



WILDERNESS RECORD

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South Yolla Bolly Peak and Mt. Linn are popular destinations in the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. Photo by Wendy Cohen

Yolla Bolly wilderness plan is off to an inauspicious start

By Jim Eaton

One of the best-kept secrets in the northern Coast Range is the wild and remote Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. This 153,000-acre wilderness spans three national forests, the Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, and Six Rivers, as well as smaller tracts administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Until recently, plans for the wilderness have been something of a secret as well.

For over a year the Forest Service has been working on a wilderness management plan for the Yolla Bollys. As part of the planning process, the agency created a working group of 17 individuals and organizations with an interest in the future of the wilderness area.

Unfortunately, most of the environmental community (including the California Wilderness Coalition) was unaware of this planning process until mid-August. Since then, activists who are concerned about the direction of the planning and troubled by their exclusion from the process thus far have pressed to be involved in the planning.

The Forest Service is using the now-standard Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) system as the foundation of its management plan. This technique, which replaced the recreational carrying-capacity method, emphasizes the conditions desired for the wilderness rather than how much use the area can tolerate.

Using the LAC system, Yolla Bolly planners have come up with four "opportunity

classes" for the wilderness, zones which the agency will maintain as pristine, primitive, semi-primitive, and transitional. A pristine zone, for example, would have no trails or established campsites, and a visitor would not expect to see any other hikers or campers. There would be no commercial grazing, and the range conditions would be excellent.

In a transition zone, by contrast, each square mile of wilderness could contain six campsites and as much as four miles of trail with a tread width of 24 inches. The unwary visitor to a transition zone could encounter up to a dozen foot parties and four horse parties a day and camp within sight of four other groups. Key water sources would be fenced to keep out cattle and sheep, and the targeted range condition would be only "fair and stable."

The Forest Service is developing five alternative plans for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel. In each plan, the four opportunity classes are distributed differently depending on the emphasis of the particular alternative.

Environmental activists are greatly disturbed by the large amounts of transition and semi-primitive zones in all five alternatives. Although these classes may reflect current uses of the Yolla Bollys, the status quo should not be maintained at the expense of the wilderness. Instead, activists feel that the future health of the wilderness requires that almost all of the area be designated pristine or primitive, with lesser standards assigned only to major trail corridors and camping areas.

At an August 25 meeting of the working group, environmentalists agreed to develop an alternative that formalizes their vision for the wilderness. The Forest Service and members of the working group will gather in October to discuss this new approach to the management plan.

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At long last, Lassen lifts removed from park

By Lucy Rosenau

With no fanfare and surprisingly little attention, helicopters began in August to remove the towers of the ski lifts from Lassen Volcanic National Park, courtesy of a Minnesota company that has bought the equipment. Once the remainder of the material is removed and the area is revegetated, only the ski areas at Yosemite and Sequoia national parks will remain as California's legacy of a 1930s policy of attracting visitors to national parks by building ski lifts and feeding bears.

Conservationists have long argued that ski developments are inappropriate uses of national parks, an argument that prevailed in the late 1970s when the National Park Service was considering a proposal to expand the ski area near the Mineral entrance to Lassen (see map on page 5). Faced with vigorous opposition to the proposal, park officials called in an Interior Department advisory board which recommended in 1979 that the ski area be phased out over five years, citing the ski area's "detrimental environmental, esthetic, and interpretive impact on the

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Coalition news

Monthly Report

"I wish I had a camera to prove that you are actually rafting on a river," Steve Evans said to me last month. Despite my preference to hike rather than float, and to snowshoe rather than ski, I actually kayaked down rivers twice this summer.

The first trip resulted from an invitation from Paul Brink, the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wilderness coordinator. Past trips to wilderness study areas (WSAs) with BLM personnel have been in four-wheel drive vehicles or even helicopters. When Paul suggested we take two days to float through the Cache Creek WSA in inflatable kayaks, I jumped at the opportunity.

It was not a small group. There were lots of BLM staff along, including Renée Snyder, the new area manager for Cache Creek. Others included wardens from the Department of Fish and Game, a representative from Homestake Mining, a U.C. Extension employee, a staffer to Representative Dan Hamburg, and a Yolo County supervisor.

The trip was magnificent. For the first time in years, bald eagles are summering along the creek. While some of us were exploring archaeological sites, others saw otters playing in the rapids. Great blue herons noisily objected to our passage and flew off in a huff.

We discussed some of the problems facing the area, from exotic plants to recreational conflicts. We floated around a bend to find miners driving a front end loader up the creek in pursuit of decorative rock.

It was clear that most everyone felt Cache Creek is deserving of wilderness status. Since it is less than two hours from Davis, I know I'll be spending many more days exploring this fantastic future wilderness.

The second trip was with Steve and singers Bill Oliver and Glen Waldeck prior to their concert for the CWC. We ended up on the American River's lower middle fork. Though pierced by roads, the canyon was much wilder than I expected. And the blackberries were ripe and plentiful.

I borrowed a boat from neighbor Paul Tarczy. This must have been the original inflatable, made in Austria more than two decades ago. To say it was unstable would be too kind; I think I know what bull riding is like. I flipped twice.

River neophyte that I am, I neglected to bring along the pump. As the day progressed, my craft became a deflatable. The main question was whether we would reach the takeout before my freeboard reached zero. I had to empty the kayak after each rapid, but I managed to finish the trip like a riverine low rider.

I have to admit that rafting is a grand recreational experience. And at Cache Creek, it would have been extremely difficult to visit parts of the canyon without floating through it.

Although I'll ride rivers again, I remain primarily a hiker and snowshoer. Perhaps it's the speed—how can you see the country while slaloming through a rapid or whizzing downhill? Or maybe I'm just a traditionalist, more comfortable in leather boots than neoprene kayaks or plastic skis.

But whether it is by hiking, rafting, snowshoeing, or skiing, it is important to get in touch with the wildlands we cherish so dearly. Although we can appreciate wilderness philosophically, being there to touch the earth, see the beauty, and listen to the creatures heightens our commitment to preserving these lands.

So I am looking forward to the CWC's September board meeting in the Phillip Burton Wilderness. While we sit around the campfire (or more accurately, the charcoal in the grill, since fires are restricted at Point Reyes) we will ponder the Coalition's continuing role in the protection of California's biodiversity.

Although we'll be out for only two days and nights rather than 40, I'll let you know what grand conclusions we reach.

By Jim Eaton

Our loss is Wisconsin's gain

After serving for 14 years as the California representative for Defenders of Wildlife, Richard Spotts is moving on to work for the Wisconsin chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

His departure leaves a major void in the state's conservation community.

Known for his indefatigable energy and boundless ability to write letters on every environmental issue imaginable, Richard has been a key lobbyist for wild creatures and wild places.

Hardly a week has gone by in the life of the California Wilderness Coalition that we have not received a packet of photocopied articles from Richard. In fact, when the Coalition first was forming, CWC staff speculated that "Richard Spotts" must be an institutional name used by a whole cadre of anonymous workers. How else to explain his superhuman productivity?

Richard was a member of the CWC's board of directors from 1980-1983 and still serves on our advisory board.



Glen Waldeck (left) and Bill Oliver performed at their August 18 benefit concert for the California Wilderness Coalition and Yolo Environmental Resource Center. Photo by Jim Eaton

Log Option #9

Much has been written about the Clinton administration's proposed "solution" to the ancient forest crisis in the Pacific Northwest. This is our favorite. Sing along (to the tune of "Love Potion #9").

Lyrics by Bill Oliver and Glen Waldeck © 1993

They took their summit out to Portland town
You know that city where the stumps abound
They sat down and talked out of both sides of their mind
They said what you need is: Log Option #9

They said they came to put a stop to this
Divisive forestry and politics
They brought the Secret Service and they did a pantomime
They said what you get is: Log Option #9

The think tank was handled like a backing up sink
He said, "I want eight options over which I will think."
But none would be the one to be committed to ink
We held our nose, we closed our eyes...This really stinks!

We didn't know if we were hearing right
They started kissing every ax in sight
And then they made the moderates fall in close behind
You'll get nothing better than Log Option #9

The deadline to comment on the administration's draft supplemental environmental impact statement and choice of Option 9 is October 28. Comments may be sent to: Interagency SEIS Team Leader, P. O. Box 3623, Portland, OR, 97208-3623 and to: President William J. Clinton, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20500. For a copy of the documents (known as the full DSEIS and FEMAT report), call (503) 326-7883.

Singing praises

To describe the August 18 Bill Oliver-Glen Waldeck benefit concert as rousing might be an understatement. Youngsters who weren't invited up on stage to hula as the environmental troubadours performed "Be a Beach Buddy" danced in the aisles and lobby of Davis' Varsity Theater.

The multi-talented Oliver and Waldeck, old friends of the California Wilderness Coalition, coaxed music from an impressive variety of instruments and body parts during the two-hour show, which included perennial favorites like "Habitat" and "Styrofoam Wrap" and the new and very timely "Log Option #9."

The concert, a benefit for the CWC and Yolo Environmental Resource Center, was sponsored by the Davis Downtown Business Association. Our thanks to the association and the musicians for their generosity and a rousing good time.

Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question:

What island wilderness study area is named for a blue-winged goose?

Answer on page 7

Desert wilderness

A wilderness of thorns and heat and beauty

The desert bill remains in congressional limbo while supporters and opponents argue over the appropriate designation—national park or national monument or something else entirely—for the east Mojave. Whatever the outcome of that debate, one thing is certain: California soon will have a lot of Mojave wilderness. This is what it will look like (acres are approximate).

Castle Peaks/Fort Piute Where the New York Mountains meet the California-Nevada border and the Great Basin meets the Sonoran Desert, valleys and bajadas form the counterpoint to the ruddy turrets of Castle Peaks. This ecologically-rich area, with its life-giving seeps and springs, supports bighorn sheep, mule deer, and desert tortoises in a classic Mojave landscape of Joshua trees and yuccas. 36,000 acres.

Cinder Cones The 15 extinct volcanic cones from which this area takes its name once were responsible for its stark, otherworldly appearance. At the terminus of the lava field, life abruptly begins: cholla, barrel, and strawberry hedgehog cactus mingle among Joshua trees that look just as alien as the lava moonscape. Ancient rock art, trails, and village sites persist as testament to the area's prehistoric inhabitants. 57,000 acres.

Clark Mountain Rugged, massive Clark Mountain is a slab of ocean floor now marooned in a desert. Its limestone and dolomite support a host of endemic plants, and large relict groves of Rocky Mountain white fir interspersed with pinyon and Utah juniper blanket a pair of canyons. White bighorn sheep, the only known herd in California, have been found in the area, as have numerous archaeological sites. 14,400 acres.

Granite Mountains South of Kelso Dunes, the pinyon and juniper-clad Granite Mountains rise to more than 6,700 feet, and three desert ecosystems—Great Basin, Sonoran, and Mojave—merge. The intimidating mountain peaks, fractured and jumbled with plutons and spires, shelter a surprising diversity of plant and animal life. Desert shrews, Mexican free-tailed bats, dusky-footed woodrats, and Canyon oaks are present here, along with more common Mojave denizens like bighorn sheep and desert tortoises. A plethora of pictographs and petroglyphs round out the attractions. 50,000 acres.

Kelso Dunes At more than 600 feet, the Kelso Dunes are among the highest in North America. They also are home to a number of plants and animals that can exist

nowhere else. In spring, pink sand verbenas and white dune primroses color the dunes that are famous for their startling "singing" and "booming," a phenomenon that has not been fully explained. The rare Mojave fringe-toed lizard shares the dunes with desert tortoises and a remnant population of endemic weevils. 36,000 acres.

Kelso Mountains North and east of the dunes, the long, dark line of the Kelso range contrasts sharply with the pale expanses of sand. These volcanic mountains are inhabited by desert bighorn sheep, golden eagles, prairie falcons, kestrels, red-tailed hawks, owls, and desert tortoises. 77,000 acres.

Magee/Atkins/Deer Spring/Joshua Forest This small, variously named area east of Cinder Cones is best-known for its dense forest of Joshua trees, but an abundance of other plants grows here too. Galleta, blackbrush, spanish bayonet, needlegrass, white-bur sage, Mojave yucca, spiny mendora, spiny hopsage, turpentine bush, pencil cholla, and brittle brush combine to make cross-country travel painful in places. 13,560 acres.

Mid Hills The aptly named Mid Hills area is a middle-elevation bridge of land connecting the Providence and New York mountain ranges. The presence of rock squirrels and Panamint chipmunks at the higher reaches may account for the frequent sightings of golden eagles, Cooper's hawks, prairie falcons, and red-tailed hawks. Caves and other archaeological sites contain rock art, potsherds, and stone tools. 20,000 acres.

New York Mountains Canyons pierce the New York Mountains from the south; the rugged northern slopes are steeper and look impenetrable. The area's mountains, hills, and fans provide diverse habitat for an unusually rich assemblage of plants: New York Peak has a relict stand of Rocky Mountain white fir, Fourth of July Canyon is home to the endangered Thorne's buckwheat, and limestone outcrops support laceferns, tongue-flower, rock spirea, and pappus-grass. Gray-headed junco, Virginia warbler, and yellow-breasted chat share the skies with golden eagles, sharp-shinned hawks, falcons, kestrels, and Swainson's hawks. 40,000 acres.

Old Dad Mountain West of the Kelso Mountains, this extensive wilderness encompasses a sand hummock, the Mojave river sink, and the sand hills of Devil's Playground along with Old Dad Mountain itself and the Cowhole Mountains. Devil's Playground and the sand hummock are noteworthy for their sand-dwelling species: mesquite, desert iguanas, shovel-nosed snakes, zebra-tailed lizards, and sidewinders. Prehistoric sites dot the landscape in surprising numbers, and Old Dad Mountain supports a



South Providence Mountains

Photo by Jim Eaton

large herd of desert bighorn sheep. 96,000 acres.

Providence Mountains East of the Kelso range and Devil's Playground, the Providence Mountains rise to 6,000 feet in a horseshoe formation around a valley full of cactus. With their limestone caves, lava-capped mesa, and jutting peaks, the mountains are a dramatic backdrop to an area rich in biological diversity. Rare plants include foxtail cactus, Stephen's beardtongue, desert hackberry, Clark Mountain buckwheat, and yerba desierto. Seeps and springs support wildlife that usually cannot survive in the desert: mountain lions, bobcats, porcupines, spotted skunks, warbling vireos, Bendire's thrashers, Swainson's and Harris hawks, and an impressive assortment of reptiles. 61,000 acres.

Rainbow Wells Southeast of the Cinder Cones, the lava field continues uninterrupted into the Rainbow Wells area. Where the lava stopped, vegetation begins—the creosote scrub, Joshua trees, and yucca that typify the Mojave. Tortoise habitat and cultural sites further distinguish this area. 23,000 acres.

Shadow Valley Just off Interstate 15, Shadow Valley is a remnant pocket of wilderness. Joshua trees carpet the hillsides but give way at lower elevations to staghorn and silver cholla, yucca, big galleta, box-thorn, and fluffgrass. Still lower, saltbush, shadscale, and spiny hopsage bespeak the southernmost reach of the Great Basin. 13,000 acres.

South Providence Mountains The South Providence Mountains are classic badlands—the rugged, stark mountains are riddled with canyons that empty into desolate washes and bajadas. Pinyon and juniper can be found at the highest elevations, and springs support riparian plants like catclaw, desert broom, and arrow weed. Bighorn sheep and assorted owls and other raptors inhabit the area, which also is home to a rare cactus. 22,000 acres.

Table Mountain This small area north of the Woods Mountains is named for the mighty volcanic mesa that rises from a landscape of hills and valleys covered with desert scrub and enlivened by the odd Joshua tree and a variety of cacti. Panamint kangaroo rats, bighorn sheep, mule deer, gilded thrashers, and golden eagles all have been spotted in the area. Camp Rock Spring is known for its petroglyphs. 8,000 acres.

Valley View/Teutonia Peak/Cima Dome East of Magee/Atkins is another little stretch of wilderness known by a lot of names. Cima Dome, the most prominent landmark, is a huge, remarkably symmetrical protuber-

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Castle Peaks

Photo by Jim Eaton

Wilderness management

The importance of scoping (really)

The importance of scoping—as subjects go, this one sounds about as exciting as the importance of flossing, and not nearly so convincing. But we would argue (and we will) that scoping is important.

So what is scoping? Scoping is one of the first stages of the environmental planning process created by the National Environmental Policy Act, the stage preparatory to the writing of a draft environmental impact statement (EIS), the stage when planners seek to determine the range (or *scope*) of issues that must be addressed in the EIS. To do that, planners invite other agencies and members of the public to submit their ideas (called “comments”) about the problems that exist and how to solve them.

Since there are public comment periods following the release of first the draft and subsequently the final EIS, many people refrain from participating in scoping. Then too, it strains credulity to suppose that the managers of a popular wilderness really need comments from the public to know to address the problem of, say, overuse.

So why is scoping important?

If an issue is not raised during scoping, the agency is not legally required to address it, and though we would hope that most planners are conscientious and as concerned with protecting wilderness and wildlands as any conservationist, that's not always the case. Furthermore, participating in scoping is one way to establish “standing,” eligibility to file an administrative appeal of a bad plan.

There are practical reasons to submit scoping comments as well. Steve Evans, Conservation Director for Friends of the River, participates frequently in Forest Service planning. “Scoping sets the stage for what the Forest Service is going to do,” he says. “It's best if you let them know what you expect rather than simply criticizing what they do.” By participating in scoping, Evans believes, conservationists can help set the agenda and establish the parameters of the planning process.

Though scoping is not intended to be a straw poll, planners unquestionably are affected by the weight of public sentiment. (For this reason, it is important to submit scoping comments even if you agree with what the agency plans to do.) Evans recalls with regret the scoping held by the Tahoe National Forest on its wild-and-scenic river eligibility study. The majority of comments received were opposed to wild-and-scenic designation, he says. That they were also “misinformed and hysterical” did not

diminish their effect on forest planners.

A flurry of public comments can derail a bad plan before it gets off the ground. It was information that came to light during scoping that led the Inyo National Forest to stop permitting helicopter skiing in roadless areas. And if no preferred alternative has been selected, scoping comments may help determine which one ultimately is chosen.

Early participation is important, experienced observers agree, because once an agency has put a lot of time and work into a plan, the agency is, understandably, loath to discard it.

Last, but certainly not least, participating in scoping identifies you as someone with an interest in the area; as such, you will be contacted the next time decisions have to be made.

That said, how do you get involved in the scoping process for areas you love? Contact the agency that manages the area and ask to be put on their mailing list. Before the agency prepares a plan for the area, you'll receive a scoping notice inviting you to submit written comments. For large planning efforts, like wilderness management plans, the agency usually will host one or more scoping meetings scheduled after work or on the weekend. Finally, planners may schedule a field trip to a particularly troublesome spot as part of the scoping process. Though meetings and field trips are good opportunities to meet planners and other citizens with a stake in the planning process, they are not a substitute for written comments which become part of the formal record.

You don't have to be an expert for your comments to be valued, but the more specific, relevant, and practical your comments, the more attention they'll receive.

Scoping underway for Emigrant Wilderness plan

Planners from the Stanislaus National Forest have set September 9 as the scoping deadline for a new management plan for the Emigrant Wilderness. A scoping meeting, at which representatives of different interests will be selected to serve on an ongoing working group, has been scheduled for October 2.

The new plan will replace the 1979 wilderness management plan which has become obsolete. The plan will also replace a 1989 environmental assessment on stream flow maintenance dams in the wilderness that was appealed by the California Wilderness Coalition because the Forest Service had failed to document the supposed benefits of retaining the 18 privately-built dams.

In addition to revisiting the question of dam removal, the wilderness plan will address grazing, trail maintenance, party size limits, stock use, bridge construction, and areas where overuse is a problem. Project Leader Cindy Diaz says although the wilderness as a whole is heavily used, the worst problems are occurring near three trailheads—Kennedy Meadow, Crabtree Camp, and Gianelli.

Send your comments about what issues should be addressed in the wilderness plan to the Emigrant Wilderness Planning Team, Summit Ranger District, #1 Pinecrest Lake Road, Pinecrest, CA 95364 by September 9. The October 2 scoping meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. at the Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor's Office, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora. If you cannot attend the meeting but wish to be considered for the working group, call Cindy Diaz at (209) 965-3434.

Mokelumne scoping—identifying problems is the easy part

By Lucy Rosenau

There was no shortage of problems when the Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Toiyabe national forests held scoping meetings on a new management plan being developed for the Mokelumne Wilderness. The problems were not with the meetings, however, but in the wilderness: overuse, off-road vehicle incursions, overuse, recreational shooting, overuse, overflights, and, well, overuse. Indeed, everyone agreed that the single biggest problem plaguing the Mokelumne is overuse, particularly in the Carson Pass area. It is solutions—not problems and certainly not visitors—that are in short supply.

Asked to brainstorm solutions, the people at the meeting I attended were divided—three recommended that the Forest Service disperse use away from Carson Pass by developing new trails, trailheads, and access roads; two of us opposed dispersing use on the grounds that the agency would be dispersing problems throughout the wilderness

along with people.

It wasn't until a few months later, on a sparsely-attended scoping field trip through the Carson Pass area, that I saw just how serious the problem is and got an inkling of how planners feel about the “solution” of dispersing use.

Between the Carson Pass trailhead and Woods Lake on a Saturday at the height of wildflower season, we encountered perhaps 40 parties of dayhikers, a handful of backpackers, two equestrians, and enough dogs to fill a

kennel. We didn't have enough fingers among us to count the number of *people* we met on the trail. But numbers alone don't tell the story. At each of the three small lakes we passed—Frog, Winnemucca, and Round Top—we saw fire rings old and new (despite a ban that has been in effect for three years), campsites, campers, and, once, tethered horses, all less than 100 feet from the lakes and trails. No doubt about it: the Carson Pass area is a textbook example of what happens when an unforgettably beautiful piece of

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The minimum-impact message hasn't reached these campers at Round Top Lake in the Mokelumne Wilderness. Photo by Lucy Rosenau

Wilderness news

Lassen ski area was going downhill

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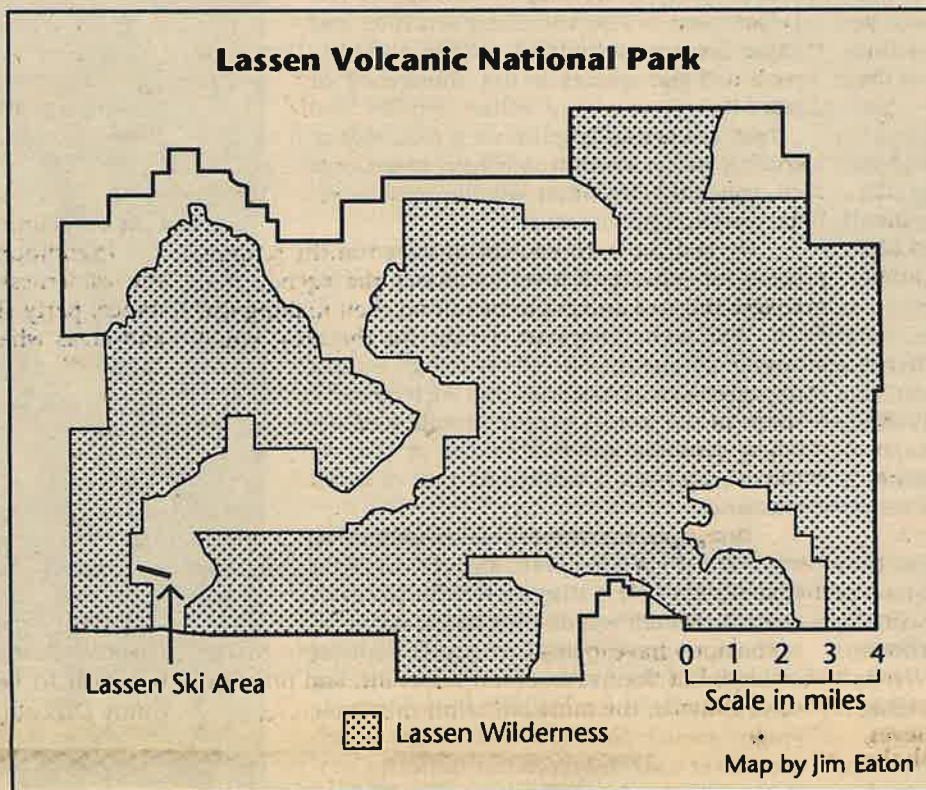
park." That recommendation was incorporated in the 1981 general management plan for the park, and now, more than ten years later, is being carried out.

Closing the ski area solves a problem not just for the Park Service but for the concessioner, California Guest Services, as well. Unable to expand within the park and unable to make a profit from the existing operation, the company asked to be released from its 20-year contract, and Park Superintendent Gilbert Blinn readily agreed. The only opposition to the closure has come from a group called Friends of the Lassen Ski Area, Blinn says.

The reaction to the news from conservationists would have been unalloyed elation were it not for the possibility that the Forest Service will see the closure as justification to develop a new downhill ski area in the nearby Butt Mountain Roadless Area, a plan that to date has forestalled wilderness designation of the roadless area. Steve Evans, Conservation Director for Friends of the River, explains that development at Butt Mountain (renamed "Carter Mountain" by proponents of the development) would endanger the Deer Creek watershed and the 100 or so spring-run salmon that still survive there.

The Forest Service's determination to develop Butt Mountain is all the more baffling in light of the fact that the Lassen ski area is being removed because it has been losing money since 1985, when the Mount Shasta Ski Park opened and began

to compete, quite successfully, for the same customers who previously had skied at Lassen. Blinn says that the opening of the Shasta ski area resulted in a 50 percent decline in use of the less-challenging, older Lassen operation.



Speak for Mono Lake— where the wild things were

Three upcoming hearings may finally determine the fate of Mono Lake, and though the brine shrimp, sea gulls, and other species that depend on the lake cannot testify, you can speak for them. The State Water Resources Control Board, which has the power to limit water diversions that have undermined the lake's ecosystem, will hold public hearings in Los Angeles, Mammoth Lakes, and Sacramento next month.

At issue is the appropriate water level for Mono Lake. Over 50 years of stream diversions by Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power (DWP) are responsible for the unnatural and unstable state of Mono Lake today. As the level of the lake has dropped, everything from air quality to waterfowl populations has dropped with it.

Historical records show that over a million ducks and geese once used Mono Lake; that number has declined precipitously—to three percent of the historical figure. Air quality, too, has declined, to the point that the Mono Lake basin now violates federal standards. And the increased salinity of the lake threatens its productivity; brine shrimp, a critical link in the lake's unique food chain, are candidates for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. All these indicators of an ecosystem in crisis are attributable to the decline in lake levels that resulted from DWP's diversions.

After years of legal wrangling, the Water Resources Control Board has entered the fray and will now decide how much water is necessary to sustain the Mono Lake ecosystem. An environmental impact report prepared by the Board considered seven possible water levels. Conservationists hope to persuade the Board that a level of 6,390

feet is the minimum acceptable to protect the health of the lake. This level, a compromise still well below the pre-diversion level of 6,417 feet, would not preclude continuing diversions to Los Angeles.

The Mono Lake Committee (MLC) and other conservation groups urge you to attend one of the meetings. The MLC will organize carpools and assist you in preparing testimony on behalf of the wild things. Call them at (619) 647-6595. The meeting schedule is:

October 4 Los Angeles
U.C.L.A.'s Ackerman Student Union
1:00-5:00 and 7:00-9:00 p.m.

October 5 Mammoth Lakes
U. S. Forest Service Auditorium
Highway 203
3:00-5:00 and 7:00-9:00 p.m.

October 22 Sacramento
Resources Agency Auditorium
1416 Ninth Street
2:00-5:00 and 7:00-9:00 p.m.



Join the stampede: comments due on range reform

September 13 is the deadline to comment on the Clinton administration's proposal for public lands grazing reform. The proposed changes were introduced August 9 by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, who termed it "a reasonable balance between the need to sustain the health of rangeland ecosystems and the need to sustain the economic health of rural Western areas."

Though a planned increase in the fees charged livestock owners who graze on public lands was the most ballyhooed aspect of the proposal, the reform package also would reserve some public water rights, establish standards to protect riparian zones, and eliminate rancher-dominated Grazing Advisory Boards.

Conservationists who have long fought for range reform under the banner "Cattle free by '93" criticize the Clinton plan as too weak. Though the proposal would increase fees over a three-year period from the current rate of \$1.86 per month for each cow-and-calf (called an "animal unit month" or AUM) to \$4.28, that latter figure is still a subsidy because it is substantially less than the cost of grazing on private land. Conservationists also want more protections for sensitive environments.

Comments on the proposed reforms may be sent to Director (200), Bureau of Land Management, P. O. Box 65800, Washington, DC 20035-9980 and to Chief, U. S. Forest Service, 201 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250.

Wilderness Tracks



The story continues...

The Headwaters Forest Act, legislation that would establish a Headwaters Wilderness, was introduced in Congress August 4 as H. R. 2866. (See August 1993 WR)

Three appeals have been filed contesting the Forest Service's decision to close the Meiss grazing allotment in the Echo-Carson Roadless Area until conditions improve. Appeals were filed by the permittee and Alpine County. (August 1993)

No news is...no news

The Inyo National Forest's proposal to allow salvage logging in a roadless area next to Devils Postpile National Monument that burned in the Rainbow fire has neither resurfaced nor been dropped. Word is that the environmental assessment of the project has been delayed because the Forest Service's priorities have changed. (March 1993)

Wilderness management

Picky, picky, picky: there's a lot to consider before you pick

I keep getting different answers. What's okay to collect/remove from wilderness and what isn't? C. W., Benicia

Good question! The reason you get different answers is, first, there are different rules depending on where you are and what you want to collect, and second, there are ethical as well as legal considerations. (Then too, there are a lot of misinformed people out there only too happy to share their misconceptions.)

Let's start with the law. The 1906 federal Antiquities Act made it illegal to remove (or damage) any cultural or historic artifacts or structures from public lands. That means, just for a start, that you cannot collect potsherds, basketry, petroglyphs, stone points (like arrowheads), beads, or human bones found in any wilderness.

Next, we need to distinguish wilderness portions of national parks, monuments, and seashores from other wilderness areas. Under National Park Service regulations, edible vegetation (if consumed in the wilderness), firewood (where fires are allowed), and fish are the only things that may be collected in these areas. Hunting is specifically banned in all national parks and monuments in California, but fishing is allowed subject to state restrictions.

In California's other wilderness areas, whether they are administered by the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the regulations are essentially as follows, though there may be additional restrictions that are specific to an individual wilderness, or even part of a wilderness. Remember that even where collecting is legal, it is often discouraged by the managing agency.

As a hobbyist, you may collect rocks provided you do not cause visual or other disturbance to the area. The Forest Service, which has permitted recreational gold panning in some wilderness areas, is phasing out this use.

The BLM presently is rewriting its regulations regarding fossil collecting. In Forest Service wilderness areas, fossil collecting is legal but *actively* discouraged. That means if you ask for directions to a known fossil area, the friendly ranger may point you in the wrong direction. Both agencies suggest that if you see a fossil, leave it in place and report its location to wilderness managers.

Non-commercial collecting of plant matter and fungi

Wilderness Inquirer

generally is allowed, unless the species is protected by state or federal law.

Fish and wildlife are considered state, rather than federal, property, so state regulations apply. The Department of Fish and Game sets rules and issues licenses for hunting, fishing, and trapping. If the species is not threatened or endangered, you may collect reptiles and amphibians (a fishing license is required) or insects, but wilderness managers discourage the practice. No other wildlife may be removed from public lands.

Exceptions to these general rules sometimes are made for Native Americans and for researchers.

That is the long (but still sketchy) legal answer. There is, of course, no single ethical approach to wilderness use, but we'll try to hit some of the points people should consider when deciding whether to use or remove something from a wilderness area or other wildland.

First, consider whether taking something will harm the wilderness or any of the species that depend on it. Eating a few berries from an abundant patch will do little harm; eating all of them, or any if berries are scarce, depletes an important food source for wildlife. Picking common wildflowers may be harmless in some environments; picking alpine flowers, which are scarcer and must reproduce under inclement conditions, is a different act altogether. A generally-applicable test is: If something is locally rare or if it is found in a harsh or fragile environment, leave it alone.

Second, ask yourself whether what you want to collect could be gathered someplace other than wilderness. Though some kinds of collecting may not harm the wilderness itself, we still can abstain from collecting out of respect for what wilderness represents. We may differ in our perceptions of wilderness, but a convenience store it's not.



Picking edible vegetation is legal, but unless the plant is abundantly available, like these wild onions near the Dana Fork of the Tuolumne River, leave it be. Photo by L. Rosenau

Ask the experts! What we don't know (plenty), we'll find out. Send your wilderness questions to *Wilderness Inquirer*, California Wilderness Coalition, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.

Mokelumne crowds

continued from page 4

wilderness is easily accessible.

A number of factors combine to make the area so accessible—expanded parking and a new visitor center being erected at the trailhead, easy trails with little climbing, gem-like lakes within a few miles of the trailhead and wilderness boundary, and the nearby population centers of Lake Tahoe, Sacramento, and Stockton. Clearly, the problem of overuse is not going to go away without intervention.

Though the dayhikers, in their day-glo shorts and ever-increasing numbers, are the more visible and jarring problem to wilderness users, day use causes very little damage to the wilderness itself. The real damage is from campers. For that reason, and only too aware that funding constraints make increased patrols and user education unlikely, the field trip participants recommended that these three easily accessible lakes be closed to overnight use, perhaps on a rotating basis.

All of us, including the Forest Service representatives, opposed dispersing use within the wilderness as both impractical and inappropriate, but we had no solution, other than imposing quotas, for the crowds of dayhikers who made this small corner of the wilderness resemble

Central Park. We discussed the feasibility of dispersing use outside the wilderness, but since the nearby lands are roadless and therefore potential wilderness areas themselves, this is not a solution that the California Wilderness Coalition could sanction.

Mojave wilderness

continued from page 3

ance with an unusually dense concentration of Joshua trees. Mule deer, quail, doves, great horned owls, prairie falcons, American kestrels, and Cooper's hawks populate the landscape. 27,500 acres.

Woods Mountains A pair of volcanic ranges separated by Watson Wash rise to the southeast of Table Mountain. This is high desert country—cactus plants are interspersed with creosote, Joshua trees, perennial grasses, pinyon, and Utah juniper. By contrast, Woods Wash is a lush if spiny garden of cholla, Mojave yucca, and barrel, mammalaria, and prickly pear cactus. Desert bighorn sheep and mule deer traverse the mountains, and golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-legged hawks, and owls prowl

Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel

continued from page 1

When the plan is completed, it either will be incorporated into the draft forest plans now being written for the three national forests or it will be issued as a separate environmental impact statement (EIS). Environmentalists are concerned that public reaction to the wilderness plan will be diluted if the plan is subsumed into forest plans which address a wide range of issues. A separate EIS would allow interested citizens to concentrate on the wilderness plan without having to concern themselves with the many details involved in managing three national forests.

If you are interested in the future management of the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, contact team leader David Hartman, Corning Ranger District, Mendocino National Forest, P. O. Box 1019, Corning, CA 96021; (916) 824-5196.

the skies. 57,000 acres.

For more information about these areas, contact the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Office at 6221 Box Spring Blvd., Riverside, CA 92507; (714) 697-5200.

Book review

New, improved, and heavy

The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California

Edited by James C. Hickman, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, 1,400 pp., \$65.00.

The Jepson Manual, profusely illustrated with excellent line drawings, is the new standard reference about the diverse plants of California. The presence of the drawings is not the only aspect which distinguishes the volume from its predecessor, Munz's *California Flora*; the new manual has been specifically designed and edited to be useful to those not trained in botanic nomenclature. Though this goal is not always reached, *The Jepson Manual* is distinctly easier to use than Munz and incorporates one heck of a lot of information in a somewhat ungainly 8.5"x11"x2.25" and decidedly weighty six-pound package. In short, it's not likely to find its way into many backpacks.

On the other hand, if you do want to identify a flower and learn its range in California, the sort of habitat it grows in, whether it is adaptable to gardens (and if so, where), if it is uncommon or rare, or almost anything else (except what time of year it blooms), *The Jepson Manual* is not only the authoritative source, but a rather easy-to-use source at that. The key to plant families is surprisingly straightforward, although it is still possible to go astray. Once you



Nine Mile Canyon
Phacelia



Sinking star

identify the correct family, finding the correct genus and species can be easy or difficult, depending in part on the family and in part on which of the almost 200 expert authors prepared the information. The editing by the late Jim Hickman resulted in an almost seamless text; the authorial variation among the descriptions is hardly noticeable. Some familiarity will be required to remember the many abbreviations used for geographic regions in the plant descriptions.

Although descriptions of the 6,000 or so plants of California comprise the bulk of the book, brief introductory chapters on California's geography, geologic past, and climate are useful and interesting additions.

The new *Jepson Manual* (the name commemorates Vacaville's Willis Lynn Jepson, the first compiler of a flora of California and a major force in shaping the study of California botany) will be heavily used by people who are truly interested in knowing about the plants of California. The average hiker or wanderer will probably still favor Niehaus and Ripper's *Field Guide to Pacific States Wildflowers*, however, which is not only the best field guide for the amateur, but is several pounds lighter. Only real plant nuts (real pistils?) like me will be seen far afield with the *Jepson*.

—George M. Clark



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Terry (l.) 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. Chris wears a design by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank; it comes in beige or light gray for \$12. All shirts are 100 percent double-knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.

Wilderness Trivia Answer:

Negit Island Wilderness Study
Area in Mono Lake.

from page 2

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 9 COMMENTS DUE on issues that should be addressed in the new Emigrant Wilderness management plan. Send to: Emigrant Wilderness Planning Team, Stanislaus National Forest, Summit Ranger District, #1 Pinecrest Lake Rd., Pinecrest, CA 95364. (See article on page 4.)

September 11-12 MEETING of the CWC Board of Directors. Call the CWC office at (916) 758-0380 for details.

September 13 COMMENTS DUE on the Clinton administration's proposal to increase the fee for grazing on public lands. Send to: Director (200), Bureau of Land Management, P. O. Box 65800, Washington, DC 20035-9980 and to: Chief, U. S. Forest Service, 201 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250. (See article on page 5.)

September 19 MEETING of the California Ancient Forest Alliance in Redding. For details, call Jim Eaton at (916) 758-0380.

October 2 SCOPING MEETING to discuss issues relevant to the Emigrant Wilderness management plan and select a working group. The 1:00 p.m. meeting will be held at the Stanislaus N.F. Supervisor's Office, 19777 Greenley Rd., Sonora. (See article on page 4.)

October 28 COMMENTS DUE on the Clinton administration's "Option 9" solution to the Pacific Northwest forest crisis. For more information, call Tim McKay at the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata, (707) 822-6918.



**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 co-operation 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.

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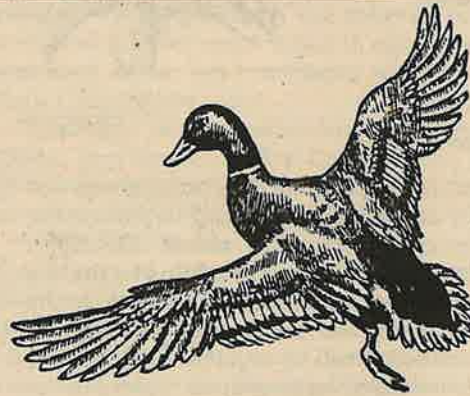
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