



# WILDERNESS RECORD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS COALITION

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## Wilderness Bill Compromise Reached

On the morning of June 27, Senators Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson announced a breakthrough on negotiations with the stalled California Wilderness Bill. The "compromise" will be for about 1.8 million acres. The House-passed measure championed by the late Representative Phillip Burton, H.R. 1437, would protect 2.3 million acres.

Environmentalists have extremely mixed feelings about the new proposal. "This another compromise, upon a compromise, upon a compromise," said Jim Eaton, the California Wilderness Coalition's executive director. "More than a half million acres of prime wilderness land are being traded away in order to reach this settlement."

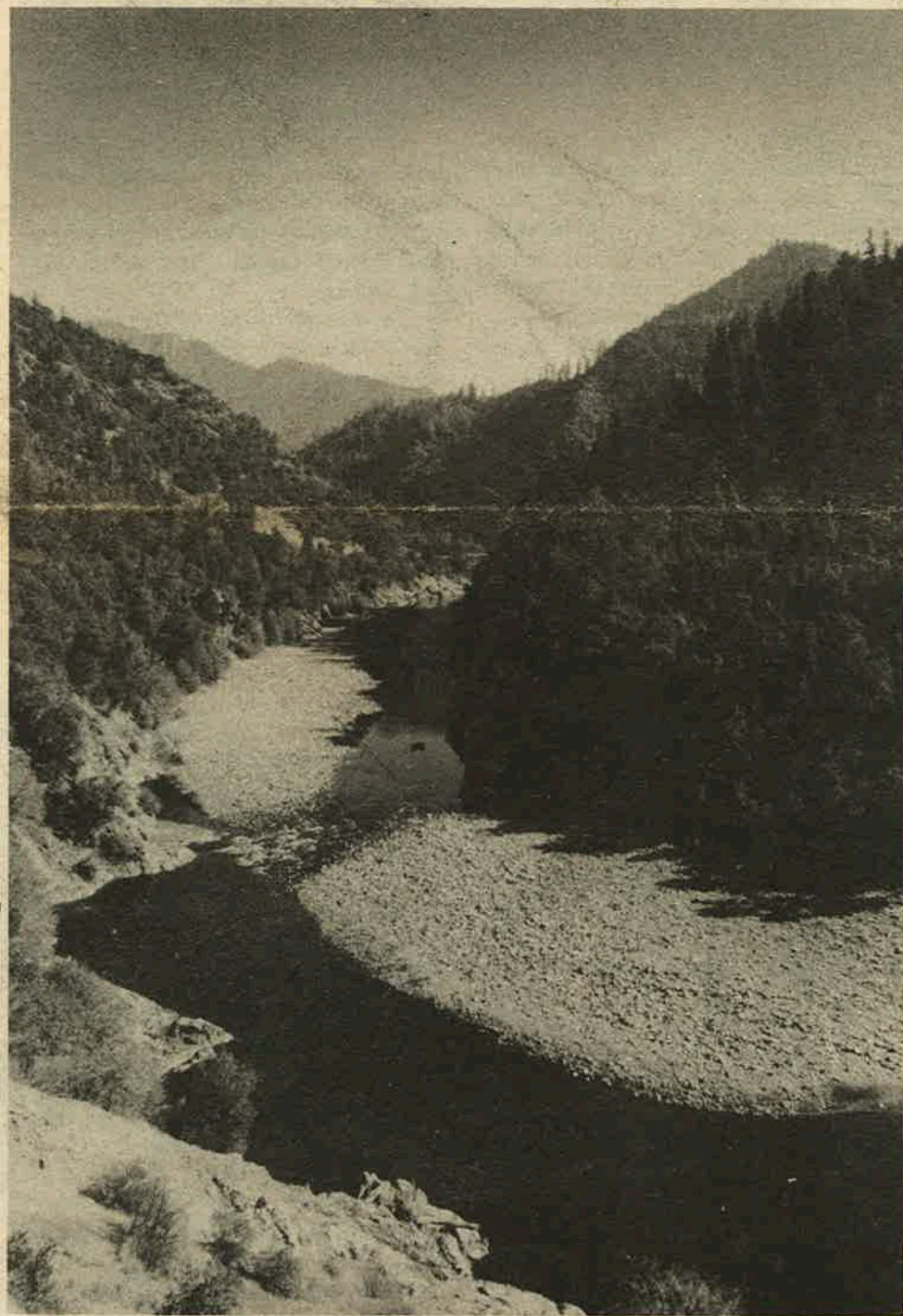
Senator Cranston had been supporting a measure similar to the House version, but Senator Wilson and the Republican-controlled Sen-

ate have been blocking passage of this bill. The compromise announced is very similar to a package announced by Wilson last winter [see the January-February, 1984, issue of the Wilderness Record]. About 100,000 more wilderness has been added to the Wilson plan, but more lands under wilderness study have been released to development.

A bright spot in the compromise is the addition of the proposed 21,000-acre Bucks Lake Wilderness in Plumas County. The cost of this, however, was the removal of a companion roadless area, Chips Creek, from wilderness study.

Other improvements from the old Wilson proposal are additional acreage for the proposed Granite Chief, Santa Rosa, and Trinity Alps wilderness areas, and Yolla Bolly Wilderness additions.

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Salmon River above the Klamath River

Photo by Tim Palmer

## Big Victory for North Coast Wild Rivers

Environmentalists scored a major victory when a federal appeals court reversed a lower court decision and reinstated wild and scenic river status for five Northern California Rivers.

The five rivers are the Smith, Klamath, Trinity, Eel, and American. Timber companies, water agencies, and Del Norte and Humboldt counties sued in federal court to block the wild river designations made during the waning days of the Carter Administration.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that any violations of regulations by then-Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus were "insignificant" and "trivial." "The integrity of the decision-

making process within the government and the public's opportunity to comment, in accordance with all legal requirements, were not compromised in any way," it said.

The court overturned U.S. District Judge William Ingram who cancelled the protection on the grounds that Andrus had cut short the time allowed for public comment.

Organizations defending the rivers included the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Sierra Club, California Trout, and Save the American River Association. The state of California originally took a legal position against the challenge, but after the initial

court decision Governor Deukmejian refused to join the appeal seeking to reinstate the protections for the rivers.

Wild river designation is especially important now that the governor is pushing to build facilities in the Sacramento-San

Joaquin delta to ship more Northern California south. "Even if the governor builds his canal, he will have little water to put in it," said EDF senior attorney David Roe. "The water and timber interests went all out to win this one, but they lost," he said.

## Coalition Report

By Jim Eaton

This issue of the Wilderness Record was almost out the door and on the way to the printer when Russ Shay called to report that Senators Cranston and Wilson had agreed on a wilderness bill. If Russ had called an hour later I could have called the printer and used by editor's dream line, "Stop the presses!"

As details on this "compromise" come in, we are writing the lead article. Mary Scoonover has given me three headlines to choose from: "Wilderness Bill Compromise Reached," "Insulting Wilderness Bill Compromise Reached," and "California Wilderness Sold Out ... Again."

As tempted as I am to use the last headline, this compromise does save some wilderness, about 1.8 million acres worth. But it is hard to accept the hundreds of thousands of acres in other deserving areas that be being discarded just so that Senator Wilson looks more "reasonable."

Many of you have now received a fund appeal from me asking for money to fund our "Adopt a Wilder-

ness" program. If this wilderness bill becomes law, this program will be more important than ever. Many tools we have been using to protect roadless areas will be eliminated as a result of this compromise. It will take an active army of individuals and groups adopting endangered areas to assure that these wild lands are not lost forever.

That may be one of the mixed blessings of the California Wilderness Bill. While those areas thrown out of the bill are in greater danger, there are 1.8 million acres of wilderness we won't have to constantly defend. We can concentrate of the remainder.

If the California Wilderness Bill becomes law, wilderness preservation in our state will reach a new plateau. Future designations will be difficult -- but definitely not impossible.

We welcome a new business sponsor, S & S Enterprises in Oakland, to the California Wilderness Coalition. And a special thanks to Bill Turnage of the Wilderness Society for a most generous donation.

## News Briefs

### EUREKA DUNES NOW A NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK

A special plaque signifying the Eureka Sand Dunes as California's newest National Natural Landmark was unveiled this past spring. The Eureka Dunes are in the northern part of the California Desert about 45 miles east of Big Pine and 50 miles north of Death Valley.

According to the Bureau of Land Management, "the Dunes are so unique that former Secretary of Interior James Watt designated them

as a National Natural Landmark in early 1983." The area covers 4,200 acres of land.

The sand dunes, which rise over 700 feet high, are part of the Saline-Eureka Wilderness Study Area, the largest study area in California. The dunes were closed all vehicle use in 1977 to help protect endangered species of desert vegetation growing nowhere else in the world.

### LASSEN VOLCANIC PARK PROTECTION PLAN AVAILABLE

A draft Land Protection Plan and environmental assessment for Lassen Volcanic National Park is currently available for public review and comment. When completed, the plan will replace the park's Land Acquisition Plan that was approved in May 1981, which specified all privately-owned land within the park

would be acquired.

The Land Protection Plan provides for exploring means of acquiring necessary property through means other than purchases. These are designed to minimize the acquisition of property while achieving resource protection goals.

### FOREST SERVICE BLASTING IN EMIGRANT WILDERNESS

The U.S. Forest Service will be blasting rock to improve a trail in the Emigrant Wilderness. The existing trail is damaging a meadow near Mosquito Pass and will be rerouted. The Forest Service has determined that the use of explosives is the

only feasible alternative.

If loud noises ruin your wilderness experience, you may wish to contact the Stanislaus National Forest before entering the Emigrant Wilderness to see if the trail construction has been completed.

### FREE WILDERNESS MAP AVAILABLE

The California Wilderness Coalition has a supply of a 1981 "Wilderness Status Map" compiled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The multi-colored map shows existing wilderness areas, most BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), and some Forest Service roadless areas. The map is free on request.

Despite some omissions, the three and a half foot square map is

the best one available at present. BLM has a newer version available, but most of the roadless areas, WSAs appealed or dropped by Secretary Watt, and other information has been removed.

While the Coalition will provide this earlier map for free, a dollar for postage would be appreciated (84 cents is the actual third class fee).

## Reader's Opinion

Editor:

Rather coincidentally received Senator Wilson's letter on his stand on California wilderness the same day as the Jan-Feb issue of the Wilderness Record arrived.

I read the Senator's letter, with misgivings. But I felt I must answer it, soon. Then I read the "ammunition" necessary in the Record -- and immediately checked my records.

I owe you dues, and enclosed check to cover. Let's say a check for dues and whatever. Do you mind \$50.00? Somehow you deserve it, and I'm weeding out the too

numerous to mention environmental organizations I belong to. You are still on the top of the list.

Keep up the good work.

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

## Spotlight

### Northstate Wilderness Committee

The Northstate Wilderness Committee is a small group of wilderness fanatics based in Chico.

Unlike many of the California Wilderness Coalition's member groups, the Northstate Wilderness Committee is not a membership-based organization. The group is a small, working committee closely affiliated with various standard environmental organizations in Chico including local chapters of the Sierra Club, Audubon, and California Native Plant Society.

The Wilderness Committee often represents these organizations concerning local wilderness and public lands management issues. The Committee's emphasis is on the preservation of roadless areas in the Lassen and Plumas national forests as well as the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Susanville District and Redding Resource Area. Wilderness management issues concerning Lassen Volcanic National Park also is of major concern to the Committee.

Specific wilderness proposals supported by the Northstate Wilderness Committee include the Ishi Country in the Lassen Forest, the proposed Heart Lake addition to Lassen National Park, and the

Feather River Wilderness encompassing the Chips Creek and Bucks Lake roadless areas.

Activities of the Committee include monitoring and review of national forest and BLM management plans and proposals, lobbying for Congressional protection, and education and mobilization of the public concerning the preservation of wilderness resources on our public lands. As with most small organizations, fundraising is a necessary, ongoing activity.

The Northstate Wilderness Committee has been responsible for halting several egregious projects in Lassen and Plumas national forests through administrative appeals. Successful appeals coordinated by the group include an appeal to halt large-scale mining on the Middle Fork Feather Wild and Scenic River and a timber salvage sale in the proposed Ishi Wilderness. Both appeals set important national precedents.

The Committee holds frequent working meetings and organizes special events and fundraisers. For more information, contact the:

Northstate Wilderness Committee  
708 Cherry Street  
Chico, California 95926

# BLM's Wilderness Study Program Biased

**Editor's Note:** On June 19th, Mary Scoonover traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify on behalf of the California Wilderness Coalition before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The "oversight hearing" was called to examine the Bureau of Land Management's wilderness review process. The following is her testimony:

I am Mary Scoonover of Davis, California. I have just graduated from the University of California at Davis and will be entering law school in the fall. I am representing the California Wilderness Coalition, an alliance of organizations, businesses, and individuals all working for the preservation of California's wild lands.

A significant part of California's wilderness heritage is found on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). One-sixth of my state is managed by BLM, and much of this land remains roadless and wild. Although most of BLM's holdings are in the California Desert Conservation Area, 4.4 million acres of public land are found throughout the state from the Oregon state line to the Mexican border. These are the lands I am speaking about today.

The California Wilderness Coalition believes that about 1.3 million acres of roadless BLM land may be found outside of the California desert. These areas are as spectacular and wild as any of our National Park or National Forest wilderness areas, and in most cases they include ecosystems not currently represented in our National Wilderness Preservation System.

California's wildest coastline is in a BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Rivers such as the Tuolumne, Merced, and Pit flow through rugged canyons managed by BLM. Other areas vividly show where cinder cones grew and molten lava flowed in comparatively recent times.

The endangered California condor and peregrine falcon may be found in these BLM wild lands. Roosevelt and tule elk, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn range on these WSAs. Some areas have plants found nowhere else in the world; others support stands of giant sequoias and bristlecone pine.

I would like to describe a few of these Wilderness Study Areas in detail.

## KING RANGE AND CHEMISE MOUNTAIN

Along most of California's coast, State Highway 1, the Coast Highway, hugs the shoreline providing beautiful vistas of rocky cliffs, sandy beaches, and the Pacific Ocean. But north of Fort Bragg, the steep and rugged terrain forced engineers about 30 miles inland around the King Range. This stretch of wild and roadless land is known as California's Lost Coast.

Mountains seem to rise directly out of the sea; Kings Peak towers 4,087 feet above a beach only three miles away. A steep trail descends from Chemise Mountain to the cobblestone beach below; here the drop is 2,600 feet in about one-half mile.

More accessible is the 26 mile beach from Shelter Cove to the Mattole River. Although in the shadow of Kings Peak you can walk this wild stretch of beach from end to end, if you don't mind the companionship of sea lions, seals, numerous birds, and an occasional illegal off-road vehicle. There is no similar wilderness experience

available anywhere in California.

There are other values here. Among the 258 bird species identified are threatened species such as the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, brown pelican, and spotted owl. Steelhead, silver salmon, and king salmon spawn in the rivers and streams. The magnificent Roosevelt elk recently has been reintroduced to the King Range.

The two Wilderness Study Areas total over 34,000 acres, but former Interior Secretary James Watt lopped off 5,152 acres of wild land last year. The area is still being studied, and preliminary recommendations are not expected until this fall.

## ROCKY CREEK - CACHE CREEK

The closest wild land to my home in Davis is the Rocky Creek - Cache Creek WSA in Yolo and Lake counties. The 33,582 acres of wild land surround a popular rafting segment of Cache Creek, a stream named by Hudson Bay Company trappers. A remnant herd of rare tule elk utilize the wilds as do bald eagles, golden eagles, and prairie

falcons.

The chaparral ecosystem of the Rocky Creek - Cache Creek area includes a unique serpentine chaparral component; there are no other established or candidate wilderness areas which contain any significant representation of serpentine chaparral. Areas such as Rocky Creek - Cache Creek with large expanses of undisturbed, typical coast range vegetation rapidly are decreasing as development pressures increase.

Despite public hearing testimony 17 to 1 for wilderness designation for this area, BLM proposed to designate the entire WSA as non-suitable.

## THE STATUS OF CALIFORNIA'S NON-DESERT WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

The Bureau of Land Management administers about 4.4 million acres of land in California outside the California Desert Conservation Area (12.1 million acres). Another 1.5 million acres in Nevada are managed by the California BLM office, but my testimony is restricted to wild lands in California.

Of these 4.4 million acres,  
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BLM's Rocky Creek - Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area

Photo by Phillip Farrell

# BLM's Wilderness Study Program

Cont. from Page 3

about 2.9 million acres were identified as wilderness inventory units during the preliminary wilderness inventory.

The Final Intensive Inventory identified 92 Wilderness Study Areas, totaling 840,796 acres, in California outside the California desert. Organizations and individuals protested and/or appealed the decision to drop 21 other areas totaling 460,553 acres; their objections were overruled on all but four areas (66,010 acres).

Former Interior Secretary James Watt later eliminated parts of six WSAs and completely dropped 40 WSAs (including two areas of the four areas won by citizen protests). Four areas subsequently have been reinstated.

To date, the BLM has studied 49 WSAs and recommended as suitable for wilderness designation parts of 10 WSAs totaling 96,105 acres. This represents 7.4 percent of the lands conservationists believe have wilderness characteristics or 10.6 percent of the lands BLM originally identified as Wilderness Study Areas.

## THE BIAS AGAINST WILDERNESS

Many of the justifications for non-suitable recommendations border on the absurd. The Panoche Hills North and South WSAs were deemed non-suitable because the BLM cannot control off-road vehicle trespass. Caliente Mountain, feeding range for the critically endangered California condor and American peregrine falcon, was not recommended due to a heavy demand for vehicular access for hunting and rockhounding. The BLM deleted some 8,000 acres from their suitable recommendation for the Owens Peak WSA to allow for a gravel pit and Christmas tree harvesting.

The most ludicrous arguments against wilderness came with the study of the 16,950-acre Tule Mountain WSA, an area first deleted by BLM but reinstated after a protest by the California Wilderness Coalition. Although most of the area is sage and juniper, at the top of Tule Mountain are 105 acres of white fir and Jeffrey pine. BLM considers this "forest" to be in an "overstocked" condition and that wilderness designation would result in the loss of 151 acres of commercial timberland in the entire 16,950-acre WSA. Mineral potential is low, but BLM suggests that basalt found at the top of Tule Mountain could be used as a decorative stone called flat rock

or lava moss rock. The agency also is concerned about the "decadent" browse and dense young juniper.

## THE ONE GOOD EXAMPLE IS NOW OUR WORST CASE

As I mentioned earlier, the trend in BLM's wilderness studies is to recommend a tiny fraction of their wild lands as suitable for wilderness designation. The one exception to that tendency had been in western San Diego and Riverside counties where two years ago they proposed for wilderness 17,774 of 34,883 roadless acres, nearly 58 percent.

Last month a "supplemental" draft environmental impact statement was released reducing their recommendation of suitable acres from 17,774 to just 360 acres!

The only lands in western Riverside and San Diego counties now being proposed by BLM for addition to our National Wilderness Preservation System are 360 acres adjacent to the existing Agua Tibia Wilderness.

The two WSAs on Otay Mountain are no longer considered suitable because "wilderness designation may not be flexible enough to provide protection to the sensitive plants and meet the goals of the Endangered Species Act."

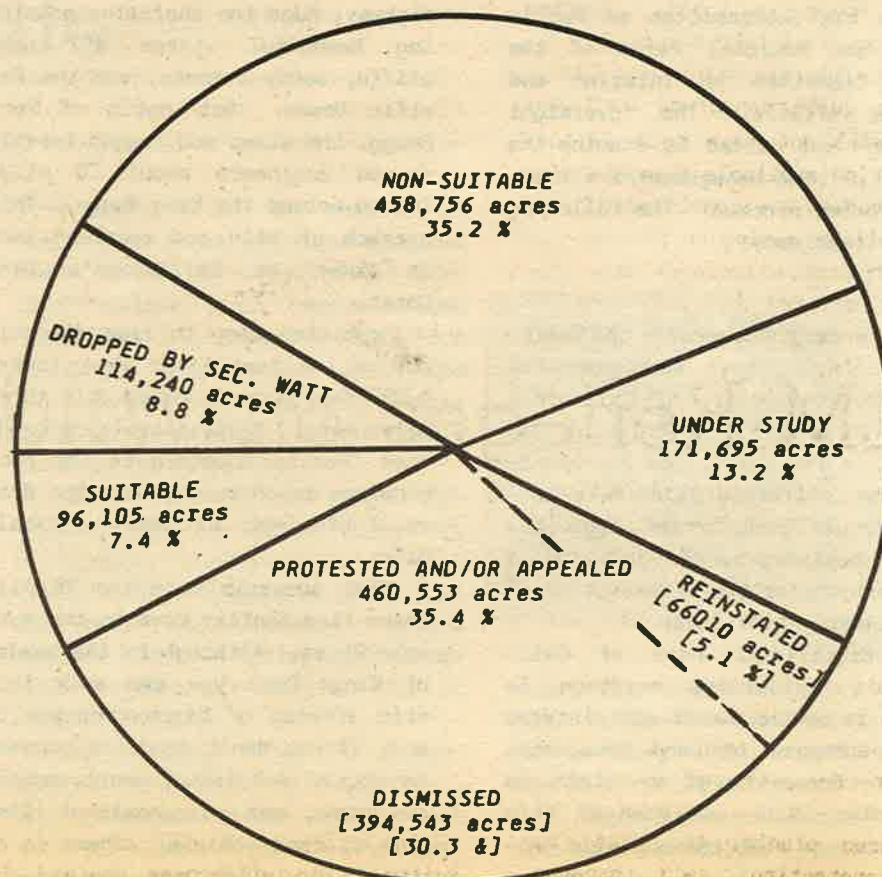
The Beauty Mountain WSA has been changed from suitable to non-suitable because "the California Department of Forestry ... has expressed concern that wilderness designation would interfere with its [sic] plans and methods for providing fire protection." BLM also feels that the wilderness values present are found "in greater magnitude, quality, and access" in the California State Wilderness Preservation System in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Despite the justifications given, BLM has not explained why in two short years 17,414 of 17,774 acres previously deemed suitable by BLM have suddenly lost their wilderness values.

## OTHER WILDERNESS STUDIES

The Central Valley of California received poor treatment when only 16,630 of 95,049 WSA acres (17%) were found suitable, despite the fact that most of these roadless areas are totally unrepresented in our National Wilderness Preservation System. In addition to non-suitable recommendations for the Panoche Hills, Caliente Mountain, and part of the Owens Peak WSAs, BLM did not find suitable the wild

## STATUS OF WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN CALIFORNIA OUTSIDE THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA



Total acreage of wild lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in California outside the California Desert Conservation Area is about 1.3 million acres. This total combines all Wilderness Study Areas, including those dropped by former Interior Secretary James Watt (under litigation), and lands protested and/or appealed by conservation organizations.

Merced River WSA with its spectacular canyon, the Piute Cypress WSA with the largest grove in existence of Piute Cypress, the Sheep Ridge and Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSAs directly adjacent to administration-endorsed wilderness in Sequoia National Park (with BLM's only giant sequoias), or even the 680 acres adjacent to the existing Ventana Wilderness.

Neither the Timbered Crater or Lava WSAs were recommended for wilderness despite a long history of support for Timbered Crater from both the Forest Service and BLM in the past which resulted in the inclusion of this area in the House-passed California Wilderness bill.

The Pit River Canyon WSA has become the "incredible shrinking wilderness" from the 15,235 acres inventoried in 1978 to the 5,880 recommended as suitable in 1983. As mentioned earlier, the Tule Mountain WSA shrunk to nothing.

Despite over 200 wilderness supporters filling the hearing room and only one witness against preservation of the area, BLM refuses to recommend as suitable any of the

Red Mountain WSA, an area described by BLM as "very, very unique."

On the east side of the Sierra Nevada, BLM is proposing to protect less than 20 percent of the wild lands. None of the areas surrounding the historic site of Bodie, north of Mono Lake, were found suitable, nor were the wilds east of Mono Lake. The four areas in the Benton Range, home for raptors, eagles, and mule deer, all were found non-suitable. The Slinkard WSA, adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg roadless area in the California Wilderness bill, was not recommended for wilderness, the same fate as two WSAs adjacent through Forest Service roadless areas to the John Muir Wilderness.

## CONCLUSION

At every opportunity, the Bureau of Land Management has attempted to disregard their Congressional mandate to study California's wild public lands. From the initial inventory, where huge areas were deleted for spurious reasons, to the recent wilderness studies, the goal of BLM seems to be to recom-

# Biased

mend an absolute minimum of WSAs as suitable for wilderness designation. I am sure that after mineral studies are completed for the few areas found suitable, further reductions will take place.

The California Wilderness Coalition is quite concerned that Congress will not have much factual information available from BLM when these studies are completed. Citizens will be coming to Congress to ask for more wilderness than the morsels offered by BLM, and we already know the agency's defense:

"we already rejected that area, and, besides, no mineral study has been done".

One hope is that a new Administration will take another review at the Secretary of Interior level before the final BLM recommendations are made. We do not see such an event happening with the current Reagan Administration.

Failing a decent review by BLM, our only recourse is the Congress. We are confident that in this forum we can present our case for preserving some of California's

outstanding wild areas.

Our wilderness heritage is rich in California. The names of the Wilderness Study Areas reflect much of our history. Cuyama, Otay, Wonoga, Tinemaha, Piute, Panoche, and Ishi come from our Native Americans. The Spanish gave us San Felipe, Agua Tibia, Tepusquet, Casa Diablo, and Cerro Gordo. And Mother Nature gave us the features honored with names like Volcanic Tableland, Glass Mountain, Devils Gate, Pinnacles, Twin Peaks, Sweetwater, and Buffalo Hills.

These places are important -- for their wildness, for the plants, for the animals, and for the 25 million Californians currently living in my state. We still have to opportunity to preserve these areas, and we must not fail to do so.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views.

Mary Scoonover has worked as an intern for both the California Wilderness Coalition and Sierra Club.

## BLM Reneges on Wilderness

In an unprecedented action, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has reversed an earlier wilderness decision for roadless areas in San Diego and Riverside counties. Their previous wilderness recommendation of 17,774 acres has been reduced to 360 acres.

The agency eliminated wilderness recommendations for three areas due to the existence of endangered plants, the need for fire protection, and because better wilderness exists in the nearby Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

"This shows that the spirit of James Watt is alive and scheming in the Department of the Interior," charged Jim Eaton, the California Wilderness Coalition's executive director. "You must have a warped sense of what wilderness is about to claim that endangered

species can not be properly managed in a wilderness area," he said.

BLM has issued a "supplemental" draft environmental impact statement for their Western Counties Wilderness Study Project. Public comment is being accepted until September 8, 1984.

In June of 1982 BLM pleased environmentalists by recommending 17,774 acres of 30,883 acres as suitable for wilderness designation. This was in stark contrast to other wilderness studies where BLM was proposing to protect only a scant fraction of eligible acreage.

The original recommendation was for the Agua Tibia Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the eastern portions of the Beauty Mountain and Western Otay WSAs, and part of the Southern Otay Mountain WSA.

The current action discards all but the 360-acre Agua Tibia WSA directly adjacent to the existing Agua Tibia Wilderness Area in the Cleveland National Forest.

Public comment on the original recommendations was light. Only five people attended the public hearing, and just 31 letters were received. Conservationists hope that an outpouring of public sentiment will cause BLM to return to their earlier wilderness proposals.

In addition to the non-suitable recommendations, BLM is proposing to transfer all the WSAs to the U.S. Forest Service.

Areas then recommended as non-suitable included Hauser Mountain WSA and the remainders of the Western and Southern Otay Mountain WSAs and Beauty Mountain WSA.

## Wilderness Bill

Cont. from Page 1

Two areas dropped from the bill will be studied further for wilderness during the next four years. The Pyramid Peak and Hoover Wilderness Additions will receive this study protection, along with 30,000 acres of the Carson-Iceberg roadless area (including the Noble Canyon area).

Numerous roadless areas are losing protection, however, by being dropped from "further planning" to "non-wilderness" status. In addition to areas being dropped from the House bill, all roadless areas remaining in the Mendocino and Plumas national forests, five areas in the Los Padres forest, and several other areas will be opened to logging and oil and gas development.

The following chart is the best analysis the California Wilderness Coalition is able to compile as we go to press.

### The Senate Wilderness Plan

Proposed Wilderness	H.R. 1437 acreage	Senate acreage	Net loss	Percent loss	Mt. Shasta	37000	37000	0	0
Boundary Peak	49900	0	-49900	100	North Fork	8100	8100	0	0
Caliente	5900	0	-5900	100	Pattison	28000	0	-28000	100
Caples Creek	14000	0	-14000	100	Pine Creek	13100	10900	-2200	17
Caribou	1800	1800	0	0	Pyramid Creek	17000	0	-17000	100
Carson-Iceberg	190000	160000	-30000	16	Red Buttes	31000	16000	-15000	48
Castle Crags	7300	7300	0	0	Russian	12000	12000	0	0
Chancelulla	8200	8200	0	0	San Gorgonio Adds.	21500	21500	0	0
Cinder Buttes	15500	0	-15500	100	San Jacinto Adds.	10900	10900	0	0
Cucamonga Adds.	4400	4400	0	0	San Joaquin	110000	110000	0	0
Deep Wells	7000	0	-7000	100	San Mateo Canyon	39540	39540	0	0
Dick Smith	67000	64700	-2300	3	San Rafael Adds.	2000	2000	0	0
Dinkey Lakes	30000	30000	0	0	Santa Rosa	20160	20160	0	0
Domeland Adds.	32000	32000	0	0	Scodies	48000	0	-48000	100
Emigrant Adds.	6100	6100	0	0	Sheep Mountain	44600	44000	-600	1
Excelsior	46400	0	-46400	100	Sill Hill	5200	0	-5200	100
Fish Canyon	32900	0	-32900	100	Siskiyou	191000	153000	-38000	20
Granite Chief	34000	25000	-9000	26	Snow Mountain	37000	37000	0	0
Granite Peak	10600	0	-10600	100	South Sierra	77000	63000	-14000	18
Hauser	8000	8000	0	0	South Warner Adds.	1940	1940	0	0
Hoover Adds.	49200	0	-49200	100	Thousand Lakes Add	7000	0	-7000	100
Ishi	41840	41840	0	0	Timbered Crater	22000	0	-22000	100
John Muir Inyo Add	9000	0	-9000	100	Trinity Alps	500000	500000	0	0
John Muir Sierra A	81000	76000	-5000	6	Ventana Adds.	2750	2750	0	0
Lassen Volcanic Ad	3900	0	-3900	100	Yolla-Bolly Adds.	46000	42000	-4000	9
Marble Mtn. Adds.	38000	28000	-10000	26	Buck's Lake	21000	21000	0	0
Minarets Adds.	9000	0	-9000	100	Echo-Carson	20000	0	-20000	100
Mokelumne Adds.	60000	55000	-5000	8	Mill Creek	9800	0	-9800	100
Monarch	55000	45000	-10000	18	Machesna Mountain	20000	20000	0	0
					Jennie Lakes	10500	10500	0	0
					TOTALS	2332030	1776630	-555400	acres
									TOTAL
									402066

FURTHER PLANNING TO NON-WILDERNESS (\*previously dropped by House)

North Fork Smith	39400*
Black Butte	17800
Elk Creek	18900
East Fork	6200
Murphy Glade	900
Ondrey Mountain	14316
Chips Creek	45000
Middle Fork	29300
Bald Rock	3850
West Yuba	20900
North Fk. American	49100*
East Yuba	17900
Lost Creek	8300
Rubicon	5100
Pyramid	24300
Miranda Pine	12800
Spoor Canyon	12300
Fox Mountain	51300
Cuyama	19000
Tepusquet Peak	5400

## Wilderness Wildlife

# Forest Service Mismanagement of Snag-Dependent Wildlife

By Dennis Coules

Numerous species of forest birds and mammals depend on snags for nesting sites or shelter. In fact, many researchers feel that the availability of suitable snags as nest sites may be the major limiting factor for populations of cavity-nesting birds.

Recent U.S. Forest Service regulations require the retention of snags for wildlife in logging areas. However, current models used by the agency to predict how many snags must be saved to maintain viable wildlife populations are highly suspect and not based on a thorough biological understanding. As a result, wildlife populations in the national forests will continue to decline as habitat for those species dependent on snags and other features associated with old-growth communities is destroyed.

### Snags and Species that Use Them

A "snag" can be defined as any dead or partially dead standing tree from which the leaves and some or all of the branches have fallen. "Soft" snags are older and more decayed than "hard" snags, which contain a larger proportion of sound wood.

The greatest value of snags to wildlife is that they provide shelter in the form of natural or exca-

vated cavities for nesting, protection, etc. Many forest bird and mammal populations would be exterminated or greatly reduced if snags were not available to provide this function.

A Forest Service study in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, an area similar to the forested coastal mountains of northwestern California, found that 39 species of birds and 23 species of mammals utilized snags for nesting or shelter. Mammals, such as martens, fishers, and squirrels, use cavities in snags for dens, while bats roost in spaces under loose bark.

Researchers have found that snags must be at least four inches in diameter (measured as diameter at breast height - dbh) and six feet high to be used for nesting by even the smallest species of snag-nesting bird. The larger the snag, the greater the range of species that utilize it. For example, the pileated woodpecker requires snags at least 20 inches dbh.

Wildlife researcher Martin Raphael, while studying habitat selection by snag-nesting birds at Sagehen Creek in the Sierra Nevada, found that rarer, large dbh snags (average 25 inches dbh) were used much more frequently than the ubiquitous small-diameter snags. This indicates that although a given

bird species may be capable of nesting in a smaller sized snag, it tends to select snags larger than this minimum size. Raphael also found that the birds were selective about the tree species used. Red fir stands were used very little compared to other forest types included in his study.

Birds that utilize snags for nesting may be divided into two categories: primary cavity nesters (PCN), which excavate their own cavities; and secondary cavity nesters (SCN), which utilize either old cavities excavated by PCN or natural cavities.

PCN are typified by the several species of woodpeckers, sapsuckers, and chickadees that inhabit our forests. Some PCN can excavate only in soft snags, while others prefer hard snags or may excavate in either type. The Blue Mountains study found 16 species of PCN birds, including ten that could excavate in hard snags and eight that excavated in soft snags. SCN include owls, wood ducks, mergansers, and kestrels. Thirty bird species of the Blue Mountains were classified as SCN, including some species, such as chickadees, which may be either PCN or SCN.

Species which are the most sensitive to reductions in snag availability are those that nest exclusively in snags as well as feed heavily on the insects and other invertebrates which live under the loose bark of snags. In California, these particularly vulnerable species include the black-backed and hairy woodpeckers.

Beside snag diameter and stage of decay, other characteristics of snags affect their suitability for a given wildlife species. Snags left in the middle of a clearcut probably would not be utilized by pileated woodpeckers, which nest in

The spotted owl and old growth timber are tied together in one other way: both are threatened with extinction within the next few decades if timber harvesting trends continue.

-Oregon Wildlife

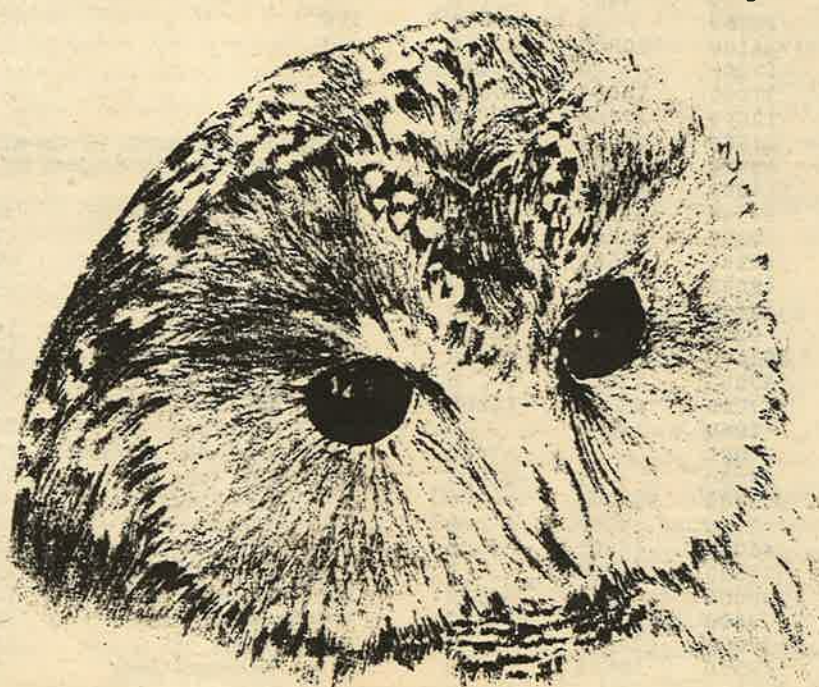


snags surrounded by other trees. Many woodpecker species appear to prefer snags that have been attacked by fungal heart rots and will not begin excavation unless the resonance of the wood indicated this. Some species will only nest within a narrow range of height, this eliminating snags that are too short. It is very rare that all snags found in the forest are utilized by cavity-nesting birds. In the Blue Mountains, a survey of 8,000 snags found 16 without nest cavities for each one with one or more cavities.

### Forest Service Models and their Limitations

The Forest Service, after a few studies such as the Blue Mountain project, has begun to develop and implement management models for snag-dependent species based on the notion that wildlife population levels can be manipulated at will. Forest managers are directed to use standardized charts to allocate the number of snags with certain minimum diameters necessary to support different population levels of cavity-nesting birds in the area.

For example, one chart shows that maintenance of a 100 percent population level for pileated woodpeckers requires 14 snags over 20 inches dbh per 100 acres, while for a 50 percent level, seven snags must be retained, and so on in 10 percent increments. For a species with a smaller territory size, such as the white-headed woodpecker, 225 snags over ten inches dbh must be retained per 100 acres for a 100 percent population level. (This



Spotted Owl

does not mean there are potentially 225 woodpeckers per 100 acres -- it takes into consideration the 16:1 ratio of utilized to unutilized snags in the forest and the fact that each pair may excavate up to three cavities in a season.)

Tahoe National Forest has selected bird populations of 40 percent and 60 percent of potential maximum populations to use as standards when allocating the number of snags to retain in its Forest Planning process. Other national forests also are using this approach to management.

Although this interest in maintaining populations of snag-dependent species is commendable (as well as being mandated by legislation), a management model based on minimum snag sizes and arbitrary population levels is seriously criticized by wildlife researchers.

First, the maximum potential (or "100 percent") population level upon which these charts are based was calculated using theoretical territory sizes for each species, even though territory sizes are not well established for most of these birds.

More importantly, management for a 10, 20, or even 90 percent popu-



Peregrine Falcon

lation level for a species does not assure that a viable population can be maintained over time. If only a fraction of the potential population is provided for, will normal population fluctuations cause an eventual crash to a zero level? This becomes even more critical as suitable forest habitat becomes increasingly isolated in a sea of clearcuts and snag-less, early successional stage growth.

Furthermore, as demonstrated by Raphael, although a given species may sometimes utilize a snag of small diameter approaching its minimum size requirement, large snags are much more frequently selected by birds. Thus if forest managers save snags based upon the minimum size required by a bird species, they may never actually be of use. It would be more biologically sound to base snag retention on the average size of snags utilized by a species.

A final fatal flaw in the model is that it is based on providing sufficient snags for only one year! It doesn't account for the decay and loss of snags over time. Thus, even if a 100 percent population level of cavity-nesting birds were selected for management, the loss of snags over time would eventually reduce the level to zero unless the snags were replaced.

In a natural forest snags are

created constantly as old trees grow old and die or are killed by lightning, fire, or insects. In young, even-aged forests created by man after clearcutting, snag replacement is unlikely or impossible, especially for large-sized snags. One answer proposed by the Forest Service has been to kill trees to create snags! However, this "technology" is in its infancy and its effectiveness has not been demonstrated.

A much more reasonable method of providing long-term habitat for snag-dependent species is to preserve numerous and significant tracts of snag-rich, old-growth forest both inside and outside of established wilderness areas. Here snags will be produced continuously as trees die, and the large snags preferred by many wildlife species will be available.

Intensively managed forests should be allowed to complete a longer rotation period so that the trees can grow to a size useful to

snag-nesting species. During logging operations, a large number of snags and large trees for future snags should be saved.

With the current trend towards elimination of old-growth stands, short rotation periods, and clearcutting, the impoverishment of our forest wildlife is inevitable. Forest managers must be held accountable for the maintenance of habitat under their administration.

Further Reading

U.S. Forest Service models mentioned are from "Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests - the Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington," USDA Forest Service Ag. Handbook #553, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 512 pages.

Other citations on this subject can be provided by the author on request.

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



Wood Duck



Marten

Wild and Woolly

The California Fish and Game Commission received a computer-generated letter with an offer from the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society of America to join the organization.

Addressed to the "Fish Game Commission," the salutation, in the standard attempt at intimacy, read

"Dear Fish."

And, after detailing the supposed advantages of membership and pointing to the offer of a \$30,500 grand prize in an outdoor adventure sweepstakes, the letter closed with this:

"Fish, you just might be the BIG Grand Prize Winner."

California Wilderness Coalition

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