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# WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

November 1996

## Final push to stop destructive logging rider sales Several areas sold to timber industry, activists hopeful other sales can be halted

By Ryan Henson

The notorious "logging rider" passed by Congress last year has led to a dramatic increase in the number of roadless areas and ancient forests in our public lands threatened with logging. The rider exempted several destructive types of logging from federal environmental law and prohibited conservation groups from effectively fighting such projects.

Every day new reports come in from the woods describing the latest logging destruction. The good news is that as we approach the rider's expiration on December 31, 1996 the number of new logging proposals are decreasing. The bad news is that many California forests have been sold to the timber industry over the last few weeks so that they can be logged.

Some of the areas we may soon lose include old-growth portions of the Corbin Creek watershed in the Mendocino National Forest (the logging project is called the Kop/Gibson timber sale). The Forest Service plans to clearcut so much old-growth in the area that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued six "take permits" to the agency for northern spotted owls. A take permit authorizes the permittee to kill an endangered species (in this case, six unfortunate owls) without violating the Endangered Species Act. Ironically, the Forest Service's own data shows that northern spotted owl populations in the Corbin Creek watershed are on the decline. The timber industry paid the Forest Service over \$3 million for the right to log this important area.

There have been at least eight other national forest wild areas lost because of the logging rider. The good news is that many more areas in California have been protected due to fierce pressure from pro-

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The Canyon Creek watershed in the Klamath National Forest has been given a thirty day reprieve by the Clinton administration. View of Hobbit Tooth Peak in the Marble Mountain Wilderness in background. Photo by Felice Pace

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## BLM to drop protective status of Owens Valley Wilderness Study Areas

By Jim Eaton

Unlike the Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was left out of the 1964 Wilderness Act. It was not until the passage of the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLMPA) in 1976 that the BLM was required to identify potential wilderness areas, study them, and recommend to Congress whether or not the BLM believed the lands qualified for wilderness designation.

The BLM is now proposing to declassify six Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Owens Valley without ever conducting the required studies. Also proposed for delisting is an area in the Benton Range north of Bishop and an unstudied area near Bridgeport.

These wildlands are small in size, but they adjoin much larger Forest Service roadless areas. The Forest Service was supposed to do the required studies of the WSAs when they reviewed their roadless areas in 1988, but except for the Benton Range, they forgot to do so. Now BLM wants to remove protection from the areas without completing the studies.

This is not the first time these areas have come under attack. In 1983 Interior Secretary James Watt tried to drop these and 48 other WSAs in California. Environmental groups successfully sued Watt to have these "Watt droppings" reinstated to their study status. (three of these are now designated wilderness areas).

Except for the six Owens Valley areas and the Bridgeport area, the studies required by Congress have been completed statewide. Despite environmentalists pointing out that these WSAs were overlooked, the BLM has ignored them—until now.

One of the WSAs, Paiute, stands in the way of a miner trying to quarry cinders on Forest Service land. He has requested permission to build a road across the WSA, although the BLM cannot allow him to build the road as long as the land retains its WSA status.

The BLM's management plan for the region is clear on this: "Since Congress may modify any Bureau recommendation, the Bureau will protect wilderness values in all Wilderness Study Areas from impairment until Congress and the President make their final wilderness decisions."

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## California Wilderness Coalition

2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5  
 Davis, California 95616  
 (916) 758-0380  
 Fax (916) 758-0382  
 cwc@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us

*...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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**Editor**  
 Herb Walker  
**Writers**  
 Louis Blumberg  
 John Buckley  
 Jim Eaton  
 Jerry Greenberg  
 Ryan Henson  
 Elyssa Rosen  
**Photos & Graphics**  
 John Buckley  
 Jim Eaton  
 Sally Miller  
 Felice Pace  
**Advisors**  
 W. Cohen, J. Eaton

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## Coalition News

### Monthly Report

In the March *Wilderness Record*, Felice Pace wrote that those of us outraged by the war against our public forests should "get off our butts and into the streets." Last month we did just that.

Frustrated by yet another ancient forest salvage timber sale in a roadless area, Ryan and Paul organized a protest in front of the Forest Service's San Francisco headquarters. Felice planned a simultaneous event at the Klamath National Forest office in Yreka.

At issue was the Canon timber sale at the doorstep to the Marble Mountain Wilderness. We also were not at all pleased with the plans to log Pilot Creek in a roadless area adjacent to the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

Nearly 100 people came to The City to carry signs, chant, and listen to short speeches. Just before Ryan's talk, a Forest Service official gave him a letter—the Department of Agriculture had overruled the Forest Service and granted a 30-day stay on the Canon sale.

Today we learned that after the bids were opened on the Pilot sale, but before the high bid was accepted, this sale, too, was delayed.

These sales were delayed, not killed. The delay will postpone the decisions until after the election. On one hand, it may just be the Clinton administration's way of avoiding embarrassment over these environmental issues before the election. The sales may go through next month.

On the other hand, the administration finally may have gotten the message that the Forest Service is out of control, the public wants these sales stopped, and the White House has the responsibility and authority to do so. Perhaps boosted by a strong re-election and the defeat of many anti-environmental members of Congress, the Clinton administration will take charge of the Forest Service and enforce a sensible, scientific forest policy.

We can only hope.

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We loaned our office to the Sierra Club recently for several evenings of phone banking for a local event. It wasn't too many years ago that we had a single phone line; now we have enough for a group of volunteers to phone bank.

It was interesting to watch. First was the challenge for each caller to announce that he or she was calling on behalf of the Sierra Club, and that "this is *not* a fundraising call" before being hung up on.

Next was the plethora of excuses of why the person being called could not attend the event. The winner, by far, was that the parent would be attending his or her child's soccer match—a most popular event in Davis. Not a bad excuse, either.

I warned them about how I now treat such calls. Wendy and I belong to so many environmental organizations and other social change groups that our evenings are filled with solicitation calls. If someone asks if James Eaton is available (my friends call me Jim) or ask if I'm Mr. Cohen (I kept my name when I married), they get a curt "no" and a dial tone. Paul tested this one evening and found it to be true.

What surprised me was who the phone bankers were. I expected some new volunteers off the street, but instead they were Sierra Club activists, spouses of Sierra Club staff, and staff members of other organizations. Not to put down other volunteers, but these activists already put a lot of volunteer time into the cause. It was pleasantly surprising to see them give up another of their evenings to take on this unpleasant task.

So the next time you get a call from an environmental organization and it's "not a fundraising call," please be nice. It's probably some poor, overworked volunteer who is doing his or her best to help the cause.

**By Jim Eaton**

### "Troubled Waters" shows economic benefits of forest and stream protection Copies of video available to CWC members

"Troubled Waters", a new 10-minute video program from Green Fire Productions, highlights the economic importance of protecting the national forests and watersheds connected to them. It features Ralph Nader, a horselogger, fishers, economists, and a city water manager on the economic benefits of protecting public forests and streams.

The video program is being distributed nationwide by a network of 100 nonprofit groups and thousands of concerned citizens in an effort to raise public awareness of the economic value of preserving public forests and streams. Individuals are encouraged to get copies to show and circulate in each community and present to news reporters and political representatives.

Green Fire, a nonprofit video production organization, in December released "Logs, Lies, & Videotape", an award-winning program on the 1995 salvage logging rider that has been shown in schools, community centers, newspaper offices, and politicians' offices across the country. That program can now also be viewed as a multimedia presentation on the Internet.

The California Wilderness Coalition has copies of "Troubled Waters" available for distribution to anyone interested. Contact our office to get your copy sent right away. "Troubled Waters" is free, although a small donation to cover the cost of postage would not be refused.

Please send a complimentary copy of the *Wilderness Record* to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Area of interest (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

May we use your name? \_\_\_\_\_

California Wilderness Coalition,  
 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616

### Wilderness Trivia Question

**What three Wilderness Study Areas, dropped by former Interior Secretary James Watt, later were designated as wilderness?**

Answer on page 7

## Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project

# Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project's view of fire— what will it mean for the Range of Light's forests?

By John Buckley

For the last few years, a great deal of controversy concerning forest management in the Sierra Nevada has centered around fire. Loggers and their supporters have argued that we must aggressively log the forests in order to open up the forest canopy to stop destructive wildfires. Environmentalists have blamed logging practices for actually increasing the risk of fire and making fires burn more intensely. Whenever major wildfires have wiped out large sections of forest, everyone has pointed fingers at everyone else and used the fires to justify their positions. Yet no clear scientific evidence was available.

When the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) report was released to the public in June 1996, fire and fuels were one of the primary topics of the scientific assessment. After more than two years of compiling fire records, evaluating fire ecology in the range, and attempting to come to conclusions, the SNEP team released some key findings related to fire as well as a host of fire-related data. These critical findings have answered some important questions, but perhaps more important than the answers are the major questions still unanswered.

### Adapted to fire

The SNEP authors described how many Sierra Nevada species, both plant and animal, have evolved with fire and have adapted to fire, especially in the chaparral and mixed-conifer forest habitats. There was also a discussion about how fire was used by Native Californians for many purposes, and that once lit, such fires often burned until the rains eventually put them out.

### Presettlement fire history

But even within the SNEP scientific team, there was no clear consensus as to pre-Gold Rush fire conditions. The majority opinion was based on the premise that prior to settlement, most of the low-to-middle elevation woodlands and forests of the Sierra Nevada burned regularly and frequently from lightning fires and fires lit by Native Californians. The SNEP report claimed that these fires covered large areas, burned for months at a time, and were primarily low intensity. This majority opinion emphasized the view that the forests were mostly open and parklike as the large trees were left undamaged, while most bushes, young trees, and surface fuels were consumed every few years as these cool, repetitive fires burned through the forest.

The alternative view by other SNEP scientists suggested that while some forests were certainly open and parklike, there were many other forest areas that were dense or thick. This view saw fire as being much more erratic, much hotter in some forest stands when it did burn, and more likely to have completely wiped out sections of forests. This view said that stand-destroying, hot-burning wildfires were more common because many parts of the forest did not burn frequently enough to prevent a build-up of fuels.

The majority view is important to those of us trying to protect wild places and reduce logging in the Sierra Nevada's national forests. The view that the forests were mostly open and parklike can be used by logging advocates to justify widespread logging of most of the small to medium-sized trees in the forest. It can also be used by logging advocates to claim that it is necessary to push new roads into roadless areas in order to thin out the thickets of trees that have grown due to fire suppression. On the other hand, a careful reading of the fire and fuels section shows that logging has contributed to fire problems—a message that aids those concerned about the effects of logging on forests and wildlife.

### Effects of Euro-American activities

The report describes how fires started by miners, sheepherders, settlers, and loggers all burned under conditions much different than the natural fires previously. Settlers used fire to clear the land. Sheepherders used hot, intentionally-destructive fires to get rid of forests or brush to provide ground covers for their sheep. Miners, loggers, and other settlers frequently started unintended fires that quickly escaped control efforts and burned fiercely.

In the early 20th century, fire suppression became the accepted policy. With limited manpower and equipment, the coolest, low-intensity fires were the ones that were usually suppressed, while the hot-burning fires continued to escape control. Although technology has improved greatly and today's fire forces are well-trained and well-funded, the results are still the same. The fires with the potential for the greatest damage are usually the fires that escape control, while the fires that are easiest to catch because they are cool and low-intensity are the fires that are put out.

Logging, through its effect on forest structure, local microclimate, and the accumulation of logging slash (debris), is described in the SNEP report as having increased fire severity more than any other human activity. The removal of the largest trees, especially large fire-resistant pines, takes away the trees most likely to survive fires and replaces them with younger, less fire-resistant trees (especially cedars and white firs) that are often in dense thickets vulnerable to rapid fire spread. Logging slash scattered about the forest floor has contributed to explosive wildfires that escape suppression efforts. And large blocks of even-age tree plantations after clearcuts and reforestation have created continuous fuel beds that are ripe for crown fires. Overall, past logging practices have contributed to making forests prone to destructive, stand-destroying fires.

### Fuel conditions and fire risk today

The SNEP team assessment describes today's forests as being much too fuel laden compared to natural conditions. Tree species tend to be shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species. Because natural fires are suppressed and prescribed fire still is not used widely, the natural build-up of pine needles, branches, fallen logs, dead brush, and other fuels accumulates year after year until some source of ignition starts a fire. This condition has been exaggerated over the last decade by numerous years of drought and by high levels of insect infestations that have killed many trees.

The fuel build-up problems are especially troublesome for forest managers because of the increasing development of private lands in the wildland/urban interface areas of the Sierra. As cabins and subdivisions pop up in the midst of forests and oak woodland habitats that naturally burned every few years, the fuel buildups become even more of a potential for disaster. While this problem has been well known for many years, the SNEP report devotes an entire chapter in Volume III to detailed descriptions of the various factors that make fire risk high in many parts of the range, especially the western foothills and lower forest areas.

The chapter on risk explains that most fires that escape control are fires that are burning during the most extreme fire behavior conditions. These are times when



Forest Service fire fighter uses a drip torch to burn forest floor at low intensity cool fall season.  
Photo by John Buckley

the weather is hot, dry, and windy. Such destructive fires usually also burn where fuels are explosive and fire crews have the most difficult time reaching the fires, such as steep river canyons in the lower elevations of the mountains. The SNEP report states that the brush/hardwood and pine belts contain all the ingredients that make for the worst wildfires. Using the Eldorado National Forest as an example, over 40 percent of the study area was rated as likely to burn with flame lengths of 8-12 feet under hot burning conditions. Most such intense fires simply cannot be stopped until they reach the nearest ridgetop.

### Alternatives for the fire/fuel problem

Based on their fire risk maps, assessment of presettlement conditions, and evaluation that fuels are drastically out of balance, the majority of SNEP scientists suggested a number of possible solutions or goals that could address the fire/fuel problem. Most dramatic was their endorsement of defensible fuel profile zones (DFPZ's) as a system of fuelbreaks strategically placed along ridgelines to limit the spread of large severe fires. These DFPZ's would be forested areas that were logged of most small and mid-sized trees, leaving mostly fire-tolerant larger trees in the midst of very low vegetation.

Logging advocates immediately endorsed such fuelbreaks, and the Forest Service likened the DFPZ's to

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## Endangered Species

# Central California coho salmon listed as threatened: Agency delays listing of other populations Environmentalists denounce decision as politically motivated

By Elyssa Rosen

Environmentalists and fishing industry representatives denounced a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) coho listing decision as "a token effort" and a "deferral to timber industry politics."

After years of petitions and delays, NMFS announced on October 25th a threatened listing for coho in only one of three areas slated for protection under the Endangered Species Act. NMFS opted to protect only central California, excluding central Oregon and California's north coast.

Notably absent in central California is the presence of the timber industry, which critics say has swayed NMFS' decision to delay the rest of the listing.

The coho, which numbered 500,000 a half century ago, have crashed to less than 5,000 fish today, taking with them a \$150 million fishing industry.

"Are we going to wait until the last 1 out of 100 fish is wiped out? Because that's all Wilson administration forestry practices have left us," said Kathy Bailey, Sierra Club California Forestry Chair.

"The National Marine Fisheries Service is trying to make a political solution look like a biological one," said Elyssa Rosen of the California/Nevada/Hawaii Field Office of the Sierra Club. "By allowing timber companies to continue logging at unsustainable rates and destroying coho salmon habitat, NMFS is choosing to let this majestic species go extinct."

"Protecting only a fraction after all these delays is criminal," said Rosen. "Species recovery science tells us to protect the best and restore the rest."

Listing the coho salmon under the Endangered Species Act would significantly increase forest and stream protection for both public and private lands. For example, activists anticipate that national forest grazing, mining, logging, and road construction projects will be scaled-

back to prevent these activities from polluting coho streams. Currently, some of the most destructive national forest logging is occurring in coho habitat. The Forest Service has thus far shown little willingness to moderate its development plans for the sake of endangered fish. The agency will either change its policies if the coho is listed, or face Endangered Species Act lawsuits from conservationists.

Timber industry politics—and dollars—has swayed every step of the coho listing process. Wilson received more than \$20,000 since 1992 from Pacific Lumber Company alone (the corporation attempting to log the well-known Headwaters Forest in Humboldt County). Using language provided by the timber industry, the Wilson administration sent a letter to NMFS Sept. 27 that appealed to the agency to halt the process of listing the coho under the ESA. Since then, a coalition of seven fisheries, restoration and environmental groups—including the Sierra Club—vowed to walk out of Wilson administration meetings to discuss a state-level protection program if the federal government continued to delay protection of the imperiled wild coho salmon.

In a letter to Hilda Diaz-Soltero, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southwest Region, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, California Trout, Salmonid Restoration Federation, Mattole Restoration Council, Environmental Protection Information Center, Northcoast Environmental Center and the Sierra Club blasted Wilson for "a serious act of bad faith" for "current political efforts of the Resources Agency to prevent the timely listing of coho."

"The public has to question Governor Wilson's ability to protect the public trust when corporations like Pacific Lumber/Maxxam are among his biggest campaign contributors," said Rosen.

In July 1995, NMFS responded nine months late to petitions from fishing and conservation groups to protect coho salmon in California, Oregon and Washington under the Endangered Species Act. The action came in response to a suit filed by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund on behalf of 24 groups to compel NMFS to act.

The most significant factor in the decline of the coho is the degradation of its upstream habitat. Increased sediment and water temperatures, both due to heavy logging, are the key salmon killers. Logging from stream sides reduces shade cover, raising stream temperatures to lethal levels. Logging and related road-building send soil into streams, where it absorbs sunlight and further raises water temperature. This process also loads the stream bed with sediment, slowing the flow of water, filling the pools that provide refuge, and burying the gravel where salmon lay their eggs.

"Massive logging and related road building operations up and down California's North Coast have destroyed salmon habitat, the fisheries, and the industries that rely on those fisheries," said Rosen.

*Elyssa Rosen is Campaign Coordinator of the Salmon Forever project of the Sierra Club.*

## Wilderness Study Areas to lose protective status

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Normally, WSAs are protected until Congress makes a final decision on their fate. These eight WSAs, however, were established under a different section of the FLMPA. Known as "Section 202" areas, these small wildlands were selected for study because they are adjacent to larger roadless areas managed by the Forest Service. Once the studies are completed, the Secretary of the Interior has the authority to remove the protective status from these Section 202 areas.

The BLM's argument is that since the Forest Service conducted studies for its roadless areas and found them unsuitable for wilderness, the adjacent WSAs are unsuitable as well.

Environmentalists contend that the wilderness values of these WSAs have never been studied, as required by law. That the Forest Service forgot to include the WSAs when they studied their adjacent roadless areas is unfortunate, however the studies still need to be completed.

The Forest Service was not totally remiss, because they did study both their lands and the BLM WSA in the Benton Range. Since the Forest Service found the area

"unsuitable" for wilderness, the Secretary of the Interior has the legal authority to remove WSA status from this area.

The issue has been confused further by Congress authorizing the disposal of part of one WSA in exchange for the Manzanar Historic Site near Lone Pine. As part of the appropriations bill for the Department of the Interior, Congress agreed to a land swap with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for the site, a World War II Japanese internment camp. BLM recommended a 470-acre portion of the Coyote Southeast WSA for exchange, despite the management plan's direction that "The BLM will not dispose of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)...to non-federal agencies."

While Congress has the authority to dispose of this portion of the WSA, it appears they were unaware of the protected status of

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The Wheeler Ridge Wilderness Study Area.  
Photo by Sally Miller

## Wilderness News

# Timber industry fueling fire fears Misinformation campaign promotes increased logging

By Jerry Greenberg and Louis Blumberg

The 1996 fire season has proven to be one of the largest in recent memory, blackening over five million acres nationwide. Capitalizing on the drama, the timber industry has sought to link wildfire and forest health to promote increased logging on national forests. In a full page advertisement in the August 28 *Los Angeles Times*, the California Forestry Association called "shameful" attempts by concerned citizens to prevent further damage to forests from abusive logging practices. The American Forest and Paper Association, a timber industry trade association, blamed "government red tape and environmental extremism" for blocking increased logging, which it maintains will improve the health of national forests. What is shameful is the deceitful attempt by industry to capitalize on citizens' understandable concern about fire to promote their agenda.

The timber industry neglects to admit that the vast majority of wildfires are not on national forests. According to Forest Service data as of September 1, of the 5.4 million acres burned nationwide, 19.3 percent was national forest land. In other words, nearly 80 percent of this year's fires had nothing to do with national forests.

Type of land	Acreage Burned	Percent
Non-federal (state and private)	1.9 million	36
Bureau of Land Management	1.9 million	36
U.S. Forest Service	1.0 million	19
Bureau of Indian Affairs	215,000	4
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	178,000	3
National Park Service	97,000	2

The lands burning outside national forests include grasslands, shrub and brush, and non-commercial forests such as pinyon-juniper woodland. These are lands the

timber industry has no interest in, which could explain its focus on fires in national forests. In California, 73 percent of the 545,000 acres that have burned are in southern California, where vegetation is largely non-forest and highly flammable. Much of the burned lands in the Sierra and northern California have been brush and chaparral, not commercial timberlands.

The timber industry ignores the growing body of evidence that logging has been a primary cause for the fire hazards that do exist on national forests. There is little disagreement among scientists that excessive logging is one of the primary reasons why some areas in national forests are in bad condition. The most recent evidence is found in this summer's report of the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP), in which a team of scientists concluded that "timber harvest...has increased fire severity more than any other human activity."

The timber industry ignores its year-long abuse of national forests. Despite the historical damage from logging, the timber industry is now asking Americans to believe that logging is needed to enhance forest health. But the last thirteen months of logging under the clearcut rider make a mockery of its plea for trust. Under the industry-sponsored rider, environmental laws protecting national forests were suspended, allowing timber companies to level hundreds of acres of old-growth forests and cut healthy trees under the guise of logging dead and dying timber.

Rather than point fingers, The Wilderness Society and other environmental groups have been leading a coalition effort to provide real solutions to the forest health situation. For four years, this coalition of elected officials, environmentalists, and timber industry representatives has been lobbying Congress to increase funding for prescribed fire and other legitimate fuels treatment activities. This year, the effort was supported by the

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## Owens Valley WSAs

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this land when they passed the legislation.

These are not vast wild places being debated—the total acreage of these six WSAs is under 22,000 acres—but the issue is significant nonetheless. These are legally-designated WSAs and deserve the wilderness studies prescribed by law. Such studies must include not only the WSAs, but the adjacent roadless lands and wilderness as well. The value of these wildlands is in the whole of the larger wilderness, not just the constituent components.

The WSAs in question are listed after their adjacent Forest Service wildlands:

- John Muir Wilderness: Coyote Southeast, Wheeler Ridge, and Laurel-McGee WSAs.
- Inyo Mountains Wilderness: Paiute WSA
- proposed White Mountain Wilderness: Black Canyon and White Mountain WSAs
- Benton Range Further Planning Area: Benton Range WSA
- Sweetwater Further Planning Area: Sweetwater WSA

### What you can do

Write the BLM's state director and ask him not to change the status of these WSAs until the required wilderness studies are completed. Write to:

Ed Hastey, State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
2135 Butano Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95825



North of Bishop, the Benton Range Wilderness Study Area was studied—and rejected for recommendation as a wilderness area. Photo by Jim Eaton

1996 regarding the Long/Damon Timber Sale (letters must be postmarked by this date). Request that the Forest Service confine its post-fire logging operations to road corridors outside the Damon Butte Roadless Area. Also request that all large-diameter trees be spared regardless if they were killed by the fire.

# Modoc wildland threatened New roads, cutting of old-growth planned

By Ryan Henson

Northeastern California's Modoc National Forest is in peril: over a century of logging has left very little ancient forest or wild land unlogged and unroaded. Even many of the forest's roadless areas were logged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In most national forests, roadless areas contain the last, best ancient forest and undisturbed country.

Disturbed or not, the Modoc National Forest's roadless areas are among the best remaining habitats in the region and—if left alone—present an opportunity for the Forest Service to re-create (if possible) wilderness in the Modoc Plateau. The 24,700-acre Damon Butte Roadless Area presents just such a restoration opportunity. Unfortunately, the area burned this summer, and the Forest Service plans to log the area's burned trees.

Looking at the Damon Butte Roadless Area, one would never guess that it is the center of a controversy. The wildland is a dry, volcanic region dominated by sagebrush, mountain mahogany, juniper, and bunchgrass. The frequent fires that burn through the area every few decades ensure the dominance of these fire-tolerant species.

Indeed, the Damon Butte Roadless Area and the lands around it are inherently fire prone. Many of the ecosys-

tems in the region depend upon fire to regenerate themselves and remain healthy. Major fires burned through the roadless area and surrounding lands for millennia, leaving small pockets of old-growth pine behind. While many of these pines were logged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before the area fell under federal ownership, several ancient forest groves remain.

While fires are natural and even essential for the health of the area's ecosystems, combined with logging, they can be devastating. Indeed, much of the land surrounding the roadless area was heavily logged decades ago, and many of the areas that successfully grew back after clearcutting burned completely. At the same time, many of the old-growth groves that escaped high-intensity fires for centuries were destroyed by logging, thus leaving very little old-growth in the area.

Citing the need to recover the market value of the burned forests before they begin to decay, the Forest Service is now proposing to salvage log the Damon Butte Roadless Area and thousands of surrounding acres. To facilitate the logging, the agency plans to construct over twelve miles of road. The California Wilderness Coalition will oppose much of this logging, and we need your help.

### What you can do

Write to Paul Bailey, Devil's Garden Ranger District, 800 West 12th Street, Alturas, CA 96101 by December 5,

## Wilderness News

# SNEP on fire: business as usual not good enough

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the large fuelbreak buffers the agency had been promoting in its Cal-Owl EIS. But environmentalists can point to other statements in the SNEP report such as: "DFPZ's need not be uniform, monotonous areas, however, but may encompass considerable diversity in ages, sizes, and distribution of trees. The key feature should be the general openness and discontinuity of crown fuels, both horizontally and vertically, producing a very low probability of sustained crown fire. Care must be exercised in the design and construction so that forest aesthetic values are largely retained and watershed values are not impaired."

The report emphasized that fuels treatments "would have to be an economically self-sustaining enterprise, supported largely from the sale of forest products." This emphasis would mean that the vast majority of the highest risk lands in the foothills (grasslands, brushfields, and oak woodlands) would not generate commodity products that would pay for fuels treatment. Yet without treatment of these highly flammable fuels, out-of-control wildfires ripping uphill would still burn into the forests above.

### Increased use of prescribed fire

One of the SNEP solutions that environmentalists have long espoused is the increased use of prescribed fire. However, the SNEP report indicated that it was unrealistic to expect there to be sufficient funding to do enough low-intensity burning during cool weather conditions to really make a dent in the buildup of fuels. The areas where prescribed or natural fire could be used most effectively were in higher elevation wilderness areas or national parks.

### Other "solutions" and implications for the future

While the SNEP report contained suggestions for fuel-management demonstration areas, better cooperation

among agencies, and better assessment of risk in order to prioritize which areas should be treated with the limited fuels treatment funds available, the report did not really produce any unexpected suggestions for solutions. Instead, the report's authors agreed that continuing to manage forests as we do now will only lead to more and more devastating wildfires.

Near its conclusion, the report emphasized that fire was once a major ecological process in the Sierra Nevada, with profound influences on nutrient cycling, successional pathways, forest structure, biodiversity, and hydrology. Without fire occurring naturally today, the consequences of its loss from the ecosystem may be significant for many elements of it. One of the key implications that wilderness lovers can find comforting is that wild, undeveloped areas are the areas most appropriate for the reintroduction of beneficial, low intensity fire on a large scale.

For anyone who really wants to review the technical aspects of fuels and fire risk, the SNEP report has good information. Yet the more the information is scrutinized, the more it is clear that fire is often unpredictable and extremely complex in its effects on resources. But within the limits of technology and budgets, the desire to reduce the size and intensity of wildfires will continue to grow as more and more people press into the mountains for recreation, commodities, water, and places to live.

*John Buckley worked for the Forest Service as a firefighter and fire technician for thirteen years. He is now Executive Director of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center in Twain Harte.*

### SNEP'S CRITICAL FINDINGS ON FIRE

- Fire is a natural force that has influenced Sierran ecosystems for millennia.
- Climate plays a major role in influencing fire patterns and severity.
- Presettlement fires burned most lower elevation areas frequently with large, low to moderate intensity fires.
- Fire suppression has drastically changed fire regimes in the range.
- Live and dead fuels are more abundant and continuous than in the past.
- Logging has increased fire severity more than any other human activity.
- Although logging can mimic the effects of fire in some ways, there is no data to know what effects keeping fire out of a forest will have on forest ecological processes.
- Increasing development in wildlands means higher risk from fire unless hazards are mitigated.

# Logging rider sales: activists hopeful that remaining sales can be stopped

conservation politicians, fair-minded bureaucrats, and an active and informed public—especially California Wilderness Coalition members. Instead of looking at only what's wrong with our forests, here's a snapshot of just some of the areas spared from the chainsaw with your help:

**Siskiyou Roadless Area:** This Klamath National Forest wild area is one of the largest unroaded, unlogged, and purely pristine regions in the Golden State. Several peaks in the roadless area and the adjacent Siskiyou Wilderness are sacred to local Native American tribes as vision sites. The Forest Service planned to clearcut large portions of the area as part of the Dillon salvage sale, but were stopped. The Forest Service will probably try to log the area again next year after the rider expires, but the local Klamath Forest Alliance and other groups will fight them all the way.

**Middle Fork Eel River:** Located in the northwest corner of the Mendocino National Forest, the Middle Fork hosts some of the finest ancient forest around. The watershed shelters over a third of California's entire summer-run steelhead trout population. The area was threatened by the Blands/Steel timber sale which was originally planned to go forward under the logging rider. The sale was put on hold until 1998 (after the logging rider expires). The Willits Environmental Center, California Wilderness Coalition, and other groups will fight to make sure that no destructive logging occurs in this sensitive area in 1998—or ever.

**Polk Springs Roadless Area:** The Lassen National Forest planned to log this area under the rider as part of the Barkley salvage sale. Friends of the River, the Quincy

Library Group, and the California Wilderness Coalition struggled hard to keep this from happening because of the ancient forest and sensitive fish and wildlife species threatened by the project (Deer Creek, which flows through the roadless area, is one of only three remaining streams in the northern Sierra Nevada hosting salmon and steelhead). Steve Evans of Friends of the River has defended the roadless area from logging several times in the past, and he hopes this will be the last time he has to do it. The Barkley sale became the first logging rider project cancelled in the United States.

**Slate Mountain Roadless Area:** The Sequoia National Forest planned to log this area using the rider's authority despite objections from conservationists and the fact that this roadless area is one of several proposed for wilderness status in Representative George Brown's (D-San Bernardino) Sequoia Preserve Act. However, after a hard struggle, the Forest Service withdrew its logging plans. This is good news for the giant sequoias, California spotted owls, and other plants and animals calling the area home.

Those of you that wrote letters, sent faxes, or made phone calls to defend these or other areas threatened by the logging rider should be proud of your accomplishments. Your involvement makes a very tangible difference. Some healthy, giant trees continue to stand as living proof. Just as stumps stand in mute testimony to the anti-environmental credo, so too do these giant trees speak volumes about the people who care for both our forests and the future.

### What you can do

White House officials have the authority to withdraw the remaining logging projects authorized by the rider.

We need your help to convince them to use this authority.

Please request that the sales mentioned below be withdrawn immediately. Remind these officials that the President has promised to safeguard our nation's public lands and protect our environment. Let them know that only by canceling these sales can the President fulfill his promise and remedy what he admits was the "biggest mistake" of his administration—signing the logging rider into law. Use the descriptions of the sales below to inform your comments.

Please call (and fax if possible) the following officials as often as you can between now and December 31, 1996, when the logging rider expires:

The Honorable Dan Glickman  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
14th & Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Phone: 202-720-3631  
Fax: 202-720-2166

Kathleen McGinty  
Director  
White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Old Executive Office Building, Room 360  
Washington, D.C. 20501  
Phone: 202-456-6224  
Fax: 202-456-2710

I. The Cannon timber sale in the Klamath National Forest would log old growth forest from landslide-prone soils and increase sedimentation to Kelsey and Clear  
*continued on page 7*

We apologize for the omission of the list of logging projects mentioned on page 6 under "Logging rider update." This is the list that should have been included

## Help stop lawless logging!

**Tell President Clinton to save our wild fish and forests!**

In 1995 Congress passed the logging rider, without question the most destructive anti-environmental law in recent memory. This infamous law has tied the hands of activists and prevented us from stopping timber sales in our national forests that log old-growth, roadless areas, and other ecologically important areas.

The rider will expire on December 31, 1996. The U.S. Forest Service is in a mad rush to sell the ecologically destructive logging projects listed below as soon as possible so that they can take advantage of the rider's blanket exemption from environmental law. White House officials have the authority to protect these threatened areas by withdrawing these projects—please help us convince them to use this authority!

I-II. The **Canon and Cub timber sales** in the Klamath National Forest will log old growth forest from landslide-prone soils and increase sedimentation to Kelsey and Canyon Creeks, important spawning streams for imperiled salmon and steelhead fisheries. The Canon sale will also log in the Box Camp Roadless Area. This roadless area could be added to the adjacent Marble Mountain Wilderness one day if it remains in a pristine condition.

III. The **Upper Poor Boy salvage sale** in the Toiyabe National Forest will log old-growth forest in the Raymond Peak Roadless Area adjacent to the Mokelumne Wilderness. The area slated for logging is steep and highly-erosive and is home to several threatened animal species. The project violates Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's recent order to the Forest Service to refrain from salvage logging in roadless areas.

IV. The **Bullshead timber sale** on the Tahoe National Forest will log 3,000 acres of forest from the Truckee River watershed. The watershed is already heavily damaged by logging and road building. The logging will cause serious damage to soil and water quality and could increase fire risk.

V. The **Outside salvage sale** in the Klamath National Forest will log ancient forest as well as portions of the Siskiyou Roadless Area in the Dillon Creek watershed. Dillon Creek hosts over 10 percent of California's remaining summer-run steelhead trout population.

VI-VII. The **Treasure and Davies salvage sales** in the Tahoe National Forest will construct ten miles of new roads in a watershed already heavily roaded and logged. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman recently ordered the Forest Service to minimize road construction while salvage logging!

VIII. The **Deer Thin timber sale** in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest will commercially log trees from an old-growth reserve despite policies requiring the agency to only allow activities in these reserves that "benefit" old-growth dependent species. The sale also risks introducing root rot disease to rare, old-growth Port Orford cedar groves in the area (Port Orford cedar root rot has been shown to be spread by logging).

IX. The **Bear salvage sale** in the Klamath National Forest will log in the watershed of a proposed Wild and Scenic River. The logging will increase sedimentation and erosion into Clear Creek, thus seriously degrading spawning habitat for coho salmon and steelhead trout.

X-XI. The **Heligriz/Linto and Cold salvage sales** in the Six Rivers National Forest will log in the extremely sensitive Horse Linto Creek watershed in an area set-aside as an old-growth reserve. The Forest Service also plans to remove trees from the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area despite Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's recent order to the agency to refrain from salvage logging in roadless areas.

### **What you can do**

Please call (and fax if possible) the following officials as often as you can between now and December 31, 1996 (the expiration date of the logging rider):

The Hon. Dan Glickman  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
14th & Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Phone: 202-720-3631  
Fax: 202-720-2166

The Hon. Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senate  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-3841  
Fax: 415-536-3954

Kathleen McGinty  
Director  
White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Old Executive Office Building, Room 360  
Washington, D.C. 20501  
Phone: 202-456-6224  
Fax: 202-456-2710

The Hon. Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senate  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-3553  
Fax: 415-956-6701

Please request that the sales mentioned above be withdrawn immediately. Remind these officials that the President has promised to safeguard our nation's public lands and protect our environment. Let them know that only by canceling these sales can the President fulfill his promise. Use the descriptions of the sales above to inform your comments.

For more information, please call Paul Spitler of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign or Ryan Henson of the California Wilderness Coalition at 916-758-0380.

# Wilderness Forum



## Book Review

### *This Land is Our Land*

by Richard Pombo and Joseph Farah, St. Martin's Press, New York City, 224 pages, \$22.95

What do you do if you are a second term Republican Congressman, blessed with Wayne Newton good looks and virtually unlimited media attention, and yet, you find that Republicans disagree with your pet issue—endangered species protection—by an almost 2 to 1 margin? You get a Rush Limbaugh sidekick to help throw together a "manifesto" of the property rights movement.

That is exactly what Representative Richard Pombo (R-Tracy) has done. From the Woody Guthrie-like title, *This Land is Our Land*, to the dust jacket's claim that environmentalism is, in fact, warmed-over communism, the book is funnier than a vintage "Saturday Night Live".

In *This Land is Our Land* you will learn that property rights are paramount and the government has no right to zone real estate or even pass anti-discrimination measures.

For people who have read the tracts of the property rights movement, the so-called "Wise Use" groups and the militias, much of the verbiage in this book will seem like old whines in a new bottle. However, for those who have only seen the statesmanlike and congressional faces of these movements, the paranoid style may be something of an eye-opener.

From government officials, in both Republican and Democratic administrations, to corporations, foundations and even the media, you will find Pombo's central belief: *They're all against us*. Take this gem, "The New York Times, for example, has already come out in favor of subverting private property rights."

Pombo and co-author Joseph Farah (formerly of the now-defunct *Sacramento Union*) must have thrown this little volume together in a hurry and put it out just in time for the November election. It is riddled with typos (Audubon is misspelled) and factual errors (within two pages the Audubon Society is given two presidents). Despite poor editing, Pombo's beliefs shine through.

Not only is the Endangered Species Act a threat (in Pombo's eyes) to property rights, but groups and corpo-

rations which use their property to protect wildlife are irresponsible at best. Taking it one step further, nature may even be a hazard itself and perhaps *should* be destroyed, "...some of these species may carry organisms or bacteria that could be extremely harmful to humans or other life. Maybe their extinction will save us!"

**"...some of these species may carry organisms or bacteria that could be extremely harmful to humans or other life. Maybe their extinction will save us!"**

Perhaps the most curious passages, given Pombo's family and career, dwell on real estate deals and money. Pombo rehashes only one tall tale he has already told about the government trying to "take" his land. In this case, the "taking" turned out to be a railway right of way already owned by the government. However in the book he accuses conservation groups of wearing green camouflage, "...such organizations are called 'conservancies' or 'land trusts.' In the real world, we call these groups by a name which describes their actual function—real estate firms." Pombo should know—his extended family and large political donors control Pombo Real Estate, which is a major player in turning agricultural land into commercial and residential developments in the Tracy area. Pombo's book even singles out for attack the Catellus Corporation, a company Pombo Real Estate sold a million dollars worth of land to in 1994.

Richard Pombo and the other anti-environmental extremists in Congress have not succeeded in killing the Endangered Species Act, but Pombo has been successful in resurrecting a debate which died about the time Mark Twain did: the government's right to zone.

Until recently, if you owned a piece of land and your neighbor decided to open a strip mall, strip mine, or a strip joint you could safely assume that zoning would take into account the public good.

Now the debate has changed and Pombo, along with others, is saying: the only public good is private gain and the one who holds the deed is the only one who counts.

—William L. Rukeyser is the Communications Coordinator for the California Biodiversity Alliance.

## Final push on logging rider sales

continued from page 6

Creeks, important spawning streams for imperiled salmon and steelhead fisheries. The cannon sale would also log in the Box Camp Roadless Area. This roadless area could be added to the adjacent Marble Mountain Wilderness one day if it remains in a pristine condition.

II. **The Saddle timber sale** in the Mendocino National Forest would log old-growth forest in the sensitive Eel River watershed. The Eel River's salmon and steelhead fisheries depend on old-growth forest to provide the cold, clear water they need for survival.

III. **The Poison Spring salvage sale** in the Modoc National Forest would log ancient forest in the region's only confirmed California spotted owl nesting area. The groves proposed for logging are also home to pileated woodpeckers and the elusive goshawk. In addition, the endangered Modoc sucker fish dwells in the affected area and is vulnerable to logging-generated sediment and other pollutants.

IV. **The Upper Poor Boy salvage sale** in the Toiyabe National Forest would log old-growth forest in the Raymond Peak Roadless Area adjacent to the Mokelumne

Wilderness. The area slated for logging is steep and highly-erosive and is home to several threatened animal species. The project violates Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's recent order to the Forest Service to refrain from salvage logging in roadless areas.

V. **The Sample salvage sale** in the Sierra National Forest (near the Kaiser Wilderness) would log rare old-growth Jeffrey pines. While conservationists do not object to the Forest Service's proposed thinning of small-diameter lodgepole pines as part of the sale, the inclusion of the ancient pines is unacceptable.

### Wilderness Trivia Answer

Tunnel Ridge WSA (Trinity Alps Wilderness), Ishi WSA and Machesna Mountain WSA

## Calendar

**December 5 Comment deadline** for Long/Damon Timber Sale. Write to Paul Bailey, Devil's Garden Ranger District, 800 West 12th Street, Alturas, CA 9610. Letters must be postmarked by this date. See article on page 5.

**December 14 Meeting of the California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA).** Likely topics include 1997 conservation priorities and strategies, the Sierra Nevada campaign, and regional updates. Call Ryan Henson at CWC for more info.

## Fire fears

continued from page 5

State Resources Agency and thirty-one members of the House of Representatives from California, including seventeen Democrats and and fourteen Republicans and is slated to deliver \$9.3 million to this program, a 300 percent increase from the amount originally proposed.

The forest products industry's characterization of national forests as fire traps threatening the nation does not stand up to scrutiny. Instead of providing solutions to restore health to the nation's forests, industry is fanning the flames of 1996 to advance its narrow objective of increased logging on national forests. It's time to stop the blame and get on with the real work of restoring fire to its natural role in California's fire-adapted ecosystems.

Jerry Greenberg and Louis Blumberg work for The Wilderness Society.

VI. **The Flat timber sale** in the Mendocino National Forest would log old-growth forest from the Corbin Creek watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to issue four northern spotted owl "take permits" for this project. The conservation community does not believe that the timber industry should profit from killing endangered species.

VII. **The Outside salvage sale** in the Klamath National Forest will log ancient forest as well as portions of the Siskiyou Roadless Area in the Dillon Creek watershed. Dillon Creek hosts over 10 percent of California's remaining summer-run steelhead trout population.

VIII-IX. **The Pilot Creek East Helicopter timber sale, and the Pilot Creek North timber sale** in the Six Rivers National Forest will log over 900 acres of the Pilot Creek Roadless Area and remove trees from sensitive areas near streams (the Clinton administration has temporarily delayed the sale of these projects—let's make it permanent).

X-XI. **The Hamilton and Too Flat salvage sales** in the Lassen National Forest will log trees in sensitive wildlife habitat, including California spotted owl and goshawk nesting areas.

XII-XIII. **The Treasure and Davies salvage sales** in the Tahoe National Forest will remove trees from riparian areas and construct over thirty miles of road in a watershed already heavily roaded and logged. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman recently ordered the Forest Service to minimize road construction while salvage logging!

XIV. **The Deer Thin timber sale** in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest will log trees from an old-growth reserve despite policies requiring the agency to only allow activities in these reserves that "benefit" old-growth dependent species. The sale also risks introducing root rot disease to rare, old-growth Port Orford cedar groves in the area (Port Orford cedar root rot has been shown to be spread by logging). In addition, the sale will be logged in winter, thus damaging wet soils and polluting streams.

## Coalition Member Groups

Ancient Forest Defense Fund; Branscomb Back Country Horsemen of CA; Springville Bay Chapter, Sierra Club; Oakland Bay Chapter Wilderness Subcommittee; S. F. California Alpine Club; San Francisco California Mule Deer Association; Lincoln California Native Plant Society; Sacramento Citizens for Better Forestry; Hayfork Citizens for Mojave National Park; Barstow Citizens for a Vehicle Free Nipomo Dunes; Nipomo Committee to Save the Kings River; Fresno Conservation Call; Santa Rosa Davis Audubon Society; Davis Desert Protective Council; Palm Springs Desert Subcommittee, Sierra Club; San Diego Desert Survivors; Oakland Eastern Sierra Audubon Society; Bishop Ecology Center; Berkeley Ecology Center of Southern California; L. A. El Dorado Audubon Society; Long Beach Friends Aware of Wildlife Needs (FAWN); Georgetown Friends of Chinquapin, Oakland Friends of Plumas Wilderness; Quincy Friends of the Garcia (FROG); Point Arena Friends of the Inyo; Lone Pine Friends of the River; Sacramento Fund for Animals; San Francisco Golden Gate Audubon Society; Berkeley

Hands Off Wild Lands! (HOWL); Davis High Sierra Hikers Association; Truckee International Center for Earth Concerns; Ojai Kaweah Flyfishers; Visalia Keep the Sespe Wild Committee; Ojai Kern Audubon Society; Bakersfield Kern River Valley Audubon Society; Bakersfield Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club; Bakersfield Klamath Forest Alliance; Etna League to Save Lake Tahoe; South Lake Tahoe Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club; Palo Alto

Los Angeles Audubon Society, West Hollywood Los Padres Chapter, Sierra Club Marble Mountain Audubon Society; Etna Marin Conservation League; San Rafael Mendocino Environmental Center; Ukiah Mendocino Forest Watch; Willits Mono Lake Committee; Lee Vining Mt. Shasta Area Audubon Society; Mt. Shasta Mountain Lion Foundation; Sacramento Native Habitat; Woodside Natural Resources Defense Council; S.F. NCRCC Sierra Club; Santa Rosa Nordic Voice; Livermore North Coast Center for Biodiversity & Sustainability; Leggett

Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata People for Nipomo Dunes Nat'l. Seashore; Nipomo Peppermint Alert; Porterville Placer County Cons. Task Force; Newcastle Planning & Conservation League; Sac. Range of Light Group, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club; Mammoth Lakes Redwood Chapter, Sierra Club; Santa Rosa The Red Mountain Association; Leggett Resource Renewal Institute; San Francisco San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club; San Diego San Fernando Valley Audubon Society; Van Nuys Save Our Ancient Forest Ecology (SAFE); Modesto Sequoia Forest Alliance; Kernville Seven Generations Land Trust; Berkeley Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund; S. F. Sierra Nevada Alliance; South Lake Tahoe Sierra Treks; Ashland, OR Soda Mtn. Wilderness Council; Ashland, OR South Fork Mountain Defense; Weaverville South Yuba River Citizens League; Nevada City Tulare County Audubon Society; Visalia Tule River Conservancy; Porterville U.C. Davis Environmental Law Society Ventana Wildlands Group; Santa Cruz Western States Endurance Run; S. F. The Wilderness Land Trust; Carbondale, CO The Wilderness Society; San Francisco Wintu Audubon Society; Redding Yolano Group, Sierra Club; Davis Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

*"It is after logging that the damage from fires is greatest, on account of the inflammable and unburned slash"*

— T.S. Woolsey, 1911  
U.S. Forest Service

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- Yes! I wish to become a member of the California Wilderness Coalition. Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for first-year membership dues.  
 Here is a special contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help the Coalition's work.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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### Annual Dues: †

Individual	\$ 20.00
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† tax deductible

Mail to:  
California Wilderness Coalition  
2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5  
Davis, California 95616

### T-Shirt Orders

1. *landscape design* in light blue, pale green, jade, or fuchsia: \$15
2. *animal design* in beige (no med.) or gray: \$12
3. *logo design* in jade, royal blue, birch, or cream: \$15

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