

# WORDS OF *the* WILD

Vol. XX, No. 1 April 2017



Newsletter of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee

## Gold Butte named new National Monument, Dec. 28, 2016 *Obama expands his environmental legacy*

THE WHITE HOUSE:  
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 28, 2016

### Statement by the President on the Designation of Bears Ears National Monument and Gold Butte National Monument

"Today, I am designating two new national monuments in the desert landscapes of southeastern Utah and southern Nevada to protect some of our country's most important cultural treasures, including abundant rock art, archeological sites, and lands considered sacred by Native American tribes. Today's actions will help protect this cultural legacy and will ensure that future generations are able to enjoy and appreciate these scenic and historic landscapes.

Following years of public input and various proposals to protect both of these areas, including legislation and a proposal from tribal governments, these monuments will protect places that a wide range of stakeholders all agree are worthy of protection. We also have worked to ensure

that tribes and local communities can continue to access and benefit from these lands."

The December 28 proclamations--one of Obama's very last significant presidential actions--"further cemented President Obama's environmental legacy as one of the most consequential — and contentious — in presidential history. He has invoked his executive power to create national monuments 29 times, establishing or expanding protections for more than 553 million acres of federal lands and waters", according to The Washington Post (12-28-2016.)

Jaina Moan, executive Director of Friends of Gold Butte, a vigorous local advocacy group with which Sierra Club has worked closely, stated: "With the national monument designation, Gold Butte finally received the protection that it needs and deserves. The Gold Butte National Monument is a spectacular place; a place of great antiquity; a treasure that is now preserved for all to enjoy."

Christian Gerlach, Sierra Club Our Wild America staffer, who has worked in Las Vegas to build support for Gold Butte protection, said: "The effort to protect Gold Butte and help make it a National Monument was more than just protecting amazing unique lands of the Mojave Desert for future generations to enjoy, explore, and protect also. The effort was one for social justice as well, to finally have recognized the history of the indigenous peoples of Southern Nevada, the Nuwuvi

(Southern Paiutes) as part of the history of our country."

Located south of Mesquite, NV, between the Overton Arm of Lake Mead (where the Virgin River flows into the Reservoir) and the Arizona border, the 300,000-plus-acre area of federal lands is mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Since 2002, the remote area contains two small wildernesses: Jumbo Springs and Lime Canyon. It also has numerous dirt roads--some well-graded, some for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Gold Butte is called "Nevada's piece of the Grand Canyon".



photo: Vicky Hoover

Christian Gerlach shows Gold Butte petroglyphs to supporters, 2016

Connecting the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Gold Butte is a treasure trove of cultural, historic, and natural wonders. As Andy Maggi of Nevada Conservation League pointed out, "Its marvels include thousands of petroglyphs, historic mining and pioneer-era artifacts, threatened wildlife, dramatic geologic -- continued page 2

### Featured in this issue:

- Gold Butte proclaimed pp. 1-2
- Military expansion threat pp. 3-4
- NO vehicles in Wilderness p. 4
- NO roads in Wilderness p. 5
- Outings p. 6
- Co-chairs on Antiquities Act p. 7
- Art can do its part p. 8

## Gold Butte -- from page 1

features like red sculpted sandstone and rock spires, and fossil sites that are now protected.” ([www.nevadaconservationleague.org](http://www.nevadaconservationleague.org)).

A month and a half after the proclamation, a Sierra Club group celebrated by camping two nights in Gold Butte’s much-heralded “Whitney Pockets” area—a region of fantastic sandstone formations surrounded by lush Mojave desert vegetation: Their field

extraordinary variety of diverse and irreplaceable scientific, historic, and prehistoric resources, including vital plant and wildlife habitat, significant geological formations, rare fossils, important sites from the history of Native Americans, and remnants of our Western mining and ranching heritage. The landscape reveals a story of thousands of years of human interaction with this harsh environment and provides a rare glimpse into the lives of Nevada’s first inhabitants, the rich and varied indigenous cultures that followed, and the eventual arrival of Euro-American settlers. Canyons and intricate rock formations are a stunning backdrop to the area’s famously beautiful rock art, and the desert provides critical habitat for the threatened Mojave desert tortoise.

By the time Spanish explorers arrived in the region in the late eighteenth century, the Gold Butte area was home to the Southern Paiute people, who to this day, retain a spiritual and cultural connection with the land and use it for traditional purposes such as ceremonies and plant harvesting. Hunters and settlers of European descent followed, and, by 1865, Mormon pioneers had built settlements in the region.

The Gold Butte landscape that visitors experience today is the product of millions of years of heat and pressure as well as the eroding forces of water and wind. Rising up from the Virgin River to almost 8,000 feet, the Virgin Mountains delineate the area’s northeast corner and provide a stunning backdrop for the rugged gray and red desert of the lower elevations. These landscape features are dotted with fantastical geologic formations, including vividly hued Aztec Sandstone twisted into otherworldly shapes by wind and water. An actively expanding 1,200 square-meter sinkhole known as the Devil’s Throat has been the subject of multiple scientific studies that have enhanced our understanding of sinkhole formation.

The often snowcapped peaks of the Virgin Mountains stand in stark contrast to the desolate desert landscapes found elsewhere in the area. Due to their elevation of almost 8,000 feet, these

mountains exhibit a transition between ecosystems in the southwest. At the highest points of the Virgin Mountains, visitors can hike through ponderosa pine and white fir forests, and visit the southernmost stand of Douglas fir in Nevada. In this area, visitors are also treated to a rare sight: the Silver State’s only stand of the Arizona cypress. The lower to middle elevations are home to stands of pinyon pine, Utah juniper, sagebrush, and acacia woodlands.

In addition to providing homes to modern species of plants and wildlife, the area shows great potential for continued paleontological research, with resources such as recently discovered dinosaur tracks dating back to the Jurassic Period. These fossil trackways found in Aztec Sandstone include prints from squirrel-sized reptilian ancestors of mammals.

The protection of the Gold Butte area will preserve its cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and maintain its diverse array of natural and scientific resources... for the benefit of all Americans.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the rights or jurisdiction of any Indian tribe.

Livestock grazing has not been permitted in the monument area since 1998 and the Secretary shall not issue any new grazing permits or leases on lands within the monument.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including hunting and fishing.

Nothing in this proclamation shall preclude low-level overflights of military aircraft, the designation of new units of special use airspace, or the establishment of military flight training routes over the lands reserved by this proclamation consistent with the care and management of the objects identified above.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of the monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF*, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of December, in the year two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-first.

*BARACK OBAMA* ~



photo: Lawson LeGate

Atsuko Koga and Vicky Hoover enjoy the new Gold Butte National Monument on a celebratory February trip

trip followed the Regional Wilderness and Desert Committees’ annual joint meeting in Shoshone, CA. They relished the brilliant starlit nights, a visit to the remnant site of the historic mining community situated on the lower flank of the prominent hill called “Gold Butte” which gave its name to the entire region, and a hike to some of the fascinating Gold Butte petroglyphs. (See WOW, Dec 2016, just before the proclamation was issued. )

### *Excerpts from the Proclamation:*

#### THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release:

December 28, 2016

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOLD BUTTE NATIONAL MONUMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A PROCLAMATION

In southeast Nevada lies a landscape of contrast and transition, where dramatically chiseled red sandstone, twisting canyons, and tree-clad mountains punctuate flat stretches of the Mojave Desert. This remote and rugged desert landscape is known as Gold Butte.

The Gold Butte area contains an

# Nellis Test and Training Range Expansion plans in Nevada

-- by Laura Cunningham

The Air Force wants to expand the Nellis Test and Training Range (NTTR) into the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (in south-central Nevada) managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The expansion would also impact adjacent land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Another large section of the Desert NWR would be closed to public use in order to carry out increased military training and tests. At 1.6 million acres in size, the Desert NWR is the largest wildlife refuge in the Lower 48, and most of the Desert Refuge—about 1.3 million acres--has been officially proposed as wilderness and has been managed as *de facto* wilderness since 1974. But the military expansion proposal would threaten the Proposed Wilderness Areas in the new expansion area--as it already has in the western half of the Desert Refuge. The Sheep Range, within the Refuge, is the largest wilderness proposal in Nevada and extremely sensitive habitat--much of which would be impacted.

## Legislative Environmental Impact Statement

The proposal document is a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Although the Department of the Interior has authority to process federal land withdrawal applications, the Air Force is the lead agency for the LEIS.

Congress itself, through the Defense Withdrawal Act of 1958 (43 USC Sections 155–158), will make the final decision as to whether or not to renew the current NTTR land withdrawal, which expires in 2021 unless legislation

is enacted extending it. What this review process and decision would do is change the usual extension from the status quo of current military land acreage and present co-management with Desert National Wildlife Refuge, to a large expansion of 301,507 acres over the wildlife refuge, and adjacent BLM land, and effect changes to how the military ranges are used (with an increase in live fire bombing). A large portion (220,027 acres) of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge along Alamo Road in the eastern half of the refuge would be closed to public use as a Safety Buffer for Sheep Range training and tests. The Corn Creek Visitor Center just northeast of Las Vegas would remain open.

## Why More Land for the Military?

At public scoping meetings, Air Force personnel and contractors told us this is because of the “one-in-a-million” chance of debris or shrapnel leaving the target area during a bomb drop from different angles. The North Range of the NTTR already allows more unrestricted and broad live fire bombing tests and training. But the Sheep Range, which overlaps with a large part of the Desert Refuge, does not have this allowance, and has very restricted targets and approaches to targets for live fire tests. The Air Force wants to do training with aircraft flying from different angles for live fire bombing. Now they can fly in from only one direction in the basin where targets are, due to the configuration of mountain ridges. Shrapnel and debris are carefully calculated not to spread outside of military boundaries.

The Air Force wants to fly in faster and higher, to more realistically train in modern war-fare conditions, over the Sheep Range and lower ridges, where they would construct electronic countermeasure devices to imitate enemy stands.

With aircraft flying in from more directions, there would be an extremely remote possibility that debris or shrapnel from high impacts on targets would fling over some lower mountains into adjacent public land sections, or that misfires would occur.

No new Target Impact Areas would be developed, only present

targets would be used in training. But a 360 degree approach to targets at faster speeds for live fire training is what the Air Force claims is needed—for a more realistic warfare environment.

Wanting to expand Safety Buffer zones and increase war game complexity, the Air Force anticipates Fifth generation F-35 aircraft and new advanced weapons systems becoming available. Currently war games are not allowed in the mountains of the Sheep Range, and the expansion alternatives would open up access to the military for increased mountain warfare tests and training.

Alternative 3C would also allow the Air Force to build a new landing strip for C-130s on a dry lake in the wildlife refuge, install new radar installations and roads, and conduct off-highway vehicle maneuvers in the mountains, with large new concrete pads to hold radar and electronic warfare installations on



photo: Laura Cunningham

Bighorn sheep have excellent habitat in their namesake range mountain ridges. Other proposed training may include use of dune buggies in secret operations, troops in mountainous areas, and “Threat Emitters” on mountain tops.

## Impacts to Wildlife.

About 600 desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) dwell in the mountainous refuge, one of the best populations of this subspecies anywhere. Presently, USFWS biologists are allowed to access the shared refuge spaces to monitor sheep for only 20 hours a year for helicopter flights. Increased noise will certainly be a factor, if the military takeover is permitted, along with overflights and new training operations.

## What is Best for Wilderness?

U.S. Fish & Wildlife personnel said they supported the status quo, which is represented by Alternatives 1 and 4A, which would continue the current withdrawal area -- continued page 4, bottom



photo: Laura Cunningham

Canyons in the Sheep Range are typical Desert Wildlife Refuge terrain

## Mountain Bikers Seek to Gut Wilderness Act

-- by Kevin Proescholdt



Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA) recently introduced a bill in Congress at the behest of a mountain biking organization (the Sustainable Trails Coalition [STC]) that would gut the 1964 Wilderness Act and allow bikes in every Wilderness in the nation.

The bill, HR 1349, was introduced on March 15. It would amend the Wilderness Act to allow bikes, strollers, wheelbarrows, game carts, survey wheels, and measuring wheels in every unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System. And in a cynical and disingenuous move, the mountain bikers try to hide behind people with disabilities in their effort to make America's wild places a playground for cycling: the bill lists "motorized wheelchairs" and "non-motorized wheelchairs" as the first uses to be authorized in Wilderness by this bill (even prior to the listing of "bicycles"), although the 1990 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) already clearly allow wheelchairs--as medical devices--in designated Wilderness.

The STC had a bill introduced last year in the U.S. Senate by the two Utah Senators, Mike Lee and Orrin Hatch. That bill would have also opened the Wilderness System to mountain bikes and chainsaws. Fortunately, last year's bill went nowhere. Unfortunately, the new bill could very well move--with the current anti-wilderness majority in Congress allied with an Administration hostile to environmental protection. Rep. McClintock, a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, also chairs that panel's Subcommittee

on Federal Lands. This means he is in a significant position of leadership, which could facilitate advance of this year's mountain bike bill.

Last year, anticipating the 2016 Senate bill to open Wilderness to mountain bikes, Wilderness Watch initiated an organizational sign-on letter in opposition to opening up the National Wilderness Preservation System to bikes. A total of 114 organizations from around the nation signed on, and we submitted the letter to Congress. Yet that strong showing of opposition did not deter introduction of HR 1349 in March.

The 1964 Wilderness Act prohibits bicycles in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The law (36 U.S.C. 1131-1136) bans all types of bicycles as well as all other forms of mechanical transportation in designated Wilderness. Section 4(c) of that act states, "[T]here shall be...no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, **no other form of mechanical transport**, and no structure or installation within any such area." (emphasis added).

Furthermore, Congress stated the purpose of the Wilderness Act was, in part, to protect these areas from "expanding settlement and **growing mechanization**..." (emphasis added) (Wilderness Act, Section 2[a].)

In a deft use of falsehoods, the mountain bikers claim that the Wilderness Act **allows** bikes in Wilderness. The STC further claims that it was only since 1984 that the U.S. Forest Service administratively banned bikes from Wilderness. (The Forest Service's 1984 regulations specifically named bicycles as one of the prohibited uses in Wilderness; the earlier wilderness regulations did not specifically name bikes

as a prohibited use since mountain bikes had not yet been invented in 1964.)

These false claims (among many others by STC) ignore the clear language of the Wilderness Act and the regulations of the other three federal agencies that have from the beginning clearly banned bikes from the Wildernesses they administer.

The STC claims also evince an incredibly narrow and selfish view of Wilderness as just a recreation "pie" to be divided up among competing recreation user groups, with little regard for wilderness, habitat, solitude, or future generations' need to find a respite from modern machinery.

For more than a half century, the Wilderness Act has protected wilderness areas designated by Congress from mechanization and mechanical transport, even if no motors were involved with such activities. This has meant, as Congress intended, that Wildernesses have been kept free from bicycles and other types of mechanization and mechanical transport. Wilderness advocates believe that this protection has served our Nation well, and that the "benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness" would be forever lost by allowing mechanized transport in these areas.

⇒ **WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Contact your Congressional representatives and urge them to vigorously oppose HR 1349 and similar bills that would effectively gut the Wilderness Act.

*FOR MORE INFO:* See "Five Lies Being Used to Get Mountain Bikes into Wilderness" at <https://www.outsideonline.com/2165406/five-lies-being-used-to-get-mountain-bikes-wilderness>.

*Kevin Proescholdt of Minneapolis, MN, has worked specifically to protect wilderness during his 40 years as a Sierra Club member. He currently works as the conservation director for Wilderness Watch, [www.wildernesswatch.org](http://www.wildernesswatch.org).*

### Nellis AFB military expansion proposal -- from page 3

for existing military lands. We can support this, although wilderness advocates know that the best thing for wilderness would be actual designation by Congress.

⇒ **WHAT YOU CAN DO:** The military hopes to have a draft LEIS out this fall.. After the Final EIS is released Congress will make a decision. Please call your members of Congress and ask them to support the status quo—Alternatives 1 and 4A, and not to allow further expansion of the military base over the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Tell them that live fire training and testing is already allowed in the northern part of the NTTR, and that the Sheep Range is too valuable for bighorn sheep and wilderness values to be opened up for such increased modern warfare training. ♪

(Thanks to Friends of Nevada Wilderness for assisting editor on this article.)

## Izembek bill: harmful national precedent by a road in Wilderness Masquerades as “King Cove Land Exchange”

A bill now in Congress in both Houses— HR 218, introduced in the House by Alaska’s Congressman Don Young, and in the Senate, as S 101 by Alaska’s senior Senator, Lisa Murkowski, seeks to construct a road across a portion of the designated Wilderness in southwest Alaska’s remote Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. This deadly attack on our Wilderness System’s prohibition of roads masquerades under the innocent-sounding name of “King Cove Land Exchange Act.”

It would mandate a land exchange with the State of Alaska for a part of the little-known Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, in a distant part of Alaska -- along the Alaska Peninsula, nearly as far off as the start of the Aleutians Chain.

They want to build a road across seven miles of present wilderness -- and, understanding that it would be illegal to construct a road in designated wilderness, they propose to exchange that land with allegedly equivalent land (more acreage, but of less value for wildlife habitat, etc.) belonging to the state of Alaska.

The legislators claim that residents of the tiny coastal community of King Cove need this road to be able reach the big airstrip of another neighboring community (Cold Bay) for potential emergency medical evacuations.

That will get sympathy, won’t it? Most of us – in Sierra Club too, want to help isolated indigenous communities.

But –what is the REAL story here if we delve into the facts?

It is a bogus issue. Congress, some 20 years ago when the push for such a road began, appropriated \$37.5 million to improve ferry service along the Alaska Peninsula, enhance Coast Guard presence, and provide helicopter assistance for King Cove. The 1997 funds included upgrading the medical clinic. In addition, Congress provided King Cove with a \$9 million hovercraft which successfully completed all requested evacuations -- before they sent it away to another community in 2012, claiming it was too hard to service it with replacement parts.

It is also bogus because the road would be snow covered much of the year, and would be too dangerous and expensive to keep open and clear through the long, dark winter months. The trip using the hovercraft took 20 minutes to cross the lagoon from King Cove to Cold Bay, but the proposed road would be at minimum a two-hour ride and would be unusable during winter: it would jeopardize safety in the winter darkness, with requent violent storms, snow drifts and ice glazed road conditions. The proposed dirt road would cost at least \$24 million--plus unknown amounts for maintenance.

The real motive for this is a direct attack on America’s Wilderness system. A deadly attack, because of the national precedent it would establish -- that if any entity that wants to put a road through an existing wilderness merely has to achieve a land exchange to take that part OUT of wilderness -- then so much for our proud American concept of keeping some special wild places wild and road-free *in perpetuity*.

In addition, there is serious concern about impacts to uniquely valuable wildlife habitat. The Izembek Lagoon, sporting the world’s largest eel grass beds, almost 45,000 acres in size, is designated as a Wetland of International Importance and is famous worldwide for the amazing congregation of migrating bird species that assemble here to fatten up on the eel grass for their long and arduous migratory pilgrimages. Almost the entire worldwide poplation of black brant feed each year in Izembek Lagoon. Taverner’s Canada goose, emperor goose, and threatened Steller’s eider are also among species feeding each autumn at Izembek. The eel grass is the foundation for a complex food-chain composed of invertebrates, fish, marine mammals, and seabirds.

In addition, waterfowl that visit in Izembek Wildlife Refuge also fly north to the Yukon Kuskowkim Delta, where subsistence hunters from nearby Yup’ik Eskimo communities (about 27 villages) harvest them. Myron

Naneng (Yup’ik Eskimo from Hooper Bay) recently testified in front of the House committee about this subsistence need. He was former President of AVCP (Association of Village Council Presidents) in Bethel.

As the National Wildlife Refuge Association also testified: “The road would cause irreversible damage to the refuge’s wildlife and environment, negatively impact Alaska natives’ subsistence way of life, waste millions of taxpayer dollars, undermine our nation’s bedrock environmental laws, and set a dangerous nationwide precedent for the entire National Wildlife Refuge System and all designated wilderness lands.”

Sierra Club’s Alaska Chapter has repeatedly refuted the Congressional delegation’s claims about the mythical “need” for such a road. The Obama administration, and specifically Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell, firmly resisted the delegation’s push for a road. But, now, with an Administration allied to anti-wilderness forces in Congress, viability for a potential road makes this an urgent NATIONAL issue.

Your editor spent a summer week in 2012 in nearby Cold Bay, headquarters of Izembek Refuge and saw how valuable this place--soon perhaps lost as wilderness--is as



The hovercraft at Cold Bay, 2012 migrating bird feeding habitat.

⇒ **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**  
The Alaska legislators figure hardly anyone has heard of Izembek and fewer still have a clue where it is—so they can whisk their anti-wilderness measure through: *Don’t let them get away with that!* Urge your members of Congress to firmly oppose S 101 and HR 218—a sinister, lethal attack on America’s system of Wilderness. The proposed road is a taxpayer boondoggle NOT needed by residents, whose needs have already been well taken care of by Congress. ♪

--Vicky Hoover



# Outings



**Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!**

*--May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds. -- Edward Abbey (from Range of Light Group newsletter)*

## April 28 - 30 – Fri-Sun Owens Lake Bird Festival

Friends of the Inyo invites all birders and lovers of wildlife and beautiful landscapes to celebrate with us during the 3rd Annual Owens Lake Bird Festival, April 28-30, 2017 in Lone Pine, California. Great opportunities to experience the height of an awe-inspiring migration of birds travelling between hemispheres. This year's festival includes a Fri evening reception at the Western Film History Museum and Sun guided outings; Owens Lake explorations for beginners and experts, a Keeler walking history tour, an Alabama Hills bird and botany venture, and a Sat evening reception including "The Amazing Shorebirds of Owens Lake" by Tom and Jo Heindel. While this year's Owens Lake Bird Festival has sold out, this is an annual event, so send us an email, and we can add you to the wait list, or we hope to see you next year. Go to <http://friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/owenslakefestival>.

### Nearby Nature Outing

## April 29 - Sat Corona Heights Natural Area Workday

Join San Francisco Bay Chapter Gay & Lesbian Section for the monthly habitat workday at Corona Heights Natural Area, within Corona Heights Park in San Francisco, from 10 am to noon. More than 100 native plant species have been recorded in this important area for resident and migratory birds. Also one of the best areas in the City to see Spring wildflowers. We'll be nurturing new plants, as well as cutting back non-native annual grasses and other weeds which can easily out-compete native species. Work rain or shine; all tools and gloves provided. Children welcome if accompanied by parent or guardian. Wear closed toe shoes and layers. Meet at 10 am north side of Randall Museum at end of Museum Way just off Roosevelt Way. Leader: Russell Hartman, 650-242-2679, [rph1917@comcast.net](mailto:rph1917@comcast.net).

## Bright Star Wilderness Restoration May 5-7, Fri-Mon

Join CNRCC Desert Committee to work on the Bright Star Corridor fence that was burned in 2016's Erskine Fire. The fence we

will rebuild blocked access to a former cabin site that still faces vehicle trespass issues. This project will begin an even longer fence line to help protect the vulnerable burned area. For questions or to sign up contact leader: Kate Allen, [kj.allen96@gmail.com](mailto:kj.allen96@gmail.com) or 661-944-4056..

### Nearby Nature Outing

## May 13 - Sat Antioch Dunes Wildflower Walk

Join San Francisco Bay Chapter's Delta Regional Group in a special spring visit to the normally closed to the public Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge—a rare chance to see this 55-acre wildlife preserve along the San Joaquin River shoreline. A docent-led one-hour easy (1A) walk starting 10 am will view wildflowers in bloom and habitat restoration for the three endangered species here: Antioch Dunes evening primrose, Contra Costa wallflower, and Lange's Metalmark butterfly. Rain or shine: meet at main Dunes Refuge gate and parking area on right, just before a sharp left turn to the Shipyard. For info, call Refuge 707-769-4200 or Delta Group contact Janess Hanson 925-458-0860.

## May 26-29 Gold Butte NV Wilderness Service

Join CA/NV Wilderness Committee over Memorial Day on our annual service project in Nevada—instead of working with BLM's Ely office this time, as first anticipated, we join Friends of Gold Butte

in our brand new national monument. Save the date and look for details soon. Optional central commissary. Contact Vicky Hoover, 415-977-5527 or [vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org)

## June 16 - 22, Fri-Thurs Escalante Backpack

This 37-mile Southern Nevada Group backpack starts in Harris Wash, then goes 12 miles along the Escalante River, and finally 14 miles out 25 Mile Wash. Enjoy narrows, large alcoves, and side canyons that become slot canyons. Day hikes will explore Choprock Canyon and Neon Canyon. Be prepared to get feet wet. Car shuttle, high clearance vehicles best. Limit 10. David Hardy, 702-875-4826 [hardyhikers@embarqmail.com](mailto:hardyhikers@embarqmail.com); email preferred.

## July 2 - 6 -- Sun-Thurs Nevada Arc Dome Backpack

This central NV area is one of "deep, rugged canyons, high bald peaks, elk and wet feet." Our **Twin Rivers Loop** begins on the North Twin River, about an hour's drive n.e. of Tonopah, elevation approx 6300 ft. Hike in 2 or 3 miles to first camp; next day, hike another 5 miles. On day 3 we day hike to the top of 11,773 ft Arc Dome, 12 miles rt with 4100 ft. gain. Day 4 sees us start down South Twin, with a camp after several miles. Last day hike out. 16 miles, 3000 ft. elevation gain with backpacks. Limit 12. David Hardy, see June 16-22. S. Nevada Group trip. ♪

**Outing report:** March 24 to 26, the CA/NV wilderness committee held its annual spring service trip with BLM in the California Desert. This year's venture was different: no hard physical labor, but we helped support a special BLM venture to bring a group of young children from the city of Barstow, to experience the desert and camp overnight in Afton Canyon--and also to help BLM celebrate the one-year anniversary of the new Mojave Trails National Monument. (See WOW, April 2016) ♪



BLM Ranger Art Basulto teaches kids about desert wildlife at Afton Canyon

photo: Vicky Hoover

## Bears Ears, the Antiquities Act, and Us



The fight to defend Bears Ears National Monument in southeast Utah is our fight too. As Californians and Nevadans who love wilderness and honor Native American heritage, we know that Bears Ears is a treasure beyond price. We know that Nevada's magnificent Gold Butte—designated a national monument by President Obama on the same day he proclaimed Bears Ears—faces a similar threat by politicians, grazing interests and extractive industries aiming to revoke or reduce national monument protections. *An attack on Bears Ears National Monument is an attack on ALL national monuments.*

National monument opponents employ “alternative facts,” portraying the monument designation process as top-down, lacking local input and tribal support. And they ignore the well-documented, long-term economic benefits of tourism and outdoor recreation to rural communities near established national monuments.

These threats are part of a broader assault on our public lands and bedrock land conservation laws such as the Antiquities Act—an assault that is likely to continue at least through the 2018 midterm elections.

President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act into law in 1906 largely to address rampant vandalism and looting of Native American artifacts and archeological sites throughout the American West. The Act gave the President authority to create national monuments from federal lands to protect significant natural, cultural or scientific features, and it has been used more than 100 times (national monuments can also be designated by Congress). Many of our national parks started out as national monuments—including Death Valley, Lassen, Pinnacles and Channel Islands in California, and Great Basin (formerly Lehman Caves National Monument) in Nevada. And many national monuments contain federally

designated wilderness within their borders, giving those wilderness areas additional stewardship and protection. Of the 15 existing national monuments in California and two in Nevada, those proclaimed or expanded by President Barak Obama may be most vulnerable to current attacks: these are Basin and Range, Berryessa-Snow Mountain, California Coastal, Cascade-Siskiyou, Castle Mountain, Gold Butte, Mojave Trails, Sand-to-Snow, and San Gabriel Mountains.

National Sierra Club staff and the Club's national Grassroots Network are working with Chapters and partners to plan rapid response rallies and social media campaigns to defeat threats to the Antiquities Act and defend Bears Ears National Monument. As your California-Nevada Wilderness Committee co-chairs we will strive to help wilderness activists stay informed and act quickly in concert with our allies using grassroots organizing, social media and old-fashioned citizen action. We will use our Listserv, website, and Facebook page to share information and alerts. And we invite you to share your ideas on how we as an activist community can become more nimble and effective in protecting all of our precious public lands.

⇒ **Take Action:** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has stated that he will travel to Utah to talk to various interested parties about the Bears Ears; as of this writing no date has been announced. Please call the Secretary's office in support of the monument. The number to call is: **202-208-7351** and if you get a recording, press “0” to leave a message. Other numbers to try are: **202-208-6317** and **202-912-7780**. 🌀

**For more information about Bears Ears and Gold Butte, see:**  
Sierra Club Utah Chapter: [utah.sierraclub.org](http://utah.sierraclub.org)  
Californians for Western Wilderness (CalUWild): [www.caluwild.org](http://www.caluwild.org)  
Patagonia's short films on Bear's Ears: [bears.earspatagonia.com](http://bears.earspatagonia.com)  
Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter: [www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe](http://www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe)  
Friends of Gold Butte: [www.friendsofgoldbutte.org](http://www.friendsofgoldbutte.org)  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness: [www.nevadawilderness.org/publiclands](http://www.nevadawilderness.org/publiclands)

**The Next meeting of the California-Nevada Wilderness Committee: April 29, 2017**  
We'll meet in conjunction with the California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee Meeting at Rancho El Chorro, 2450 Pennington Creek Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA. Join our one-hour wilderness workshop at 11 am - then stay to learn from rest of meeting--Everyone welcome!  
Contact Dale Stocking at [dales.cnrc@gmail.com](mailto:dales.cnrc@gmail.com) for registration and information.

*Wilderness is now threatened. Join us April 29 to see how you can help.*

### California/Nevada Committee contact information:

**For Southern co-chair Jim Hines:**  
[jhcasitas@gmail.com](mailto:jhcasitas@gmail.com), (805) 340-9266.  
Southern Chapters are: Angeles, Kern-Kaweah, Los Padres, San Diego, San Geronio, and Santa Lucia.

**For Northern co-chair Anne Henny:**  
[anneth16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:anneth16@sbcglobal.net), (510) 289-2294 (cell),  
Northern Chapters are: Loma Prieta, Mother Lode, Redwood, SF Bay, Tehipite, Toiyabe, and Ventana.

**Home page address** for California-Nevada Wilderness Committee:  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/california/cnrcc/wilderness>

**ListServ** sign-up instructions for California-Nevada Wilderness Committee: Go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/lists> and put CONSNRCC-WILDERNESS-COMM in your email request.

**Facebook address** for California-Nevada Wilderness Committee:  
<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubCANVWilderness/>

**Twitter address** for California-Nevada Wilderness Committee:  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/california/cnrcc/wilderness#WEHJrkjqRM.twitter> ,



## Art can do its part for public lands -- by Tim Lydon/[Writers on the Range](#)

Dozens of artist's residencies have sprouted on public lands across the West. Most are hosted by national parks, national forests and wildlife refuges, but research stations and even conservation groups also offer programs. These grassroots efforts foster important connections between people and place.

The link between art and the American landscape runs deep. Early on, artists such as George Catlin and Thomas Cole helped create a national identity by celebrating the wildness of American lands and contrasting them with the far-tamer European landscape. The connection was well established by 1872, when Thomas Moran's paintings and William Henry Jackson's photographs helped inspire Congress to designate the world's first national park at Yellowstone.

Soon after, John Muir's prose brought vivid images of Yosemite, the giant sequoias and Alaskan glaciers to the public. Later, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson bridged art and science, voicing prescient warnings about extinctions and pesticides.

Today's residencies offer a chance to further the tradition. And amid an unfolding climate crisis and a plutocratic rise to power that threatens not just the health, but the very existence of our public lands, the inspiration of

artists is more important than ever.

In 2015, Frederick J. Swanson wrote in *Ecosphere* about the growth in artist's residencies, [and] observed the important role that artists can play in an era of change. When writers or artists portray receding glaciers or threatened species, they spark fresh ways to engage the public. And when they use stunning imagery to reveal the interconnected processes that result in wildfires and other natural events, they help agencies convey modern conservation messages.

Residencies also offer broader connections to the land. To celebrate its 2016 centennial, the National Park Service offered over 50 residencies nationwide. Ongoing programs include stints at Crater Lake, Zion, Glacier and Petrified Forest national parks.


National forests participate, too, including a long-standing example in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness. In a common model, artists are treated to a stay in a remote cabin, with bears and wolves and other wildlife as their neighbors. Each artist donates a piece of work, for outreach or for sale by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation in support of local trail maintenance. Each also hosts a public workshop or other event, providing added publicity.

Conservation groups also turn

to artists for assistance. The Idaho Conservation League and Oregon Wild hosted a children's art contest surrounding the West's most famous travelling wolf, OR7, as he roamed into California. And, in Alaska, the Voices of the Wilderness residency is notable for its commitment to exposing artists to public-land stewardship. Participants spend part of their time alongside biologists, rangers and others, pulling invasive weeds, gathering marine debris, or contributing to climate-change research. This stewardship component can be transformational, leaving artists with



California artist Heather Anderson was artist-in-residence in Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park some years ago

deep connections and long-lasting loyalties to place. That kind of inspiration is what these programs seek. Because as history shows, if artists emerge inspired by a landscape or important event, huge cultural and political shifts can follow. And we need that promise now. So dust off your portfolio, artists, and apply for your dream residency in support of public lands. 

This is an excerpt of an article by Tim Lydon in [Writers on the Range](#), the opinion service of *High Country News* ([hcn.org](http://hcn.org)). He writes in Alaska.

---

## WORDS OF the WILD

Co-Chair, newsletter editor: Vicky Hoover (415) 977-5527  
Co-Chair, Los Padres Chapt. coord: James Hines (805) 340-9266  
Vice Chair: George Barnes (650) 494-8895  
Judy Anderson (818) 248-0402: wilderness management  
Cassie Barr (510) 336-7022: San Fran. Bay Chapter coordinator  
Victoria Brandon (707) 994-1931: Redwood Chapter coordinator  
Joyce Burk (760) 252-3820: Southern CA forests  
Cindy Buxton (619) 934-0323: San Diego Chapter coordinator  
Alan Carlton (510) 769-3403: National Wildlands team liaison  
Sandra Cattell (661) 714-2850: Angeles Chapter coordinator  
Larry Dwyer (775) 786-8564: Toiyabe Chapter coordinator  
Steve Evans (916) 442-3155: Wild & Scenic Rivers  
Steve Fernald (530) 577-5112: Tahoe area coordinator  
Joe Fontaine (661) 821-2055: Wilderness Watch, Kern Kaweah Ch.  
Cal French (805) 239-7338: Santa Lucia Chapter coordinator  
Terry Frewin (805) 966-3754: CA Desert areas  
Hermi Hiatt (702) 361-1171: Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
John Moore (916) 731-7153: Mother Lode Chapter coordinator  
Mike Painter: (415) 752-3911: Californians for Western Wilderness  
Par Rasmusson (702) 215-9119: Southern Nevada coordinator  
Geoffrey Smith (858) 442-1425: List manager



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

2101 Webster St.,  
Suite 1300, Oakland  
CA 94612

### FIRST CLASS

The Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, an issue committee of the CA/NV Regional Conservation Committee, advocates for preservation of unroaded, undeveloped public lands in a wild state, through legislation and appropriate management, and sponsors stewardship and wilderness study outings.