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# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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Mountain lion

Photo by Mike McWherter

## Hunting for the truth about mountain lions

By Jim Eaton

"In all of nature, there is no sound more pleasing than that of a hungry animal at its feed. Unless you are the food." —Edward Abbey

Most humans have an innate terror of being killed by wild creatures. From *Jaws* to *Jurassic Park*, writers have exploited our primordial fear of carnivores that won't accept our supposed perch at the top of the food chain.

How else can one explain the current controversy over the status of the mountain lion (cougar) in California?

Mountain lion attacks on humans are exceedingly rare. During the 101 years between 1890 and 1990, there were 53 documented cougar attacks in all of North America. These attacks killed a total of nine people.

Since 1990, there have been three fatal attacks by lions: one in Colorado in 1991 and two in California in 1994. Before the 1994 deaths, the last fatalities in California were in 1909 when a woman and child died of rabies after being injured by a mountain lion. The only other death by cougars in the Golden State was that of a Siskiyou County boy in 1890.

With more than 30 million people in California, the odds of being attacked, let alone killed, by a mountain lion are minuscule. By contrast, one of every two people will contract cancer in a lifetime. Even events considered quite remote are much more likely than death by cougar. You have a one in 600,000 chance of being struck by lightning.

Needless to say, mountain lion deaths do not make it into actuarial tables. Even within threats from the animal kingdom, fatalities due to rattlesnakes, spiders, or even household pets are far more likely.

### Where do we stand now?

For decades, mountain lions were killed for bounty and sport. Between 1907 and 1972, over 12,500 cougars were killed. Bounties ended in 1963, and in 1972 the California legislature banned lion hunting. Efforts to declare the mountain lion a "game" animal eligible for hunting were countered by Proposition 117, the California Wildlife Protection Act that was approved by voters in 1990.

Proposition 117 banned the hunting of cougars (lions that kill livestock or pets or threaten human safety can be destroyed) and mandated that the legislature appropriate \$30 million a year to purchase and enhance wildlife habitat. Between 1972 and 1994, 896 lions were killed under deprecation permits.

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## Unholy resurrection at Polk Springs

### Forest Service brings back the Barkley sale

By Ryan Henson

Activists thought they had driven the final nail in the coffin of the Barkley sale when the Forest Service decided to suspend the Lassen National Forest salvage sale until next summer. It seemed a tactical, face-saving retreat for the Forest Service, a way to kill an unpopular timber sale without admitting a mistake. Activists were particularly pleased with the outcome because an amendment to the Rescissions Act that exempts salvage sales from environmental regulations would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to stop the sale in court.

But in January the Forest Service announced the sale will go forward despite opposition from conservation groups, anglers, and even the timber industry.

The Barkley sale was controversial from the outset because of its location in the Polk Springs Roadless Area adjacent to the Ishi Wilderness (see May 1995 *WR*). The roadless area is an important part of the Deer Creek watershed which hosts one of the last steelhead trout runs in the northern Sierra Nevada. The watershed also was a refuge for Ishi, a member of the Yahi tribe who became

famous as California's "last wild Indian." Yahi artifacts and cultural sites abound in the watershed.

The proposed sale was first delayed because it was opposed by the Quincy Library Group, an association of environmentalists, loggers, and other citizens of Plumas and Lassen counties who meet periodically in the Plumas County Library to discuss national forest management. The group agreed nearly two years ago that all roadless areas in the Plumas and southern Lassen national forests should be protected, including Polk Springs.

The Clinton administration is particularly enamored of the consensus group and has encouraged the Forest Service to honor its wishes. When administration officials planned a visit to Plumas County, environmentalists planned a demonstration and the Barkley sale was shelved.

Now the Barkley sale has been resurrected. Activists believe the only way to kill the sale is to shame the Forest Service and White House into honoring the Quincy Library Group agreement. The stakes are high: priceless old-growth ponderosa pine in the roadless area already has been marked for logging. The fate of steelhead in Deer

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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

Inyo and I are trying to take a daily walk. Some days, when there's lots to do and I'm trying to rationalize skipping our stroll, he wistfully glances up at his leash, then catches my eye to guilt trip me. It usually works.

Though we have different routes, Inyo is ever hopeful that we will go to "rabbit field." This 320-acre parcel has been fallow for several years while developers wait their turn in Davis's housing lottery. Bulldozers have compacted the clay earth so that the land is a mixture of vernal pools and star thistle with a healthy population of jackrabbits. There are nesting burrowing owls, and Swainson's hawks, northern harriers, and American kestrels patrol the skies.

On clear days I can see Snow Mountain to the north-west. Foggy days are eerie, with pheasants exploding from bushes and rabbits bounding through the mist.

But whatever the weather, one sound is constant: the rap-rap-rap of hammers constructing the first model homes. The land is destined to become the Evergreen Forest subdivision.

It has been said that we name subdivisions for what they destroy: Quail Ridge, Bay View, Meadowlands. The opposite is true here. An evergreen urban forest will emerge, characterized by ornamental junipers, photinia, and lawns. Artificial summer rains will keep these exotic plants green through the long dry season.

To be sure, the new homes will provide shelter for the expanding population of Davis. But the wildlife now there will lose their homes and foraging grounds. Animals will populate the new habitat, but they will be dogs, cats, mice, rats, pigeons, and blue jays.

This change I see reinforces my resolve to save wild places, but it also reminds me that some of the most threatened landscapes are those we turn into housing, freeways, and malls. Finding wild land in the Central Valley is difficult, and there is a critical need to identify reserves and corridors and begin the long job of rehabilitation.

It also is a continual reminder that if we do not control and reduce world population, my life's work may be for naught.

Change is happening closer to home. A small new office building has sprung up next to the Coalition's office. This building has been planned since Village Homes began, but high interest rates kept it from happening. Most of the tenants are neighbors who now can walk to work, so the structure has its benefits.

Actually, most of us are awaiting the construction of a small restaurant. There are few places this side of town to grab a bite, so I'm sure a lot of walk-in lunch and dinner customers would help a cafe succeed. It would do a booming business on the days hungry environmentalists gather at the Community Center for our frequent meetings.

Change is also happening to the California Wilderness Coalition. After nearly five years as *Wilderness Record* editor, Lucy has decided to move on. Fortunately she isn't moving far; she is renting an office in the new building next door to try her hand at creative writing.

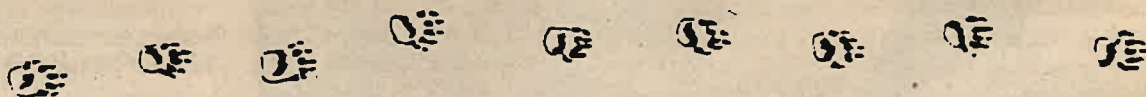
I remember my panic when Stephanie Mandel left the Coalition to move to the foothills. Steph turned our newsletter into a monthly, got it out on time, and greatly improved the quality. How was I going to replace her?

Well, we found Lucy. She made the *Record* even better. It's quite embarrassing to look at older issues, especially back to the time I was editor. Each editor has brought new standards of excellence.

I know there's someone out there who is up to the task, although the financial rewards are slight. Finding that person is the challenge.

Change is not always bad, but it certainly can be unsettling.

By Jim Eaton



### Welcome to the family

The California Wilderness Coalition is pleased to welcome two new member groups.

The **Sierra Nevada Alliance** was formed in 1993 to bring together and support the scattered grassroots groups working to protect the Range of Light. The alliance is their reference library, their network, and their voice.

At the Sierra Nevada Alliance's annual conferences, participants can share their successes and failures while learning from experts how better to combat the land management practices and surging growth that threaten the range.

For more information, write the Sierra Nevada Alliance at Box 9072, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158 or call (916) 542-4546.

The **International Center for Earth Concerns**, a joint venture of the Conservation Endowment Fund, Humane Society, and International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation, runs an educational center in the heart of the Los Padres National Forest. The Center emphasizes experiential wilderness education in its local, national, and international projects and publishes the *International Journal of Wilderness*.

A sponsor and organizer of the sixth World Wilderness Congress, the Center is also involved in planning the 1996 national wilderness conference in Los Angeles which will focus on urban wilderness and youth outreach.

You can reach the International Center for Earth Concerns at 2162 Baldwin Road, Ojai, CA 93023; (805) 649-3535.

### Correction

An article about the Headwaters Forest Act (January 1996 *WR*) incorrectly stated that the bill would require that 50 percent of the old-growth in the Six Rivers and Shasta-Trinity national forests be logged. In fact, the legislation mandates that proportion of logging only in the southern portions of the forests.

### Rat out your friends and help us grow

Do you know someone who cares about California's wilderness? Send us the names and addresses of people who might want to join the California Wilderness Coalition. We'll send them information about the Coalition—only once, we promise—without mentioning your name unless you instruct us otherwise. It's the cheapest way yet to contribute to the CWC.

### Wilderness Trivia Question

California now has two official state fish. What are they?

Answer on page 7

# The CWC: 1976-1996

## 20 years defending wilderness

By Jim Eaton

"Legend has it that on a cold February day a ragtag band of college buddies made their way through drifts of snow to gather in a Davis garage. There, huddled over a stereo, they founded the California Wilderness Coalition." So read the invitation to our 20th anniversary party.

Reality, of course, is a little different. Returning from the nation's capital after testifying in support of the Emigrant Wilderness in the fall of 1975, I stopped off at the Wilderness Society's Denver office. There I met with Jerry Mallett and my former housemate Roger Scholl.

We thought the Society was straying from its job of preserving wilderness by taking on too many urban environmental issues. We also felt that in California the Sierra Club was thought to be the only wilderness group, and that too often the Club took weak positions on wilderness. And I was looking for a job.

Jerry and Roger suggested I look at a model group in the recently formed Oregon Wilderness Coalition (now the Oregon Natural Resources Council).

When I returned home, I called together four friends: Phil Farrell, Bob Schneider, Jeff Barnickol, and Don Morrill. Phil was at Stanford, finishing his degree in geophysics after picking up a degree in forestry at Berkeley. Don Morrill was working in Chico as the Sierra Club's Northern California wilderness coordinator. The rest of us were U.C. Davis graduates: Jeff was a civil engineer, and Bob and I had degrees in geology.

The five of us met in Bob Schneider's duplex in Davis on a November evening. We decided to form the California Wilderness Coalition. With the assistance of a volunteer attorney, the Coalition was incorporated on January 14, 1976. Our first official board meeting was held on January 17.

### Our first year

The Coalition grew quickly. We enlisted the aid of Tom Jopson and Jim Trumbly to produce the first issue of the bimonthly *Wilderness Record*.

In that first issue Phil drew a two-page map detailing the 262 federal and state roadless areas we believed existed. At that time there were only 1.9 million acres of designated wilderness in California. We estimated there were another 12 million acres of wildlands in the state. Our estimate proved low, but it was the first statewide inventory ever produced.

In addition to the inventory of California wildlands, three other special supplements were printed in the *Wilderness Record*: a guide to citizen involvement in Forest Service planning, a review of the proposed Siskiyou Wilderness, and a detailed report on the critical situation facing desert wildlands.

A change in leadership at the Wilderness Society led to my being hired as their California representative. I set up shop in Davis, installing the Society's and Coalition office in my unheated garage.

We held a workshop at Lake Tahoe to train activists working to protect Granite Chief. In May, 48 activists gathered at Donner Summit for a wilderness strategy meeting and training session.

The Coalition began issuing special Wilderness Alerts to generate letters from activists. The first year we produced alerts about Joshua Tree, Kaiser, Mineral King, Siskiyou Mountains, Truckee-Little Truckee, Rancheria Creek, and Golden Trout.

Congress passed wilderness legislation for Joshua Tree and Pinnacles national monuments and Point Reyes National Seashore, bringing the state wilderness total to 2.36 million acres.

Total income for 1976 was \$3,593.13.

### The *Wilderness Record*

I'm not sure when it happened, but when we were planning our first newsletter there was a lively discussion about its name. Someone looked at a pile of *Congressional Records* and suggested we mimic it. The name and masthead were born.

Although nobody really wanted the title of editor, Tom Jopson and Jim Trumbly ended up doing the work. They enlisted the help of many local volunteers for the enormous task of producing the newspaper.

This was before the age of desktop publishing. Copy had to be typed, edited, and sent to a typesetter. The length of the articles had to be estimated, a mock-up of the newsletter sketched, and headlines (including their size and length) thought up. The material from the typesetter had to be re-edited (there *always* were mistakes). Then the columns of articles, headlines, and halftones were pasted up by hand.

Tom made a light table from an old orange crate, a plate of glass, and a bare light bulb that rested on a bent soda can. It is the only original office equipment still in use today.

Producing an issue was so exhausting that different people took on the lead role, including Bob Schneider, Jean Ketchum, and Phil Farrell. By 1979 I took on the formal title of editor.

That year I bought my first computer, a Radio Shack TRS-80. Two years later I turned my retirement fund from the Wilderness Society into a daisy-wheel printer so that most of the layout could be done in-house. Apple Computer granted us a Macintosh Plus in 1986, allowing the Coalition to enter the realm of desktop publishing.

In 1987 intern Lora Moerwald wanted a job with the Coalition and submitted a grant to the Packard Foundation to fund a part-time editor. Her grant was successful, but she already had taken a different job. So we hired Stephanie Mandel as our first paid editor and turned the *Wilderness Record* into a monthly publication. Stephanie



The Coalition launched the drive for wilderness on state lands. The 22,000-acre Henry W. Coe Wilderness is one of the few to preserve one of California's least-protected ecosystems—oak woodlands. Photo by Phil Farrell

## The next 20 years

By Ryan Henson

I don't spend much time thinking about the future. I'm lucky if I can get myself to look a month ahead. The reason for my self-imposed myopia is simple: the day-to-day challenges I face as the California Wilderness Coalition's conservation associate are nearly overwhelming. It's all I can do to fight the latest timber sale or grazing plan.

But when I do think about the future, this is what I'd like to see. I would like to see all of the roadless areas, old-growth groves, and other sensitive areas on our public lands permanently protected. I would like to see some developed areas between these wild places restored so we can have wildlife corridors connect them once again. Limited logging, grazing, and other development may still occur on public lands, but these activities should be subordinate to the goal of protecting and restoring biological diversity and wilderness.

As for the Coalition, I hope that we won't have to exist for another 20 years. I hope we can all retire and move on to other causes. I would like to see us rendered unnecessary by an enlightened Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, agencies who will come to see ecosystem protection and restoration as their sacred duty.

That's my vision for the future. It's not radical enough for some, and it's too radical for others. But I hope it comes to pass. It's the vision that gets me through the day-to-day challenges.

was succeeded by Lucy Rosenau in 1991. Both Stephanie and Lucy brought new standards of excellence to the publication.

Hundreds of volunteers, writers, and photographers have contributed to the *Wilderness Record* during the past two decades. At the risk of overlooking someone, there are several people who deserve special recognition: Fred Gunsky, a former editor of the Sierra Club Bulletin, and Wendy Cohen, who each edited copy for a decade; Marcia Cary, Mary Scoonover, and Beth Newman for years of volunteer help with layout; and Mike Nolasco for graphics during the early days of the Coalition.

This edition of the *Wilderness Record* is the 165th issue.

### The Staff

Over the past 20 years, 19 people have worked for the Coalition. In addition to myself, Phil Farrell and Dave Brown have served as executive director. A number of people did office coordinator duty, tasks now absorbed by the current staff, especially our Membership and Development Associate Lora Leerskov. Two recent outstanding employees were Bill Burrows and Nancy Kang. And the 1989 wilderness conference would not have been successful without Jeanette Colbert.

Until President Reagan cancelled it, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) allowed the Coalition to hire project coordinators and administrative assistants. In his two years as a CETA employee, Dennis Coules laid the foundation for the Desert Protection Act with his inventory and analysis of desert wildlands. He also wrote numerous articles on wilderness wildlife.

The future of the Coalition is embodied by our Conservation Associate Ryan Henson. With his boundless energy and enthusiasm, reminiscent of Phil Farrell's, he has led our organization to a new plateau.

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## Wilderness news

# There's hope for the sugar pine

By Julissa McKinnon

Since 1930, an exotic fungal disease has threatened the survival of one of California's most beloved trees, the sugar pine. The disease was named blister rust for the blister-like cankers that plague an infected tree's bark and the rusty color of dying needles. Today, thanks to the scientists at the Forest Service's sugar pine genetics program, there is reason to hope that the stately sugar pines and the large cones we know them by will long grace the landscape of California.

In California, sugar pines thrive at elevations that vary from 2,500 to 7,500 feet, from the state's northernmost border to Baja. When blister rust first emerged from the north as a threat to California's sugar pine population, the only method of containing the spread of the disease was uprooting all currant and wild gooseberry plants, whose infected fall spores are the transmitting agent for the blister rust to enter the needles of the sugar pine. This approach proved futile, however, since the uprooted plants would resprout from the underground roots that remained.

The loss of sugar pines had serious ramifications. Without sugar pines, neighboring tree species are more susceptible to root diseases that spread more easily through more homogeneous populations. A healthy mixed conifer stand provides buffer zones between trees of the same species and disease susceptibility. The death of sugar pines also means the loss of a distinct food source and habitat for wildlife.

So the discovery that even in the midst of a heavily infected population, some sugar pines survive because of a natural and dominant resistance trait, known as major gene resistance or MGR, was welcome news. The Forest Service instituted a program that breeds seedlings from resistant trees and exposes them to blister rust; if they survive, they have inherited the MGR trait. These seed-

lings are then transplanted to farms of rust-resistant trees where they mature into parents of other resistant offspring, which are planted throughout California to restore dwindling sugar pine populations. The average sugar pine parent with MGR produces about a pound of seeds each year. Of these seeds, about 50 percent inherit the MGR trait. MGR breeding farms produce a thousand resistant seedlings each year.

Because California has a wide variety of soil types, climates, and watersheds, sugar pine seedlings cannot be planted in the wild at random. Scientists have mapped various seed zones for the state, with elevational bands at 500-foot intervals. Resistant seedlings are planted within the region to which they are acclimated so that they will be well-adapted to their new habitat. To ensure that genetic breeding does not stifle genetic variation in the sugar pine population, scientists have designed safeguards. The seed zones and elevation bands have "quotas" of variation to prevent genetic bottlenecks.

However, just as certain genetic variations enable some sugar pines to resist infection from blister rust, a strain of blister rust has emerged that can overcome MGR. So far, scientists have been able to keep the strain localized. One method of containing its spread is to eliminate surrounding currants and gooseberries with herbicides that penetrate the root system of the plants, making it next to impossible for them to resprout. In addition, Saffiya Samman, the manager of the Forest Service's sugar pine project, says scientists are searching for resistance mechanisms other than MGR that naturally occur within the sugar pine population, such as bark that resists the outbreak of cankers.

*Julissa McKinnon is an intern at the California Wilderness Coalition.*



Sugar pine (with unopened cones) on Copper Creek Trail, Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness. Photo by Pete Yamagata

## Logging threatens Thousand Lakes Wilderness additions

Thousand Lakes Wilderness is becoming increasingly isolated as roads and clearcuts hem it in on every side. The Devil's Garden and Cypress roadless areas offer the only hope of ever expanding the boundaries of the wilderness and maintaining habitat connections between Lassen Volcanic National Park to the south and other wildlands to the north. But salvage sales threaten these two small Lassen National Forest roadless areas.

The 3,500-acre Devil's Garden Roadless Area on the southeastern boundary of the Thousand Lakes Wilderness

has two prominent features: the jumbled Devil's Rock Garden volcanic formation and 7,245-foot Logan Mountain. The roadless area is bordered on the west by a popular trail into the wilderness. The 3,400-acre Cypress Roadless Area borders Thousand Lakes Wilderness on the north; it too is traversed by a popular trail.

In the past, the Forest Service had to prepare an environmental impact statement before logging roadless areas. Because of an amendment that makes salvage sales immune from federal environmental laws, the agency now has only to prepare a less-comprehensive analysis before destroying these irreplaceable wildlands. The amendment also means it is difficult, if not impossible, for activists to stop salvage sales in court. For this reason, only public outrage and pressure on the Clinton administration can prevent roadless areas from being destroyed.

### What you can do

Write to Jan Sorochtey, Hat Creek Ranger District, Lassen National Forest, P. O. Box 220, Fall River Mills, CA 96028 by February 28 (letters must be postmarked by this date). Request that the Forest Service exclude the Devil's Garden and Cypress roadless areas from the proposed Wilcox and Bellow salvage sales. Remind the agency that these roadless areas are needed to maintain habitat connections between other wild areas and the Thousand Lakes Wilderness.

Send a copy of your letter to President Clinton at The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500 and remind him that it was his approval of the salvage amendment that made this logging possible. Tell him that to fulfill his promise to protect the environment, he must prevent the Forest Service from destroying our last wild areas.

## Forest Service wants to log Butt Creek

The Forest Service is proposing to log the upper portions of the Butt Creek watershed in the Lassen National Forest. More than 40 groves of trees will be logged and over two miles of new road built. This heavy concentration of logging and road construction in a single watershed raises serious concerns about water quality. The proposed logging sites are adjacent to the Cub Creek and Butt Mountain roadless areas and in some cases only yards from the Pacific Crest Trail, which follows a ridge around the western edge of the Butt Creek basin.

Although Butt Mountain and Cub Creek roadless areas themselves will not be logged, the proposed logging will affect them nonetheless. The logging now proposed in the Ruffa timber sale would isolate two roadless areas a mile apart that now are linked by healthy forest.

Sadly, if the Ruffa timber sale proceeds as planned, a hike on the Pacific Crest Trail along the rim of the Butt Creek basin will provide hikers with excellent lessons about logging methods and their impacts—but not much of a wilderness experience.

### What you can do

Write to Michael R. Williams, District Ranger, Almanor Ranger District, Lassen National Forest, P. O. Box 767, Chester, CA 96020 by February 26 (letters must be postmarked by this date). Request that all sanitation, salvage, and shelterwood logging proposed in the Ruffa timber sale be excluded from the headwaters of Butt Creek (west of the Ruffa Ranch) to prevent the ecological isolation of the Butt Mountain and Cub Creek roadless areas. Remind him that concentrating so much logging in the Butt Creek watershed risks degrading the area's water quality and scenery, especially as viewed from the Pacific Crest Trail.

## Barkley sale

continued from page 1

Creek and the wilderness character of Polk Springs Roadless Area depends on whether public outrage can force the Forest Service to drop the Barkley sale permanently.

### What you can do

Write to Leonard Atencio, Forest Supervisor, Lassen National Forest, 55 South Sacramento Street, Susanville, CA 96130. Request that the Forest Service honor the Quincy Library Group agreement by cancelling the Barkley salvage sale. Tell him you want the wilderness character of the Polk Springs Roadless Area and the pristine aquatic habitat of Deer Creek permanently preserved.

Send a copy of your letter to President Clinton at The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500 with a reminder that it was his approval of the salvage rider that made the Barkley sale possible. Explain to him that logging Polk Springs would undo the work of the Quincy Library Group and undermine other consensus efforts by re-igniting the timber wars.

## Wilderness news

# Forest Service to evict Bradley Hut

By Lucy Rosenau

In all the months and all the negotiations that preceded the passage of the California Wilderness Act, no one gave much thought to Bradley Hut. Agreeing on the boundary of the Granite Chief Wilderness, that was the issue that had people's attention. Environmentalists, led by the Sierra Club, wanted a 34,000-acre wilderness reaching from the headwaters of the North Fork of the American River south to the Five Lakes Creek drainage. Timber companies wanted the wilderness boundary drawn to exclude the big trees they coveted in the Five Lakes drainage, and influential landowners in the north wanted their watershed left out of the wilderness. For its part, the Forest Service didn't want a wilderness in the Tahoe National Forest at all.

As the months passed, the boundary moved first south, then north, then south again. When the California Wilderness Act passed in 1984, California had a 25,000-acre wilderness, a wilderness that included the forested slopes of the Five Lakes drainage and Bradley Hut. Today, the rustic ski hut is itself the focus of negotiations between the Sierra Club, which wants it preserved, and the Forest Service, which has ordered it removed.

Bradley Hut was erected in 1957, the last link in a chain of shelters that allowed cross-country skiers to travel from Castle Peak to Desolation, sleeping each night in one of five Sierra Club huts spaced 8 to 15 miles apart. It sits in the woods of Five Lakes Basin, invisible to most of the recreationists who crowd Five Lakes each summer, some 500 yards inside the wilderness's eastern boundary.

When the Forest Service issued its draft management plan for the Tahoe National Forest in 1985, cross-country

skiers were shocked to read that the agency wanted the hut removed from the wilderness. Whether the agency's proposal to remove the hut was retaliation against the Sierra Club for its role in promoting a Granite Chief Wilderness the Forest Service didn't want, as some environmentalists believe, or an appropriate application of the Wilderness Act and Forest Service policy, as the agency contends, the Tahoe forest plan the agency adopted in 1990 calls for the hut to be removed from the wilderness and its site restored.

The dispute between the Sierra Club and the Forest Service centers on whether the hut has historic significance. In its evaluation, the Forest Service determined the hut does not qualify for preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Sierra Club maintains that though Bradley Hut itself is not old enough to qualify as a historic landmark, the chain of shelters does have historic significance and should be protected.

Although the 1964 Wilderness Act defined wilderness as a place "without permanent improvements or human habitation," there is no shortage of structures in wilderness areas (one survey found 119 cabins and shelters in the wilderness areas of California's national forests alone). Some are historic structures. Others are associated with mining claims or grazing allotments. The Forest Service has lookouts and other buildings in the wilderness for its



Bradley Hut in the Granite Chief Wilderness. Photo by Garry Oye

## Victory for Caples Creek

In welcome news for advocates of a Caples Creek Wilderness in the Eldorado National Forest, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) announced in January that it would respect the Forest Service's chosen wilderness boundary, effectively scotching a developer's long-standing plan to build a hydroelectric dam on the Silver Fork of the American River, within the proposed wilderness.

Ordinarily, a wilderness proposal from the Forest Service is a sure thing, a ticket to eventual wilderness designation. The only uncertainty is whether Congress will establish a wilderness larger than the agency recommends. But that has not—until now—been the case with Caples Creek.

In its 1988 Eldorado forest plan the Forest Service recommended all of the 17,900-acre Caples Creek Roadless Area for wilderness designation. The recommendation was cheered by environmentalists, not only because it set a likely minimum size for the future wilderness area and included the dam site, but also because the Forest Service protects the areas it recommends for wilderness designation from destructive activities like logging and road building.

But not even the Forest Service can protect a roadless area or free-flowing river from a dam. Only Congress can do that, by including the river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Both Caples Creek and the Silver Fork of the American River have been found eligible for wild-and-scenic designation by the Forest Service. The next step is a suitability study, something the agency so far has declined to do.

But in the absence of wild-and-scenic or wilderness designation, the FERC decision is the next best thing for Caples Creek. Had the FERC allowed the dam to be built, there could still have been a wilderness at Caples Creek, but it would have been a lesser wilderness, not just in acreage but in wildness.

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Although it is widely accepted that mountain lion populations are expanding, there is no scientific basis for this assumption. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) estimates that there are between 4,000 and 6,000 adult lions in California. And though mountain lion sightings are soaring, DFG officials admit that many reports cannot be verified since they come from members of the public unfamiliar with the appearance and habits of cougars.

Increased sightings are partly a result of an expanding population moving into and visiting mountain lion territory. The DFG reports that roughly half of California is suitable habitat, although lions are more abundant in areas where deer are plentiful.

Expanded coverage of lion sightings by the media has translated into public concern. Areas long populated by cougars are posted with warning signs by agency personnel fearful of lawsuits in the event of an attack. People are warned not to hike alone and to report any encounter with a lion to authorities.

Hunting organizations argue that killing cougars is the only way to restore fear of humans in lions and eliminate the threat of mountain lion attacks.

**Is hunting the solution?**

Arguing that hunting is needed to cause mountain lions to fear humans ignores the fact that hundreds of

administration, as do other state and federal agencies.

The circumstances vary. The California Wilderness Act that established Granite Chief Wilderness also established the Yosemite Wilderness—and specifically excluded Yosemite's High Sierra Camps from the wilderness to avoid violating the intent of the 1964 Act. Other structures are grandfathered in, allowed to remain because Congress specifically included them in wilderness areas. But since Congress did not make provisions for Bradley Hut, its disposition is at the discretion of the Forest Service.

The Forest Service has offered to help the Sierra Club find another location, outside the wilderness, where a new hut could be erected to replace Bradley Hut, but the cost of erecting a new hut probably will be prohibitive.

## Mountain lions

lions currently are being killed under depredation permits.

Indeed, DFG director Boyd Gibbons reported to state Senator Tom Hayden that "recreational hunting... would not be expected to sufficiently reduce lion densities to result in lowering the potential for human attacks. From a scientific basis, it would likely be necessary to reduce a lion population by 25-50 percent in order to reduce competition for food between lions and thereby reduce the potential for the predatory act of attacking humans."

Nevertheless, lobbyists from Gun Owners of California, the National Rifle Association, and the Safari Club convinced the legislature to place Proposition 197 on the March ballot. If passed by voters, this measure would allow the sport hunting of mountain lions and raid the habitat protection funds to create private mountain lion hunting zones for the Safari Club.

The truth is that some hunting groups are exploiting the public's fear of attack to restore trophy hunting of mountain lions. And some members of the legislature are eager to take away the \$30 million now reserved for purchasing and restoring wildlife habitat.

Mountain lions and people can co-exist in California, but not if lions are slaughtered, habitat is destroyed, and management funds are eliminated.

*Jim Eaton is executive director of the California Wilderness Coalition.*

***If passed by voters, Prop. 197 would allow sport hunting of mountain lions and raid the habitat protection funds to create private mountain lion hunting zones for the Safari Club.***

## Wilderness forum

### A walk in the wilderness

By Steve Evans

I escaped the destruction derby-strip mall-freeway known as Interstate 15 by taking the Lytle Creek Road exit. While visiting my folks for the Thanksgiving holiday, I wanted to take advantage of Southern California's seemingly permanent Indian summer to get above the smog and away from the constant jumble of people, cars, houses, and the rest of the city sprawl that has turned so much of the region into an urban wasteland.

Heading up Lytle Creek Road, I gazed in anticipation at the eastern peaks of the San Gabriel Mountains, averting my eyes from the dry, boulder-strewn bed of Lytle Creek, which has been dewatered by the local utility's hydroelectric project. A left turn at the hamlet of Lytle Creek led me up a gravel road following the free-flowing Middle Fork of Lytle Creek. The road ends at a trailhead parking lot, empty on this weekday afternoon.

On with the hiking boots and day pack. I started up the Lytle Creek trail, which switchbacks over a side ridge that blocks easy access up canyon. At this point, Southern California's ubiquitous chaparral gives way to big-coned Douglas fir and lush creekside riparian forest dominated by sycamore trees. Soon, the trail drops down to the creek and to the first campsite marked on the map, Stone House. The creekside camp was a tempting rest spot, but too many recent hours trapped in an automobile and my 40th birthday convinced me I should stretch my legs a bit. I continued upstream into the Cucamonga Wilderness.

The trail climbs steeply up rugged canyon walls. A rare multicolored mountain king snake slipped sinuously off

the trail as I walked past. Stopping to catch my breath, I heard the tell-tale rattle of rocks tumbling down the canyon and spotted a small herd of bighorn sheep—a ram, two ewes, and a yearling. They stared at me across the canyon abyss, unconcerned about my presence or their seemingly precarious perch on the perpendicular cliff.

Well above the gray smog line which obscured the urbanized basin below, I stopped at Third Stream Crossing camp. Here, the Middle Fork cascades through a smooth, rock-bound inner canyon. The sycamores and maples were in full autumnal display, their leaves carpeting the trail. It was getting late, but the incipient approach of middle age again nagged me to push on.

***It was getting late, but the incipient approach of middle age nagged me to push on.***

Another switchback summit afforded me a spectacular view of a high waterfall created by the Middle Fork's vault over a rocky scarp. Above the waterfall, the flow of the creek fell to a murmur, and then to nothing, reminding me once again of the ephemeral nature of California's creeks and rivers. Farther upstream at Comanche camp, I discovered the Middle Fork once again flowing above ground. The late afternoon shadows made me wish I had brought a sleeping bag as I reluctantly turned to retrace my steps back toward the trailhead and civilization.

The fast approach of evening encouraged a quick march back down the trail. Just a mile short of the trailhead, a giant pile of fresh bear poop and an ambling string of paw prints affirmed that I wasn't the only one enjoying an evening stroll in the wilderness.

*Steve Evans is conservation director for Friends of the River and a director of the California Wilderness Coalition.*

## Notices

### Job opening

The California Wilderness Coalition is seeking an editor for the *Wilderness Record* and other CWC publications beginning April 1. The Davis-based position is flexible half-time and pays \$700 a month.

The job requires good writing and editing skills and the ability to work well with a variety of people. Familiarity with PageMaker software and knowledge of California wilderness issues are desirable.

Interested candidates should mail, e-mail, or fax a resume to Jim Eaton at the CWC—2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616; [cwc@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us](mailto:cwc@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us); (916) 758-0382 respectively—by March 1. Spelling counts. For more information, call the CWC office at (916) 758-0380.

### Mammoth-June extension

The Forest Service has extended the deadline for comments on the desired condition of the Mammoth-June area of the Inyo National Forest. The agency's desired condition for the area does not include wilderness designation for San Joaquin Roadless Area or protection for old-growth forests (see January 1996 *WR*). Comments should be sent by February 19 to Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514-2400.

## Letter

### DFG fish policy: only a little less worse

The *Wilderness Record* and Eric Gerstung should be commended for bringing us this timely and informative update on the status of at-risk native fish [January 1996]. It should be a serious wake-up call to those of us who have complacently assumed that native fish are in some sort of safe haven by virtue of living in officially designated wilderness areas under the protection of state and federal resource agencies including the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the U. S. Forest Service. Unfortunately, rather than halt the slide toward species extinctions, the management actions Gerstung describes generally seem to have made things only a little less worse.

The example of Cal Trout and others working to reduce cattle damage to Volcano Creek golden trout habitat underscores the widespread unwillingness of the Forest Service to come to grips with the continuous, cumulative degradation of resources entrusted to the agency's protection. Why must private citizens have to act to make the government do its job? The public servants we have hired to be guard dogs have turned out to be lapdogs.

Taking occasional fish population samples, recommending sport fishing restrictions, and doing some handwringing over road deterioration is about all that is really happening. The most active and intensive management Gerstung describes is the systematic use of rotenone by the DFG to poison water, followed by restocking with at-risk native fish. Our most enlightened and respected scientists now incorporate holistic relationships and the concept of biodiversity into assessing environmental conditions. The use of rotenone to grossly simplify an ecosystem for the single-minded purpose of promoting the survival of a particular local strain of an at-risk fish species is an outrage hung over from the outmoded mindset of single species/sport species wildlife management in vogue a century ago.

Peculiar as it may be, the proponents of "management by death" describe rotenone as a somewhat innocuous, naturally occurring substance. Take note! Rotenone

formulations currently employed by the DFG are highly toxic and not all that easy to control. Due to a number of highly variable complexities such as water temperature, stream flow, and chemical batch differences, far too many rotenone projects have not worked as intended. Most rotenone products are no longer permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency for agricultural or domestic use.

Rotenone in use by the DFG is deadly to essentially all gill-breathing organisms. Gerstung points out that "most species of aquatic insects are killed" by this stuff. The DFG then accepts on faith that insects, other invertebrates, amphibians, and non-game fish will naturally recolonize a poisoned stream reach or lake. At-risk fish are identified to the most refined taxonomic levels, but the few inventories we have been able to find for past DFG rotenone projects list insects in the crudest taxonomic terms (usually by orders or families) and do not quantify individual species recovery with sufficient accuracy to know whether the ecosystem will ever be the same as it was before a project.

Another irony of the single species/sport species management syndrome is illustrated by the Lahontan cutthroat trout that Gerstung informs us were once so abundant as to sustain commercial fisheries in Tahoe, Pyramid, and Walker lakes. This trout has now been re-established in a mere seven California streams. Meanwhile, Lake Tahoe supports large populations of non-native game fish, including out-of-state exotic Mackinaw trout and kokanee salmon. There appears to be little to no effort to re-establish the at-risk natives in their most important historic waters.

Adding insult to injury, golden trout have been stocked into over 200 high-elevation lakes since 1918. Most of these lakes originally had no native fish in them at all. Has this practice threatened insects and amphibians that are native to those high-elevation lakes and may not have natural defenses to being eaten by fish? Not only do the

resource managers decline to answer, but the DFG continues to stock reservoirs and natural lakes throughout the state with multiple exotic species. We might conclude that planting an exotic mix of fish like Mackinaws, brook trout, kokanee salmon, brown trout, and an out-of-the-watershed variety of rainbow trout into a reservoir like Bucks Lake, or equally bizarre mixtures of mostly non-native species into most other bodies of water around the state, constitutes the DFG's interpretation of biodiversity.

The DFG's persistent lack of concern for non-game species and real biodiversity is evident when we see that in two full pages, only the last, three-sentence paragraph of Gerstung's article is about non-game fish. He reports that "DFG management efforts for these species are largely limited to occasional population surveys."

Consideration of the ecosystem where a plant or animal lives is important because species do not become extinct all by themselves. The loss of one of nature's creatures is an indication that something (probably many interrelated things) is wrong. Coal miners used to carry caged canaries underground to detect unsafe air. If the bird keeled over dead, they didn't try to replace the bird, they got the heck out of the mine shaft! If today we are losing trout, or salmon, or chub, dace, and sucker species in any of our streams, it may be all well and good to move some quality stock to hatcheries and try various methods to re-introduce them to native waters. It is far more important, however, to find out what is going wrong, what other species are in trouble, and then do something to correct it. It should also be obvious that the problems with at-risk fish are not confined to designated wilderness. Resource managers and the public in general should not be content to fight last-ditch, delaying battles within the wilderness when the entire natural range of a particular critter has been compromised. As Gerstung pointed out at the very beginning of his article, "wilderness protection alone is not sufficient."

Harry G. Reeves  
Quincy

## Wilderness news

# Klamath refuge to be logged

By Ryan Henson

There is a beautiful little watershed in the Klamath National Forest with a very ugly name: Specimen Creek. Specimen Creek originates in the Marble Mountain Wilderness and flows south to the Salmon River. With the wilderness to the north and the Snoozer Roadless Area (another inspired name) to the west, Specimen Creek's ancient forests are a critical habitat link for old-growth dependent species. For this reason, President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan (Option 9) designated much of the Specimen watershed outside the wilderness as a late-successional reserve.

But Option 9 is riddled with loopholes, and one of the worst allows the Forest Service to salvage log late-successional reserves when they burn. The Specimen reserve burned last year.

The Forest Service insists that the only way a burned forest can recover is if it is logged, even though regeneration begins immediately after a fire with little or no help from forest managers. Indeed, ample evidence indicates that salvage logging after a fire can hinder natural regeneration by reducing shade, compacting soils, destroying the protective soil crust that forms after fires, increasing erosion, damaging or cutting the unburned trees that remain, destroying protective grasses and shrubs, and removing logs which decay and help create fertile soil.

## 20 years defending wilderness

from page 3

### The Volunteers

It is impossible to list all the volunteers who have made the Coalition what it is today. Thirty men and women have served on our board of directors, nine as president. Support for the Coalition has always been strong, with early mentors like Harriet Allen, Joe Fontaine, David Gaines, Ike Livermore, and Tom Winnett.

Your monthly *Wilderness Record* has been mailed by volunteers for 20 years, and Paul Grant and Mary Tappel have helped out all that time. Volunteers write or take photos for the *Record*; you see their work each month.

U. C. Davis has provided the Coalition with a steady flow of interns. Most notably, Mary Scoonover went from intern to Coalition president; she still serves on the board of directors.

### The Conferences

Many activists fondly remembered the Sierra Club's biennial wilderness conferences of the 1950s and 1960s, gatherings that inspired them and helped get the Wilderness Act passed.

So in 1978 the Coalition, with great assistance from the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, organized a statewide conference in Oakland. David Brower was the featured speaker, and there were workshops and presentations by Huey Johnson, Celia Hunter, Peggy Wayburn, and Mark Palmer. Howard Wilshire gave a moving multiple-projector slide show on the California desert. Over 200 people attended.

Flushed with that success, we planned a joint conference with Friends of the River for 1979. This gathering drew 400 people to Sacramento to hear Huey Johnson, Barry Lopez, Doug Scott, Brock Evans, and others. The event was a financial disaster, however, and enthusiasm for another conference waned.

After the passage of the California Wilderness Act of 1984, we decided to gather our clan again to discuss how to protect areas that were left out of that legislation and how to save the California desert. Bob Barnes agreed to organize the event in Visalia.

Bob's phenomenal energy made the conference an enormous success. Over 700 activists came to Visalia in October of 1985 to cheer Senator Alan Cranston's promise to introduce a desert wilderness bill. Other wilderness leaders who inspired the crowd included David Brower, Dave Foreman, Ardis Walker, Brock Evans, and Doug Scott.

The Forest Service claims that if the burned forest is left unlogged, an even greater fire will occur when dead trees rot and litter the forest floor. In fact, logging waste (called slash) and the dense, monotonous rows of trees (called plantations) planted after clearcutting are the greatest fire threat to our forests. Slash is like kindling piled high on the forest floor, and plantations burn like matchsticks. Natural forests, on the other hand, burn more slowly, coolly, and unevenly.

Conservationists do not object to the Forest Service salvage logging previously logged areas, but they strongly object to salvage logging in old-growth stands where fire is a natural and necessary process. With enough public pressure on the Forest Service, perhaps the agency won't make Specimen Creek come to resemble its ugly name.

### What you can do

Write to Bill Wais, Salmon River Ranger District, Klamath National Forest, P. O. Box 280, Etna, CA 96027-0280 by February 14 (letters must be postmarked by this date). Request that the Forest Service exclude all burned old-growth stands from the Specimen salvage sale. Remind him that there is no credible scientific evidence to support the Forest Service's claim that salvage logging an ancient forest will hasten post-fire recovery or reduce the danger of future fires. Demand that the Forest Service produce such evidence before selling away Specimen Creek's old-growth forest.

Bob surpassed himself four years later with another Visalia event. With financial support from his mother Sidney (who also helped staff the registration desk), a four-day conference was attended by 750 people—despite the disruption of the Loma Prieta earthquake three days earlier that forced Rep. Barbara Boxer and others to cancel.

Senator Cranston again inspired the crowd; he was joined by Rep. Mel Levine who was helping usher the desert bill through Congress. There were dozens of workshops to choose from, and environmental leaders who spanned the generations, from David Brower and Ike Livermore to Mark DuBois and Dave Foreman. Heads of land management agencies shared the stage with activists from Earth First!

### Have We Made a Difference?

It is difficult, of course, for me to answer this question objectively. From my perspective, the *Wilderness Record* has been a unifying force in the efforts to protect California wildlands. We have played major roles in several campaigns:

State wilderness—Phil Farrell, with help from Jim Trumbly and others, did an outstanding job in getting the Resources Agency to inventory its lands and make good wilderness recommendations, especially in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Today there are six state wilderness areas that protect about 500,000 acres.

California Wilderness Act of 1984—The Coalition's early conferences and workshops helped bring together the massive alliance that worked to pass this landmark legislation. I spent a lot of time in Washington, D. C. testifying at hearings, lobbying, and helping other activists learn the ropes. The bill established 27 wilderness areas and enlarged 13 others.

California Desert Protection Act—From the very beginning, Jim Trumbly, Tom Jopson, and Phil Farrell made the desert a Coalition priority. Even our logo is meant to represent sand dunes and a desert mountain. The work of Dennis Coules laid the groundwork, and the two Visalia conferences gave focus to the campaign for the legislation that in 1994 protected more than seven million acres of the California desert.

We now are turning our attention to preserving California's remaining wild places and biodiversity in a system of protected reserves and corridors—ambitious, much-needed work that may well take us another 20 years to accomplish.

## Calendar

**February 14** COMMENTS DUE on a logging proposal for an old-growth reserve near the Marble Mountain Wilderness (article on this page). Send to Bill Wais, Salmon River Ranger District, Klamath National Forest, P. O. Box 280, Etna, CA 96027-0280.

**February 15–16** PUBLIC MEETING of the Northwest Sacramento province advisory committee in Mt. Shasta. The topic is managing old-growth reserves. For details, call Ryan Henson at the CWC, (916) 758-0380.

**February 16–19** WETLANDS FESTIVAL promoting conservation in the Sacramento Valley. For more information about Duck Days classes and field trips, call (916) 758-1286 or (800) 425-5001.

**February 19** COMMENTS DUE on the Forest Service's proposed desired condition for the Mammoth-June area of the Inyo National Forest (article in January 1996 *WR*). Send to: Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514-2400.

**February 26** COMMENTS DUE on a timber sale proposed for the Butt Mountain and Cub Creek roadless areas of the Lassen National Forest (article on page 4). Send to: Michael R. Williams, District Ranger, Almanor Ranger District, Lassen National Forest, P. O. Box 767, Chester, CA 96020.

**February 28** COMMENTS DUE on salvage sales that threaten the Devil's Garden and Cypress roadless areas of the Lassen National Forest (article on page 4). Send to: Jan Sorochtey, Hat Creek Ranger District, Lassen National Forest, P. O. Box 220, Fall River Mills, CA 96028.

**March 14–15** PUBLIC MEETING of the resource advisory committee for the Bureau of Land Management's Ukiah district. For details, call Renee Snyder at the BLM, (707) 468-4000.

## Wilderness Trivia Answer

The golden trout is California's state fish. Last year, the legislature named the garibaldi the state marine fish.

### 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  
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 Friends of Chinquapin, Oakland  
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 Friends of the River; Sacramento Friends of the River Foundation; S. F. Fund for Animals; San Francisco Hands Off Wild Lands! (HOWL); Davis

High Sierra Hikers Association; Truckee International Center for Earth Concerns; Ojai Kaweah Flyfishers; Visalia  
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 League to Save Lake Tahoe; South Lake Tahoe Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club; Palo Alto

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 Species for Habitat; Sunnysvale Natural Resources Defense Council; S.F. NCRCC Sierra Club; Santa Rosa  
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Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata Northern Coast Range Biodiversity Project; Davis  
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 Yolano Group, Sierra Club; Davis  
 Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

*"The public servants we have hired to be guard dogs have turned out to be lapdogs."*

—Harry G. Reeves (page 6)

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