



# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

Vol. 8

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Nos. 4-5

## BLM Wildlands Win in Court

A federal judge on September 9 ordered a temporary halt to former Interior Secretary James Watt's plans to open 1.5 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

The restraining order, which was granted by federal Judge Lawrence K. Karlton, requires the wilderness characteristics of the lands to be preserved until a final decision on the legality of Watt's action is made.

Last December, Watt deleted 800,000 acres from the BLM wilderness inventory, and he dropped an additional 735,000 acres in August. About 250,000 acres of these "Watt droppings" are in California.

Some of the well-known deletions include part of the proposed Ishi, Tuolumne River, and Scodies wilderness areas, and a portion of the King Range Wilderness Study Area. Six areas are in the California desert including the entire 68,051-

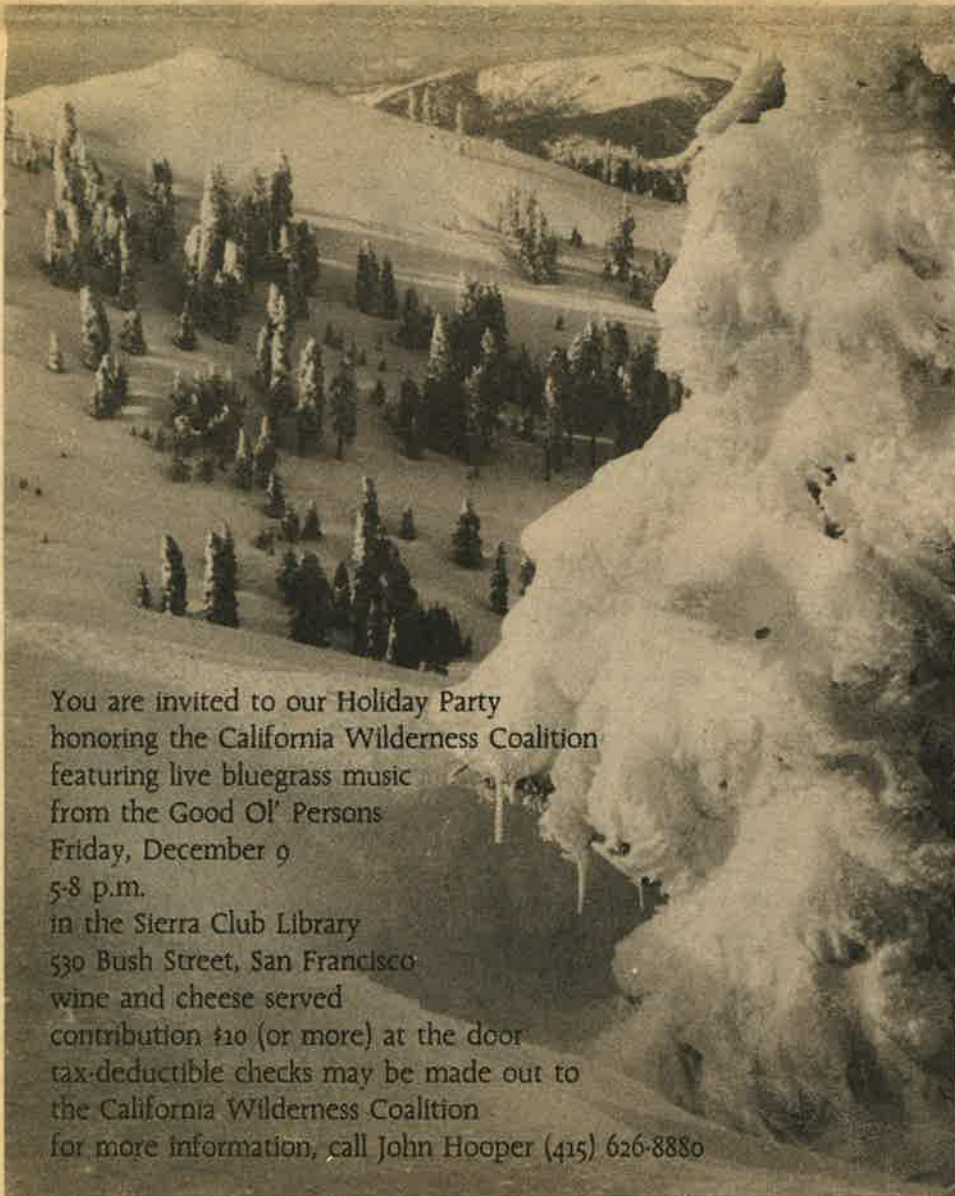
acre Santa Rosa Mountains WSA and all of the 44,195-acre Orocoopia Mountains WSA.

Watt based his withdrawals on the supposition that the areas were not eligible for designation as wilderness either because they were smaller than 5,000 acres, because the government did not own the subsurface mineral rights, or because they were being included in the

review solely because they were contiguous to existing roadless areas or wilderness.

It is expected that Judge Karlton will not make a final decision on the issue for several months. The suit was brought by the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and the Wilderness Society.

## Join the CWC Holiday Gathering



You are invited to our Holiday Party honoring the California Wilderness Coalition featuring live bluegrass music from the Good Ol' Persons Friday, December 9 5-8 p.m. in the Sierra Club Library 530 Bush Street, San Francisco wine and cheese served contribution \$10 (or more) at the door tax-deductible checks may be made out to the California Wilderness Coalition for more information, call John Hooper (415) 626-8880

Snow Mountain

Photo by Phillip Kay



Redwood stump at Duffy Gulch on the Sinkyone coast

Photo by Sam Camp

## Sinkyone Protesters Stop Logging

Protesters repeatedly have blocked Georgia Pacific's attempts to log 75 acres of old-growth redwoods in proposed additions to the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. There have been at least six arrests and one injury since the blockade began.

The struggle is for the Sally Bell Grove in Little Jackass Canyon about two and a half miles from the existing park boundary. The area is in northern Mendocino County.

A timber harvest plan for clear cutting the grove filed by Georgia Pacific was approved by the California Department of Forestry in September. The Environmental Protection Information Center of Garberville and others have filed suit to rescind this approval.

Several restraining orders against Georgia Pacific have been issued and canceled by lower courts; an appeals court injunction currently is in effect.

## Coalition Report

By Jim Eaton

"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else -- if you run very fast for a long time as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Red Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."

Just as Alice had difficulty getting ahead in Through the Looking Glass, we at the California Wilderness Coalition have been struggling to keep abreast of a rapidly changing wilderness world.

In an attempt to catch up, you are receiving a double issue of the *Wilderness Record*, the July-October issue. The good news is that you won't have to wait until 1984 for the following *Record*; it will be in your hands a few weeks after this one.

We have been busy. As you will learn in this issue, we are monitoring the twenty-one national forests in California that are re-inventing RARE II. We also have been working for the passage of the Cal-

ifornia Wilderness bill so we can prevent the Forest Service from dragging us through RARE III.

The CWC was on the road these past few months, testifying at wilderness hearings in Redding and Redway, attending a public lands conference in Salt Lake City and a desert conference in Norden, and rafting the Tuolumne River with a CBS news team.

Our work is made possible through your generous donations now being received in response to David Brower's special fund appeal for the Coalition. We appreciate it!

Special thanks go to interns Mary Scoonover and Pat O'Brien who are getting us organized on BLM and forest planning issues. Their work will be published in this and future issues of the *Record*.

A thank you is due the Environmental Protection Information Center of Garberville for generously funding a Wilderness Alert for the Red Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

Finally, we'd like to welcome our newest group members, the Redwood and San Diego chapters of the Sierra Club and the California Alpine Club.

## Spotlight

### Friends of Plumas Wilderness

An active group of the California Wilderness Coalition with a broad membership base in Plumas County is Friends of Plumas Wilderness. The organization is an outgrowth of wilderness preservation efforts that began almost 30 years ago when then Sierra Club Executive Director David Brower first suggested the Bucks Lake wilderness.

The 25,000-acre Bucks Lake roadless area just west of Quincy has been a priority of Friends of Plumas Wilderness ever since. The group's enthusiastic support resulted in the addition of Bucks Lake to the House-passed California Wilderness Act, H.R. 1437. Since then, outreach and publicity in Plumas County has resulted in a flood of letters from the public to members of Congress in support of the scenic Bucks Lake area.

Other roadless areas that Friends of Plumas Wilderness has been actively working to protect include Grizzly Peak, Adams Peak, Middle Fork, Bald Rock, and Lakes Basin in the Plumas National Forest. The organization is playing a

key role in the development of the Forest Plan that will decide the fate of most of these areas.

Friends of Plumas Wilderness is active in issues other than wilderness. Its committees are working on county land use planning, the development of a biomass power plant in Quincy, use of herbicides on the national forest, small-hydro development on scenic streams and rivers, and protection of the "wild" parts of the Middle Fork Feather Wild and Scenic River from development of adjacent private lands.

Mike and Sally Yost have been mainstays of the group for more than five years. An independent forester who used to work for the U.S. Forest Service, Mike is currently a forestry professor at the Feather River College in Quincy. Local attorney Mike Jackson has provided invaluable legal assistance to many aspects of Friends of Plumas Wilderness.

Friends of Plumas Wilderness  
P.O. Box 133  
Quincy, CA 95971

## Update

### California Wilderness Act

Negotiations are continuing between Senators Pete Wilson and Alan Cranston towards an agreement on the California Wilderness Act. Wilson currently backs the Reagan Administration's 1.2 million-acre recommendation, while Cranston's bill is closer to the House-passed 2.4 million-acre version.

Wilson is trying to keep wilderness protection from portions of three areas that the timber industry wants to log in the Trinity

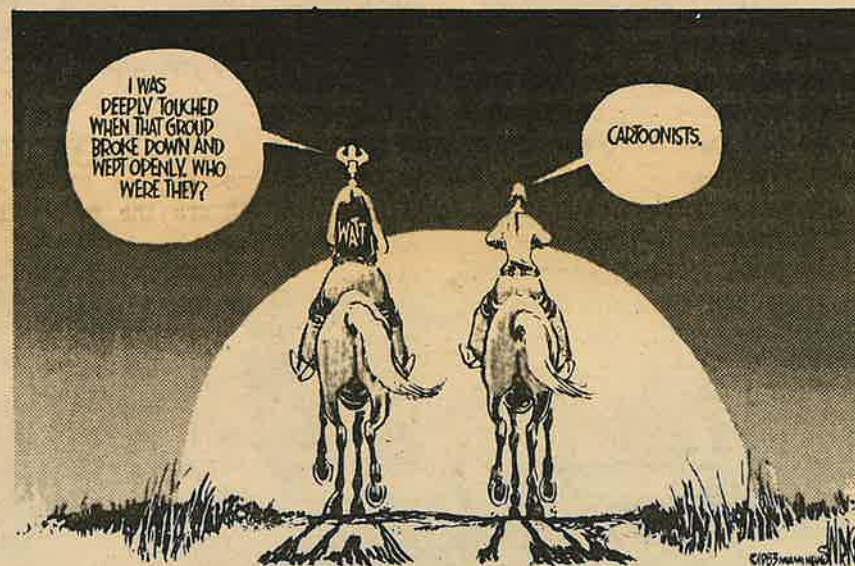
Alps, Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness additions, and the San Joaquin roadless area. He also is fighting to simply reduce the acreage of wilderness to about 1.8 million acres.

The Board of Directors of the California Wilderness Coalition has joined other groups in calling for a return to the House-passed bill, a compromise reached after five years of hearings and debates. They feel that no bill is preferable to an emasculated one.

### Snowmobiles Return to Lassen

Lassen Volcanic National Park will again allow snowmobiles in the park this winter. The nineteen-mile route will be open to the noisy machines beginning December 1 for the first week of each month.

According to the Park Service, the "test" will be enable them to obtain additional data for the completing the evaluation of joint use by snowmobilers and cross-country skiers of the same area.



## Reader's Opinion

Editor:

Thanks for your review of The Klamath Knot in the March-April *Wilderness Record*.

I hope the book will help to spread the word about what marvelous areas these are, so that, as you say, readers who haven't been to the Klamaths "will be hiking there soon."

Thanks also for the *Record* and the alerts, and all the other good things the Coalition does for wilderness.

David Rains Wallace  
Covelo

Editor:

Just returned from a month of hiking and sightseeing in British Columbia to learn you'll be putting together a position paper on Henry

Coe State Park. Great news -- this is the kind of thing we've been lacking and that only someone of your experience and perspicacity can provide.

And I found your very generous review of my Treasury in the *Record*. I'm very grateful.

Bob Reid  
Palo Alto

### 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 opinions appearing in the *Record*. The Editor reserves the right to condense or edit any letter received.

# Red Mountain EIS Released

By Mary Scoonover

In a recently released draft environmental impact statement, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has determined that the entire Red Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is unsuitable for wilderness designation. The 6,173-acre WSA is located in the Coast Range of northern Mendocino County.

Although the area has many outstanding scientific values, including rare plants and animals, it is threatened by mining and logging.

Herb Roth of the Red Mountain Association said his group "will pursue all avenues to protect the wilderness values that exist on Red Mountain."

"It's already a wilderness up there," Roth continued. "All we're asking is for the government to acknowledge that fact."

A study team from the BLM's Ukiah District office rated the Red Mountain area low in the mandatory wilderness characteristic of "naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation." They found the WSA does have an abundance of ecological and scientific values.

"Very, very unique" is the BLM's description of the area's flora. This small WSA supports one listed and three endangered species. Among its seven plant communities are the type localities for fifteen species, the range extension for two conifer and two shrub species, as well as a stand of old-growth Douglas fir.

Red Mountain provides the feeding territory for endangered peregrine falcons and other raptors including the goshawk, golden eagle, and bald eagle. The area is

habitat for spotted owl, mountain lion, and bear. The "pristine" Cedar Creek and Canyon support river otter and a steelhead trout nursery.

The BLM's preferred alternative to wilderness is designation of the entire WSA as a Research Natural Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (RNA/ACEC). The Bureau feels that the RNA/ACEC designation is necessary to "recognize and administratively protect" this unique area.

The Red Mountain Association terms the RNA/ACEC designation "paper protection." The organization is composed of 1,000 local residents and is a member group of the California Wilderness Coalition.

According to the Red Mountain EIS, this designation would allow logging up to 20 million board feet of timber, mining, oil and gas drilling, and vehicle access for administrative and mineral claim maintenance as well as for scientific study.

Mining claims within and adjacent to the WSA are the major difficulties associated with long term wilderness management. Deposits of nickel, cobalt, and chromium are under mineral claims covering 3,000 acres of the WSA. Hanna Mining Co., a multinational corporation based in Cleveland, Ohio, holds a majority of the mineral claims. Hanna eventually plans to strip all vegetation and remove forty million tons of the unique red soil for the minerals it contains. The BLM views these mineral claims as valid and existing rights and expects development to proceed.



As the United States' only nickel mine for some 25 years, Oregon's Nickel Mountain has been stripped by Hanna Mining Co. Red Mountain Association



Red Mountain, background, and parts of Little Red Mountain are being considered for designation as a wilderness area. Red Mountain Association

## Red Mountain Wilderness Proponents Speak

In October, over 200 wilderness supporters filled a school room in Redway, Calif., to hear testimony on the Red Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) roadless area, located in northern Mendocino County, is proposed to be strip mined by Hanna Mining Co.

Several people in the partisan crowd waved signs with messages such as "Red Mountain - Your Wilderness or Mine" and "Hanna, Mine Your Own Business." More than fifty people spoke at the hearing with only two speakers not supporting wilderness designation for the area.

A representative for Coastal Mining, a subsidiary of Hanna Mining Company, said BLM should choose the "no action" alternative for Red Mountain. This plan would allow the company to mine under the existing management program.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors backed BLM's proposal to manage the area as a Research Natural Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), but called for absolutely no logging within the WSA.

All other speakers objected to the proposed mining of Red Mountain. Many people were concerned that the BLM's proposal would not adequately protect the WSA. A statement from Assemblyman Dan Hauser was read in which the local representative stated, "the re-

sources would be better protected by wilderness."

Herb Roth of the Red Mountain Association argued that BLM's alternatives would not stop the proposed mining, and that the agency should look at all reasonable options to preserve the ecological values of the area.

Jim Eaton, Executive Director of the California Wilderness Coalition, took the proposed ACEC designation to task by asking, "If you can log an ACEC, or mine an ACEC, or drill for oil and gas in an ACEC, just what is an 'Area of Critical Environmental Concern'?"

Other organizations represented included the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Environmental Protection Information Center, Sinkyone Council, Caho Coalition, Earth First!, and Homesteaders for Wilderness.

People from all walks of life spoke in favor of preserving the unique values of Red Mountain. Testimony was heard from Native Americans, scientists, children, construction workers, and former BLM personnel. While most people spoke, some sang or read poetry.

The BLM will continue to accept public comment until December 1.

Mary Scoonover is the California Wilderness Coalition's intern for Bureau of Land Management issues.

# Forest Service Begins RARE III

By Pat O'Brien

Earlier this year, Assistant Agriculture Secretary John Crowell announced that he was abandoning the U.S. Forest Service's second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). National forests in California now are in the middle of a reevaluation of millions of acres of wild areas and are asking for public comment. RARE III is a reality.

Ironically, passage of the now-stalled California Wilderness bill would eliminate the need for this expensive restudy, but the Reagan administration and timber industry are adamant in their opposition to a bill acceptable to environmentalists.

Secretary Crowell based his decision on an interpretation of the *California v. Block* (formerly *Bergland*) lawsuit in which the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that RARE II had been biased against wilderness designation and had inadequately considered site-specific impacts of development on 46 roadless areas in California. The court ruled that development of these areas may not proceed until adequate consideration of site-specific wilderness qualities was completed. In determining that the primary problem with RARE II was its lack of balanced environmental consideration, the court dismissed a timber company's contention that the RARE II wilderness recommendations were similarly flawed.

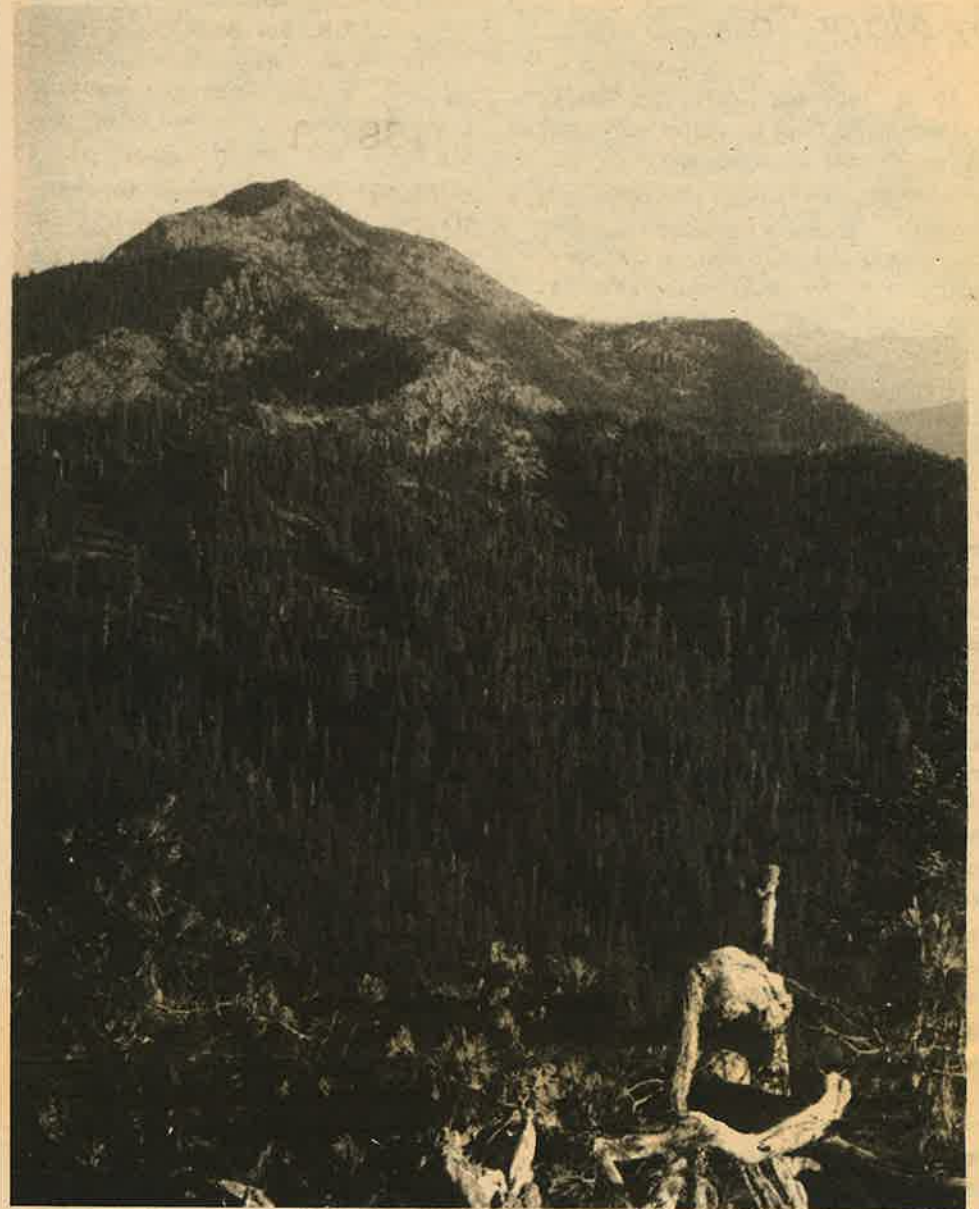
Crowell announced, however, that all RARE II recommendations -- wilderness, non-wilderness, and further planning -- were to be encompassed in a new review, but that development activities scheduled in non-wilderness areas would proceed. Environmentalists have dubbed the reevaluation "RARE III."

The national forests in California are now busy starting the "RARE III" process. Most forests are holding public meetings or open houses to provide the public with an explanation of the evaluation process and to collect information on the wilderness attributes and potential designation of the study areas. The forests also are accepting written comments.

The following are summaries of the acreages involved in each forest review and a schedule of public meetings. We urge you to take advantage of the opportunities for public involvement provided by the Forest Service.

Send in your recommendations, even if the deadline for comment has passed. This current review is just part of the whole forest planning process that will be continuing for months (and in some cases years) to come.

Pat O'Brien in the California Wilderness Coalition's intern for forest planning issues.



Red Buttes in the Klamath and Rogue River forests

Photo by John Hart

## Angeles

Eleven roadless areas totaling 172,900 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Angeles National Forest; eight previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and three for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another two areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Public meetings will be held in five locations; all weekday gatherings will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.: Monday, Nov. 7, Tujunga Ranger District; Tuesday, Nov. 8, Mt. Baldy Ranger District; Wednesday, Nov. 15, Valyermo Ranger District; Tuesday, Nov. 15, Sangus Ranger District; and Friday, Nov. 18, at the Forest Supervisor's office (also Saturday, Nov. 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Written comments should be received by November 25.

Angeles National Forest  
150 S. Los Robles Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

## Cleveland

Ten roadless areas totaling 120,140 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Cleveland National Forest; eight previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and one for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another three areas already are under study as further planning areas.

An open house will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 16, in Room 2-S-16 of the Federal Building, 880 Front Street, San Diego, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Written comments should be received by December 1.

Cleveland National Forest  
880 Front Street  
San Diego, CA 92188

## El Dorado

Three roadless areas totaling 4,700 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Eldorado National Forest; two previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and one for wilderness by the Forest Service. A-

nother six areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A public meeting was conducted this past summer, and written comments were due in August.

Eldorado National Forest  
100 Forni Road  
Placerville, CA 95667

## Inyo

Twenty-four roadless areas totaling 477,670 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Inyo National Forest; eleven previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and thirteen for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another sixteen areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Open houses will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the Forest Supervisor's office in Bishop, and Wednesday, Dec. 7, at the Mammoth Ranger Station in Mammoth Lakes. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Inyo National Forest  
873 North Main Street  
Bishop, CA 93514



## Klamath

Eighteen roadless areas totaling 439,079 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Klamath National Forest; fourteen previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and four for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another two areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A public forum will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 16, at 7 p.m. in the Forest Supervisor's office, 1312 Fairland Road, in Yreka. No deadline was given for written comments.

Klamath National Forest  
1312 Fairlane Road  
Yreka, CA 96097

## Lake Tahoe Basin Man Unit

Two roadless areas totaling 2,143 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit; both previously had been recommended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another four areas already are under study as further planning areas.

An open house will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Forest Supervisor's office, 87 Emerald Bay Road, in South Lake Tahoe. Written comments should be received by November 1.



Mill Creek in the proposed Ishi Wilderness

Lake Tahoe Basin  
Management Unit  
P.O. Box 8465  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 95731

## Lassen

Twelve roadless areas totaling 109,073 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Lassen National Forest; three previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and nine for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another nine areas already are under study as further planning areas.

An open house will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 9, at 7 p.m. in the CARD Community Center, 545 Vallem-brosa Avenue, in Chico. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Lassen National Forest  
707 Nevada Street  
Susanville, CA 96130

## Los Padres

Fifteen roadless areas totaling 265,700 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Los Padres National Forest; twelve previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and three for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another twenty-five areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Public meetings will be held from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 24 in Ventura, Tuesday, Oct. 25 in San Luis Obispo, Wed-



Dardanelles Lake in the Echo-Carson area

Photo by Kathy Blankenship

nesday, Oct. 26 in Salinas, and Thursday, Oct. 27 in Santa Barbara. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Los Padres National Forest  
42 Aero Camino  
Goleta, CA 93117

## Mendocino

Eight roadless areas totaling 143,280 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Mendocino National Forest; all eight previously had been recommended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another nine areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Open houses will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 7, at the Covelo Ranger District Office; Tuesday, Nov. 8, at the Upper Lake Ranger District office; and Wednesday, Nov. 9 at the Forest Supervisor's office in Willows. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Mendocino National Forest  
420 East Laurel Street  
Willows, CA 95988

## Modoc

Twenty-four roadless areas totaling 200,950 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Modoc National Forest; nineteen previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and five for wilderness by the Forest Service. No areas were under study as further planning areas.

Informal open houses were held during the summer. No deadline was given for written comments.

Modoc National Forest  
441 N. Main Street  
Alturas, CA 96101

## Plumas

Four roadless areas totaling 23,250 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Plumas National Forest; all four previously had been recom-

mended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another five areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m. in the CARD Community Center, 545 Vallem-brosa Avenue, in Chico. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Plumas National Forest  
P.O. Box 1500  
Quincy, CA 95555

## Rogue River

One roadless area totaling 24,522 acres in California will be reevaluated for its wilderness potential in the Rogue River National Forest; it previously had been recommended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another California area already is under study as a further planning area.

Public involvement is not yet scheduled, and a comment deadline has not been released.

Rogue River National Forest  
P.O. Box 520  
Medford, OR 97501

## San Bernardino

Twenty-four roadless areas totaling 240,025 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the San Bernardino National Forest; fifteen previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and nine for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another five areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Informational meetings will be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 25, at the San Bernardino Convention Center's California Room; Tuesday, Nov. 1, at the Arrowhead Hilton Hotel in Lake Arrowhead; and Thursday, Nov. 3 at the Idyllwild Town Hall. No deadline was given for written comments.

San Bernardino National Forest  
144 N. Mtn. View Avenue  
San Bernardino, CA 92408

Cont. on Page 6

## RARE III Underway

Cont. from Page 5

### Sequoia

Twelve roadless areas totaling 335,950 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Sequoia National Forest; all twelve previously had been recommended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another nine areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A briefing session will be held on Thursday, Oct. 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Forest Supervisor's office, 900 West Grand Avenue, in Porterville. Written comments should be received by October 21.

Sequoia National Forest  
900 West Grand Avenue  
Porterville, CA 93257

### Shasta-Trinity

Forty-one roadless areas totaling 513,604 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest; twenty-nine previously had been recommended as

non-wilderness and twelve for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another eight areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Open houses will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15, at the Civil Defense Hall in Weaverville, and on Thursday, Nov. 17 at the Forest Supervisor's office, 2400 Washington Avenue, in Redding. Written comments should be received by November 30.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest  
2400 Washington Avenue  
Redding, CA 96001

### Sierra

Seven roadless areas totaling 120,432 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Sierra National Forest; four previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and three for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another five areas already are under study as further planning areas.

An open house will be held on



Freel Peak south of Lake Tahoe

Tuesday, Sept. 27, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Fresno Fashion Fair Community Hall, First and Shay avenues. No deadline was given for written comments.

Sierra National Forest  
Federal Building  
1130 O Street, Room 3017  
Fresno, CA 93721

### Siskiyou

One California roadless area totaling 8,294 acres will be reevaluated for its wilderness potential in the Siskiyou National Forest; it previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and wilderness by the Forest Service. No other California areas are under study as further planning areas.

Public involvement was not yet been scheduled, and a deadline for written comments has not been set.

Siskiyou National Forest  
P.O. Box 440  
Grants Pass, OR 97526

### Six Rivers

Twenty roadless areas totaling 249,550 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Six Rivers National Forest; seventeen previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and three for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another three areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 14, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Clark Street Conference Room, 600 W. Clark Street, in Eureka. Written comments should be received by December 30.

Six Rivers National Forest  
507 F Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

### Stanislaus

Twelve roadless areas totaling 178,400 acres will be reevaluated

for their wilderness potential in the Stanislaus National Forest; ten previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and two for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another three areas already are under study as further planning areas.

A public briefing will be held on Thursday, Oct. 13, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Forest Supervisor's office, 19777 Greenley Road, in Sonora. Written comments should be received by November 15.

Stanislaus National Forest  
19777 Greenley Road  
Sonora, CA 95370

### Tahoe

Six roadless areas totaling 65,809 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Tahoe National Forest; all six previously had been recommended as non-wilderness by the Forest Service. Another five areas already are under study as further planning areas.

An open house will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 1, at the Forest Supervisor's office, Highway 49 and Coyote Street, in Nevada City. Written comments should be received by November 21.

Tahoe National Forest  
Highway 49 and Coyote Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959

### Toiyabe

Ten California roadless areas totaling 252,119 acres will be reevaluated for their wilderness potential in the Toiyabe National Forest; seven previously had been recommended as non-wilderness and three for wilderness by the Forest Service. Another five California areas already are under study as further planning areas.

Written comments should be received by November 30.

Toiyabe National Forest  
1200 Franklin Way  
Sparks, NV 89501



South Sierra roadless area on the Sequoia

Photo by Phillip Farrell

# Wilderness Wildlife

## The Red Fox

By Dennis Coules



Of the several species of furbearers in California, the native red fox is one of the rarest, rivaled in scarcity only by the wolverine. Our native subspecies—*Vulpes fulva necator*—occurs only at relatively high elevations in the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade Range.

An expanding red fox population in the Sacramento Valley and northern coastal mountains is probably the result of introductions from the eastern U.S. These introductions began in the late 19th century and may continue even today with the release or escape of pet foxes. Large-scale fox farming was another potential source of introductions. In 1942, 125 farms with 20,000 red foxes existed in California.

### RANGE AND HABITATS

The native red fox was reported by Grinnell in 1937 as being most abundant in the vicinity of Mount Shasta, Lassen Peak, Mount Whitney, and west of Mono Lake. More recent observations suggest a more even distribution of this species

in the Sierra, extending well into Tulare County. In the 1920s red foxes were trapped as far south as Big Meadow and Serretta Peak.

Areas of most frequent encounters with red foxes in current years are the vicinity of Lassen Volcanic National Park, Yosemite National Park (including Yosemite Valley) and the headwaters of the Kern and Kaweah rivers.

In the northern portion of their California range, most red foxes occur between 5400 and 7400 feet, with a high elevation observation of 8500 feet on the south side of Lassen Peak and a low of 4300 feet two miles west of Viola in Shasta County. In the southern Sierra, observations range from a low of 3900 feet in Yosemite Valley to 11,900 feet at Lake South America.

The red fox occurs in most of the plant communities found within its geographic range. It has been reported from all forest types at the elevations where it occurs. Open areas such as alpine fell-fields, meadows, and open forest stands are preferred for hunting.

### RED FOX BIOLOGY

The red fox is an omnivore that eats small rodents, birds, insects, berries, and carrion. Hunting either by day or by night, the fox stalks and pounces on its prey. It is most active at night and in early morning and late evening. The red fox does not hibernate.

Four color phases of red fox are known—red, silver, cross, and black (the rarest).

Special habitat requirements for successful breeding are hollow logs, rock outcrops, or loose, deep soil for den sites. Often burrows will have several exits or chambers. Alternative refuges are usually prepared in case the den is disturbed.

The mating season is during the dead of winter in January or February. Litters range in size from four to six pups which are born in May or June. Both parents usually share in feeding the offspring once they are weaned. The pups disperse in the fall.

Territory and home range sizes for red foxes have not been studied thoroughly in California but average from 200 to 800 hectares in the Midwest.

The American red fox differs from its Old World counterpart by being slightly larger and having longer hair. Some authorities consider the two to be the same species, *Vulpes vulpes*.

### CONSERVATION STATUS

The native red fox population appears to be declining in California. At best, it is maintaining itself at a very low level. There are only 19 records of observations in the 1950s, 19 in the 1960s, and 12 from the 1970s up to 1977. A 1977 interagency survey (cited below) rated the native red fox as the furbearer most in need of further research as to its status and needs in this state.

Currently the red fox is designated as a fully protected furbearer by the California Department of Fish and Game and cannot be legally trapped. Until extensive fur farming made the value of pelts decline, red fox pelts were the most valuable furs taken in California. In the 1920s, trappers received from \$12 to \$30 for red pelts and up to \$1000 for the rare black phase.

With the threat from hunting and trapping reduced to the presumably low levels of whatever poaching occurs, the major obstacle to the continued maintenance of native red fox populations in California is habitat alteration. Overgrazing of alpine meadows has been cited as a special problem for this species. At present, only national park lands are closed to domestic stock grazing within the red fox's range. National forest wilderness areas may be subject to this potential abuse.

Other potential threats to this species include "accidental" trapping, mortality from predator control programs targeted at coyotes, and harassment by snowmobilers during the stress of winter. If our native red fox is to survive in California, all land management agencies must take into consideration its special vulnerabilities and habitat needs.

### FURTHER READING

Joseph Grinnell, et al. (1937), *Fur-Bearing Mammals of California*, volume 2, UC Press.

P.F. Schempf and M. White (1977), *Status of Furbearer Populations in the Mountains of Northern California*, USDA Forest Service, California Region.

Dennis Coules is the California Wilderness Coalition's consultant for wildlife and desert issues.

## California Wilderness Coalition

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

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