



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

March 1997

Desolation Wilderness plan released Forest Service dodges grazing, fish stocking

By Jim Eaton

The long-awaited management plan for the Desolation Wilderness has been released for public comment. Apparently gun shy from an earlier ambush by the National Rifle Association and Wise-Use groups, the Forest Service released their environmental impact statement (EIS) without recommending any of the six alternatives analyzed. The public comment period ends on April 4.

The Forest Service previously came under attack for floating ideas to eliminate fish stocking and recreational shooting in the wilderness. People who never set foot in wild areas came forward to defend their right to have fingerlings dropped from airplanes and to shoot varmints and inanimate objects in Desolation. It did not seem to matter that the proposal would not have affected legal hunting or even carrying guns, just the discharge of weapons for purposes other than hunting.

Once again, the Forest Service has dodged the issue of eliminating grazing in wilderness. Straddling the fence in this issue, the agency admits that many visitors are disturbed by the presence of cattle and the destruction the animals wreak but counters that some visitors enjoy the presence of cattle and wish to see this "historical" use continued. Some modified grazing schemes are analyzed, however.

With the major biological issues of fish stocking and grazing eliminated from examination, the Forest Service concentrated on human use issues, such as group size and quotas, wood fires, and dogs. While there are some innovative ideas reviewed in the EIS, without a preferred alternative it is hard to see if the agency is seriously considering all options.

To their credit, the Forest Service does offer a range of alternatives not normally seen in a wilderness plan. One alternative maximizes human use over the protection of the natural condition, another maintains the current management guidelines, one emphasizes primitive recre-



Rockbound Lake, Desolation Wilderness, Eldorado National Forest.

ation, and three emphasize restoration of the ecosystem while allowing varying levels of backcountry use.

A comparison of the alternatives shows the range of ideas being released for public comment:

- Fire: from suppressing all fires, to allowing natural fires and prescribed burning, to allowing only natural fires.
- Wood fires: from continuing the current ban on campfires to allowing campfires in established fire rings

(the current ban allows the use of fully enclosed wood burning stoves).

- Camping restrictions: from no restrictions, to 100-foot setbacks from water, to no camping in high use areas.
- Recreational stock: from no limits, to limits on the number of stock per person with a maximum party size, to allowing-day use only.
- Group size: from increasing the current 15 persons per group to 25, to reducing the maximum size to 6.

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California Wilderness Coalition
2655 Portage Bay East, Ste. 5
Davis, California 95616

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Phil Farrell



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California Wilderness Coalition

2655 Portage Bay East, Suite 5
Davis, California 95616
(916) 758-0380
Fax (916) 758-0382
cwc@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us
<http://www.dcn.davis.ca.us/~cwc>

...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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Editor
Herb Walker

Writers
Jim Eaton
Kevin Kirchner
Neil Levine
George Weurthner

Photos & Graphics
Dan Brown
Ryan Henson

Advisors
W. Cohen, J. Eaton

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Coalition News

Monthly Report

Santiago, Chile

I'm lying here in a hammock at my brother's house in the outskirts of Santiago, sipping a pisco sour in the warm summer breeze. Above me tower the Andes, looking surprisingly like the Last Chance Range in Death Valley National Park.

I really haven't a clue to what has been happening at the California Wilderness Coalition. So let me tell you about wild Chile.

This is the end of a three-week trip Wendy and I are on to this incredibly wild country. Some folks have suggested that Chile is like California fifty years ago. From what I've seen, it more like California during the Pleistocene.

Our adventure started at the Straits of Magellan where we rented a truck and drove to one of the world's outstanding national parks, Torres del Paine. It has been suggested that this may be South America's finest national park, a miniature Alaska of shimmering turquoise lakes, roaring creeks and rivers, cascading waterfalls, sprawling glaciers, dense forests, and abundant wildlife. The issue is not whether to come here, but how much time to spend.

The sun gods smiled on us, so we were fortunate to see the Torres, towering 2,000 meters above us. We also took a short hike to Lago Grey, where we were amazed by icebergs floating off the massive Grey Glacier. Other visitors brought Scotch that they cooled by chunks of ice that was far, far older than the spirits they were sipping.

We saw guanacos, raptors, waterfowl, and a host of other critters. But the highlight of our trip may have been on a hike up the Rio Ascencio where we stopped at a high point and watched with amazement as Andean condors soared up the canyon *beneath* us.

We then flew up to Puerto Montt where we linked up with my brother for a backpack trip. First came the five-hour bus trip along a narrow, potholed gravel road

(including a ferry crossing of a major fjord), followed by a three-hour boat trip. When we were dropped off, we hoisted our packs for a four-kilometer hike to Lago Abascal. Instead, our backpack totaled 100 meters.

We discovered that at high tide, the estuary we intended to cross was under deep water. Our alternative route through the forest required machetes or some similar vegetation-clearing device, backpacking accessories we normally don't bring along.

While disappointed, we weren't too upset, as we were at the Termas de Cahuelmo, minimally-developed hot springs with tubs carved out of rock. Huge trout swam in the river, and an array of birds flitted about.

This came close to paradise, but the leech that Wendy found and the two varieties of biting flies gave us a reality check. The larger of the two flies, which put our bumblebees to shame, was able to take a large chunk of flesh if it got through your defense.

After the journey we made I expected we would be alone, but we met lots of Chileans here. Several local fishing families boated in to fish and soak in the hot springs, two kayakers paddled for 14 days to reach the area, and other users sailed in for the day. We met two college students and their father who had backpacked up a nearby canyon to see the ancient alerce, conifers reminiscent of our coastal redwoods.

My eyelids are growing heavy in this gently swinging hammock. While I ponder getting some more pisco, I reflect that the staff has handled by absence without tracking me down with some major crisis. With e-mail, telephones, and fax machines, there really isn't any reason I need to return home. Perhaps I can keep the Coalition going from afar.

I'll let you know my decision.

By Jim Eaton

Wish list

We're always scrounging for office equipment, and we have two specific needs at present.

One is an office desk, something of decent size—four feet wide or so, and fairly deep. Some of our current furniture would be okay for a pre-teen, but most of us are bumping into them when we get close. Kathy has been trying to use such a desk, with the drawers falling apart, and we want to improve her morale and mend her knees.

Secondly would be a faster Macintosh. Much of our word processing is done on our old Macs—Pluses, SEs, and Classics—which work just fine for writing. But page layout, graphics, and data management crawl along and are frustrating on these small screens. Even an old MacII would be great.

The mail saga continues...

You may have noticed that your *Wilderness Record* and other mailings from the Coalition are coming with larger labels and are barcoded. Our main motivation is to speed the mail to you, although we also save some money in the process.

We are required to use a computer program to determine your nine-digit zip code. Several dozen members have addresses the program can't find (including our two U.S. Senators and most University of California sites), and these mailings must be sent separately (and either slower or first class—more expensive either way).

So if your label lacks a nine-digit zip code, please check to see if we have your address exactly right. Thanks.

Wilderness Trivia Question

The 63,960-acre Desolation Wilderness is now 500 acres larger than when it was established by Congress in 1969. Why?

Answer on page 7

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

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Wilderness News

Santa Rosa Island: trouble under foot

Park Service mismanagement damaging part of Channel Islands National Park

By Neil Levine

Santa Rosa Island was purchased from the Vail and Vickers Cattle Company in 1986 for 30 million dollars. The purchase added the island to the Channel Islands National Park (CINP), five islands of incredible beauty and biological diversity off the coast of Santa Barbara. In spite of the inclusion of Santa Rosa Island into the national park, management of the island's native ecosystem and public access have taken a back seat to providing Vail & Vickers with an ideal setting to graze cattle and provide paying adventurers with trophy deer and Roosevelt elk to hunt. The grazing and hunting operations have impacted the island with up to 6,000 cattle, 150 horses, 1,000 deer, and 1,000 elk. Consequently, the Environmental Defense Center filed a lawsuit representing the National Parks & Conservation Association to protect plants, wildlife, water quality, riparian habitats, and historic resources on the island from further decline and to open up the island so we all can appreciate and enjoy the remarkable beauty of this public resource. To achieve this goal, we will force the National Park Service to comply with all environmental laws.

Because of its geographic isolation, Santa Rosa Island is a unique and valuable endemic ecosystem. However, populations of plants and animals on the Island are smaller and less stable than those on the California

mainland, and are therefore more susceptible to disruption. Human interference causes substantial damage to the island's native flora and fauna through direct habitat destruction and the introduction of non-native plant and animal species. Santa Rosa Island also contains cultural and archaeological resources worth protecting, such as Chumash historic sites and prehistoric remains. These are the resources that make worth protecting as a national treasure and why the island was included in our National Park System. However, Park Service management of the Island's resources has been severely compromised by the commercial grazing and hunting operation.

Two years of working within the administrative (and political) process have proven ineffective at changing Park Service management direction. The National Park Service has put livestock production before protection and enhancement of the natural resources as evidenced by their recently-released Draft Resources Management Plan. As a result, native

plants continue to slide toward extinction, creeks and streams continue to be choked with sediments from soil erosion and fecal matter, and public access is restricted to not interfere with cattle grazing and commercial hunting. Obviously, the Park Service has chosen not to follow

through with their obligation to the public and consequently, Santa Rosa Island's environment is paying the consequences. The lawsuit looks to redirect Park Service management efforts by enforcing the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Park Service Organic Act, Natural Historic Preservation Act, and Channel Islands National Park Act.

Neil Levine, formerly a Staff Attorney for the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) in Santa

Barbara, now works for EarthLaw in Denver, Colorado.

For more information regarding Santa Rosa Island, contact EDC at (805) 963-1622, the National Parks Conservation Association at (510) 839-9922, or Range Watch at (805) 536-8668.

management of the island's native ecosystem and public access have taken a back seat to providing Vail & Vickers with an ideal setting to graze cattle and provide paying adventurers with trophy deer and Roosevelt elk to hunt

Alpine County business owners and residents outraged at Forest Service logging abuses

Residents of the small Alpine County communities of Woodfords and Hope Valley recently blasted the U.S. Forest Service for violating its commitment to provide a 100-foot no-logging buffer along the West Fork Carson River. "We've seen the Forest Service cut trees only two feet away from the Carson—it's a complete outrage" said Hope Valley resort owner Patty Brissenden.

The logging is being conducted as part of the Woodfords timber sale in the Toiyabe National Forest which was approved last year under the controversial "logging rider" (Public Law 104-19) which exempted the Woodfords timber sale and hundreds of other logging projects on public lands across the country from environmental law and citizen oversight. In effect, the rider gave the Forest Service carte blanche to log national forest lands.

Local residents fear that the logging along the riverbank will greatly increase erosion and possibly trigger landslides into the scenic and popular trout stream. They also contend that the logging violates the Forest Service's assurance to the public that the West Fork Carson River would be protected from logging on 100 feet of both sides of the streambank. While the Forest Service claims that the cutting is authorized because the trees pose a "hazard" to Highway 88 and a powerline paralleling the river, environmental activists and local residents contend that this loophole is being exploited to increase logging along the streambank. "We wrongly assumed that the Forest Service would use their common sense and not cut a mere

two feet from the river" said Ryan Henson of the CWC. This is yet another example of the Forest Service stretching a small loophole so wide that they can drive a hundred log trucks through it" added Henson.

Local residents and conservation groups are calling on the Forest Service to halt the Woodfords timber sale, and they have asked several members of Congress to intervene. "The Forest Service has already caused enough damage to both the river and to the public trust" said Brissenden, "It's time for them to stop."

In 1995, the CWC, the Wilderness Society, and Sorensen's Resort successfully stopped Forest Service plans to log ancient forest and the Raymond Peak Roadless Area in the same region. The Woodfords timber sale is a significantly scaled-back version of the earlier sale, with no old-growth or roadless areas involved. While the CWC



Merk Canyon, pictured here, was spared from logging, however the adjacent West Fork Carson River is now threatened. Photo by Ryan Henson.

and other groups were not happy with even the latest version of the timber sale, they were almost powerless to stop it given the rider's severe constraints.

Wilderness News

Loopholes for logging: Senator Craig and the timber industry's wish list

By Kevin Kirchner

Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) and the timber industry are at it again. They have unveiled a new bill that would override most existing safeguards that protect water quality, fish and wildlife, clean air, and recreational uses in national forests.

Of course, they do not come right out and admit it, but when you wade through the rhetoric about "responsibility," "accountability," and "predictable land management," you find that the actual language of this 100 page bill attempts to make logging the predominant use of national forests.

In the last Congress, they used similar tactics to get a bill enacted that they said would "streamline" the laws governing the so-called "salvage logging" of dead and burned trees in national forests. That bill became known as the "Clearcut Rider" or "Logging Without Laws" because timber corporations and government officials were allowed to ignore all environmental laws and disregard public comments or scientific oversight without fear that the courts or anyone else could hold them accountable for the results.

And the results were terrible: hundreds of timber sales and tens of thousands of acres were clearcut in areas that never should have been, and never could have been logged if Congress hadn't suspended the laws.

Senator Craig's new bill is more of the same. It is nothing short of a bald attempt to turn our national forests into tree farms by (1) severely weakening existing environmental safeguards, (2) undermining the system of checks and balances that hold government agencies and the timber industry accountable, (3) limiting public participation, and (4) making logging the dominant use of national forests. All this is done at the expense of water quality, fish and wildlife, and recreation.

That is why many call this bill the "Timber Industry Loopholes for Logging" (TILL) Act: it is a repeat of the 104th Congress when special interests were invited to rewrite the nation's health, safety, and environmental laws.

Congress should be closing loopholes, not creating new ones. Senator Craig and the industry obviously have other ideas. Here are a few examples of what they are proposing:

Logging mandates, no strings attached

The Craig/industry bill attempts to turn the entire management framework for national forests upside down. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) was adopted

in 1976 to establish standards and guidelines that would protect national forests from damage caused by excess logging, mining and grazing. Thus, the NFMA required the Forest Service to protect fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, while imposing strict limits on clearcutting and other activities that harm the forests. The Craig/industry bill reverses that approach by proposing to turn current environmental standards into unenforceable "policies" while at the same time making logging and other commodity "outputs" mandatory and enforceable.

Fine, just fine

The industry and Senator Craig want to give the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) the authority to impose up to \$10,000 fines whenever they decree that a timber sale appeal was filed for an as yet undefined "improper purpose." So much for encouraging public participation in government decision-making.

Silence in the courts

The bill attempts to set up a Catch-22 scheme guaranteeing that, once a forest plan is in place, all logging, road-building, mining, grazing, and other activities go forward with virtually no possibility of stopping them in court—no matter how destructive they might be. It tries to do so by:

- Prohibiting any legal challenges that are based on laws or safeguards that were in effect at the time a forest plan was adopted, including for example, the Clean Water Act;

- Requiring any challenges based on a new law or new information to be preceded by a petition to amend the plan, a process that could take from 90 days (if the petition is rejected) to two years (if it is accepted and a plan revision process ensues);

- Barring courts from stopping any on-the-ground activities while a plan amendment or revision process is underway—

no matter how much damage they may be causing.

- Allowing the agencies to proceed with any activities that would have been allowed under a prior forest plan, even if the current forest plan is declared illegal and even if the old forest plan was worse than the one declared illegal, and

- Requiring the agencies, when revising a forest plan, to maintain the same overall balance among forest uses that was contained in the plan being changed. In other words, if the original plan was being revised because new information showed the agency had been overcutting the forest to the detriment of fish, wildlife and recre-

ation, the Craig/industry bill would nonetheless force them to maintain the same balance between logging and those other resources that was in the original plan.

Watch your backroom deals

A section titled "Coordination with the Use Authorization Holders and Applicants" proposes allowing the Forest Service and BLM to meet in secret with representatives of the timber, mining and livestock industries to cut deals regarding timber contracts, mining permits, or grazing leases—or even the rules governing those activities. Such meetings were all too common in the past. In fact, a 1994 investigation by the U.S. Agriculture Department's Inspector General found that "as often as twice a year, and for many years, top Forest Service personnel have had private meetings with select industry representatives which have neither public notice nor public participation." The Inspector General concluded that the meetings "give the appearance of undue influence on Forest Service policy." The Craig/industry bill attempts to allow a legal return to the good old days of backroom deal making away from the public eye.

The fox and the chicken coop

A section titled "Wildlife Protection" would actually jeopardize fish and wildlife by attempting to eliminate one of the most important checks and balances on arbitrary or illegal government actions: the requirement that a government agency consult with independent scientists from the Fish and Wildlife Service of the National Marine Fisheries Service before taking actions that might lead to the extinction of a threatened or endangered species. Senator Craig and the timber industry want to let the Forest Service and the BLM just consult with themselves before taking such actions. They call it "self-consultation". Conservationists call it "self-serving" because the agencies' record of abuse of similar authority under the Clearcut Rider was abysmal: they repeatedly ignored the warnings and recommendations of state and federal fish, wildlife and water quality officials.

Love that dirty water

A section titled "Water Quality Protection" could put water quality at risk for tens of millions of Americans by letting the Forest Service and the BLM decide for themselves whether the timber industry's logging and road-building activities in national forests comply with key state and federal water quality protections. States could be cut out of the process for ensuring that important water quality safeguards are followed and that their rivers, lakes, and streams are not polluted by runoff from logging operations.

When smoke gets in your eyes

A section titled "Air Quality Protection" is similarly misnamed. It seeks to undermine efforts to reduce air pollution by allowing the Forest Service and the BLM to ignore state and federal clean air standards for setting fires, known as prescribed burns, in national forests. Once again, the States could be barred from ensuring that those activities do not cause smoke inversion over local communities that could harm their citizens.

Kevin Kirchner is Vice-President of Policy, Legislation and Communications for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

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Wilderness News

Forest legislation before Congress

Current and Proposed Forest Legislation before the 105th Congress

Each of the five bills below are floating around the halls of Congress. None of them have been introduced yet, but each will most likely be introduced at some point this session. The only two bills (one will be an amendment) that are likely to be voted on in the 105th Congress are the Craig bill and the Kennedy-Porter amendment. The other three have less chance of passing in the 105th Congress but nonetheless are useful organizing tools and may help to put the timber industry on the defensive.

The Kennedy-Porter Amendment

The amendment would eliminate \$50 million from the Forest Service roads budget each year. These are dollars appropriated for building new roads in National Forests for the use of timber companies who want to get the trees. Eliminating the roads budget would be very helpful in preventing the massive damage caused by forest roads, and by making it much more difficult to access trees—especially the old growth trees that grow in unroaded areas.

This amendment was introduced last session and lost on a tie vote, 211-211. It will most likely be introduced again in May or June (i.e. right after Earth Day) and proponents are working hard for a victory. With the additional organizing activists been doing and the ten new Democratic members in the House, there should be a good chance of pushing the amendment through.

The Act to Save America's Forests

This bill was introduced last session by Rep. John Bryant (D-TX). It garnered 43 co-sponsors (including Dellums, Lantos, Eshoo, Stark, and Woolsey from the Bay Area) but never made it to the House floor. It is not likely to come to a vote this session, but the list of co-sponsors is growing. It may be introduced by Rep. John Porter (R-IL), a powerful House Republican.

The bill would ban clearcutting, end logging of old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest, prohibit logging of roadless areas, and designate over 60 "special areas" (old growth forests, critical wildlife habitat, etc.) throughout the United States.

The Zero Cut Bill

This bill would end commercial logging in all national forests. This bill has not yet been introduced. Proponents have been gathering co-sponsors and had 26 in the House as of late November. It is unclear whether it will be introduced in the 105th Congress. Like the Act to Save America's Forests, it is not likely to pass any time soon, but is a great organizing tool and will help to shift the debate over how best to manage our national forests.

The Sequoia Bill

This is another bill that has been around for a while. It was introduced in the 103rd and 104th Congresses. In the 103rd it had over 60 co-sponsors. After the Republican takeover of the 104th, the number of cosponsors dropped to less than 30. (Activists were too busy defending the forests to put energy into gathering cosponsors.) The bill would permanently protect a number of southern Sierran roadless areas and would end logging in giant sequoia groves.

There are a number of other bills that could be voted on in the 105th. These include a Clinton Administration proposal to create a new Forest Service slush fund to carry out "watershed improvement" projects (i.e. logging). This will most likely be voted on some time around May. There is also a proposal being put forth by the Quincy Library Group, a collaborative group of timber industry representatives and environmentalists that is working to develop consensus forestry methods on the Lassen and Plumas national forests. The bill is likely to come up for a vote this year. In its current form, it is opposed by many environmental organizations around the state.

Finally, the Western Ancient Forest Campaign is coordinating a Citizen's Forest Appropriations Initiative for the 1998 federal budget. It will include elements such as eliminating the Forest Service roads budget, eliminating steep-slope logging (which has been linked to numerous destructive—and deadly—mudslides recently), getting rid of Forest Service slush funds, and increasing funding for prescribed fire. The campaign to forward this agenda is in full swing and we could see some votes by May or June

—Western Ancient Forest Campaign



As was mentioned in the February 1997 *Wilderness Record*, the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) is the California contact office for The Wildlands Project (TWP). TWP is a non-profit organization that works for the ecological and biological restoration of North America's ecosystems through the establishment of a connected systems of reserves. CWC is currently working to coordinate TWP related mapping efforts in the state. Although our long-term plan is to hold a series of meetings in each of the bioregions around the state, our first step was to take an inventory of the work of established groups who are proceeding with reserve design in their bioregions.

California can be divided into at least nine large bioregions, depending upon the criteria used to make the classifications. Within these large bioregions are a multitude of geologic and floral provinces, watersheds, habitat types, and ranges. Within these broad classifications, which may sound cold to some ears, are the places that humans and other animals call home, as well as the trees and plants that define those regions. Reserve design optimally begins on the local level, since it is most effective if informed by the kinds of knowledge and love that local people have for their places. In a state as large and ecologically diverse as California, one of the greatest challenges facing TWP is the integration of locally based, on-the-ground knowledge with the scientific rigor necessary to ensure sound reserve design.

There are currently two groups in California that have begun integrating these two aspects: LEGACY, based on the North Coast, and the Conception Coast Biodiversity Project in Santa Barbara. Both of these groups are using GIS (geographic information systems) and local information to compile data for mapping regional reserves. They are sharing information and ideas that will be helpful to other groups as more become established.

Another group based in the Santa Cruz area called the Ventana Wildlands Group (VWG), has been very active in projects in and around the Ventana Wilderness in the northern Los Padres National Forest. Recent efforts have focused on the road that currently bisects the Ventana Wilderness. Part of this road was closed by landslides following a winter storm in 1995. VWG has been pressuring the Forest Service to close this road permanently, thereby reconnecting the now divided Ventana Wilderness.

In addition to these three groups, there is active interest in Northern Santa Cruz, and in the southern Sierra. We will be holding preliminary meetings in these two regions within the next two months. Following these, there will be meetings in the remaining bioregions.

In other TWP mapping news, CWC continues to expand its GIS database. We have been able to take advantage of the availability of free GIS data on the Internet, and are still in the process of building and developing our GIS program.

We are also putting together a California TWP newsletter, which will serve as a connection between regional groups and a source of information. It will be out in the spring.

If you would like more specific information on any of the above projects, or to learn more about how you can become involved in your region, please contact Kathy Brennan at (916) 758-0380.

Wilderness and the economy

Perspectives

Wilderness and jobs: a healthy union

By George Wuerthner

One of the cherished myths repeated throughout the West by folk economists is the notion that protecting landscapes from development comes at an economic cost to regional and state economies. The common perception goes something like this: protected landscapes reduce resource extraction, hence lead to impoverished human societies. Few question this common "wisdom."

California is a public lands state—like most in the West. Although a few states have greater public holdings, California still has a significant amount of its land area controlled by the federal government. Nearly 50 percent of the state is managed by federal land management agencies, while the state controls another 5 percent of the land base.

What is even more surprising to many is the fact that California, despite having the greatest population of any state, also has more of its land area protected as national parks, wilderness areas, and state parks than any other state outside of Alaska.

The umbrella of wilderness protection, both state and federal, covers nearly 15 million acres of California (Wyoming by comparison has a little over three million acres of designated wilderness). Indeed, California has as much designated wilderness as the combined totals of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Utah, Montana, and Wyoming!

Another four to five million acres are currently under study for potential addition to the federal wilderness system, and thus not available for resource extraction. When all is said and done as much as 20 percent of California's entire land area is effectively off limits to any kind of resource extraction.

With so much designated wilderness in the state, according to popular wisdom, California ought to be impoverished. If we are to believe the folklore of the West's extractive industries and their lackeys in Congress, Californians should be at the bottom of the economic ladder, barely able to make ends meet. But the reality is quite different.

California has one of the largest, most diverse and productive economies in the world. Indeed, the Gross Annual Product of California is said to be greater than all but eight countries in the world. It has one of the best, if not the best, public university systems in the country.

Despite all its problems, it is still the state of choice for more Americans than any other, with the greatest number of new residents annually of any state. People flock to California because it still has plentiful jobs and a perceived high quality of life, at least in many parts of the state. If poverty is what you get as a result of public lands and wilderness, many people in California aren't getting the message.

Maine, by contrast, could be the Wise Use movement's poster child. Maine has almost no public land. Less than 1 percent of its land area is in public ownership—less than any other state! Those who suggest public ownership is a hindrance to resource extraction probably love the fact that more than 85 percent of Maine is used for commercial timber production. Maine is a classic example of a resource economy and the wonders of private lands. Though one of the largest eastern states, Maine has less than 9,000 acres protected as federal wilderness. Even tiny New Jersey has more designated wildlands than Maine.

According to some economists Maine is a textbook example of the wonders of private lands ownership and a resource extraction economy. Indeed, with no public lands, much less wilderness designation to hinder resource extraction, Mainers should be among the wealthiest people in the world.

So how does Maine's economy compare to California? Well, by most measures of wealth and well-being, Maine comes in close to last. Mainers have one of the lowest per capita incomes in the nation. The state has one of the lowest percentages of high school students who go on to college in the country. And though there is some wealth along the coast, most of the logging dependent communities are anything but wealthy, indeed they are among the poorest in the state.

With all those private lands in the tax base, one would expect Maine to have an abundance of excellent schools and other infrastructure, yet Maine's university system is considered near the bottom of the barrel. Other public services are equally as impoverished. And unlike California, people aren't flocking to Maine. Overall Maine's population is stagnant, with many people forced to leave the state to find employment.

These two states actually confirm quite well what many economists have been saying for a while: namely protecting landscapes and preserving a large amount of the land base as public lands holdings, rather than impoverishing a state or region, is a positive economic influence.

Whether the precise cause and effect I've outlined here exists may be debated, but one thing appears to be clear: the less logging, grazing, and other resource extraction dominates the economy, the better off that community and state will likely be.

Certainly this trend has been documented in states like Oregon and Washington where the importance of the timber industry has declined dramatically, all the while these states have enjoyed unprecedented economic prosperity and jobs creation.

This is not to deny that most economic growth has many associated environmental and social costs. That's another issue that should be part of any debate. However, the California versus Maine comparison demonstrates that even using the Wise Use movement's own definition of what constitutes "good" economic growth—the idea that preservation of natural landscapes results in economic decay and poverty—doesn't appear to have merit.

If California is an example of how protected landscapes impoverish a state, then the rest of the West could stand a little more of the kind of "impoverishment" that comes with more wilderness, and less of the "wealth" that results from resource extraction.

George Wuerthner, an activist in Oregon, has written books and articles on California and Maine.

Spotted owl not responsible for logger woes, study concludes

A paper released in February shows that, despite popular belief, protections for northern spotted owls have not eliminated timber industry jobs.

The paper, titled *Forty Years of Spotted Owls? A Longitudinal Analysis of Logging-Industry Job Losses*, analyzed the relation between environmental protections and job losses in the timber industry. The authors analyzed long term trends in timber industry employment and found no evidence of job loss due to spotted owl protections.

"If logging jobs have indeed been endangered by efforts to protect the environment in general and spotted owl habitat in particular, what is needed is a plausible explanation of how the influence of the owls could have begun some forty years before the species came under the protection of the Endangered Species Act," reads the abstract.

The paper concludes that, "Despite the strength of the conviction that the 'endangered logger' of the Pacific

Northwest has been suffering because of the needs of small owls, rather than the tree-cutting and cost-cutting practices of large corporations, the common belief is remarkably devoid of empirical support. There is simply no quantitative evidence of any statistically credible increase in job losses associated with the federal listing of the northern spotted owl as a threatened species"

Interestingly, the study also finds that the greatest decline in timber jobs occurred before the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The period between 1947 and 1964, before most key environmental laws and a time of economic prosperity, experienced the sharpest drop in logging employment.

The paper was presented by William Freudenberg, Lisa Wilson, and Daniel O'Leary of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. It will be published in an upcoming issue of *Sociological Perspectives*. The paper was presented February 14 at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences.



The northern spotted owl.
Photo by Dan Brown, Naturestoc Photos

Wilderness Forum

Letters

Yosemite washed clean

In 1975 I filled out a document so unwieldy it would have daunted any lawyer: citizens' input to the so-called "Yosemite Master Plan". Yet twenty years later I noticed that little had changed on the Valley floor. It was still unliveable place, full of the noise of speeding traffic, the stench of exhaust and the suffocating smoke of a thousand campfires, the very scourges people got there to escape.

Until recently, suddenly, in the space of 48 hours, the Merced River accomplished what two decades of bureaucracy could not: Yosemite Valley was swept clean.

Here is a cause for celebration, for we now stand on the threshold of a great opportunity. We choose now between a silent valley of glistening rock and fragrant pine groves; or a valley of tawdry shacks and shabby tept-cabin slums. We can again become the duped victims of the Yosemite Concession Services Corporation's insatiable greed; or we can tell the Park Service to honor the intelligence of the Merced River by keeping Yosemite Valley pristine.

There is much to be learned from rivers.

Bob DeNike
Sunnyvale

Desolation Wilderness plan

continued from page 1

- Quota dates: from the current mid-June through Labor Day, to April through October.

- Quota numbers: overnight use from 793 persons per day, to 264 persons per day. Day use from no quota to 104 permits per day.

- Commercial outfitter guides: From allowing 3 equestrian outfitters, five camps, and 2 day hike guides, to allowing 2 equestrian guides (for drop camps and day use only).

- Aircraft overflights: From no recommendation to the Federal Aviation Administration, to asking for a 4,000-foot mandatory minimum altitude over Desolation.

- Dogs: From recommending that dogs be under voice control, to requiring dogs to be on leash, to banning dogs.

- Trails: From expanding the trail system, to removing all but major trails.

- Signing: From additional signing at trail intersections, to eliminating all signs from the wilderness.

In all, the draft EIS is a very complex document that

adequately reviews the topics that were not eliminated from consideration. What remains to be seen is what the Forest Service plans to do. Perhaps they really do want to hear from the public before making their recommendations.

What you can do:

Since the six alternatives have such a plethora of options, the California Wilderness Coalition recommends that you state your views on the specific topics above. The most protective plan is Alternative 6, but this alternative may have elements on human use that you may find too restrictive.

Despite being removed from consideration, it always is useful to let the Forest Service know they should end commercial grazing and fish stocking in the wilderness.

Comments must be received by April 4, 1997. Send your views to:

Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines
Eldorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667

Desolation Wilderness entry fees: no charge to day users

Exclusive of the wilderness plan being circulated for public comment, the Forest Service is proceeding with plans to charge entry fees for the Desolation Wilderness. However, public opposition has forced the agency to drop plans to charge day users.

Currently, the agency plans to charge \$5 per person for an overnight stay, \$10.00 for two or more nights, and a separate \$5.00 reservation fee. Regular users could buy a \$30.00 annual pass, and a large party would not have to pay more than \$100 for a single permit.

Rather than charge day users a fee, the Forest Service will ask for voluntary donations. The agency had proposed a \$3.00 per person fee, but strong opposition killed the proposal.

Ranchers grazing cattle in the area will continue to be charged \$1.52 per month for each cow with a calf.

Adopt-a-Wilderness program update: new activists are coming out of the woods

The California Wilderness Coalition's Adopt-a-Wilderness program is starting to yield fruit in the form of new public lands activists.

Since its inception in late 1996, the Adopt-a-Wilderness program has already helped recruit and train dozens of new public lands activists. Keeping these activists interested and involved requires constant attention.

Our proudest achievements have occurred in 1997. For example, we are working hard to spark a new wave of activism in the Tahoe National Forest which, despite its popularity, is currently very poorly defended. Working closely with forest activism guru Tom Infusino of Friends

Aware of Wildlife Needs (FAWN), we have hosted three meetings and training sessions thus far (attended by 36 local citizens) designed to inspire people to monitor and defend the national forest lands of the Tahoe bioregion. Recently, the activists decided to form the "Forest Issues Group" (FIG) which will adopt the Tahoe. For the first time in almost four years, the Tahoe National Forest now has a dedicated cadre of friends willing to protect it. This is a major achievement.

The Lassen National Forest is in the same neglected state as the Tahoe and is therefore the next target of our organizing efforts. We have travelled to Chico several times in February to try to organize a new forest group. At

Calendar

March 7-8: Chico State Environmental Conference. Topics include forest and watershed protection and pollution. Call Jessica Rios at (916) 898-6701.

March 10: Adopt-a-Wilderness training session. Rico's Pizza in Chico. Call Ryan Henson at (916) 758-0380 for more information.

March 21-23: Sequoia Bioregional Meeting. Kern River Research Center. For those interested in protecting the Sequoia National Forest and surrounding wildlands. For more information contact Joe Fontaine at (805) 821-2055.

April 11-13: International Forum on Globalization. Will highlight the social, ecological, cultural and political aspects of economic globalization. At U.C. Berkeley campus. Contact Victor Menotti at (415) 771-3394 for more information.

April 25-27: Kern Valley Bioregions Festival. A celebration of the biodiversity of the Kern Valley, the festival offers a host of birding and natural history field trips. The trips are kept small to better appreciate the rich variety of species found in the valley (185 species of birds were recorded at last year's festival alone). For more information, contact the Kernville Chamber of Commerce at (619) 376-2629.

Wilderness Trivia Answer

Computerized mapping technology now more accurately measures the acreage.

our last meeting at the CSUC campus, 25 people showed up. We have a follow-up training session scheduled for March. Repeating our Tahoe success in the Lassen National Forest is critical given that the Lassen cuts more trees than any other national forest in California.

We have also urged potential activists to adopt public wild lands at several conferences, classes, and meetings since January at the U.C. Davis, Humboldt State, Sacramento State, and U.C. Berkeley campuses, the Headwaters Forest Conference in Ashland (lots of Californians attended), and four Sierra Club local chapter meetings. Through these meetings over 200 people have received information about the Adopt-a-Wilderness program.

Future plans include field training sessions, public land "show me" tours where people can see public lands management at its best—and worst, and more recruitment sessions around the state to win friends for other neglected areas of public land. Please call Ryan Henson at the CWC for more details on the Adopt-a-Wilderness program.

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
 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
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 Sustainability; Leggett
 Northcoast Environmental Center; Arcata

People for Nipomo Dunes Nat'l. Seashore;
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 The Wilderness Land Trust; Carbondale, CO
 The Wilderness Society; San Francisco
 Wintu Audubon Society; Redding
 Yolo Group, Sierra Club; Davis
 Yolo Environmental Resource Center; Davis

**"My expectaion is that everything we do...
 will not compromise the health of the land. I
 want to make it clear that no Forest Service
 program has dominance over another.
 Timber is not more important than wildlife
 or fisheries."**

— Forest Service Chief Michael
 Dombeck, from his first message to
 his employees.

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