



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

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Agencies to charge fees for wilderness access

By Jim Eaton

The best things in life may be free, but that soon may not include wilderness. Entry charges are being proposed for the Desolation, Yosemite, and Sequoia-Kings Canyon wilderness areas. Southern California wilderness areas may require entry fees as well.

Last spring, Congress passed legislation authorizing a three-year pilot program for federal land management agencies to collect user fees to pay for the cost of operating and maintaining recreation areas. Unlike previous entry and camping fees which went directly to the United States Treasury, 80 percent of these new fees would be used for the management of the area requiring the fees.

Wilderness areas are not the only areas with new fees. The Forest Service plans to charge for sites in southern California forests, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and the Mono Basin National Scenic Area. The National Park Service intends to double or triple entry fees for Yosemite, Sequoia-Kings Canyon, and Death Valley national parks, charge an entry fee for Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and institute an "interpretative" fee at Redwood National Park for ranger-led kayak trips. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is looking at areas such as the Dumont Dunes Off-Highway Vehicle Area in the California Desert.

Although many users have indicated a willingness to pay fees for visiting wilderness areas and national parks, not all are sure this is a good idea.

"We used to pay for the management of parks and wilderness areas out of our income tax," said Yosemite activist Garrett DeBell. "Now we'll pay extra for this, and I'm sure my income tax will not be reduced correspondingly."

Others fear that popular wilderness area such as Desolation and John Muir will have large budgets, while less



Entry fees to Yosemite National Park may double or triple according to a new wilderness fee proposal. The Merced River at El Portal. Photo by Pat Carr

popular areas will have limited funds for management. There also is the concern that agencies will be tempted to increase visitor use in wilderness to increase their budgets. The question of fairness arises, since other public land users would not be subject to a fee if they simply
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Election offers opportunities to save forests

By Jim Jontz

The 1996 elections didn't produce as many changes as environmental advocates had hoped, but the net impact should be a Congress more sympathetic to protecting wilderness and forests, especially in California.

Nationwide, forest advocates can count a net gain of seven or eight votes in the House of Representatives. This may not sound like an enormous shift but can be significant considering conservation advocates lost some very close votes in the 104th Congress. An effort by Representative Elizabeth Furse to repeal the Clearcut Timber Rider failed by two votes. A motion by Representative Joe Kennedy to end funding for road building in national forest roadless areas lost on a tie vote. A shift of just a few votes would have made a real difference on both of these issues.

On the Senate side, we may have lost a pro-environment vote or two, but the retirement of Senator Mark Hatfield, author of the salvage logging rider, will more than make up for it. Senator Hatfield was prone to use his powerful position on the Senate Appropriations Committee to the detriment of our national forests throughout the West.

California voters deserve credit for contributing as much or more to positive change in the House as anyone else. Representatives-elect Ellen Tauscher, Walter Capps, and Loretta Sanchez will be replacing consistent anti-wilderness and anti-forest legislators.

In fact, of all the Western states California has by far the most pro-forest Congressional delegation. Strong support among Democratic members (with only a couple of exceptions) is supplemented by help from Republican Reps. Horn, Bilbray, and Campbell. This should be a challenge to citizens in California to ask their
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...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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Coalition News

Monthly Report

Shortly after the election, Ryan remarked that the frantic pace of defending forests seemed to have slowed. No longer was the telephone ringing off the hook, the mailbox stuffed with timber sale notices, and the fax-modem filling the computer with electronic communications.

There still are new sales offered, and egregious ones to be sure, but we're getting a chance to catch our collective breath.

But for me, the administrator delegating most of the issues work to the rest of the staff, I actually got more involved in forestry after the election.

First was *California Forests in Crisis Symposium*, a one-day seminar organized by the El Bosque Pumalin Foundation, the same folks who funded our campaign to stop the salvage rider earlier this year. Several hundred seasoned activists and new volunteers came to U.C. Berkeley to learn how they can further the efforts to keep our ancient forests standing.

The conference was a melding of public land activists with those working to save trees currently in private ownership, notably the Headwaters Forest in Humboldt County. There was an amazing collection of speakers from throughout the West. Ryan and I were selected to address the crowd and participate on several panels.

The next week a local television reported called to ask if we had any hot issues. Of course, we answered. Ryan and Paul Spitler, an organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign working out of our office, had just returned from the Mendocino National Forest where they found a timber sale scheduled to remove most of the old-growth trees that remained in the area (see article on page 4).

The reporter felt they could do some interviews and even fly over the timber sale, but they wanted some on-the-ground footage. Could we help them out?

Guess who had a video camera capable of taking broadcast quality footage? The boss finally got to go out in the field!

It turned out that Ryan and Paul already had planned to take activists out to the timber sale the coming weekend as part of our Adopt-a-Wilderness training program. I simply piggy backed on their trip.

It was a pleasant drive up Highways 16 and 20 to Upper Lake. I was joined for the ride by Curtis Bradley, a super volunteer who has been slaving for months to create an outstanding web page for CWC, which is nearing completion. As we drove up M1, the main road in the Mendocino National Forest, we stopped to look at what had burned this summer in the major fire near Clear Lake. Paul gave a brief lecture on fire and its role in maintaining healthy forests.

I was somewhat concerned about the weather and its effect on video taping. Rain was predicted and the lowlands were blanketed in fog, but when we got to the sale area the sun shone through.

Paul did a great job in explaining how timber sales are made and how citizen activists can learn the basic issues in forest management. He stressed that few forest activists have a formal education in forestry (Paul and I have degrees in geology, Ryan in political science and history). The group seemed energized to learn more.

We tramped among the trees and along the steep slopes where the large, old-growth trees were marked for logging. I was in my element, eye glued to the viewfinder, capturing the scene. Inyo was having a grand day, too, and my canine companion was considerate in not barking or whining too much while I was shooting.

While most of the group stayed the whole weekend, other commitments brought me home. But as I began the drive to Davis, I looked out in awe at the full moon rising over the Snow Mountain Wilderness with fog curling through the mountain passes. It was great to be out of the office.

So as long as he keeps his video skills, the old man may not be superfluous after all.

By Jim Eaton

Membership drive draws new members, organizations to Coalition

A membership drive this fall has expanded the Coalition by four new groups. A large number of new individual members also have joined.

Our apologies to existing members who received a new member solicitation. We do try to compare our existing list to those we are prospecting, but sometimes we miss a few folks.

We would like to welcome the following organizations to the Coalition:

The Seventh Generation Fund, a Native American advocacy group and intermediate grantmaking organization, is an outspoken advocate for Native autonomy and self-reliance. They also are working to protect reservation ecosystems and imperiled sacred sites. The Fund is working to stop salvage sales affecting sacred areas, a goal shared with CWC.

Golden Gate Audubon has been around for seventy-nine years working for the conservation of our natural resources. This Bay Area chapter of National Audubon Society is working to preserve wetlands and wildlife, fighting to protect clean air and water, and striving to conserve energy and stabilize population.

With over 51,000 members, the Angeles Chapter is the largest of Sierra Club chapters. Although the chapter

works on a multitude of environmental issues, there is a public lands committee with task forces that work to protect ancient forests and the California desert.

Working to protect the only undammed river in California, the Smith River Alliance was instrumental in the establishment of the 305,000-acre Smith River National Recreation Area in 1990.

Many thanks to all the individuals who have joined CWC. Together, our common vision can become reality.

Wilderness Trivia Question

What does the
"Picacho" in Picacho
Peak Wilderness mean?

Answer on page 7

Desert Wilderness

Proposed mining in Imperial County pits gold versus tortoises and wild lands

By Ryan Henson

The gold mining company Chemgold, Inc. is proposing to dig three gigantic pits and remove 600 million tons of rock and sand from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in the California desert. The targeted two and a half square-mile area is in western Imperial County, located in the south-east corner of the state. Gold would be leached from the excavated material by dumping it in pits containing the highly toxic chemical cyanide. This mining would be conducted twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week, from 1997 until 2016.

Chemgold, Inc. and the government agencies involved in the proposed mine...acknowledge that native plants and wildlife will be buried, crushed by equipment, or poisoned in cyanide pits

Chemgold's project is authorized under a controversial mining law dating to 1872, which forces the federal government to allow mining on federal land for literally pennies on the dollar. Under the law, the federal government has little alternative but to bow to mining claims, allowing wealthy mining companies to make millions of dollars from public lands while returning only a small percentage of these profits to the government as royalties.

While such monumental scars as those slated for this part of the desert would be unwelcome in any region, the area Chemgold seeks to mine is especially sensitive. The proposed mine is only three-quarters of a mile away from the 7,700-acre Picacho Peak Wilderness, one and a half miles away from the 33,855-acre Indian Pass Wilderness, and less than ten miles away from the Colorado River. The proposed mine would dominate the horizon from several points in these wilderness areas. Road construction and constant disturbances would also contribute to ecological isolation of these wildlands.

The region is also home to many sensitive wildlife species, including the endangered desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, black-tailed gnatcatcher, Vaux's swift, loggerhead shrike, badger, chuckwalla (a very large liz-

ard), flat-tailed horned lizard, Gila woodpecker, Nelson bighorn sheep, and perhaps even the elusive Yuma puma. The puma is a rare mountain lion living along the southern Colorado River. Loss of habitat and declining prey animals have dropped puma populations low enough to be considered threatened.

Chemgold and the government agencies involved in the proposed mine—the BLM, California Department of Fish and Game, and others—acknowledge that native plants and wildlife will be buried, crushed by equipment, or poisoned in cyanide pits. Conservationists object to this destruction that allows Chemgold to derive immense profits at the expense of taxpayers and the ecological health of our public lands.

What you can do

Please write to the Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Keith Shone, 1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243 by December 31, 1996. Request that the BLM choose the "no action" alternative for the Imperial Project EIS/EIR. Explain that public lands should be preserved for biological diversity and wildness, and that wildlife and sensitive plant communities should not be killed or harassed for the sake of mining corporations.



Desert wilderness inholdings threatened with mining, water development

By Jim Eaton

A massive land deal involving more than a quarter-million acres of private land in the California desert has stalled and the landowner is blaming the breakdown on the effort to save the Headwaters Forest.

At stake are 285,860 acres of inholdings in wilderness and in the Mojave National Preserve established by Congress in 1994. The landowner, Catellus Development Corporation, was proposing to exchange its lands for \$24 million of other federal lands and \$36 million in cash.

Catellus claims the cash part of the deal was withdrawn after the Clinton administration agreed to a \$380 million cash and land exchange for part of the Maxxam Corporation's old-growth redwoods in Humboldt County's Headwaters Forest.

Not so, said Interior Deputy Secretary John Garamendi. He said the negotiations broke down over price, but that the land exchanges are going forward.

To spur the federal government into action, Catellus announced that it would send in geologists to search for valuable minerals and land surveyors to do property surveys and drill for water. According to the Los Angeles Times, David Friedman, president of Catellus' resources group, said, "We want to get out of wilderness areas and

out of the park and consolidate our land holdings in more economically useful areas. But if we can't reach an agreement to trade out these lands, then we owe it to our stockholders to get the maximum value out of the desert property we presently own, even if it is in wilderness areas."

"We want to get out of wilderness areas and out of the park and consolidate our land holdings in more economically useful areas. But if we can't reach an agreement to trade out these lands, then we owe it to our stockholders to get the maximum value out of the desert property we presently own, even if it is in wilderness areas."

Most of the inholdings are lands granted to the Southern Pacific Railroad over 120 years ago. The lands, interspersed with federal lands in a checkerboard pattern, were given to the railroad as an incentive to lay tracks across the West.

Catellus was established in 1984 to manage the real estate portion of Southern Pacific, which had merged with the Santa Fe Railroad. The major owner of Catellus is now the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CALPERS).

A prospectus on Catellus notes that "a major portion of land is well suited for environmental mitigation purposes and for strategic trades with federal and state entities to favorably enhance the company's development options with other locations." Many observers feel the company's threat to develop the inholdings simply is a ploy to get the land exchange back on track with better terms for Catellus.

Others point out the competition for federal funds and lands is increasing as deals are struck to protect threatened places. In addition to the Headwaters Forest, the Clinton administration has an agreement to keep a gold mine away from Yellowstone National Park and an exchange of leases to keep a coal mine out of the newly designated national monument in Utah.

Logging Rider

In waning days of rider, forest activists confront lawless logging

Five rider sales delayed or halted

Nine-hundred acres to be logged in Six Rivers National Forest

By Ryan Henson

Opponents of the logging rider in California won more victories in November when the Modoc, Lassen, Mendocino, and Sierra national forests decided to postpone or cancel five controversial logging projects. These victories, however, were offset by the logging of the Pilot Creek Roadless Area after an almost two year struggle to save the forests of that region. Meanwhile, other destructive logging projects continue to go forward.

The logging rider has exempted over 300 logging projects in California's national forests (and hundreds more in other states) from environmental laws and court challenges. A small handful of groups in California, facilitated by the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) and the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC), continue to battle these logging projects, despite the suspension of law, by highlighting the destruction these logging proposals will cause and reaching out to the public for help.

Public pressure has produced results in many areas. For example, the Poison Spring salvage sale would have logged the Modoc National Forest's only confirmed California spotted owl nesting area, solely based on the theory that signs of insect activity in the region indicate that the vast majority of the trees will die (few trees had actually died). One Forest Service official feared that a "ten mile clearcut" would have to be made to salvage the economic value of the dead and dying trees before they rot. Though the predicted wave of tree deaths never came to pass, it took months for activists to convince the Forest Service to withdraw its logging plans.

The withdrawal of the Poison Spring logging project is a great victory for California conservation. The area to be logged included some of the best old-growth in the Modoc National Forest (the Modoc has proportionately less old-growth than other California national forests

As is increasingly common throughout the state, the Sierra National Forest claimed that it had to log the large pines to restore the health of the forest.

because vast tracts of it were logged prior to the federal government acquiring it). The project would have devastated habitat for not only the California spotted owl, but the pileated woodpecker, goshawk, and threatened Modoc sucker fish, as well.

Two other destructive logging projects, the Hamilton and Too Flat timber sales in the Lassen National Forest, will also not go forward under the rider. Most of the credit for the victory goes to Linda Blum of the Quincy Library Group who doggedly insisted that the Forest Service abide by its own policies as well as de facto agreements to avoid logging critical California spotted owl habitat areas in the Lassen. Rather than being cancelled outright like Poison Spring, Hamilton and Too Flat have only been delayed until next year. This is important because the logging rider expires on December 31, 1996. Therefore, Linda Blum and other activists will be able to stop these destruc-

tive logging projects in court next year if the Forest Service insists on pursuing them in their current form.

The Mendocino National Forest has also indefinitely delayed the Saddle timber sale. The Saddle project was particularly egregious because CWC and WAFC found that the Forest Service actually planned to log three times as many trees as they admitted to in the sale's planning documents. CWC and WAFC field inspections also found that the Forest Service had violated numerous laws and policies governing logging around streams, in or near bald eagle nesting and foraging areas, and on steep slopes. The Forest Service also violated policies requiring them to retain clumps of large, old trees in areas slated for logging.

For example, over ninety percent of the largest, oldest trees in the area were slated to be logged, and only in one small area were trees clumped together that the Forest Service planned to spare (large trees standing all alone in clearcuts are more vulnerable to being knocked down in windstorms and also provide less habitat than clumps of large trees). In addition, instead of establishing 100-foot no-cut buffers around seasonal streams as required by Forest Service policy, buffers were either nonexistent or ranged from fifteen feet to, at the most, eighty-five feet.

The proposed logging of the bald eagle territory was particularly disturbing because it is illegal to clearcut these areas in the first place and because the Forest Service claimed on paper to be leaving the largest, oldest, and best trees behind for the eagles. However, CWC and WAFC measured and counted the trees in the bald eagle nesting area and found that over eighty-five percent of the trees over thirty inches in diameter would be cut down.

As a result of these and other abuses, WAFC is requesting that the U.S. Department of Agriculture launch a full investigation of the Forest Service's handling of the Saddle timber sale to determine whether it was corruption, incompetence, or ignorance that led to such horrendous violations of federal law and policy.

Also in November, the Sierra National Forest dropped its proposal to log several healthy, old-growth Jeffrey pines near Sample Meadow and the Kaiser Wilderness. Activist Richard Kunstman of Yosemite Area Audubon is largely responsible for this victory by repeatedly pointing out the illogic of removing the oldest, healthiest trees in the area to "improve forest health." As is increasingly common throughout the state, the Sierra National Forest claimed that it had to log the large pines to restore the health of the forest. In this case, the Forest Service actually claimed that the large, old-growth trees were sucking up so much water that they were killing off the surrounding trees.

These victories were sullied by the final loss of the Pilot Creek Roadless Area in the Six Rivers National Forest. After fighting the project for almost two years, the Forest Service was finally granted permission by the White House to log over 900 acres of the roadless area. One of the justifications for the project is that the Forest Service needs to generate revenue so that it can finance



Taking the best and leaving the rest. Hundreds of old-growth trees were slated for logging until activists stopped the Saddle timber sale. Photo by Paul Spitzer

restoration projects in the watershed. The obvious irony of heavily logging a wild area in order to restore it appears lost on the Forest Service and the White House.

CWC and WAFC continue to seek the public's help in pressuring the White House to cancel the remaining destructive sales authorized by the rider in California. For example, the Bear salvage sale in the Klamath National Forest (adjacent to the Siskiyou Wilderness) will cut hundreds of trees in riparian areas (fifty-two percent of the total area to be logged is in riparian areas) thus reducing the number of trees available for holding the soil in place, regulating stream channels, filtering sediment, and providing habitat for plants and animals. Logging in riparian areas will have devastating long-term effects on aquatic habitats within the region to the detriment of sensitive fish populations in the main stem of Clear Creek. The main stem of Clear Creek, a proposed wild and scenic river, provides critical habitat for steelhead trout and coho salmon (both proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act). The Forest Service admits that logging the area may make it less likely for the creek to be protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in the future (the act prohibits dams and, in some

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Wilderness Management

Inholdings abound: New inventory finds over 27,000 acres of private land in California wilderness areas Forest Service seeks expanded wilderness acquisition program

By Mark Pearson and Jon Mulford

A new inventory of private inholdings in California national forest wilderness areas revealed more than two hundred parcels totaling 27,632 acres. The parcels are scattered among thirty-five wilderness areas in eighteen national forests.

Private lands inside wilderness can pose significant challenges for wilderness managers. Owners of these private lands can develop their property in any manner permitted by local county planning and zoning codes, and the federal government has little authority to stop development that threatens the integrity of surrounding wilderness lands. California wilderness inholdings offer examples of private residential subdivisions, mines, and extensively logged forests. These activities disrupt ecological functions, degrade air and water quality, fragment habitat, and negatively affect recreational visitors.

One major threat from development of wilderness inholdings is construction of new roads to reach private property. Roads are widely regarded as one of the most ecologically destructive actions that can occur in wild lands. Roads fragment forest cover, provide avenues for invasion by exotic species, increase the incidence of poaching, and result in increased erosion and water quality degradation.

The 1964 Wilderness Act requires that the Forest Service provide private owners with "adequate access." Current regulations direct agency personnel to permit "reasonable use and enjoyment of the land," measured by contemporaneous uses on similarly situated lands. The regulations recognize that voluntary acquisition of private lands in wilderness by purchase or exchange is often the only way to eliminate threats to wilderness resources.

Private inholdings are scattered throughout the length and breadth of California. Areas with substantial inholding acreages include Trinity Alps (4,109 acres) in the north, Ventana (2,931 acres) on the coast, Mokelumne (2,040 acres) and Golden Trout (1,878 acres) in the Sierra Nevada, and San Geronio (1,920 acres) in the south. In some areas, the bulk of inholdings is held in large blocks by one or two landowners such as a timber company or a public utility. In most areas, the inholdings span a range of sizes with numerous owners.

Forest Service management plans and national policies rank wilderness inholdings as a top priority for purchase, and since 1994 Congress has appropriated funds each year expressly for wilderness inholding acquisitions. Colorado has been the primary beneficiary, with \$3.25 million appropriated in 1994 and 1995 as a result of a highly publicized threat of development in that state's West Elk Wilderness. More than 4,500 acres, or approximately one-half, of Colorado's most developable inholdings were subsequently acquired.

In 1995, Congress also initiated nationwide funding in the form of a \$1 million National Wilderness Protection Fund which resulted in wilderness purchases in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington. Congress allocated \$500,000 for additional purchases nationwide in fiscal year 1996

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Forest Service ready to purchase Trinity Alps inholding



Incense cedars and firs in The Grand National Mine property, now slated to be added to the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Photo by Mark Pearson

By Mark Pearson

The end of the 104th Congress brought good news in the form of money to purchase a threatened wilderness inholding in the Trinity Alps Wilderness. As part of the 1997 spending bill, Congress approved \$600,000 for the Forest Service to buy the 240-acre Grand National Mine property in the northeast corner of the Trinity Alps.

The Grand National Mine operated in the 1930's as a gold mine, but today is more valuable for its trees, wildlife habitat, and recreation. The property includes an estimated 1.6 million board feet of mature and old-growth cedar, fir, and pine, and lies within a spotted-owl habitat conservation area. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes less than one mile from the mine, and the trail to Tangle Blue Lake skirts the property's corner. Any development, such as large-scale logging operations, would adversely alter the area's wilderness characteristics and recreational values.

The current property owner, Eel River Sawmills, is a willing seller assuming the final details of the purchase can be completed in a reasonable time frame. Eel River Sawmills needs to recover its financial investment in

the property either through sale to the public for addition to the wilderness or by logging the property. The company has an approved California state Timber Harvest Plan to log the area which expires in September, 1997. The company has employed timber consultants to lay out the timber sale and to identify the most suitable access route for removal of the felled logs.

The crucial step in securing Congressional funding for this purchase was a letter of support sent to the House Appropriations Committee by two northern California legislators, Representatives Frank Riggs and Wally Herger. As members of the Republican majority in Congress, their official request for funding the acquisition carried significant weight with Appropriations Chairman Ralph Regula.

The purchase is being shepherded by the Wilderness Land Trust, a non-profit land conservation group dedicated to acquiring private lands inside wilderness for addition to public ownership. For the latest update on this project visit the Trust's web page at <http://www.rof.net/wp/twt>.

Mark Pearson works for the Wilderness Land Trust

Wilderness News

Lessons from lawless logging in the Modoc National Forest

Part one of two

By Paul Spittler

Nestled in the northeast corner of California, far from any population centers, the Modoc National Forest has long been ignored by citizen activists. Not that the Modoc isn't worthy—the forest features a rare floral community that combines plants of the Great Basin to the east, Cascade range to the north, and Sierra Nevada to the south. Conservationists were simply too busy fighting horrendous abuses in other parts of the state to pay much attention to the far away Modoc.

Recent events have placed the Modoc at the center of a controversy. Unchecked logging, including highly questionable "accidental" cutting of fifty-five acres of old-growth forest have forced citizens to pay attention to the forgotten forest. The discoveries were distressing.

The California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) began looking more closely at the Modoc in 1994 after the forest tripled the number of trees being cut as "salvage" (the removal of supposedly dead or dying trees). In coordination with other conservation groups, CWC urged Acting Forest Supervisor Robert Haggard to put a moratorium on the cutting of old-growth trees. With the threat of lawsuits looming, Haggard agreed and the moratorium was enacted.

We learned last year that the Forest Service had "accidentally" (their word) logged fifty-five acres of pristine old-growth forest adjacent to the Knox Mountain Roadless Area. The logging clearly violated the agreement. Modoc officials explained that they simply lost track of the timber sale boundaries—an unlikely explanation considering CWC's interest in the sale and the agreement signed by the Forest Supervisor. More likely is that the agency logged the area because they thought they could get away with it—and they did.

Two recent timber sales suggest that Modoc officials have not yet learned their lesson. The Southsun timber sale in the Big Valley District was prepared in 1995 and logged earlier this year. The sale was intended to remove "dead and dying" trees from Manzanita Ridge, an area just east of the small town of Adin. The agency claimed that bark beetles had infected the region and would soon claim thousands of trees.

Rather than limiting themselves to the trees that were already infected, the Forest Service began an aggressive program to remove trees that *could* be killed by the beetles. The result was predictable and disturbing. Every large tree was cut—including some with trunks up to four feet in diameter. The only trees left behind were those too small to be worth the effort. These virtual clearcuts covered hundreds of acres.

Worse yet, because the trees were sold as "salvage", they were offered at bargain-basement prices—up to 90% off their market value. So blatant was the fraud that one Forest Service employee called the logging "one of the most embarrassing things I've ever seen."

CWC learned about the Southsun project only after it was already logged. It was with the knowledge of Southsun in mind that CWC, the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC), and the Klamath Forest Alliance began looking into an adjacent project: the Poison Spring salvage sale. Like Southsun, this project proposed to remove thousands of trees that the agency claimed were likely to be killed by bark beetles. The logging was proposed within the only California spotted owl nesting area in the entire Modoc National Forest. The area is comprised of rare eastside old-growth forest and home to numerous rare forest creatures, including the endangered Modoc sucker fish.

On a cold and misty October day, CWC staff visited the forests of the Poison Spring sale area. What we found was amazing. Between clearcuts spanning thousands of acres were healthy old-growth pine and fir forests. Although the old-growth stands contained few, if any, dead trees, these were the forests targeted for cutting. We found no evidence for "catastrophic mortality" and little evidence of bark beetles at all. Most importantly, we found that there was no "forest health" emergency.

Armed with these facts, we went to the Forest Supervisor and directly to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. We complained that the cutting of healthy trees under the guise of "salvage" is a violation of the law and the public trust. After countless phone calls and letters from concerned citizens, the Forest Supervisor decided not to proceed with the sale. Citizen monitoring had paid off again.

There are lessons to be learned from the Modoc story. First, never assume that the Forest Service is obeying the law. They often do not, and the less attention paid to their activities, the more egregious the violations can be. Second, it takes active citizen monitors to assure that laws are obeyed and forests protected. Third, simple, on-the-ground monitoring can make all the difference between saving a wild area or losing it to a clearcut, road or mine. Without the work of groups like CWC, WAFC and the Klamath Forest Alliance, stumps would be all that remain at Poison Spring.

Next month:

Did Representative Wally Herger intervene in the Modoc National Forest's management on behalf of a campaign contributor?

Logging rider update

continued from page 4

cases, logging, mining, and road construction near stream channels).

Activists are also urging White House officials to withdraw the proposed Heligriz/Linto and Cold salvage sales in the Six Rivers National Forest. These proposed timber sales are especially disturbing since Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman specifically prohibited the Forest Service from salvage logging roadless areas under the logging rider (his directive, unfortunately, did not apply to non-salvage, or green, projects such as the Pilot Creek timber sale). Despite this, the Forest Service is moving ahead with its plans to salvage log the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area. The agency erroneously claims that the trees they plan to log are not in the roadless area, although the Forest Service's own maps indicate otherwise.

Other logging projects opposed by activists include the following:

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 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

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.

Wilderness fees

continued from page 4

avoided designated wilderness areas.

It also has been pointed out that people paying to visit a wilderness may demand better management of the area. A backpacker or horse packer being charged for wilderness travel may lobby for elimination of subsidized cattle grazing in wilderness, for example.

Some of the agencies are asking for public comment on their schemes. The National Park Service, however, has announced that it will charge \$10 per wilderness permit at Sequoia-Kings Canyon and a "wilderness cost recovery fee" of a yet to be determined amount at Yosemite.

At Desolation Wilderness, the Forest Service is seeking public comment on a proposal to charge an overnight fee of \$5 to \$10 per person and a day use fee of \$2 to \$5 per person, with a \$20 per person annual day use pass available. Reservation of an overnight permit would cost another \$5 to \$10 per permit.

The collection of fees would not change the current trail quota system for overnight use in Desolation. Day fees would be collected at Forest Service offices or at self-service fee tubes at trailheads. If the plan is approved, fees would be required for overnight use starting in March 1997 and mid-June for day use.

The Forest Service also is considering age limits for fees, a cap on the amount to be charged per permit (for

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Wilderness Forum

Letters

I took a three day backpack trip over the Veteran's Day holiday with my teenage daughter and two of her friends. We hiked into the Ventana Wilderness at the northern end of the Los Padres National Forest near Greenfield.

We wondered if this was such a good idea as we approached the trailhead and we passed a number of camouflaged people who appeared to be hunting within reach of their vehicles. It turned out to be just fine because we didn't meet a single hunter on the trail for three days.

The backpacking was ideal. Warm nights, fabulous views, and the first night we shared a campsite with millions of ladybugs.

Upon our return to the car on Monday, we went to the China campground to clean up for the long drive home. No one was there but it was trashed, including broken bottles. A pipe extending from a large water tank to the campsites was suspended above a steep fifty foot ravine. Directly underneath the pipe was a large pile of deer guts. I imagine some happy hunter dressed his kill right at the spigot and conveniently shoved the entrails down the hill. Is this another case of one bad apple spoiling the reputation of his compatriots?

Brian Newton
Visalia

Election opportunities

continued from page 1

Congressional delegation to "go to bat" for the future of the state's forests and wilderness.

Even though Congress is still controlled by Republicans, members of California's delegation can still do a great deal of good for forests and wilderness by exerting influence in the appropriations process, and by leaning on the Clinton/Gore Administration to use its executive authority to protect California's wildlands. This past year, both Senators and half of California's representatives were helpful in stopping bad sales under the logging rider. Now, a clear majority of California's federal lawmakers should be able to be persuaded for the cause of forests and wilderness.

In fact, the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC), in cooperation with other groups, is in the process of recruiting citizen advocates who will meet with their Representatives to discuss forest issues in the next few weeks. If you are able to assist with this project, please contact WAFC's California organizer, Paul Spittler, at the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) office.

In cooperation with CWC, WAFC is circulating a "citizen's statement" against logging in any of California's old-growth forests or unprotected roadless areas. We hope to enlist as many of the state's congressional delegation as possible to endorse this position.

Can positive forest legislation pass in the 105th Congress? In addition to what can be done through the

Wilderness inholdings

continued from page 5

and fiscal year 1997. These appropriations are made from the Land and Water Conservation Fund which has been under severe pressure from budget cutters the past couple of years, causing the overall reduction in wilderness purchase appropriations.

California wilderness areas received only modest amounts of this available national funding. A 20-acre parcel in the new Matilija Wilderness was purchased in 1995. National funds also provided support for two additional projects in 1996: purchase of a 140-acre tract in the Ishi Wilderness, and a small contribution towards the \$700,000 purchase of a heavily timbered 120-acre inholding in the South Sierra Wilderness near Albanita Meadows.

The Forest Service also has acquired significant acreages of inholdings via land exchanges over the past decade. More than 12,000 acres of checkerboard inholdings in the Trinity Alps were picked up from Sierra Pacific Industries in this manner, as were large acreages in other exchanges at Mount Shasta, Castle Crags, and Granite Chief.

The Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region has recognized the need for a more aggressive program to purchase wilderness inholdings. In October, the Regional

appropriations process and action by the Clinton/Gore administration through the executive agencies, there is one other promising opportunity.

A growing group of true fiscal conservatives in Congress, many of them Republicans, is learning that what are called "green scissors" cuts in the budget can both protect the environment and help the taxpayer. Money losing public timber sales and road construction in roadless areas are among the "green scissors" targets. A combination of fiscally conservative and environmentally enlightened lawmakers may be large enough to win victories in the 105th Congress—not just by cutting funds but perhaps also achieving some positive reforms in the way the Forest Service does business.

The 1996 elections raised the issue of the environment virtually everywhere, and that in itself is promising. Even where the "wrong" candidate won, lawmakers will be more alert to how their votes on environmental issues may be considered by the electorate.

The gains in 1996 make it possible to achieve some victories for forests. But this opportunity will only become reality if citizens organize through the CWC and other groups to demonstrate public support for forest protection. Jim Hightower reminds us that you don't get a hog out of the middle of the stream by whispering "Here, piggy piggy" in its ear. You have to get in the stream and push. We have some serious pushing to do.

Jim Jontz is Executive Director of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign

Forester submitted a fiscal year 1998 budget request for \$3 million to initiate an expanded California wilderness acquisition program. The goal is acquisition of a significant number of the most critical private parcels identified in the recently completed inventory. The inventory was completed by the non-profit Wilderness Land Trust under contract with the Pacific Southwest Regional office.

Both The Wilderness Society and the Wilderness Land Trust have thus far pledged to strenuously organize support for this new funding initiative. Additional support from other organizations and individuals is highly desired. The fate of California's pristine wildlands ultimately rests with the new 105th Congress which will begin debate on 1998 appropriations early next year.

What You Can Do:

Contact your Congressional representatives and urge their support for a \$3 million California wilderness protection fund in the fiscal year 1998 budget:

The Honorable _____ The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, D.C. 20515

Mark Pearson and Jon Mulford work for the Wilderness Land Trust.

Calendar

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.

December 18 Bay Area Earth Day planning meeting. The theme of this Earth Day event will be forest protection, and a major effort will be made to encourage Earth Day participants to "adopt a forest." Please contact CWC or Fred Beddall of the Sierra Club at (510) 848-0800

January 9-10 Meeting of the BLM Ukiah District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in Arcata. Topics include public lands grazing and recreational fees. RAC members and the public are also invited on a tour of the Samoa Dunes near Eureka. Contact Linda Rousch at (707) 822-7648 for more details.

Wilderness fees

continued from page 6

large groups), and seasonal passes. Public comment is being sought on this plan.

Information is not yet available on the fees being proposed for southern California wilderness areas.

The BLM is seeking comment through its Advisory Councils and at local BLM offices. For more information contact Tim Smith at (916) 979-2840.

The California Wilderness Coalition would like your opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of charging wilderness fees. Send your letters to the editor to our address listed on page 2.

What you can do:

If you want to comment on the proposal for fees at Desolation Wilderness, write a letter by December 15 to:

Eldorado National Forest
Attn: Desolation Fee Pilot Project
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667

Comments on BLM's plans for fees at recreation sites may be sent to:

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

Wilderness Trivia Answer

Picacho is old Spanish for "peak," making it literally the Peak Peak Wilderness.

Coalition Member Groups

Ancient Forest Defense Fund; Branscomb Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club; Los Angeles 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
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 Desert Survivors; Oakland
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 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
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 North Coast Center for Biodiversity &
 Sustainability; Leggett
 Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata

People for Nipomo Dunes Nat'l. Seashore; Nipomo
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 U.C. Davis Environmental Law Society
 Ventana Wildlands Group; Santa Cruz
 Western States Endurance Run; S. F.
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 The Wilderness Society; San Francisco
 Wintu Audubon Society; Redding
 Yolo Group, Sierra Club; Davis
 Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

"If you can't eat it, can't sleep under it, can't wear it or make something from it, it's not worth anything."

— Representative Don Young
 Chairman, Committee on Resources

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 Bishop, CA 93514

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 707 Army Street
 San Francisco, CA 94124

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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 _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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 2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5
 Davis, California 95616

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