of the continent's most violent explosions.

Jim Eaton is a geology buff who first visited the volcanic tablelands in 1979. He is better known for his work as the Executive Director of the California Wilderness Coalition.

Note: The Bureau of Land Management has recommended "non-wilderness" designation for the four WSAs of the tablelands and for Merced River WSA.



From the volcanic tablelands, the snow-covered White Mountains dominate the eastern horizon.
Photo by Sally Miller

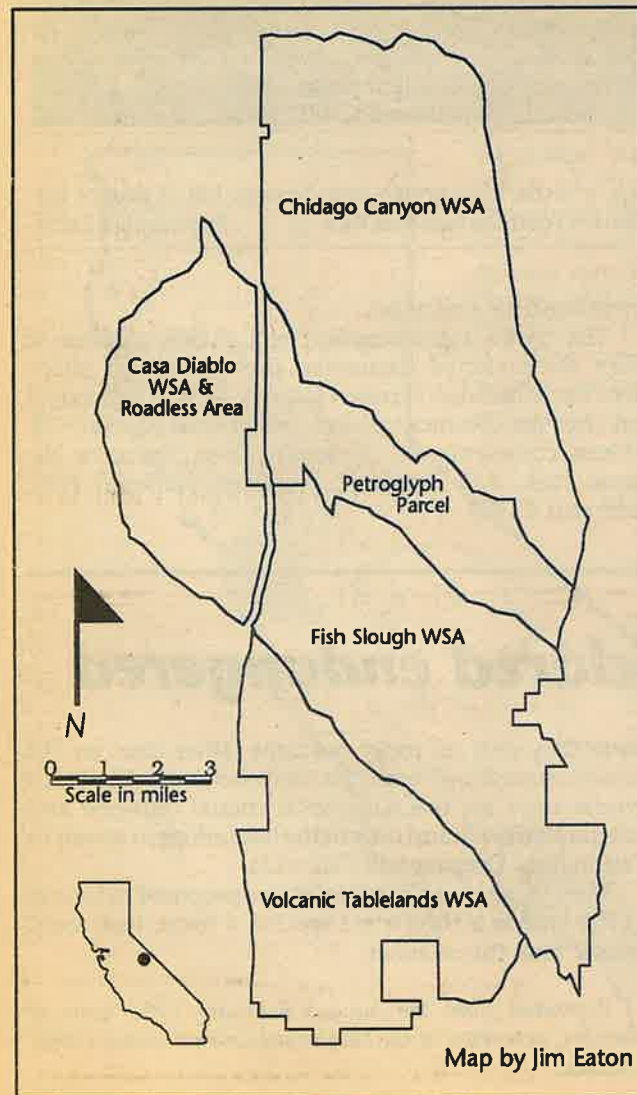
Merced River Wild & Scenic bills run the rapids

In the last week of the first session of the 102nd Congress, Merced Wild & Scenic River bills passed some important milestones. H.R. 4687, sponsored by Representative Gary Condit (D-Modesto), passed the full House of Representatives. The similar (but not identical) S. 549, sponsored by Senator Alan Cranston, passed the Senate Energy Committee with the support of Senator John Seymour.

Each bill would protect from dam construction the eight-mile portion of the Merced River that flows through the Bureau of Land Management's Merced River Wilderness Study Area. Already protected is a stretch of the river upstream, in Yosemite National Park and Stanislaus National Forest. The bills also would prohibit new mining claims within a half mile-wide river corridor.

Wild & Scenic designation could also affect an existing but unpatented mining claim within the river corridor. According to the Bureau of Land Management, the claim's owner is interested in excavating the Cave Flat campground which may be underlain with gold. The Bureau has been unsuccessful in its attempts to void the claim, and the alternative, purchasing the claim, is impractical while the river corridor remains unprotected because someone else still could file a claim under the 1872 Mining Law. If the Merced is designated Wild & Scenic before the claim is patented, then no grandfathered rights will exist and the campground will remain.

Ron Stork is Associate Conservation Director for Friends of the River and a member of the CWC Board of Directors.



Wilderness management

Fate of Yosemite a fait accompli?

continued from page 1

Although the concession plan has a narrow focus that precludes extensive transportation planning, to plan for the future of concessions in the park without first planning how visitors will reach those concessions strikes Francis as shortsighted and dangerous. The more so, Francis says, since some site-specific details of the concession plan will be determined in separate "development concept plans" that have yet to be prepared.

Overall, the draft plan would reduce the number of rooms in the park, replace some of the rustic (and cheap) accommodations with more comfortable ones, provide more seating at fast food outlets and restaurants, and ban souvenir shops from selling items not associated with the park or its natural history.

In the valley, lodging will be reduced by 20 percent from 1980 levels. (Parkwide, the reduction is 13 percent, as compared to the GMP's target of a ten percent reduction.) Nonetheless, the preferred alternative proposes the addition of 155 units to the Yosemite Lodge and 144 at Curry Village. The cafeteria at Curry Village would be converted to a "family" restaurant and the fast-food outlets (added since the GMP) would be retained. Francis believes park planners should adhere to the GMP. The draft concession plan, Francis states, would "continue to accommodate uncontrolled overcrowding rather than dealing with the underlying problem."

High country: fewer concessions, less oversight

Tioga Pass Road provides access to Yosemite's high backcountry which lacks the crowds (and video outlets) of the valley but still has pockets of commercial activity addressed by the draft concession services plan.

The high country's largest concentration of concessions is at Tuolumne Meadows, a popular departure point for climbers and backpackers as well as parties bound for

the High Sierra camps. The preferred alternative proposes the construction of a new building to house the existing store, fast food outlet, and mountaineering center and the relocation of employee housing and the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge dining room and kitchen. The rationale for relocating employee housing and the dining room is that the existing structures lie in a riparian zone (see sidebar). A new, less sensitive location for the buildings has not yet been determined. A development concept plan will be

formulated to address the site-specific details of the preferred alternative's plan for Tuolumne Meadows. According to Bob Howard, Environmental Specialist for the park, any development concept plan would be accompanied by an appropriate environmental

study.

At White Wolf, the preferred alternative would replace the existing cramped dining room with a new building that could seat 50 people indoors; the outdoor seating now enjoyed by diners who watch deer in the adjacent meadow at dusk would be eliminated. A development concept plan and environmental study would address site-specific considerations.

Expansion of the five High Sierra Camps located within the wilderness boundary is prohibited. Moreover, the GMP states that if the camps cannot function in their existing condition, they must be removed. (If camps are removed, the land would revert to wilderness.) Nonetheless, the septic system at Vogelsang camp was expanded last year; reportedly, boulders from the wilderness adjacent to the camp were transported by helicopter for use in the expansion. Notwithstanding environmentalists' complaints about the Vogelsang violation, the draft concession services plan states that "work will be required in the near future" at Sunrise camp, where the potable water supply and sewage system are inadequate.

The absence of site-specific planning in a document that purports to be an environmental impact statement troubles Marc Francis, who believes that the draft plan's lack of specificity constitutes a violation of the National



Liberty Cap, a roche moutonnée near Nevada Fall, is one of the natural attractions in Yosemite National Park. Photo by Jim Eaton

Yosemite: planners' nightmares and pipe dreams

Yosemite, one of the nation's oldest national parks, presents managers with real challenges. In Yosemite, as in other national parks developed long before the principles of landscape management and conservation biology were understood, meadows and riparian zones—places of great beauty and great sensitivity—were the preferred location for buildings and roads.

What's a manager to do? The ideas range from planned projects to pipe dreams. At Yosemite's Tuolumne Meadows, the draft concession services plan proposes to protect the meadows and the adjacent Tuolumne Wild & Scenic River by moving the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge dining room, now located next to the riverbank where it affords diners a lovely view. Bob Howard, Environmental Specialist for the park, says planners would like to move buildings and vehicles to the lodgepole pine forest that borders the meadow. More ambitiously, planners envision one day rerouting Tioga Pass Road above the meadow.

Environmental Policy Act.

The park's superintendent will decide whether to adopt the preferred alternative after a series of public meetings scheduled between January 29 and February 1 and after the comment period, which ends February 28. Address comments to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite National Park, California 95389.

Marbled murrelet declared endangered

The marbled murrelet was placed on the state's endangered species list by a 4-1 vote of the Fish and Game Commission on December 6, further clouding the prospects that Maxxam's Pacific Lumber Company can log its remaining old-growth redwoods. Maxxam has said that the bird's endangered status could cost 3,000 timber jobs.

The robin-sized seabird forages within a mile from shore, but nests as far as 25 miles inland, near the top of old-growth trees. Fewer than 2,000 murrelets are thought to remain in California. An equal number are believed to be in Oregon, and as many as 5,000 in Washington. Murrelets are more numerous around the Gulf of Alaska

where they nest on rocky outcrops rather than on the moss-encrusted high branches used elsewhere. The bird's favorite trees are the old-growth coastal redwood and Douglas fir trees found only in the last unlogged stands in Washington, Oregon, and California.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed in June to list the bird as a threatened species, a move that could become final this summer.

Reprinted from the January-February 1992 issue of *Econews*, newsletter of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.

Wilderness representatives

Reapportionment roundup:

Who's safe, who's not, and why it matters

By Ron Stork

"All politics is local" —Tip O'Neill

Tip O'Neill is not the only one to believe these words, and as a consequence, members of Congress usually defer to the local representative in "district" issues. And often, wilderness and public land legislation is considered a district issue.

The new Congressional districts (see map) proposed by the California Supreme Court's "master" panel of three retired judges could bring changes to the representation of California's public lands. That, in turn, could mean a great deal to upcoming California public lands legislation. Not only would some of California's potential wilderness areas be represented by new legislators, but six of the seats on the powerful Interior Committee—which hears most legislation pertaining to public lands—are now held by California representatives; with redrawn districts, some of those representatives will be vulnerable to challengers.

Going clockwise: Freshman Republican Frank Riggs' district (1) remains pretty much the same. Rep. Riggs does pick up some pieces of Wally Herger's old district 2—Napa and the southeast side of Lake County (and much of the Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area).

Republican Representative Wally Herger's district (2) will be moving out of the Central Valley to the mountains. He will be picking up the Sierra Nevada north of the American River watershed, the Lassen National Forest, and the Modoc Plateau from Rep. John Doolittle. Rep. Herger

already represents the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and surrounding lands. Most of the citizens of his new district reside in Chico and the Marysville area.

Rep. Herger has opposed Wild & Scenic River legislation for the upper Klamath and Yuba rivers in recent years. There is little evidence that he will be a friendly vote on other public lands issues in the giant new district that now includes the largest Bureau of Land Management wilderness study areas outside of the California desert.

Rep. John Doolittle knows why he was elected: to build large dams like Auburn Dam in the nearby Sierra Nevada and to help industry get timber from the national forests. While keeping the Republican heartland of the suburbs east of Sacramento and the 48 miles of the American River slated for burial beneath Auburn Reservoir, Rep. Doolittle's new district heads south to the watershed of the Tuolumne River and down the east side to the Mono-Inyo county border.

In this new district (4) will be the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, the Eldorado and Stanislaus national forests, and sizable portions of the Tahoe and Toiyabe national forests. Also in his "care" will be most of the imminently endangered rivers in the Sierra Nevada—the Clavey, the North Fork Stanislaus, the Mokelumne, and the North Fork of the Mokelumne, as well as the salty, blue jewel of the east side: Mono Lake. Rep. Doolittle sits on the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee, which has primary jurisdiction in wilderness, national recreation and scenic areas, and Wild & Scenic River legislation.

Rep. Gary Condit's (D-Modesto) district (18) moves out of the Merced River drainage to the Central Valley counties of Stanislaus and Merced. Rep. Condit carried the Merced Wild & Scenic River bill that was passed by the House of Representatives in December (see article on page 3), but he has had little time to develop an extensive record in public lands issues.

Representative Rick Lehman (D-Fresno) will move south to stand for election in a district (19) encompassing the Merced, San Joaquin, and Kings river drainages in the Sierra and Sequoia national forests and Yosemite and Kings Canyon national parks. Rep. Lehman is a veteran on the House Interior Committee as well as a member of the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee. Because most of the voters in his new district are Republicans concentrated in the suburbs of Fresno, Rep. Lehman expects a tough re-election race.

Another Interior Committee member, the promising freshman Rep.

Cal Dooley (D-Visalia) will lose the Kings-to-Kern River reach of the Sequoia National Forest when his district (20) shifts to the agricultural (but Democratic) heartland of the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Bakersfield Representative Bill Thomas has indicated his intention to run in a district (21) that includes most of the Sequoia National Forest, the southern Inyo National Forest, and part of Bakersfield. Rep. Thomas loses most of his California desert acreage (in Inyo County) to Rep. Jerry Lewis (40). Both Republican legislators opposed the California Desert Protection Act passed by the House in November.

Analysis

The districts (44 & 52) of Republican Representatives Al McCandless and Duncan Hunter in Riverside, Imperial, and eastern San Diego counties are pretty

much unchanged, but it is still unclear who will run in them. Both Reps. McCandless and Hunter opposed the California Desert Protection Act.

Republican Interior Committee members Elton Gallegly and Robert Lagomarsino were placed in the same Ventura County district (23) encompassing the big roadless areas around the Sespe River, and both could face tough elections. Rep. Gallegly, who is seldom a good vote on public lands issues, will run in this district (which has more "green" voters than his previous Simi Valley district).

Rep. Lagomarsino, the senior Republican on the National Parks Subcommittee, will move north to stand for election in the new Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo County district (22). Rep. Lagomarsino opposed the California Desert Protection Act and was the author of the tepid Condor Range and Rivers Act that passed the House last year but has been a strong supporter of Wild & Scenic River designation for the Merced. Many of the residents in the northern part of this district were previously represented by Rep. Bill Thomas.

Rep. Leon Panetta's (D-Monterey) San Benito and Monterey County district (17), which includes the northern portion of the Los Padres National Forest, remains with little changed.

Of the two other Californians who presently serve on the Interior Committee, one, Rep. Mel Levine (D-Santa Monica) will not be seeking to retain his seat. Instead, he has announced his candidacy for the six-year Senate term. The Interior Committee's Chair, Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez), is expected to win re-election in a "safe" district similar to his existing district 7.

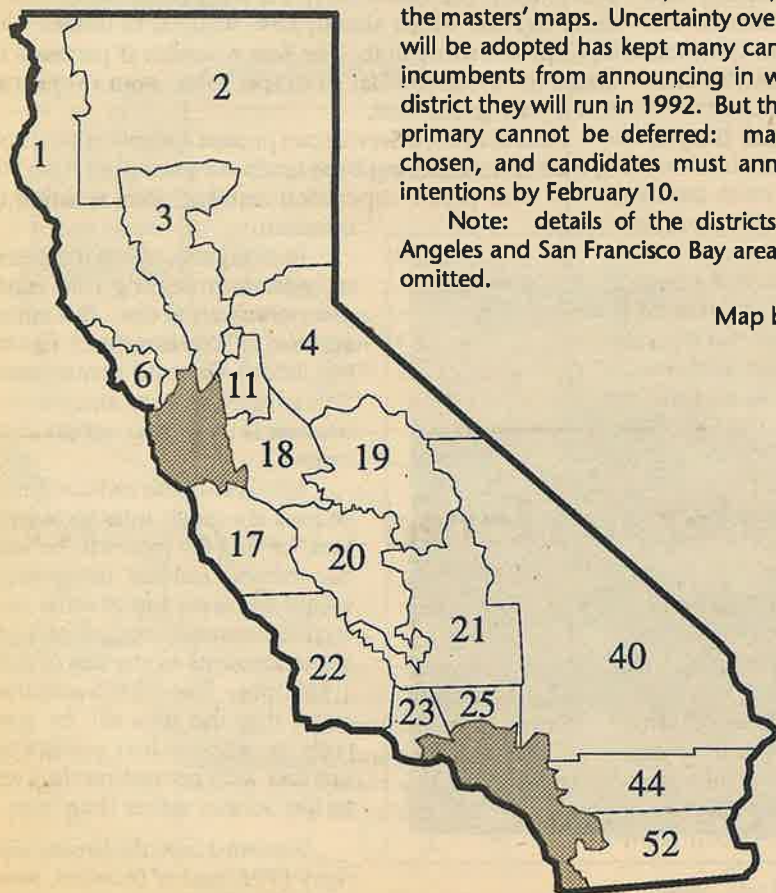
Ron Stork is Associate Conservation Director for Friends of the River and a member of the California Wilderness Coalition's Board of Directors.



The California Supreme Court is scheduled to adopt this Congressional map (or a slightly modified version) on January 28, 1992. The California Democratic Congressional caucus has filed suit in federal court, however, to overturn the masters' maps. Uncertainty over which map will be adopted has kept many candidates and incumbents from announcing in which House district they will run in 1992. But the June 1992 primary cannot be deferred: maps must be chosen, and candidates must announce their intentions by February 10.

Note: details of the districts in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas have been omitted.

Map by Jim Eaton



Wilderness news

The case against the Desert Bill, and how to rebut it

Note: The House of Representatives passed the California Desert Protection Act on November 26, 1991. The fate of the Desert Bill, and the desert, now depends on Senator John Seymour.

The "lockout" argument:

"Who are we protecting the desert from? We are protecting it from blue-collar Californians....What do these people want to do that is so threatening to the desert? They want to be able to get up on Saturday morning or Sunday morning and go out to the desert...and get away from the boss for a while. They want to be able to talk with their wives for 20 or 30 minutes while the kids are riding motor scooters around the dunes. They want to set their campers up, and they want to barbecue.

"Let us call this bill by its real name. This is the desert lockout bill, because it locks average Americans out, 160,000 of them who used our dunes last year for family outings. It locks them out.

"Well, people can always strap a backpack on and they can go backpacking in the desert, can they not? That is the response I have received from the Sierra Club and other organizations. I say to the Members [of Congress], I would like to see them strap a backpack on in 97-degree heat, not only on themselves but on their wives and kids and have them trudge through the sand for 15 or 20 miles to get to that old camp site. And remember, when they get there,

they have got to have water, so maybe they need 20 or 30 gallons of water, weighing several hundred pounds....We are taking blue-collar Americans and locking them out of the desert, and the decisions are being made by people who can afford to fly off to New Zealand to go fly-fishing if they want to...."

—Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-San Diego)

The rebuttal:

The incorrect impression deliberately being given in this and other references to "massive enclosures of wilderness" is that an "area the size of Maryland" that is now heavily used by families is to be closed to vehicles. In fact, as Rep. Vic Fazio (D-West Sacramento) stated, "The bill leaves open a network of more than 33,000 miles of roads and jeep trails. Of the lands that the bill designates as wilderness, fully 85 percent are within three miles of vehicular access."

This is because the proposed wilderness areas are relatively small (as wilderness goes) and widely scattered. Many have roads "cherry-stemmed" inside them. The rugged, remote mountain ranges that comprise most of the proposed wilderness areas are undeveloped land not now usable for vehicular family recreation. Because of the rugged terrain, even a short walk gives a fine desert experience. The bill certainly provides for all reasonable vehicle access, but some sensitive areas will indeed be

closed to future vehicular abuse.

The real desert "lockout" already exists—whenever miners lace their claims with "keep out" signs, whenever off-roaders create noise or dust and damage resources, thereby interfering with the quiet enjoyment of ordinary visitors.

The opposition's persistent attempts to equate so-called "blue-collar" Americans with the "mech-rec" crowd and imply that vehicles, not people, have supreme rights in America, did not deceive Congress. The final overwhelming vote of 297-136 clearly shows that.

Rep. Rick Lehman (D-Fresno) summed it up: "The American people clearly want...recreation that does not unduly harm the landscape. They want the most precious and primitive and pristine areas left intact, insofar as possible, for future generations to appreciate. And they want the cruel and senseless extermination of fragile species to end now.

"My colleagues, the easy environmental issues have been solved. Can we blindly continue to use every last resource and destroy critical habitats as if there were no tomorrow? Do we continue to tell other countries to stop unwise resource use, when we cannot protect our own public land?...Time is running out for one of the world's great ecosystems."

—Vicky Hoover

Grouse Lakes RA land swaps possible

By John K. Moore

For years wilderness activists who love the 20,000-acre Grouse Lakes Roadless Area in Tahoe National Forest have worried about its checkerboard private lands. Logging or second-home development of these lands would gut the roadless area and degrade the dozens of beautiful lakes, trails, fir forests, and scenery which thousands of visitors enjoy every year.

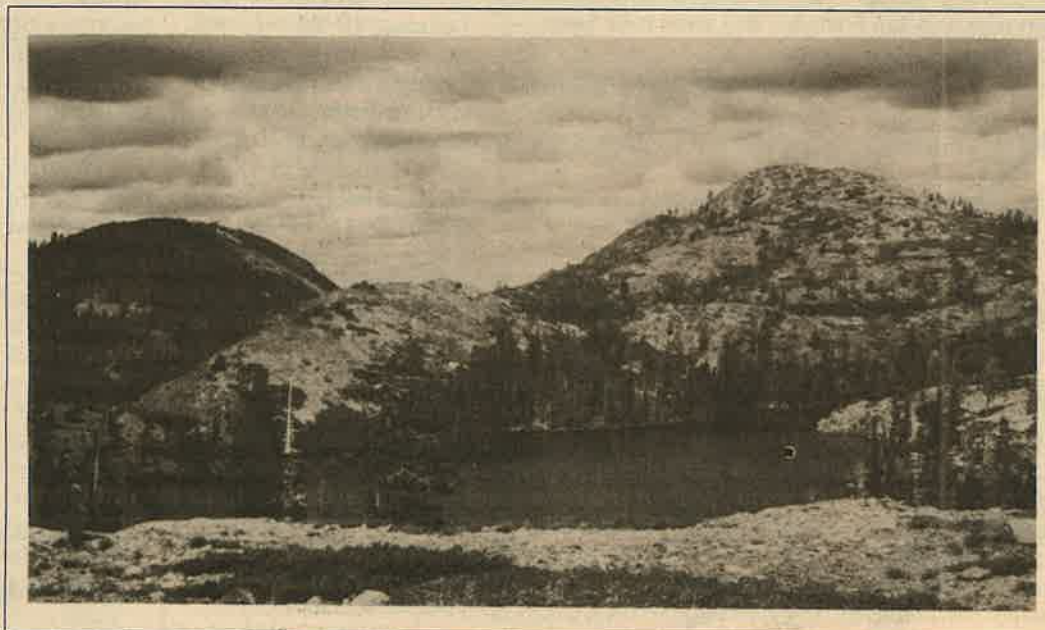
Conservationists have been campaigning for three years for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriations to buy 8,800 acres, which are on the market, belonging to Sierra Pacific Industries, a timber company. Although the campaign has generated broad public support, Congress has yet to appropriate any funds. LWCF monies, which derive from taxes on offshore oil drilling, are sought for hundreds of worthy projects across the country.

Significant progress toward acquiring Sierra Pacific's lands can still be made in 1992. Conservationists are now making an intensive effort to persuade the Tahoe National Forest to acquire a substantial part of Sierra Pacific's holdings by land exchanges.

There is some good news at Grouse Lakes—the resumption of negotiations between Walter Hewlett and Tahoe National Forest on exchanging Hewlett's lands at Milk, Penner, and Sawmill lakes for Forest Service lands in the headwaters of the North Fork of the American River, south of Soda Springs. Visitors to Grouse Lakes know that these lands include some of the area's finest and most popular lakes. An outpouring of letters from organizations and individuals helped persuade the Forest Service to resume negotiations.

Tahoe National Forest has always been extremely reluctant to make land exchanges, no matter how important are the lands that would be acquired. To support Forest Service acquisitions at Grouse Lakes via land exchanges, write to Ronald Stewart, Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service, 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94111. Send a copy of your letter to John Skinner, Supervisor, Tahoe National Forest, P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959.

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



Penner Lake in the Grouse Lakes Roadless Area

Photo by John K. Moore

Owl habitat designated

continued from page 1

logging on a host of criteria.

While the BLM seeks to escape endangered species restrictions, the Forest Service is staggering under delays and litigation which already have stopped all timber sales in suitable owl habitat. The Forest Service is prepared to adopt the Thomas plan so timber sales, even at reduced levels, can go forward.

How the Forest Service can protect a viable population of owls if neighboring BLM lands are exempted from the critical habitat plan remains in question.

In Congress, about ten pieces of legislation dealing with forest practices await action. But as one advisor to Washington's Governor Booth Gardner commented, "It's an election year, and political courage is in shorter supply than timber."

When all of the various agency actions are taken into account, a total of 33,000 jobs will be lost. But critical habitat designation would come on top of other protective measures; creation of HCAs alone amounts to the loss of only 1,420 jobs. The F&WS acknowledges that the jobs will be gone with or without owl protection, but that with protection they will be lost sooner rather than later.

Reprinted from the January-February 1992 issue of *Econews*, newsletter of the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata.

Book review

Definitive view of the White Mountains

Natural History of the White-Inyo Range, Eastern California

By Clarence A. Hall, Jr., ed., University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, 560 pp., \$24.95.

If you have visited the beautiful White and Inyo mountains, or if there is a chance you will, buy this book. It will provide you with an excellent guide to the weather, geology, and landforms of the region and enable you to identify many of the important plants and most of the animal life of the region.

A massive range in eastern California best known for its ancient bristlecones, the White-Inyos are by common practice divided (arbitrarily) at Westgard Pass. Although most of the chapters cover the features of both the White (northern) and Inyo (southern) portions of the range, the chapters on physical features are largely restricted to the Whites.

The book begins with a discussion of physical features: there are chapters on weather and climate, on geomorphology, and on geology. These chapters are well-written and informative, although the chapter on the geology of the White Mountains contains more abstruse information (and more scientific terminology) than most people will ever need. A set of road logs which guide the reader to many of the interesting geological features of the Whites and northern Inyo is particularly helpful; the

extensive glossary is indispensable.

The section on plants includes chapters on the plant zones, trees, and flowering plants and shrubs of the region. (Mushrooms have been omitted, perhaps because of space constraints.) The chapter on flowering plants and shrubs by Dr. Mary DeDecker is profusely illustrated with color plates of excellent quality (though the photograph of cottontop cactus is clearly upside down).

The section of the book on animals includes chapters on insects (rather sketchy), fish (apparently only introduced species remain), amphibians, reptiles (thorough and well-illustrated), breeding birds, and mammals. The decision to include only breeding birds seems unfortunate; many other birds are found in the range. A list of birds that visit the range, with annotations on their expected abundance, would have been a useful addition.

The book concludes with an informative section on archaeological and anthropological research in the range. Recent discoveries have revealed (to the researchers' surprise) that the inhospitable alpine regions of the Whites were inhabited during the summer by prehistoric peoples. More information on the history of the region since European contact would have been welcome.

All the chapters were written by recognized experts, and the text is augmented by maps, sketches, and an index, in addition to the aforementioned glossary and color plates. Certainly those of us who have grown to love the White-Inyo range will want to own this volume; the first-time visitor will find the book a boon companion.

—George M. Clark and Lucy W. Rosenau



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Baby Christopher hangs loose in a vintage CWC tee, while Papa Marc models our six-tone anniversary shirt which comes in light blue, yellow, light green, or peach for \$15. The animal design Mama Elvia chose 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 22 ACTIVIST MEETING of the California Ancient Forest Alliance in Davis. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.

February 28 COMMENTS DUE on the draft Concessions Services Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Yosemite National Park. Send to: Superintendent Michael Finley, P. O. Box 577, Yosemite National Park, California 95389. (See article on pages 1 & 4.)

March 24 COMMENTS DUE on the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the South Fork of the Trinity Wild & Scenic River. For more information, contact Roger Jaegel, Project Team Leader, at the Hayfork Ranger District, P.O. Box 159, Hayfork, CA 96041 or (916) 628-5227. Address comments to: Karyn Wood, District Ranger, Hayfork Ranger District, ATTN: Wild & Scenic River, P.O. Box 159, Hayfork, CA 96041.

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

Thatcher Ridge (Eel River) and Cahto (S. Fork of the Eel), as well as N. Fork American River WSA and Tuolumne River WSA.

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**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 *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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—Senator John Seymour explaining that he continues to oppose national park or monument status for the East Mojave, as quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner*

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