



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

October 1997



The Amargosa River, here flowing through Amargosa Canyon, could be polluted by petroleum-based hazardous materials due to a proposed talc mine nearby, according to the Parks Service's environmental assessment.

Another grazing bill rolling out of Congress

Letters needed to stop an industry wish list from becoming law

By Herb Walker

Call it the son of Domenici, call it corporate welfare, call it what you will, but grazing legislation introduced by Representative Bob Smith (R-OR) amounts to nothing less than a wholesale giveaway of our public lands to the livestock industry.

Following in the hoof prints of a very similar attempt last year by Senator Domenici (R-NM), Smith, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, has introduced a bill (HR 2493) that, again, makes it easier and more profitable for the livestock industry to graze on public lands, while making it much harder for the public and land management agencies to oversee grazing activities on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, national forests, and national grasslands.

The bill, instead of working to improve the destructive legacy of public lands grazing, ignores the ecological harm livestock cause to public lands and gives a green light to the industry to cause even more damage. The bill impairs public and agency monitoring of grazing, stacks the deck in favor of livestock operators in decision making bodies, keeps fees at ridiculously low subsidized levels

continued on page 5

Mine threatens Death Valley

By Helen Wagonvoord

Death Valley National Park was established to protect extraordinary scenic, ecological, cultural and wildlife values for the American public. The park harbors sweeping vistas, endangered plants and animals, and prehistoric and historic values. Because of its primeval character and outstanding opportunities for solitude, Congress designated over 3 million acres of the Park as wilderness. Now there is a proposal to mine in that very wilderness—and in a part of the wilderness that hasn't even been fully surveyed for its natural and cultural values.

One million tons of talc would be mined over the next 5 years in the Saddle Peak Hills in the southern end of

Death Valley National Park, and in the process may destroy wildlife habitat, blast the quiet of the desert with heavy machinery and explosives, choke the air with dust and fumes and pollute the nearby Amargosa River.

Obviously, mining in a national park wilderness is fundamentally inappropriate. The wilderness of Death Valley National Park was expressly set aside to protect the beauty, quiet and ecological values of the California Desert from incompatible uses.

Unfortunately, antiquated mining laws from the 1800's, which are a current target for reform, provide

continued on page 7

In this issue:

Cows invade SEKI.....3

Steelhead.....4

Legislative news.....4

Ancient forest logging.....5

Conservation today.....6

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our web site is under reconstruction

...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

The past month has brought tremendous change to the Coalition. We hired a new Executive Director, welcomed two new Board members, and kicked off a new wilderness campaign. And it is with renewed energy that we continue our work to protect California's wildlands.

For almost as long as CWC has led campaigns for wilderness, Jim Eaton has led CWC. After co-founding the organization in 1976, Jim served seventeen years as Executive Director. During that time, Congress enacted two major wilderness bills protecting millions of acres of California wildlands. Under Jim's direction, CWC played a central role in these campaigns. For two decades, Jim's name has been synonymous with California wilderness. His are definitely big shoes to fill.

I was hired last month as Jim Eaton's successor as Executive Director of the Coalition. I have been a part of the California conservation movement for the past seven years and have worked on numerous campaigns. Most recently, I served as California Organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign and coordinated efforts to spare our forests from the ravages of the "clearcut rider" and to end subsidized logging road construction in national forests. I am excited about the opportunity and the challenge of leading CWC into the future.

Our Board of Directors has a new look too. Long time Directors Frannie Hoover and Ron Stork have decided to leave the Board. Both work full time (which, in the conservation movement, often means more than 50 to 60 hours per week) for other organizations and found that they no longer have the time to commit to CWC. We are grateful for their years of service and wish them the best in their endeavors.

In their place, we welcome John Davis and Don Morrill as our newest Directors. John recently served as the editor of *Wild Earth* magazine and serves on the Board of The Wildlands Project. He recently moved to California to take a position with the Foundation for Deep Ecology. Don is a co-founder of CWC who spent many years working on California wilderness issues. He now runs a travel agency in Davis. We welcome the experience and enthusiasm that this pair will bring to the Board.

The Coalition experienced one other staff change this month. Kathy Brennan, who worked for the past year as our Membership and Development Associate and Wild-

lands Project Coordinator, has decided to move to cooler, more coastal environs. We will miss Kathy's presence in our office. In her place, we have hired Jane King as our new Membership Associate. Jane served for five years as Director of the Sierra Club's outings program. She currently works as an instructor at the Cosumnes River College and is finishing a Ph.D in English. Her diverse skills and experience will be a solid addition to our office.

Our work on protecting California wilderness is, of course, far from complete. Millions of acres of wild areas remain unprotected. Each year, more of these areas are lost to logging, mining and road construction. Lands excluded from the 1994 desert bill are threatened by a proposed expansion of the Fort Irwin National Training Center. At the opposite end of the state, the U.S. Forest Service is proposing to clearcut wide swaths through the Mount Hoffman roadless area to accommodate the power lines of a new geothermal energy plant. Our defensive efforts can only last so long. We are turning our sights forward once more.

A wilderness revival has spread across the western United States. Wilderness campaigns are underway in Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho and Montana. CWC is actively laying the foundation for California's next wilderness proposal. We're planning a series of statewide and regional meetings over the next year to initiate and coordinate the effort. In the late 1970s, CWC planned a similar series of meetings to talk about the California desert. A decade and a half later, the California Desert Protection Act permanently protected over seven million acres of fragile desert. This new wilderness campaign could also lead to the protection of millions of acres of California wildlands.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Coalition. The changes are coming fast and furious, but our commitment to California's wildlands remains constant. For 21 years, CWC has led campaigns to protect California wilderness. I look forward to carrying that tradition into the future and to making CWC the most effective organization it can be. Our forests, deserts, water and wildlife deserve nothing less.

By Paul Spitler

Meet Paul Spitler

Paul Spitler has been involved in the California conservation movement for the past seven years. His involvement began in the summer of 1990 as a participant in the Redwood Summer campaign to protect California's last old growth redwoods. He worked on the Forests Forever and Big Green initiatives in 1990.

Paul also spent four years as a writer for the journal *Terrain*, an environmental publication based in Berkeley. For the past year and a half, Paul worked as the California Organizer for the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, where his job responsibilities included educating the media, policy makers and public about the threats to and need for protection of California's last great ancient forests.

As an avid backpacker, Paul looks forward to experiencing first hand California's vast tracts of potential wilderness. It's a dirty job...

Correction

An article on the Quincy Library Group bill in the August issue of the *Wilderness Record* incorrectly identified the author as Wendell Wood. The author was Delbert Williams. We apologize for any confusion.



Grazing

Bovines encroach on Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park... again

By Todd Shuman

The reality of illegal livestock trespass in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park (SEKI) has once again reared its ugly head. On September 10 and 11, I saw and photographed eight cows grazing in the southeast end of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park (SEKI) in the area known as Siberian Outpost. Several cows had red tags attached to their left ears, and these tags appeared identical to the ones that were on cows in nearby Big Whitney Meadow, which is located in the northern Golden Trout Wilderness, in the Inyo National Forest. The permittee for the grazing allotment that includes Big Whitney Meadow is none other than Anheuser-Busch Companies, the well-known brewer of Budweiser and Bud Light beers.

While I was wandering around Siberian Outpost, I also witnessed and photographed damage related to past and recent livestock grazing. The area of Siberian Outpost, while beautiful and striking, still bears the wounds generated by past livestock grazing in the form of sloughing streambanks and headcuts (upwardly-eroding gullies) that have and may still be dewatering significant areas of the main Siberian Outpost meadow section. As for more current livestock impacts, I took a few shots of wet cow pies in intermittent meadow streamcourses and significantly-sized areas of bare soil apparently generated from a combination of livestock defoliation and trampling.

I wish to note that mine is not the first documentation of a livestock trespass violation in this part of SEKI. Just last year, Roland Knapp and Sally Miller (Friends of the Inyo, CWC Board member) photographed dried cow pies in this area of SEKI that had been apparently deposited by cows the previous year. As a result of this documentation and additional pressure applied by the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club and the High Sierra Hikers Association on both SEKI and the Inyo National Forest, the Forest

Service issued a written warning to the permittees of both the Whitney and the Mulkey Allotment. This warning, which included modifications in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOIs) to the permittees, noted that "[a]llowing cattle to drift into SEKI is unacceptable under any circumstance" and "[f]ailure to prevent drift of your permitted livestock into Sequoia-Kings National Park will result in suspension of your grazing permit for the remainder of the grazing season and may result in additional permit action, such as longer term suspension or cancellation of all or part of the permit." Unfortunately, the Inyo NF failed to incorporate such protective measures into this year's AOIs, according to Del Hubbs, Range Conservationist for the Golden Trout Wilderness.

This incident, which is currently being investigated by both the SEKI and the Inyo NF, once again highlights some of the problems associated with livestock grazing in the southern Sierra Nevada wilderness that is the native home to California's state fish, the Volcano Creek Golden Trout. In nearby Big Whitney Meadow, for instance, livestock grazing is continually aggravating past damage to the soil and vegeta-

In nearby Big Whitney Meadow, for instance, livestock grazing is continually aggravating past damage to the soil and vegetation of the area, thus contributing to a stunted, overpopulated golden trout fish supply in the wilderness. Moreover, the large number of dried and fresh cow pies on the meadow is a constant pollution source for a domestic, municipal water supply that is used by town dweller and backpacker alike.

tion of the area, thus contributing to a stunted, overpopulated golden trout fish supply in the wilderness. Moreover, the large number of dried and fresh cow pies on the meadow is a constant pollution source for a domestic, municipal water supply that is used by town dweller and backpacker alike. Now add to this mix the knowledge that Big Whitney Meadow is a staging area for recurring, illegal livestock incursions into our national park and one can understand why a growing number of influential activists in our state are calling for the long-term removal of cattle from areas like Big Whitney Meadow.

Clearly, the Inyo NF needs to address this issue more seriously. A permanent permit modification that incorporates the requirements of the warning letter cited above (as opposed to a temporary AOI modification) should be considered by the Forest Service. Perhaps more broadly, elimination of Big Whitney Meadow from the Whitney Allotment should be considered, as well as other possible access points

in the northern part of the Whitney Allotment, such as Barigan Stringer and Rocky Basin Lakes. SEKI may also float the controversial proposal to build a fence at the border between the Golden Trout Wilderness and SEKI at Siberian Pass. In any case, please contact and demand action from:

Michael Tollefson, Superintendent, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, Three Rivers, CA 93271, phone (209) 565-3341.

JoEllen Keil, Assistant Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 798 No. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514, phone (760) 873-2515.

August Busch III, President and Chairman of the Board, Anheuser-Busch Companies, One Busch Place, St. Louis, MO 63118, phone (314) 577-2000.

For more information, contact Todd Shuman at the Golden Trout Wilderness Protection League, 1442 "A" Walnut Street, Suite 240, Berkeley, CA 94709. You can also send an e-mail to sstuart@lausd.k12.ca.us or call (818) 956-0207.

Todd Shuman is an activist with Golden Trout Wilderness Protection League.



Cows illegally grazing in the Siberian Outpost in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. A similar incident occurred last year. Photo by Todd Shuman.



water

Wilderness News

Delayed action leaves steelhead floundering

By Tim McCay

Local steelhead will have to fend for themselves for at least another half-year because of a federal move last month delaying a decision on protecting the five races of the fragile fish until next February. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) did list five populations of steelhead in southern and central California and on the Columbia and Snake rivers as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. But it gave as much deference as possible to big agricultural and timber interests by delaying action in five Evolutionarily Significant Units, regions where stocks have more genetic similarities than differences: the Central Valley, the North Coast, the upper Klamath, the Oregon coast and the lower Columbia River.

Ironically, runs of the prized fish sports fish were once so numerous on the upper Klamath that Happy Camp was called "Steelhead Capital of the World," and river guides, hotels, and restaurants flourished. That all changed in the late 1980s, when the fish for all practical purposes disappeared.

More delays

The NMFS said new rules governing the protected races of steelhead won't go into effect for 60 days, and that the agency will delay identifying "critical habitat" for them for another year after that. The agency also said the law has flexibility so it can tailor rules governing "incidental take"—that is, killing—in ways that recognize local conservation efforts.

But many conservationists and fisher groups are concerned that such conservation efforts have been lacking.

Long on plans and studies, state agencies have done little to reverse the decline of the species. In 1988, then-Governor Deukmejian signed the Salmon, Steelhead Trout and Anadromous Fisheries Program Act (SB 2261), which called for the state to insure no more habitat loss, to develop a recovery plan and to achieve a doubling of wild fish populations by the year 2000. Today, sadly, it is more likely that all salmonid populations in the state will need to be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Salmon's cousin

Once considered a form of trout, the steelhead is now believed to have a common lineage with Pacific salmon.

But as close to salmon as it might be, the life cycle of the steelhead is iteroparous, meaning it can spawn more than once before it dies. Although they anadromous, meaning they are born in freshwater but spend time in the ocean before they return to spawn, some steelhead stay up to four years in freshwater before they migrate to the sea. Some individuals may never migrate to the ocean.

The species is considered to have the most complex life history of any salmonid species. More than 23 naturally reproducing stocks have been extirpated in the past

50 years in Washington, Oregon and California. As with coho and other salmonids, the key impacts on water quality affecting the freshwater phase of their life cycle are sedimentation and high stream temperatures associated with logging, water diversions, grazing and road-building.

In spite of the listing deferrals, salmonids are listed as threatened or endangered in most of the freshwater of the West, from Los Angeles to the Canadian border. The protected fish include the Snake River sockeye salmon, the Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon, the coho salmon, the Columbia River fall run and spring-summer runs of chinook salmon—and now the steelhead.

Reprinted courtesy of the Northcoast Environmental Center.

Legislative Roundup

Bryan Roads amendment

In July, the House of Representatives defeated—by a mere two votes—a measure that would have eliminated the entire road building budget for new logging roads. Instead, the House overwhelmingly approved a \$30 million cut in the logging road budget. The \$30 million "compromise" was offered at the last second by pro-timber Democrat Norm Dicks, as a successful effort to undermine the efforts of environmentalists and fiscal conservatives who sought to eliminate the entire \$100 million subsidy.

In September, the Senate took on the logging roads issue. An amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill offered by Richard Bryan (D-NV) would have eliminated \$60 million in federal subsidies to logging companies seeking to build roads in national forests. Initially, the measure was tied, 50-50. Under the rules of the Senate, Vice President Al Gore casts the deciding vote. Consistent with the Clinton Administration's record on forest policy, however, the Veep was nowhere to be found. Thus the amendment was defeated. Rumor has it that Gore was in New York on a fundraising visit.

Quincy Library Group

S. 1028, the Quincy Library Group bill, would double logging levels on two and a quarter Sierran National Forests by implementing a five-year pilot logging project on those lands. Under the bill, the U.S. Forest Service would be required to carry out a logging plan written by residents of the town of Quincy and representatives of the logging giant, Sierra Pacific Industries.

The bill was introduced by California Senator Dianne Feinstein. In July, Senator Boxer joined Feinstein as a sponsor of the bill. S. 1028 was scheduled for a hearing in the Senate in early September, but was delayed due to the concerns raised by environmental organizations. As of press time, no new hearing date has been set.

Logging (and grazing) without laws...again

Infamous Idaho Congressman (her term) Helen Chenoweth has introduced H.R. 2458, the "Community Protection and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Act of 1997." Based on the timber industry theory that logging is the only way to spare forests from the ravages of wildfire, the bill is a bald attempt to clear the way for increased cutting of national forests. The bill directs the Forest Service to identify areas of high fuel buildup within national forests and authorizes the agency to plan and implement timber sales within these areas, regardless of whether the projects comply with environmental laws. The bill also touts grazing as a way to remove "excess" grasses and authorizes increased grazing without environmental review. Way to go Helen.

A blank check for logging

Representative Bob Smith and Senator Gordon Smith (no relation), have introduced a Forest Recovery and Protection Act. This "blank check for logging" would create a new Forest Service slush fund to facilitate increased logging in national forests. The logging would be carried out under the banner of "forest health," although, at press time, neither Smith could explain how increased logging will actually help the forest ecosystems.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Wildlands Project Coordinator

The California Wilderness Coalition has a half-time opening for a California Wildlands Project Coordinator.

Job description:

- The Wildlands Project Coordinator is responsible for:
- Coordinating a statewide effort to map core wilderness reserves, corridors and buffers
 - Arranging regional and statewide meetings to coordinate the efforts of other Wildlands activists
 - Compiling a database of existing and potential wilderness areas, and potential corridors to connect these areas
 - Establishing regional activist groups to identify potential reserves
 - Promoting the Wildlands Project and the CWC in public forums and through the media
 - Overseeing Wildlands Project volunteers

Desired qualifications:

- Experience in grassroots organizing
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Highly motivated
- Commitment to wild lands conservation
- Familiarity with California public land issues

This position is half-time, flexible hours. Salary dependent on experience.

Please submit resume and three references to:

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

For more information, please contact Paul Spitler at (916) 758-0380

Ancient Forests

Scaled back Yolla Bolly logging going forward

By Anthony Ambrose

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest has recently announced their decision to log the 10.5 million-board foot Beegum Corral Regan Timber Sale in the Beegum Creek watershed. The Forest Service plans to clearcut and highgrade some of the last late-successional and old-growth habitat between the Yolla Bolly/Middle-Eel Wilderness and Chanchellula Wilderness.

The Beegum watershed and surrounding area has been heavily logged and roaded in the last 30 years. The 2,050 acres targeted for logging in the sale contain some of the last fragments of older, intact forest in the watershed, providing critical habitat and landscape connectivity for many plants and animals that are dependent upon old-growth forest, including the northern spotted owl, Pacific fisher, northern goshawk, and several sensitive plant species.

In classic double-speak, the Forest Service is trying to justify this sale on the basis of what they call "defragmentation" of the landscape. In effect, this entails clearcutting the last fragments of old-growth patches to "create larger areas of consistent landscape pattern," (i.e. larger monoculture tree farms).

The Forest Service intends to log in primary wildlife migration corridors in the headwaters of the watershed, claiming that the forest will grow up sometime in the future to accommodate these species. However, they do not have the budget to properly maintain the thousands of acres of young plantations that are already there, resulting in dense young timber stands with low biological diversity and a high risk of destruction from catastrophic fire, insects, and disease.

President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan requires that the Forest Service protect and maintain the last fragments of old-growth habitat in watersheds where little remains. However, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest is attempting to log these old-growth stands while leaving younger stands in their place. This is another example of the reluctance of the Forest Service to implement sustainable ecosystem management based on sound scientific principles.

As a result of concerns expressed by the public as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service has scaled back their original plans to log a larger area of the watershed, which had previously included riparian reserves and the East Beegum Roadless Area. However, the magnitude and scale of impacts on old-growth dependent species is still extreme, and would result in the destruction of thousands of acres of habitat that provide connectivity between several old-growth reserves and wilderness areas.

What you can do

Please write or call Shasta-Trinity National Forest Supervisor J. Sharon Heywood (2400 Washington Ave., Redding, CA 96001; (916) 246-5222) and Regional Forester Lynn Sprague (630 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111-2214; (415) 705-2870), requesting that they immediately cancel the sale and develop new management plans that are more consistent with the needs of the ecosystem. For more information, contact Citizens for Better Forestry, POB 1297, Hayfork, CA, 96041; (916) 628-5004.

Six Rivers timber sale under appeal

By Anthony Ambrose

Plans by the Six Rivers National Forest to salvage log in the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area under the guise of "fuels reduction" in the Horse Linto Creek and Mill Creek watersheds has recently been appealed by several local and regional conservation groups, including the California Wilderness Coalition.

The salvage timber sale is located in a large block of national forest land sandwiched between the Trinity Alps Wilderness and the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation. This stretch of mid-elevation forest contains the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area, one of the largest concentrations of late-successional and old-growth forest in northern California as well as a critical wildlife habitat corridor. Horse Linto Creek is designated as a Tier 1 Key Watershed

loads. So, in the summer and fall of 1996, under the provisions of the infamous "Salvage Logging Rider," three salvage sales were logged in the affected area, resulting in the cutting of many large old-growth trees and construction of new roads, including within the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area.

Now the Forest Service wants to continue the encroachment into the roadless area with more logging and road construction, ostensibly for the good of the forest. Congressionally-appropriated funds and those garnered from the sale are insufficient to address treatment of highly flammable, small-diameter woody debris, which is primarily responsible for the rapid spread of fire. Instead, the large old-growth trees and logs are cut,



The Horse Linto timber sale is targeting ancient forest in the Orleans Mountain Roadless Area, the boundary of which is marked by the clearcut in the foreground. The sale area is behind that ridge. Photo by Jim Eaton.

under Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan in recognition of its value in the maintenance and protection of anadromous fisheries in the region.

In the late 1980s, a small part of the roadless area in the Horse Linto watershed was roaded and logged in the Lone Pine timber sale, in violation of environmental laws and regulations. Subsequently, the roadless area boundary was redrawn to exclude the entire north slope of Lone Pine Ridge on the grounds that it had been developed, although only a small portion along the ridgetop had actually been impacted by the timber sale. Environmental analysis consisted of a simple inter-office computer memo with no public notice or input. The roadless area boundary was arbitrarily moved down to the creek, and thousands of acres of untouched roadless area thus became available for logging.

In the winter of 1995-96, strong winds and snow caused extensive wind disturbance in the area, and the Forest Service claimed that logging was necessary to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire from high fuel

degrading the forest, while leaving small-sized fuels in the form of logging slash and dense understory growth, ironically increasing the risk of catastrophic fire.

Concerned citizens should contact Six Rivers National Forest Supervisor George Lottritz (1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501, (916) 442-1721) and Regional Forester Lynn Sprague (630 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111-2214, (415) 705-2870), demanding that they immediately cancel the portion of the sale within the original Orleans Mountain Roadless Area. Tell them that the continued encroachment on roadless areas by logging and road construction is unacceptable, and that the public is not willing to subsidize the degradation of our last remaining wild areas under the guise of "forest health." For more information, contact the Northcoast Environmental Center, 879 Ninth St., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 822-6918.

Anthony Ambrose works for the Northcoast Environmental Center and Citizen's for Better Forestry.

Wilderness Activism

California conservation today: A new activists introduction to issues affecting public lands Part II

By Ryan Henson

Roads

California's national forests, like all of our national forests, have been filled with literally thousands of miles of roads. Nationwide, there are over 375,000 miles of roads in national forests (eight times more miles of road than our entire national highway system), and in California alone there are so many national forest roads that if they were stretched end to end they would extend around the world with miles to spare. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holdings in California do not have as many miles of road, primarily because the economic incentives to build roads across BLM lands are not as great as on national forest land. The primary purpose of road construction on BLM land is for private property access, public recreation access, and mining.

While it is true that many of these roads are important for public recreation, the vast majority exist only to facilitate the subsidized exploitation of our public lands for the mining, livestock, and timber industries. In addition to making clearcutting, stripmining, and overgrazing possible, these roads also fragment wildlife habitat, increase the incidence of human-caused fires, and degrade water quality by depositing vast amounts of sediment into streams. Scientists estimate that erosion from roads is between 30 to 300 times greater than erosion from undisturbed land.

A particularly notorious road construction subsidy is the Forest Service's timber roads purchaser credit program. This program allows the timber industry to build roads across public land to access trees to cut. The industry is "compensated" for the expense of building these roads to cut the public's forests with—you guessed it—extra trees. In other words, the timber industry gets the trees regularly offered by the Forest Service, as well as additional trees as a reward for building roads. The American taxpayer is stuck with the visual scar of logging, the bill for maintaining the road, and the cost of mitigating the ecological harm the road causes. Despite the anti-corporate welfare rhetoric in Congress of late, a bid to end the purchaser road credit program recently failed in the Senate after passing the House. Fortunately, Senators Boxer and Feinstein voted to end the program. (See Legislative Roundup, page 5.)

As our national forests and BLM lands are filled with more and more roads, areas without roads have become increasingly valuable as the last vestiges of wild, pristine habitat and places where hikers and other recreationists can "get away from it all" and find solitude and scenic beauty in what is otherwise a sea of clearcuts and roads. Over the last few decades, public sentiment against corporate road subsidies and scientific evidence concerning

the value of unroaded lands has forced Congress to at least protect some of these "roadless areas" from destruction.

Roadless areas and wilderness study areas

In the 1970s, Congress ordered the Forest Service to map the remaining roadless areas in our national forests that met the criteria for wilderness established by Congress in the Wilderness Act of 1964. That criteria essentially required 5,000 or more acres of pristine land. The agency identified over 6,269,000 acres (over 9,645 square miles) of national forest roadless areas in California, though Congress did not require the agency to protect these areas.

The BLM's equivalent of a roadless area is a wilderness study area (WSA). Congress ordered the BLM to identify WSAs in 1976, and it took several years for the agency to identify over 7.8 million acres of WSAs.

Many roadless areas and WSAs have been permanently protected by Congress through the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (1.3 million acres), the California Wilderness Act of 1984 (1.8 million acres), the Condor Range and Rivers Act of 1992 (402,000 acres), and the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 (7.6 million acres). As a result, California is blessed with over 11,102,000 acres of wilderness (about 11 percent of California's overall area)—excluding national parks. This is more designated wilderness than any other state outside of Alaska. On the other hand, 3.6 million acres of roadless areas remain unprotected in California, as well as over two million acres of WSAs.

Unfortunately, though roadless areas contain much of our last old-growth forest, pristine watersheds, and undisturbed plant and wildlife habitat in California's national forest lands, the majority of these wild areas are still open to logging, road construction, and other activities that will destroy their primitive character forever. Unlike roadless areas, WSAs will continue to receive some degree of protection until Congress decides whether they should be designated official wilderness areas. This does not apply to many of the WSAs in the California desert not designated wilderness in the California Desert Protection Act—unfortunately these WSAs are as vulnerable to

development as the Forest Service's roadless areas.

Unless we can convince Congress to declare these areas as protected wilderness or protect them in some other way, roadless areas in particular will continue to be lost to development. The California Wilderness Coalition will be holding a series of meetings around the state over the next few months to develop a strategy to safeguard these areas. We think the California Wilderness, Wild Rivers, and Biodiversity Act of 2004 sounds like a good working title for the next wilderness bill!

Ancient forests

When the average citizen imagines our national forests, he or she will likely envision large, ancient trees filtering sunlight like pillars in a cathedral. Sadly, all too often the opposite is true: our ancient forests have been clearcut, filled

with roads, and—if anything grows back at all after being clearcut—rows of small monotonous trees resembling more a Christmas-tree farm rather than a forest take the place of what was once old-growth.

Fortunately, there are still many places in California's national forests where old-growth remains. Indeed, over 95 percent of all of our remaining ancient forest exists in our national parks and national forests. Unlike the National Park Service, however, the Forest Service has logged our old-growth to the point that, statewide, only 15 percent of national forest old-growth remains.

This is unfortunate given that countless species of plants and animals depend on old-growth ecosystems to survive. While many people have heard of the spotted owl's decline, most are unaware that there are numerous other species such as the pileated woodpecker, pine marten (a member of the weasel family), and coho salmon that depend in one way or another on the habitat provided by ancient forest.

In addition to providing habitat for sensitive plant and animal species, ancient forest also provides clean, clear water, healthy and fertile soil, and simple beauty. Scientists have also shown that old-growth trees not only are more resistant to fire than younger forests, they have evolved in tandem with fire.

Conservationists in California and elsewhere have long maintained that not only should we protect all remaining ancient forest, but we should restore old-growth, where possible, elsewhere in our national forests as well. Ongoing protection efforts include fighting individual old-growth logging plans, educating the public about the importance of ancient forest, encouraging further scientific studies of the relationship between ancient forest, biological diversity, and watershed health, and passing legislation in Congress to protect our remaining national forest old-growth. The public's help is sorely needed to advance these efforts.

Ryan Henson is the Conservation Associate for CWC.

As our national forests and BLM lands are filled with more and more roads, areas without roads have become increasingly valuable as the last vestiges of wild, pristine habitat and places where hikers and other recreationists can "get away from it all" and find solitude and scenic beauty in what is otherwise a sea of clearcuts and roads.

Unless we can convince Congress to declare these areas as protected wilderness or protect them in some other way, roadless areas in particular will continue to be lost to development. The California Wilderness Coalition will be holding a series of meetings around the state over the next few months to develop a strategy to safeguard these areas.

Wilderness Forum

Death Valley mine

continued from page 1

loopholes for mining claims. The National Park Service (NPS) is required to regulate such mining operations to protect the park's resources. Yet in the case of the Rainbow Talc Mine, the NPS has only released a scant environmental assessment (EA) of the Rainbow Talc mining operation and is asking for minimal mitigation.

Legally, whenever the NPS takes significant action on park land, they need to conduct extensive study and analysis in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Not only does an EIS require in-depth analysis of a project, but it also provides an opportunity for public oversight. Approval of the current mining proposal will pave the way for more mining in this and other national parks. Clearly, a decision of such historical significance for public lands necessitates public input.

We need your help to pressure the NPS to do their job. You can help by:

- Asking the NPS send you a copy of the current environmental assessment of the mining project.
- Writing a letter stating that the EA does not provide sufficient detail and depth. This violates the law that requires the NPS to "ensure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken."

For example, despite the presence of several sensitive bat species and the fact that this is one of the top areas in the state for bat maternity use, the NPS has not completed a bat survey. In fact, the environmental analysis admits that "disturbance...would cause female bats to drop their young or abandon the site altogether" and that "mining activities would disturb and displace most if not all bats." Also, this region is in violation of both state and federal air quality regulations and the EA states that the mine will cause particulate pollution, but doesn't outline effective mitigation and enforcement measures.

Also state that an EIS needs to comprehensively assess the natural and cultural values of the site and all possible impacts to those values from this operation. Without this information, it is impossible for the NPS to make an informed decision regarding this project.

Send your comments and request for the environmental assessment by November 14 to:

Richard Anderson, Environmental Specialist, Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, CA 92328.

Please send a copy of your letter to Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Thank you for your help. Not only are you helping to protect Death Valley National Park but you are also preventing the establishment of a historical precedent with serious implications for the protection of our national parks.

Thank you for your critical input. For more information, call Helen Wagonvoord or Brian Huse of the National Parks and Conservation Association at (510) 839-9922.

Helen Wagonvoord is a staff member of the National Parks and Conservation Association.

Save the Date!

Thursday, November 13

- CWC is celebrating at the Patagonia store in San Francisco!
- Cocktails, silent auction, and more!
- Former Senator Alan Cranston will be present.

Call (916) 758-0380 for more information.

Grazing bill

continued from page 1

while expanding the privilege of sub-leasing, allowing permittees to profit at the expense of plants, wildlife and the American taxpayer.

The bill has passed the House Agriculture Committee and is now awaiting action in the House Resources Committee when legislators return from their October recess.

This land is your land... or is it?

The Smith bill is clearly a hand-out to the ranching industry, which uses 250 million acres of public land to graze sheep and cattle. Grazing on public lands costs the American taxpayer between \$150 million to \$400 million annually and is directly responsible for about 90 species being added to the threatened or endangered list.

Indeed, the livestock industry has admitted that the Smith bill includes seven of their top eighteen priorities. They are working hard to add the remainder.

Specifically the bill would:

- Prohibit agencies from negotiating with ranchers on the issue of public access to federal lands during the permit process, thereby giving ranchers excessive decision making power on who has access to public lands.
- Allow livestock operators to monitor range conditions, but bar the public from scrutinizing their own lands.
- For the first time allow sub-leasing on Forest Service lands, thus allowing a permittee to extract a profit from below-market fees, while taxpayers pay the bill.
- Allow livestock operators to enjoy a grazing fee lower than last year's Domenici bill, and maintain grossly subsidized fee levels even lower than the current federal program.
- Make grazing on public lands a "right," not a "privilege." If a livestock operator were to have their grazing curtailed for environmental reasons, taxpayers would pay them for their "loss"
- Remove multiple use management of national grasslands, letting grazing be the dominant use and undermining any conservation of these rare ecosystems.
- Require that resource advisory councils (RACs) be dominated by the livestock industry, instead of the more balanced collection of conservationists, industry representatives and land management agency officials. Adding a mandate that RACs be run by majority vote, the bill would ensure that these councils are run by, and for, the livestock industry.
- Shackle the ability of federal agencies to monitor, enforce and make decisions that would protect fish and wildlife from poor grazing practices.

What you can do

Call or write your Representative in Congress and ask him/her to oppose HR 2493. Mention that it is time to undo the damage that subsidized, poorly managed grazing has done to our public lands, not give more subsidies and concessions to the livestock industry. Tell your Representative that this bill is anti-taxpayer, anti-environment and restricts public access to our land. Use some of the points above to inform for discussion.

Write to:

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

Or you can call the Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Calendar

October 22-23 Meeting of the Sacramento Province Advisory Council. Topics will include the implementation of Option 9. Call Ryan Henson at (916) 758-0380 for more information.

October 25 Annual Meeting of the California Ancient Forest Alliance in Davis, California. All activists who would like an opportunity to join with others now working to protect the ancient forests of California, or those who would like to learn how to become involved are encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held at the Village Homes Community Center. Call Scott Hoffman at (916) 442-3155 for more information.

October 30-31, November 3-4 "Building Common Ground" workshops hosted by the Mendocino, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity and Six River national forests. This is a free educational program designed to help people acquire and practice the skills needed for successful group decision making processes. Topics include: "Bringing a Group Together," "Communicating With a Group," and "Planning for Change." The October workshops will be held in Ukiah; the November workshops will be held in Yreka. For more information call Phebe Brown at (916) 934-3316.

November 1 Watershed Monitoring Workshop for citizen's groups and creekside residents. This all-day workshop includes such topics as: how to start a citizen's monitoring program, sediment and turbidity, temperature, fish and habitat. The free workshop will be held at Bayside Grange (near Arcata). The workshop is sponsored by Humboldt Fish Action Council, U.S. EPA and the Watershed Improvement Network. For more information and directions call Ruth Blyther at (707) 269-2066.

November 1-2 SNEP Workshops in North Lake Tahoe (Nov. 1) and Chico (Nov. 2). The Wilderness Society is sponsoring two workshops on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP). The workshops, focused on federal forest land protection, are designed to facilitate understanding of the information contained in the SNEP report. Hands-on exercises with the the computer maps developed by SNEP will be a special feature of the workshop. For more information call Barbara Spolter at (415) 561-6641 or e-mail her at bspolter@twsw.org.



Coalition Member Groups

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

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

Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club; Palo Alto
Los Angeles Audubon Society, West Hollywood
Los Padres Chapter, Sierra Club
Marble Mountain Audubon Society; Etna
Marin Conservation League; San Rafael
Mendocino Environmental Center; Ukiah
Mendocino Forest Watch; Willits
Mono Lake Committee; Lee Vining
Mt. Shasta Area Audubon Society; Mt. Shasta
Mountain Lion Foundation; Sacramento
Native Habitat; Woodside
Natural Resources Defense Council; S.F.
NCRCC Sierra Club; Santa Rosa
Nordic Voice; Livermore
Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata
People for Nipomo Dunes Nat'l. Seashore; Nipomo

Peppermint Alert; Porterville
Placer County Cons. Task Force; Newcastle
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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
Seventh Generation Fund; Arcata
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund; S. F.
Sierra Nevada Alliance; South Lake Tahoe
Sierra Treks; Ashland, OR
Smith River Alliance; Trinidad
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
Yahi Group, Sierra Club; Chico
Yolano Group, Sierra Club; Davis
Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

"Any recreational user that is bothered or annoyed by project views, noise, dust, or odors at this location can move out of the vicinity or make a decision not to hike or hunt in proximity to this [wellfield and power plant]."

— From the mitigation section of the draft EIS on the proposed geothermal projects in the Medicine Lake Highlands. This must be the new "If you don't like it, get out" form of mitigation. See *Wilderness Record*, September, 1997.

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Yes! I wish to become a member of the California Wilderness Coalition. Enclosed is \$ _____ for first-year membership dues.

Here is a special contribution of \$ _____ to help the Coalition's work.

NAME _____

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