



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

August 1996

Tahoe rivers poised for protection, many more need help

By Steve Evans

The U.S. Forest Service is soliciting public comments in response to its draft recommendation to add portions of the South Yuba River, North Yuba River and its tributary, Canyon Creek, to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. The recommendation is the result of an assessment of 22 river and stream segments in the Yuba and American river watersheds in Northern California's Tahoe National Forest.

After analyzing public comments, the Forest Service will make a final recommendation to Congress as to which of the 22 river and stream segments should be added to the system. Subsequent designation by Congress would protect the river and stream segments from new dams and require public lands to be managed to protect their outstanding natural and cultural values. Until Congress acts on the agency's recommendation, eligible rivers are provided interim protection by the Forest Service. At stake are some of the most wild and beautiful river canyons in the northern Sierra Nevada, many of which are threatened by proposed dams, commercial logging and mining.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service is recommending only three of the 22 eligible segments at this time, although the recommendation covers 114 miles of the 297 miles of rivers and streams which are eligible for



The South Yuba River, Tahoe National Forest

protection. Rivers and streams not recommended include the Downie River, Empire Creek, Lavezzola Creek, Pauley Creek, New York Ravine, Middle Yuba River, Macklin Creek, East Fork Creek, Oregon Creek, upper South Yuba River, Fordyce Creek, North Fork of the North Fork American River, Big and Little Granite creeks, New York Canyon, North Fork of the Middle Fork American River, Grouse Creek, Screwauger Canyon and the Rubicon River above Hellhole reservoir.

Another weakness of the Forest Service recommendation is their use of the less protective "Scenic" classification for portions of the lower South Yuba, North Yuba and Canyon Creek. These river segments are clearly eligible for the more pristine "Wild" classification, yet the agency is recommending a weaker classification to placate resource industries which may be restricted from logging and mining on public lands if the segments are classified "Wild."

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Inyo cows invade Sequoia National Park wilderness

By Sally Miller

Do cows and backcountry recreation mix? The Inyo National Forest may think so, but recent personal experience tells this hiker otherwise. On a late June backpacking trip to the Golden Trout Wilderness and Sequoia National Park, signs of cattle grazing in otherwise pristine wilderness marred what would have been a perfect venture into the Sierra wildlands. Worse, my companion and I discovered that cattle from the Inyo National Forest had illegally grazed within the fragile alpine country of Sequoia National Park.

We began our trip in the Golden Trout Wilderness (GTW), fully expecting to see signs of cattle grazing—a cow pie here, a cow pie there. Grazing is, after all, allowed within this 330,000-acre wilderness of large, lush meadows surrounded by foxtail and lodgepole pine forest. When we arrived at 10,600-foot Johnson Lake, a subalpine gem and one of very few lakes in the GTW, I was somewhat surprised to see that cattle had grazed along its shores, miles from the nearest meadow. This seemed to me incongruous at best.

The following day greeted us with more surprises. After a very warm day spent exploring the Boreal Plateau in adjacent Sequoia National Park, we reentered the Golden Trout Wilderness and descended to Rocky Basin

Lakes, a popular spot with backpackers, anticipating a cooling swim and perhaps moving camp. But what was this—cow pies in the Rocky Basin Lakes? Needless to say, our swimming and camping plans were aborted. I envisioned the eager yet unsuspecting camper arriving at Rocky Basin Lakes after a two day hike from the nearest trailhead, only to be greeted by the sight of cows defecating in these lakes. Would this make for a pleasant wilderness experience? Perhaps to some, but count me out. And what about the angler, looking forward to hooking some of the region's famed and lovely golden trout? Why is it, I thought, that humans in wilderness must sleep, eat, and perform all activities at least 100 feet from water, not to mention bury their waste, while cattle are allowed to deposit their goods anywhere, even within the waters of a high mountain lake? No small irony, there.

The next day marked our entry into Sequoia National Park. Finally, I thought, a more pristine wilderness experience awaits us. We again hopped up on to the Boreal Plateau, then descended to Siberian Outpost, a large and beautiful subalpine meadow just within the park boundary. But what was this? A cow pie in the Siberian Outpost? And another, and another, all within the national park! We subsequently discovered hundreds

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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

I had an inkling that the Coalition was headed for change when the phone rang the night before Wendy and I were off on vacation. Lora, our membership and development associate, called to tell me she had taken a full-time job elsewhere.

Not much we could do, especially since Ryan, too, was off for two weeks to hike down the Pacific Crest Trail. So I told Herb and Paul to hold down the fort, loaded the truck, and drove to the Montana side of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Our plan for a week-long loop trip was altered by the snowpack coating the peaks and the passes. Although hot weather rapidly was melting the snow, this in turn led to treacherous stream crossings. We opted for a five-day, 40-kilometer trip up and down Blodgett Creek (in this part of the country, the Forest Service is using hard metrics—figures calculated in the metric system rather than simply converted from the English system).

The beginning of the backpack was hot as we walked through snags blackened by a recent fire. But the trail soon entered a cool forest canopy. Because of congressional budget cuts, little trail maintenance has been performed, so we spent a lot of time climbing over or around downed logs. Long stretches of trail looked to us more like creeks or lakes, forcing additional detours.

Flowers were spectacular, especially bear grass that frequently crowded the trail. From the pollen on my arms, legs, and pack I surmised that I *personally* was a major pollinator of the species. The fresh and abundant tracks of elk, deer, and bear before us on the trail made us feel as though we were herding the wildlife up to higher pastures.

As we ascended to the cirque containing Blodgett Lake, things began to change. The trail began disappearing under snow drifts, and above 2,000 meters there was no ground to be seen at all. We forded swift, waist-deep streams that didn't show on the topographic map.

Climbing through the snow we expected to find a white, frozen flatland, but we were pleasantly amazed to

find half of Blodgett Lake free and clear of ice. Also heartening was the large snow-free campsite nestled among the Engleman spruce, subalpine fir, white and lodgepole pine, and subalpine larch. Wendy celebrated her 40th birthday by taking a brisk (and brief) swim amid the icebergs.

Although this was said to be a popular trail, the only people we saw (mostly day hikers) were near the trailhead. Had there been more folks hiking this canyon, the wet sections of the trail would have been muddy morasses.

We also were struck by the near absence of aircraft and by the lack of litter. When we climbed to Blodgett Pass to step symbolically into Idaho, it was astounding to realize that if we could hike westward in a straight line, we would go 50 miles before we left this wilderness (or rather, 80 kilometers).

I was not ready to face the 100° heat when we returned to Davis, but a \$30,000 check from El Bosque Pumalin Foundation and a \$10,000 check from the Peradam Foundation did wonders for my spirits. Most of that money simply will pass through the Coalition; for example, half of the Peradam grant is intended for distribution to grassroots activists and small groups.

Our intern Kathy Brennan agreed to take on Lora's work, and that transition is now complete. You know you've made it at CWC when you finally get your own desk. And the phones are ringing off the hook in response to the hard work Ryan and Paul are doing to repeal the salvage rider. It is an incredibly exciting time in our office.

However, I was deeply saddened to hear of the death of long-time activist Luis Ireland. The original Mokelumne Wilderness, protected prior to the Wilderness Act of 1964, largely was due to Luis. He was there, year after year, working to protect wild lands and forests.

In his memory, we have named the grassroots activist fund made possible by the Peradam Foundation the Luis Ireland Fund.

By Jim Eaton

Stop the Rider Campaign given \$30,000 boost

El Bosque Pumalin Foundation has awarded the California Wilderness Coalition \$30,000 for a short-term project to save roadless areas and old-growth forests from being logged under the salvage logging amendment, also known as the clearcut rider.

Much of the effort will be spent convincing the Clinton administration to cancel or alter clearcut rider timber sales in sensitive wildlands. Despite assurances from the White House that federal agencies will follow environmental laws, protect forest ecosystems, and allow public scrutiny of salvage sales, examples of abuse abound.

A media firm and a campaign consultant are being engaged for part of this campaign. CWC also will hire an organizer who most likely will be located in southern California.

A subcommittee of the California Ancient Forest Alliance (CAFA), chaired by Ryan Henson, is advising the Coalition on actions needed for this project. Paul Spitler, California organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, also is an integral part of this campaign.

The Coalition greatly appreciates the El Bosque Pumalin Foundation's generosity in helping stop the damage from salvage rider.

Peradam Foundation awards Coalition dual-purpose grant

Fund established in memory of the late Luis Ireland

The Peradam Foundation has granted the California Wilderness Coalition \$10,000 for the coming year. Half of this amount is for general support, and the other is earmarked for an activist support fund.

The support fund will provide small grants to California activists working on local wilderness and public lands issues. The fund will be spent in small amounts over the next 12 months allowing activists, who might otherwise not have the money, to attend meetings, cover certain expenses, and have certain projects subsidized.

The fund will be called the Luis Ireland Fund, in memory of the longtime grassroots activist who recently passed away. Unfortunately, due to short notice, his obituary will be printed in the September issue of the *Wilderness Record*.

In notifying the Coalition of the grant, Peradam director Robert Spertus wrote: "...on behalf of all those who care for California wilderness, we would like to thank you and your dedicated staff, interns, and volunteers for all you have already done. It is deeply appreciated. Of course, in this business there are always new struggles, so good luck in the months ahead."

We would like to thank the Peradam Foundation for helping us to take on these new struggles.

Wilderness Trivia Question

California has 2,292 miles of Interstate Highways. How many miles of logging roads are in California's national forests?

Answer on page 7

Wilderness News

Illegal grazing in Sequoia National Park

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of cow pies as we walked through the high elevation meadow (10,800—11,200 feet), as well as hoof prints indicating that the cattle were present during last year's grazing season. Our unlikely discovery stunned and dismayed us. According to Park Service records, Siberian Outpost has not been grazed since 1914. The meadow has more recently been used by scientific researchers as a reference site for comparing grazed and ungrazed meadows in the region. The trespass of cattle into Siberian Outpost has threatened its integrity as a "baseline" site for future studies.

We concluded that the cattle could only have entered Sequoia National Park from the Golden Trout Wilderness within the Inyo National Forest. No other grazing occurs for miles around. The access point into the national park appears to have been either from Rocky Basin Lakes or from Big Whitney Meadow, both within the GTW and both part of the Whitney allotment managed by the Inyo National Forest. This allotment is grazed by Anheuser-Busch, purveyor of beer and, more recently, cattle.

How could the Inyo National Forest have allowed this to happen? Unfortunately, the Inyo has demonstrated little commitment to monitoring or enforcing the actions of its permittees in the Golden Trout Wilderness. Tales of vastly overgrazed meadows and degraded riparian areas are commonplace. Because there has been little to no enforcement presence in the GTW, it's not hard to imagine a herd of cattle wandering (or, perhaps, being led) into Siberian Outpost Meadow for a bonus feeding session late in the season. While the National Park Service has a wilderness ranger stationed at nearby Rock Creek, the season for the rangers ends September 30. Cattle were documented in the GTW as late as October 23 last year, thus they could have entered the park after the ranger, and most backpackers, had left the area.

What can be done to assure that the trespass doesn't occur again? Some concerned with overgrazing in the GTW are trying to fund an individual to monitor grazing conditions there. While this would help document the problems associated with overgrazing in the wilderness, it will not eliminate grazing conflicts with recreation, as at Rocky Basin and Johnson lakes, nor the possibility of future trespass. It is unlikely that anyone would remain in the area late enough in the fall to prevent or document illegal trespass activity in the national park.

One easy "remedy" from an agency standpoint might be to construct a fence. This option would likely prove costly and highly unpopular with the public. The visual



Cow pies in the Siberian Outpost Meadow, Sequoia National Park.

Photo by Sally Miller

impacts of a fence on the ridgeline, between two wilderness areas no less, would be significant. And who would pay for the fence and its long-term maintenance—the Park Service or the Forest Service? Essentially, the taxpayer would further subsidize the activities of the permittee if this option were chosen.

The only reliable means to keep the cows out of the national park and eliminate the conflicts with recreational users in the lakes of the GTW is for the Forest Service to eliminate grazing from Big Whitney Meadow. This would effectively terminate the access to Rocky Basin and Johnson lakes, and to Siberian Outpost Meadow in the park. Undoubtedly, the Forest Service will be loathe to make any changes to its grazing practices in the GTW—unless and until it hears loud and clear from the public that "business as usual" is unacceptable.

After several hours spent documenting the trespass in Siberian Outpost, we reached our final destination in the

Miter Basin, where we gratefully spent our final night cow-free. Ah, wilderness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514 and express your outrage that it allowed the illegal trespass to occur. Ask the Inyo to close Big Whitney Meadow and Rocky Basin Lakes to grazing to ensure that the trespass will not occur again *and* to eliminate recreational conflicts at the lakes within the Golden Trout Wilderness. Tell the Inyo that if it will not disallow grazing in Big Whitney Meadow, then it will need to fund an enhanced presence in the GTW and Siberian Outpost within Sequoia National Park, until every last cow has left Big Whitney Meadow.

Sally Miller is a Board member of the California Wilderness Coalition

Tahoe National Forest rivers

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Despite the Forest Service's attempt to placate resource exploiters, timber, mining and property rights zealots are expected to vociferously oppose any federal protection for the 22 eligible river segments. Conservationists need to strongly support the Forest Service's recommendations as well as push protection for additional rivers in order to counter the specious arguments of anti-environmental interests.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write a letter to Forest Supervisor John Skinner, Tahoe National Forest P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959 by Monday, September 9, 1996. In your letter, support the Forest Service's preferred plan (alternative C) which recommends designation of the lower South Yuba River, the North Yuba River and its tributary, Canyon Creek. However, the segments of the three streams eligible for "Wild" classification should be classified "Wild" to ensure that their outstanding values are protected from inappropriate logging and mining. Be sure to note that federal

protection in no way affects private property rights. In addition, urge the Forest Service to recommend the following additional rivers:

- Downie River Watershed (including Empire, Lavezzola and Pauley creeks) - This largely roadless tributary watershed provides high quality water to the North Yuba, supports the largest stand of ancient forest in the Tahoe National Forest and has outstanding botanical, ecological and cultural values.
- Middle Yuba River - The Middle Yuba forms a rugged and remote canyon that few people ever visit. This vestige of wild America deserves protection.
- Humbug Creek - This tributary of the South Yuba is rich in Gold Rush history and provides a popular trail route between Malakoff Diggings State Historic Park and the South Yuba River.
- Fordyce Creek - The outstanding recreational value of this creek includes a summer-long class V whitewater run prized by expert kayakers.

- North Fork of the North Fork American River - Protection of this tributary of the North Fork American Wild River is critical to preserving water quality in the North Fork Wild River and the popular downstream Giant Gap and Chamberlain Falls whitewater runs.

- North Fork of the Middle Fork American River - This rugged and scenic tributary of the Middle Fork is the route of the Western States National Recreation Trail, which hosts internationally renowned running and equestrian events.

- Rubicon River - The Forest Service failed to consider the value of the Rubicon River as a migration corridor for wildlife between the Desolation Wilderness, the Granite Chief Wilderness and the lower Rubicon canyon and roadless area below Hellhole reservoir.

Be sure your letter is postmarked by September 9. For more information, contact Steve Evans at Friends of the River, (916) 442-3155.

Steve Evans is Conservation Director of Friends of the River.

Wilderness management

Park Service seeks input on draft management plan for the Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness

by Trent W. Orr

The National Park Service (NPS) has been holding a series of workshops around the state seeking public input prior to drafting a wilderness management plan for the 737,000-acre wilderness in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. This plan is an outgrowth of an attempt several years ago by the management of Sequoia-Kings to increase the maximum allowable number of pack animals per backcountry party from 15 to 25. Wilderness advocates sued the NPS for failure to prepare an environmental impact statement on the negative effects of this increase before approving it. The NPS capitulated, settling the suit by canceling the increase in pack party size and agreeing to promulgate a full wilderness management plan with proper environmental review before any significant changes in wilderness management policies are made. That process is now underway.

Workshops have been held in Visalia, Three Rivers, Fresno, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Bishop, with a final one to be held in Sacramento at an as-yet unspecified time and place. At these workshops, the NPS is seeking public comments on eight categories of wilderness management issues. The categories, taken verbatim from the NPS workshop flyer, are:

1. What are your personal expectations when using the wilderness?
2. How we learn about wilderness (including education programs/techniques, mail-out information, trailhead information, etc.)
3. How we get there (including signs, trails, bridges, cross-country travel, etc.)
4. How we spend the night (including campsites, campfires, human waste disposal, food storage, etc.)
5. How we get along (interact) with each other in the wilderness
6. How we protect environmental quality (including air quality, water quality, noise, exotic species, etc.)
7. How we use the wilderness (including research, education, commercial use, etc.)
8. How we get the job done (including chain saws, helicopter use, regulations, drift fences, etc.)

At the workshops, participants are asked to write their "visions" or "desired conditions" for the Sequoia-Kings wilderness ten years from now under any or all of the eight categories and, under each such desired condition, to offer strategies to reach the desired condition. For example, under the category "How we protect environmental quality," one might propose the condition "The natural biodiversity of the wilderness shall be protected and, where necessary, restored," and propose such strategies as "Require stock feed to be certified weed-seed free," and "Give highest priority to endangered and threatened species recovery programs in wilderness management decisions."

The NPS staff at the workshop acknowledged that the eight categories have a fair amount of overlap and told the public that they need not be concerned about the category under which they offered a particular management concern.

The important thing is to present the desired wilderness condition and strategies to achieve it for the NPS's consideration in formulating the draft wilderness management plan. If you were not able to attend one of the workshops but are interested in the future management of the magnificent Sequoia-Kings wilderness (which includes Mt. Whitney, Kern Canyon, Tehipite Valley, the



Middle Fork Kings River from Tehipite Valley, Kings-Canyon National Park
Photo by Trent Orr

Pallisades, Chagoopa Plateau, Evolution Basin, Redwood Meadow, and countless other extraordinary places), you can submit written comments as soon as possible following the format described above to: Wilderness Coordinator, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers, CA 93271.

Expressions of support for protecting the environment of the wilderness are extremely important. At the San Francisco workshop, the Park Service staff present seemed to believe that their task in drafting the plan is to balance recreational use with preservation of the wilderness resource, rather than to manage all recreational use so that it has the minimum possible impacts on wilderness resource values. For example, questioned about environmental damage caused by inappropriate stock use, an NPS staffer responded by citing the "rights" of stock users as something to be weighed against environmental protection. The Park Service needs to hear loudly and clearly that the Wilderness Act and the NPS's own legal mandates require that all recreational uses of the Sequoia-Kings wilderness, whether by hikers or stock users, must be circumscribed so as to avoid any significant degradation of the wilderness environment.

After the close of scoping, the NPS will create and

Senator Craig's idea of forest health

Senator Larry Craig's so-called "forest health" bill (S. 391) would require the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to designate forest health "emergency" zones where tree mortality, disease, and other supposed problems are occurring at higher than average rates. Within these areas, the agencies would be able to log forests with minimal environmental review, public comment, or judicial oversight. Conservationists would be almost powerless to stop destructive logging projects within these "emergency" zones.

According to activists, S. 391 is flawed in that it is based on the assumption that there is a forest health crisis on our public lands that can only be cured by logging. The legislation is predicated on this assumption despite recent studies showing that roads, poor logging practices, soil loss, and other problems are the true cause of ecosystem degradation on our public lands. Activists also contend that S. 391 is essentially a permanent extension of the timber salvage rider—one of the worst pieces of anti-environmental legislation ever passed by Congress. Like the salvage rider, S. 391 would allow agencies to aggressively log our public lands with little public oversight or involvement.

Unfortunately, a group of western senators are currently negotiating with Senator Craig and his allies to ameliorate the harshest provisions of his "forest health" bill. Activists are deeply concerned that this legislation should be stopped, not mitigated, because they believe S. 391 is, frankly, un-salvageable. Neither of California's senators have thus far joined in these negotiations.

release for public review and comment a draft wilderness management plan and environmental review documents. CWC will follow the development of these documents and inform readers in a future issue of the *Wilderness Record* of their availability and the time period within which to submit comments regarding the plan to the Park Service.

Trent W. Orr is an attorney and Board member of the California Wilderness Coalition.

Salvage Rider

Light at the end of the tunnel? Reflections on the salvage rider's first year

by Ryan Henson

In July 1995 President Clinton signed into law the so-called emergency timber salvage rider—so-called because it was meant to address a non-existent emergency and went far beyond salvage (the cutting of supposedly dead, dying, and diseased trees) to authorize the logging of countless acres of healthy forests. The rider also exempted many types of logging from federal environmental laws and severely restricted citizens' access to the courts. It was meant to be a knockout punch for the forest conservation movement, and it nearly was.

In its first year, the salvage rider caused tremendous damage to some of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana's most outstanding old-growth forests. Activists in these states struggled to win the national attention this destruction deserved. On one occasion, they made the evening news across the country by chasing President Clinton down the streets of Seattle with a 30-foot long inflatable salmon. With the giant fish swimming through the crowd at every one of his speeches and glaring at him with its giant, unblinking, accusing eyes, the president was forced to apologize for signing the rider into law in the first place.

California activists also have fought fiercely to keep the Golden State's forests from falling to the chainsaw—and this dogged opposition is beginning to show results. For the first time since the salvage rider was signed into law, activists now are hopeful that a catastrophic loss of our ancient forests can be averted.

Perhaps things began to change a few months ago when activists drew a line in the soil at the Polk Springs Roadless Area in the Lassen National Forest and told the Forest Service that they would not be allowed to log in the Barkley Salvage Sale area. The agency had worked a full year to gain approval to log the area, and they were equally determined to clearcut it. Conservationists let President Clinton know that no logging in the area would be tolerated, and they also let him know that if the area were clearcut, he would be held personally responsible since only he had the power to stop it. A mere 24 hours before it was scheduled to be sold to the timber industry, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman ordered the Forest Service to cancel the Barkley sale. The Barkley project became the first salvage rider timber sale to be stopped in the United States.

Forest Service plans to log the Deep Creek Roadless Area in the San Bernardino National Forest were shelved soon after the Barkley victory, and other rumored projects quietly disappeared. Some national forests, however, relentlessly move ahead with plans to log some of California's most pristine wild areas.

The Klamath National Forest, which bears the dubious distinctions of having the largest and ugliest clearcuts in California, and of destroying more roadless areas than any other national forest in the state, aggressively targeted the Tom Martin, Siskiyou, and Orleans Mountain roadless areas for logging under the salvage rider. The Sequoia National Forest targeted the Agnew, Jennie Lakes, Slate Mountain, and Lyon Ridge roadless areas for logging even though all of these areas are proposed wilderness areas or giant sequoia preserves under Representative George Brown's (D-San Bernardino) Sequoia Preserve Act. Smarting from the Barkley defeat, the Lassen National Forest also proposed to log several California spotted owl nesting areas and the popular Chips Creek roadless area. The worst defeat in California this year was the approval of the Pilot Creek Timber Sale in the Six Rivers National

Forest. This proposed timber sale will destroy over 900 acres of the Pilot Creek Roadless Area and harm the fragile Pilot Creek watershed which is critical to the survival of salmon and steelhead. Fortunately, these projects still have not gone through, and activists are working hard to ensure that they never do.

For the last few months, conservationists have been aggressively lobbying the Clinton administration to work harder to repeal the rider and to cancel destructive salvage rider sales in California and elsewhere. The Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC) even hired a field organizer to work full-time on this effort, and the California Wilderness Coalition received a \$30,000 grant from the El Bosque Pumalin Foundation to fight the rider as well. WAFC has released a report describing in detail the worst 28 salvage rider sales planned in California, with an additional list in the appendix of the remaining 300+ proposed logging projects (call or write CWC for a free copy).

A kinder, gentler salvage rider

These efforts have finally begun to pay off. In July, one year after the rider was approved, Secretary Glickman released a directive to the Forest Service ordering them to:

- Avoid roadless areas unless these areas are "imminently susceptible to fire";
- Minimize new road construction;
- Make non-salvage sales subject to federal environmental law;
- Make non-salvage sales that were reclassified as salvage sales after the passage of the salvage rider subject to federal environmental law;
- Make sales that were rejected for environmental reasons before the rider, and then resurrected after the rider was

passed, subject to federal environmental law, and;

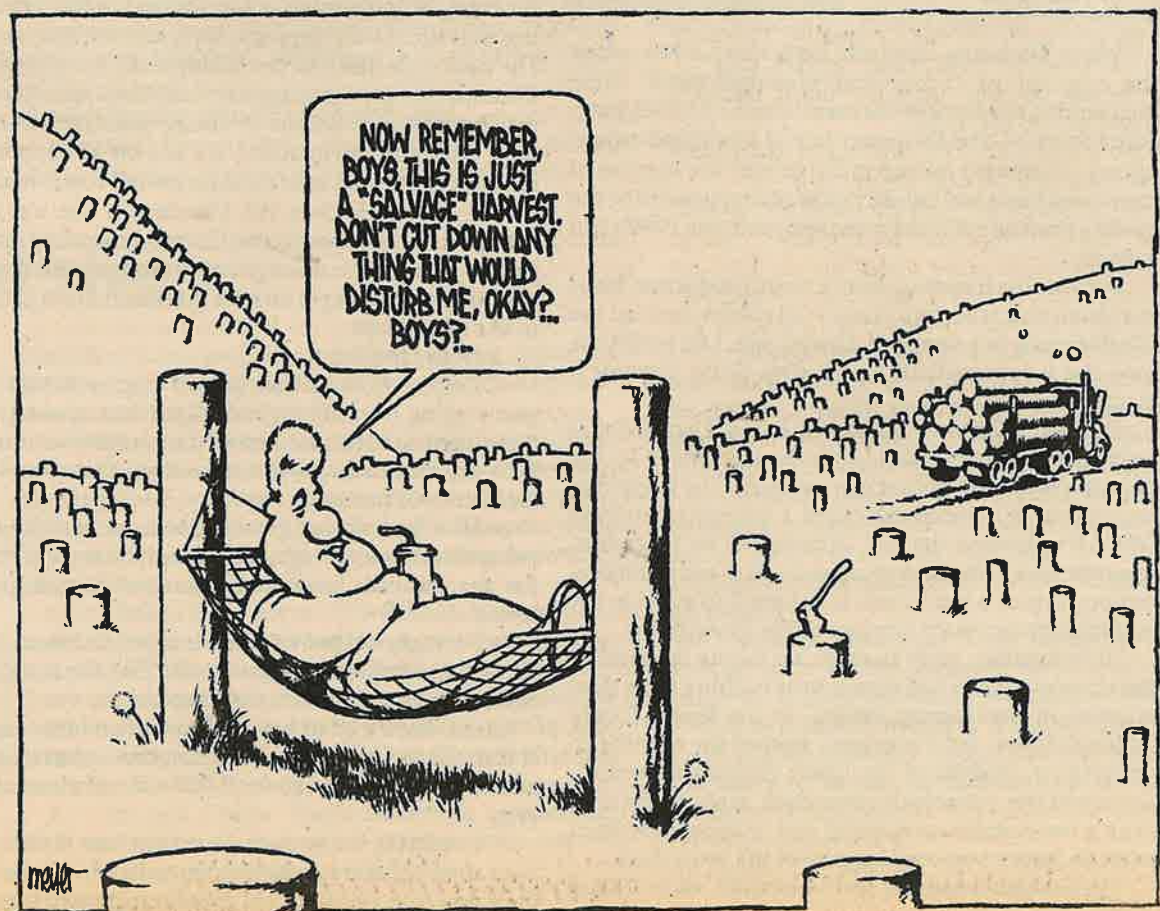
- Reduce the number of healthy trees cut under the guise of salvage logging.

While Secretary Glickman's directive has countless loopholes, applies only to projects that have not already been sold to the timber industry, and will remain in effect for only two months, activists expect several of the worst salvage rider sales in California to be delayed—or even cancelled—as a result of the new policy. CWC recently received word, for example, that the Sequoia National Forest is abandoning its plans to log the Slate Mountain and Lyon Ridge roadless areas under the salvage rider. They still plan to develop these wild lands, but CWC and other groups will now be able to use our nation's environmental laws to defend them in court.

Conservationists point out, however, that Secretary Glickman's policy ignores non-salvage sales planned for national forests covered by President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan (known as Option 9). One of the worst aspects of the salvage rider is the fact that it makes all timber sales, salvage and non-salvage, immune from court review and environmental law in national forests covered by Option 9. In California, this means that every timber sale in the Mendocino, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, and Six Rivers national forests is covered by the salvage rider. Activists are incredulous that the White House would allow such a broad exemption from our nation's environmental laws to continue.

Meanwhile, efforts to repeal the timber salvage rider in Congress continue. In June, a vote to strip all funding from the salvage rider fell two votes short of passing in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives. Repeal

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BY TOM MEYER/THE CHRONICLE

Wilderness news

Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project looks at state of old-growth

By Kathleen Brennan

According to the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) report (see *Wilderness Record*, July 1996), Sierran old-growth forests have been severely impacted over time by human activities. While this is not surprising to anyone who is familiar with the Sierra, the scientific documentation of these impacts is significant. Of these activities, logging has most dramatically reduced the acreage and viability of late successional, or old-growth, stands.

Old-growth forests are vital to the health and stability of the Sierra Nevada for numerous reasons. One of the most important is that many species are dependent upon ancient forest's unique structural characteristics for their habitat. Old-growth tends to have what is called a high degree of structural complexity.

As a forest evolves over the centuries, the trees reproduce, age and die, resulting in a forest which is a mosaic: highly varied in species, and in the sizes and conditions of the trees. Dead and dying trees play a critical role in all forest ecosystems. Snags (dead but still standing trees) and fallen trees provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to nutrient cycles. Thus, old-growth stands, which have been undergoing such processes for many years, are ecologically rich and vital areas.

The SNEP report examines ten forest types to assess the condition and presence of old-growth in the Sierra, focusing mainly on the mixed conifer forests which have been most heavily affected by commercial logging. In these forests there is a marked contrast between younger stands and old-growth. Older stands function in ways that younger stands cannot, by providing habitat for animals and plants that need specific spatial parameters (canopy densities, tree heights and other types of forest

architecture) and light availability. Ancient forests regulate and affect snowmelt, biochemical cycles, and the temperature beneath the canopy in ways which are ecologically different from the ways second growth forests or plantations regulate these same systems. Any alteration of these variables may undermine the ability of a given plant or animal to survive in an area.

The report states that human activities, most notably logging, have led to the elimination of old-growth in some areas and the simplification of other stands to the point that they can no longer contribute ecologically as an old-growth stand would. Essentially, there is much less old-growth in the Sierra now than there was 150 years ago, and a sizable portion of what little remains is still threatened. Fire suppression has led to an increase in tree density, thereby reducing the number and variety of plants that can grow on the forest floor and increasing the probability of a high intensity fire that could destroy an entire stand.

The SNEP scientists used a ranking system to classify forests by their structural characteristics on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 representing low complexity and 5 being high complexity. Of the 8.5 million acres of federal land that were surveyed, only 6 percent ranked as 5, or highly complex, and only 13 percent ranked as 4. About 60 percent fell into the middle ranges (2 or 3). Most of the areas ranked 2 or 3 were logged in the past and are now recovering.

Most of the old-growth that now exists in large contiguous blocks in the Sierra is found in national parks, where it has been protected from logging. Four times as much old-growth exists in national parks as in national forests, and scientists estimate that this amount can safely be used to approximate the amount of old-growth that existed in the Sierra prior to the first logging in the 1850's.

As would probably be expected, the forests which hold the most commercially valuable trees have the least amount of old-growth left. In eastern Sierra pine forests, which were decimated by early logging, only 7 percent was ranked as a 4 or 5. West side mixed conifer has a significantly higher amount, about 20 percent, but this is largely due to the presence of national parks on the west side of the Sierra.

Currently about half the old-growth which was ranked a 4 or 5 in the report is not protected from logging. There is little high-ranked forest within wilderness or other legislatively protected areas. Some of the old-growth that remains is in steep river canyons, or areas that were inaccessible to logging due to past limitations in technology. These limitations have been largely surmounted, and these areas may be threatened now.

The SNEP report analyzes six management strategies for old-growth stands. The underlying assumptions in all of them are that what little ancient forest stands remain need to be protected, and second-growth areas which could recover and evolve to old-growth stands, must be allowed to do so, in order to create the large contiguous areas of old-growth that are vital to wildlife survival and ecological function.

By confirming with sound scientific data what conservationists have been saying for years, the SNEP report's information on the status of old-growth in the Sierra is a challenge to those charged with managing our public lands because it provides a basis for decision-making on an ecosystem-wide level. This kind of management will be necessary to protect what little old-growth remains, and to ensure that younger forests mature to old-growth conditions.

Kathleen Brennan is CWC's Membership Associate and Conservation Intern.

Are Watershed Analyses doing their job?

By Paul Spittler

When discussing forests in 1996, it is hard to escape the concept of "ecosystem management." These buzzwords have become the mantra of the United States Forest Service—and the poster boy of a new and reborn agency. Ecosystem management garners the support of conservationists and industry alike and is poised to be the guiding principle of forest management in the 1990's and beyond.

But alas, the transition from a wood production focus to a vision that takes into account all species, not just the saleable ones, is a slow and painful one. Old habits die hard and it appears that, for the time being, ecosystem management will have to wait.

President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan includes bold steps aimed at moving the Forest Service in the direction of true ecosystem management. The kingpin of the process is a document called a watershed analysis (WA). A watershed analysis, intended to be a rigorous, scientific look at the biological, geological and ecological components of a watershed, is designed to provide the information necessary for responsible stewardship.

Unfortunately, early analyses are falling far short of their intended goals and appear to be nothing more than exercises in bureaucratic futility. In the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, land managers worked for months to complete an analysis of the Lower Hayfork watershed. The report was extensively researched, carefully detailed (with a few notable exceptions) and, it appears, written solely to justify increased logging of the watershed.

The analysis consists of several sections, each dealing

with a different layer of management. The first section, for example, looks solely at the physical characteristics of the watershed—the geology, soils, climate and biology. The next steps describe the health of the ecosystem, and the impacts of past management activities. A final section makes recommendations for future management of the area. The recommendations are known as "opportunities" and their goal is to increase overall forest health.

The Lower Hayfork WA blunders in the transition from describing the watershed to recommending options for the future. The management recommendations appear to have nothing to do with the information gathered in the other steps.

A few examples:

- Despite finding that habitat fragmentation from past logging is inhibiting the migrations of old growth dependent species, management recommendations call for more clearcutting—the very action that causes fragmentation of habitat.

- After finding that grazing is a major contributor to sedimentation and degradation of riparian ecosystems, the analysis calls for a continuance of current grazing levels.

- Throughout the WA, there is an emphasis on maintaining and improving forest health. Yet the conclusion authorizes over 2000 acres of clearcuts per year!

Somewhere a bit of logic was lost when forest managers can, on the one hand, call for improving forest health, while, on the other, call for 2,000 acres of clearcuts per year.

Considering the work that has gone into the analysis, it is a shame that the only recommendations that will see their way into existence are calls for increased logging.

The Lower Hayfork analysis makes some valid observations about the negative impacts caused by mining, grazing, road building and logging. Degraded water quality and riparian conditions, increased fire risk, loss of wildlife habitat and connectivity, and increased erosion and sedimentation—all have been associated in the report with the above extractive activities.

After years of denial, the Forest Service finally is admitting that logging, grazing and road building, actually *do* have an impact on the health of national forests. The next step, of course, is to move past the lip service and towards the goal of true ecosystem management. If forest health in the Lower Hayfork is ever to improve, the emphasis needs to move away from logging and road building and towards activities that further the restoration and rehabilitation of damaged forest lands.

What you can do:

Write to District Ranger Joyce Anderson, Hayfork Ranger District, PO Box 159, Hayfork, CA 96041. Request that the Forest Service redo the Lower Hayfork Watershed Analysis. Ask that more consideration be given to the impacts of logging, road-building and grazing on ecosystem health and that future management be based on sound scientific principles, not the desire to log ancient forests. Remind the Forest Service of its mission to manage entire ecosystems, and ask that it continue to move towards that goal. Send a copy of your letter to Forest Supervisor Sharon Heywood at 2400 Washington St., Redding, CA 96001.

Paul Spittler is the California organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign.

Wilderness forum

Letters to the Editor

One more addition to your long list of splendid reports on California wilderness is Jim Eaton's article on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project. I look forward to the next installment in this series.

Despite the gloomy outlook for this region that I so deeply love, I am happy that we now have some authoritative documentation of the reality of the Sierra Nevada. This report will stand in marked contrast to the volumes of sophistry and illusion generated by Forest Service interdisciplinary teams.

It is a remarkable fact that the sorrowful condition of Sierran forests and meadows, plainly evident to every backpacker who has been over these trails within the last fifty years, should be quite invisible to scores of federal land and resource managers. Sunken down in that same oblivion along with them are most of the leadership of wilderness advocacy groups. (The California Wilderness Coalition is a notable exception.) I'm hoping Congress (which commissioned the SNEP report) will now take some notice of its contents. I'm also hoping some generous soul will volunteer to provide copies for all of the Directors of the Sierra Club.

Nell Patterson
Pacific Palisades

Our Wishlist

CWC is in need of the following:

A fax machine, plain paper if possible.
Volunteers for:
clerical and administrative help in the office, like phones, filing, etc.

Thank You!

Salvage rider anniversary

continued from page 5

supporters such as Representative Elizabeth Furse (D-OR) and Representative John Porter (R-IL) will continue to try to overturn the rider in the coming weeks. Also, activists are working hard to convince California Senator Dianne Feinstein to introduce a similar measure in the Senate.

Miraculously, very few egregious salvage rider timber sales have gone through in the year the rider has been in effect. While several destructive projects have gone through in the Lassen, Modoc, and Klamath national forests, no roadless areas have been lost yet anywhere in the state, and very little old-growth forest has been destroyed.

While countless destructive projects are still planned, it appears that the Forest Service's dire plans for California's wild areas are slowly fizzling. The credit goes to every activist who wrote, called, and otherwise demanded that the White House and Congress prevent the timber salvage rider from destroying our last wild places. If we keep the pressure up, it is possible that all of the destructive projects proposed under the salvage rider will be cancelled in the coming months.

What you can do

Even if you have already done so several times before, please write to:

I certainly agree with most of Howard Whitaker's letter on wilderness user fees (letters to the editor, July issue). However, I take exception to one point: Whitaker says that he wants "the entire fee dedicated to improved wilderness management."

The problem with dedicating the entire fee to management is that it encourages overdevelopment of the resource. Look at timber management. The Forest Service is allowed to keep an unlimited share of timber receipts, no matter what a sale costs taxpayers. So managers offset profits from selling some stands of trees by finding submarginal stands they can lose money on.

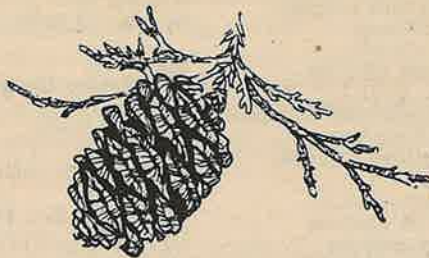
If the Forest Service could make a profit on a wilderness area, but it got to keep all of the receipts, it would have to spend that profit somehow. So it will overdevelop the wilderness with trails and other facilities in order to lose enough money to offset its profits.

The solution is to fund wilderness management—and all other national forest management—exclusively out of net user fees. This will end below-cost timber sales, below-cost grazing, and below-cost developments in wilderness and other recreation areas.

What to do with the profits? Part can go to a diversity trust fund aimed at protecting endangered species, part to counties, and part to the Treasury to pay back all the losses the national forests have incurred in the past 90 years.

Funding out of net will do far more to protect wilderness areas than funding out of tax dollars or gross user fees.

Randal O'Toole
The Thoreau Institute



Leon Panetta, Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500
Fax: 202-456-2883
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

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 our environment despite the passage of the salvage rider. Let him know that only by canceling these sales can the President fulfill his promise. Also, remind him that Secretary Glickman's policy will simply delay destructive sales, not cancel them. 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

Calendar

September 9 DEADLINE FOR comments on the Tahoe National Forest's Wild & Scenic rivers plan. Write to: Forest Supervisor John Skinner, Tahoe National Forest P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959.

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

Name _____

Address _____

Area of interest (if known) _____

May we use your name? _____

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

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Julissa wears our six-tone landscape shirt, available in jade, fuchsia, light blue, or pale green for \$15. Paul sports our three-color logo T-shirt, available in jade, royal blue, birch, or cream for \$15.

Not shown but still available: our animal design by Bay Area cartoonist Phil Frank, in beige or light gray, for \$12. All shirts are 100 percent double-knit cotton. To order, use the form on the back page.

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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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Ecology Center of Southern California; L. A.
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Friends Aware of Wildlife Needs (FAWN);
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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

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

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

Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata
People for Nipomo Dunes Nat'l. Seashore;
Nipomo
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"The most beautiful thing about a tree is what you do with it after you cut it down."

— Rush Limbaugh

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