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# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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## Modoc gets its due

### Logging hiatus for remainder of '94

By Ryan Henson

With over 1,600,000 acres of public land and a stunning diversity of ecosystems, northeastern California's Modoc National Forest should be popular with recreationists and a priority for wilderness defenders. Unfortunately, despite its beauty, ecological importance, and threatened condition, the Modoc has had few friends.

No more. The conservation community recently has begun paying more attention to the Modoc. In particular, the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC), Klamath Forest Alliance, and Oregon Natural Resources Council became concerned when the Modoc's salvage sale program more than tripled in size within the last year. It appeared the Forest Service was unduly exploiting the Modoc because of its remoteness and lack of conservationist oversight.

In October of this year, the CWC appealed two salvage sales adjacent to the Knox Mountain Roadless Area because the Forest Service had failed to assess properly the impacts of the proposed logging on old-growth ecosystems, wildlife, and water quality. Both the Klamath Forest Alliance and Oregon Natural Resources Committee joined the CWC appeals and notified the Forest Service that more appeals were forthcoming.

In response, Robert Haggard, acting supervisor of the Modoc, offered to suspend all sales of old-growth, whether salvage or "green" (healthy) trees, until January 1, 1995. In exchange, the appellants and representatives of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Wilderness Society agreed to meet with Haggard and his staff to discuss their objections to the agency's logging proposals and see if a resolution of the appeals is possible.

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Winter, Castle Peak Roadless Area. Money appropriated by Congress will allow the Trust for Public Land to buy inholdings along the Pacific Crest Trail. Castle Peak is just one of the wildlands the CWC worked to protect in 1994. Photo by Tim Palmer

## Pilot project worries eastside defenders

### Ecosystem management revisited

By Sally Miller

What is ecosystem management, and what do these promising words mean for the fate of California's forests and wildlands? Conservationists have been asking these questions since the Forest Service and other agencies debuted ecosystem management in the summer of 1992 (see November 1992 *WR*). Only now are we beginning to get a glimpse of how ecosystem management is being implemented in the state. Throughout California, phrases such as "desired condition" and "historic range of variability" are cropping up in the vocabulary of land managers. Following is an example of an ecosystem management project of the Inyo National Forest that will determine the fate of the embattled San Joaquin Roadless Area (see map on page 5) and could have implications for the application of ecosystem management elsewhere in the state.

The Mammoth-June Ecosystem Management Project encompasses 45,000 acres between the eastern Sierra communities of Mammoth Lakes and June Lake. This region comprises the headwaters of the Owens River and includes 21,214 acres of the San Joaquin Roadless Area. The fate of the Owens River headwaters has long been debated. Some, such as developer Dave McCoy, envision an alpine ski resort connecting existing ski areas at Mammoth and June. Others envision a world-class mountain bike park, a geothermal power plant, groundwater pumping facilities to supply Mammoth's burgeoning population—in short, a dizzying array of uses. Conservationists, mean-

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## 1994 Conservation Report

What does the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) do besides publish a newspaper? The *Wilderness Record* covers the high points each month, but a lot of what we do never sees print. To rectify the omission, here is our first annual conservation report.

Though we try to review every project proposed for California's public lands, we reserve our energies for threats to roadless areas, current and former wilderness study areas (WSAs), wild rivers, designated wilderness areas, and other critical wildlands. Furthermore, though all natural areas are important and though we try to respond to all requests from our member groups (member groups are indicated in bold type), we concentrate our efforts on California's more remote public lands, since those lands have the fewest defenders. In this way, we can ensure that

even the most isolated and unpopular areas receive some degree of monitoring and protection.

The following summary of our 1994 conservation efforts will give you an idea of the scope of our work. Copies of the unabridged report are available on request.

### Forest Service

**Statewide:** Submitted comments on the Pacific Fish Environmental Assessment, which proposed interim protections for watersheds containing salmon and steelhead. Provided testimony on proposals to "re-invent" the Forest Service, change the way the agency manages archaeological and historic sites, weaken the regulation of certain kinds of bear hunting, and reform grazing practices. Met with the new regional forester to discuss our concerns.

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## Coalition news

### Monthly Report

I've always been fond of Halloween. As a secular event, it is a mostly fun time without religious or political overtones.

That view changed this year, but for the better. Henceforth, I will remember Halloween as the date the California Desert Protection Act was signed into law.

President Clinton signed the bill before a select group of activists early that morning in Washington, D. C. But the event most of us were invited to was a press conference in Los Angeles honoring Senator Dianne Feinstein.

I first balked at going to L. A. for the day (my anti-Southern California bias coming through?), but Wendy insisted we take advantage of special air fares to join the celebration. So on a bright sunny October 31st, we caught the jet to beautiful downtown Burbank.

I love to fly. I enjoy identifying peaks, lakes, and wilderness areas from the air, especially the places I have hiked. It's always a joy to see the White Mountains, a massive wall that seems to loom over the Sierra Nevada.

That morning I gazed south of the Whites and realized I was looking at the Southern Inyo Wilderness, then about five hours old. I saw the Panamint Mountains, part of the 3.1-million acre Death Valley Wilderness. The Kern Plateau and the new Owens Peak, Sacatar Trail, Chimney Peak, and Kiavah wilderness areas all came into view.

The press conference was fun too. A lot of activists I hadn't seen in years were there, along with Coalition members like Skip Smith who I previously knew only by name.

Missing were Jim Dodson, Judy Anderson, Elden Hughes, Peter Burk, and Nobby Riedy. As Senator Feinstein put it, "they preferred to be with the big guy in Washington." I hope they all got souvenir pens used to sign the desert bill. Anyone want to make a trade?

But we had a blast without them. The artists whose paintings and photographs were used during the campaign decked the Sierra Club office with their works. We all wore the yellow t-shirts that identified us as desert supporters during the many congressional field hearings over the years. And the press corps feasted on the edibles.

Senator Feinstein clearly enjoyed herself. She worked her way through the crowd, thanking the

volunteers who worked for decades to achieve desert protection. She gave an uplifting speech, although her emphasis on the compromises she brokered stung a little. But the election was still eight days away.

Ah, the election. I think the main reason I am not wearing sackcloth and ashes is that the desert bill passed and Dianne Feinstein survived the attempt to buy her Senate seat. Otherwise, election day was as depressing as Halloween was joyous.

In Congress, California lost two good friends of wilderness. Rick Lehman, who played a major role in passing the desert bill (which includes protection for his district's Bodie Hills) and the California Wilderness Act of 1984 (the Mono Lake National Forest Scenic Area), lost his redistricted seat. Dan Hamburg, a first-term representative from the North Coast, refused to air negative ads and went down to defeat. But Hamburg got the ball rolling on the Headwaters Forest, and he got the Bureau of Land Management to support more wilderness than the agency had recommended previously.

So with John Doolittle overseeing our public lands and Don Young controlling environmental legislation, where do we go?

Back to the grassroots. Though we will be spending time defending existing laws like the Endangered Species Act and agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey (targeted in the Republican contract for elimination), we will use the next few years to prepare for the future.

We will be going back to rural and urban communities alike, explaining the need for wilderness and the need to protect native biodiversity. We will train a new generation of activists throughout California to use our political system to preserve wildlands.

This election was not a victory for the Wise Use movement or a repudiation of environmentalism. It was a frustrated electorate punishing those in power for not bringing change and reform. When they see the anti-environmental agenda of the new Congress, they will lash out again.

Our job is to be ready with a positive alternative for the future when that day comes.

**By Jim Eaton**

### An open letter to Smokey Bear

Once again the Forest Service demonstrates it is unscrupulous in its institutional behavior as well as addicted to logging. No matter what rhetoric it may have about "new perspectives" or other reforms, it is the same old agency—subservient to the timber industry that distorts scientific principles to justify continued manipulation of our forests. The agency recently announced its intentions to begin a massive logging program, supposedly to reduce fire hazard and promote forest "health." Both justifications are scientifically bankrupt and display significant ecological ignorance and abundant human arrogance.

First, the agency continues to attempt fire suppression throughout the West even though evidence suggests that under extreme fire conditions, suppression is a waste of time, money, and sometimes lives. Simply put, you can't really suppress fires, particularly the kind that develop into large blazes.

Furthermore, large fires, rather than being characterized as destructive, are ecologically necessary. They are not some kind of aberration but a normal part of forest ecosystems; they should not be viewed as something to suppress or control.

Second, even if you wanted to prevent these fires, there is no good scientific evidence demonstrating that logging can prevent them anyway. Thus, justifying timber sales as a mechanism to prevent fires is nothing more than a convenient excuse for more logging.

Third, contrary to popular conception, increasing the amount of dead trees, whether from fire, drought, disease, or insects, doesn't necessarily result in more fires or even larger fires. Indeed, under extreme drought conditions, young green trees are more flammable than dead trees because of the resins in living tissue. Since the young trees dominate cut-over areas, logging may actually promote the spread of fires under extreme fire conditions.

Fourth, our forests are not unhealthy! Such terms reflect an economic bias, not biological reality. Dead trees may not be useful to the timber industry, but they serve many ecological functions. And though individual trees may die, those deaths demonstrate that the forest ecosystem is still functioning. The increased incidence of disease, insects, and fires is a natural response to fire suppression and to the loss of natural predators (insects, birds, etc.) that protect forests from disease or insect infestation—a loss that can be traced to habitat fragmentation from past logging. The death of trees, rather than a sign of sickness as portrayed by foresters, is actually an indication of the health of the forest ecosystem as it attempts to correct the imbalances created by human interference.

Fifth, logging is not ecologically neutral, nor is it a substitute for natural processes like fire, disease, or insect infestations. Indeed, there are many ecological impacts associated with logging, including but not limited to the removal of biomass, nutrient loss, increased soil erosion, loss of snags, dead downed material, and increased access that affects wildlife habitat use or numbers.

The only thing unhealthy occurring in our native forests is logging—and the disruption of ecological functions carried out in the name of forest health by the Forest Service. If the Forest Service were truly interested in forest health, it would develop defensible boundaries around communities and other human development while allowing forests to burn, die, and achieve their own level of ecosystem stability.

George Wuerthner  
Eugene, OR

### How to reach us

The CWC now has a fax number and an Internet address:

FAX (916) 758-0382

E-MAIL [jeaton@wheel.ucdavis.edu](mailto:jeaton@wheel.ucdavis.edu)

### CWC earns FWN grant

The California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) has received a grant from the Fund for Wild Nature to produce a brochure explaining the role of wilderness in preserving biological diversity. Since the wilderness campaigns of the future will focus on little-known wildlands that are less scenic than the popular rock-and-ice playgrounds of wilderness bills past, it is vital that we begin to educate casual wilderness users that wilderness isn't just for recreation.

The Fund for Wild Nature grant of \$1,650 will enable us to produce 10,000 copies of the brochure for distribution through outdoor recreation stores and other likely outlets. We plan to have the brochure ready by the spring of 1995; if you or your organization would like copies, contact Lora Leerskov at the CWC, 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.

### Correction

There must have been a freak magnetic shift in Davis last month. How else to explain why, on the map of new desert wilderness in our November issue, South Avawatz Wilderness Study Area is to the north of Avawatz Wilderness Study Area?

Corrected 8.5-by-11-inch versions of the map are available on request, or you can correct your own by switching their labels. It's easy; just ask our cartographer!

A limited number of (uncorrected) copies of November's desert issue of the *Wilderness Record* remains. If you would like some, contact the Coalition at (916) 758-0380 or 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616.

### Wilderness Trivia Question

According to the Department of Fish and Game, how many California lakes (and reservoirs) and streams support wild trout?

Answer on page 7

# Wilderness and fish-stocking

## The case for continued trout-stocking in wilderness lakes

By Eric R. Gerstung

Trout angling in the high mountain lakes of California is a cherished tradition that goes back more than a century, when the first trout were introduced to the previously-fishless glacial lakes. A beautifully colored trout rising to a well-presented fly on the surface of a crystal clear lake can be a memorable experience to the backcountry angler. Even people who don't fish may be equally thrilled by the experience of camping beside a lake dimpled by multitudes of feeding trout. Backpackers tired of eating starchy freeze-dried food may welcome an occasional meal of freshly-caught trout. John Muir, in *Our National Parks*, prescribed trout angling in the high country "for the saving of both body and soul" and argued that it "deserved all the expense and care bestowed on it."

As a teenager during the early 1950s, I spent many glorious days angling for trout in the backcountry of

### Some facts about fish-stocking

Approximately 16,000 high mountain lakes exist in the western contiguous United States. An estimated 54 percent support fish.

About 4,131 mountain lakes exist in California. Sixty-three percent support fish, and 52 percent of these are stocked periodically by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). All but 20 of the lakes were fishless before the arrival of Europeans.

The majority of mountain lakes in California are in national park or national forest wilderness areas. Wilderness legislation and regulations allow aerial fish-stocking, operation of stream flow maintenance dams, removal of obstacles to migratory fish, chemical eradication of non-native fish, and trapping fish to collect spawn. All of these activities are strictly regulated to maintain wilderness values.

Fish-stocking has been phased out by the National Park Service. As a result, the number of lakes supporting fish dropped from 202 to 108 in Yosemite, from 336 to 254 in Sequoia-Kings Canyon, and from 50 to 8 in Lassen Volcanic national parks.

The DFG currently stocks between 900 and 1,000 mountain lakes annually with fingerling trout (1.5 to 3 inches long) at an average rate of 100-200 fish per acre. Trout typically are not caught by anglers until after their second year in a lake; thus, most growth occurs in the wild rather than in a hatchery. During 1993, 418 mountain lakes were stocked with rainbow trout, 368 with brook trout, 138 with golden trout, 35 with brown trout, and 43 with Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Mountain lake stocking began in the mid to late 1800s, mostly by individuals with coffee cans. Pack cans carried by mule teams were used from the early 1900s until the late 1940s, when planting fish by air proved to be cheaper, more efficient, and less environmentally damaging.

Although brook trout are able to reproduce successfully by spawning over springs and gravel patches within the lake bed, the native rainbow, golden, and cutthroat trout can spawn successfully only in flowing streams (inlets or outlets). Only a small proportion of mountain lakes provide such features.

Surveys show that, on the average, less than 10 percent of wilderness users visit wilderness areas for the primary purpose of angling, but up to 50 percent carry fishing equipment for casual angling. —ERG

Lassen Volcanic National Park, where I commonly caught plump one- to two-pound rainbow trout. When I returned to my favorite fishing lakes 30 years later, they were devoid of trout. I later learned the National Park Service had reversed its policy on trout-stocking, and lakes without natural spawning had reverted to a fishless condition.

Although trout-stocking is permitted in national forest wilderness areas by the various wilderness acts and implementing regulations, the Forest Service in the 1970s proposed to stop stocking trout in heavily visited wilderness areas in the hope of reducing overuse of the wilderness. Subsequent visitor surveys revealed that most wilderness recreationists would continue to visit the wilderness regardless of whether trout angling was available. The Forest Service then reconsidered and substituted quotas for heavily used areas. In the meantime, the surge in wilderness recreation has leveled off.

Opponents of trout-stocking within the Forest Service recently have developed a new argument, ecosystem management, to justify terminating trout-stocking. Stocking opponents contend that since the trout were not native to high country lakes and since trout prey on frog tadpoles and invertebrates, they do not belong in those wilderness lakes.

Stocking opponents also argue that continued stocking could lead to the extinction of endemic species of invertebrates even though most lakes now being stocked have been stocked continuously since the turn of the century and even though existing regulations prohibit stocking new waters. However, many aquatic biologists argue that there is little likelihood of endemic invertebrates being present in geologically young high-elevation waters where the fauna is composed primarily of widely distributed pioneer species with the ability to move or be transported readily. These biologists contend that this combination of young lakes and motile fauna probably has limited the evolution of specialized, distinctive invertebrate taxa in individual lakes or lake basins.

Opponents of trout-stocking blame trout for the disappearance of mountain yellow-legged frogs from hundreds of Sierra Nevada lakes. While there is a consensus among biologists that an abundance of trout in a lake can eliminate frog tadpoles, there also is evidence to suggest that amphibian metabolism, and thus populations, are being adversely affected by the recent dramatic increase in ultraviolet B radiation resulting from thinning of the ozone layer and by the presence of estrogen-mimicking pesticides carried by air currents from Central Valley agricultural areas into the higher elevations.

It is doubtful that terminating stocking in Sierra Nevada lakes will quickly increase the number of yellow-legged frog populations. Frogs have not returned to the Lassen lakes even though fish have been absent for 20 years. In fact, it may take centuries for frogs to recolonize lakes they once inhabited. John Muir hypothesized that frogs may have been transported to the high country as frog eggs stuck to the feet of wading birds. To speed things

### Another angle

## On biodiversity, humans, and fishing poles

By Felice Pace

The October issue of the *Wilderness Record* included an interesting exchange between two advocates for wildlife and biodiversity—Canyon Fred and Phil Pister. The immediate issue under dispute was impacts of California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) wilderness trout-stocking programs on aquatic biodiversity. On the one hand, Fred argued convincingly that DFG trout-stocking (and occasional rotenone poisoning) have unassessed detrimental impacts on biodiversity. Pister defends DFG's stocking policy, arguing a long history of active support by environmental organizations and wilderness advocates and minimal impacts to other species. Pister also argues that many wilderness users would oppose the removal of trout from these lakes.

Neither writer adequately addresses the broader issue of biodiversity vs. human use. I think any knowledgeable scientist would agree that removing human influences and ultimately humans themselves from the environment would be the best thing for biodiversity. The more humans removed, the greater total biodiversity—trading one species for the security of many and the integrity of evolution. Short of shipping the entire human race into space in giant, self-sustaining colonies (possibly a good idea!), limiting our consumption and our impacts on natural areas is good biodiversity policy. Thus any planning exercise which values only or predominantly biodiversity ends up with recommendations that are politically, socially, and culturally unpopular.

"Ecosystem management" is being created as a methodology to mediate human needs and uses with those of ecosystems. It is essentially a way to balance competing interests and thus for compromise. Those who do not like compromise will not like ecosystem management. Others believe biodiversity will fare better under ecosystem management if the bottom-line value is maintaining or restoring the integrity of ecosystem processes.

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**If stocking were terminated, golden trout would be limited to the fewer than 60 lakes with adequate natural reproduction.**

up, perhaps frogs should be re-introduced to the most suitable fishless lakes. (At present, there are 1,528 mountain lakes without fish, and based on an analysis of several subsamples, two-thirds of these are without frogs.)

Terminating trout-stocking would have little or no effect on populations of trout not native to California. The principal non-native trout, the brook trout now in nearly half of the fish-bearing wilderness lakes, will continue to persist because they reproduce in most lakes. Worse yet, brook trout tend to overpopulate, so stunted fish are commonplace. Invertebrates and perhaps tadpoles are

often more severely reduced when their habitat is overpopulated with fish. Trout native to California—the rainbow, golden, and Lahontan cutthroat—seldom produce stunted populations when planted in mountain lakes. If planting of these natives were terminated, anglers would likely re-

stock the lakes with brook trout from adjacent lake or stream populations, compounding the problem. Brook trout are easily transported by coffee can: unauthorized fish transplants are a serious and growing problem. One result could be a decline in the number of native trout populations and an increase in the number of non-native populations.

The native trout that would be particularly affected by cessation of fish-stocking is the golden trout, the California state fish considered the most beautiful of all trout. Originally the golden trout was found only in Golden Trout Creek and the South Fork Kern River. Golden trout in these streams are small, generally less than seven inches

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## Wilderness news

# Joyous work ahead for Mono Lake

By Sally Miller

Many years ago, the predecessor to the California State Water Resources Control Board issued permits allowing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) to divert water from a high desert basin hundreds of miles to the north to feed a growing city. At the time, the predecessor agency recognized that diverting water from its tributary streams would harm Mono Lake but deemed "there is apparently nothing that this office can do to prevent it."

Now, over 50 years later, the Water Board has righted that wrong. In late September, before a packed hearing room at the state capitol, the Water Board voted unanimously to establish a target elevation for water in Mono Lake at 6,392 feet above sea level, 17 feet higher than the lake's current elevation of 6,375 feet, and to greatly restrict future diversions by Los Angeles.

The Water Board's decision caps 15 years of litigation by the Mono Lake Committee, National Audubon Society, California Trout, Sierra Club, and other parties. A series of landmark court decisions over the years directed the Water Board to amend the DWP's water rights to protect ecological, recreational, and other values at Mono Lake, and to restore historic fisheries in tributary streams decimated by years of diversions.

During the lengthy process that led to the decision, the Mono Lake Committee and other environmental groups supported raising the level of Mono

Lake to 6,390 feet or higher to protect the basin's unique and fragile ecosystem. The environmental groups were joined in their position by numerous state and federal agencies, among them the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, State Lands Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Fish and Game.

It may take 20 years for the lake to reach the target level of 6,392 feet. In the meantime, the Water Board

decision requires the DWP to fund the continued restoration of Mono Lake's tributary streams (this is currently being done under court order) and to restore wetland habitat around Mono Lake as mitigation for environmental damage caused by the diversions. Mono Lake and its attendant wetlands and lagoons once hosted hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl each fall. The declining lake level and desiccation of streams caused the permanent loss of much of this habitat.

Significantly, the Water Board recognized that replacement for the loss of Mono Basin water is available to L. A. through development of water reclamation facilities and continued conservation programs. For years, the Mono Lake Committee worked to secure state and federal funding for the development of these projects which will provide L. A. an alternative to Mono Basin water without causing additional pressure on other environmentally sensitive areas in the state like the Bay Delta.

Although Mono Lake is saved on paper, it will take many years and intensive labor before the basin's streams and wetlands are restored to some semblance of their former health. And, while the DWP agreed not to appeal the decision and to work with the environmental groups and agencies to implement the Water Board's order, many details remain to be worked out.

*Sally Miller is the Mono Lake Committee's eastern Sierra representative and a director of the California Wilderness Coalition.*



California gulls at Mono Lake

Photo by Michael Dressler

## Environmentalists sought for Option 9 advisory committees

When the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management set about implementing Option 9, the president's plan for the forests of the Pacific Northwest, the agencies will work in conjunction with panels of interested citizens. The advisory committees will include representatives of the conservation community who live in the affected region, along with representatives of state, local, or tribal governments, loggers, ranchers, miners, and many other interested parties. Applications for the three California committees are being accepted through December 30.

Environmentalists familiar with Option 9 and its implementation to date believe the advisory committees, which will forward recommendations to the federal agencies, could have a significant effect on how the Pacific Northwest forests are managed. Although the agencies will determine the composition of the committees, nominations are being solicited.

Applicants and nominees must be U.S. citizens knowledgeable about the issues involved and able to attend meetings throughout their region. Travel expenses will be reimbursed, and a per diem paid for attending meetings.

For more information or to receive a nomination packet, contact:

**Klamath Province** Virginia Bracken, Klamath National Forest at (916) 842-6131, extension 1300.

**Northwest Sacramento Province** Steve Fitch, Forest Supervisor, Shasta-Trinity National Forest at (916) 246-5222.

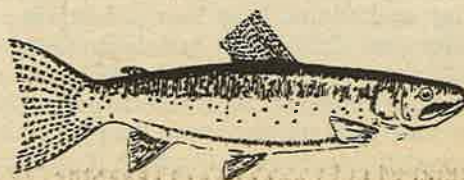
**California Coast** Dan Chisholm, Forest Supervisor, Mendocino National Forest at (916) 934-3316.

## Fishing poles

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Wilderness is a multiple-use land allocation. Wilderness areas serve human recreational needs while also playing a role in maintaining the viability of species and biodiversity. Proper application of ecosystem management is an attempt to evaluate and balance the multiple and, at times, antagonistic uses. The result will probably include allowing some lakes to return to non-trout status while others continue to be stocked. As a wilderness user who likes to fish, I will favor continued stocking (at least in areas I like to visit); as a biodiversity advocate, I'll support eliminating non-endemic trout when the integrity of the aquatic ecosystem appears to be significantly adversely impacted. As a political realist I will advocate positions that do not unnecessarily alienate any users. The question is where to draw the line. Fred apparently favors allowing continued human use—including the use of polluting camp stoves—but not fish-stocking, while Pister wants to continue stocking but (presumably) would not favor letting off-road vehicles in. Both positions are defensible. We should realize, however, that the logical position for those who believe biodiversity alone should be the criterion for wilderness management is total removal of humans, not just their fishing poles. Any advocates?

*When he's not fishing, Felice Pace heads the Klamath Forest Alliance in Etna, California.*



## Trout-stocking

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long, but in lakes, one- to three-pound fish are not uncommon. This is one of the reasons that they have been planted in nearly 400 lakes. At present, goldens are known to occur in about 230 lakes. If stocking were terminated, golden trout would be limited to the fewer than 60 lakes with adequate natural reproduction.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has stated that it is willing to work closely with the Forest Service to develop a rational fisheries management plan for each wilderness area using the results of amphibian surveys now being conducted. If it can be shown that amphibian populations might benefit from changes in the trout-stocking program, the stocking of individual lakes or lake basins could be discontinued. Even chemical eradication of existing fish populations cannot be ruled out, particularly if deemed necessary to remove fish from several lakes within a basin of largely fishless lakes. Fish eradication in this instance might reduce the potential for unauthorized fish transplants but, more importantly, would reduce the potential for local extirpations resulting from habitat fragmentation and isolation of frog populations.

In conclusion, the wilderness lakes of California provide an important fishing resource for the American people. In recent years, as trout fisheries have been diminished elsewhere by environmental degradation, wilderness lakes have taken on added significance as a source of wild trout fishing. In my opinion, with careful planning wilderness lakes can continue to be managed to provide a high-quality angling experience consistent with maintenance of wilderness and biological values.

*Eric Gerstung is a DFG fisheries biologist; the views expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of any state agency.*

## Roadless areas

# Will ecosystem management manage to supplant NEPA?

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while, would like to see the area left alone to protect permanently its unique ecology and geology, while allowing non-consumptive recreation—cross-country skiing, hiking, etc.—to continue.

The headwaters of the Owens River are the repository of the eastside's most extensive old-growth forest. Towering groves of red fir shelter forest carnivores, and fragile sub-alpine meadows are ablaze with wildflowers each summer.

The headwaters are also a repository of irreplaceable clues about the region's geologic and volcanic past. Pumice deposits from historic eruptions are storehouses of information about the volcano's trajectory—storehouses that can disappear with one pass of a logging crew.

In 1988, the Forest Service promised to prepare a comprehensive watershed analysis and environmental impact statement (EIS) to examine how the various proposed uses of the Owens River headwaters would affect the area. In 1992, with the advent of ecosystem management, the Forest Service announced that the Mammoth-June region had been named a pilot project for the implementation of ecosystem management. All was quiet until this past fall, when the Forest Service unveiled a process by which ecosystem management will be used to determine the future of the Owens River headwaters.

### W(h)ither ecosystem management?

In a four-page summary and at an October public meeting, the Forest Service presented its new process, designed to "provide Forest Service decision makers the information to make choices on which projects should be evaluated and implemented to meet the goals and objectives of the [Inyo] forest plan." At the heart of the process is defining the desired condition, "an integrated and pragmatic expression of the desired state or condition of ecosystems or ecosystem processes, now and in the future." The summary further states that "describing the desired condition will be a major focus of the [Mammoth-June] project and will require extensive public and agency involvement.

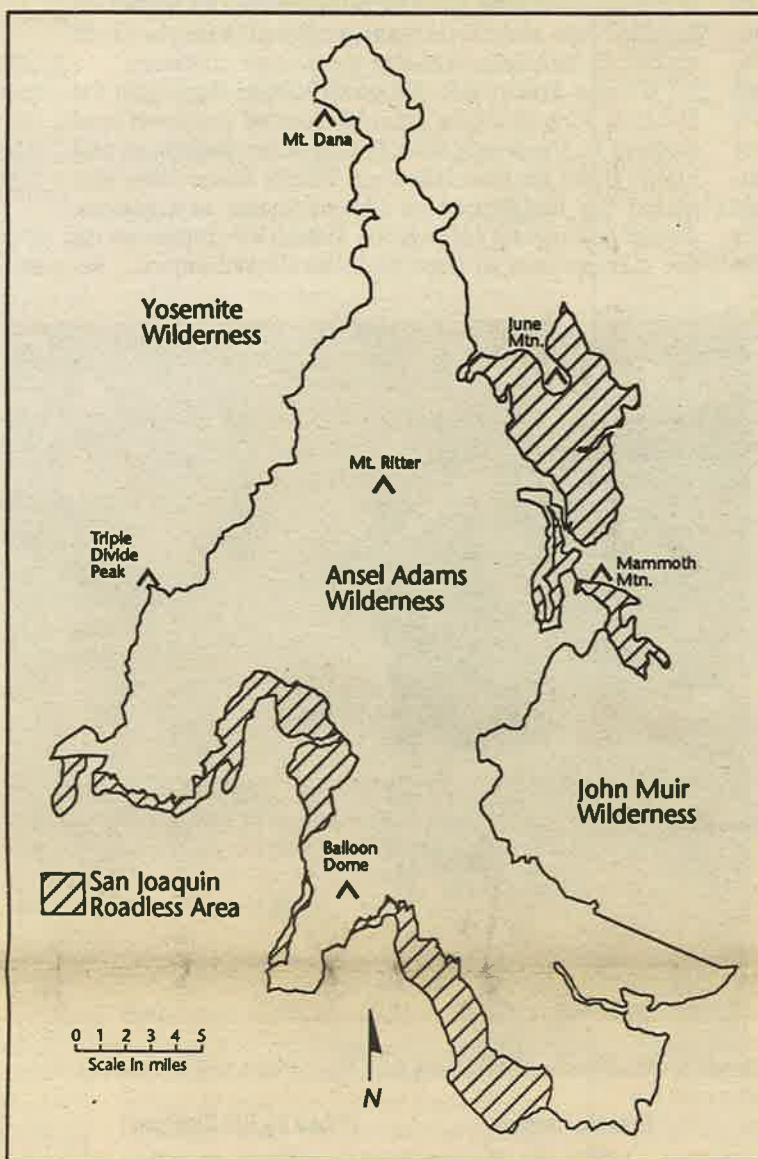
...The desired condition[s] developed for the various resource areas [e.g. timber, wildlife] will have to be compared and balanced so that they are not in conflict with each other. This step will also require significant agency and public involvement."

Once the agency determines the desired condition for the Mammoth-June area, it will prepare a list of "possible management practices" to attain the desired condition. The Forest Supervisor will then decide which practices to implement and develop a schedule for implementation. The projects selected will be analyzed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. NEPA, enacted in 1970, mandates the disclosure of the environmental impacts of any proposed federal action and lays out a specific process for public involvement.

Eastside conservationists have some concerns with the Forest Service's approach. These include:

1. The Forest Service asserts that determining the desired condition is not an action or decision subject to NEPA because the Inyo forest plan already made the decisions on which the desired condition will be based. Environmentalists don't agree. They believe the direction in the forest plan is vague and often conflicting. Furthermore, the forest plan was crafted in an era when commodity outputs like recreation visitor days and timber targets determined the plan's direction. Ecosystem management supposedly has abolished such targets, yet the Mammoth-June study is constrained at the outset by reliance on an outdated plan.

2. The agency has promised "extensive public involvement" in determining the desired condition, yet the process is not subject to NEPA until after critical decisions



The San Joaquin Roadless Area lies on both sides of the Sierra crest, in the Inyo and Sierra national forests. Map by Jim Eaton

are made. The Forest Service says "since this is not a NEPA analysis, the traditional environmental documents such as environmental assessments and environmental impact statements will not be used to document the results of this planning effort." Instead, the agency says it will release reports, technical papers, and summaries describing the desired condition and possible management practices.

Because NEPA won't be invoked until after the Forest Service has determined the desired condition, members of the public won't be able to seek administrative reconsideration through the appeals process if they disagree with the agency's data collection and analysis, definition of desired condition, or chosen projects. The Forest Service itself recognizes the challenges inherent in defining desired conditions: Desired conditions may be in "conflict with each other" and will have to be "compared and balanced." Conservationists believe that the desired condition must be determined through the NEPA process to allow for consideration of a range of alternatives and formal public involvement.

3. The agency promised in its 1988 Inyo forest plan to conduct a watershed analysis and EIS focusing on specific proposed projects and their potential impacts. While the Forest Service still could conduct the watershed analysis after the desired condition is determined, there is no guarantee that it will. Given the track record of the Inyo National Forest, environmentalists fear that the agency will jettison the more comprehensive analysis in favor of less stringent NEPA documents on individual projects (e.g. environmental assessments and categorical exclusions).

4. At the October presentation, the Forest Service seemed intent on using fire as a tool to manage the Owens

River headwaters. Environmentalists agree that reintroducing fire is critical but are concerned that the agency may be invoking fire as a smokescreen to ultimately develop wildlands such as the San Joaquin Roadless Area. Such experimental management has no place in roadless areas; the Forest Service should reserve its experiments for areas already impacted by years of intensive timber management.

### The SNEP Connection

Interestingly, the Mammoth-June Ecosystem Management Project is not only a Forest Service pilot project but also is being monitored and partially funded by the congressionally authorized Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) as a case study. Congress impaneled the SNEP, a team of scientists, to provide an accurate assessment of the entire Sierra Nevada ecoregion. According to the Forest Service, the SNEP is interested in the process the Forest Service is using to implement ecosystem management for Mammoth-June and in whether it could be applied throughout the Sierra. Environmentalists hope that the SNEP will provide an objective assessment of the Forest Service's process, an assessment that takes into account the agency's failure to adhere to the intent of NEPA when making decisions affecting federal lands.

In sum, eastside conservationists are increasingly concerned about what ecosystem management will mean for the Owens River headwaters. What at one time seemed a promising direction appears simply to be new wording on the same old face, with an ominous twist: Will ecosystem management replace NEPA and disallow citizens' rights?

Sally Miller monitors the San Joaquin Roadless Area for Friends of the Inyo. To receive a summary of the Mammoth-June Ecosystem Management Project and get on the agency's mailing list, contact Bob Hawkins, Winter Sports Specialist, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514; (619) 873-2490.

## Mt. Shasta stripped from National Register

A decision to add Mount Shasta to the National Register of Historic Places has been reversed in response to opposition by loggers, developers, and others who feared its listing would prohibit their expanded use of the mountain. Instead of placing the entire mountain on the register, as Native Americans and environmentalists had proposed, only the existing Mount Shasta Wilderness and the area around Panther Meadows will be included.

Sites in the register are subject to review before development is allowed, but development is not necessarily prohibited. Native Americans who consider Shasta sacred and environmentalists have long sought to stop a new downhill-ski area from being built high on the mountain in roadless lands, where an avalanche destroyed a previous resort.

## Modoc

continued from page 1

The first meeting of the Forest Service, the timber industry, and conservationists was held in October. That meeting revealed profound differences among the three parties. Yet despite these differences, it was clear to many in attendance that a compromise beneficial to the small, family-owned mills in the area, the Forest Service, and the Modoc's wildlands is possible.

Several more meetings and a field trip are planned between now and January. Stay tuned.

Ryan Henson is the CWC's conservation associate.

## Conservation report

# Minding mushrooms and martens

continued from page 1

**Sierra Nevada:** Supported a Natural Resources Defense Council petition to protect Sierra Nevada populations of small forest carnivores such as the marten, fisher, and red fox. Submitted comments on the plan to manage the California spotted owl, the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project report, and various salvage logging or "forest health" proposals currently being crafted by Congress and the Forest Service. In addition to these purely defensive efforts, the CWC is working with many of its member groups and allies on a campaign to save the region's remaining wild rivers, old-growth forests, and roadless areas.

**Northwest:** Fought to improve President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan (Option 9), which was adopted in April. The CWC continues to monitor the implementation of Option 9 in California's four northwestern national forests (plus small portions of the Modoc and Lassen national forests included in the plan). In a recent meeting with the president's forestry advisor, we again argued for additional protections for old-growth and roadless areas.

**Angeles National Forest (NF):** Submitted comments on mining and recreation management in the Sheep Mountain and San Gabriel wilderness areas.

**Eldorado NF:** With Friends Aware of Wildlife Needs and the California Mule Deer Association, protested overgrazing, off-road vehicle use, and the construction of oversized bridges in the Caples Creek Roadless Area. Submitted comments on plans to regulate commercial mushroom gathering and manage sensitive plant populations.

**Inyo NF:** In league with Friends of the Inyo, defeated a salvage logging proposal for the San Joaquin Roadless Area. Submitted comments on draft grazing reforms.

**Klamath NF:** Opposed a salvage sale within the Siskiyou Roadless Area. Submitted comments on proposed salvage logging within or adjacent to the Dillon Creek watershed. Provided input on commercial mushroom gathering.

**Lassen NF:** Opposed several timber sales adjacent to the Butt Mountain Roadless Area, as well as salvage sales proposed for the Polk Springs and Mill Creek roadless areas. Submitted comments on restoring the Soldier Mountain area. Opposed an illegally constructed road in the Ishi Wilderness and submitted scoping comments on the forthcoming draft management plan for the Thousand Lakes Wilderness.

**Los Padres NF:** Submitted comments on proposed grazing management plans for a portion of the forest that includes the De La Guerra and Santa Cruz roadless areas.

**Mendocino NF:** With Mendocino Forest Watch, the Backcountry Horsemen of California, and other groups, helped shape the forthcoming draft management plan for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. Provided testimony to the General Accounting Office concerning off-road vehicle use in the forest. Opposed logging adjacent to the Grindstone Roadless Area and a proposal to upgrade the Mendocino Pass Road to a two-lane, paved highway. Submitted comments on a watershed analysis for the Middle Fork Eel River (the first step toward opening the area to logging under Option 9).

**Modoc NF:** With the Klamath Forest Alliance and Oregon Natural Resources Council, appealed an old-growth salvage sale adjacent to the Knox Mountain Roadless Area. The appeal led to current negotiations with the Forest Service (see article on page 1). Submitted comments on proposed salvage logging adjacent to the South Warner Wilderness and a plan to allow fire to play a more natural role in the South Warner's ecology.

**Plumas NF:** Urged the Forest Service to expand its list of proposed wild-and-scenic river candidates.

**Sequoia NF:** Protested plans to log old-growth forests adjacent to Jennie Lakes Wilderness. Submitted com-

ments on prescribed burning plans for the Oat Mountain Roadless Area and a final management plan for the north and south fork Kern wild-and-scenic river corridors.

**Shasta-Trinity NF:** Opposed salvage logging in the Bonanza King Roadless Area. Supported proposed road closures in the South Fork Trinity River watershed and higher flows for the main-stem Trinity River. Also supported the designation of Mount Shasta as a historic district (see update on page 4). Submitted comments on the management of the Chanchelulla Wilderness. Re-



Female marten

Photo by Bill Zielinski

quested that Congress appropriate funds to purchase old-growth parcels slated for logging within the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness.

**Sierra NF:** Submitted scoping comments on the forthcoming draft management plan for the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, and Monarch wilderness areas.

**Six Rivers NF:** Supported Rep. Dan Hamburg's Headwaters Forest Act and its proposed Headwaters Wilderness. Submitted comments on a watershed analysis for Pilot Creek, recreation development projects in the Smith River National Recreation Area, and a proposed foot and horse trail in the Board Camp Roadless Area.

**Stanislaus NF:** Submitted comments on a plan to delete portions of the Tryon Peak Roadless Area from the proposed additions to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Opposed plans to spray several thousand acres (including the Tuolumne River Roadless Area) with herbicides to promote conifer regeneration after decades of clearcutting. Opposed a Clavey River dam and praised the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for denying a permit to build it.

**Tahoe NF:** Requested that Congress appropriate funds for the purchase of inholdings in the Castle Peak Roadless Area. Protested proposals to allow snowmobiles and mountain bikes in the Castle Peak Roadless Area. Asked the Forest Service to exclude Bald Mountain Roadless Area from the proposed Cottonwood Salvage Sale. Encouraged the agency to expand its list of recommendations for wild-and-scenic river candidates.

**Toiyabe NF:** With the Wilderness Society and Sorensen's Resort, appealed salvage logging plans for the Raymond Peak and Horsethief roadless areas. Supported a Forest Service decision to ban cross-country off-road vehicle use and a decision to designate Rainbow Meadows (in the West Walker Roadless Area) a research natural area.

### Bureau of Land Management

**Statewide:** Praised Bureau of Land Management (BLM) grazing reform proposals and encouraged the agency to strengthen them further. Met with groups from throughout the western states to discuss the drafting of a Great American Desert Protection Act that includes the eastern Sierra and California portions of the Great Basin.

**Desert:** Helped secure passage of the California Desert Protection Act, which designated 7.6 million acres of wilderness in southeastern California. Protested the placement of a firing range adjacent to the Masonic Mountain WSA. Submitted comments on proposed plans to develop springs and construct fences for cattle in the Hauser Mountain WSA and on the final management plan for the South Coast Resource Area. Opposed the placement of a stripmine next to Manly Peak Wilderness and the former Slate Range WSA.

**Bakersfield District:** Submitted comments on the draft management plan for the Caliente Resource Area.

**Susanville District:** Requested that a powerline not be constructed near Tule Mountain, Five Springs, and Skedaddle WSAs. Proposed that Dry Valley, Five Springs, Twin Peaks, Skedaddle, and Buffalo Hills WSAs be managed together as the future Smoke Creek Wilderness.

**Ukiah District:** Supported road closure efforts, a ban on off-road vehicle use, and proposed rules for commercial mushroom harvesting in the King Range WSA and adjacent lands. Protested the logging of a Red Mountain WSA inholding. Continued to monitor the implementation of Option 9, which applies to the BLM as well as the Forest Service. Proposed that Eden Valley and Thatcher Ridge WSAs be combined with the adjacent Thatcher and Elk Creek roadless areas of the Mendocino NF and designated the Yuki Wilderness. Supported wild-and-scenic river status for Cache Creek and additional land acquisitions along the creek. Continued to work with the BLM to develop a coordinated plan for

Cache Creek WSA and adjacent lands. Opposed continued off-road vehicle use on Cow Mountain and praised the BLM for deciding to forego logging in the Cahto Peak region. Provided volunteer labor for habitat restoration and primitive recreation development projects.

### National Park Service

**Statewide:** Submitted comments on proposed changes to a Department of the Interior policy allowing some jeep trails and other primitive routes within national park and BLM lands to become sanctioned rights-of-way. Under current law, such rights-of-way may become paved roads.

**Lassen Volcanic National Park:** Opposed the removal of native vegetation along the shores of Manzanita Lake. Submitted comments suggesting that the former downhill ski area near the park's south entrance be added to the Lassen Wilderness.

**Yosemite National Park:** Met with park officials to discuss fish-stocking and its impacts on aquatic ecosystems.

### Alliances

Took part in the Wildland Project's Great Basin meeting; organized and hosted the California meeting. At both gatherings, activists and conservation biologists began mapping out a draft network of core wilderness reserves, buffer zones, and migration corridors.

Organized and chaired California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA) meetings on Option 9 and the various threats to the forests of the Sierra Nevada. Published and distributed the CAFA newsletter.

For more information on any of the projects or initiatives the CWC worked on in 1994, or if you would like to discuss our priorities for next year, please contact Jim Eaton or Ryan Henson at 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616; (916) 758-0380.

## Book review

# Delighting in California's forests

### *California Forests and Woodlands: A Natural History*

By Verna R. Johnston, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994, 222 pp., \$30.

From its lovely jacket photographs to its final chapter (a brief discussion of a few of the issues involved in preserving forest diversity), this delightful little book is worth your time. An almost-comprehensive guide to the state's woodlands (valley riparian woodlands are omitted), the book also discusses many of the plants, insects, and animals which occupy and depend on the wonderful trees and tree assemblages of California. It is probably impossible to read the chapter on the Klamath Ranges without planning a trip to this area which hosts the greatest diversity of conifers on earth (go ahead—try it yourself!).

Like many natural histories, the book does not provide detailed information on identification and characterization of the trees and other plants and animals it discusses. What it does provide is a pleasantly written guide to the plant communities defined by the trees, descriptions of the denizens of these communities, and descriptions of their interactions with the trees, whether destructive or beneficial. The author, a longtime biology teacher at San Joaquin Delta College, focuses on the importance of the many species described in making woodland communities the fascinating places they are. One emerges from the book with a great interest in revisiting California's forests and woodlands to search for evidence of the unusual insects which are significant factors in the forest cycles, and in spending more time watching the birds and animals described in the book pursue their busy lives.

The book is illustrated with frequent line drawings (by Carla Simmons) and with maps showing the distribution of the natural communities it discusses, and includes

several color plates of photographs by the author, an accomplished photographer. Like most of the other volumes in the U. C. Press California Natural History Guide series (this is number 58), it will be of interest to all of us who spend time in outdoor California, or at least contemplate spending time there.

—George M. Clark

## On beyond bookstores

### Titles of interest, and where to find them

#### **The Wilderness Act Handbook**

A revised edition of an old friend. Includes the text of the 1964 act and an interpretation, along with summaries of other important laws. Published by the Wilderness Society (Attn: Publications, 900 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20006). Cost: \$5 (includes shipping).

#### **How to Appeal Forest Service Project and Activity Decisions, A Citizen Handbook to the 1993 Rules**

Better than its title. For anyone who wants to tackle the Forest Service under the new appeal regs. Published by the Wilderness Society (address above). Cost: \$6 (includes shipping).

#### **Northern Sierra Peaks Guide**

Self-published by Pete Yamagata, whose photographs often grace these pages, the guide describes more than 60 climbs. All proceeds go to the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club for wilderness conservation in Nevada. (Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club, P. O. Box 8096, Reno, NV 89507) Cost: \$8.95 for Club members; \$9.95 general (add \$2 for shipping and tax).

## Seen in better wildernesses everywhere

Jeanny 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. Ben 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.



**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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### **Wilderness Trivia Answer**

Trout are in more than 5,000 lakes and reservoirs and 20,000 streams.

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### **The Wilderness Record**

The *Wilderness Record* is the monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition, but not all articles published herein reflect the views of the Coalition. Articles may be reprinted; credit would be appreciated. Subscription is free with membership.

The *Record* welcomes submissions on California wilderness and related subjects. We reserve the right to edit all work.

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*"The only thing unhealthy occurring in our native forests is logging—and the disruption of ecological functions carried out in the name of forest health by the Forest Service."*

—George Wuerthner, to Smokey Bear (page 2)

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