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# WILDERNESS RECORD

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Looking south toward Mammoth Mountain, where the Rainbow Fire left 8,000 acres of charred trees. The Forest Service wants to sell as many of those trees as it can. Photo by Tim Palmer

## Inyo NF considering whether to salvage wilderness or timber

By Sally Miller

The Inyo National Forest currently is asking for public comment (scoping) on its proposal to authorize a salvage sale for the area near Mammoth Lakes that burned in the Rainbow Fire. Last August, this lightning-caused fire burned 8,000 acres of heavily forested lands in the San Joaquin River drainage. The majority of the fire occurred in the Ansel Adams Wilderness and within the boundary of Devils Postpile National Monument.

The Forest Service now is proposing salvage logging for "fuels reduction" on a 125-acre section outside the wilderness and monument boundaries (see map on page 5). The area under consideration is bordered by the Ansel Adams Wilderness to the south and east, Devils Postpile National Monument and the San Joaquin Wild and Scenic River corridor to the west, and the Reds Meadow Pack Station to the north. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through the affected area.

In a ten-page scoping letter, the Forest Service cites the specter of intense fuel loading over the next 10-20 years as the primary need for taking any action. The Forest Service is concerned that, when the trees killed by the fire eventually fall, hundreds of tons of downed, woody material will pose an extreme fire hazard. Though the agency considered various methods of removing fuels, from commercial logging (by tractor or helicopter) to prescribed burns, the scoping letter fails even to identify "no action" as a viable alternative.

### The siren song of timber

Worse, the scoping letter neglects to disclose the size of the proposed timber sale. This critical information was uncovered in *continued on page 5*

## Chainsaws and BLM menace Cahto's ancient forests

By Steven Day

The South Fork Eel River flows west from Laytonville, then north for 105 miles to its junction with the main stem of the Eel River near Weott. At the South Fork's headwaters, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 17,000 acres of public land. Embedded within the BLM lands at Cahto Peak, Brush Mountain, and Elkhorn Ridge is the Nature Conservancy's first preserve in the west, the Northern California Coast Range Preserve. Together, the nearly 22,000 acres comprise a *de facto* wilderness of forested slopes, grasslands, and cool rivers alive with salmon.

The heart of this remarkable wilderness now is threatened by a proposed timber sale and river management plan drafted by the BLM in apparent indifference to the fragility of this area and the species that depend on it.

The South Fork Eel is one of five northern California rivers designated wild and scenic by the Secretary of the Interior in 1981. The most sensitive designation (see sidebar on page 4), "wild," was accorded to the portion of the river that flows through the potential Cahto wilderness, wildlands that the BLM has partially excluded thus

far from the wilderness study process mandated by Congress. The most sensitive of native salmon, the Coho, spawn in the wild river and its tributaries. Fisheries biologist Peter Moyle explains that "Coho are the species of fish probably the most dependent on ancient (old growth) forests" because they need the cool water and sustained flows these forests provide. Old growth mixed evergreen forest is distributed throughout the Cahto wilderness, in 47 stands on nearly 5,000 acres.

These considerations notwithstanding, the BLM has proposed a timber sale in the heart of the wilderness, adjacent to the preserve. The Elkhorn Ridge Timber Sale, first proposed in the late 1980s, "breaks nearly every environmental law on the books," according to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney who represents environmental groups who sued the BLM after an Earth First! blockade delayed logging operations in 1988. One of the many legal requirements the BLM had not completed when the sale first was proposed, a river management plan for the Wild and Scenic Eel, now has been released with a *continued on page 4*

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## COALITION PAGE

### MONTHLY REPORT

BY JIM EATON

The always entertaining Dave Foreman, who headlined this year's fundraiser, made *An Evening on the Wild Side!* a financial success and a lot of fun. Fellow speaker Tom Harris, now retired from the *Sacramento Bee*, had some kind things to say about the wilderness movement while questioning the new editorial policy of his former employer.

I was a bit apprehensive about having Foreman speak in Davis. Mother Nature has been known to accentuate his speeches with thunderbolts and July snowstorms, but the earth didn't move and the sky didn't fall. Yet there was that sudden violent storm several weeks later that toppled a number of trees in the cemetery...

Dave said he enjoyed the event as well. We had loads of great food at the reception, including another fantastic cake from Toot Sweets decorated with the CWC logo. The homemade treats brought by our volunteers weren't too shabby either.

During the reception, a local pulled me aside. "I know the Coalition is not a really large organization," he began. "Yet you have Foreman here tonight, last year you brought Gary Snyder and Peter Coyote to town, and before that Dave Brower and Martin Litton. How do you rate such heavyweights?"

Ah, I explained. These are just CWC members who want to help us out. We may not have a lot of members, but we have some pretty famous ones.

I thought back to when Lucy joined us as the *Wilderness Record* editor. She was going through our mailing list and ran across Gary Snyder, David Rains Wallace, and Wallace Stegner, authors whose books she was quite familiar with. "Do you actually know these people?" she asked.

Yes. The wilderness community isn't all that large. One of my prize possessions is a collection of autographed books. I treasure volumes signed by the late Edward Abbey and Holly Jones, and in addition to the authors mentioned above, I have

tomes inscribed by CWC members Michael Frome, John Hart, Gordon Robinson, David Robertson, and Henry Brown. Last summer I got Raymond Dasmann to autograph my worn copy of *A Different Kind of Country*, a book that heavily influenced my early years in conservation.

Dave Foreman shares this passion, so we both cornered Tom Harris at the reception to have him sign copies of *Death in the Marsh*. When I ordered *Grizzly Years* from Dave's mail-order book catalog, it arrived with some kind words penned by author Doug Peacock.

It is fun, too, to read books about your friends. A lot of California activists figure in Tim Palmer's *The Sierra Nevada*, and the hero of David Rains Wallace's novel, *The Turquoise Dragon*, is not-so-loosely patterned after my former roommate Tom Jopson (with several cameo appearances by a character resembling Tom's wife Sari Sommarstrom). When reading about an Alaskan river trip in John McPhee's *Coming into the Country*, I realized that the only river runner I hadn't met was McPhee himself.

Well, it's possible I might have met him. Reading McPhee's newest book, *Assembling California*, I learned he's been hanging around Davis for years digging up material with my former geology professor Eldridge Moores.

It makes you wonder how there can be thirty-plus million people in California when you keep running into people you know in person, in the press, or on the tube.

At any rate, as a board member of The Wildlands Project I'm off to Arizona for a meeting. Come to think of it, of the fifteen board members of this international organization, Dave Foreman, Bill Devall, Rod Mondt, George Wuerthner, and I all are CWC members. As I said, the Coalition may be short on members and money, but we do okay with the environmental luminaries.

### Last call for Conservation Call

December brought not just the end of a year but the end of an era. It was then we received the hundredth and final issue of *Conservation Call*, a newsletter that has been published by California Wilderness Coalition members Roscoe and Wilma Poland since 1969.

Like so many environmental publications, *Conservation Call* was born of a crisis. Its deep grassroots can be traced to Coyote Creek, a perennial stream in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park that was threatened in 1969 by what Roscoe Poland remembers as "a dastardly proposal." Real estate promoters wanted to pave a road up Coyote Canyon, thereby shaving twenty minutes off the commute from Los Angeles for prospective buyers.

The dastardly proposal ultimately was blocked (though the inholdings remain), and *Conservation Call* lived on, promoting wilderness preservation throughout the state. In recollecting their many accomplishments, the Polands are especially proud to have helped former Senator Alan Cranston draw the boundary of the Agua Tibia Wilderness north of San Diego.

Most recently, the Polands have turned their considerable energies to opposing the controversial Ward Valley dump site for radioactive waste. Dastards take heed: *Conservation Call* may have ceased fighting, but the Polands have not.

#### Uncle Jim's

#### Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

In what wild area will you find Deep Hole Valley, Long Doe Ridge, and Sanhedrin Creek?

Answer on page 7

### Letters

Dear Editor,

I would like to take exception to Jim Eaton's suggestion that the Mineral King road be closed ["Closing the road to wilderness is the road to wilderness," January 1993 *WR*]. While I agree with the general thrust of the article, and I strongly agree with him about the closure of some specific roads that I am familiar with (Ebbets Pass, Sonora Pass, Tioga Pass, Minaret Summit), I do think you might reconsider lumping the Mineral King road in with these unfortunate constructions.

My reasons for keeping the Mineral King road open are as follows. First, the Mineral King road is no recent construction. It was built in 1885 by hand and mule. It is itself a unique artifact. Bulldozers played no role in its construction. It hugs every contour of the canyon as it climbs from 600 to 8,000 feet, resulting in one of the steepest, twistiest 25 miles of road in California. In this respect it has nothing in common with modern constructions like, say, Tioga Pass Road. Speeds on the Mineral King road averaged 22 miles per hour during a recent Park Service check, so unlike many other wilderness roads it is not littered with "road kills."

Furthermore, it is a dead end road that does not attract the gawking tourists that so crowd Tuolumne Meadows. It is not a short cut to any place else. And there are no branch

roads leading off the portion which is within the national park. At its terminus, there is no development, only a small parking lot still owned by Walt Disney Inc. which serves backcountry users exclusively. [In the 1960s and 1970s, Walt Disney Inc. proposed developing a year-round resort in Mineral King Valley, on land now within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park.] Just short of the road's end are two additional small parking lots and two small campgrounds (Cold Springs and Atwell Mills) which have some of the tightest regulations of any campgrounds I know: one vehicle per campsite, no motor homes, no trailers. Signs at the bottom of the road indicate the road is "not advised" for motor homes or trailers. So the impact of the Mineral King road is limited.

What the Mineral King road does do is provide the best backcountry access in all of Sequoia-Kings Canyon. The Mineral King Ranger Station writes almost half of all the wilderness permits issued in the park. Park Service surveys show that over 80 percent of these permittees are repeat visitors. This, I believe, is evidence that the road serves, and very satisfactorily at that, the needs of backcountry users.

Not to say that there are no problems associated with the road. There are persistent rumors of Park Service plans to "improve" the road by widening, straightening, and repaving it. This would be most unfortunate and, if implemented,

paradoxically would support the case for the road's removal. The road also allows access to and thus supports the Mineral King pack station which spreads environmental degradation far into the surrounding wilderness. At present the road's biggest problem is that it is becoming too popular with backcountry users precisely because it offers an unimproved, unspoiled entry into one of California's most spectacular wilderness areas. Perhaps there is a lesson here—that we need more wilderness access like the Mineral King road and much less like Tioga Pass Road.

For the past 20 years my wife and I have backpacked and hiked the Mineral King area intensively. We have walked California's Pacific Crest Trail, and there are few Sierra trails we have not hiked. Presently we own a cabin on a private inholding along the Mineral King road within Sequoia-Kings Canyon. I am not, therefore, a disinterested commentator on this matter, but I am intimately familiar with the road and its larger impact on the Mineral King area. In my judgment, the road today is a real benefit to wilderness users and should not be lumped together with the other roads on Jim's list, which (in the many cases I am familiar with) should be closed.

Thanks for listening,  
Gerald Gregg  
Point Richmond

# Wilderness and biodiversity

## CWC's continental connection—The Wildlands Project

By David M. Johns

The Wildlands Project (WP) is an educational and scientific organization founded to protect and restore the native biological diversity of North America through the development and promotion of a long-range and visionary proposal for an interconnected continental-scale system of reserves. In developing such a proposal, the WP aims to refocus public perception and debate on the importance of biodiversity and to make clear the scale of effort necessary to protect and restore whole ecosystems.

What is unique about the WP is its commitment to sustain all native species within the ebb and flow of ecological processes, rather than within the constraints of

what industrial civilization is content to leave alone. The existing system of reserves—parks, wildernesses, refuges—are discrete islands of nature in a sea of human-modified landscapes. They represent a beginning: building on those natural areas, we seek to describe a system of core reserves where ecological processes dominate.

Core reserves would collectively contain extensive

**"What we seek is a path that leads to beauty, abundance, wholeness, and wildness. We look for the big outside instead of empire, we seek wolf tracks instead of gold, we crave life rather than death."**

—Dave Foreman, on *The Wildlands Project in Wild Earth*

areas of native vegetation in various successional stages as well as viable, self-sustaining populations of all native plant and animal species, including large predators. The WP recognizes that diversity at the genetic, species, ecosystem, and landscape level is fundamental to the integrity of nature. Reserves would constitute vast landscapes

without roads, dams, motorized vehicles, powerlines, overflights, or other artifacts of civilization, where evolutionary and ecological processes that represent four billion years of earth wisdom can continue. We recognize that most of the earth has been colonized by humans only in the last several thousand years and

heavily and intensively settled only in the last few hundred years. The resulting disruption and biological impoverishment is reaching critical proportions, according to the best science, and must be reversed.

Core reserves would be linked by biological corridors to allow for the natural movements of wide-ranging species, for dispersal, for genetic exchange between populations, and for migration of organisms in response to climate change.

Buffers would be established around core reserves and corridors to protect their integrity from disruptive human activities. Only those activities compatible with the biological integrity of the core reserves and corridors would occur. Buffers also would be managed to restore ecological health, extirpated species, and natural conditions. Roads would be closed, for example, and highways elevated at strategic locations to allow passage of wildlife underneath.

The vision is continental: From Panama and the Caribbean to Alaska and Greenland, from the Arctic to the continental shelves, the WP will bring together conservationists, ecologists, indigenous peoples, and others to protect and restore evolutionary processes and biodiversity. The WP does not seek to replace other organizations but to develop cooperative relationships with activists and grassroots organizations everywhere that are committed to these goals.

Founded by conserva-

On this page is information about The Wildlands Project, a new organization working to connect existing wilderness areas with other wildlands in order to reverse the biodiversity crisis. The California Wilderness Coalition is associated with this effort, which is documented in the organization's companion publication, *Wild Earth*. Later this year, most CWC members will receive a complimentary copy of a special issue of *Wild Earth* dedicated to The Wildlands Project.

The CWC allows only a select few organizations infrequent access to its mailing list, and only when we believe our members will benefit from the information distributed. Any CWC members who do not want their names and addresses released on this limited basis should call or write our office.

*Wilderness Record* readers who are not CWC members can obtain a copy of the special issue by sending six dollars to The Wildlands Project, P. O. Box 5365, Tucson, AZ 85703.

tion biologists and biodiversity activists, the WP works with independent grassroots organizations and scientists throughout the continent to develop proposals for each bioregion. Regional groups include the Rockies' Greater Ecosystem Alliance, Klamath Forest Alliance, Preserve Appalachian Wilderness, and dozens of others. Additionally, the WP works with several national groups such as the Society for Conservation Biology, the Xerces Society, and World Wildlife Fund Canada.

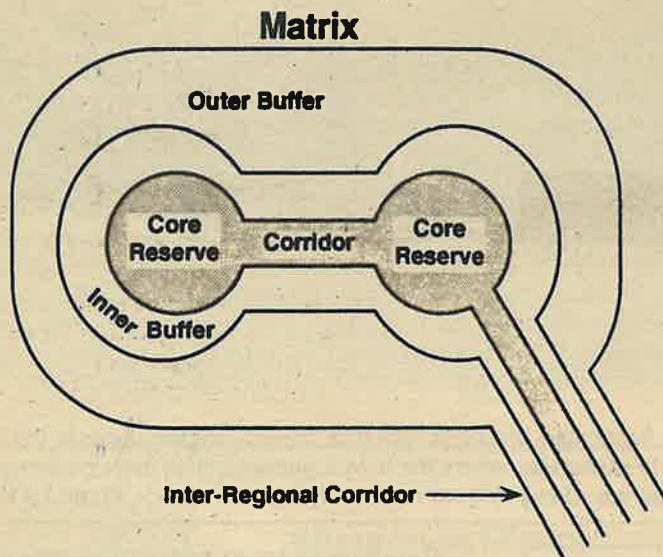
The WP supports the work of regional groups and other in developing proposals for specific regions of the continent. It provides access to scientific and technical expertise, including peer review of reserve proposals. It also supports, through conferences and other meetings, the organizational base needed to develop proposals. Such conferences bring together regional activists, conservation biologists, and other scientists as well as a broad spectrum of environmental groups. The WP office operates a clearinghouse where groups can be put in touch with each other to share experiences and strategy or to locate needed resources.

The WP will integrate the various regional proposals into a continental whole that describes a vision of a biologically healthy North America. It is putting forth this most important, positive vision—rather than a focus on last-ditch efforts to defend wilderness—that is an essential and missing prerequisite to reversing ecological destruction.

The WP also undertakes and synthesizes research on many topics including the role of human activities and management practices in core areas and buffers, re-establishment of extirpated species, control of exotic species, and design of connecting corridors. Such corridors are needed especially for areas where significant human-created obstacles exist to overcome fragmentation and maintain population viability and genetic diversity.

Our central goal is to educate the public, the environmental movement, decision makers, the academic community, and others about the importance of biodiversity and what is necessary to protect and restore it in all its splendor.

David Johns is Executive Director of The Wildlands Project. For more information, contact the WP, North American Wilderness Recovery, 1955 West Grant Street, Suite 148 A, Tucson, AZ 85745; (602) 884-0875.



A regional wilderness recovery network, consisting of core wilderness reserves, connecting corridors or linkages, and buffer zones. Only two core reserves are shown in this diagram, but a real system may contain many reserves. Inner buffer zones would be strictly protected; outer zones would allow a wider range of compatible human uses. In this example, an interregional corridor connects the system to a similar network in another bioregion. Matrix refers to the landscape surrounding the reserve network, but this is the case only in the first stages of a wilderness recovery project in areas now dominated by human activity. Eventually, a wilderness network would dominate a region and thus would itself constitute the matrix, with human habitations being the islands.

Adapted from Reed Noss in *Wild Earth*.

## Wilderness management

# Egregious Echo-Carson EA values cows over common sense

By Jim Eaton

President Bill Clinton is calling for sweeping changes to improve the economic health of our nation. The U.S. Forest Service apparently has not yet gotten the word.

The Forest Service's Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) has issued an environmental analysis (EA) for the Meiss Grazing Allotment. This tract, at the headwaters of the Truckee River between highways 50 and 88, is within the proposed Echo-Carson wilderness area.

The Forest Service currently spends \$2.50 for every dollar it receives from cattle permittees. The alternatives considered in the EA propose even bigger subsidies so that the LTBMU can do its share to provide America with red meat.

Last year, Meiss permittees paid the Forest Service \$1.92 for each month that a cow and calf grazed these wild lands (this was 5¢ less than paid in 1991) for a total of \$1,538. And half of that money was spent on grazing "improvements."

It costs the Forest Service \$4,000 each year to administer and monitor this grazing allotment. In addition, writing the EA cost another \$2,000, and the alternatives considered require fencing costing between \$5,000 and \$16,000.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out this is a

bad deal for the taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the news is worse. Because of damage to fisheries, riparian vegetation, and endangered species, the Forest Service is proposing to spend more money to allow fewer cows to graze.

Annual grazing use has averaged 934 animal unit months (AUMs) during the past ten years in the Meiss allotment. (Each AUM represents a month of grazing by a cow and her calf.) A 1970 study estimated the grazing capacity at 722 AUMs at a time when the allotment also included the Grass Lake area, which now is off limits to grazing. Sites were established in 1971 to monitor the long-term effects of grazing, but the Forest Service today says it cannot find its own monitoring sites.

The Forest Service refuses to consider a "no grazing" alternative, stating that the forest plan

for the LTBMU requires the continuation of grazing to "utilize available forage for production of red meat without impairing other resource values, especially water, wildlife, and recreation." The forest plan remains under appeal by the California Wilderness Coalition and other organizations.

A "tradition" of cow bells and cow patties

The Echo-Carson area is the most popular backcountry area in the LTBMU outside of the

Desolation Wilderness, with between 10,000 and 15,000 people visiting the area each year. The Forest Service admits visitors frequently complain about cows eroding streambanks, trampling meadows, destroying trails, and clanging their bells.

But the agency replies that "this is countered by the traditionalist attitudes of people who believe that cows complement the wildland experience...." It suggests that "manure and cowbells will not shock the visitor who is prepared for these things...cattle manure on trails and adjacent to camping areas will be spread across trails to quickly dry and mix into the soil."

In addition to the physical impacts of grazing, there is substantial noise. Each cow wears a collar with bells. According to the EA, "the permittees bell their cattle both out of respect for tradition as well as ease in finding the cattle." But as CWC Treasurer and LTBMU backpacker Wendy Cohen wrote to the Forest Service in 1990, the bells ringing all day and night ruined her wilderness experience, leaving her feeling as if "perpetually stuck at a railroad crossing."

But there are far more than recreational conflicts with grazing. Cattle in the Meiss country are adversely affecting riparian vegetation, sensitive plants, wildlife, and fisheries.

Cattle browse on woody riparian plants, such as willows, alders, and aspen, and they trample and undermine streambanks. This in turn affects the animals that depend on these environments.

The willow flycatcher, for example, needs large, dense

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**To visitors who complain about the cows in the proposed Echo-Carson wilderness, the Forest Service replies that it must consider the views of "traditionalists...who believe that cows complement the wildland experience."**

## A motto for Cahto: Ax not

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supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for both the plan and the timber sale.

The SEIS states that the proposed sale is "excluded from Designated Critical Habitat" which ordinarily would be required in northern-spotted-owl forests only because the BLM assured the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service that "the suit was settled." (The Fish and Wildlife Service exempted from the logging ban in owl habitat those timber sales that were sold but not yet cut when the ban took effect.) In fact, the litigation still stands. The SEIS conforms to old plans that the BLM's former Arcata Resource Area Manager John Lloyd termed "inadequate, particularly with regard to old growth" and to the Arcata Resource Management Plan which is under appeal.

None of the alternatives considered in the river man-

agement plan and SEIS meets these conservationist criteria:

- The timber sale contract that already was sold to Eel River Sawmills should be bought back at the contractor's cost with interest;
- The ancient forests of the Cahto area should be recognized as an "Outstandingly Remarkable Ecological Value" of the wild river;
- Old growth on all streams in the Cahto area that drain into the South Fork Eel should be protected;
- Fragmentation of old growth habitat should not be permitted;



Rare native grasslands advance toward forested slopes in the future Cahto wilderness, where the BLM is pursuing, with more persistence than prudence, a long-delayed timber sale. Photo by Steven Day

## W&SRs: vestiges of primitive America

The national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 established three categories of protected rivers—wild, scenic, and recreational. Rivers protected by the Act are known as Wild and Scenic Rivers, but river segments are classified as either wild, scenic, or recreational; there are no 'wild' and 'scenic' river segments.

Here are the definitions for each category as defined by the Act:

**Wild** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primi-

tive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

**Scenic** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads.

**Recreational** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

•Lands necessary to protect wild river values should be identified and acquired;

•A wild river corridor stretching to the boundaries of federally-owned lands should be designated to better manage wild river values; and

•Access to the river corridor should be limited to only those types and amounts that have no adverse impact on wild river values.

To comment on the river management plan and SEIS, or to obtain a copy, write to: Bureau of Land Management, Arcata Resource Area, 1125 16th Street, Room 219, Arcata, CA 95521-5580. The deadline for comments is March 26.

Steven Day is an activist working for the future Cahto wilderness and a member of the Ancient Forest Defense Fund, the group that sued the BLM to stop the Elkhorn Ridge Timber Sale.

## Wilderness management

### East Side ORV plan in the offing

This spring the Inyo National Forest will release the long-awaited draft update of the 1977 Interagency Motor Vehicle Use Plan for the eastern Sierra region. The draft plan and its companion environmental impact statement (EIS) are being produced in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP).

The draft plan and EIS will address vehicle route designations on 2.3 million acres of federal and DWP lands, including many thousands of acres of wildlands. Among the areas addressed by the plan are gems like the Inyo Mountains, White Mountains, Mammoth-June region, Glass Mountain, Monache Meadows, and many more BLM wilderness study areas and Forest Service roadless areas from Owens Valley to the Mono Basin.

Some of the more controversial issues that are expected to surface with release of the draft include preservation of old growth and spotted owl habitat in the Monache and Mammoth-June areas, protection of Native

American sites in the Inyo Mountains, creation of new roads and trails for off-road vehicle (ORV) users, and the question of whether organized ORV events should be permitted at all in the eastern Sierra. These events have greatly increased in frequency the past few years and have been marked by repeated permit violations and widespread damage to the environment and cultural sites.

To get on the mailing list to receive the draft plan, EIS, and accompanying maps, write to the Inyo National Forest, Attn: OHV PLAN, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514. The Forest Service is updating its mailing list prior to printing the documents, so please write as soon as possible to ensure that enough copies will be printed.



The Inyo Mountains are among the eastern Sierra wildlands where ORV users want to roam. Photo by Jim Eaton

## What, oh what is the FS doing over the Rainbow?

continued from page 1

the Inyo National Forest's 1993 *Key Issues and Opportunities* statement, which notes that the agency is "conducting an environmental analysis to log approximately five million board feet of fire-killed timber from the Rainbow Fire." This figure is significant, given that the annual timber cut level for the Inyo National Forest is 7.1 million board feet and the project area is only 125 acres. It is difficult to imagine how five million board feet could be taken from a 125-acre area without clearcutting.

The scoping letter raises a number of troubling issues, including the prospect of logging in the summer or fall. In the past, the Inyo National Forest has allowed only winter logging to protect the forest's fragile volcanic soils and numerous cultural sites. The 1988 forest plan made a radical departure from previous policy by allowing summertime logging to be considered for future timber sales. In its four-year-old, still-unresolved appeal of that plan, Friends of the Inyo and other conservation groups contended that no analysis had been completed to determine the environmental impacts of creating a summer logging season. This is a precedent-setting issue for the forest, and it deserves thorough environmental scrutiny.

The potential conflicts between a logging operation and recreational use are as numerous as they are obvious. The area is heavily used for recreation in the summer and fall. Nearly one million people visited Devils Postpile in 1992. The scoping letter concedes that "20 to 40 logging

trucks a day would add significantly to congestion and safety problems." The permittee at Reds Meadow Pack Station would be affected by "an unsafe and visually disruptive environment" which could result in a temporary loss of business or closure of his operation. He opposes the logging project on economic and environmental grounds. To mitigate these recreational conflicts, the Forest Service proposes to log between September 15 and the winter's first big snowfall. Several hundred visitors each day, however, still would be subjected to the impacts of logging.

#### The "laboratory" rationale

The Forest Service sees the proposed salvage logging as an interpretive "opportunity" in which "to show the difference between how...a public agency deals with a natural disaster in a non-wilderness area and how the forces of nature respond to the same disaster in [the adjacent] wilderness." The agency also claims that reduction of the amount of "visible charred wood" will improve views. Elsewhere in the scoping letter, however, the Forest Service notes that "an abrupt visual edge between the proposed project area and the Ansel Adams Wilderness would appear unnatural" and that visitors would be affected "in the short-term" by "having to view the

stumps of fallen trees for two to three years." Surely the stumps of *felled* trees will be apparent far longer than that.

Another concern is that this timber sale would be a money-losing proposition for the Forest Service, which is to say the taxpayer. Helicopter logging would escalate the costs associated with "fuels reduction," as would the necessary repair of the Minaret Summit-Devils Postpile road. There are no mills near the Inyo National Forest; most of the forest's contractors come from Quincy, Folsom, and other towns on the west side of the Sierra. Since the price the Forest Service can set for a timber sale goes down when a contractor's associated costs go up, one has to wonder why the Forest Service is so intent on this

salvage sale, especially when its economic benefits, if any, would not be kept local.

Other key issues include impacts on water quality, fisheries, and aesthetic values of the Wild and Scenic San Joaquin River; how the logged area will be replanted and with what tree species; the area's suitability as habitat for the California spotted owl (though the area was identified as potential owl habitat before the fire, a loophole in the Forest Service's recently-announced policy of not clearcutting in owl habitat will permit the salvage operation); impacts on other wildlife such as sapsuckers and woodpeckers; impairment of the area's wilderness qualities; and creation of new roads. A very basic question is whether logging 125 acres really can alleviate fire danger when nearly 8,000 acres in the adjacent wilderness will remain "untreated."

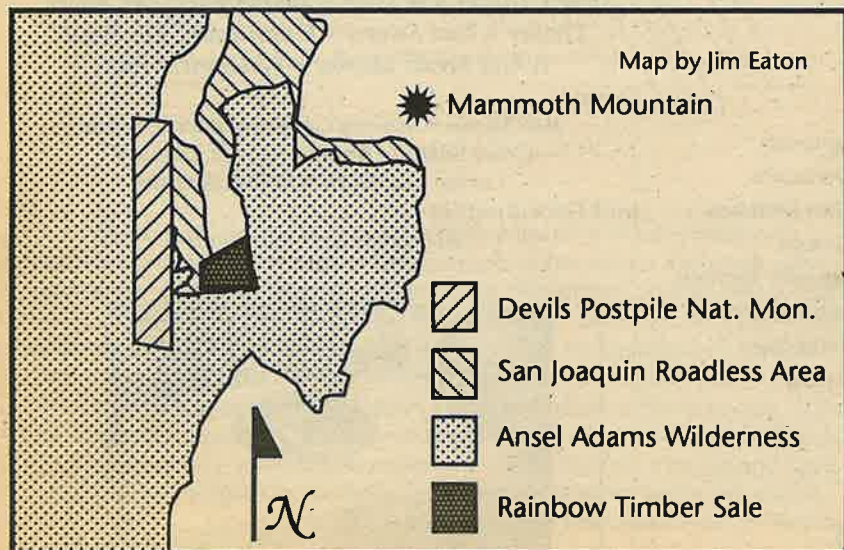
It is evident that this proposal involves many complex and significant issues. An environmental assessment is wholly insufficient to analyze the impacts of proposed logging

**A very basic question is whether logging 125 acres really can alleviate fire danger when nearly 8,000 acres in the adjacent wilderness will remain "untreated."**

in this area. More painstaking review, in the form of an environmental impact statement, clearly is necessary if the Forest Service wants to pursue this course. Furthermore, the very high recreational, wildlife, watershed, aesthetic, and existing economic values undoubtedly are the superior "multiple uses" of the area. Reading the scoping letter, one wonders if the agency's real objective is not primarily to reduce fire danger but to extract a windfall of five million board feet of timber.

The Forest Service currently is accepting comments on its proposal. The agency would prefer to receive comments by the end of February, but because the February issue of the *Wilderness Record* had gone to press when the scoping notice was released, comments will be considered if they arrive by mid-March. To be safe, write soon. Address your comments to Debbie Austin, District Ranger, Inyo National Forest, Mammoth Ranger District, P. O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546.

Sally Miller is a Friends of the Inyo activist and a Director of the CWC.



Map by Jim Eaton

# Wilderness news

## AFSEEE gets a peer

A new organization modeled on the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (AFSEEE) is forming to represent employees of other agencies who are dissatisfied with their agencies' management of public lands. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) will be open to employees of state and federal agencies that manage natural resources.

PEER will have three immediate goals: to organize employees, to educate policy makers and the public about public-land environmental issues, and to protect whistleblowers from reprisal. Jeff DeBonis, who founded AFSEEE, will run the new organization.

For more information, contact PEER at P. O. Box 428, Eugene, OR 97440; (503) 484-7158.

## Echo-Carson EA inspires lots of beefs

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stands of willows or other deciduous riparian shrubs along streams or adjacent to wet meadows. Cattle can impact this bird, listed as endangered by the state, by knocking over nests or eating the lower branches of willows which it uses to nest. In addition, the brown-headed cowbirds that follow cattle into the mountains lay their eggs in flycatcher nests where their larger chicks out-compete their host's young.

Mule deer also are affected by grazing because hiding cover for young fawns is reduced by cattle browsing willows and trampling corn lilies.

A restoration program for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout has begun in Meiss Meadow. These fish suffer from lack of shade due to browsed willows and loss of habitat from trampled streambanks. The Forest Service admits that even if all cattle were removed, it would take 10 to 15 years for the trout's habitat to recover.

### Econ 1A

Considering the environmental damage caused by cattle, the public subsidy required to continue grazing in

the Meiss Allotment is outrageous. It is abundantly clear that both the environment and the taxpayers would benefit from the elimination of grazing in the area.

Randal O'Toole of Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants advocates recreationists paying their fair share. If each person hiking or riding into the proposed Echo-Carson Wilderness paid two cents per visit, the income would exceed that paid by the grazing permittees.

The Forest Service, however, warns that elimination of grazing would change the appearance of the area: "The historic landscape of the Meiss Allotment—that of grassy meadows shorn by grazing with bovines present in the scenery—would be absent."

The Forest Service is accepting comments on the EA until March 22. Write to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

CWC Executive Director Jim Eaton likes his wilderness scenery bovine-free.

## Annual report



Dave Foreman was kept so busy chatting at the reception that preceded *An Evening on the Wild Side* that he hardly had a chance to sample the abundant delicacies, including the now-traditional CWC logo cake.

## CWC kicks off 1993 with another successful fundraiser

On a rainy Sunday night in sleepy downtown Davis, wolf howls filled the art deco Varsity Theater as the California Wilderness Coalition's annual fundraiser, *An Evening on the Wild Side*, came to a close. The fundraiser was a great success, raising not just funds—some \$4,000—and ululations but new friends for the CWC and The Wildlands Project (see article on page 3).

We thank the following individuals, businesses, and organizations which made the event possible:

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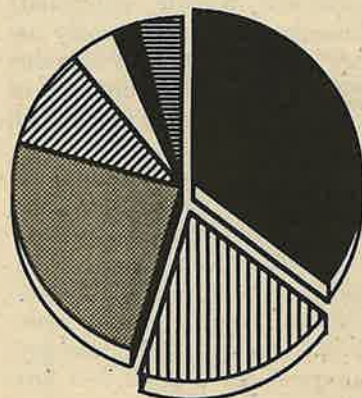
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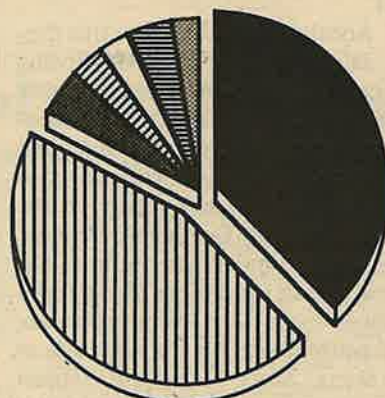
Bob Schneider • Bill Waid

### 1992 Disbursements



- Publications
- ▨ Issues
- ▩ Office
- ▧ Membership
- Fundraising
- Grants to Groups
- ▨ Retail, Board, Media

### 1992 Income



- Renewals
- ▨ Donations
- New Members
- ▧ Groups
- Business Sponsors
- Subscriptions
- ▨ Retail Sales
- ▩ Grants

The CWC's income declined a bit from 1991; the total in 1992 was \$43,033. With 1992 expenditures of \$45,018, we find ourselves somewhat in the red (which is not to say, in the pink). In sum, it was an average year for the CWC.



## Book reviews

### Two wilderness traveler's advisories

#### **Soft Paths: How to enjoy the wilderness without harming it**

By Bruce Hampton and David Cole, NOLS, Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 1988, 173 pp., \$10.95.

The National Outdoor Leadership School's (NOLS) comprehensive guide to treading lightly in the backcountry covers the ethics of fire use, sanitation, campsite location, and much more. *Soft Paths* is more than just a set of rules for wilderness users to follow, however; the book assumes intelligence on the part of the reader and teaches the wilderness user to make good judgments based on the situation at hand. The school's approach to teaching good wilderness practices is exemplified by a quote from NOLS founder, Paul Petzoldt: "Rules are for fools."

The book advocates minimum-impact techniques from two perspectives: to maintain a healthy environment and to give the next visitor a sense of discovery—as if the place had never been visited before. Chapters two through five are dedicated to general minimum-impact techniques and the remaining six to "special environments." Some of the general minimum impact techniques are basic practices that experienced users probably know; others are more obscure. Even though I do not agree with all their advice, I found it interesting to read what the "experts" think is appropriate wilderness behavior.

Perhaps the best thing this book does is address minimum-impact techniques in special environments such as deserts, alpine and arctic tundra, and rivers. The book alerts users to these

environments' varying capacity to decompose organic waste and resist trampling. Even experienced wilderness users can learn something new: that wildlife disturbance is "probably the most important [concern in winter travel.]" Since animals must work harder to maintain their heat stores and find food in the winter, the book cautions us not to stress wildlife further by getting too close and frightening them.

My one complaint with the book is its treatment of the campfire issue. Given their fairly sensitive views, I expected the authors to advise strongly against the use of campfires. Instead, I felt they took a disappointingly lenient position on the subject. To their own question "Are campfires taboo?" they respond, "No, not by a long shot in most backcountry." Though a case can be made for campfire

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#### **Wilderness Basics: The Complete Handbook for Hikers & Backpackers**

By the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Mountaineers Books, Seattle, 1993, 221 pp., \$14.95.

There's a limit to what wilderness skills you can learn from a book. Most people learn by doing. Still, beginning and inexperienced backpackers might feel more confident and prepared for having read a manual like *Wilderness Basics*. Compiled by the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club and now in its second edition, *Wilderness Basics* covers everything from trip preparation to search-and-rescue, with good chapters on navigation, weather, winter mountaineering, and first aid (among others) in between.

Some of the material might better have been omitted (a full description of how to perform a kick turn on cross-country skis, for instance), and some is at variance with accepted practice (the manual counsels hikers on a trail to stand uphill of passing horses, not downhill as the Park Service recommends), but the majority of the text and illustrations are useful and authoritative. (Regrettably, a majority of the illustrations depict men, detracting from the book's otherwise admirably non-sexist tone.)

Annotated recommendations for further reading at the end of most chapters potentially broaden the audience for what is essentially a beginner's handbook. *Wilderness Basics* would be a good gift for a novice backpacker; more experienced wilderness users who want to increase their skills also may find the book useful. But bear in mind, *Wilderness Basics* was aptly named. —Lucy Rosenau

### CWC t-shirts in bright new colors!

Lorraine models our six-tone landscape shirt now available in jade and fuchsia as well as the ever-popular light blue and pale green for \$15. Rick 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.



**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

**March 13** ACTIVISTS' MEETING of the California Ancient Forest Alliance in Davis. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.

**March 15** COMMENTS DUE on the Inyo National Forest's proposal for salvage logging adjacent to Devils Postpile National Monument and Ansel Adams Wilderness. Send to: Debbie Austin, District Ranger, Inyo N. F., Mammoth Ranger District, P. O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. (See article on page 1.)

**March 22** COMMENTS DUE on an environmental assessment of cattle grazing in the proposed Echo-Carson wilderness. Send to: Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. (See article on page 4.)

**March 26** COMMENTS DUE on the Bureau of Land Management's plan and environmental impact statement for the South Fork Eel River, which includes a timber sale. Send to: BLM, Arcata Resource Area, 1125 16th Street, Room 219, Arcata, CA 95521-5580. (See article on page 1.)

### Wilderness Trivia Quiz Answer:

Eden-Thatcher Wilderness Study  
Area in eastern Mendocino  
County.

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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:

California Wilderness Coalition  
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5  
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## Wilderness advisory

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use in remote areas, most of the book's audience will use the Sierra Nevada, the Rockies, the Cascades, and the Appalachians. In these heavily used areas, campfires certainly should not be recommended. I fear that people who are attached to having fires will use the authors' lenience as license to continue.

Overall, I applaud the authors' decision to base the principles of soft use on the idea that "appropriate behavior flows from an understanding of and respect for the land, an inherent set of values within the

individual user—a land ethic." They remind us, the wilderness visitors, of our responsibility to take care of the wild places left in the world. Instead of listing rules, the authors give intelligent and carefully thought-out suggestions, with reasoning to back them up. Both new and experienced backcountry users will find this a valuable resource for treading lightly on the wilderness.

—Holly Lerner

Soft Paths can be ordered from the NOLS at (800) 332-4100.

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Like many citizen organizations, the California Wilderness Coalition depends upon sponsorship and support. We are grateful to the following businesses that have recognized the need to preserve the wilderness of California.

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