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Even the Yosemite highcountry, like the headwaters of Lewis Creek pictured here, is not immune to the impacts of concessions in the Yosemite Valley far below. Photo by Phillip Farrell

## Hurried choice of new Yosemite concessioner triggers concern

By Lucy Rosenau

In December the National Park Service took the Evelyn Wood approach to the task of selecting a company to run the concessions at Yosemite National Park, speed-reading its way through the 50,000 pages of six bids in a scant two weeks. The quick—some say rushed—choice of Delaware North, which runs concessions at a number of sports venues, was possible, the Park Service explained, because no other bidder met the agency's criteria. But conservationists protective of Yosemite question whether the Park Service's analysis was careful and thorough enough for a decision that, if approved by Congress, will determine the commercial tenor of the park for the next 15 years.

"It seems that the time allocated was not sufficient to analyze bids of such a complex nature," said Anne Iverson, Chair of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee. "We've seen what can happen when a bad contract is in place," she continued, referring to the Park Service's expiring contract with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. Many conservationists would have preferred the choice be left to the incoming Clinton administration, especially with environmental stalwart Bruce Babbitt heading the Interior

Department which includes the Park Service. Critics of the hasty decision were heartened, however, when Representatives George Miller (D-CA) and Bruce Vento (D-MN) promised stringent review of the contract and subsequent hearings by the Interior Committee.

The selection of a new concessioner will be a milestone for the park, where lodging facilities have been run by the Yosemite Park and Curry Company since the beginning of this century. In that time, the concession has grown from mule trains and campgrounds (and a grand hotel) to include a much-criticized abundance of conveniences ranging from laundromats and video stores to tennis courts and a skating rink. The Curry Company has been criticized also for returning little money to the Treasury despite generating enormous revenues.

In response to widespread objections to the commercialization of Yosemite, the Park Service in December 1991 released a new concession services plan that would reduce some of the facilities in the park, particularly in congested Yosemite Valley (see article in February 1992 WR). Con-

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## Granite Chief plan reins in pack stock

By Jim Eaton

Tahoe Forest Supervisor John Skinner has approved a management plan for the Granite Chief Wilderness west of Lake Tahoe. The plan adopted is "Alternative F," an option that will close some areas to camping, restore many campsites, and restrict the recreational use of stock. This wilderness management plan is being incorporated into the existing forest plan for the Tahoe National Forest.

The Forest Service's strategy for managing the Granite Chief Wilderness is based on the Limits of Acceptable Change (IAC) system. Under this technique, indicators and standards are set to determine how much change from present or desired conditions can occur without impairing the area's wilderness qualities.

No permits will be required to enter the wilderness area because the Forest Service felt that the traditional permit system was too restrictive and inconvenient for day users. The agency has concluded that the most damaging recreational activity is overnight camping with stock animals and consequently is applying specific restrictions to this use only.

The 1990 forest plan set the maximum group size at 12 people. Under the new wilderness management plan, day users may bring in a maximum of 12 animals; overnight stock users will be limited to eight.

Recreational stock will not be allowed within 600 feet of any lake in the wilderness. Skinner states that this restriction "will target the use that is causing most of the damage while leaving other uses, such as backpacking and day hiking, free from restriction."

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## COALITION PAGE

### MONTHLY REPORT

BY JIM EATON

This is proving to be an unusual winter. Not only is it raining in Davis and snowing in the Sierra, but the holiday season has been busy.

Normally, things are quiet during the last two weeks of the year. Many of us use this time to catch up on long-delayed projects from our things-to-do list. The phone seldom rings, and the pace of life slows down.

This year is different. Part of it stems from the election. The country is in a state of transition; major changes are in the offing. Presidential appointments are being made, and environmentalists are making plans to work with a friendlier administration.

I'm busy also just keeping up with normal Coalition business. Unlike many other newsletters, the *Wilderness Record* does not take a vacation. This issue is being mailed on December 31, which means I am writing this just hours before deadline. (My friends know my habits. Like Ed Abbey, I work only under duress.)

Wendy Cohen, the CWC's treasurer-for-life also is happily busy processing your checks from our fall fund appeal. We will be able to scrape by yet another year.

Our plans for organizing activists working on Bureau of Land Management wilderness are jelling. Board member Bob Barnes is setting up a training workshop for San Joaquin Valley activists in March, and we will be headed to the North Coast shortly after that. We will be putting together a statewide wilderness proposal this spring.

We also are busy planning our third February fundraising event. For the CWC's fifteenth anniversary, we brought in Dave Brower and Martin Litton. Last year we were entertained by Gary Snyder and Peter Coyote. This year it will be Dave Foreman and Tom Harris (see details on page 6).

If you have never heard a Foreman speech, you are in for a treat. I can promise it will be educational, informative, exciting, exhilarating, moving, and just plain fun. Come to the reception preceding the talk and meet the ecowarrior who is

leading the New Conservation Movement.

We also will be honoring Tom Harris, a reporter who has just retired from the *Sacramento Bee*. Tom became an environmental writer for the *San Jose Mercury* way back in 1969 and has written several award winning series.

Foreman's in-laws live in Sacramento, so we got together after Christmas to escape the valley fog and hike off some of the holiday calories we'd consumed. Steve Evans suggested the Steven's Trail near Colfax, a delightful route down into the canyon of the North Fork American River. The three of us, along with our spouses, had a most enjoyable day.

Out of the bone-numbing fog we were, but the sun was more cheering than warming. The ground was frozen when we started, but our bodies warmed as we descended into the canyon. Impressive as the views were, the thought lingered that we would be looking at the upper end of a dead reservoir should the "multi-purpose" Auburn dam ever be built.

It is hard to leave business behind on such a short trip, so our discussions covered wilderness issues, plans for Dave's Wildlands Project, the February speech, and how to work with a relatively friendly Clinton administration.

The last topic is one I'd like to share. When Jimmy Carter was elected president, many environmentalists relaxed because they thought problems would fix themselves. They forgot two things: bureaucracies are slow to change, and the despoilers of wilderness don't give up easily. The administration was hammered hard, and outside of the Alaska lands legislation, there was little improvement.

The lesson is never let up, even if things look better on the surface. The pressure to compromise, compromise, compromise will be unrelenting on Clinton appointees. It will be incumbent on us to present a new vision of wilderness and biodiversity protection.

It won't be easy. But the opportunity for real change has never been better.

### CWC Wish List

Thanks to Marc Francis and Doris Sloan, the CWC soon will have filing cabinets. Lots of filing cabinets. Emboldened by success, we present our wish list for 1993:

- The transfer of the Forest Service from the Department of Agriculture to the Interior Department;

- An elimination of the loophole that allows logging to proceed without environmental review when termed a "salvage sale;"

- A reduction of "resourcism," a mind set that views the natural world as a collection of resources for human use, and a parallel reduction of the use of the word "resource," which implies human use, in reference to wilderness and its component parts;

- Reauthorization of a strengthened Endangered Species Act or, better still, enactment of endangered ecosystem legislation;

- Reform of the 1872 Mining Law;

- Swift passage of a California desert bill that does not permit hunting in lands administered by the Park Service;

- Zero population growth; and

- Peace on Earth.

### Good news!

## Big victory for the South Fork Trinity Roadless Area rings in the new year

It wasn't on our wish list, but as we went to press we learned that the Forest Service has withdrawn its approval of a timber sale in the 17,000-acre South Fork Trinity Roadless Area. The proposed sale had been in abeyance since 1987, when conservationists first appealed the Forest Service's decision to log steep slopes in the area which had burned.

Environmentalists, with the aid of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, sued the Forest Service on the grounds that the proposed logging would generate erosion that, combined with erosion from other logging in the water-

shed, would irreparably harm the salmon and steelhead that survive in the South Fork Trinity Wild and Scenic River. A second contention of the lawsuit was that the trees the Forest Service wanted to sell as dead "salvage" timber were in fact alive. Court-appointed scientists upheld both the environmentalists' arguments in 1992 (see article in May 1992 *WR*).

That lawsuit resulted in Judge Lawrence Karlton banning logging pending the outcome of a trial scheduled for March 1993. With the Forest Service's recent action, no trial will be necessary, and no trees will be cut.

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

Congress designated one California wilderness that includes a nuclear-fallout evacuation road, complete with a substantial concrete bridge and tunnel. Where is it?

Answer on page 7

## Wilderness restoration

# Closing the roads to wilderness is the road to wilderness

By Jim Eaton

One of the constraints on protecting wilderness is the presence of roads. The Wilderness Act of 1964 required the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a review of "every roadless area of five thousand contiguous acres or more...and every roadless island," a stipulation later extended to the Bureau of Land Management. The Forest Service twice has conducted roadless area reviews.

Without rehashing the debate on what constitutes a road, suffice it to say that wilderness areas ultimately are defined by roads. If a road is not the actual wilderness boundary, it usually is nearby.

This is not to say that once roaded an area can never become wilderness. The Wilderness Act is subjective enough to allow minor developments if the area: "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable." Congress has designated wilderness areas with paved roads, county roads, tunnels, and even bridges.

But throughout the decades, roads have continued to fragment our wildlands. As a graduate student in 1936, Norman B. "Ike" Livermore wrote that "in my comparatively short lifetime, I have seen three great wilderness areas spoiled by roads—the Upper Sespe River country back of Santa Barbara, the coast mountains below Monterey, and the Klamath River country below Yreka."

Livermore inventoried California roadless areas outside the desert and found only seven areas larger than 100,000 acres. Since then, roads have decimated the wild lands surrounding the McCloud River and intruded into the other six areas he studied.

Livermore's concern about the construction of new roads into the mountains was brought to the attention of the Commonwealth Club of California in 1936. After debate, the Club's Section on Forestry and Wild Life concluded that, "what is needed is not new roads, but the adequate improvement of those that we already have. There is as much need for the abandonment of some existing roads as there is for construction of new ones."

Needless to say, the advice of the usually staid Commonwealth Club was not followed. Nearly 60 years later, a bumper crop of roads and highways crisscross the state. Very few roads have been abandoned.

Now, as we begin working to restore the biological integrity of our wildlands, it is time to look at eliminating some roads. Dave Foreman points out that, "without roads, without mechanized access, native species are more secure from harassment and habitat destruction, and fewer people with fewer 'tools' are able to abuse the land." Large wilderness areas with connecting corridors are critical to preserving biodiversity, and removing some highways and byways is essential to restoring the land.

Clearly, our freeways pose the greatest barriers of any roads. Where wildlife can take its chances crossing a narrow highway late at night, crossing a freeway can be impossible. Considering the cost of constructing freeways and our overriding preference for moving people and goods by automobile and truck, moving or closing freeways is highly unlikely for now. But activists in Mendocino County are proposing burying freeways under migration corridors or constructing tunnels for wildlife.

### A ROAD TOO FAR

In talking with activists about roads that need to be put to bed in California, I found the candidates falling into two categories: the "easy" dirt routes and the "harder" paved roads.

The unpaved roads will be easy to restore, but closing them will not be without controversy. Some are favorite routes of 4-wheelers; others are used by backpackers to

reach wilderness trailheads. Some of these tracks may not seem to be a significant problem. But, as the late Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas observed, "a road, though only a few miles long, points like a dagger at the heart of any wilderness that lies ahead."

**Trinity Alps:** Along Coffee Creek is a "cherry stem" road that intrudes 14 miles into the heart of the wilderness at the headwaters of the Salmon River. The county-maintained road predates the original 1932 "primitive area," and it provides access to resorts and trailheads. But the road allows easy entry to the core of this heavily used wilderness.

**King Range:** South of Eureka, the state's wildest coastline is bisected by the Smith-Etter Road, a steep, eroding route that crosses the King Range to reach private lands along the coast. Although the last few miles are closed to the public, landowners and their friends drive down to the beach. The private lands should be purchased and the road closed (see related article on page 5).

**Ventana:** The 205,000-acre wilderness is divided by the Arroyo Seco Indians Road. This extremely rugged track does little more than connect Los Padres National Forest campgrounds and trailheads. Similarly, consideration should be given to closing the cherry stems into Cone Peak and Tassajara Hot Springs.

**Dick Smith and San Rafael:** These two wilderness areas near Santa Barbara are separated by an "administrative" road closed to the public. If this fire road were eliminated, a wilderness of some 265,000 acres would provide habitat for the now-imprisoned California condor.

**Skedaddle-Buffalo Hills:** In northeastern California and northwestern Nevada lies a complex of wilderness study areas (WSAs) separated by dirt roads. Taken together, the Skedaddle Mountain, Dry Valley Rim, Five Springs, Twin Peaks, Buffalo Hills, and Poodle Mountain WSAs total more than 400,000 acres.

**Mokelumne:** Located between Carson and Ebbetts passes, this wilderness was enlarged in 1984 to over 100,000 acres. Unfortunately, a small corridor with a jeep route was allowed to divide the wilderness to placate 4-wheel drive users.

**Dinke Lakes:** The 1984 California Wilderness Act designated this wilderness but left it cut off from the John Muir Wilderness by a jeep trail. The narrow, 100-foot-wide corridor has no purpose except to allow a few off-roaders a chance to drive through a wilderness.

**Bodie:** More than 100,000 acres of wild land surround the ghost town of Bodie north of Mono Lake. Many of the five WSAs and additional wild areas can be linked simply by closing a few dirt roads. You don't need four roads to get to Bodie, anyway.

**Volcanic Tablelands:** North of Bishop is another complex of five areas separated by dirt roads, although the



This feeder road through Nine Mile Canyon to Sherman Pass is one of many that could be closed. Photo by Jim Eaton

Casa Diablo WSA also has a powerline separating it from the other four areas.

**Inyo-Saline-Cottonwood:** The closure of just two dirt roads would allow designation of 1.5 million-acre wilderness stretching from the Inyo Mountains to Death Valley. The Saline Valley and the Devil's Racetrack roads, along with jeep spur trails, invade this desert wilderness.

### I'D RATHER BE A FOREST THAN A STREET

When it comes to paved highways, road closures are a bit more difficult. Still, some routes like the Sherman Pass road, which serve mainly as a means of getting logs out of the area and recreationists (many of them off-roaders) in, are prime candidates for closure. Other highways? Remember that we are running out of oil, so someday soon it will be time to redesign our transportation system and obliterate unneeded roads. Here are some suggestions:

**Central Coast:** The closure of Highway 1 south of Big Sur could recreate the wild coastline that existed here in the early 1900s. The road along the scenic coast was not constructed until 1937.

**Lassen:** The wilderness of Lassen Volcanic National Park and adjacent Forest Service roadless and wilderness areas are split by State Highway 89. This road is closed by snow more than half of the year, and when Lassen erupts again, will be closed by ash and lava.

**Ebbetts Pass:** The narrowest of the High Sierra passes (one lane for a long stretch) separates the Mokelumne from the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness.

**Sonora Pass:** This steep, winding road climbs to 9,628 feet, dividing the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness from the Emigrant and Hoover wilderness areas.

**Tioga Pass:** This once-thrillingly narrow route now hauls tourists across the highest Sierra pass, dividing Yosemite National Park. If closed along with Sonora and Ebbetts-passes, a three million-acre intact High Sierra wilderness is possible.

**Minaret Summit:** The road across the Sierra crest near Mammoth snakes down into the San Joaquin River canyon at Devils Postpile National Monument. Although the chamber of commerce dream of a trans-Sierra route to

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## Wilderness management

### Dams threaten American River wildlands

By Steve Evans

The Eldorado National Forest is expected not to redraw the boundary of the proposed Caples Wilderness, the realignment of which would permit construction of the Foottrail hydroelectric project. In a recent meeting with conservationists, Forest Supervisor John Phipps stated that he would not recommend changes in the boundary to accommodate the controversial project.

After extensive lobbying by hydroelectric proponent Joe Keating, the Chief of the Forest Service ordered a draft amendment to the Eldorado forest plan which would consider deleting 200 acres from the agency-recommended wilderness to allow for the hydroelectric project. The draft amendment, with Phipps' "no change" recommendation, is expected to be published early in 1993.

The Forest Service will not directly oppose Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval of a hydroelectric license, however, and presumably will allow Keating access into the wilderness to construct his project if he gains FERC approval. Phipps stated that the FERC, not the Forest Service, has the power to approve or reject hydroelectric projects. He noted that the Foottrail project license application predates the Forest Service's wilderness recommendation for the area.

The proposed Foottrail project includes a diversion dam at the confluence of Caples Creek and the Silver Fork American River. The dam would divert water through a canal and run it through a hydroelectric plant nearly a mile downstream. The project will partially dewater a segment of the Silver Fork and destroy the primary recreational access trail into the proposed wilderness area, as well as reduce the size of the already diminutive 13,694-acre future Caples Wilderness.

In addition to the obvious wilderness impacts, the project could degrade the outstanding fishery values of Caples Creek, which has been determined eligible for national Wild & Scenic River (W&SR) status by the Forest Service.

Public comments received during the scoping phase for the plan amendment universally opposed the wilder-

ness boundary adjustment and hydroelectric project. The public will be provided another opportunity for input when the draft amendment is released in January.

Unfortunately, the Foottrail project is not the only threat to wilderness and wild river values in the American River watershed. Long the target of water and power developers, the watershed already hosts more than 20 major dams and diversions, and more projects are under consideration.

One, a water development project proposed by the El Dorado County Water Agency, potentially threatens the wilderness values of the Caples Creek area, as well as the existing Desolation Wilderness. The county has applied for water rights to utilize up to 20,000 acre feet of water from Aloha reservoir in the Desolation Wilderness and Caples and Silver lakes upstream of the proposed Caples Wilderness.

Full utilization of the water rights could drain the basins and radically change the existing flows of Pyramid Creek, Caples Creek, and the Silver Fork. Flow changes could harm downstream wilderness values and may violate the implied wilderness water right held by the Forest Service. Flow changes also could adversely impact the W&SR potential of all three streams. Several conservation groups are protesting the county's application for water rights because of the project's possible impacts on wilderness water rights and wild rivers.

Other proposed dam projects in the watershed are downstream of existing and proposed wilderness areas but still could impact wild river and other natural values.

A combined hydroelectric and water development diversion of the upper South Fork American River is under study by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, in cooperation with El Dorado County. The project would divert up to 45,000 acre feet of water from the river and could significantly degrade the outstanding recreational values of the upper South Fork, which has been determined eligible for W&SR status by the Forest Service.

Meanwhile, the granddaddy of all American River dams—the long-contended and controversial Auburn dam on the North and Middle forks—is still under study by a

host of federal, state and local agencies. A reduced version of the dam, proposed by the Corps of Engineers for flood control, was rejected by a nearly two-to-one congressional vote last fall.

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### Trail work planned for Ansel Adams and John Muir

The Sierra National Forest is seeking public comments on a plan to reroute or reconstruct three trails in the Ansel Adams and John Muir wildernesses. So far, Forest Service planners have identified no reason not to go forward with the reconstruction of portions of Saddle Mountain and Minnow Creek trails and the rerouting of the Devil's Bathtub Trail. Comments from concerned citizens will be accepted until January 24.

Planners propose reconstructing seven miles of the Saddle Mountain Trail from Onion Springs Road, through the Ansel Adams Wilderness, to Margaret Lakes in the John Muir Wilderness, because erosion and existing conditions make the trail unsafe. Saddle Mountain Trail is variously known as Margaret Lakes, Arch Rock, or Hedrick Meadow trail.

A total of 11 miles of the Minnow Creek Trail in the John Muir Wilderness also has become unsafe. Reconstruction is planned between Fish Creek Hot Springs and Papoose Lake, north of Goodale Pass.

Finally, the Forest Service wishes to reroute one mile of the Devil's Bathtub Trail, from the Thomas A. Edison reservoir to Devil's Bathtub near the Ansel Adams-John Muir wilderness boundary.

Only the Saddle Mountain reconstruction has been funded as yet; work on that trail is scheduled to begin June 15.

Convey any concerns about the proposed trail work to Joan Benner, Pineridge Ranger District, Sierra National Forest, P. O. Box 300, Shaver Lake, CA 93664; (209) 841-3311.

### Granite Chief wilderness plan

*continued from page 1*

A major change from past management is the prohibition of camping within 600 feet of the popular Five Lakes basin near Alpine Meadows. A new trail will be built along Five Lakes Creek below the outlet of the lakes to provide access to campsites. Camping also will be prohibited within 250 feet of the Whiskey Creek cabins. These historic cabins will be maintained in a state of "arrested decay." Although the forest plan called for the removal of another structure, the Sierra Club's Bradley Hut in the Five Lakes basin, that decision is under appeal. In all, there will be 78 campsites closed and rehabilitated in the wilderness, including 43 sites in Five Lakes basin alone.

To restore naturalness to the wilderness, the Forest Service will recommend to the California Department of Fish and Game that the current stocking of trout at Five Lakes be discontinued. In addition, cattle use in upper Picayune Valley will be phased out by the turn of the century.

From May 15 to July 15, dogs will be prohibited in the following key deer fawning areas: the wilderness portion of the French Meadows Game Refuge (except on the Pacific Crest Trail), the Big Springs Trail, and the portion of Five Lakes Creek paralleling that trail.

Further management actions that may be necessary

within the next decade include:

- prohibiting dogs at Five Lakes from June through August;
- prohibiting campfires at Whiskey Creek or other locations;
- requiring stock to be tied using hitchlines or hitchrails and instituting a 100-foot setback from water when tying or grazing;
- designating a small number of resilient campsites and requiring stock users to camp in these sites; and
- requiring traditional permits for overnight camping.

The new management directions will be implemented in 1993. All the changes are intended to help the wilderness heal from past human impacts, but the degraded Five Lakes basin, which will benefit from a number of the new restrictions, is expected to recover best.



Changes are in the wind for visitors to the Granite Chief Wilderness under a new management plan. Photo by Jim Eaton

## Wilderness management

### King Range plan: old road, new trails

A new plan has been adopted to manage visitors to the King Range National Conservation Area on California's Lost Coast. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) final visitor services plan is eliciting a range of reactions from Lost Coast activists and wilderness advocates who find in it reason for both discouragement and hope.

Most discouraging is the BLM's statement that the new plan "retains and implements" provisions of the 1986 King Range Transportation Plan that was reviled by conservationists for mandating public access along the Smith-Etter Road to the beach, effectively bisecting the potential King Range wilderness. For now, to accommodate environmentalist concerns (and stave off a lawsuit) the BLM has granted use of the road only to inholders who need access to their properties. A gate bars access to the general public. The status quo is hardly ideal—trespasses persist—but is overwhelmingly preferable to opening the road to public use as the BLM, in standing by its 1986 plan, apparently intends.

More positive, though by no means trouble-free, is the agency's plan to disperse recreational use from the popular oceanside Lost Coast Trail to inland areas of the King Range Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the larger of two WSAs in the conservation area. The BLM believes that constructing new trails will lure visitors from the sensitive coastal zone long favored by equestrians, hikers, and rogue off-road vehicle (ORV) users. While applauding the BLM's attempt to protect the area, environmentalists still question whether the agency has adequately assessed the impacts of new trails and more visitors on inland wildlife.

Most heartening by far is the agency's decision to designate 35,340 acres of the King Range and Chemise Mountain WSAs as primitive recreation zones in which no motorized vehicle use will be allowed by visitors. The acreage is meaningful because it is significantly larger than the 24,391 acres the BLM has recommended for wilderness protection. Another 882 coastal acres—at the mouth of the Mattole River and at the end of the Smith-Etter Road—are classified primitive with motorized access only by inholders and authorized personnel.

### Yosemite concessions

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ervationists criticized the plan, however, for not doing enough to reduce human impacts and restore naturalness to the fabled valley.

No one could reasonably criticize the Delaware North bid for not doing enough: the company has offered to pay 20 percent of its gross (as compared to the less than one percent now paid by the Curry Company) for the right to run the park concessions and will give the park an additional five million dollars annually for capital improvements. Delaware North further promised to invest up to six million dollars in building repairs and maintenance and to clean up sites where fuel tanks have leaked.

According to Iverson, the very munificence of the bid is a potential trouble point. Though welcome at first glance, the 20 percent payment may not be possible to maintain without continued or even increased commer-

cial enterprises. The contractual obligation, she fears, may prove a disincentive for both the concessioner and the agency to reduce commercial operations in the park as stipulated by the concession services plan.

Though most of the existing commercial facilities are located in the valley, a handful—the High Sierra Camps—are located within the Yosemite Wilderness that comprises most of the park. Nonetheless, it is the valley concessions that are considered the greater threat to the surrounding wilderness and the park ecosystem because of the effects on the park—from air pollution to wildlife disturbance—from so many visitors in so many cars. Consequently, reduction of amenities like parking lots, hotel rooms, and restaurants in the valley with an accompanying reduction in automobile use is seen as vital to preserving and restoring naturalness in the park.



The Lost Coast Trail in the King Range National Conservation Area is popular with hikers, equestrians, and rogue ORV users. Photo by Pete Yamagata

The plan also provides that the BLM will attempt to acquire easements to the inholdings and, eventually, the properties themselves. In the meantime, the agency will install better boundary signs to minimize conflicts.

There will be no shortage of signs in the area once the BLM fully implements its planned changes. Perhaps giddy at the prospect of managing a veritable visitor's mecca (most BLM holdings in California attract few tourists and even less attention), staff recreation officers have an ambitious program of visitor services planned. Among them: a junior ranger program "for local and visiting preteens," hikes and campfire talks led by naturalists, displays and live interpretations of the area's human past, and "road tour cassette tapes" to explain the region's natural and cultural assets.

Implementation of some of these changes will be delayed by legal constraints. No developments inappropriate to wilderness will be permitted in the WSAs until Congress enacts legislation defining wilderness boundaries, and no projects will be initiated without the necessary level of environmental review.

### Easier access to Yolla Bolly proposed

The Mendocino National Forest is soliciting public comment on its plan to make a popular wilderness trailhead more accessible to passenger cars. In conjunction with the proposal to reroute an access road to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, the Forest Service intends to add assorted developments to the surrounding area.

Currently, the road to the Ides Cove Trailhead near the southeastern portion of the wilderness contains a sharp switchback which is difficult to negotiate. By rerouting a half mile of road, forest planners can improve access to the trailhead and the wilderness beyond. The trailhead is popular because it leads, by way of the Ides Cove Loop National Recreation Trail, to Long and Square lakes.

Other changes proposed by forest planners include trail maintenance, meadow rehabilitation, and the installation of signs, fencing, and a water source for stock. None of the proposed developments would be located inside the wilderness.

To be considered, comments must be sent by January 15 to Arthur Quintana, District Ranger, Corning Ranger District, Mendocino National Forest, P. O. Box 1019, Corning, CA 96021. For more information, call Marilyn Loughrey at the ranger district office, (916) 824-5196.

### Wilderness roads

continued from page 3

Fresno has been crushed by the designation of the Ansel Adams Wilderness, the road should be removed from the west side of the Sierra.

**Kings Canyon:** One of the drawbacks of national parks is the roads built into them. Kings Canyon once was wilderness, but after the national park was created from the High Sierra Primitive Area, road builders blasted a highway up the canyon.

**Mineral King:** Now that the threat of a Disney ski resort is gone and the area is part of Sequoia National Park, why not close the road and let this area become wilderness?

**Sherman Pass:** For years the southern end of the Sierra wilderness was Walker Pass. But the Forest Service has connected logging roads, paved them, and provided off-roaders with a playground in what once was pure wilderness on the Kern Plateau. When this road is removed, the Dome Land Wilderness can be joined to the South Sierra Wilderness and other wild lands stretching north to Yosemite.

These lists are not inclusive: I'm sure I've missed many deserving roads. The closure of a few off-road vehicle trails in the desert, for instance, can result in large wilderness areas.

Most of these closures will not be happening anytime soon. But it is time to begin thinking in terms of restoring the earth, beyond saving just the purest wild land.

The dream of removing O'Shaughnessy Dam and restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley once was laughed at. Since then, a Reagan-appointed Secretary of the Interior has embraced the idea. Someday it will become a reality. So too will the designation of large wilderness areas and the establishment of corridors linking these lands throughout the continent.

Thanks to Ike Livermore for suggesting this article and providing candidates for closure (including Highway 1), and to Phil Farrell and Dave Foreman for additional proposals.

## Wilderness news

### New group to give voice to Sierra

The Sierra Nevada has long had allies. Soon it will have an alliance. Concerned that both public policy and conservation efforts have been piecemeal, an organization is forming to speak for the Sierra and to nurture new and existing Sierra-based conservationists.

The Sierra Nevada Alliance intends to be the voice of the Sierra. Though many conservation groups presently defend the wildernesses, parks, and national forests of the range, none is focused exclusively and comprehensively on the Sierra. And it is just that kind of focus, environmentalists agree, that is needed to save the Sierra Nevada ecosystem from the excesses of human use.

The Alliance's second and co-equal mission is to empower and support local member groups working on behalf of watersheds, forests, roadless areas, and wildlife. The groups now involved in the Sierra Nevada Alliance range from single-issue concerns, like the Friends of Hope Valley and the Clavey River Preservation Trust, to well-known national organizations like the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

In addition to clarifying the Alliance's mission, at-



From Mono Lake, the Sierra Nevada looks indestructible. It's not. Photo by Jim Eaton

tendees at a November organizing meeting stipulated that a majority of the group's directors should live and work in the Sierra Nevada. An interim committee will be responsible for early fundraising and outreach.

If you or your group would like more information about the nascent Sierra Nevada Alliance, contact Joan Boothe at The Wilderness Society, 116 New Montgomery St., #526, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 541-9144.

### American River dams

continued from page 4

The multi-purpose Auburn dam still under consideration by the Bureau of Reclamation would drown as much as 48 miles of the North and Middle forks of the river, which recently have been determined eligible for W&SR status in a multi-agency assessment. In addition to harming W&SR values, the Auburn dam would degrade or destroy the nationally significant recreational, scenic, and cultural values which make the canyons eligible for designation as a national recreation area. Over 100 miles of backcountry hiking trails and more than 400 cultural and historic sites would be inundated by the dam.

A revised flood control project, which may or may not include a dam at Auburn, is expected to be proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers at the end of 1993. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Reclamation is expected to propose construction of a multi-purpose Auburn dam sometime in 1995.

Steve Evans is Conservation Director for Friends of the River and Vice President of the CWC.

Join the California Wilderness Coalition for

### An Evening on the Wild Side

honoring

Tom Harris, former environmental writer for the Sacramento Bee and San

Jose Mercury News and author of Death in the Marsh;

and featuring

Dave Foreman, founder of Earth First! and author of The Big Outside and

Confessions of an EcoWarrior.

Sunday, February 7, 1993

7:00 p. m.

Varsity Theater, 101 "F" Street, Davis

Reception with the authors, 5:30 p. m.



You never know what to expect when Dave Foreman comes to town. Left photo: at the first CWC wilderness conference. Top photo by David Cross.

\$100 Sponsors

\$30 Reception & Speakers

\$20 Speakers only

\$10 Students, at the door

To order tickets or for information, call the CWC at (916) 758-0380.

## Book review

### Wilderness book of the year

#### **Ghost Bears: Exploring the Biodiversity Crisis**

By R. Edward Grumbine, Island Press, Washington, D. C., 1992, 290 pp., \$25.00.

Conservation biology, landscape ecology, biological diversity, island biogeography. What these terms have in common (besides lots of syllables) is their general incomprehensibility to most people, even most environmentalists. We see these terms and others like them cropping up increasingly in our reading, we may even use them ourselves, but do we understand them? If you've any doubt, help is at hand. A new book is available from the respected Island Press that is being hailed by heavyweights like Dave Foreman, Reed Noss, and Michael Soulé as the first rendition of the biodiversity crisis and the emerging science of conservation biology that is both readable and creditable.

R. Edward Grumbine's *Ghost Bears* is an amazingly ambitious and comprehensive book. What he's done is take a greater ecosystem he knows well, the North Cascades of Washington, and examine the scope of the biodiversity crisis by focussing on this ecosystem and one of its endangered inhabitants, the grizzly bear of the title. After making a convincing case that we are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis, Grumbine leads us through the thicket

of agencies, activities, philosophies, and laws that imperil the North Cascades and the grizzly. Along the way, the patient reader will encounter a perceptive summary of the spotted-owl-as-indicator-species controversy ("the owl was likely not capable of sheltering other species under its wings," he writes), a surprisingly interesting chapter on environmental laws and their history, and a chilling indictment of federal actions—purported to benefit the grizzly—that seem destined to consign the bear to "ghost" status.

Throughout, Grumbine gives us all the building blocks we need to understand a complicated and dense subject. "Just as salaried employees learn the difference between gross income and net take-home pay," he explains, "conservation biologists have come to distinguish ecologically functional habitat from the total area of a forest fragment." The inclusion of a glossary and maps and figures helps considerably. The weight of the subject matter is leavened by Grumbine's forays into myth and personal experience and by an exceptionally nice and eclectic choice of epigraphs, quotes that introduce each chapter.

Grumbine's conclusions, though troubling overall, will hearten wilderness advocates. "[P]rotecting a mere five percent of North America as wilderness is not scientifically justifiable," he states, then recommends a "wilderness recovery strategy" that calls for "closing and revegetating roads, allowing wildfires free play to set successional rhythms, removing settlements from sensitive areas, reintroducing grizzlies, wolves, and other extirpated species,...and in general building a restoration economy."

Finally, Grumbine offers a blueprint of where we need to go from here. It will be a long and arduous journey, but "[w]e, the grizzly bear, and the Greater North Cascades share a common fate; no one of us can be renewed without each of the others."

Having read Grumbine's book, I'm ready to join the bandwagon. This could be the most important book of the year. But only if you read it.

—Lucy Rosenau

### A couple of CWC t-shirts

Dawn models our six-tone anniversary shirt which comes in light blue, yellow, light green, or peach for \$15. John wears a design 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

**December 30-January 24** EXHIBITION of desert landscape paintings by artists who support protection of the California desert. *Oasis* will be exhibited at the Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland. For hours, call (510) 273-3401.

**January 15** COMMENTS DUE on a proposal by the Mendocino N. F. to enhance access to the Ides Cove Trailhead and the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. Send to: Arthur Quintana, District Ranger, Corning Ranger District, Mendocino N. F., P. O. Box 1019, Corning, CA 96021. (See article on page 5.)

**January 24** COMMENTS DUE on trail reconstruction projects planned for the Ansel Adams and John Muir wildernesses. Address comments to: Joan Benner, Pineridge Ranger District, Sierra N. F., P. O. Box 300, Shaver Lake, CA 93664. (See article on page 4.)

**February 7** ANNUAL MEETING of the California Wilderness Coalition. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.

**February 7** EVENING ON THE WILD SIDE to benefit the CWC. (See announcement on page 6.)

### Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

Sheep Mountain Wilderness in the Angeles National Forest

from page 2



**California  
Wilderness  
Coalition**

#### Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

...to promote throughout the State of California the preservation of wild lands as legally designated wilderness areas by carrying on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest, by making and encouraging scientific studies concerning wilderness, and by enlisting public interest and cooperation in protecting existing or potential wilderness areas.

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#### The Wilderness Record

The *Wilderness Record* is the monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit would be appreciated. Subscription is free with membership.

The *Record* welcomes letters-to-the-editor, articles, black & white photos, drawings, book reviews, poetry, etc. on California wilderness and related subjects. We reserve the right to edit all work. Please address all correspondence to:

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*"A road, though only a few miles long, points like a dagger at the heart of any wilderness that lies ahead."*

*—Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in his 1965 Wilderness Bill of Rights.*

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