



WILDERNESS RECORD

Proceedings of the California Wilderness Coalition

August 1997

Doolittle will take any dam he can get: Bill mandating the maintenance of dams in the Emigrant passes Congress

By Steve Brougher

Having been rebuffed in his attempt to build the Auburn Dam, Congressman John Doolittle (R-CA) has turned his obsession for dams towards a more vulnerable opponent—the Emigrant Wilderness. The Emigrant Wilderness is located in the Stanislaus National Forest in the central Sierra Nevada and contains eighteen small rock & mortar dams that local “wise-use” advocates demand be maintained. They have found a sympathetic ear with Congressman Doolittle and, consistent with his philosophical opposition to wilderness preservation, he has introduced legislation (H.R. 1663) that would require the Forest Service to “enter into an agreement with a non-federal entity ... to retain, maintain and operate at private expense” the dams.

The dams were built between 1920 and 1951 primarily to enhance production of non-native trout by raising natural lake levels three to ten feet (one is 25 feet high, creating a totally artificial lake) and regulating stream flows (three were built at meadows to improve livestock forage). Congress recognized their existence during the legislative process leading up to designation of the Emigrant as wilderness in 1975. A 1974 House committee report mentioned a Forest Service proposal that the dams would be “retained” (ie. not removed), but made no provision in the establishing legislation for continued operation and maintenance. Lacking such provision the Emigrant Wilderness is to be administered in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In early 1990, the California Wilderness Coalition appealed a Forest Service decision to maintain twelve of the dams. The Coalition won the appeal when Deputy Regional Forester Joyce Muraoka agreed with CWC in an eight page letter stating that not only should the dams not be maintained, they should be removed within five years. A flurry of local protests, especially from the Stanislaus National Forest, led to a bizarre about-face from Muraoka two weeks later, saying her earlier decision letter “miscommunicated my original intent.” Her decision was thus reversed. About this time, the Central Sierra Chapter of Wilderness Watch was formed and with CWC began monitoring the Emigrant Wilderness.

The purpose of the Wilderness Act was to assure that expanding civilization did not “...occupy and modify all



Y-Meadow Dam in the Emigrant Wilderness. This dam is 25 feet high and creates a totally artificial lake. Later, as the lake is drawn down mudflats and a bathtub ring become evident. Photo by Steve Brougher.

areas within the United States...leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition...” Wilderness is an area that retains its “...primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation...protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions... [and is] ...affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable...” The uses of wilderness shall be administered so as to preserve the wilderness character and “...except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act...there shall be no structure or installation within any such area.” Thus, the only basis for maintaining these dams is a determination that they are necessary to preserve wilderness character.

Proponents of the dams argue that they are necessary

because of their recreation and fishery values, but such claims have no merit. A study of the dams by the Stanislaus National Forest clearly shows that the dams provide little or no benefit to fisheries or recreation. Only fifteen of the more than 100 lakes in the Emigrant have a dam and all but one of these are on natural lakes that would continue

continued on page 7

In this issue:

The QLG compromise.....3

**Book Review:
Real Matter.....4**

Klamath Basin refuges.....6

Lost Coast alert.....6

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...to promote throughout the State of California the preservation of wild lands as legally designated wilderness areas by carrying on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest, by making and encouraging scientific studies concerning wilderness, and by enlisting public interest and cooperation in protecting existing or potential wilderness areas.

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Coalition News

Monthly Report

The last few months have been a difficult time at the California Wilderness Coalition. We have had to try to keep the Coalition going while dealing with the loss of founder/guru, Executive Director, and wilderness expert Jim Eaton and searching for his replacement. Jim was around for a while to help with the transition but is now off in Canada.

During this transition, I recalled the recent history of the Coalition. When I came on the Board of Directors in 1988, the Coalition had a full-time executive director, Jim Eaton, a part-time *Wilderness Record* editor, and a part-time membership coordinator. Today, we have a full-time Executive Director, a full-time Conservation Associate, Ryan Henson, a full-time Membership/Wildlands Project Coordinator, Kathy Brennan, and a part-time *Wilderness Record* editor, Herb Walker. This growth has been accomplished without a significant growth in our membership base by a series of foundation grants funding various wilderness related projects. While foundation funding has enabled us to grow and to accomplish more, it is not necessarily the steady source of income that is needed to fund continuing Coalition expenses. One of our challenges in the future will be to grow our membership base. Sign up your friends and neighbors (see application on page 8). We will, of course, also continue to seek foundation funding so that we may continue to fund projects such as the Wildlands Project and the Adopt-a-Wilderness Program.

The California Wilderness Coalition has a vital role to play in protecting roadless wilderness areas, whether officially designed or not, and in increasing protection by having worthy areas officially designed as wilderness. We are the only statewide organization dealing solely with California wilderness issues. We provide the *Wilderness*

Record, the best and only way to keep up with all wilderness news in California; we maintain a relationship with federal agencies managing wilderness, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management; we provide a lobbying presence on wilderness issues with state and federal agencies and legislative bodies; we coordinate the efforts of other California environmental organizations on wilderness issues; and we provide our members with information on where their letters and comments are needed and can have an effect through the *Record* and our Wilderness Alerts. No other organization fulfills all of these roles.

The Coalition can look back on past successes, the California Desert Protection Act, the California Wilderness Act of 1984, two statewide wilderness conferences, and many other legislative and administrative victories. However, we are looking forward too and defining our future goals. They probably will include an eventual statewide wilderness bill encompassing both BLM and Forest Service areas, increased protection for our threatened old-growth forests, and statewide wildlands identification and protection.

During the transition period, the Board of Directors has had to increase its role in managing the Coalition. I would especially like to thank Sally Miller, Steve Evans, Nobby Reidy, Mary Scoonover, Trent Orr, Frannie Hoover, Ron Stork, and Wendy Cohen who have all contributed to this effort. It is through the efforts of these dedicated volunteers, the staff and many other Coalition members that the Coalition will continue to protect California wilderness.

By Alan Carlton

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A flatbed scanner, compatible with the Macintosh operating system, to replace the one that we no longer have. Call (916) 758-0380 for details. Thank you.

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Position Available

Executive Director

The California Wilderness Coalition seeks a motivated individual with proven experience in conservation, fundraising, staff management, and administration.

Terms: Full-time, salary \$30,000 per year. Mail cover letter, resume with professional references, and a writing sample to:

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Resumes accepted until position is filled.

National Forest Management

The Quincy Library Group bill: A consensus process gone awry yields lopsided results

By Wendell Wood

After more than a century of bitter contention between economic interests and conservation proponents, a sincere effort to accommodate the goals of both sides would of course be welcomed by everyone. H.R. 858, The "Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act of 1997", is being championed by many for finally bringing opposing viewpoints on national forest management together in a constructive way.

The Quincy Library Group (QLG) bill unfortunately does not succeed in its goal of achieving a "win-win" solution for the competing interests in national forest management.

Nevertheless, H.R. 858 passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming margin (429 to 1) on July 9.

Again, a balanced consensus would be welcomed. The Quincy Library Group has been portrayed as a balanced arena for resolution of public lands management issues, as if lined up on one side of the room were environmentalists and, on the other, economic interests. Actually the bean counter side of the room is ostensibly more crowded than the green one.

Perhaps this accounts for the popularity of the QLG bill with such rock hard anti-environment legislators as Representatives Helen Chenoweth (R-ID), Don Young (R-AK), Richard Pombo (R-CA), and Wally Herger (R-CA), the bill's sponsor.

With the vast majority of trees to be felled under this proposal being bought by one company, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), it's not surprising that SPI was a major player in the negotiations that created the bill. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that implementing the QLG bill will cost an extra \$88 million over the next five years.

When looking at the Plumas National Forest, one could easily be impressed with the extent of forest cover that from the distance appears to be thriving, green and intact.

With a more discerning inspection, we realize that this view is oddly one-dimensional. This is an even-aged forest, like crop in the making, or a second or third hay cutting being readied for market. Fortunately, a pitiful single digit percentage of our ancient forests has been preserved by conservationists. Otherwise we would not be able to recognize the contrast so apparent here.

Closer, "on the ground" inspection reveals more. Travel across Spanish Creek to those mountainsides viewed from the log landing: over eroded logging roads, over washed out culverts at creek crossings, and past those stump-riddled clearcuts bordered by thickets of firs, sprouting through the logging slash piled on the forest floor. Hurried along by our passage are beef cattle aiming toward some soupy, trampled spring where forage is available throughout hot, dry Sierran summers.

Definitely, this degradation cannot be blamed on conflict, the pitched battles between conservationists and economic interests. Conflict has not been a detriment to forest health nor an impediment to forest recovery. A commodity extraction priority has.

Now we have H.R. 858 based on the QLG proposal. Companion legislation has been written by Senator Dianne Feinstein in the Senate.

With the QLG proposal, local "on the ground" management is the central theme. Threat of "catastrophic" wild fire addressed by commercially thinned fuel breaks is the priority, and concern for forest health must acknowledge impacts to the stability of local economies. Watersheds are a consideration: a few predetermined areas are identified as "off limits" to logging.

The bill would implement the QLG plan with a five year pilot project conducted on the Plumas and Lassen national forests, as well as the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest. Commercial logging will be used to create "defensible" fuel breaks and funding will come from the Forest Service budget.

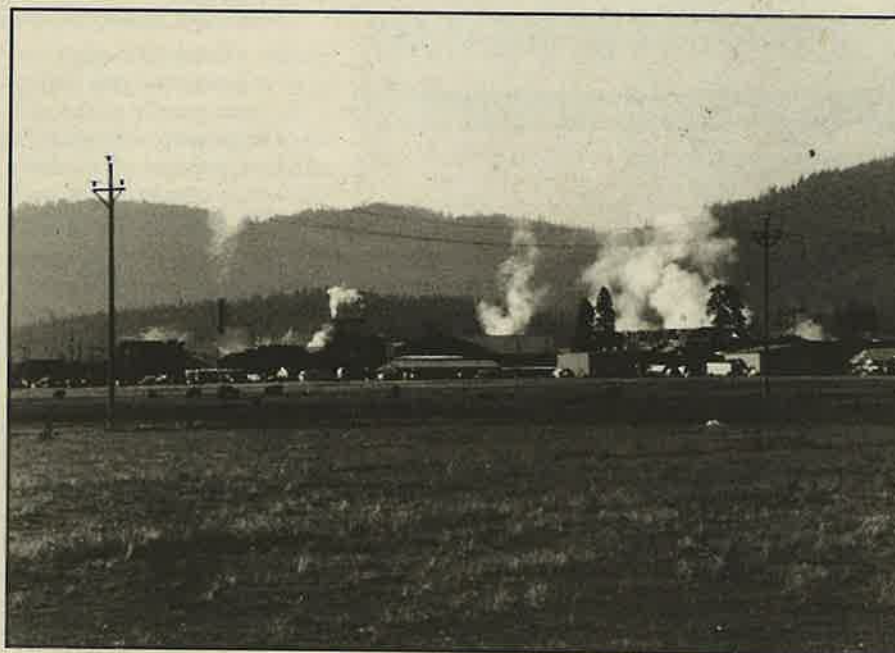
If the QLG bill becomes law, a logging priority will be perpetuated on our national forests. At the expense of future Americans, the single issue of wildfire will dominate budgetary attention while other problems are neglected. A bad precedent will be set when federal public land management

decisions are ceded to local interests—excluding participation by all other Americans. Finally, the demonstrated effectiveness of federal environmental safeguards, as well as national advocacy, will be diminished.

As always, the U.S. Forest Service waits for its orders. The new Chief of the Forest Service, Michael Dombeck, maintains that forest health is the first priority, He acknowledges that major federal environmental laws are supported by "mainstream America" while an overwhelming majority of Americans deplore logging as the first priority on their national forests. He also admits that solutions for forest health problems are "investments in the land" and will require long term, costly commitments. He seems open to change. One hopes that any change would include abandoning the logging supremacy.

Where the bill stands now

The overwhelmingly large margin by which the bill past the House in July has changed the political climate tremendously for Senator Feinstein's companion bill in the Senate. Before the House vote, Senator Feinstein had been willing to negotiate changes to her bill and Senator Boxer opposed the legislation. With the positive changes made to the House bill by pro-environment Representative George Miller (and the ensuing vote), Senator Feinstein abruptly ended discussions of substantive changes to her bill and Senator Boxer announced her intention to co-sponsor the legislation.



The Sierra Pacific Industries mill in Quincy. The company stands to reap huge gains with the passage of the QLG bill, since most affected timber sales would be bought by them. Photo by Delbert Williams.

At a Senate hearing in July environmentalists raised numerous issues regarding the proposed legislation, including concerns that the bill would:

- Double logging on two and a quarter Sierran national forests;
- Fail to comply with environmental laws including the National Environmental Policy Act and National Forest Management Act;
- Draw precious funds away from other forest programs, including recreation and wildlife;
- Exclude interested citizens from decisions concerning the management of their public land;
- Be carried out with minimal scientific or environmental monitoring.

Environmentalists will continue to encourage Senators Boxer and Feinstein to address these concerns.

What you can do:

Please write to Senators Boxer and Feinstein and urge them to withhold their support for S. 1028 until the following changes are made:

- The pilot logging project is significantly narrowed in scope and duration. Three hundred and fifty thousand acres of logging over five years is far too much for such an experimental project.
- The minimum logging levels are removed from the bill. Mandating logging levels is in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.
- Language is added preventing the Forest Service from taking funds from other logging programs to carry out the higher logging levels mandated by the bill.
- Independent scientific monitoring takes place and the results guide the logging project's future.

Write to:

Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

Delbert Williams is an activist from Quincy.

Book Review

Real Matter looks for the "secret at

Real Matter, by David Robertson, University of Utah Press, 180 pp.

"The closer you get to real matter, rock air fire wood, boy, the more spiritual the world is"

Real Matter, a new book by David Robertson, is an interesting and challenging journey through a range of ideas which are relevant for any traveller who has spent time in the backcountry. The title is taken from a line in Jack Kerouac's *Dharma Bums*, which hints at what for many lovers of the wild is a sound truth: "the closer you get to real matter, rock air fire wood, boy, the more spiritual the world is."

David Robertson is a professor at the University of California at Davis, where he teaches in the English Department, the Program in Nature and Culture, and the Graduate Group in Ecology. He is also actively involved

in bioregional studies in the Putah and Cache Creek watersheds, as well as in the Yuba River watershed in the northern Sierra Nevada.

There is no one place to begin reviewing this book, as it reads like the trails it follows. Although it is linear conceptually in that it follows a path from start to end, there are places where it is wide, and more narrow, there are patches of shadows, blind curves, and even some steep climbs for the reader. It is a walk in the wild, not in the park. Yet it is quite accessible, and utterly human.

In the book, Robertson travels trails which have been walked in the past by writers who recorded their journeys. He weaves their observations with his own, and with his observations on their writings. This proves rather engaging for several reasons. His choice of writers, which includes Clarence King, Mary Austin, and Jack Kerouac among others, creates an historical context which complements the topographic context of the land. Journal entries are mingled with commentary, including photographs which are complex and intriguing for their subject and the surprises they hold.

The photographs are as compelling as the text, and speak to the themes which run throughout this book. Robertson, who took all the photographs in the book, juxtaposes humans and human-made objects with various landscapes, and successfully creates visual metaphors.

Real Matter raises questions which surely have occurred to most wilderness travellers who travel in the wild, but live permanently in cities. One of the most compelling is how to integrate wilderness travel with city life so that it does not feel like an escape, but rather a means to an end of completion and wholeness. Robertson points out that there are serious problems with the notion that "city self" and "wild self" are separate entities, and that the resolution lies in the fact that ultimately going out will be followed by coming back.

Intrigued by many of the subjects and ideas in this book, I arranged an interview to hear firsthand the author's answers to some questions *Real Matter* piqued.

Kathy Brennan

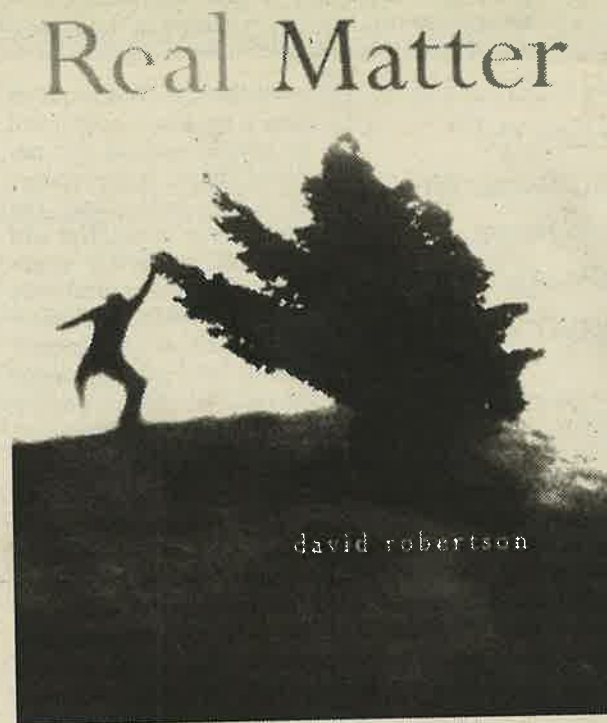
KB: By way of introduction will you describe where the idea for the book came from and briefly what it's about?

DR: Like a lot of ideas for books it didn't have a simple origin. It gradually dawned on me in the late 1980s that I might be able to do a series of articles in which I would re-do hikes that famous literary people had taken. I would keep my own journals and take creative photographs and I might be able to interweave these things. And I did that a couple of more times and it seemed to work and I got them published separately as articles. Then about four years ago a grad student of mine, Sean O'Grady, and my wife Jeanette began to say "look you have a book here", and I kept saying "I don't think so, it's just a collection of hikes". They pushed and I thought "Well, OK I'll try it" and the more I worked on it the more it seemed in fact there was a book there. What is exciting to me about this book from my own point of view is that four things are combined in each chapter if the book that generally don't get combined. One is literary history in the sense that I'm trying to recreate events that later get written up in literature. The second thing is literary criticism, that is by which I mean trying to make sense of literary works. The third thing is my own experience in writing and the fourth thing is my own experience in photography. When all these four things get put together, what I'd like to have happen is that the book works as a kind of art piece itself, not just simply in the genre of books that talk about literature, it's some other strange thing that combines these four different elements— hopefully in a creative way.

KB: How do you perceive the relationship between literature, art, wilderness and conservation?

DR: You can tell from the book that one of the hallmarks of my writing is to every time somebody suggests something is separate from something else to call that into question. That doesn't mean we don't need the differences, but it seems to me that oftentimes creative things happen when you try to bridge gaps as opposed to separating things even farther. Notice how many people who are involved in conservation in some way write or do creative things. Ansel Adams was a photographer. Edward Abbey, Gary Nabhan, Barry Lopez, Rick Bass, we could go down the list. In these peoples minds, and their lives and their works there doesn't seem actually to be the kind of separation that we ordinarily impose. That is, somehow or other their art is conservation work, and somehow conservation work is their art. You can certainly separate them out, but I think the way people live their lives suggests these things get tangled up in strange

and creative ways. Now having said that, its also true there are people who are very active in the conservation movement in the sense they are actively involved in politics, and for the most part that's not where I put my energy. I can make excuses for that and say well, I'm



doing something else and it's also important for the whole conservation movement, and I think that's true, although at the same time I always wish I had more hands-on experience at the kind of level, for example that you or Jim Eaton have. These things exist in my mind as some sort of creative tension, and one of the ways I'm personally trying to solve this tension is in the bioregion work that I'm engaged in now where I think the two things are in some kind of balance. I think the testimony is overwhelming: if you talk to people that who have gotten into the conservation movement, an extraordinary high number have gotten in there because of pictures they've seen or books they've read. So, I look upon a book like *Real Matter* as conservation work. It is not, to be sure "precinct politics".

KB: This book weaves literature, wilderness and your personal experience. To what extent does literature shape your experience of wilderness trips? Is it always there?

DR: Yes, although not necessarily consciously. That is I don't know how conscious of it I am when I'm actually out there. Probably not most of the time, unless I take up my pen to write or take up my camera to photograph. I'm a teacher at a university and I consider one of the essential parts of my job is to do my part to see that the college-age people of California know something about the past, that is know something about the context in which they act in the present. I've been impressed for a very long time how ahistorical Americans are. By and large Americans seem to go about tearing down their history in urban renewal projects and the like at, what is for me, an alarming rate. It seems to me to enrich your whole experience if you know who's been there before you, what's happened to them, what they thought about, what they did out there. Then you have something to compare yourself with and also you have—especially if you want to write or photograph—a notion of how you might use what people have done before you got there.

KB: That's interesting. It seems that many people take wilderness trips to "get away" and pretend they're the first people, or only people, who've been there.

DR: I'm not particularly opposed to that and I think that a lot of this comes out of the fact that I'm a teacher and I'm used to considering the present in light of the past. It's not as if I deliberately sat down and said I'm going to hike and carry along my ancestors with me and try to gain some insight into what they were up to and into myself by, as it were, carrying them along. The dangers in my answers to all of your questions is that in fact that it's going to make this seem as if it's more self-conscious and deliberate than any of it was.

KB: In the book you refer to landscape in a way that it sets a context for a person's identity, placing yourself in relation to the cosmos. It seems that history also provides context, in a sense.

DR: I'm a kind of astronomy buff. I don't do any astronomy. I read avidly reports about the nature of the universe. The single most interesting thing perhaps about astronomy is that as you look up into the stars you are literally looking into the past. I think in that sense I am historically oriented and find it difficult to make sense out of the present without constantly making reference to the past.

KB: The physicality of wilderness is definitely a theme through-

the heart of the universe"

out this book—Hershey bars and blisters—and you admit that sometimes these hikes were physically challenging. This is a marked contrast from romanticized wilderness writing. So, is the Real Matter the physical experience, the human part of the experience?

DR: The very premise of the book: the closer you get to real matter, the more spiritual the world is, is that we separate the physical, the psychological, and the spiritual when we talk about them, but in fact they're not separate and we don't experience them as separate. I very much wanted people to get a feeling for what it's like physically to be out there because it's out of that that good things psychological and spiritual come. This book advocates doing: when in doubt *do*, then let things follow from there, but don't try too hard to get in with mental or even creative stuff too fast. There is another side to this in that I also was in presenting myself as a kind of wilderness traveler whose not always on top of the situation. It seems to me that heroes like John Muir, even Gary Snyder are well and good but there is also a place in the literature of wilderness for people who don't know how to do it well, who make mistakes, who go out there and don't seem in any sort of obvious way to have great and grand experiences.

KB: In the book you refer to a dilemma that I think is in the mind of many wilderness travelers: that to go to wilderness is to escape the city but as you mentioned this creates a false duality between "city self" and "wild self". So then how to make it so that as you write "going out there is coming in here"? Although you speak to this quite well in the book can you describe how you came to your conclusions?

DR: This is perhaps the most difficult question of all. The book sort of leads up to it and so to make the problem explicit in the last chapter suggests a kind of vision of how it might be dealt with. The next two books I'm going to try to write are both sort of deliberate attempts to answer that question. It's clearly extraordinarily important for human beings to feel that they're out there on some kind of edge, some kind of boundary where things get extraordinarily interesting but potentially dangerous, both physically, mentally and spiritually. If all three of those things are one as I want to argue, then if it's physically dangerous it's also psychologically and spiritually dangerous. The other side of that is if you look—and I'm influenced by Joseph Campbell here—at stories of culture heroes, Moses, Jesus, whoever it happens to be, if you look at doctors in hunter/gather societies, shamans in societies that are shamanic, people never go out there to this boundary for the sole purpose of going out to the boundary, and generally speaking they don't go out there to stay out there, they go out there to learn something that they can bring back. It bothers me greatly that wilderness is seen by so many people as a kind of escape or refuge. It bothers me that I see it that way a lot of the time. I think that this is not healthy for individuals, and I think it's not healthy for the community. People that go out there should try to marry the two sides of their lives, their selves and their society, and not in some way reinforce how separate they are. I would like to at least imagine a way in which life in society is rich and life on the edge out there in wilderness is rich and you need both of them and there shouldn't be this notion that relief is out there in the wilderness and burden is in the city. I have no neat solution for this, but I would like for my writing to constantly raise up to people that these should be two parts of one world and not two different worlds.

KB: I think that you suggest some ideas or starts toward that end that are pretty interesting. One thing that is intriguing

about your photographs is that they involve the same idea, but articulated in playful and imaginative ways: the juxtaposition of objects and humans (you) in the natural world. Will you talk a little about your photos in the context of the book?

DR: How I arrived at taking photographs like this was haphazard and irrational. I decide what directions to go and what photographs I like and don't like on very, very gut reactions. Now, of course, I can intellectualize about this, in that if one of the dangers in talking about wilder-

ness is that it seems to be something out there that we go visit, and in some way apart from us, and you're not happy what that view of it and you want to counter it with another view, then one good way to do this is to do the exact opposite of Ansel Adams, where, generally speaking, there's never a human or human-made thing in any of the photographs. I love those photographs too. But that's one way to do it and I don't want to do it that way. I want my viewer to always call into question this notion of wilderness as something where humans are absent. So my art can then be a pointer book and it can say look how wild the universe is out there in the wilderness and in here in my head. I want people to see that they're participating in this wildness that's inherent in the universe. I'm going to put the human in, preferably in some strange way, holding a heart, or doing some kind of dance, or lying on top of the rocks on Mount Tamalpais, in way that hopefully is just unexpected enough or enough of a surprise, to get people to think about their own responses and how their wilderness is not only out there, it's also in here. The artist is supposed to do both: point to it in both places. In the book the photographs are meant to double my journal entries; what they're supposed to do ideally is bounce off of each other and reinforce one another in non-linear, non-rational ways, that is where you keep having to take a leap in order to see the connection between them. So you can never read a chapter, look at the photographs in the chapter and immediately see how they relate to one another. If you can do that I haven't succeeded in doing what I want to do.

KB: I think that they challenge the viewer to see differently—I think that's one of the distinctions I notice the most when I go on wilderness trips: it forces me to see differently.

The Wilderness Act partly defines "legal" wilderness as "a place where man himself is a visitor who does not remain". Many of your photographs feature yourself in a wild area, some where you're solidly placed and apparently at ease, in others your image is blurred and ghostlike, suggesting an ephemeral presence in a lasting landscape. How do these images reflect your views of the self and its place in wilderness?

DR: The simple answer is wilderness is wild and my self is wild. Going back to this idea of society providing a place that's on the edge of out-of-bounds for people to go. My observation is that almost all societies have a representation of what they think ultimate reality is. So wildness has increasingly impressed us as an integral part of, if not the integral part, of the universe. It's just obviously so now with Einstein's theories of relativity, quantum mechanics and other discoveries about the nature of the universe. The more pictures we take of what's going on out there, the more it looks incredibly wild. Where can you go on Earth where you can see the way the universe really works everywhere? In our cities, in our towns, in our pastures and our farms, we're constantly trying to somewhat hide from ourselves that the universe is inherently wild. But you need a place to go where you can be reminded in some unequivocal way. So that's my explanation of the need for wilderness.



WILDLANDS THE WILDLANDS PROJECT UPDATE

The Wildlands Project (TWP) is a vision, based on the principles of conservation biology, for the permanent protection of native plants and animals, including the systems in which they live. Since every ecosystem is unique for its place and time, TWP is necessarily grounded in a bioregional approach.

In California, due to the wide range of political and social issues which shape various parts of the state, this means that the approach to reaching goals of maintaining dynamic ecosystems over time are going to vary.

In some places core reserves will be obvious, while in more developed areas, the challenges to reserve design in terms of finding intact habitat will be significant.

The southern San Francisco Bay Area is one of these regions. Although much of the area is developed, many ecologically critical areas remain as isolated fragments which are islands among a sea of concrete. The difficulties of survival on such islands are numerous, yet nonetheless significant populations of native plants survive.

A new group is beginning to meet to discuss how principles of conservation biology and The Wildlands Project can apply in such a context.

The Santa Cruz Mountains Wildlands Project (SCMWP) group held its first meeting in June. This meeting was primarily focused on existing related efforts in the region, and on how to bring similar efforts and interested people together to begin working towards protecting what remains of the Santa Cruz Mountains ecosystem.

The group adopted the definition of the region proposed by the Santa Cruz Mountain Bioregional Council, but recognized that such definitions are by nature inexact. As Joe Rigney, one of the leaders of the effort to establish the group points out, "bioregion is really about connection between systems, not separation." Thus the boundaries are roughly from north to south the San Francisco Bay to the Pajaro River, and from the coast eastward to the edge of the Santa Clara Valley.

One unanimous goal of the group is to bring people closer to the experience of wilderness, and thus to include as many of the 3.5 million people in the region as is possible.

The SCMWP is actively working on its mission statement, as well as coordinating subgroups for organizational purposes. If you would like more information contact Joe Rigney, P.O. Box 8098, Santa Cruz, CA, 95061 or dreamer@armory.com.

In other Wildlands Project news: we are beginning to organize TWP efforts in the Sierra Nevada. For more information on this contact Kathy Brennan at (916) 758-0380.

Wilderness News

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges: As critical habitat dries up, more water is needed to restore wildlife

By Wendell Wood

In 1908, Teddy Roosevelt established the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge as our nation's first waterfowl refuge. While one would assume that a "refuge" by definition would afford protection to the species it is designed to protect, such is not the case for wildlife on the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges of southern Oregon and northern California.

Most notably, even in what are termed "normal" water years, the marshes of most of the Klamath Basin's federal waterfowl refuges can go dry. Normal refuge water needs occur not only in summer for nesting waterbirds, but also in the fall when the refuge must flood the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge to inundate food plants for the large concentrations of arriving fall migrating waterfowl, as well as the accompanying wintering bald eagles and other wildlife populations.

Irrigation interests argue that the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges are entitled to no water all. Indeed, over the years, the Bureau of Reclamation, the agency that determines where water is allowed to flow, has historically prioritized water delivery to lavishly flood-irrigate area farms. This has left Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge's tule marshes totally dry, and continues to deny needed water resources to the Pacific Flyway's largest waterfowl concentrations at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.

Taking the position one step further, irrigators in the Klamath Reclamation Project filed a lawsuit in July aimed at preventing the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) from providing water for other than agricultural purposes. The irrigators are challenging the rights of BOR to deliver any water for fish and wildlife, while conservationists claim the BOR's proposed 1997 water allocation will leave less water in area lakes, rivers, and refuges than last year, posing greater threats to the wildlife of the region.

Out of concern that the BOR will not adequately represent the interests of fish and wildlife, a coalition of conservation and fishing groups, represented by Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund (formerly Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund) intervened in the lawsuit.

Wetlands, refuges left high and dry

Overall, in the critically dry water years of 1992 and 1994, thousands of acres of refuge lands stood dry, as the Bureau of Reclamation sharply curtailed water deliveries to the refuges in favor of production of crops such as onions, alfalfa, and sugar beets. Some of these crops are even grown on the National Wildlife Refuges, even when there is little or no water for fish and wildlife.

Last year, approximately 14,000 acres of the Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge was left dry by summer's end as water was continually drawn down from Upper Klamath Lake, leaving migrating birds without their wetland habitats.

Additionally, thousands of ducks and endangered fish died on Upper Klamath Lake in August and September due to bacterial diseases created by warming water temperatures. Even though the Bureau of Reclamation acknowledged they had over 150,000 acre feet in excess storage in two other area reservoirs, (enough water to flood 3/4's of the entire Klamath Reclamation Project's



The Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge has 22,000 acres of land leased to farmers—to the detriment of migrating waterfowl. Photo by Wendell Wood.

irrigated lands one foot deep), Upper Klamath Lake's marshes were drawn down still further.

On the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges, the incredible irony is that 22,000 acres of refuge lands, that should be in wetland production, are instead leased annually to 80 to 90 private farmers, for crop production. This occurs even in years when there is inadequate supplies of critically needed water to flood these and other refuge lands for the waterfowl migration in the fall.

Saddest of all, Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, which just four decades ago held the distinction of being one of the most productive waterfowl refuges in the country, today has become little more than an agricultural waste water storage pond. The result has been precipitous declines in breeding birds and overall waterfowl numbers, and now even significant declines in use by wintering bald eagles have been documented.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists attribute these declines, first and foremost, to the loss of the refuge's former productive marshland habitats.

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges may exist today as little more than tiny islands of wetland habitats in a sea of intensive agricultural development—but they are still the most logical place to first protect and restore.

The conservation community can no longer stand by and watch what was once one of the greatest wildlife displays on this continent be allowed to decline any further. The lawsuit over refuge water may offer a glimpse of hope for this declining national treasure.

Wendell Wood works for the Oregon Natural Resources Council.

ORV's off the Lost Coast

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wants to amend its management plan for the King Range National Conservation Area to exclude off-road vehicles from a 3.5 miles of beach at the southern end of the Lost Coast Trail near Shelter Cove.

It is seeking public comments until August 21 on the proposed closure for consideration in its Environmental Assessment.

The King Range National Conservation Area is the longest stretch of primitive, publicly-owned coastline in the western United States, and use of the mainly wilderness beach trail by hikers and backpackers has increased tenfold since the management plan was written in 1974.

Backpackers usually begin their 24-mile trek from the northern trailhead at the mouth of the Mattole River, but conflict continues to intensify with ORV enthusiasts reluctant to restrict themselves to the well-posted 3.5 mile ORV zone.

The BLM's various strategies "do not seem to have reduced the overall level of illegal use."

The Blue Ribbon Coalition, a major national ORV organization, is throwing its weight against any revision of the management plan.

The North Group and the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club have strongly endorsed the BLM's proposed amendment to its management plan, and hikers, wilderness supporters and concerned groups might consider doing the same.

Send your comments to the Bureau of Land Management, 1695 Heindon Road, Arcata, CA 95521.

Courtesy of the Northcoast Environmental Center.

Wilderness Forum

Emigrant dams

continued from page 1

to exist without a dam. About eighty lakes support fish populations and while the dams have increased aquatic habitat, they provide no significant increase in available fishing opportunities or angling success. Use in the Emigrant Wilderness is influenced primarily by the existing trail system and the scenic attractions of the area. The dammed lakes have a wide range of use levels, from high to low, as do all the undammed lakes, and hundreds of lakes throughout the Sierra Nevada have significant recreation use and good angling without the presence of dams.

In 1996, the Stanislaus National Forest released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on proposed management guidelines for the Emigrant Wilderness. The DEIS indicated that seven dams are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) and proposed to maintain them for this reason. However, historic preservation laws do not require this and the DEIS failed to establish why it is necessary for wilderness preservation. The Emigrant Wilderness was designated to ensure that the area is not "occupied and modified," not to preserve historic structures. It must be managed to preserve its wilderness character as defined in the Wilderness Act. The Act has no provision that allows eligible structures to be dominant over the wilderness character.

None of these dams are necessary and arguments to maintain them totally disregard the need to keep wilderness free of structures and human manipulation of the environment. Maintaining them is the antithesis of wilderness—their purpose is to trammel the hydrology and ecology of the area for perceived recreation benefits, not to preserve the wilderness character. They change natural lake levels and streamflow regimes, alter natural subsurface water processes and modify vegetation and wildlife habitat, including inundation of former meadows. Scars such as perpetual "bathtub rings" due to annual draw-down would not be allowed to heal and additional impacts would occur (e.g. water pollution, rock quarrying, etc.) from ongoing maintenance work. In short, these structures cannot be retained and still allow natural processes to occur. Those eligible for the NHRP should have their historic attributes documented, as required by law, and all 18 dams should have no further maintenance. This will allow natural processes to gradually return these sites to a natural condition and restore the wilderness character.

Doolittle claims that he is simply trying to clarify Congressional intent stated in the 1974 House committee report, but if Congress had really intended for the dams to be maintained and operated they would have provided for that in the final bill. Instead, they recognized the value of maintaining wilderness character and provided that the area "...shall be administered in accordance with the Wilderness Act..." H.R. 1663 is an ill-conceived bill which will not only degrade the values of the Emigrant Wilderness, but has ramifications for the entire National Wilderness Preservation System. Special legislation to override the Wilderness Act opens the door for similar efforts to chip away at this vital conservation law and diverts scarce funding from more important wilderness stewardship needs. This bill caters to a small, aggressively vocal group in the local community that fervently believes it is their right to manipulate the wilderness environment for personal interest and financial gain. It also overrides an established planning process, blatantly disregarding the interests of many involved citizens who have expressed a desire to eliminate the dams.

Ultimately this issue comes down to a fundamental choice about the meaning of wilderness. Although the Wilderness Act is burdened with special provisions, that compromise true wilderness preservation, it does still hold a powerful vision. To realize that vision, we must be committed to the idea that we respectfully and humbly recognize the importance of leaving areas where wild nature can flourish. These wild settings also provide people with a few remaining places where we can free ourselves of human development and the constant reminder of the drive to control every aspect of the natural world. Perhaps a few small dams seem insignificant compared to the greater onslaughts we face, but they are nonetheless symbolic of a choice we must make about wilderness. Each time we allow this type of action to slowly erode what has been preciously attained, it becomes easier to make more changes of increasing significance. Eventually we will find that the wildlands we thought we had protected in a natural state in perpetuity have been reduced to nothing more than recreational parks that cater to comfort and convenience. The Emigrant was protected for the benefit of natural ecosystems and our society, not just a few local interests who do not understand or believe in the value of preserving wild environments. Wilderness lovers should vigorously oppose this attack on our wilderness heritage and help defend the legacy of the Wilderness Act to "...secure for

Letters

Logging without laws in the Northern Sierra Nevada

It has been fascinating to follow in the pages of the *Wilderness Record* the heroic struggles of forest activists to protect the ecosystems of the Northern California region and delightful to note the victories that have been won. Some readers may not know how hard Congressional anti-enviros and others are fighting to reclaim this territory. An example is H.R. 858, the Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act, recently introduced by Representative Wally Herger, who has been associated with attempts (some of very doubtful propriety) to further the interests of Northern California timber corporations. In essence, H.R. 858 calls for greatly increased timber harvest in the already heavily logged northern Sierra Nevada forests and would suspend existing environmental safeguards on logging operations in these forests.

Another bill recently introduced in the House of Representatives, Henry Waxman's Defense of the Environment Act (H.R. 1404), would make maneuvers such as Representative Herger's more difficult by requiring Congressional committees to quantify the environmental impact of proposed legislation.

Representative Herger's bill is sponsored by the Quincy Library Group. It seems to me this group takes some strange positions for an organization which professes to be concerned about the future of the forests. What the Quincy Library Group advocates for the northern Sierra Nevada forests (as presented by the CalOwl Team) is: "community economic stability through a moderate level of timber production combined with protection of selected reserve lands, riparian area protection, increased emphasis on watershed restoration, and an extensive fuels reduction program."

This sounds like a positive program for the forests. However, the level of timber production could eventually become very large since the acreage available for timber harvest would be much greater than under the present plan. The reserve lands they propose are not the large contiguous blocks of undisturbed habitat which forest wildlife require; they are small PACs (Protected Activity Centers). Moreover, the reserves are not permanent. Some of them at least could be phased out after five years. The proposed riparian reserves include generous pro-

Calendar

August 30: The BLM's California Desert District is seeking members of the public to fill their Desert Advisory Council (DAC). Members of the DAC assist the BLM by giving the agency advice on issues ranging from livestock grazing to wilderness management in the 10,300,000-acre district. Call the BLM public affairs office at 909-697-5215 for details.

August 31: Deadline to offer input on the BLM's proposed livestock grazing standards for all of its lands (or actually, our lands) in California. Call Ryan Henson at CWC for details.

September 9: Deadline to offer input on the Forest Service's proposal to construct high-tension powerlines through the Mount Hoffman and Glass Mountain roadless areas and build geothermal powerplants in the Modoc National Forest's scenic and popular Medicine Lake Highlands. As the place-name implies, Medicine Lake is also an important sacred site for Native Americans in the region. Call Ryan Henson at CWC for details.

the American people...the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

What you can do

In late July the bill passed the House of Representatives by a lopsided vote of 423 to 2. As of this writing, neither California Senator has publicly committed to either oppose or support the new bill.

Contact your Senators and let them know you strongly oppose H.R. 1663 and the wise-use agenda for the Emigrant Wilderness dams. Also ask them not to allow this bill to become a legislative rider. Use some of the points raised in this article to inform your discussion.

Write to: Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Steve Brougher works with the Central Sierra chapter of Wilderness Watch in Twain Harte.

tected zones for fish-bearing streams, and these also could revert to the timber base after five years. Fuels reduction would be accomplished primarily by thinning. Thinning has not been shown to reduce fire danger but certainly does have the potential to reduce the amount of high quality wildlife habitat.

The Quincy Library Group program, like the Herger bill, would provide economic stability for timber impacted communities, if you assume that their economic stability depends on maintaining perpetually high levels of logging (a doubtful assumption), but only increasing instability for wildlife communities. Wildlife experts have projected that under this program some species (marten and fisher among them) would survive only in isolated refugia and might face local extirpation.

If the Herger bill passes, we can expect other "forest recovery" measures to follow, designed to promote economic stability in timber communities elsewhere in the state, and the result will be a logging onslaught from which the forests will never recover.

Nell Patterson, Palmdale

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
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"We need to help grow the capacity in local communities to define what fire management and fire safe communities mean to them"

— G. Lynn Sprague, U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester, from the "California Fire Partnership Summit"

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