

Phil Farrell



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

July 1996

Salvage logging threatens Siskiyou wild area— only President Clinton can save it

By Ryan Henson

The Forest Service is proposing to log up to 26 million board feet of trees from the Dillon Creek watershed, a pristine forest region in the Klamath National Forest. The beleaguered area provides a haven for old-growth dependent species, including the northern spotted owl, fisher, marten, goshawk and wolverine as well as providing wildlife a critical link between the Siskiyou and Marble Mountain wilderness areas.

The Dillon Creek watershed is mostly contained within the Siskiyou Roadless Area, which borders the Siskiyou Wilderness on the west and the Klamath River on the east. For the last two decades the Forest Service has slowly encroached on the north and south ends of the roadless area through logging and road construction. Dillon Creek is quickly becoming the most endangered roadless watershed in California thanks to the salvage rider passed by Congress last year. Under the rider, citizens are prevented from appealing Forest Service logging plans and are also strictly limited in what they can use against the agency in court.

The proposed Dillon Salvage Sale will be the next assault on the roadless area. During the summer of 1994, a lightning fire burned 27,000 acres in the region. As soon as the flames were extinguished, the Forest Service began planning to salvage log the Dillon Creek watershed. Last year, a group of Forest Service employees who were out surveying the sale area forgot to douse their campfire and started another 2,000-acre conflagration. As before, the agency is now planning to salvage log trees burned in that fire as well.

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The Siskiyou high country, with the greatest conifer diversity on Earth, is threatened by salvage logging.
Photo by Felice Pace

Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project unveiled Comprehensive report chronicles damage to Range of Light

By Jim Eaton

Taking over three years, \$6.5 million and 107 scientists to prepare, the Congressionally mandated Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) has been completed. The finished report, the largest study of a single mountain range ever undertaken, is being sent to Congress with the conclusion that the Range of Light has been badly degraded.

Tom Knudson's 1991 series of *Sacramento Bee* articles, *The Sierra in Peril*, motivated Congress to request the collaborative study. Coordinated by the Centers for Water and Wildland Resources at the University of California at Davis, the team of scientists was selected from universities, state and federal agencies, and private institutions.

The scientists inferred that logging, grazing, water development, air pollution, and urbanization have badly damaged the Sierra Nevada. Among the many conclusions reached:

- logging has increased fire severity more than any other recent human activity;
- loss of habitat, especially foothill, riparian, and old-growth forests, is the primary reason for the loss of animal species;
- grazing is the primary negative factor impacting the viability of native Sierran landbird populations; and
- few local economies are exclusively dependent on resource-extractive industries (eg. timber, mining, grazing).

Not only are past activities wreaking havoc on the Sierra, but projected population increases threaten to exacerbate the problems. In the two decades preceding 1990, population doubled in the Sierra Nevada. The population is expected to triple by 2040.

These new residents will be moving into lands increasingly prone to wildfire, putting an increasing number of homes and people at risk.

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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

Interns are second class citizens at CWC. Not only do they have to work for free, they don't even get a desk. Since the paid staff are seldom all in the office at the same time, an intern looks for a vacant desk to use and hopes to find a free computer.

Last month I had to find room for another desk in our crowded office. It wasn't a gesture of kindness to our interns (although I wish I could offer one). It was to make room for a new staff member, Paul Spitler.

Technically Paul isn't working for the Coalition; he's being paid by the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC). After interning with CWC the past year, he sure seems like part of our staff.

WAFC has Paul working on repealing the salvage rider, known around here as the clearcut rider. Much of Ryan's work this year has been trying the kill or alter salvage sales, sales which often cut thriving ancient forests in the name of forest health. This one amendment has done more to destroy roadless areas than anything else I can recall.

So Paul and Ryan are working closely together to return logging on public lands to environmental and judicial review. They recently were frustrated when we came within two votes of victory in the House of Representatives. Being dedicated environmentalists, they took the disappointment in stride and got back to work.

Our other long-time intern, Kathleen Brennan, has been joined this summer by Jenny Miller. Kathy gets pulled different ways; we'll have her working on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project one moment and The Wildlands Project the next. Jenny, who commutes from the Bay Area, likely will work mostly on forest issues.

While I was the traveller much of May, that distinction has returned to Ryan. He spent a week in Washington, D.C. working to repeal the clearcut rider, and he has travelled throughout California to attend various meetings.

20th Anniversary Celebration draws wilderness lovers

The California Wilderness Coalition's 20th Anniversary fundraiser in San Francisco at the Fort Mason Firehouse was a rousing success. Great wine, excellent food, and short speeches made for a fun evening. Although final figures are not yet in, the event netted over \$6,000 for the Coalition.

At the risk of slighting someone, thanks are in order for many people. First, the Bay Area board members who organized the event should be congratulated: Trent Orr, Alan Carlton, Frannie Hoover, and Nobby Riedy. Past board members were also key to the planning team: John Hooper, Catherine Fox, and Jay Watson.

The natural wines were courtesy of Storybook Mountain, Green and Red winery, Casa Nuestra, and Coturri and Sons, Ltd. Millennium Restaurant provided great food, along with Semifreddi's and Greens. Ryan's wife Bonnie Beffa baked and decorated a beautiful anniversary cake. We learned that Trent Orr makes a wicked pasta salad, and that various board members (along with Genny and Mark Palmer) can fix good eats as well. And we appreciate Lora Leerskov's attention to detail that makes for a great smooth-running event (although the great wind surfing weather may have been her main incentive to attend).

David Darlington and David Rains Wallace were kind enough to provide brief but moving readings from their books. The San Francisco Patagonia store donated two great items for a silent auction.

Finally, a collective thank you for all our friends who attended and generously donated to CWC, especially from our friends in The Wilderness Society who wrote a nice, large check.

Backpacker that he is, Ryan never has taken a trip for more than four days. That record should be shattered in July when he hikes for two weeks down the Pacific Crest trail through the Marble Mountain, Russian, and Trinity Alps wilderness areas.

Wendy and I plan to celebrate her July 3rd birthday (the big four-oh) on a seven day trek in Montana's Bitterroot Wilderness. Ten years ago we journeyed there after Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton's wedding, but the rain limited us to short day hikes. We again plan to visit Kirk and Lisa Thompson in Stevensville—Lisa played a key role in the designation of the Snow Mountain Wilderness.

Our office was recently brightened up by a visit from former board member Lynn Ryan. Lynn, now in Massachusetts, was traveling from hot spring to hot spring with her significant other Wayne and his 10-year old daughter. Inyo was delighted to see the "popcorn lady" again—Lynn readily shares treats with her canine friend. We filled each other in with news and gossip while Wayne and Herb shared the secrets of graphic arts and publishing.

Sadness came too with hearing of the deaths of Harley Greiman and George Clark.

Harley was the first non-forester District Ranger I ever met. He was one of the friendliest Forest Service employees around.

George was my neighbor when Roger Scholl and I lived at the corner of 4th and A streets 25 years ago. George and Rog were chemistry graduate students at U.C. Davis and best friends.

Years later we discovered what a small world we live in when Lucy Rosenau came to work for the Coalition. The Clark family is among Lucy's closest friends. Her obituary for George is on page 7.

By Jim Eaton

Wilderness Trivia Question

How many plant species occur only in the Sierra Nevada?

Answer on page 7

Welcome to the Los Angeles Audubon Society

CWC would like to welcome our newest member group, the Los Angeles Audubon Society. The Society offers a variety of services and programs aimed at educating citizens in the Los Angeles area and protecting the region's natural resources and wildlife.

The Society publishes a wide range of materials including several guidebooks to the birds of southern California and *Western Tanager*, an award-winning newsletter filled with articles, illustrations and a guide to upcoming events.

The Society has also worked successfully to conserve habitat for several imperiled species. Victories include the El Segundo Dunes, Mono Lake, Sepulveda Wildlife Area and Malibu Lagoon. At-risk species that have benefited from the Society's efforts include the California condor, peregrine falcon and bald eagle. The Society obtained funding to reintroduce bald eagles at Catalina Island and peregrine falcons in the Santa Monica mountains.

For more information, contact the Los Angeles Audubon Society at (213) 876-0202/fax (213) 876-7609 or write to 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694.

Salvage Rider

Blame Congress for the salvage rider, but the fate of California's forests are in President Clinton's hands—will he save them?

By Ryan Henson

Whether you call it logging without laws, the salvage rider, Public Law 104-19, or (as many activists prefer) the clearcut rider, the salvage logging amendment to the Rescissions Act signed by President Clinton last year is devastating our ancient forests. The conservation group Save America's Forests calls the amendment "the most anti-environmental bill" ever signed into law.

The salvage rider exempts from environmental law, judicial review, and citizen appeals all salvage logging on public lands. It also defines salvage logging so broadly that almost all timber sales qualify under the amendment. Little known but terribly disturbing, is that all logging on national forests managed under the Northwest Forest Plan (known as Option 9) falls under the rider (see article on page 5). Despite assurances from the White House that federal agencies will follow environmental laws, protect forest ecosystems, and allow public scrutiny of timber sales, examples of abuse abound.

Public lands in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana have been particularly hard hit by the amendment, and several large and potentially destructive sales are planned for California's forests as well (there are currently over 300 salvage rider sales planned for the Golden State). In particular, the Modoc, Klamath, Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, Lassen, Sequoia, Six Rivers, and Tahoe national forests will all use the amendment this year to log at least thirteen roadless areas, several old-growth groves, and other important natural areas. In the past, these sales most likely would have been defeated

It is important to remember that President Clinton can cancel or alter every salvage rider sale in California if he so chooses

through citizen pressure, administrative appeals, and the courts. However, under the clearcut rider, activists can only protest these projects and hope that public outrage will convince the Forest Service to withdraw them. Given that the Forest Service has stubbornly ignored public opinion over its logging policies for decades, it is doubtful that bad publicity alone will bring about a change of heart in the agency. Thanks to the salvage amendment, such flagrant abuses of our wildlands can only be challenged in the court of public opinion—not in a court of law.

Conservationists in Oregon and Washington have done an outstanding job of making the rider a key political issue in the Pacific Northwest. Activists in California, however, have had to concentrate their efforts into stop-



Slate Mountain Roadless Area, proposed as a new wilderness area under the Sequoia bill, had three salvage sales planned for it until recently. Photo by Ryan Henson

ping individual salvage sales—leaving few resources to engage in a similar media and organizing campaign. This is unfortunate considering California's position as a key electoral state with far more political clout than any other region affected by the rider. California's activists are beginning to use this influence to convince President Clinton to prevent wholesale forest destruction from the rider and work harder for its repeal.

On June 20, 1996 a vote to strip all funding from the salvage rider fell two votes short of passing in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives. Repeal supporters such as Representative Elizabeth Furse (D-OR) and Representative John Porter (R-IL) will try to overturn the rider again in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, efforts by anti-conservation lawmakers in Congress to extend the salvage rider continue. For example, Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) has proposed a so-called "forest health" bill that would essentially become a permanent salvage rider. A few Democratic senators are currently negotiating with Senator Craig to improve his bill. This is disconcerting to others who feel that the Craig bill is an extreme measure that should be rejected outright by thoughtful senators.

The belief held by Senator Craig and other salvage rider proponents that salvage logging and other intensive logging practices are good for our forests was dealt a severe blow in June by the release of the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) Report (see article on page 1). The multi-year study by the University of California concluded that logging has greatly worsened fire danger in the Sierra Nevada. The concern is that Congress will ignore these findings in its rush to placate the timber industry. For example, Representative Wally Herger (R-Yreka) has already begun to belie the SNEP report's findings by claiming that the study endorses large-scale logging to reduce the danger of fire on public lands, despite the study's true conclusion that logging has increased the intensity of

wildfire "more than any other human activity."

The California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA), an umbrella group of dozens of conservation organizations including CWC, is working hard to convince the Clinton administration to cancel salvage rider sales in old-growth forests, roadless areas and other sensitive wildlands, win more support for rider repeal efforts, and prevent Congress from extending the rider. The first task is especially critical since it has the greatest chance of succeeding and is the only short-term way to save thousands of acres of ancient forest and roadless wildlands from unregulated cutting.

It is important to remember that President Clinton can cancel or alter every salvage rider sale in California if he so chooses. California activists are currently developing a list of destructive salvage sales which they will demand that President Clinton withdraw in the coming months. These activists feel that their only hope of stopping these old-growth and roadless area sales is to convince President Clinton that it is in his political

interest to cancel them. This strategy was used successfully to get President Clinton to cancel the Barkley Salvage Sale in the Lassen National Forest—the first salvage rider sale in the nation to be halted.

On a recent trip to Washington, D.C. representatives with the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, Sierra Club, CWC, and other groups told White House officials that by stopping timber sales authorized by the salvage rider in ancient forest groves, roadless, and other ecologically critical areas, the administration would be fulfilling its pledge to protect our public lands and comply with federal environmental laws. At the meeting activists diplomatically informed the Clinton administration that it would be held directly—and very publicly—responsible for allowing areas like the Dillon watershed in the Klamath National Forest (see article on page 1) to be logged when they have the power to save them.

What you can do

Write to Leon Panetta, Chief of Staff, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500 as soon as possible. Request that the President cancel all salvage rider timber sales in old-growth groves, roadless areas, and other important natural areas. Remind him that the President has promised to safeguard our nation's public lands and protect the environment despite the passage of the salvage rider. Let him know that only by canceling these sales can the President fulfill his promise. If possible, please send copies of your letter to your Congressional representatives at:

Representative _____ Senator _____
House Office Building Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515 Washington, D.C. 20510

Desert wilderness

Contested Territory: Environmentalists and Native Americans Fight to Save Ward Valley from Nuclear Contamination

By Philip M. Klasky

The small town of Needles, California, known for blistering summer temperatures and as a rest stop on the once famous Route 66, has become a national battleground over the tenacious problem of nuclear waste disposal and the hub of a national debate on endangered species. Needles sits near the Colorado River which flows like a tame giant through the ancient landscapes of the Mojave desert. A close look reveals an area rich with pioneer and Native American history. Eighteen miles to the west of Needles is Ward Valley, the proposed site for a nuclear waste dump.

Ward Valley is a wide tilting valley in the beautiful Mojave desert. The proposed dump site sits in the midst of eight wilderness areas surrounded by the pristine golden canyons and cave paintings in the Old Woman Mountains, volcanic fins slicing limestone in the Stepladder Mountains and the surreal cactus forests in the Bigelow Cactus Gardens. Legislation crafted by those who would eviscerate the Endangered Species Act boldly threatens to exempt the project from the protections afforded critical habitat. Endangered species activists fear the precedent of building a nuclear dump in the best habitat for a species on the edge of oblivion.

What complicates the issue is the nuclear power industry's sophisticated public relations campaign to confuse the facts and present the dump as a safe and remote repository for short-lived medical wastes. According to Department of Energy statistics 85 percent of the waste slated for Ward Valley would come from nuclear reactors.

Further intrigue involves political maneuvers in Congress which attempt to force the dump project forward by exempting it from all environmental regulations. Senators Frank Murkowski (R-AK) and Bennett Johnston (D-LA) and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Brian Bilbray (R-San Diego) have introduced legislation which would force a federal land transfer at Ward Valley and exempt the dump from all existing environmental regulations. Murkowski and Young have led the charge against the Endangered Species Act and Johnston leads the Senate in donations from the nuclear power industry. Bilbray receives much of his financial support from the nuclear

utilities industry.

Attempts to pass a stealth amendment over the budget bill were defeated when President Clinton, responding to an overwhelming public outcry, listed the Ward Valley rider as one of the reasons for his veto. The latest version of the legislation has passed through the Senate and House committees and is awaiting a vote on the floor. Mixed messages from the Clinton Administration have made activists cautious about support from the White House.

For ten years, the State of California, working closely with the nuclear power industry, has been attempting to build a nuclear waste dump at Ward Valley. Ward Valley is on federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The 1980 Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act directs the states to take responsibility for the waste generated within their borders by forming regional compacts. California is in the Southwestern Compact with Arizona, North Dakota and South Dakota.

The land at Ward Valley must be transferred to the State of California before the dump can be built since the State would be the licensing agent. The land transfer would encompass 1,000 acres, ample room for a national dump site. In fact, dump opponents believe that the intention is to turn Ward Valley into a national repository for the nuclear waste from America's aging reactors. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has unilateral emergency access powers to direct waste to any open dump and the Southwestern Compact Commission, administered by gubernatorial appointees from the compact states, has voted to accept out-of-compact waste.

Governor Wilson has selected a notorious waste management firm as the dump contractor. US Ecology, (formerly Nuclear Engineering Corporation), has left a trail of leaking dumps and litigation across the country. Their nuclear dumps at Sheffield, Illinois; Maxey Flats, Kentucky; Richland, Washington and Beatty, Nevada are leaking dangerous radioactive materials into the surrounding ecosystem. Two of their toxic waste dumps are Superfund sites.

Deputy Secretary of the Interior John Garamendi has called for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to explore new information which has surfaced since the original Environmental Impact Statement in 1991. Dump opponents fear that Garamendi's move may be largely political since the SEIS is not expected to be completed until after the 1996 presidential election. Garamendi has stated that the purpose of the SEIS is to "determine the conditions of a land transfer." This is disturbing to those who believe that the land should not be transferred under any conditions and should stay in the hands of the federal government under the protection of the Endangered Species Act.

The Fort Mojave, Chemehuevi, Cocopah,

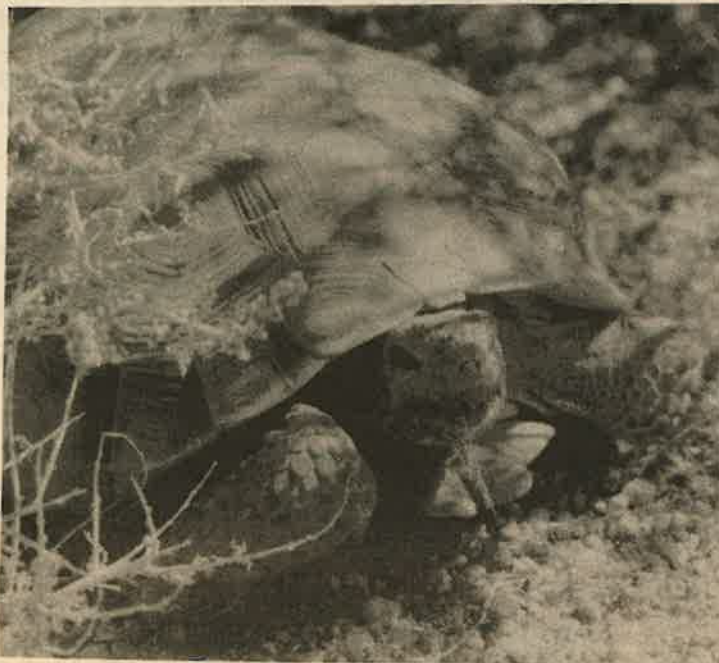


Protesters outside US Ecology's outpost in Needles, California.
Photo by Dan Budnick

Quechan and Colorado River Indian Tribes forming the Colorado River Native Nations Alliance have requested status as a "cooperating agency" in the SEIS process. This designation gives the tribes "nation to nation" consulting privileges with the federal government to be directly involved in the drafting, scope, and analysis of the final SEIS document. In an assault against the tribe's rights to self-determination, Bureau of Land Management State Director Ed Hastey has rejected their request to become a cooperating agency and has denied their status as a sovereign nation.

Opposition to the dump is great and growing. Public opinion polls conducted by independent research found that 70 percent of Californians oppose the dump, 80 percent oppose shallow land burial of radioactive wastes, but unfortunately only 30 percent know about the issue. A diverse coalition of nuclear scientists, medical professionals, economists, community activists, city and county governments, environmental, social justice, wilderness protection, indigenous rights, and endangered species organizations and Native American tribes have been working to protect Ward Valley. Their efforts are more than a political campaign: concerns about Ward Valley have accumulated to become a movement. Spring and fall

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Desert tortoise

Ancient forests

Forest Service undermining Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan

by Ryan Henson

The long series of court battles waged in the Pacific Northwest over the Forest Service's and Bureau of Land Management's logging of ancient forests ended in 1994 when U.S. District Judge William Dwyer ruled that the agencies and the White House had finally developed a satisfactory old-growth management plan. Judge Dwyer decided that President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, known commonly as Option 9, complied with federal environmental laws, though the judge warned that the plan was a bare-bones effort and that "any logging sales [over the amount] the plan contemplates would probably violate the laws."

A mere two years after Option 9 was approved, the Forest Service is undermining both the spirit and letter of the plan. Activists now worry that what was already a barely acceptable political compromise is now being weakened even further to the detriment of old-growth dependent species, roadless areas, and sensitive watersheds.

Option 9 was offered by the Clinton administration as an attempt to continue selling national forest timber while maintaining stable populations of spotted owls, salmon, steelhead, marbled murrelets, and other species. While conservationists were pleased with many aspects of the plan, many felt that Option 9 allowed too much ancient forest to be destroyed. Judge Dwyer's approval of the plan cleared the way for the cutting of approximately 1.1 billion board feet of trees annually in the Pacific Northwest, including over 200 million board feet annually from the Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, Six Rivers, and Klamath national forests in northwestern California.

Option 9, on paper at least, has had dramatic impacts upon northwestern California. For example, 1.5 million acres of federal land have been designated late-successional (old-growth) reserves, another 799,000 acres of land around streams, lakes, wetlands, and rivers have been designated riparian reserves, and 565,000 acres have been administratively withdrawn by either the Forest Service or BLM from logging or other development activities. Together with national parks, wilderness areas, and other lands, Option 9 provides at least some degree of protection for 75-85 percent of northwestern California's remaining old-growth forests. In addition to these large-scale land allocations, Option 9 also designates certain areas as "key watersheds" where no net increase in road mileage is allowed and where road closures are encouraged for the benefit of salmon, steelhead, and other sensitive species. Lastly, Option 9 toughens Forest Service and BLM regulations over off-road vehicle use, grazing, road construction, recreation development, and other activities that may degrade healthy watersheds over time.

Despite these seemingly positive aspects of the plan, Option 9 has many flaws in the eyes of conservationists. For example, late-successional reserves, riparian reserves, and administratively withdrawn lands are still subject to thinning (the cutting of small trees) and salvage logging (the cutting of supposedly diseased, dead, and dying trees) pending approval of an inter-agency review board. In addition, following a watershed analysis (which may be completed in a matter of months), the Forest Service and BLM are free to log and otherwise develop key watersheds (so long as they close one mile of road for every mile they construct), log roadless areas in key watersheds using helicopters or other supposedly low-impact equipment, and log and build roads in roadless areas outside of key watersheds. Lastly, only small patches of old-growth forest must be retained outside of reserves and other protected areas for the benefit of sensitive plants and wildlife.

While the BLM's implementation of Option 9 in California has been sincere, the Forest Service's approach to the plan is viewed with anger and cynicism by many activists who fear that the agency is doing all it can to

exploit Option 9's loopholes.

For example, it appears to activists, the agency's watershed analyses have been mere paperwork exercises at best. This is unfortunate since watershed analyses were supposed to be scientifically credible studies of the watershed restoration needs and the ecological processes at work in a given region. Since watershed analyses are the first step under Option 9 to opening up key watersheds, roadless areas, and other sensitive lands to logging, conservationists demanded that these documents look objectively at the ecological needs of a watershed and not focus simply on development. Sadly, the Forest Service has made a mockery of this process.

For instance, the Panther Creek Watershed Analysis prepared by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest was written in order to allow the Forest Service to log trees blown over in a storm last year near Mount Shasta. The analysis thus concluded that the primary ecological problems in the watershed are not clearcuts or roads (the problems scientists usually identify), but the hundreds of trees knocked down by the storm. The watershed analysis then concluded that the best way to restore the Panther Creek watershed was to log the fallen trees.

To make matters worse, the agency continues to argue that it must log in order to get the money it needs to comply with Option 9's directive to restore watersheds damaged by logging and road construction. Like Medieval physicians who bled their patients to death in order to cure them, the Six Rivers National Forest has proposed extensive logging and road construction in the Pilot Creek key watershed (including the Pilot Creek Roadless Area) in order to generate the money it needs to close roads and perform other restoration work in the area. The irony of such proposals appears lost on the agency.

Unfortunately, Option 9's riparian reserve standards are also being seriously undermined. These reserves, ranging in size from two hundred feet across for ephemeral and intermittent streams, to six hundred feet across for permanently flowing fish-bearing streams, are also supposed to protect landslides, highly erosive areas, and other sensitive soils no matter how far away they are from a riparian area. Riparian reserves may be even larger if the height of the tallest tree in the area exceeds the recommended buffer. For example, if a tree growing next to an intermittent stream is 150 feet tall, then the buffer for that stream would be 300 feet (150 feet on each side of the stream). For

ephemeral streams hosting fish, the height of the tallest tree in the area is doubled (in the above example, this would result in 300 feet on each side of a stream being protected). Riparian reserves are important because they not only protect water quality, but they are also supposed to provide old-growth habitat connectors between wilderness areas, late-successional reserves, and other protected areas. Unlike spotted owls which can fly from one patch of ancient forest to another, species like the marten and fisher must travel on foot across roads and clearcuts to find hospitable territory. Without strictly protected connectors between old-growth groves, old-growth dependent species will become isolated and will most likely be extirpated over time.

While Option 9 allows salvage logging and road construction in these reserves under exceptional circumstances, riparian reserve logging proposals have almost become the rule rather than the exception. One of the worst cases of riparian reserve logging occurred in the Lovers Bar timber sale in the Klamath National Forest (adjacent to the Marble Mountain Wilderness) where the Forest Service removed trees from reserves and, even worse, dragged the cut trees through streams. The agency later admitted its mistake but refused to punish the responsible officials.

In the proposed Saddle timber sale in the Mendocino National Forest the agency admitted that it "paces off" the riparian reserve boundaries instead of using tape measures. When asked by activists how tall the highest tree along one particular stream was, a Forest Service official pulled out a chart of average tree heights instead of simply looking at the forest around her for a giant. Her chart stated that the highest tree was 135 feet tall, while activists pointed to a tree nearby that was over 200 feet tall. She insisted on using an average tree height despite Option 9's mandate requiring the Forest Service to use the highest tree in a riparian area, not an average-sized tree.

In many areas the Forest Service is also failing to include landslides and other unstable soils in riparian reserves. For example, Mendocino National Forest officials said that unstable areas in the Middle Fork Eel River watershed (the most sediment laden river of its size in the United States according to Forest Service data) would be surveyed and added to the riparian reserve network through the watershed analysis process. The Middle Fork Eel Wa-

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Pine marten, Tahoe National Forest

Photo by Bill Zielinski

Wilderness news

Dillon Creek watershed on salvage rider list

continued from page 1

Forest Service rhetoric about the fire promoted the idea that vast areas had been "consumed," when in fact natural fires, including the Dillon fire, burn in a mosaic pattern across the landscape. Some fires do destroy entire stands of trees, but for the most part fires simply burn along the ground, killing small trees and consuming brush, downed wood, and other small fuels in the forest understory. These "underburns" are essential for forest health. Even the Forest Service admits that we cannot have healthy forests without fire. Ironically, every time our forests burn the agency punishes them with salvage logging. This logging compounds the effects of fire and hampers regeneration for decades.

The Forest Service's rhetoric is meant to justify salvage logging and road construction by creating an "emergency" atmosphere every time a forest burns. The agency usually argues that if burned forests are not salvage logged, they will burn even more intensely in the future and perhaps never become forested again. What the agency ignores is that North America had some of the finest coniferous forests in the world before salvage logging came along.

In the nearby watershed of Grider Creek, which flows out of the Marble Mountain Wilderness, examples of salvaged and unsalvaged logged areas exist side by side.

Studies by conservation biologist Sam Stroich of the Klamath Forest Alliance found that not only are the unsalvaged logged areas recovering more quickly from the fire, but that between 50 and 75 percent of the trees marked as dead or dying by the Forest Service are still perfectly healthy seven years after the Klamath Forest Alliance, CWC, and other groups stopped the sale. However, the example of Grider Creek appears lost on the Forest Service, who insists it can now identify dead and dying trees much more accurately.

Sensitive fisheries and old-growth at risk

The Dillon Creek watershed contains thousands of acres of old-growth forest along its steep, rugged ridges. These forests host rare amphibians, northern spotted owls, goshawks, peregrine falcons, martens, fishers, and perhaps even the elusive wolverine and marbled murrelet. Dillon Creek is also known to support chinook salmon, winter steelhead, and possibly coho salmon. Dillon Creek also supports as much as 10 percent of California's threatened summer steelhead population.

Much of the land proposed for salvage logging is so steep that the Forest Service considers it unsuitable for non-salvage timber sales. Unfortunately, salvage logging

is allowed even in areas where the agency admits trees may never grow again. In addition, much of the watershed is in a late-successional (i.e., old-growth) reserve established by President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan (known as Option 9). As a political compromise, the president agreed to allow salvage logging in burned late-successional reserves.

What you can do

Write to Barbara Holder, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, CA 96097 by July 14, 1996 (letters must be postmarked by that date). Request that the Forest Service choose the "no action" alternative for the Dillon project. Stress the importance of maintaining the Siskiyou Roadless Area in an undisturbed condition for the sake of old-growth dependent wildlife, water quality, salmon and steelhead trout habitat.

Also, write to Leon Panetta, Chief of Staff, White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20500 and request that President Clinton cancel the Dillon sale. Since the salvage rider prevents activists from stopping destructive projects like the Dillon salvage sale in court, it is up to the Clinton administration to protect the trees, fish and wildlife of the Dillon watershed.

Proposed geothermal development in the Mount Hoffman Roadless Area has activists fuming

The Mount Hoffman Roadless Area in the Modoc National Forest rises like a forested island amidst the dry, volcanic, and jagged landscape of the Medicine Lake Highlands region. An important ancient forest corridor between the Shasta-Trinity and Klamath national forests to the west and the Basin and Range region to the east, the roadless area provides a refuge for several threatened wildlife species, including the northern spotted owl, American marten, goshawk, bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, and peregrine falcon.

The volcanic nature of the Medicine Lake Highlands region has attracted the interest of mining and geothermal power companies since World War II. Recently, a consortium of geothermal power interests has proposed to construct a power plant to the west of Medicine Lake and build 24 miles of powerline from the plant to existing powerlines to the east.

While conservationists usually support alternative energy development, the proposed powerline is slated to slice through the heart of the Mount Hoffman Roadless Area. Constructing the powerline will require the logging of old-growth forest, road construction, and other enormous disturbances to the rich array of sensitive wildlife species who call the area home.

Activists are urging the Forest Service to either prohibit powerline construction altogether, or at least choose an alternative route that avoids the Mount Hoffman Roadless Area and other important natural areas.

What you can do

Write to Randall Sharp, Modoc National Forest, ATTN: Fourmile Hill Project, 800 West 12th. Street, Alturas, CA 96101 by July 12, 1996 (letters should be postmarked by that date). Request that the Forest Service choose an alternative route that avoids the Mount Hoffman Roadless Area, protects old-growth forest, and does not require any new road construction.

SNEP report spells out Sierra's ills

continued from page 1

Logging, which reached a peak in the 1970s and 1980s, has greatly added to the fire risk. Fire-resistant species and large trees were cut, allowing more smaller, fire-susceptible trees to grow. Fire suppression and tree mortality in these young forests have created conditions ripe for more intense and severe fires.

Not likely to be a great surprise, logging has greatly reduced Sierran ancient forests, with only seven percent of east-side pine forest retaining old-growth features. The greatest amount of old-growth—30 percent—can be found in red fir forests, with much of that protected in national parks.

The analysis of the Sierra showed that only 15 percent of the range is formally designated for conservation of native biodiversity. Most of the protected lands are in Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon national parks. Grazing is allowed in 89 percent of the vegetated land, and logging is permitted in 57 percent of the area. Nearly 800,000 acres of oak woodlands have been converted to other land uses and vegetation types, a decline of almost 16 percent. Few oak woodlands are publically owned, with 98 percent of valley oak woodlands on private lands.

Loss of habitat has resulted in the listing of 69 species of terrestrial vertebrates as endangered, threatened, of special concern, or sensitive. Logging and trapping has greatly reduced populations of forest carnivores such as the fisher, while species such as the red fox and the wolverine are so little studied that changes in their status cannot be determined. Of California's vascular plant species, 50 percent are found in the Sierra, with 200 species considered rare.

Historic, unregulated grazing created widespread, profound, and in some places, irreversible ecological impacts.

Current livestock grazing practices continue to exert significant impacts on biodiversity and ecological processes of many middle to high elevation rangelands.

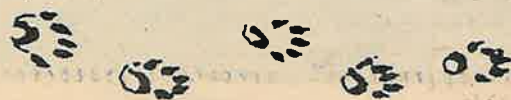
According to the SNEP report, aquatic habitats and riparian systems are the most altered and impaired habitats in the Sierra. These areas have been extensively damaged by placer mining, grazing, dams, roads, logging, and recreational activities. Anadromous fish are nearly extinct from Sierran rivers, and amphibian species at all elevations have severely declined.

Although during the winter some remote areas in the northern Sierra have some of the cleanest air in the world, southern airsheds in the spring, summer, and fall have some of the poorest air quality in the nation. Sensitive tree species are suffering from extensive ozone damage.

Aside from cataloging the damage to the Sierra Nevada, the SNEP report also offers numerous options for solving the problems. The time scale differs for each problem—damaging air pollution could be reduced virtually in a matter of days, while restoration of old-growth forests may take centuries. Recovery of degraded river channels takes even longer.

In a grim prognosis, the scientists concluded: "left unresolved is the question of whether our society has the will and the capacity to correct such problems...failure to use these options increases the chances of irreversible loss and reduces the range of options over time."

Editors note: Look for more articles on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project in the coming months as the Wilderness Record looks at various conclusions drawn from the SNEP report and how they relate to protecting and restoring the Range of Light.



Wilderness forum

In Memorium

George Clark, 1939-1996

George Clark died last month doing what he loved best—wandering the hills of California looking for wildflowers. He was 57.

A self-taught botanist, George was an amateur in the original sense of the word. His love of wildflowers drew him ever onward, over one more Sierra pass, into one more desert canyon. He carried with him always a camera, with which he compiled a vast, meticulously documented library of slides.

George was an indefatigable hiker, and the less hardy people who hiked with him quickly learned they could assure themselves a breather by asking him to identify a flower or bird. If the sightings were sometimes inspired more by fatigue than curiosity (and truth be told, not a few of them were outright fictions), no matter. George was always ready with field glasses or hand lens.



George Clark at the Arc Dome Wilderness. Photo by Roger Scholl

A modest, self-effacing man, George was quick to credit other people's contributions while minimizing his own. He devoted thousands of hours to the California Native Plant Society, most recently as its president.

He was also a loyal friend to the California Wilderness Coalition. When we needed to know whether a checkerbloom was a flower or a butterfly, we called George (it's a flower; the butterfly is a checkerspot). When we called in search of a photograph, he'd reply, "How many do you need?". His photos and reviews graced these pages, just as he graced our lives. We will miss him sorely.

Memorial contributions in memory of George Clark may be sent to the California Native Plant Society, 1722 J Street, Suite 17, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Option 9 subverted

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tershed Analysis in turn said that unstable areas will be located and protected as reserves while individual timber sales are planned in the watershed. Unfortunately, while preparing these individual timber sales, Forest Service officials always refer back to the watershed analysis' data. In other words, nowhere in the planning process is the Forest Service surveying areas with landslides and other sensitive soils and protecting them as riparian reserves. This may lead to great ecological harm over time as slumps, earthflows, and other geologically unstable areas

are clearcut and begin to pour sediment into streams. Protecting these areas is particularly critical in the Middle Fork Eel River watershed, where soil maps reveal that many of the areas the Forest Service proposes to log are "inactive" landslides (many geologists argue that there is no such thing as an inactive landslide—they contend instead that some landslides are simply faster than others).

Option 9 also requires the Forest Service to identify and protect potential old-growth habitat corridors in addition to those provided by riparian reserves. This is particularly important in northwestern California where the riparian areas are often dominated by brush and hardwoods rather than old-growth forest. Despite this, the Mendocino, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath national forests are all relying upon riparian reserves, late-successional reserves, and other Option 9 land allocations to provide old-growth habitat connectors. None of these forests have conducted studies to determine whether these areas adequately provide habitat connections. In some cases the Forest Service has identified key old-growth areas that serve as habitat corridors, but then they propose to log them (as is the case in the Klamath National Forest's proposed Dillon Salvage sale).

Even late-successional reserves are not immune from large-scale logging proposals. For example, hundreds of acres of late-successional reserves are threatened by the Dillon Salvage sale. Unfortunately, whenever a late-successional reserve sustains a large fire the Forest Service is free to log it. Ironically, the agency argues that they are restoring the forest by logging it. For example, in an unintentional nod to George Orwell, the Forest Service calls the Dillon salvage sale the "Dillon Recovery" project.

Activists hope that these perversions of Option 9 are simply the result of the so-called salvage rider which severely restricts judicial review and makes all timber sales in forests covered by Option 9 immune from citizen appeals and federal environmental law. While the Forest Service claims it is still following the law despite the salvage rider, abuses abound.

The Clinton administration has ample authority to reign in the Forest Service and prevent the continued subversion of Option 9. Unfortunately, the White House has thus far shown little interest in cancelling destructive timber sales and exercising its authority over the Forest Service.

Letters to the Editor

In response to Mr. Kluth's question, I would certainly be willing to pay a substantial fee for a wilderness permit, PROVIDED the entire fee was dedicated to improved wilderness management and protection.

Distasteful as it is, we who cherish wilderness are going to have to advocate substantial, dedicated user fees if we want to see management and protection of our wilderness areas adequately funded. Ideally, such funding should come from our taxes, via Congress, but that is just not going to happen, and we don't have the time, energy or resources to fight for such, given all the other critical battles we are having to fight and, I fear, will continue to have to fight for the foreseeable future.

The sooner we as wilderness advocates and users reach consensus on the need for substantial user fees dedicated to wilderness protection and management, the better for our deteriorating wilderness areas.

Howard Whitaker
Gold River, CA

Calendar

July 12 DEADLINE for comments on the proposed geothermal project in the Mt. Hoffman Roadless Area. Address comments to Randall Sharp, Modoc National Forest, ATTN: Fourmile Hill Project, 800 West 12th. Street, Alturas, CA 96101 (letters should be postmarked by this date). For more information see the article on page 6.

July 14 DEADLINE for comments on the Dillon salvage sale. Address them to Barbara Holder, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, CA 96097 (letters must be postmarked by this date). For more information see the article on page 1.

July 16 WORKSHOP & SCOPING meetings on the Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness Management Plan will be held to hear public comments on how this wilderness area should be managed. The workshops are in Los Angeles 7/16, and Bishop 7/25. Call Malinee Crapsey at the National Park Service for more information (209) 565-3131.

Wilderness Trivia Answer

About 400, 218 of which are considered rare or threatened.

Ward Valley

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gatherings at Ward Valley have attracted 500 to 800 people.

Through the prism of the controversy, facets of the struggle are more readily recognized. Preserving biodiversity, honoring cultural and historical relationships with the land, environmental justice concerns, wilderness preservation, social responsibility, the profound influence of the nuclear industry on the political process, and the struggle for indigenous rights are bundled together in an elaborate web. The struggle to save Ward Valley is a battle of contesting values and visions and presents an exciting opportunity to explore new ways of relating to the land.

The perception of the desert as a wasteland and repository for nuclear wastes which remain deadly for a quarter of a million years can be contrasted with spiritual and ecocentric views which place humans in an intimate partnership with the land and its life. Consideration of the future, hundreds and thousands of years distant, is another dimension of the issue which reveals the depth of consideration and concern. The intrinsic value of species richness and the protection of our water resources is placed against the short-term goals of waste disposal at any cost. When issues come into view with greater contrast, we are presented with clear paths of action.

Philip M. Klasky is a writer, teacher and co-director of the Bay Area Nuclear (BAN) Waste Coalition. For more information on how you can help protect Ward Valley call (415) 752-8678 or (415) 868-2146.

Coalition Member Groups

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

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

"This is so far out of the realm of responsibility it befouls the aisles of the House"

— Rep. George Miller, on the failed bid to exempt Pacific Lumber's land from efforts to protect the marbled murrelet.

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