

# WILDERNESS RECORD

News Journal of the California Wilderness Coalition

SUMMER 2006



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California's Wild National Forests *page 4*

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*The California Wilderness Coalition protects the natural landscapes that make California unique, providing clean air and water, a home to wildlife, and a place for recreation and spiritual renewal.*

*CWC is the only organization dedicated to protecting and restoring California's wild places and native biodiversity on a statewide level.*

*Since 1976, we have empowered local communities and conservationists to be the voice for wild California.*



JIM ROSE

A madrone and oak forest in the Pattison Potential Wilderness, Shasta-Trinity National Forest

**WILDERNESS RECORD**

**SUMMER 2006/VOLUME 31/ISSUE 2/ISSN 0194-3030**

The Wilderness Record is published quarterly by the California Wilderness Coalition. Articles may be reprinted with permission from the editor. Articles, photographs, and artwork on California wilderness, wildlife, and related subjects are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all work.

COVER & BACK PHOTOS BY JIM ROSE

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# Good News for Wildlands

It's so wonderful to write about good news for a change! We have had some great victories in the past few months. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger petitioned the Bush Administration to set off-limits to logging, road building, and other development all of California's 4.4 million acres of roadless areas in our National Forests. These are wildlands that have the characteristics of wilderness, but have not yet been given permanent protection by Congress. These lands had been protected under the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, until it was overturned by the Bush Administration last year. CWC has joined almost every national and statewide conservation group in the country in challenging the repeal of the Roadless Rule in court. Yet, we are all incredibly pleased by this step Governor Schwarzenegger has taken to protect these lands while the lawsuit makes it way through the courts. The importance of a Republican governor from the West asking for such protections really cannot be overstated.

In addition, the governor has also appealed the unwise management plans for the four southern California National Forests—the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino. Conservationists have also appealed the management plans for many reasons including their attempt to open up 1 million acres of roadless forests to development or road construction of some kind. The governor announced his appeal in tandem with the roadless announcement. It was a great day for California's National Forests.

Just as exciting, is the passage of the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act (H.R. 233) out of the House of Representatives. The bill would add almost 300,000 acres of permanently protected wildlands from the Oregon border to Napa County. Having already approved the bill, the Senate now just needs to approve the amendments. We'll be publishing a special edition of the Wilderness Record if the bill is signed into law this year.

No one person has put in more work on this effort than CWC's Policy Director, Ryan Henson. A native of Mendocino County, Ryan saw the county's beautiful lands fall victim to development over the years as he grew up. It has been a personal mission of his to see these wild areas receive the protection they so deserve. The author of the North Coast bill, Congressman Mike Thompson, recognized Ryan's efforts on the House floor before the bill was passed saying, "Ryan Henson from the California Wilderness Coalition stands out amongst those who worked so hard and knows this area so well."

Some 500 miles away, conservationists and private property owners in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties are cheering the passing of two local ordinances to curb off-road vehicle abuse. These county efforts also protect all the public lands in the county because of the patchwork of public and private lands throughout the California desert. We are now working on making sure these ordinances receive the funding they need so that they can be enforced. These laws are great strides for us on the damaging effects irresponsible off-road vehicle use in the desert.

Some people have remarked that many of these victories are simply election year politics. If that's really the case, then we have to wish that every year was an election year!

***Mary Wells is the Executive Director of CWC***



# Governor Schwarzenegger Moves to Protect California's Wild National Forests



MEREDITH EILERS

CWC Executive Director Mary Wells and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger address the press

*California's National Forests have found* a new champion. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has filed a petition with the United States Forest Service to protect all of California's 4.4 million acres of roadless areas in our National Forests, currently vulnerable to logging, road building, and other development. These lands provide Californians with clean water, opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing and hunting, buffers from fires, as well as essential habitat for wildlife. Gov. Schwarzenegger is the first Republican governor from the West to ask for full protection of a state's wild National Forests, and only four other governors have acted at all.

JIM ROSE



In addition, the governor has taken a stand for California's four southern National Forests—the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino—by appealing the Forest Service's management plans for those forests. The misguided Southern California forest plans would allow road construction in over 90% of the region's 1 million acres of roadless areas.

The California Wilderness Coalition (CWC), Defenders of Wildlife, Environment California, Heritage Forests Campaign, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, and The Wilderness Society joined the governor in his announcement at the capitol on July 12. In his remarks the governor said, "This Roadless Plan is fitting for a state that is the birthplace of the conservation movement. It will honor our environmental heritage, preserve our resources, protect our forests and leave the people of California an unmatched natural inheritance."

Last year, the Bush Administration overturned the national 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and replaced it with a state petition process whereby each state could ask for a specific federal rulemaking for the management of its forests. The repeal of the Roadless Rule left California's pristine roadless areas—20 percent of the state's National Forests—with little or no protection from development.

The governor's petition asks the Forest Service to write a federal rule to safeguard all of California's roadless lands. The governor's proposed rule would, in effect, be equally as protective as the 2001 Roadless Rule. Upon filing the petition, the Forest Service has six months to accept or reject the petition and initiate a federal rulemaking. The rulemaking process could take up to a few years, but CWC and its partners will be working hard to ensure that the final rule is just as strong as the governor's petition.

The deadline to appeal the management plans for the four southern National Forests was looming on July 20 when the governor announced his appeal. The Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests are critically important because of their ecological diversity and precarious location near the state's most urbanized regions. They host most of the remaining habitat for the California condor and dozens of other endangered species of plants and animals, as well as most of southwestern California's



JIM ROSE

**Black Oak Potential Wilderness, in the Tahoe National Forest, contains old-growth forest and overwhelming biodiversity**

remaining open space. CWC, the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, and other conservationists will also appeal the management plans.

Conservationists have been urging the governor to act to protect our National Forests for many years. This month his actions have spoken loud and clear. The petition is a giant step toward the permanent protection of California's last remaining wilderness. The governor deserves our thanks for his efforts and our encouragement for the work to be done in the future. Please call the governor at (916) 445-2841 or visit <http://www.govmail.ca.gov> to send him an email message. Thank Gov. Schwarzenegger for his work to protect our National Forests and tell him we hope he continues to champion our public lands.

• • •

**(LEFT) Duncan Canyon Potential Wilderness, in the Tahoe National Forest, is one of the many roadless areas the governor has acted to protect**

# California State Legislative Update: Conservationists Defeat Off-Road Vehicle Proposals, Work to Strengthen Public Lands Protections in 2007

Poorly managed off-road vehicle use harms the environment and disturbs traditional forms of outdoor recreation. This year, a growing coalition of conservationists, responsible recreation advocates and private property owners successfully defeated several ill-conceived proposals to open up California's wild places to the roar of motorized vehicles.

Activists from throughout the state worked together to defeat the following bills during the 2006 California State legislative session:

- AB 2298 (Niello) would have used taxpayer dollars to open up California's State Parks to increased off-road vehicle damage.
- AB 2337 (Garcia) and SB 1681 (Cox) would have diminished the independent oversight authority of California's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission (OHV Commission). These bills would have reduced legislative oversight and public input for California's \$18 million off-highway vehicle management program.
- AB 2784 (Parra) would have eliminated the OHV Commission and diverted environmental restoration funds to pay for off-road vehicle trail maintenance.

Despite our success in 2006, unchecked off-road vehicle abuse continues to threaten California's wild places. Next year's legislative session will be critical to the future of California's \$18 million OHV grants program. This program funds important law enforcement and restoration efforts to protect California's wilderness, wildlife, and waterways from off-road vehicle damage. It is set to expire on January 1st, 2008.

In 2007, off-road vehicle industry groups are expected to introduce legislation to re-write California's OHV Grants Program to weaken off-road vehicle management rules and open up California's fragile public lands and waterways to unmitigated off-road vehicle abuse. The California Wilderness Coalition is working to ensure that wild places are protected from irresponsible and illegal off-road vehicle damage.

**(LEFT) Grouse Lakes Potential Wilderness, in the Tahoe National Forest, is at risk from illegal off-road vehicle use**

**(OPPOSITE PAGE) Mountain Violet, found in the Grouse Lakes Potential Wilderness, Tahoe National Forest**



CWC ARCHIVES

## We Need Your Help!

To participate in local meetings with your state legislator, please contact Brent Schoradt at [bschoradt@calwild.org](mailto:bschoradt@calwild.org) or (510) 451-1450.

## California Desert County Cracks Down on Illegal and Abusive ORV Use

This spring, the Supervisors of San Bernardino County voted to pass an ordinance to regulate the growing problem of illegal and abusive off-road vehicle (ORV) use on both private and public lands. Measures such as this are vital to the protection of the fragile wild desert landscape in the face of increasing development, and the checkerboard of public and private lands in the county. The ordinance will address acceptable noise levels, limit large groups, and require riders to obtain written permission to ride on land other than their own. Residents can file complaints when riders become a nuisance, and fines will be levied to enforce the new law.

The final ordinance was the result of considerable work on the part of CWC and other members of the Alliance for Responsible Recreation (ARR), who attended stakeholder meetings with members of the off-road vehicle community, community representatives, and county officials. We will continue to monitor the situation in San Bernardino County to ensure that the new ordinance is enforced.



CWC ARCHIVES

# COALITION news

### Join Us in Our National Forests!

After years of largely ignoring the destruction caused by off-road vehicles (ORVs), the Forest Service has finally made a commitment to eliminate unfettered cross-country ORV use in all of California's 20 national forests. Over the next three years, the Forest Service will inventory and analyze existing ORV routes to determine which will be designated open and which will be closed because they harm the environment, cultural sites, or traditional recreation like hiking and fishing. Decisions made during this process will have a critical impact on the state's 20 million acres of national forests for decades to come. CWC will be working hard to protect wild places through this "route designation" process, and we really could use your help!

This summer, we are surveying national forest lands used by ORVs to document environmental damage and other problems. The surveys will be evidence for the Forest Service to close all environmentally harmful routes. This fieldwork is a huge undertaking, and we need help in every national forest in the state. If you're interested in joining us in the field or if you're planning a hike in the woods yourself, please let us know!

For more information, you can email Jason Schulz ([jschulz@calwild.org](mailto:jschulz@calwild.org)) or Brent Schoradt ([bschoradt@calwild.org](mailto:bschoradt@calwild.org)) or call CWC's Oakland office at (510)451-1450.

### Welcome Jason!

Jason Schulz joins the CWC team this summer as our Wilderness Trail Surveyor. He will be working on CWC's off-road vehicle route inventory and coordinating much of our work in the field.

Jason grew up in Santa Barbara and recently graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Community Studies. Jason's love for the wild landscapes of California and his experience with fieldwork and coordinating teams of volunteers are a welcome addition to this project.



# North Coast Wilderness Bill Passes the House!

*After weeks of negotiations,* Congressman Richard Pombo, Chair of the House Resources Committee, and Congressman Mike Thompson came to an agreement on Representative Thompson's wilderness bill, the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act (H.R. 233/S. 128). On July 24, the bill was passed by the House of Representatives. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein were able to pass the bill out of the U.S. Senate last July, but it now must go back for final agreement to the House amendments. If all goes well, this bill could be signed into law very soon!

The legislation covers some of the most beautiful and majestic lands in five Northern California counties—Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, and Napa—as well as 21 miles of the Black Butte River. It will provide wilderness protection for some of California's greatest jewels, including the

magnificent King Range, home to the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline in the contiguous United States. Other areas that will be protected by the bill include key low-elevation additions to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, the new 50,000-acre Yuki Wilderness in Mendocino County, the proposed Cache Creek Wilderness in Lake County, and additions to the Siskiyou Wilderness in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties. In all, the bill will protect over 279,000 acres of the North Coast's public land as wilderness.

This recent progress on the North Coast bill is especially exciting for CWC, as we have made the bill a legislative priority for nearly 6 years. Having cleared the U.S. Senate twice already (once in the 108th Congress, then again last year), getting the bill through the House of Representatives proved to be one of the most difficult steps along the bill's path to becoming law. Thanks to the tremen-

JIM ROSE



The stunning 50,000 acre Yuki Wilderness will be permanently protected by the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act

Lovely lupine in the proposed Yuki Wilderness

dous amount of broad-based constituent support, including bi-partisan support from 21 of the 24 county supervisors in counties affected by the bill and the support of Governor Schwarzenegger, Congressman Thompson was able to reach a deal with Representative Pombo to move the bill forward. Though some minor modifications were made as part of this compromise, the bill still stands to protect vast stretches of pristine lands throughout the North Coast. The adjustments that were made do not detract from the major milestone we have reached in seeing the bill passed out of the House. We all look forward to the North Coast bill becoming law in the very near future!



JIM ROSE

Thank Congressman Thompson, Senator Boxer, and Senator Feinstein for their leadership in this victory for wilderness! Call, write, or send an email message to let them know why California's wild places are important to you:

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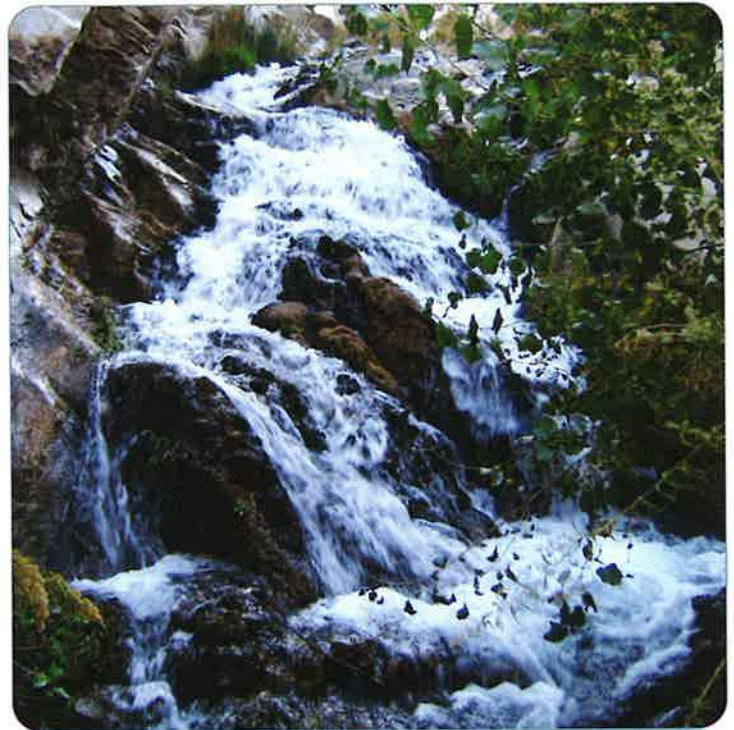


# California's Threatened Wild Places

The California Wilderness Coalition has released its fifth annual California's 10 Most Threatened Wild Places report, drawing attention to wilderness lands at risk across the state. Based on extensive surveys completed by conservation groups, scientists, and other wilderness experts, the report details both the severity of the threats facing our natural heritage and the diversity of places affected. Forests, rivers, deserts and grasslands throughout the state are facing the pressures of off-road vehicle use, water diversions, logging, urban sprawl, and gold mining. A complete copy of the report is available online at: <http://calwild.org/resources/pubs/10most06.php>

(RIGHT) Extreme off-roading threatens Surprise Canyon, a rare desert riparian ecosystem

(BELOW) Developers are planning to create a city of 45,000 residents in Shavers Valley, permanently destroying a vital wildlife corridor for bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, and other wildlife



BRYN JONES



BRYN JONES

## California's 10 Most Threatened Wild Places in 2006

### MOJAVE DESERT

- Furnace Creek — *proposed road*
- Surprise Canyon — *extreme off-road driving*
- Red Rock Canyon — *intensive off-road vehicle use*

### COLORADO DESERT

- Indian Pass — *proposed open-pit gold mine*
- Anza-Borrego Desert — *multiple 16-story power lines*
- Shavers Valley — *development of sprawling new city*

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

- Southern California Forests — *proposed freeways, power lines, and off-road vehicle routes*

### SIERRA NEVADA

- Owens Valley — *excessive groundwater pumping*
- Stanislaus National Forest — *accelerated logging and illegal snowmobile use*

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

- Klamath River Basin — *excessive water diversion*

## 30 Years of Protecting Wild California

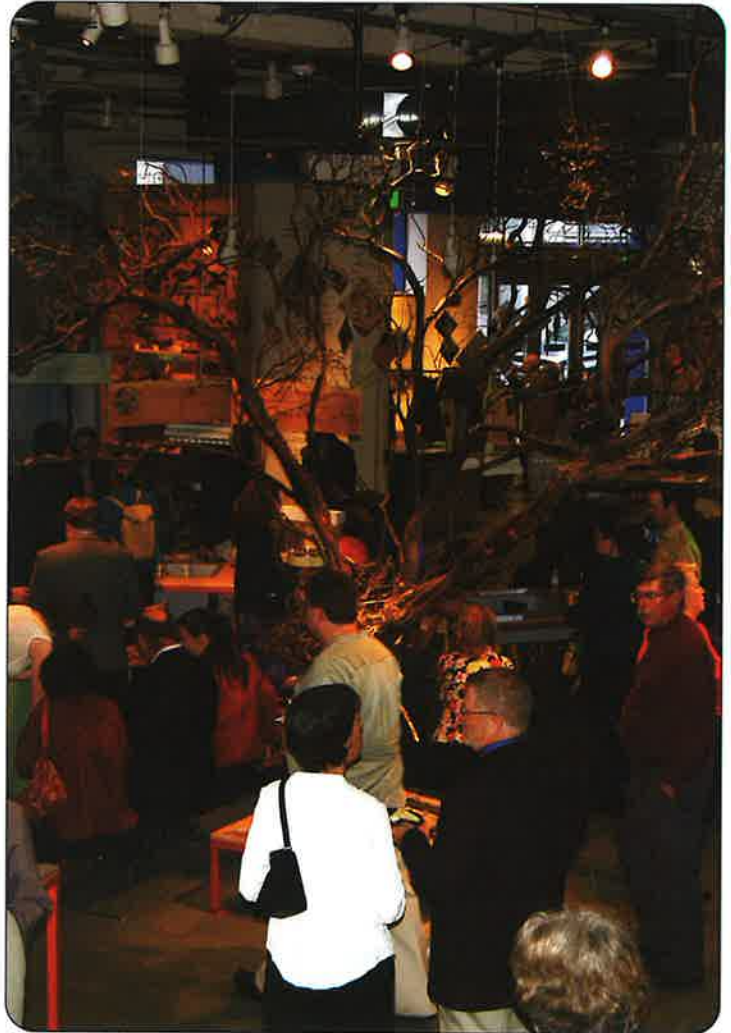
2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the California Wilderness Coalition. Since 1976, CWC has been the only statewide organization in California dedicated to protecting the Golden State's last remaining wild places. On April 28th, members, activists, and supporters of CWC gathered at the California Academy of Sciences to celebrate CWC's work and honor the individuals who have ensured a natural legacy for future generations.

California State Assemblymember Lois Wolk was in attendance to receive the Philip Burton Award for her work passing the state Cache Creek Wild and Scenic River Act. Senator Dianne Feinstein was honored for her dedication to California's wilderness, including the historic California Desert Protection Act. Local activist Paul McFarland of Friends of the Inyo received the Jim Eaton Award for his outstanding activism on behalf of the Eastern Sierra.

Our 30th Anniversary Celebration was a special night for our community to celebrate our conservation achievements, as well as to build momentum and financial support for our continuing work for wilderness.

**(RIGHT) Guests enjoy the food, wine and exhibits at CWC's 30th Anniversary event**

**(BELOW) Helen Lake Meadows, proposed Hoover Wilderness Addition**



JASON FRIED

## Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon Introduces a Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River Bill for the Eastern Sierra

Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Santa Clarita) has introduced H.R. 5149 the "Eastern Sierra Rural Heritage and Economic Enhancement Act." The bill proposes to enlarge the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest's Hoover Wilderness and Emigrant Wilderness, and to protect almost 24 miles of the Amargosa River as a Wild and Scenic River. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein introduced companion legislation in the Senate. These 40,000 acres of land include dozens of lakes, meadows, groves of old-growth forest, waterfalls, alpine peaks and sage-dappled lowlands.



JOHN DITTLI

# 30th Anniversary Celebration Supporters

The California Wilderness Coalition would like to gratefully thank the following individuals and businesses for their generous support for our 30th Anniversary Celebration:

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