



# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

Vol. 6

P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95616

January - February 1981

No. 1

## New Ski Lifts for Lassen National Park

Three and a half years after releasing a draft plan, the National Park Service finally has released the final plan for Lassen Volcanic National Park. Of greatest concern to environmentalists is the plan to spend millions of dollars to upgrade downhill skiing facilities in the park, even though the plan foresees eventual removal of this non-park activity.

The general management plan requires that downhill skiing facilities at the southwest entrance be removed when adequate replacement facilities are developed in the vicinity, although this is expected to take 15 to 20 years. Since the current downhill ski facilities do not meet National Park Service standards improvements will be permitted.

According to the Park Service, the Poma lift will be replaced by a chair lift on a new alignment, the intermediate rope tow will be realigned to reduce congestion and allow easier crossing of the slopes by cross-country skiers, and the beginner rope tow may be realigned to provide more efficient use of the beginner slope.

The existing Chalet will be replaced with a larger structure with interpretive facilities, concessioner services, winter sports equipment rental and other related services. Since this building will take up some parking spaces, the parking lot will be extended to replace lost area. A new sewage treatment system would be built, and commercial power would be brought in to replace the ex-

isting generator. The projected cost of these developments, including new ski lifts, would be \$7,222,000.

According to the environmental impact statement, most of the proposed developments at the southwest entrance are needed to accommodate downhill skiers. If the downhill skiing facilities were removed, the Chalet would be converted for use as a visitor center, the parking area would be reduced in size, a new sewage treatment facility would not be needed, and underground commercial power might not be economically feasible.

The upgrading of downhill ski facilities, however, will have significant impacts. Installing a chair lift would require the construction of 17 to 35 support towers, depending upon the recommended spacing between towers. To provide maximum safety for skiers and to minimize shutdown time and damage to the lift from falling trees and debris, it might be necessary to cut a 200-foot-wide swath along the entire length of the chair lift. This would require clearing approximately 19 acres of forest.

Installing and maintaining the chair lift might require the construction of a new 1.2 mile service road, running from the top of the Poma lift hill, across the upper basin, and switching back along the forested ridge to the upper terminal to the lift. Constructing and using the road would result in visual scarring, increased erosion,

and the deposition of unknown quantities of sediment in local watersheds.

The ski area is used mainly by local people from Butte, Tehama, and Shasta Counties. 25-30 percent of the winter visitors are participants in activities other than downhill skiing. Cross-country skiing, for example, increased almost 500% between 1972 and 1978 and keeps increasing.

The other major controversy at Lassen surfaced when it was discovered that the major visitor facilities at Manzanita Lake were located in the path of a potential rock-fall-avalanche. These facilities were closed in 1974, and since that time, extensive studies have been conducted to determine the feasibility and cost of providing these services in another location.

The National Park Service will not develop food, lodging, or other commercial facilities to replace those at Manzanita Lake. The Park Service will cooperate with the Forest Service and the private sector in planning for any needed facilities outside the park boundaries. The Manzanita Lake and Lost Creek campgrounds, which are in a low risk area, will be retained for the foreseeable future but closed when adequate replacements are developed in the immediate vicinity.

Comments on the plan will be accepted until March 2, 1981, by the Superintendent, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Mineral, CA 96063.



Lassen Volcanic National Park

Photo by Phil Farrell

## New Burton Offensive Calif. Bills in Congress

Representative Phillip Burton (D-San Francisco) has taken the offensive this Congress by introducing two wilderness bills for California. Hearings have not been set for either measure.

The first bill, H.R. 856, would designate about 1.4 million acres of wilderness in Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks.

The companion bill, H.R. 859, is similar to the "RARE" portion of last year's House-passed H.R. 7702. That bill would have designated 53 areas totaling 2.1 million acres as wilderness in national forests in California, designated 166,000 acres of

"planning areas" to be protected while they underwent further wilderness study, as well as "sufficiency language" to allow possible development of roadless areas not protected as wilderness. H.R. 859 has few changes from last year's measure.

No similar bills have been introduced in the Senate.

As reported in previous newsletters, most of the commercial timber on roadless lands and many potential downhill ski sites have been compromised out of wilderness in the Burton bill. Although it contains many disappointments for

conservationists, they are supporting the overall package as a good faith effort to reach a compromise that has taken all views into account. The 2.1 million acres of proposed wilderness is less than one-third of potential wilderness on national forest managed land.

Also, expected legislation by supporters of the timber industry to "release" for development roadless lands nationwide has not yet been introduced into the U.S. Senate, nor have bills been introduced to dispose of public lands as recommended by the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion backers.

## State Park Proposal

## Sheep Canyon Wilderness

On March 13th the State Park and Recreation Commission is meeting in San Diego to discuss proposed wilderness designation for Sheep Canyon in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. This would be the first such classification done by the commission since the passage of the State Act in 1974.

57,000 acres is proposed for wilderness, much of which is in the existing Sheep Canyon Natural Preserve. About 150 bighorn sheep roam the San Ysidro Mountains here, and a dozen rare plants are known to be in the area. Virgin native palms are found around springs and seeps.

Wilderness areas in state parks can be designated either by the legislature or the Park and Recreation Com-

mission. Classification by the commission, however, is administrative and can be changed by the same commission.

The California Wilderness Act was modeled after and closely parallels the federal Wilderness Act in definitions of wilderness and in management requirements for wilderness.

Opposition to proposed wilderness at Anza-Borrego has come from off-road vehicle groups who claim they use the areas proposed for preservation. In previous hearings, the state park officials have pointed out that the areas already were closed to vehicular use, so that any such use would be illegal. These facts, however, are unlikely to deter continued off-road vehicle group opposition

to these proposed wilderness areas.

Most of the potential wilderness in the entire state park system lies within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Even after designation of the Sheep Canyon State Wilderness, more than 175,000 acres of proposed wilderness will await action by the Parks and Recreation Commission at a later date.



## Forest Planning

by John Hooper

### FOR USE OR ABUSE: THESE FORESTS ARE YOURS

The cheery brown and yellow signs inform us of the exact moment of our arrival, the exact moment of our departure. Between and beyond these unobtrusive wooden demarcations of our national forest boundaries, however, stretches one of the more complex and controversial land management issues of the new decade.

The 188 million-acre national forest system encompasses a diverse array. There are the forest dwellers -- innumerable species of

plants and animals; the forest makers -- rivers, fire, and time; the forest lovers -- the thousands of people who trek in each year; and the forest changers -- within the system lie minerals, oil and 90 million acres of potentially harvestable timber.

### BOILING SAP

Just how to tend to all these resources has spurred almost a century of federal legislation. From 1897, when the Organic Administration Act established the National Forest System, until 1973, nearly 50 major laws were enacted relating to activities

in the forests. None dispelled the reigning chaos, though, and upon declaring that, "The sap is coming to a boil on our forest lands," Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced legislation that was to become the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA).

Passed in 1974, RPA was intended to provide a framework for comprehensive, long-term, and continuous resources planning for the nation's 1.7 billion acres of public and private forest and rangeland. But RPA was little balm for historical national

cont. on pg. 6

# Coalition Report

## By Jim Eaton

Last December's membership contest brought in 134 new members to the California Wilderness Coalition. Anne Schneider was the top new member recruiter/donor, with 54 regular members and a sponsor to her credit. She received the grand prize of a chamois shirt donated by Alpine Supply in Davis and a Henry Evans print. The two runners-up are Gary Wong and Martin Rigby, both winning a Henry Evans print each. The prints were donated by The Naturalist in Davis and Bob Schneider. CWC President Bob Barnes also brought in a great deal of new members but declined a prize.

Membership, of course, is the backbone of the California Wilderness Coalition. Financially, your membership is what keeps the Coalition afloat; 43.7% of our income last year came from dues. And members are the letter writers, article submitters, and volunteers that do the bulk of the work needed to save wilderness.

Some folks outside the Davis area have asked what they can do directly to help the Coalition. We've appreciated the offers of assistance and have some projects in need of volunteers:

- distribute the *Wilderness Record*. Each issue, we ship packages of this newsletter to members and friends who set them out in backpacking stores and other locations where wilderness supporters may be found.

- help with public relations. This can be as easy as walk-

ing into a radio station with a CWC Public Service Announcement and giving it to the public affairs director. Other tasks would include setting up talk shows and interviews for wilderness spokespeople when they come to your city.

- booths at county fairs. We would be happy to supply materials for use at county fairs and other public events. It's hard to set up things from Davis, but if the Coalition could join with other environmental groups to share a booth it might work out. The primary need would be for volunteers to sit at the exhibit.

- show a wilderness slide show. This may take a little longer to arrange, but within a few months we plan to have some slide shows about California's wilderness, the desert, and perhaps an anti-sagebrush rebellion presentation. At first we'll need to send around a speaker with the show, but as time goes by we plan on having slides duplicated and scripts or tape recordings made to accompany the program. Civic groups, schools, and other organizations are always looking for good presentations.

- black and white photographs. Yes, we continually ask for good quality black and white photos of California's wild areas. Later on we may have the time and money to convert slides to black and white, but for now we need prints for publications like the

### Wilderness Record.

There are lots of other ways that members can help us save our state's vanishing wild lands. We're always open to new ideas, too. Please let us know your ideas for furthering our common cause.

One other housekeeping item: a few people get confused by our renewal process. Aside from our getting information to our faithful membership computer, our renewal system is quite simple. We avoid extra postage expense by sending you a membership card with your renewal notice and a wilderness activists questionnaire; a second notice is sent out two months later if we haven't heard from you. Some folks get a second renewal notice and tell us they already have a membership card for the following year. That's true, but please check to see if you sent in the dues with the notice accompanying that card. Sometimes the error is at this end, sometimes it is at the other. The day after sending out second notices we can always count on getting a number of renewals in the mail. We ask your patience; our errors have been few in number, and often emergencies on issues force us to put off membership oversights.

We would like to welcome Earth Integral, Inc. in Davis as a new sponsor and two new groups members: Concerned Citizens of Calaveras County and Sierra Association for Environment in Fresno.

May 8 - 10

# South Sierra Conference

The wilderness happening of the spring season is the second South Sierra Regional Conference, May 8-10, in Kernville. The event will focus on the wild land and water issues of the Southern Sierra and adjacent California desert.

The Kern Plateau Association, California Wilderness Coalition, and other organizations are sponsoring this gathering of wilderness and wildlife activists. The conference will be held at the Kernville School in Kernville.

Numerous displays and tables set up by conservation groups will allow conference participants to find out about the dozens of proposed wilderness areas, wild rivers, wildlife and other issues of the Southern Sierra/California Desert region.

Registration fee for the conference is \$5. This will not cover food, as there are many convenient eating establishments nearby. Campgrounds and motels are also close to the conference site.

Presentations will be scheduled for participants to meet each other and the conservation leaders attending the conference.

Environmental leaders will conduct workshops designed to help conferees effectively deal with wilderness and wildlife issues during the next several months.

The previous Kernville Conference was very well received and highly praised by the 225 participants. Every-

thing is being done to insure that a similar or superior experience will be provided for attendees this May.

An art auction and raffle will be held at the conference to help pay any expenses not covered by pre-registration.

Conference organizers would appreciate advance

reservations so they can meet expenses which primarily occur prior to the conference itself. Send your check (\$5 per person) to the Kern Plateau Association, c/o Bob Barnes, P.O. Box 749, Porterville, CA 93258. Where else can you find such an interesting weekend for five dollars?

# Reader's Opinion

To the Editor:

What a happy surprise to receive a membership in CWC from Bob Barnes. He has always had a soft spot in our hearts - and now it's even softer. Will fill out the questionnaire after our next Audubon meeting at which I'll ask for more ideas that I can muster!

Betsy Collins  
Atascadero

organization, Humane Civic Assoc. (HCA), to lend you support. HCA works on a state level to protect animals (domestic and wild), but we'd be glad to add our clout to any important environmental issue - we must all hang together, eh?

Lori L. Paul  
Los Angeles

### Notice to Readers

The *Wilderness Record* encourages reader response and comment. We hope you will feel free to express yourself concerning wilderness issues of interest to you or in response to articles and options appearing in the *Record*. The Editor reserves the right to condense or edit any letter received.

To the Editor:

Thank you for your letter and literature about your organization. Please send me whatever amount and type of materials you deem appropriate to be distributed free to our customers at Holubar Mountaineering. Please also keep me informed of emergencies so that I can in turn alert members in my



# Coalition in Action

## Advisory Committee Named

The California Wilderness Coalition is pleased to announce the formation of an advisory committee of ten prominent California environmentalists. Committee members represent a wide spectrum of the environmental movement, from professional and volunteer conservationists to photographers and writers.

The Board of Directors and staff of the Coalition call upon the advisory committee members for advice and help on issues, fundraising, media contacts, etc.

The following are the ten members of the advisory committee (their affiliations and occupations are listed for informational purposes):

Harriet Allen of Spring Valley is president of the Desert Protective Council and a member of the California Coastal Commission.

David R. Brower of Berkeley is chairman of Friends of the

Earth.

Joseph Fontaine of Tehachapi is president of the Sierra Club.

David Gaines of Lee Vining is chairperson of the Mono Lake Committee.

Phillip Hyde of Taylorsville is an internationally known photographer.

Norman B. Livermore, Jr., of San Rafael is a Fish and Game Commissioner and past Secretary for Resources of the State of California.

Michael McCloskey of Piedmont is executive director of the Sierra Club.

Nancy S. Pearlman of Los Angeles is executive director of the Ecology Center of Southern California.

Raymond J. Sherwin of San Francisco is a Superior Court Judge and past president of the Sierra Club.

Thomas Winnett of Berkeley is the owner and publisher of *Wilderness Press*.

The Board of Directors and the staff of the California Wilderness Coalition feel it is important that members of the CWC know that their wilderness contributions are effectively used. The two pie charts, one for income and one for disbursements, illustrate the Coalition budget for 1980.

The slice of the pie labeled "office" includes items such as rent, monthly telephone service, computer labels, and office supplies. Much of the office category is necessary for our work on

issues.

Our publications continue to be a major portion of our expenses. The *Wilderness Record* is the primary cost in this category, along with other items like the *Wilderness Information Service*.

While the amount spent on fundraising may seem high compared to the income category of the same name, much of the new member income and some of the donations are "fundraising" projects.

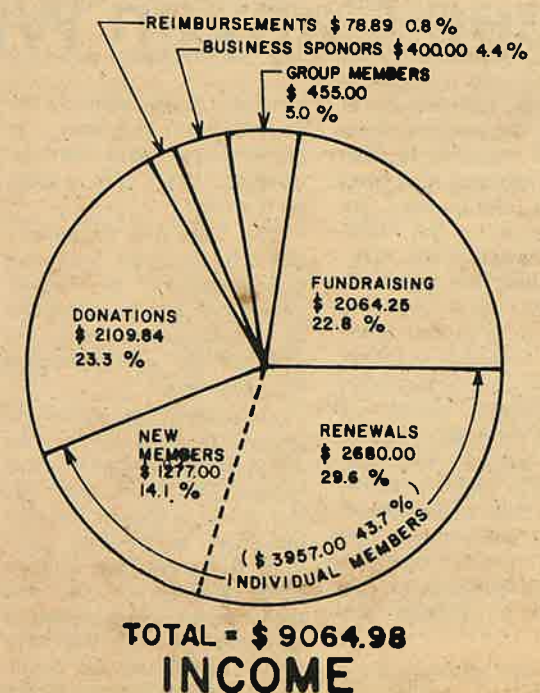
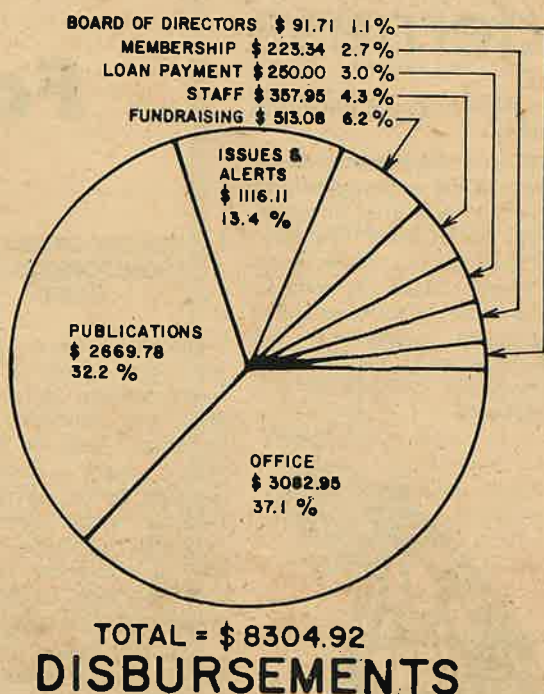
Not included on the charts was the CETA project which employed Dennis Coules and

Archie Douglas for the first six months of last year. Their salaries and some expenses were paid by CETA with the Coalition providing office space and supervision.

Funding the Coalition in 1981 will be a major challenge. We are projecting a five-fold increase in disbursements this year to meet the needs of our members and the issues. Since the threats to California's wild lands have never been greater, the Board of Directors has hired two employees and ordered an increase in issue work, media

development, and fundraising projects. Our ability to continue this expanded program will depend upon the involvement and donations from our members, groups, businesses, and other friends of wilderness.

The Board and staff believe the Coalition provides vital functions to the wilderness movement in California and that we deliver a maximum amount of results per dollar donated. We hope you agree and will help us in 1981 with your generous donations.



Graphic by Mike Nolasco

# DESERT UPDATE

## The Desert Plan

Last December Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus approved the final plan for the 12.1 million acres of public land in the California Desert Conservation Area. A major change in the draft plan was the designation of the East Mojave as a national scenic area.

Wilderness recommendations remained nearly the same, with only the Funeral Mountains added to make a final total of 2,099,000

acres proposed for "controlled use." The Bureau of Land Management acknowledges that more than 5.5 million acres of the desert still remain wild, but their recommendation for preservation as wilderness is less than half the potential acreage.

The 1 1/2 million acre East Mojave National Scenic Area designation by Secretary Andrus is seen as an attempt to defuse efforts to have this magnificent portion of the

California desert added to the national park system. Groups such as Citizens for a Mojave National Park have been working to convince Congress to act to preserve this area since earlier plans by the Bureau of Land Management failed to recognize the outstanding natural and cultural values of this region.

No regulations currently exist for a national scenic area. Conservationists are working to develop strong measures that will preserve the wilderness values of the numerous roadless areas in the East Mojave. If the Bureau of Land Management fails to enact good regulations for the scenic area, efforts to have the land transferred to the National Park Service will be accelerated.

## East Mojave Scenic Area

\*\*\*\*\*

*The California Wilderness Coalition is active in the campaign to protect the East Mojave and the proposed wilderness areas in this region. The following articles on the national scenic area and three of these potential wilderness areas were prepared by the California Desert Alliance.*

\*\*\*\*\*

The East Mojave National Scenic Area is a masterpiece of Nature. It is a land of superlatives. Cima dome is the world's largest Joshua tree forest. Kelso Dunes are the second highest dunes in the Americas. Clark Mountain, at 7,929 feet, is the Mojave Desert's tallest peak. The 32 Cindercones are a National Landmark. Soda Lake and the Mojave Sink form the sink of the Mojave River -- one of the few rivers in the world to flow away from the ocean. Mitchell Caverns is a major tourist attraction. The Old Mojave Road, with its ruins of Army posts and Indian conflicts, tells the story of the Mojave Desert's first wagon road.

The East Mojave is one of the most scenic areas in North America. The heart of the East Mojave National Scenic Area is characterized by raw, rocky ranges -- a rugged upthrusting backbone of mountains extending from the Granites and Providences, northeastward through the Midhills and New Yorks to the Castle Buttes. Add to this the lunar landscape of the Mojave Cindercones, the towering Kelso Dunes, the Devil's Playground, Cima Dome, massive Clark Mountain, and other ranges, mesas, washes, and valleys. In addition to all this scenery, there are more than 300 species of wildlife, 700 plant species, and an abundance of cultural treasures such as Fort Piute ruins, the Mojave Road, Indian artifacts, the Kelso Depot. The East Mojave is truly the "Gem of the California Desert."

The East Mojave is one of the most pristine areas left on our fragile planet. One feels a sense of timelessness here -- of unchanging eons stretching back to the Dawn of Creation.

How will BLM manage this National Scenic Area? Certainly, it will be a multiple-use management prescription, but with emphasis on protecting the natural and cultural scenic values.

In 1976 several groups and individuals angered by BLM mismanagement of this superlative scenic area, banded together to form the Mojave National Park Coalition. Two bills were introduced into Congress to establish a 1 1/2 million acre "Mojave National Park."

In 1980, BLM established the 1 1/2 million acre "East Mojave National Scenic Area." Will BLM management now be able to protect the "Gem of the California Desert?" Or is the Mojave National Park proposal a preferred alternative? There are still many threats to the naturalness of the East Mojave. We must continue to band together to pressure BLM to manage this "Gem" responsibly, both for present and unborn generations.



Kelso Dunes



South Providence Mtns.

Photo by Jim Eaton

## New York Mountains

The New York Mountains are a truly unique feature in the California Desert. From an ecological standpoint, the range is quite remarkable. It has one of the best botanical collections in the East Mojave (over 288 species, according to Thorne). A unique stand of Rocky Mountain white fir trees can be found near the top of New York Mountain (7,532'). Caruthers Canyon may be the best botanical area in the Eastern Mojave.

A stand of locust, located at Bathtub Spring is the only known stand in California.

The New York Mountains exhibit outstanding scenic

quality. These are the highest mountains in the East Mojave Region. Pinto Mountain (6,144') is a striking feature of recent volcanic origin. Vertical walls of lava form bands interspersed with steep talus slopes. The northwest side of the New Yorks is very steep where the mountains rise abruptly from Ivanpah Valley. The interior area of the range possesses some of the highest primitive values in the region--the resulting opportunities for solitude are probably not matched anywhere else in the region.

The New York Mountains harbor outstanding wildlife habitats for bighorn sheep, mule deer, porcupine, mountain lion, and many other animals. Over sixty species of birds, including golden eagles and prairie falcons, nest here.

Spectacular canyons such as Fourth of July Canyon, Caruthers Canyon, Cottonwood Canyon, Butcher Knife Canyon, and others dominate the slopes. These canyons house species of manzanita, California lilac, oak, silk tassel, ceanothus, and yerba santa which are characteristic of coastal California. What are these coastal plants doing in the

middle of the desert? What better way to protect these isolated islands than by wilderness designation?

The New York Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA) contains 35,583 acres of public lands. The New Yorks are one of the most forested ranges within the California Desert. There are no active mines within this WSA.

The majestic New Yorks form the headwaters of extensive desert washes including Kelso Wash, Watson Wash, and the washes leading into Ivanpah Dry Lake.

BLM states that the New York Mountains is an "Area of outstanding scenic splendor, natural wonder, and scientific importance that merits special attention and care in management to insure preservation in a natural condition." In 1979, BLM designated the New York Mountains WSA. In 1980, BLM did not recommend the New Yorks as a wilderness area.

Piles of documents support wilderness designation for the New Yorks. Congressional action seems to be the only alternative to continued BLM neglect.

## Kelso Dunes

The Kelso Dunes are the second highest sand dunes in the Western Hemisphere. Only Great Sand Dunes National Monument in Colorado is higher.

Sweeping up to 700 feet, the spectacular Kelso Dunes are sculpted by the winds and sands of the Devil's Playground. The Kelso Dunes are "musical dunes" or "singing dunes" -- a rare geologic phenomenon.

The Kelso Dunes are an outstanding floral area with evening primrose, desert willow, desert sunflower, desert lily, and many other annuals. Galleta grass and some rare grasses also form part of this eco-system.

Educational groups from all over the country come to study the unique life systems of the Kelso Dunes. The Mojave fringe-toes lizard exists in this habitat as well as seven endemic species of insects.

The towering Kelso Dunes are perhaps the most popular photographic place in the California Desert. The scenic majesty of the dunes, the rugged backdrop of the Pro-

vidence Mountains and Granite Mountains, and the utter vastness of the Devil's Playground provide the setting for one of the most breathtaking views in North America.

The proposed Kelso Dunes Wilderness Area contains 45,000 acres -- the vast majority of which is public land administered by BLM.

The Kelso Dunes have been closed to motorized vehicle use since 1972 -- however there is easy access to the dunes from Kelbaker Road. BLM has designated the dunes as a Natural Environment Area and an Outstanding Natural Area. In 1980 BLM recommended that all 45,000 acres be designated wilderness. But this unique habitat is threatened by grazing and mining.

Clearly, the majestic values of this area merit wilderness status now. The Kelso Dunes are one of the Crown Jewels of the Eastern Mojave. The outstanding scenic, geologic, wildlife, plantlife, and educational values of this endemic dune system certainly merit wilderness status.

## Midhills

The Midhills, lying between the magnificent Providence Mountains and the impressive New York Mountains, are part of the towering backbone of the Eastern Mojave.

The Midhills form a biological island in this part of the desert. The Midhills have large stands of Utah juniper and Great Basin sagebrush. Broad sagebrush covered valleys surrounded by hills with pinyon pines and junipers impart a landscape similar to that of Utah. The Midhills form one of the California desert's finest pinyon-juniper habitats for bird species and mule-deer.

The Midhills are a pristine wilderness because human use has historically been limited. The Eagle Crags Archeological District, however, was a significant visitation area of the Prehistoric Chemehuevi Indians. There are no active mines in the area.

One of the true tests of wilderness is that the area still has unnamed peaks. The only named peak in the Midhills is Columbia Mountain, which at 5,673 feet, dominates Macedonia Canyon. Three unnamed peaks, lying to the north, are designated only by their elevations: 5,799, 5,810, and 5,879. These mile high peaks form a winter paradise when the snows come. This pinyon-juniper forest is a desert de-

light in winter.

The proposed Midhills Wilderness Area is easily defined by accessible roads: Cedar Canyon Road on the north, Wildhorse Canyon Road on the east, Macedonia Canyon on the south, and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks by Cima Road on the west.

The Midhills already receive heavy recreational use. They are a major recreation site in the Eastern Mojave. The popular Midhills Campground, which lies in the pinyon-juniper forest, is a jumpoff point for wilderness recreation such as hiking, nature study, camping, picnicking, sight-seeing, and photography.

In 1979, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) inventoried the Midhills (WSA 264) and found them suitable for wilderness designation. However, in 1980, BLM's Desert Plan recommended against wilderness. This wrong must be corrected.

The 15,000 acre Midhills Wilderness Area proposal lies overwhelmingly on public lands administered by BLM. It is vulnerable because it is easily accessible by good roads. The popular campground attracts many people. BLM is unable to manage the spectacular scenic and wilderness designation.

Photo by Jim Eaton

## Oil or Condors?

# Sespe-Frazier Roadless Area

After countless months of debate between conservationists and development interests, the future of the unusual Sespe - Frazier roadless area remains unresolved. Except for the huge Trinity Alps roadless area (over 600,000 acres), Sespe - Frazier is the largest piece of roadless land in California. Its fate is of great concern to environmentalists. To help us educate our members about this endangered area, Roger Lamoni, a Coalition volunteer and long-time resident of Ventura County, has written the following description of the area and of some of the issues under debate.

The Sespe - Frazier roadless area encompasses a large portion of the remarkable backcountry of northern Ventura County, in the Los Padres National Forest. The proposed wilderness area, covering some 320,700 acres, would be one of the largest in the state, and would protect some of the last truly wild land in southern California. The area that would be protected by a Sespe - Frazier Wilderness is unique in California, in that it is an area where several geographical and climatological regions overlap.

The region occupies that portion of south - central California known by geologists as "the big curve," for it is in this region that, due to the curving of the San Andreas Fault, the California coastline changes from a north - south to an east - west trending direction. The mountains of the Sespe - Frazier are mostly sedimentary, heavily faulted ranges not part of the Coast Range to the north, nor part of the Transverse Ranges to the east. In fact, the several major faults responsible for the Coast Range, Tehachapis, and Transverse Ranges all converge in the vicinity of the Sespe - Frazier.

This northwest - southeast orientation of the region is responsible for its widely varying climate and vegetation and makes the Sespe - Frazier a kind of transition zone of climate and geography between the mountains of northern and central California, and those of southern California. The Sespe - Frazier receives more rainfall than other regions of southern California, but a good bit

less than the Coast Ranges just to the north.

Portions of the Sespe - Frazier are semi - arid, receiving less than 20 inches of precipitation annually. These areas are home to such vegetation as sagebrush, yucca, juniper, and pinyon pine. Other areas, however, such as the coastal canyons and higher mountains can receive over 50 inches of precipitation in one winter season, and support riparian woodlands with oak, alder, and sycamore, extensive and diversified chaparral, and scattered coniferous forests. Summers in the Sespe - Frazier are hot and dry, with temperatures commonly over 100° in the inner canyon, and almost no rainfall between March and December. Thus, spring through early summer is the best time to visit the Sespe - Frazier, when creeks are full, temperatures mild, and vegetation green.

The topography of the Sespe - Frazier ranges from deep riparian canyons and steep chaparral - covered slopes, to higher peaks clad in pine and fir. Elevations in the roadless area range from less than 1000 feet in such canyons as the Sespe and Santa Paula, to over 7500 feet at Reyes Peak.

Mountain ranges within the proposed wilderness include the Topatopa Mountains, which rise abruptly from the coastal plain to elevations of over 6000 feet, Pine Mountain, the highest range, and the Hopper Mountains, comprising most of the present 53,000 - acre Sespe Condor Sanctuary. Also included is a large portion of Sespe Creek, one of the few important trout streams in southern California (and kept stocked by the California Department of Fish and Game). Because of this extremely varied terrain, the Sespe - Frazier is considered to offer some of the most strenuous and challenging hiking and backpacking anywhere in the state.

The Topatopa Mountains (it is believed that "topatopa" is Chumash Indian for "north") are a popular hiking and backpacking area of the Los Padres. Included in the area is lush Santa Paula Canyon, with its spectacular rock formations, waterfalls, and outstanding groves of big-

cone spruce, Sisar Canyon, a popular route that offers outstanding vistas of coastal Ventura County, the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands, and Hines Peak (6704 feet) which provides clear-day vistas of much of southern California.

The eastern slopes of the Topatopas are known nesting and foraging areas for the California condor, and, hence, are within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary (and are off - limits to visitors).

Pine Mountain, a popular area with hikers due to its pine and fir shaded trails, is the highest range in the Sespe - Frazier. It culminates in Reyes Peak at an elevation of 7510 feet. (Reyes Peak would form the northwest boundary of the proposed wilderness). Pine Mountain is a prime Condor observation area, and also offers outstanding views of the Pacific Ocean, the Cuyama Valley, the Cuyama Badlands, and

the Mount Pinos area. Pine Mountain is rich in local history (it is the locale for much of Louis L'Armour's book, *The Californios*), and boasts of a diversified Sierran forest including jeffrey pine, sugar pine, white fir, and incense cedar.

In addition, the roadless area contains the Sespe Hot Springs, an undeveloped thermal area located north of Sespe Creek, near Matau Flat. Through the years, the hot springs have soothed many a hiker's weary bones.

By far the most unique wildlife species residing within the Sespe - Frazier is the California condor. Nesting sites of the 30 - or - so remaining birds are within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, and also are known to exist throughout the Sespe - Frazier. Thus, wilderness area designation for the Sespe - Frazier is desirable, as it would exclude such "multi uses" as ORV recreation, oil, and mineral de-

velopment near these noise-sensitive birds. Other more common wildlife in the region include mule and blacktail deer, black bear (who periodically invade lowland valleys to munch on avocados), mountain lion, coyotes, and redtailed hawks. Some hikers, though, would argue that the most common form of wildlife in the Sespe - Frazier is the Pacific diamond-back rattlesnake, and that the most common vegetation is poison oak.

The Sespe - Frazier was classified as a "further planning" area by the U.S. Forest Service's RARE II process. Originally, the Sespe - Frazier was included in Rep. Phillip Burton's (D - San Francisco) California Wilderness Bill (H.R. 7702). Due to pressure from the two Congressmen representing Ventura County, Barry Goldwater, Jr. (R - Woodland Hills), and Bob Lagomarsino (R - Santa Barbara), however, the Sespe -

Frazier was removed from the bill, and remained allocated to further planning.

As there are known oil deposits in the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, Representatives Goldwater and Lagomarsino apparently did not want to put these resources off - limits to development. Just how this oil is to be developed within a wildlife sanctuary is not known. Perhaps it is merely a matter of waiting until the last condor dies, and then opening up the area to the oil companies. Why the relatively small area of oil deposits was not excluded from the roadless area to allow its inclusion in H.R. 7702 is also not known.

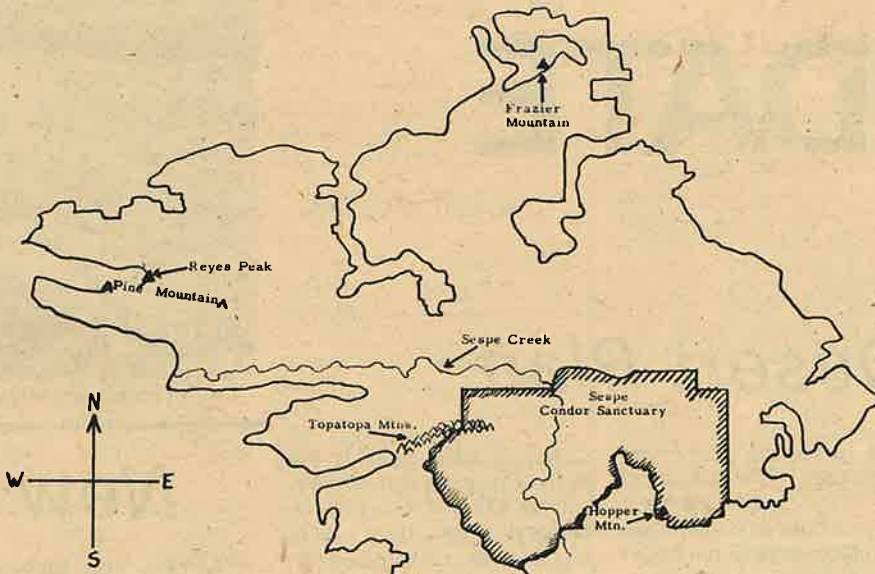
Thus, the Sespe - Frazier roadless area remains in the "further planning" land classification status. The only method left to conservationists to get this extensive natural area declared an official wilderness is that of applying pressure on both the USFS and Congressmen Goldwater and Lagomarsino, via individual comments.

Your comments supporting wilderness designation for the Sespe - Frazier Roadless Area should be sent to; Forest Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest, 42 Aero Camino, Goleta, CA 93107. A map of Los Padres, including the Sespe - Frazier area can be obtained from the same address for 50 cents. More complete information on the area, including information concerning specific trails and campsites, can be found in Dennis R. Gagnon's, *Hiking the Santa Barbara Backcountry*, soon to be published in a second edition by Viking Publishers.

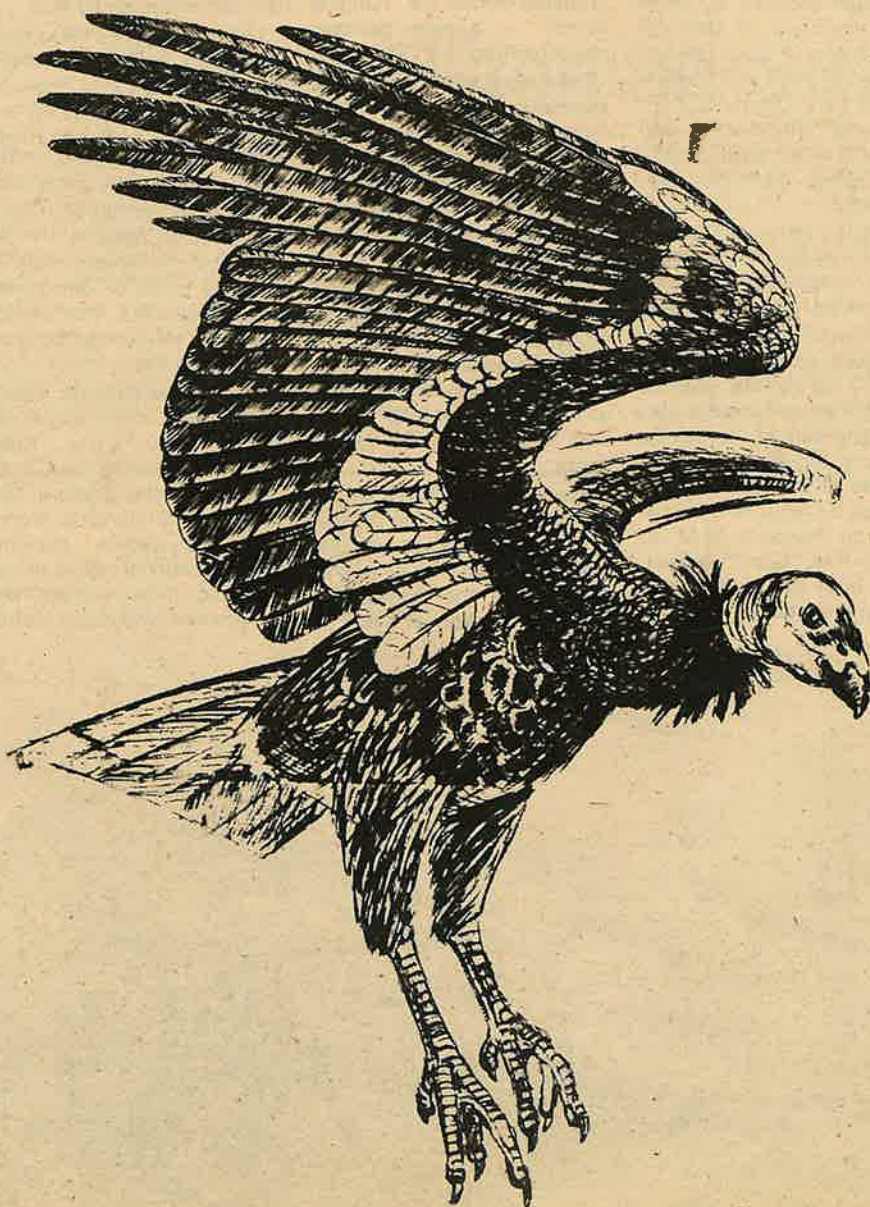
## Food for Thought

"Several hundred years of European forestry and about half a century of experience in the United States offers ample proof that the best forestry rests not upon a single purpose but a number of purposes. On the same area of land it is often possible to grow timber, furnish food and shelter for game animals and other wildlife, provide protection to watersheds, offer healthful recreational opportunities, enhance the beauty of the landscape, and promote the general welfare. The best forestry takes account of all these values and works out a comprehensive and coordinated technique to handle them efficiently. Such a composite plan of management is appropriately called **multi-purpose forestry**. Rarely is a single purpose in forestry so overwhelmingly dominant as to warrant the exclusion of other objectives. Multi-purpose forestry has its objective the full and balanced development and use of all forest resources and the greatest sustained output of forest products, uses, and services. Multi-purpose forestry programs are not developed by accident, nor are they the result of planless endeavor. Only through conscious, deliberate, and planned efforts are the best results obtained. To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, and to live as a people, we need forestry, and multi-purpose forestry offers the best means to get it and keep it."

Joseph S. Illick  
*An Outline of  
General Forestry*  
(Barnes & Noble,  
New York, 1935)



SESPE - FRAZIER ROADLESS AREA



Graphic by Dick Smith

## Majestic Birds Threatened

Since before memory, the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) has soared silently on thermal air currents over western North America. This enormous scavenger, whose nine-foot wingspan supports a 25-pound body, lives for as many as four decades. It nests in cliffside caves; a pair raises only one chick every other year.

At one time, the California condor ranged from British Columbia to Baja California. But with unbridled expansion of sites on the West Coast, the shy condor has lost much of its territory to people and their civilization. Gradually, it has been confined to a smaller and smaller range. Now found only within the state of California, its last holdout is a small area of the Los Padres National Forest, northeast of Santa Barbara. No more than

30 condors are thought to remain.

Even in this area, the condor is not safe. Developers plan to tap the area's oil, timber, natural gas, and mineral resources. Engineers plan to dam nearby watersheds. Off-road vehicles crisscross the range, intruding with noise and smells. Hunters have been known to take pot-shots at the birds. Pollution, particularly pesticides and rodent poisons, poses a health hazard of unknown dimensions. Well-meaning biologists, who have handled condors in an attempt to learn more about them, have seriously harmed these majestic creatures.

Many people realize that condors, faced with so many threats, may soon be extinct. People agree that we must save the condor, but they don't always agree on how to go about it.

# Where Wilderness Came of Age

## Desolation Wilderness

by Archie Douglas

At 63,475 acres, the Desolation Wilderness in the High Sierra is not of notable size in comparison with other federal wilderness areas in California. However, the fact that it exists in its present form is a worthy monument to the efforts of hard-working wilderness supporters who won an important philosophical battle in Congress in 1969 with the adoption of the area's current boundaries. Their victory established a precedent for wilderness legislation, a precedent perhaps even more vital to conservationists' efforts than creation of the wilderness area itself.

Located immediately west of Lake Tahoe, on both sides of the Sierra Nevada crest, Desolation is less than 100 miles from Sacramento and only hours from the San Francisco Bay area. The wilderness is popular with hikers due to its rugged mountain scenery and alpine environment. Lakes make up about 3 percent of the area, and provide a special attraction for fishing enthusiasts.

The wilderness has a small summer population of California black-tailed deer and California mule deer, and a few black bear. A wide variety of small mammals and birds frequent the area.

The outstanding feature of the Desolation Wilderness is that from which it draws its name - its rocky, barren appearance. Signs of glacial activity are overwhelming throughout the area, particularly in Desolation Valley, where the heaviest human use of the wilderness occurs.

Desolation contains the headwaters of the Rubicon River, the South Fork of the American River, and the Truckee River watershed within El Dorado County. Due to its location and its heavy annual snowfall (approximately 360 inches), and because its basin-like topography forms a catchment for snow, the Desolation Valley region has long been regarded as an important water storage area for nearby agricultural and urban centers.

As a result, two applications for power withdrawal rights to water in the region were accepted prior to the establishment of a 40,744-acre Desolation Valley Primitive Area in 1931. Because the rights predated the creation of the Primitive Area they were honored in keeping with federal guidelines concerning previous uses of public land. The creation of Lake Aloha at the southern end of the wilderness, and of the Rubicon Reservoir to the north, relate to this decision.

Lake Aloha is a shallow,

1963, after many years of negotiation and study of alternate sites and facilities, and after many Forest Service conferences with conservationists who opposed the project. The Forest Service eventually decided - that the reservoir and accompanying diversion tunnel were indispensable to the American River Project, and that construction of these facilities would "serve the American people more than would its denial."

The Rubicon dam is made of grey concrete and, like the Lake Aloha dam, blends reasonably well with the surrounding rock. A tunnel diverts water to Rockbound Lake. An access road used during construction of the dam has been closed to motorized traffic, and nature is slowly returning to the appearance of a trail. SMUD uses helicopters periodically to land at the dam and read gauges, an activity the Forest Service has characterized as an existing use and, therefore, allowable under provisions of the Wilderness Act.

In the spring of 1969, the Forest Service submitted a proposal for designation of a 63,475 acre Desolation Wilderness for consideration by the Senate. The proposal received unusually emphatic support from conservationists, many of whom had previously scorned Forest Service wilderness proposals as being too conservative in scope.

The Senate committee reviewing the proposal raised the question as to whether or not the inclusion of two dams within the boundaries might dilute the wilderness concept. Lacking a precedent, the Committee decided that, due to the circumstances surrounding the use, establishment, and management of the dams, they were acceptable within the proposed wilderness boundaries. The committee recommended passage of the proposed Desolation Wilderness bill, and the Senate acted quickly. The bill passed through the Senate with a minimum of

### U.S.G.S. TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:

The Fallen Leaf 15 - minute quadrangle covers most of the Desolation Wilderness. The Homewood, Loon Lake, Rockbound Valley, Emerald Bay, Echo Lake and Pyramid Peak 7.5 minute maps provide more complete, detailed coverage.

A brochure and map showing trails is available free from area ranger stations, Forest Supervisor, and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

Two guidebooks cover the area: *Desolation Wilderness* by Robert S. Wood, and *Tahoe - Yosemite Trail* by Winnet & Denison, both published by Wilderness Press.

900 - acre reservoir constructed in 1865 and enlarged in 1875. The dam is made of native rock masonry and blends well with the surrounding glaciated granite. The area flooded by Lake Aloha is also rock. In early days, the water was used for mining, and later for irrigation of lands to the west. In recent years, the water has been used for power generation outside the wilderness area by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

The Rubicon Reservoir was built by the Sacramento Metropolitan Utility District in



Rockbound Lake

Photo by McClellan Air Force Base

interference.

In early July, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs began work on the bill the Senate had passed on for consideration. Developments took a surprising turn for conservationists when, in a startling 17-11 vote, the committee recommended excluding from wilderness designation both reservoirs and two long fingers of surrounding land totaling 3,200 acres. When the matter came to the House floor, Rep. Wayne N. Aspinall of Colorado, chairman of the committee and a notorious opponent of wilderness legislation, led an effort to win approval of the exclusion.

The debate focused on the concept of purity in wilderness areas - the House had to consider the degree to which land included in the National Wilderness System must be pure and untouched by man. Thus, under the pretense of protecting the National Wilderness System's integrity, opponents of wilderness sought to weaken or

defeat this and future wilderness proposals, and to exclude extensive areas from the National Wilderness System.

According to Chairman Aspinall, the intent of the Wilderness Act is wilderness areas "are to be as unchanged, primitive, and primeval as possible." Another member of the Interior Committee, Rep. John Kyle of Iowa, asserted that inclusion of the reservoirs would "diminish what is a pure concept of what wilderness shall be."

Seven other committee members, however, defended the inclusion and disputed the purity argument. Rep. John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania, ranking minority member and an outspoken leader in the fight for the San Rafael Wilderness the previous year, cited language in the Wilderness Act allowing some evidences of human impact (when "substantially unnoticeable"). Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona pointed out that a number of small reservoirs actually were brought into the National Wilderness System in 1964 with the system's establishment.

"It would be nice to have our national wilderness system absolutely pure and completely free of any sign of the hand of man," Udall asserted. "But the fact is that we are getting a late start in this business of preserving America's wilderness ... We cannot have perfection."

With several colleagues, Udall also argued that the committee - voted omissions would jeopardize protection of the balance of the Desolation acreage. Saylor characterized the committee action as an "attempt to eviscerate the wilderness concept as passed by the Congress."

In late September, the Desolation Wilderness Bill, including the 3,200 - acre exclusion, came to a vote on the House floor. Prior to the vote, Rep. Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson, in whose district the proposed wilderness was located, offered substitute language restoring the deleted acreage, a move conservationists had hoped for and applauded.

Johnson's measure, also supported by SMUD, PG & E,

and the Forest Service, was approved by voice vote, insuring passage of the entire Desolation Wilderness proposal. President Nixon signed the act creating the new Wilderness Area on Oct. 10.

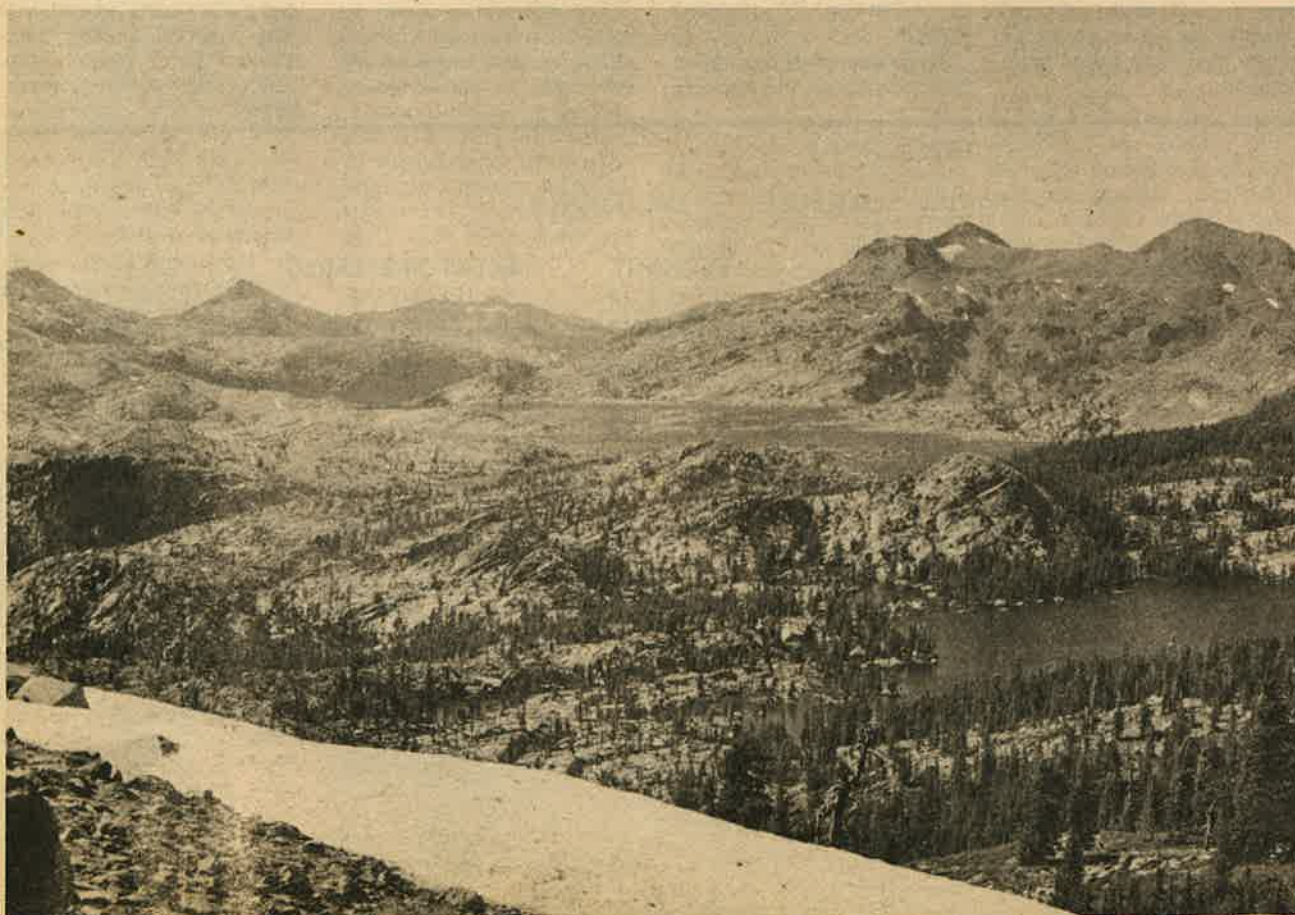
In view of his later attempts to foil conservationist-supported wilderness legislation, it is ironic that Johnson should have rescued the Desolation bill. However, observers in Washington now feel that Johnson's support of the restoration of the contested 3,200 acres was more a reflection of his faith in the conclusions drawn by the Forest Service and the utilities than of any desire to help conservationists.

For wilderness proponents, creation of the Desolation Wilderness in 1969 set an encouraging precedent. The argument for absolute purity in wilderness standards had been effectively defused, weakening the efforts of opponents of wilderness to dilute the integrity and extensiveness of the National Wilderness System.

The result meant that when presented with a choice between wilderness with existing minor intrusions, or loss of an extensive area from protective wilderness designation, Congress could choose the former without reservation or fear of contravening the intent of the Wilderness Act.

The battle over Desolation demonstrated that a wilderness area need not be absolutely pristine to be included in the National Wilderness System. This concept was to prove quite useful to conservationists in later wilderness struggles, particularly that involving the Point Reyes Wilderness.

Conservationists proved in the Desolation fight that the crucial factor in determining a proposed Wilderness Area's suitability is its purity and wild character as a whole, not acre by acre. That the Desolation Wilderness exists today is testament to a significant victory for conservationists, a triumph that helped keep the wilderness movement alive and that therefore contributed to the subsequent preservation of countless acres of wild land across the nation.



Desolation Valley - Lake Aloha in Distance

Photo by Lloyd Fergus

# Forest Planning

cont. from  
page 1

## WHATEVER LOLO WANTS

forest resources sorespots like clearcutting. So, in 1976, Congress passed an extensive amendment to RPA called the National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

NFMA requires the U.S. Forest Service to develop a plan for each of the 9 regions and 154 national forests in the nation, and it provides standards and guidelines for management to ensure consideration of all forest resources. Regulations implementing NFMA were published by the Forest Service in September 1979.

## THROUGH THE GREEN MAZE

A forest plan is the document that must provide direction "on the ground." It is here that multi-use (see box) will be put to the test. The plan specifies the amount of the forest's land that will be allocated to timber production and to wilderness; the output of timber and the "output" of plant and wildlife habitat protection, recreation, and visual quality; and such management practices as herbicide use, fertilization, and planting of genetically "improved" trees.

The plan will be the end result of an arduous and intricate process that varies from region to region and forest to forest; but that will include at least these fundamental steps:

**1. Identifying the issues:** Here's where it will be decided what's important. The Forest Service can be counted on to include timber harvest level; it will be up to others to make sure that wilderness, recreation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and soil protection are included as well.

**2. Developing criteria:** The plan will be judged according to guidelines established at this juncture. Economic efficiency, physical and biological enhancement, and meeting of production goals will be primary.

**3. Collecting data:** What's going on in this forest, anyway? Just exactly what is available?

**4. Analyzing the management situation:** This is a critical step in which the planners study the costs and benefits of utilizing the available resources.

**5. Formulating alternatives:** The issues identified in step # 1 will appear in a range of alternative plans.

**6. Evaluating the effect of the alternatives:** How will life in and around the forest be made better or worse by each alternative?

**7. Evaluating alternatives:** The criteria developed in step #2 will be used to judge the options.

**8. Selecting an alternative:** The Chief (in the case of a region) or the Regional Forester (in the case of a forest) selects one alternative.

**9. Implementing the plan:** Theory goes into practice.

**10. Monitoring the plan:** Keeping an eye on things.

Right now, all 154 forests in the country are at one stage or another in this labyrinth. It may be too late to start at the beginning, but it's not too late to jump in the middle. Call your local or regional office of the Forest Service to find out where they are in the process and ask them to send you what they've done so far.

The Lolo National Forest sprawls over two million acres of northwestern Montana. It is the home of elk, mountain goats, perigrine falcons, bald eagles, wolverines, bighorn sheep, moose, and the grizz. It is also the first national forest in the country that will complete a forest plan under the new NFMA regulations. It will, for better or for worse, serve as a prototype for subsequent forest plans across the nation.

Not surprisingly, the importance of the Lolo was recognized not only by the Sierra Club and other environmental groups. The timber industry has been working with a massive \$250,000 budget and a Portland-based consulting firm to coordinate their comments, and timber groups sent numerous "committees" to the Lolo this past summer.

"We realized that a significant effort would have to be mounted to counter the industry's comments," said John Hooper, the Sierra Club's Issues Specialist. "Particularly since our initial sense of the plan was that it was fundamentally sound, with moderate timber goals, sensitive consideration of wildlife habitat, and streamside and soil protection."

Recognizing that no single environmental group had the time, money, or expertise to prepare a comprehensive set of comments, the task was divided into twelve subject areas which had been determined the most critical to review. The group of people addressing each area spent two days with the Lolo planners in early July, where they received a detailed briefing on the plan from the Forest Service and participated in an on-the-ground tour of the forest.

With this foundation, the group stayed in touch by memo and by phone. The draft comments were eventually sent to Hooper, who functioned as compiler and editor. Before being submitted to the Forest Service, the comments were once more sent to each participant. "It was a good working team effort," said Hooper. "We hope this will serve as a catalyst for comprehensive environmental review of other forest plans."

## COME EARLY, COME OFTEN STAY LATE

NFMA extends an invitation to the public for their partici-

pation no fewer than 11 times, and the Forest Service regulations require that the public participate "early and often throughout the development, revision, and significant amendment of plans."

But the hospitality of the Forest Service may not be as warm as it seems. To date, many of the Forest Service public involvement documents have failed to inform people adequately of conditions of the forest, of legal or monetary constraints on what can be done, and of the matters the planners intend to address whether or not mentioned on a public response form. The Forest Service is spending a lot of time and money seeking public response without providing information specific enough to generate informed and thoughtful comments.

For example, it should not take any forest or region a round of public involvement to conclude that "the amount of timber harvest" is an issue. Instead, what is needed is public input on the specific impacts and tradeoffs involved in logging specific areas and on specific logging methods.

The Forest Service regulations contain rather formidable requirements regarding the timeliness of the public's response to its invitation; if you don't come when called, you might not have an opportunity for another ten years. Decisions and plans may not be appealable un-

less challengers can document their participation on the issue in question from early in the process. That is, if a forest is already formulating alternatives and is not considering herbicide use because no one identified it as an issue in step #1, it may not be taken into consideration at this late date. It is important, therefore, that citizen forest planners shine a bright and early light on the issues that concern them.

## BAREFOOT TREE DRS.

"You don't need to be a forester to recognize bad management any more than you need to be a doctor to recognize ill health," says Gordon Robinson, Sierra Club Forestry Consultant. The decisions being made right now about those seemingly serene expanses of land are complex and technical, but they can be demystified. The plans are being made quickly, but they can be slowed down if people are there to insist that the law be followed. Some of the real conflicts may be obscured, but they can be uncovered if people know what they're looking for. "The intensity and objectivity with which people can argue will depend on how much they are able to learn," continues Robinson. "But you don't need to know very much to make some of these points. Don't be shy about it! People can trust their intuition -- that's the important thing."

# For The Passenger Pigeon

In addition to Gordon Robinson's principles of excellent forestry (see box), there are a number of issues that will probably be -- or should be -- of concern throughout the planning process.

**Wilderness** The fate of many RARE-II "further planning" areas, as well as controversial "non-wilderness" lands, may be determined in the planning process, and timber and other commodity management should not dictate their development. Also, it is important to continue political campaigns for wilderness designation of specific areas.

**Water Quality** The Forest Service regulations call for 100-foot special study areas along "the edges of all perennial streams, lakes, and other bodies of water... No management practices causing detrimental changes in water temperature or chemical composition, blockages of water courses, and deposits of sediment will be permitted within these areas which seriously and adversely affect water conditions of fish habitat." This 100-foot area should be considered a minimum, and streamside management should be fully

explored.

**Silvicultural (logging) Methods.** It was not until the mid 1960s that a major movement began which charged that clearcutting was damaging soil, water quality, wildlife habitat, and forest productivity, not to mention aesthetics. In NFMA, clearcutting is allowed when it is the "optimal method." The principles of multi-use need to be kept in mind when considering any silvicultural system. The regulations specify national limits on the maximum size of clearcuts, but the size of and the space between clearcuts will be determined by forest planners at the regional level.

**Old Growth** Old growth forests are a unique aesthetic resource and they provide essential wildlife habitat for many species. Some politicians and forest economists are advocating rapid liquidation of old growth; specific areas in forest plans need to be pinned down as old growth refuges. The passenger pigeon, which depended on old growth hardwood forests in the eastern U.S., disappeared forever when those forests were cut down.

## Excellent Forestry

*Excellent forestry costs nothing but restraint and offers the greatest gifts as a forest can provide.*

"The principles of excellent forestry are these. First is practicing **sustained yield**. That means limiting the amount of timber that is removed from a forest to that

quantity which can be removed annually in perpetuity. The quality may improve and the quantity may increase, but **neither will ever decline**. The second principle is to practice **long rotations** (a rotation is the period of time between one final harvest of timber and the next). That is, letting the trees grow until

they've reached physiological maturity before cutting them, or at least allowing them to reach a size that produces a sustained yield of high-quality wood, in contrast with mere wood fiber.

"The third principle is to practice **uneven-aged management**. The Forest Service defines this as "the combination of actions that results in creation of forests in which trees of several or many ages may grow together." The fourth principle is to take extreme precautions to **protect the soil**. The nutrients are

concentrated in the top layer of the soil and that layer must be protected.

"A last principle is to maintain the habitat and the populations of all the species and animals in a given forest.

"Now all this can be done rather easily, it doesn't require a lot of computer technology or anything, it just requires common sense and concern and the ability to observe."

Gordon Robinson  
Sierra Club  
Forestry Consultant

# Forest Planning Slide Show

The new National Forest planning process may be one of the most complicated but important issues that environmentalists will have to grapple with in this decade.

Because of the multiplicity and complexity of forest planning on public lands, we must organize as never before to insure maximum public participation.

One tool that environmentalists can utilize to interest people in becoming active in National Forest planning is a slide show. The Northstate Wilderness Committee is developing a slide program designed to stimulate the public concerning the planning process.

The program will provide information about the planning

process and raise questions concerning such controversial Forest Service practices as clearcutting, water quality management, wildlife habitat enhancement, mining of old-growth timber, and destruction of wilderness areas.

The slide set is slated for completion by April 1 and it will be available to groups and individuals to show around

California. Hopefully, it will provide a useful tool for environmentalists to use in educating the public and in organizing a concerted conservationist response to the Forest Planning process.

For more information, contact Steve Evans, Northstate Wilderness Committee, 708 Cherry St., Chico, CA 95926, or call (916) 891-6424.

TABLE 1  
FOREST PLANNING SCHEDULE - CALIFORNIA

FOREST	ANALYZE MANAGEMENT SITUATION	FORMULATE ALTERNATIVES	ESTIMATE EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES	SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR DRAFT EIS	SELECT ALTERNATIVE FOR FINAL EIS
REGION 5				6/81	12/81
ANGELES	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
CLEVELAND	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
ELDORADO	8/81	2/82		8/82	3/83
INYO	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
KLAMATH	DONE	DONE		6/15/81	12/81
LASSEN	5/82	11/82		5/83	12/83
LOS PADRES	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
MENDOCINO	5/82	11/82		5/83	12/83
MODOC	5/82	11/82		5/83	12/83
PLUMAS	5/82	11/82		5/83	12/83
SAN BERNARDINO	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
SEQUOIA	12/81	6/82		12/82	7/83
SHASTA-TRINITY	DONE	DONE		8/3/81	2/82
SIERRA	DONE	DONE		6/15/81	12/81
SIX RIVERS	DONE	DONE		6/15/81	12/81
STANISLAUS	8/81	2/82		8/82	3/83
TAHOE	8/81	2/82		8/82	3/83

Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*)

The spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*) is a characteristic resident of dense old-growth forests in western North America. This owl resides primarily on heavily forested mountain slopes and deeply shaded canyons. It is a relatively large species of owl and can be distinguished from other large western species by its round face, dark eyes, and heavily barred and spotted underparts.

Three subspecies of spotted owl have been named. They are commonly referred to as the California, Mexican, and northern spotted owls. The California subspecies is found on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada in forests from Tehama County south to Tulare County. A few range onto the east slope north of Lake Tahoe. A disjunct population occurs along the coastal slope of southern California mountains from Santa Barbara to San Diego counties, where deep ravines, well timbered with various combinations of oak, cottonwood, alder, sycamore and willow meet its habitat requirements.

The northern spotted owl is found in California, north of the San Francisco Bay area, and as far as Bella Coola, British Columbia.

The Mexican spotted owl, not a resident of California, lives in the southern Rockies and adjacent mountain ranges from central Colorado well into central Mexico.

Until quite recently little research has been undertaken on the life history and ecology of the spotted owl. Over the past decade, the U.S. Forest

Service in California and Oregon, the National Park Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) have undertaken studies of the species.

As with most owls, the majority of food items taken by *Strix occidentalis* are rodents. Although mammalian prey are most common, birds, amphibians, and insects are also taken. Birds may be captured at their nighttime roosts, and smaller owls, as well as slow-moving bats, may be captured on the wing. One researcher, after observing that no screech owls lived in an area occupied by a pair of spotted owls, found that the hoots of the spotted owl silenced male screech owls, and female screech owls responded to real and simulated spotted owl hoots with alarm calls. Considering the other end of the "food chain," several investigators have reported that spotted owls do not occur in areas occupied by the larger great horned owl.

Little is known of the reproductive biology of this owl. Nests are usually situated in trees, tree hollows, or natural cliffside cavities, although they have rarely been found on bare ground. Old hawk's nests may be used. The northern spotted owl nests primarily in old-growth forests dominated by western hemlock, redwood, Douglas fir or grand fir. The nest site is typically an old-growth tree with a broken top, supporting mistletoe, and capable of sustaining a nest over 100 feet above ground. A lateral climb growing upward to

form a new tree - top may create a protected nesting platform.

Usually two to three eggs are laid, very rarely four. Juvenile spotted owls in Oregon have the unusual trait of leaving the nest as early as one week after hatching. They move overland and perch eight to ten feet off the ground in a nearby understory tree where they are cared for by the parents until fledging (sometime after the sixth week).

The spotted owl makes several different vocalizations. The principal hoot is four syllables long and is repeated at intervals of one minute or more. A three-syllable hoot has also been noted, as well as shrill whistles (probably alarm cries), a harsh, crow-like call, and a call which sounds like the barking of a small dog.

#### STATUS/CONSERVATION

Spotted owls are non-migratory and sedentary. They have been observed at the same elevations both winter and summer, and may frequent the same localities year after year. Research on a population in Trinity County, California, suggests that spotted owls are rarely found in isolated pairs. Rather, pairs are spaced at 5 - 6 mile intervals in suitable habitats. Even relatively undisturbed populations are thought to occur in low densities. Gordon Gould of the DFG has estimated that a pair of owls requires 300 - 600 acres of suitable habitat. However, this estimate is likely to be

modified as more information becomes available. Of course, the amount of acreage required varies in relation to the characteristics of the habitat occupied.

As of 1978, spotted owl pairs were known from 317 sites in 36 counties in California. 122 of these were in the range of the northern spotted owl; 195 were in the range of the California spotted owl. The largest concentration of northern spotted owls in the state occurs along the South Fork of the Trinity River and into the Yolla Bolly Wilderness. A large concentration also exists on the Pt. Reyes Peninsula. Population centers for the California spotted owl include Sequoia National Park, Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties, and the Deep Creek and Green Valley areas in San Bernardino County.

The population trend is difficult to determine because the exact size of past or present populations is unknown. However, during surveys by the California DFG, spotted owls were still present at only 72 percent of the historical sites (reported over 30 years ago) that were checked.

Destruction of habitat through logging of old-growth forest poses the most immediate threat to this owl throughout its range in California. The DFG study noted, for example, two sites that were occupied in 1960 and 1961 but unoccupied in 1974. Both sites had been logged, removing 80 percent of the canopy over 80 percent of the area. No owls were found in heavily clearcut areas although a few were found in less heavily cut areas of similar habitat. If groves of giant sequoia were present, up to 30 percent of the habitat could be clearcut and still support a nesting pair, but in lower quality habitat, spotted owls could only tolerate the removal of 10 percent of the available habitat by clearcutting. The stability of these populations on recently disturbed areas is unknown. The sedentary habits of this species may induce it to remain in areas unsuitable for successful nesting or rearing of

young.

As more and more of the public lands inhabited by this species are clearcut, or developed, and creeping urbanization and other land conversions reduce other areas of suitable habitat, our protected wilderness areas and parks may provide the only refuges for this deep forest inhabitant.

#### HABITAT NEEDS

Although the three subspecies of spotted owl occur in somewhat different habitat types, all share a preference for shade and/or dense vegetative cover. The northern subspecies prefers dense coniferous forests where deeply shaded ravines are available for daytime roosts. They do not occur in the higher sub-alpine forest areas, probably because these do not provide dense cover.

As noted before, old-growth trees are very important as nest sites. In many areas of their range, only Douglas fir provides the necessary nest-tree characteristics, but ponderosa and other pine species may also be utilized. As well as old-growth trees for nesting, a well-developed understory near the nest may be important to provide the young birds with perches when they leave the nest.

Permanent water is usually available very close to nest sites. On warm days these heat-intolerant owls frequent the bottoms of the darkest streambeds.

Although suitable habitat for the northern spotted owl may occur as low as near sea level in the northern coastal ranges and the Cascades, the California spotted owl is basically limited to elevations of 2,500 to 6,600 feet on the west slope of the Sierra in forests dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, white fir and lodgepole pine. The California subspecies also makes greater use of tree

hollows and cliffs for nesting and roosting than does the northern spotted owl.

Canyon live oak was the dominant tree species in 91 percent of the locations where California spotted owls were found in the south coast area below 1,100 meters (during an ongoing DFG study). Above this elevation, ponderosa pine, incense cedar, sugar pine or coulter pine were dominant, with California black oak as the understory tree.

For both subspecies of spotted owl in California, the quality of the forest habitat was found to be similar in the ongoing DFG study: a multi-layered forest with a diversity of tree species, forest age classified as "moderately decadent to decadent" (providing nest sites in tree cavities or broken tree-tops) and a canopy closure of at least 40 percent at 90 percent of the sites. Spotted owls were found on the lower slopes of canyons at 89 percent of the sites.

Heat intolerance has been suggested as a major factor in this habitat preference. Cameron and Katherine Barrows, while researching the thermoregulation of spotted owls, found that they would open their talons when the temperature approached 27°C, thereby exposing their feet pads to the air, presumably to encourage heat dissipation. The legs were also more exposed by perching owls under higher temperature conditions. At 28°C, the owls erected their breast and scapular feathers, permitting movement of air through the feathers, and other behavioral changes were noted as the temperature continued to rise.

During this study in the summer months, spotted owls roosted in dense understory trees which provided a 3°C - 4°C depression in temperature compared to the open canopy, thus the value of multi-layered forests to their survival.

# Wilderness Wildlife

## Spotted Owl

By Dennis Coules

## Project Wilderness

Wilderness advocates in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties have organized Project Wilderness under the sponsorship of the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club to step up activity on behalf of wilderness preservation.

The group plans a series of programs of speakers, educational workshops, social get-togethers, and field trips to local natural areas for members of the Sierra Club and the public. These activities are aimed at educating people about the values of wilderness and the need for political action to preserve it.

Research into issues, letter-writing campaigns, visits to

local legislators, and increased media contact will be undertaken as needed on behalf of legislation or other governmental action to preserve wilderness.

A major focus of Project Wilderness will be pressuring the State government to complete its proposed classification of wilderness areas within California's state parks, especially Henry Coe State Park, which may be expanded into a very large wilderness park.

For a schedule of activities, or more information about the group, contact Project Wilderness, Sierra Club, 2533 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

## Staff

#### Contributors

Editor - Jim Eaton  
Dennis Coules  
Beth Newman  
Jim Trumbly  
Archie Douglas

The **Wilderness Record** is the bi-monthly publication of the California Wilderness Coalition. Address all correspondence to:  
P.O. Box 429  
Davis, CA 95616  
(916) 758-0380  
Articles may be reprinted. Credit would be appreciated.

#### Board of Directors

President - Bob Barnes  
Secretary - Steve Evans  
Treasurer - Wendy Cohen  
Director - Beth Newman  
Director - Bob Schneider  
Director - Richard Spotts  
Director - John Hooper

#### Executive Director -

Jim Eaton

#### Program Coordinator -

Archie Douglas

#### PURPOSES OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

...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.

# "Desertification of the United States" - CEQ Report

The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on January 17 released a report entitled *Desertification of the United States*. The report notes that about 225 million acres of the United States are undergoing desertification, or the impoverishment of arid lands.

Major effects of desertification are extensive soil erosion, salinization of top soils and surface water, and the desolation of native vegetation. Among the causes of this problem are extensive irrigation and poor soil drainage, ground water overdraft, overgrazing and urbanization. According to the report, desertification is "an affliction that saps an arid land's ability

to support life."

The report also warns of "new stresses" that are likely to intensify desertification in the arid West. Development of coal and oil shale deposits is likely to require more water than will be available from the Colorado River by the year 2000. The development of the proposed MX missile system would require substantial amounts of scarce water for construction. Increased wheat, cotton and beef prices encourage arid land ranchers and farmers to push production beyond the land's capacity. The fourth new stress discussed is increased cutting of western forests for fuel, a major cause of desertification elsewhere in the

world.

The desertification report concludes that "the federal government subsidizes the exploitation of arid land resources beyond their carrying capacity" and that government subsidies for arid land resource conservation as far less substantial. As a result, "the incentives to exploit arid land resources beyond their carrying capacity are greater today than ever."

The desertification report was prepared by David Sheridan as a supplement to the CEQ's Eleventh Annual Report entitled *"Environmental Quality 1980."* The Annual Report identifies global loss of animal and plant species, contamination of ground

water by toxic chemicals and the spread of desert-like conditions in the western United States as "three priority environmental concerns for the 1980s." Outgoing CEQ Chairman Gus Speth said that the "most urgent and pressing" concern discussed in the Annual Report is an un-

precedented threat to global biological diversity. As much as 15 to 20 percent of all species on earth could be lost in the next 20 years, the Report warns, about half as a result of tropical deforestation.

Copies of *Environmental Quality 1980; The Eleventh*

*Annual Report of the Council on Environmental Quality and Desertification of the United States* are available from the Council on Environmental Quality, 722 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20006. To ensure a prompt response, send them a self-addressed mailing label.

## Burton Off Interior Comm.

Representative Phillip Burton, chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks during the 95th and 96th Congresses, has accepted the chair of the key Labor-Management Relations Subcommittee for the new Congress because "the new political climate in Washington makes it imperative for me to focus my primary efforts on the rights of the American worker."

Democratic Caucus rules limit a member to heading one subcommittee at a time. At Rep. Burton's initiative, the Subcommittee on National Parks will be merged with the Subcommittee on Public Lands under the leadership of Rep. John Seiberling of Ohio.

Rep. Burton released this statement — concerning his decision:

I have been privileged to lead the park subcommittee during a time of incredible conservation challenges. I reached the decision to switch to a different subcommittee with great reluctance because I remain deeply committed to the protection of the natural and historic resources exemplified in our National Park System. However, the new political climate in Washington makes it imperative for me to focus my primary efforts on the rights of the American worker. My decision was facilitated by the knowledge that the subcommittee on parks will be in good hands. It is self-evident that John Seiberling's record of commitment and achievement in conservation ensures that our national parks and other public lands will be protected. I look forward to working with him as

the ranking Democratic member on the Interior Committee and continuing my interest and advocacy in the cause of conservation. Meanwhile, as chair of the Labor-Management Relations Subcommittee and a member of the full Education and Labor Committee, I intend to uphold the minimum wage and the right of American citizens to expect a decent wage, fair collective bargaining, adequate pension benefits, and a safe and healthy workplace.

The 95th and 96th Congresses (1977-1980) passed more national park legislation than ever in the history of the National Park System, a fact Burton says demonstrated "a firm commitment by the Congress to protect the country's great remaining natural places as well as the best of our historic, cultural, and social heritage."

## BLM Wilderness Studies

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Review was designed as a three step process. The first stage, the inventory, was completed in November 1980, and resulted in the identification of approximately 24 million acres of Wilderness Study Areas nationwide (excluding the California Desert Conservation Area and other accelerated inventories). The second stage will be to conduct studies on each of these areas. The third and final stage for BLM will be reporting of the recommendations to the President and Congress, since only Congress can make the final decision whether or not to designate an area as wilderness.

BLM recently released for

public comment the draft policy and guidelines for conducting these wilderness studies. Conservationists have identified major weaknesses in the proposal that need to be corrected as well as strengths that should be defended. For example, the draft policy introduces "manageability" criteria into the decision process, gives special consideration to the involvement of local citizens over those who live outside the region (although the public lands belong equally to all Americans), considers outside "sights and sounds" when evaluating the quality of an area, and proposes that the wilderness values of a given area must outweigh all other potential or known re-

source values that might be foregone if the area were designated as wilderness.

Conservationists are concerned that the 24 million acres remaining under consideration receive study in as fair, comprehensive and unbiased a manner as possible. During the initial inventory phase over 117 million acres of public lands were eliminated from wilderness consideration. During the intensive inventory phase another 32 million acres were eliminated. Many of these eliminations are under protest by conservationists. Strong public support is needed for the relatively few areas that have survived these elimination processes to date.

## CWC Member Groups

Our newest group members:

**Concerned Citizens of Calaveras County**  
P.O. Box 231  
Avery, CA 95224

**Sierra Association for Environment**  
3771 Circle Drive West  
Fresno, CA 93704

CWC Member Groups:

- American Alpine Club**
- Bay Chapter, Sierra Club**
- Butte Environmental Council**
- California Native Plant Society**
- Citizens to Save Our Public Lands**
- Citizens for Mojave National Park**
- Concerned Citizens of Calaveras County**
- Defenders of Wildlife**
- Desert Protective Council**
- Earth Ecology Club**
- Ecology Center of So. California**

**Friends of the Earth**

**Friends of the River**

**Friends of the River Foundation**

**Golden Gate Environmental Law Society**

**Granite Chief Task Force**

**Greenpeace**

**Ishi Task Force**

**Island Foundation**

**Kern Plateau Association**

**Knapsack Section, Bay Chapter, Sierra Club**

**Lake Tahoe Audubon Society**

**Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club**

**Mono Lake Committee**

**Mt. Shasta Resources Council**

**NCRCC Sierra Club**

**Northcoast Environmental Center**

**Northeast Californians for Wilderness**

**Northstate Wilderness Committee**

**The Red Mountain Association**

**Salmon Trollers Marketing Association**

**San Joaquin Institute for Environmental Action**

**San Joaquin Wilderness Association**

**Sierra Association for Environment**

**Sinkyone Council**

**Siskiyou Mountains Resource Council**

**Sonoma County Ecology Center**

**South Fork Fish and Game**

**South Fork Trinity Watershed Association**

**South Fork Watershed Association**

**Trinity Alps Group**

**The Wilderness Group of Mendocino County**

## CWC Business Sponsors

... Like any citizen organization, California Wilderness Coalition depends on sponsorship and support. The organization is grateful to the following businesses that have been able to see beyond just selling their products to the great need to preserve the wilderness in which their products are used.

**Antelope Camping Equipment Mfg. Co.**  
21740 Granada Ave.  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
(408) 253-1913

**Ace Family Hardware-Kauai**  
4018 Rice St.  
Lihue, Hawaii 96766

**The Alpine Supply Co.**  
130 G Street  
Davis, CA 95616  
(916) 756-2241

**Daybell Nursery & Florist**  
55 N.E. Street  
Porterville, CA 93257  
(209) 781-5126

**Echo, The Wilderness Co.**  
6505 Telegraph Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94609  
(415) 658-5075

**Earth Integral, Inc.**  
2655 Portage Bay Ave.  
Davis, CA 95616  
(916) 756-9300

**Four Seasons Sports**  
410 Redwood  
Oakland, CA 94619

**Mammoth Maintenance Service**  
P.O. Box 155  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546  
(714) 934-8616

**The Mountain Shop, Inc.**  
228 Grant Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 362-8477

**The Naturalist**  
219 E Street  
Davis, CA 95616  
(916) 758-2323

**The North Face**  
1234 Fifth Street  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
(415) 548-1371

**San Francisco Travel Service**  
728 Montgomery St.  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
(415) 991-6640

**Bob Schneider, Contractor**  
Solar Homes  
2402 Westernesse Road  
Davis, CA 95616  
(916) 758-4315

**Ski Hut**  
1615 University Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(415) 843-6505

**Solano Ski Sport**  
1215 Tabor Ave.  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
(707) 422-1705

**Wilderness Press**  
2440 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(415) 843-8080

**Wildflower Farms Native Plant Nursery**  
1831 Terrace Place  
Delano, CA 93215

**Zoo-Ink Screen Print**  
2415 Third St., No. 270  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
(415) 863-1207

California Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 429, Davis, CA 95616

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

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL DUES:  
Note: two dollars of annual dues supports the Wilderness Record

Individual	\$ 10
Low-income individual	5
Patron	500
Non-profit organization Sponsor (business)	30

not tax deductible