



WORDS OF *the* WILD

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

Mountains and Rivers Wilderness Proposal -- nearly here!

-- by Victoria Brandon



After more than four years of preparation, via quiet grassroots organization and stakeholder outreach, Congressman Jared Huffman's

(D-CA2) "Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act" seems to be on the verge of introduction into Congress. The legislation would expand nine existing wilderness areas in Trinity, Humboldt, Del Norte and Mendocino counties including the majestic Trinity Alps (the largest wilderness in California north of Yosemite), and establish ten new wilderness areas in Trinity, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. (See WOW, April 2015.) The proposed areas are

all different and all special: for example, the Chinquapin erness contains the largest patch of unprotected old-growth forest remaining in northern California; the English Ridge Wilderness would be unique in that the only legal public access is by canoe or kayak; and the Mad River Buttes Wilderness includes the headwaters of Redwood Creek, a critical salmon and steelhead trout stream that eventually flows into Redwood National Park.

To maximize support from the widest possible group of stakeholders this bill has been very deliberately crafted to include far more than wilderness

Congressman Huffman off to a running start as soon as it is introduced, the campaign has held organizational meetings in each of the affected counties. Redwood Chapter executive committee member Randy MacDonald and I had the pleasure of participating in the Mendocino County meeting,



photo: thanks to Ryan Henson

Trinity River in the northern California Mountains & Rivers proposal

designations alone. The legislation would also protect about 450 miles of rivers in the region as "wild and scenic," designate a 700,000-acre special Demonstration Restoration Area in the South Fork Trinity River watershed, restore public lands that have been damaged by illegal marijuana cultivation, work for improved fire management regimes, and enhance recreation by trail construction and repair. For specifics on just what the legislation contains and (very important!) detailed maps, visit <http://mountainsandrivers.org>.

To get the bill championed by

which took place February 25 at the Willits Environmental Hub. After a presentation by California Wilderness Coalition Policy Director Ryan Henson, some 15 local environmentalists got down to serious brainstorming to identify potential supporters in the county and the best individuals to approach them. As longtime Willits activist David Drell said: "Don't worry, we'll get this done."

A few weeks previously, immediately after the big Sacramento rally against offshore -- continued on page 2

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oil drilling on February 8, I had the privilege of driving down to the tiny town of Shoshone on the other side of Death Valley, to give the annual joint meeting of the California/Nevada Wilderness and Desert

photo: Victoria Brandon



Victoria Brandon with Congressman Jared Huffman at his Town Hall in Ukiah summer 2017.

Committees an update on this bill.

Knowing that much of the meeting time would be devoted to lamentations about the unprecedented assaults on our public lands by the Trump administration, Wilderness co-chair Anne Henny had invited me to talk about the exciting positive prospect of the Mountains and Rivers bill, with particular emphasis on Congressman Huffman's efforts to shift from defense mode and work for positive change leading to environmental protection. As hoped, the group assembled at the Shoshone meeting—many of whom have devoted long lives striving to protect sensitive natural resources in their own areas, and who frequently find themselves in despair these days—responded very positively to this vision of a way forward. “What a great project!” was the most frequent reaction I heard, with “What can we do to help?” close behind.

Now we're all waiting for the bill to drop! ~

(Victoria Brandon is Redwood Chapter Chair and Chapter Wilderness Chair.)

Can we Keep the Land & Water Conservation Fund alive?

Unless Congress acts, the Land & Water Conservation Fund will expire end of this year.

Sierra Club and the many other organizations within the Land & Water Conservation Fund Coalition are seeking more Congressional support for the reauthorization bills in both Houses of Congress – HR 502 in the House and S 569 and S 896 in the Senate. The bills all call for reauthorizing the Fund permanently.

Whoa—wait a minute – what IS the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) anyhow?

Widely hailed as “America’s most successful conservation program,” the Fund, started in 1964, authorizes up to \$900 million a year from the royalties paid to the federal government by energy companies acquiring leases for offshore oil and gas drilling. (While we strongly oppose new offshore oil development, we know such leasing has been going on for a long time, and it is gratifying that at least a small portion of the revenue to the federal government has been dedicated to the Fund’s valuable conservation and public recreation purposes.)

The LWCF works via two principal programs – “Direct Federal Acquisitions” which allows land management agencies like the National Park Service and Forest Service to acquire private inholdings in parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and BLM lands--inholdings which complicate management and offer potential conflict with incompatible uses. The State Assistance program lets states offer funding to local communities, counties, or state wildlife and parks departments to acquire land for, develop, and improve outdoor recreation facilities. Such popular but sometimes taken-for granted items like community parks, swimming pools and tennis courts, campgrounds, bike trails, marinas, etc., get funded via matching grants from the LWCF.

Because LWCF provides outdoor recreation and conservation close to where people live, this program is said to *have had a greater effect on more Americans’ ability to recreate in nature than did the*

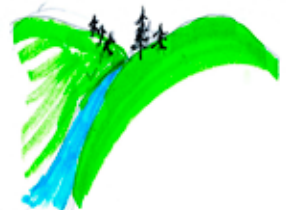
Wilderness Act.

The vast majority of U.S. counties and ALL Congressional districts have benefited from LWCF. Members of Congress can easily see this, and thus the reauthorization bills are popular; the House bill presently has 220 bipartisan cosponsors – just over half the House, and the Senate bills together have 47—nearly half the Senate. Land trusts and sportsmen’s groups throughout the country are pushing for LWCF. However, one powerful committee chairman now holds the whole reauthorization effort hostage. Rob Bishop of Utah, Natural Resources Committee chair, doesn’t like federal lands and won’t let the House bill through his committee. To overcome his hostile obstruction, we seek more cosponsors, especially republicans who presently, being in the majority, have direct access to House leadership and can urge action forward. They can urge action to House leadership even without cosponsoring—for example, describing to the Speaker what LWCF has done for *their* districts.

As chair of the Sierra Club’s LWCF Reauthorization Task Force, in late March I spent a week in Washington, DC lobbying various Congressional offices for about 18 states to support the LWCF bills.

All Democrats from California and Nevada in Congress are cosponsors of the LWCF reauthorization bills. They deserve thanks!

While H.R 502 does have more than two dozen Republican cosponsors, none are from California and Nevada. If you have a Republican Congressman or Congresswoman and are willing to call on your representative to support LWCF reauthorization via bill cosponsorship OR talking directly to the Speaker of the House, please contact Vicky Hoover@sierraclub.org. ~



Connecting Wilderness, Climate, and Social Justice

-- by Anne Henry

Northern Co-Chair, CA/NV Wilderness

Conserving biodiversity; protecting ecosystem services; connecting landscapes; capturing and storing carbon; building knowledge and understanding; and inspiring people. What do these six concepts have in common?

They are all the six roles of wilderness and protected areas in responding to climate change that were identified by an intergovernmental committee working to improve wilderness protection in Canada, US and Mexico. Its 2012 brochure, "Protected Areas as Natural Solutions for Climate Change"¹ highlighted these six reasons to assure protection of natural landscapes for mitigating climate change. <http://nawpacommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NAWPA-CCWG-Brochure.pdf>.

The concept of ecosystem services is one that many people are familiar with: services like "clean water; weather, temperature and humidity regulation; soil conservation; and genetic reservoirs that may lead to the development of improved crops, new medicines and other products vital to human communities. Intact ecosystems offer a natural buffer to protect communities against disasters like storms and flood events that could be associated with climate change.

In 2014 Jason Mark, now Sierra Club's editor-in-chief of *Sierra* magazine, penned an article for *Nation* magazine entitled, "Why We Still Need Wilderness in the Era of Climate Change." For many of us die-hard wilderness advocates the reasons might be self-evident—but they are little-understood by the general public. Mark identifies one of the important ones: "wilderness areas and other parks

1 NAWPA stands for The North American Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation for Wilderness and Protected Area Conservation. <http://nawpacommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NAWPA-CCWG-Brochure.pdf>.

and preserves—ideally connected by corridors of wildlands—are vital *refugia* for plants and animals trying to survive the inevitable dislocations of climate change." Intact ecosystems—forests, deserts, grasslands, healthy lakes, rivers and oceans—also help moderate climate change by capturing and storing carbon far better than places disturbed by people. In 2016 an Australian research team published a study entitled, "Catastrophic Declines in Wilderness Areas Undermine Global Environment Targets," which revealed that about 10 percent of what remained of the earth's wilderness in the early 1990s had been lost by 2015. The researchers found that efforts aimed at protecting wilderness areas are failing to keep pace with its loss, and they



called for heightened engagement by international policymakers to protect remaining wilderness areas.

The global devastation is perhaps most stunning when seen from a vantage point few people ever have: outer space. Last year former astronaut Mark Kelly wrote that "This Year Has Been an Unequivocal Disaster for the Future of the Planet." Here's part of his comments:

"To see our planet as this majestic blue ball floating in the blackness of space is breathtaking.... Bright and mostly blue, it's a literal island in our solar system.... Perhaps the thing that worries me the most is the massive deforestation underway in areas like Asia and Latin America.... When I first looked down upon the Amazon rainforest in 2001, I saw vast areas of jungle and a wide and winding copper colored river that went on and

on and on. By 2011, however, the part that was most noticeable wasn't the river or the jungle but the large swaths of empty land. From space, it looks empty because we are far away. We see the loss of an incredibly diverse ecosystem that once held endless possibilities for new medicines and other discoveries. We see the loss of a home for so many species that will now have to learn to adapt and survive somewhere else—or not. And we see the loss of a large amount of carbon, sequestered in a living ecosystem which created massive amounts of oxygen."

Stabilizing the climate requires urgent action worldwide not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to stem the destruction of our earth's remaining wild places. And for this to happen, we need to get better at building a movement that embraces equity and social justice while it connects wilderness conservation with climate protection.

New Approaches, new priorities

The Sierra Club now focuses more and more on movement-building and partnering to amplify traditional organizing and mobilizing. The Club has established and staffed an Equity, Inclusion and Justice Department and rolled out "Growing for Change" trainings to all staff and some volunteers. Staff and volunteers have developed a *Movement Building Manual*² and a "Theory of Change" document for protecting public lands.

We see a convergence of movements. One example is the new Poor People's Campaign that builds upon Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s analysis of the need for a revolution of values in our country. Dr. King said: "We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin ... the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society."

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Fifty Years of Saving Rivers

--by Steve Evans

The National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2018. Congress passed and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Act on October 2, 1968, creating the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. The law was specifically intended to balance the nation's existing policy of building dams on rivers to develop their water supply, flood control, and hydroelectric potential, with a new policy to ensure that some rivers with outstanding values are protected for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. One of the first six rivers protected by the 1968 law was the Middle Fork Feather River in California. Today, this 77-mile river remains one of the wildest waterways in the state.

The 50-year-old law is the nation's primary river conservation tool. New dams and diversions are prohibited on protected rivers. Designated rivers are also classified as wild, scenic, or recreational based on the level of existing development at time of designation. Federal agencies are required to manage

federal public lands along the rivers to protect their free-flowing character and specific outstanding recreation, scenic, fish, wildlife, geological, cultural/historical, and other values.

The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act requires the agency to develop a comprehensive river management plan

year deadline, and all recent WSR management plans in California were only produced after the agency was sued.

The National System now protects 12,734 miles or less than one percent of the 3.6 million miles of rivers and streams nationwide. In California, which also has its own State Wild and Scenic River system, rivers and streams may enjoy both state and federal protection. There are about 2,021 miles of California rivers and streams protected in the National System, or about two percent of the state's 94,000 miles of rivers and streams. About 1,274 miles of rivers in California enjoy overlapping federal and state protection.

Another 125 miles of rivers in California are protected only by the state.

Both the federal and state Wild & Scenic River Systems were established in reaction to our nation's aggressive

-- continued on page 5



photo: Steve Evans

The Middle Fork of the Feather River--California's first designated Wild & Scenic River

within three years of designation to protect the river's free flowing character and outstanding values. However, the agency has rarely met the three-

Chair's Corner: Anne Henny-Wilderness and Social Justice

-- from page 3

When profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

The new Poor People's Campaign's "Twelve Fundamental Principles" now adds ecological devastation to Dr. King's original list: "We are committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division."²

² <https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/fundamental-principles/>

People from all walks of life are speaking out for social justice and standing up for hard-won environmental protections. We Sierra Club members and wilderness advocates need to get better at building alliances, welcoming new activists, and publicizing how wilderness protection helps mitigate climate change, provide clean water and air, and preserve biodiversity. This work is especially important here and now in California. As federal agencies, laws and protections are dismantled, California remains on the forefront of environmental and climate defense—a model and inspiration not only for the rest of the country but the world.

There is such an onslaught of attacks on our bedrock laws, regulations and institutions protecting people and

the environment—we wilderness advocates really have our work cut out for us in 2018...and beyond. At the Chapter level and as individuals we can do a lot:

Educate ourselves and speak out as citizens. Support good legislation, public officials, and candidates; push back against the attacks on our forests, deserts, oceans, National Monuments, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge--now truly a global Symbol of the Wild.

Emphasize outings (an essential Sierra Club tradition) as a great way to build dedicated support for public lands—and to replenish the spirit. Enjoy the places we've worked to keep wild. So keep on getting out there—and take a friend! ♻️



policy of dam development. Although dams provide many benefits, they also drown river canyons and habitat, modify downstream flows, block fish migration, and degrade water quality. There are an estimated 84,000 dams in the United States impounding 600,000 miles of rivers. California alone has more than 1,400 dams on its rivers and streams. Congress and the California Legislature established the national and state river systems to ensure that at least some free-flowing rivers and streams with outstanding and extraordinary values were protected for present and future generations.

Rivers are primarily protected in the national system through legislation passed by Congress. Congress may also direct federal agencies to study and make recommendations as to whether specific rivers should be added to the system. The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other federal land management agencies are also required to assess the Wild & Scenic River potential of streams flowing through public lands as part of each agency's land and resource planning process. Federal agencies have identified more than 4,200 miles of rivers and streams eligible for federal protection through this process.

California's protected rivers represent a diverse array of large and small waterways possessing a wide range of outstanding natural and cultural values. National Wild & Scenic Rivers in California include large rivers like the Klamath in northwest California and tiny seasonal streams, such as Bautista Creek in southern California. Many of California's rivers and streams in the federal and state system were protected in direct response to proposals to build river-destroying dams. Others were protected simply for their unique natural and cultural resources deserving special recognition and protective management. Many rivers and streams have been designated to protect threatened and endangered salmon, steelhead, and other native fish. Others were designated for their excellent whitewater recreation opportunities. Some are protected because of their outstanding prehistoric and Native American cultural values.

There are not yet any designated Wild & Scenic rivers in Nevada.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the California Wilderness Coalition (CalWild) has initiated the Wild Rivers Project, with the goal of expanding the federal and state wild and scenic river systems in California to 6,000 miles by the 60th anniversary of the Act. Our on-going coalition efforts are responsible for at least three bills currently pending before Congress to protect 227 miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers and 649,000 acres of wilderness in the California Desert, San Gabriel Mountains, and the Central Coast. To learn more about CalWild's

Wild Rivers Project, visit www.calwild.org or contact Steve Evans at sevans@calwild.org. ☞

(Steve Evans is the Wild River Director for the California Wilderness Coalition. He has been involved in the designation of every state and federal wild and scenic river in California since 1988.)

It's YOUR River!
#makeyoursplash



Kayaking on the Middle Fork of the Feather River

photo: Darin McQuoid

WHAT is YOUR Chapter doing to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act?

The anniversary gives good opportunities for specially-focused outings--whether river rafting or canoe trips, or hikes alongside rivers--why not make this a BIG DEAL?

To learn about the Wild & Scenic Rivers near your area, check out the downloadable statewide map and spreadsheet listing all state and federal WSRs in California, plus a short description of each, to be found at <https://www.calwild.org/portfolio/WSR/river>.

The Rivers Network is encouraging and tracking WSR anniversary events: contact Lisa Ronald, Wild & Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary Coordinator <wsr50@river-management.org>. ☞

Can we come to terms with off-road vehicles?

-- by Jenny Wilder

I am writing this because many people are confused about the term OHV and what it means. This confusion is exacerbated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Off-road vehicle recreation groups that lump all vehicles capable of driving off paved and maintained roads under the heading - OHV. There are distinctions, however, and we need to train ourselves and BLM to make note of them-- especially in the development of specific routes of travel.

What does the BLM mean by OHV? And OHV, ORV, SL and NSL?

OHV = Off Highway Vehicle.

The BLM makes no distinction between *street legal* (legal to drive on paved streets and maintained dirt roads) and *non-street legal* OHVs. When BLM say OHV they lump both types together.



photo: Jenny Wilder

A volunteer at National Public Lands Day 2017 in Juniper Flats

What is the difference between street legal (SL) and non street legal (NSL)?

SL vehicles will have a state issued license plate. The driver will

be of legal age, and the driver must legally carry insurance.

NSL vehicles do not have license plates, the drivers can be whatever age, and no insurance is required.

SL vehicles like jeeps, trucks and SUVs are more or less equipped to drive off paved and maintained dirt roads, depending on conditions. NSL vehicles, like dune buggies, dirt bikes, and side by side (RZR) are made to be driven off road and, according to manufacturers, can be dangerous to drive on street surfaces.

ORV versus OHV

The public often interchanges OHV = Off Highway Vehicle with ORV = Off Road Vehicle.

So what does "off road" mean? To many, this means driving off the road/trail into the desert/brush -something that is authorized only in the OHV OPEN areas such as Stoddard Valley, Dumont Dunes, Johnson Valley.

The crucial message that "off-road" outside the OHV OPEN areas means staying on the designated signed route is very difficult to advance.

This difficulty has been exacerbated by lumping all vehicles into the term "OHV". You can even go "off-roading" in the parks--meaning going off the paved road onto a dirt road.

How to untangle that mess? Certainly, in BLM planning documents, like the Western Mojave Management Plan (WEMO), we should insist on a definition of "OHV".

But what else can be done?

I challenge everyone to attempt to replace "OHV" with "vehicle" in BLM planning or management documents. This makes it less of a conflicting issue (US vs. THEM) because we all drive vehicles.

BLM should be very clear where they think non-street legal use is okay and *why* it is acceptable in those areas.

We should also look for the definition of different kinds of roads/trails: Ones that are maintained (or not), ones requiring 4x4 capability, and ones limited to specific vehicles (such as street legal). Roads/trails are rarely just open/closed.

Even if non-street legal vehicles are unauthorized in an area does not mean there are no OHV opportunities there. It is important to recognize this in the WEMO route mileage totals and when BLM is applying for an OHMVR grant. We could come to a conclusion on how to clearly use the term ourselves. This need has become clear in the work of Friends of Juniper




photo: Jenny Wilder

Juniper Flats volunteer records a point during monitoring field work

Flats, often with the Sierra Club's San Gorgonio Chapter, to rein in regional off-road vehicle abuse.

Friends of Juniper Flats engages in considerable efforts to counter damaging effects on the fragile desert landscapes in the Juniper Sub Region. This sub region (approximately 100,000 acres) is south of Apple Valley and north of the San Bernardino National Forest. (The area is called a "hot spot" for OHV non-compliance by BLM.) Our goal is to preserve, protect and restore the natural and cultural values in the Juniper Flats Area. Friends of Juniper Flats has been observing and reporting issues facing the area for nearly two decades. This includes ongoing route proliferation and erosion caused by vehicles being driven on and off the designated route. In an effort to help get the message out to stay on the designated trails, we have assisted the BLM with restoration grants and projects, we routinely fix fences, help with clean ups and outreach events.

We have noted that, in most instances, "OHV" can be interchanged with "vehicle" because all vehicles are capable of being driven "off highway" on most dirt roads. We also note that there is more damage done by NSL vehicles to the roads than SL vehicles. Drivers of NSL vehicles tend to drive faster which causes more erosion. For these reasons, we believe that a first step in the effort to gain better control of the situation is to have clear definitions of terminology commonly in use today.

<https://friendojuniperflat.wordpress.com>
<http://www.friendsofjuniperflats.org/> 
(Jenny Wilder, Coordinator for Friends of Juniper Flats, recently served as chair of the Sierra Club's Mojave Group.)

SAVE LOVELL CANYON

We're Almost There!

The U.S. Forest Service is finally making a “Focused Management Plan for Lovell Canyon” in the backcountry just west of Las Vegas. This document will determine and guide what activities will be permitted in Lovell Canyon. (The Lovell Canyon road goes north from Highway 160 at Mountains Springs Summit to access the backcountry of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.)

And the Forest Service wants to hear from you! It takes only five minutes or less to send an Email! Your direct communication to the Forest Service will make a difference.

Show up at one of the public comment forums or Write an Email! Either way the agency is listening and your efforts will make an Impact!

Tuesday, April 17

**U.S. Forest Service' Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas, Nevada 89130**

Wednesday, April 18

**Bob Ruud Community Center
2100 E. Walt Williams Dr., Suite 100, Pahrump, Nevada 89048**

Faxed, hand-delivered and emailed comments will be accepted until April 25, 2018.

Fax written comments to 702-515-5447 or mail to: Spring Mountains National Recreation Area: Attn. Naaman Horn, Public Affairs Specialist 4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr. Las Vegas, NV 89130

E-mail: htnfinfo@gmail.com

For more information contact one of the officials below:

Naaman Horn,
Public Affairs Specialist,
702-515-5413 or
Donn Christiansen, Area Manager,
702-515-5448

For the past two years Save Lovell Canyon, Sierra Club, Save Red

Rock, Get Outdoors Nevada (formerly the Outside Las Vegas Foundation), Back Country Horsemen, Spring Mountain Free Trappers, Clark County School District, Clark County Commissioners, Center for Biological Diversity, Sigfried and Roy, Mr. Brent Torino, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, and many others have cleaned up and helped restore and protect Lovell Canyon. This effort is needed because the area has seen lots of damage from fires and trash, from target shooters and campers not practicing “Leave No Trace Principles”, shooting up trees, and using explosive targets in a dry forest. It’s imperative that we show our strength through letters and physical presence at these April meetings.

We have an opportunity to inform management, through public comment, how to best protect and preserve Lovell Canyon for future generations and for the wildlife that call it home too.

Save Lovell Canyon is a community partnership with the US Forest Service with focus on restoration of damaged areas, and protection and preservation of wildlife. https://www.facebook.com/pg/SaveLovellCanyon/about/?ref=page_internal



At the Lovell Canyon campout, Christian Gerlach with Estefania Rangel, and Davis Huskon

Christian Gerlach, Sierra Club’s Our Wild America Campaign staffer in Las Vegas, organized a big outing last July 14 to kick off and celebrate Latino Conservation Week.



GOLD BUTTE ART EXHIBIT in Las Vegas

When: April 27th - June 23rd, 2018

Where: The Studio @ Sahara West Library Art Gallery (9600 W. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas)

M-Th: 10 am-7:45 pm

Fri - Sun: 10 am - 5:45 pm

Opening Reception May 3rd, 5:30-7 pm

Find inspiration in the beauty of Nevada’s special places. This exhibition will feature works of art inspired by Gold Butte National Monument with additional pieces highlighting Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument and Basin & Range National Monument--Nevada’s three national monuments. *Free & open to public.* Call 702-507-622 for more info.

Sierra Club hosted the campout, joined by our Save Lovell Coalition Partners including Save Red Rock, Save Lovell Canyon, The U.S. Forest Service, The Torino Foundation and its camps for organizations like Autism Awareness and Camp Hope, the Outside Las Vegas Foundation, Center For Biological Diversity, and Friends of Nevada Wilderness. We had a great evening and saw the Milky Way in all of its mesmerizing glory. Then we turned out 29 participants for the clean-up. That didn’t stop the Torino Foundation from kicking it up a notch and with their help, our numbers swelled to over 100 participants. It was an awesome sight. We also got lots of praise from many of the passersby --like the 702 Biking Club. Lovell Canyon is barely recognizable from even just a few years ago when it was considered a free-for-all- zone. ☺

Photo: Myra Favella Outside Las Vegas Foundation

Wilderness Update For Sierra and Sequoia Forest Planning

-- by Jamie Ervin

Nearly six years into the process, the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests' efforts to revise their now-outdated management plans still continue. After releasing draft plans in 2016 and receiving thousands of public comments, the Forest Service is now reworking new drafts to be released later this year. This gives conservationists another bite at the apple to use this once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect the wildest parts of each forest as recommended wilderness areas.

The primary reason why both forests are re-drafting their plans is the unprecedented climate-related tree mortality in the southern Sierra between 2012 and 2016. During this time, mid-elevation forests experienced tree losses from bark beetle outbreaks ranging from five to 100 trees per acre. This tree mortality changed the baseline conditions on which the first drafts were built. The 2018 newly updated draft forest plans and supplemental environmental impact statement are intended to address this new baseline and introduce new strategies to manage beetle-killed trees. The new plans will also include updated alternatives relating to other plan areas--including wilderness and wild & scenic rivers.

Both the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests contain unprotected areas with wilderness values on par with any wild place in the country. Some of these areas, like the South Fork of the Merced River adjacent to Yosemite National Park, have been high priorities for the conservation community for decades. Others like Oat Mountain in the foothills east of Fresno are less well known but offer rare unroaded refuges for low elevation plants and wildlife not now protected by the wilderness system.

Both forests did an excellent job in their wilderness inventories (something required in forest planning), which collectively identified more than 800,000 acres of wilderness-eligible roadless lands. In turning the inventory into actual recommendations, however, the 2016 draft plans were a huge disappointment to

conservationists. Despite significant citizen support for wilderness throughout the plan revision meetings, neither the Sierra nor



summitpost.com

Salmon Creek Falls in Cannell Peak Roadless Area, Sequoia National Forest

the Sequoia chose to recommend any new wilderness areas in their original draft plans. To back this decision the Forest Service claimed opposition from outdoor recreationists, Native American tribes, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, timber advocates and others.

Conservation strategies

In November of 2017, a gathering of conservationists including members of Sierra Club's CA/NV Wilderness team, The Wilderness Society, Sierra Forest Legacy, and California Wilderness Coalition decided on two key strategies for the Sierra and Sequoia forest plans:

- (1) identify the highest priorities for wilderness protection on each forest, and
- (2) broaden the coalition of wilderness supporters.

Their subsequent innovative proposal would protect hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlands across both forests. This includes wilderness protection for conservationists' ten highest priorities: areas like a 43,000-acre addition to the Golden Trout Wilderness above the North Fork Kern River, and another 43,000-acre addition to the Monarch Wilderness above the Kings River. For these priority areas, the team is exploring modifying some potential wilderness boundaries to reduce conflicts with other stakeholders while still protecting key habitats and wild values.

In addition to ten wilderness priorities, the 2018 proposal would give some 100 additional areas a "Backcountry Management Area" (BMA) designation to maintain wilderness eligibility over the life of the forest plans. While wilderness is the gold standard for wildlands conservation, the moderate BMA status provides a temporary solution that will prevent new roads and OHV trails--similar to the protections already in place for Inventoried Roadless Areas. This new proposal for the Southern Sierra has already helped broaden the support base for protecting wild places on the Sierra and Sequoia while dampening

opposition. Conservationists and allies are encouraging the Forest Service to include these protective designations in their new plans.

The Forest Service is expected to host some open-house sessions this summer to preview the new draft plans--which are tentatively scheduled to be released near the end of 2018. A public comment period will follow, for which we'll need to raise as much support as possible. In the meantime Sierra Club, Sierra Forest Legacy, and California Wilderness Coalition are scheduling outings to these spectacular wild place. Please consider joining an outing, writing a pro-wilderness comment, or helping broaden the wilderness support base in your community. (See Outing page for Memorial Day trip to the



photo: Steve Evans

Monarch Wilderness proposed addition. Looking north across Kings River

Sequoia National Forest.)

For more info on the Southern Sierra Wilderness Campaign, and how you can help protect Sierra wild places, contact Jamie Ervin (jamie@sierraforestlegacy.org).



Outings

Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!



April 21 - Sat

Earth Day Bay Area event

Visualize Sea Level Rise! Join S. F. Bay Chapter, Citizens for East Shore Parks, and local officials to visualize where two meters of sea-level rise leaves our Albany shoreline. Albany Beach at McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, 2 Buchanan St, Albany, CA 94710, 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Contact Patricia Jones, pyjones11@gmail.com, (510)230-4900 for info.

May 25 - 28 - Fri-Mon

Memorial Day Sierra Car Camp

Join CA/NV Wilderness Committee, Sierra Forest Legacy, and CalWild on our holiday camping trip to visit wild places in the southern Sierra Nevada deserving wilderness protection. Enjoy exploratory hikes in potential addition to Golden Trout Wilderness and along North Fork Kern Wild & Scenic River. We may explore a potential addition to the Domeland Wilderness, proposed Cannell Peak Wilderness, and proposed Stormy Canyon and Salmon Creek Wild & Scenic River. (see Forest Plan article, p. 8) Meet Friday evening at campground north of Kernville, hike Sat and Sun, and leave Mon by noon. Bring own camping/hiking gear and food, or sign up for optional central commissary offered by Vicky Hoover. Long-time Sierra Club volunteer leader Joe Fontaine will be with us and share southern Sierra memories. Limited to 20 people; RSVPs required, contact Vicky Hoover. vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.

August 8-12 -- Wed-Sun

Central Nevada Backpack Twin Rivers Loop, Arc Dome

“Deep, rugged canyons, high bald peaks, elk--and wet feet.” Begin on the North Twin River, near Carver, northeast of Tonopah, elevation around 6300 ft. We will hike in 2 or 3 miles to our first camp. The next day backpack about another 5 miles; on day 3 we day hike to the top of 11773 ft. Arc Dome, 12 miles r/t with 4100 ft. elevation gain. Day 4 start down South Twin, camp after several miles. The last day backpack out, 16 miles, Limit 12. David Hardy (702)875-26 <hardyhikers@embarqmail.com> email preferred.

OUTING Reports: TWO Wilderness Committee Desert trips

In February, CA/NV Wilderness Committee volunteers (joined by Sierra Club Nevada staffers Christian Gerlach and Brian Beffort) camped in Gold Butte and hiked in a part of the national monument new to all—the



photo: Kyle Sullivan, BLM

Bonanza Spring group at new barrier to prevent vehicle trespass.



photo: Richard Rollins

Brian Beffort and Anne Henry admire expansive views on north slope of Virgin Mts. in Gold Butte National Monument

north side of the Virgin Mountains. Since Secretary of Interior Zinke had recommended taking this area out of the



photo: Richard Rollins

Cabin Creek landscape, north side of Virgin Mts.

new monument proclaimed on Dec 28, 2016, we wanted to document wild values here. On hikes in Nickel Creek and Cabin Creek, we were amazed at the profuse assemblage of lush vegetation not common to the Mojave desert—including oaks and manzanita.

After Gold Butte, we went to the Desert National Wildlife Refuge—threatened by military takeover (see WOW April and Dec 2017.) An exploration day along the Mormon Well Road followed a service project on the Gass Peak trail with Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

Over Easter weekend, the committee’s annual spring service trip with Needles BLM wilderness staff Mona Daniels visited a little hidden gem of the two-year old Mojave Trails National Monument—Bonanza Spring Watchable Wildlife Area—a mile north of historic Route 66 near Essex. We worked alongside of Monument Manager Kyle Sullivan to close an old vehicle route near the sensitive riparian area and turn it into a single-track trail. And on our Easter hike in the next valley, Manager Sullivan invited us to share our thoughts on how—and where-- the new Monument could establish some facilities for anticipated visitors without harming the wild remoteness of the area. ∞



photo: Judy Branfman

Mojave Trails Monument Easter hike

Now More Than Ever: A Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Rep. Carbajal, Natural Resources Secretary John Laird on board

-- by Andrew Christie

The Sierra Club hosted an event on the San Luis Obispo campus of Cal Poly on March 17 for 150 attendees that furthered the cause of creating a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) along the coast of San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties.

The event, “Now More Than Ever: A Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary,” began with a greeting from a representative of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, followed by the chairwoman of the Yak Tityu Tityu Northern Chumash, who offered a prayer of benediction in her native language.

Tribal Council representative Violet Cavanaugh then read a letter the tribe had received that week from John Laird, California’s Secretary of Natural Resources, affirming his support of the proposed marine sanctuary:

“As articulated in the proposal submitted to NOAA [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration], sanctuary status for this area would provide protection for submerged Chumash Tribal Sacred Sites, a prohibition on oil and gas exploration and development, protection of a unique and significant coastal ecosystem, increased tourism on the Central Coast, and increased funding for marine research on the Central Coast. Designation of this area as a National Marine Sanctuary would also, for the first time, explicitly elevate indigenous culture and historic use as primary core values along with protection of ocean habitat.”

The highlight of the day came when Greg Haas, district representative for Congressman Salud Carbajal (D-CA24), came to the stage to make a surprise announcement, reading a statement from the Congressman that said, in part: “I am supportive of moving the public review process forward for the Chumash National Marine Sanctuary.

My office will contact NOAA in the coming weeks to encourage them to promote the proposed sanctuary from the inventory list and begin the study and an inclusive public engagement process.”

News of the support of Rep. Carbajal and Secretary Laird



photo: Sarah Christie

Krill, baby, Krill” sign at Santa Lucia Chapter marine sanctuary event

galvanized the audience, who also enjoyed a presentation by marine biologist Holly Lohuis of Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ocean Futures Society with a multimedia overview of the Society’s ocean explorations, marine wildlife habitat efforts, and support for the national marine sanctuary program.

Santa Lucia Chapter organizers urged attendees to go to either tinryurl.com/CHNMSpetition or chumashsanctuary.org to fill out online petitions to NOAA and add their numbers to Rep. Carbajal’s support. Other Sierra Club members should do likewise!

Central coast activists have sought a new marine sanctuary off the central California coast for years. To truly protect our coast from damaging seismic testing—with its attendant harm to coastal and marine wildlife—we need the permanent protection of a national marine sanctuary for the Central Coast. A national marine sanctuary would need to be designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and would be the underwater equivalent of a national park. ∞

(Andrew Christie is Santa Lucia Chapter Director)

Nature is Good for You: sure, and now Science gives the nod

(adapted from USA TODAY NETWORK, Ron Dungan, The Arizona Republic)

When Henry David Thoreau and John Muir wrote about their outdoor experiences more than a century ago, they frequently touted the benefits of nature for their mental health, but they didn’t have proof.

Modern researchers, measuring brain activity, heart rate and other factors, have confirmed it: Nature is good for you. Exercise is good for you. Exercising in nature is even better.

“We can see changes in the brain,” said David Strayer, cognitive psychologist at the University of Utah.

Exposure to nature improves concentration and problem solving. It reduces stress and increases feelings of empathy. One study found that hospital patients with bedside views of trees recovered faster, needed less pain medication and had fewer complications after surgery. Even simple activities like

gardening, jogging or walking the dog are good for our mental and physical health.

Researchers re-examining humans’ relationship with nature found that people score 50 percent higher on creativity and problem-solving tests after unplugging and spending four days outside. In 1984, Pulitzer Prize-winning entomologist Edward O. Wilson wrote that humans have a genetic bond to nature called *biophilia*, a connection formed during about 2 million years of hunting and gathering. Although the evidence is far from all in, the brain appears to have kept its old capacities, its channeled quickness. Tests show that natural settings fire up opioid receptors connected to the brain’s dopamine reward system. Opioid receptors inhibit pain, but they are also good for stress relief, forming emotional bonds and positive thinking.

Thoreau was right. Muir was onto something when he wrote that people need “beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.” ∞

Mountain Biker Distortions On Wilderness Act -- George Wuerthner responds:

(This response to an editorial in the Sacramento Bee appeared in The Wildlife News on March 1, 2018.)
<https://www.thewildlifeneews.com/author/george-wuerthner>.

The editorial referred to the current bill, HR 1349, introduced by Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA4) to open designated wilderness to various types of vehicles. Sierra Club and all other environmental groups strongly oppose this bill.)

The Feb. 28th editorial [by Kurt Gensheimer] on mountain biking and wilderness in the Sacramento Bee is full of misinformation and distortions.
<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/california-forum/article202387639.html>

Mr. Gensheimer suggests that Rep. Tom McClintock's legislation to open our nation's wilderness system to mountain bikes and other wheeled contraptions "restores" the original intent of the 1964 Wilderness Act and will provide access.

Ironically, Wilderness Areas are accessible to anyone so long as they leave behind their mechanical transportation.

It appears that Mr. Gensheimer hasn't read the Wilderness Act.

The Wilderness Act's opening paragraph states: "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

The Act further goes on to state that "there shall be no temporary road, 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."

A bicycle is a form of mechanical transportation and part of the "growing mechanization" that the Wilderness Act was established to preclude.

Mr. Gensheimer says the Wilderness Act did not explicitly ban bicycles, so he argues that means bicycles should be legal in wilderness areas.

However, the Act also does not explicitly ban snowmobiles, jet skis, four wheelers, hovercraft, skateboards, helicopters, and a host of other forms of "mechanical transport". Just because these things are not explicitly mentioned does not mean they are therefore legal.

It would be like claiming that the First Amendment Freedom of the Press does not apply to television or radio because the Constitution mentions only freedom of the "press" implying printing presses.

Mr. Gensheimer's assertion that the Forest Service put in place a ban on bicycles in 1984 is also incorrect. The Forest Service was only clarifying what the 1964 Wilderness Act stated about mechanical transport.

It is always interesting to observe that mountain bikers tend to believe that our public lands are merely there as outdoor gymnasiums for their recreational use.

However, it is clear from reading the Wilderness Act as well as the commentary which leads up to the Act that the prime purpose of the Wilderness Act is not to provide recreational opportunities, rather again the Act specifically states that its prime purpose is to "preserve the wilderness character and the resource of wilderness."

Howard Zanhiser who wrote the Wilderness Act wrote: "I believe we have a profound fundamental need for areas of the earth where we stand without our mechanisms that make us immediate masters over our environment."

Racing down a trail on a mountain bike, eyes glued on the path ahead, is not preserving wilderness character.

Finally, Mr. Gensheimer says

The Next meeting of the California/Nevada Wilderness Committee is scheduled for May 6, 2018.

We'll meet in conjunction with the May 4-6 California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee Meeting at Rancho El Chorro, 2450 Pennington Creek Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA. Join our one-hour wilderness workshop set for 9 a.m. Sunday - and learn from the rest of meeting--Everyone welcome! *Climate change* is the meeting theme, and we will connect wilderness and climate change. Contact Anne Henny for more information at [<anneth16@sbcglobal.net>](mailto:anneth16@sbcglobal.net)

You can register for the CNRCC meeting at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZ0g5Z>.

that mountain bikers will support more wilderness if they are allowed to ride their bikes in wilderness areas.

Using that same logic, one could suggest that if logging, mining, oil and gas drilling, dams on rivers, four wheelers, dirt bikes, snowmobiles, four-wheel drive trucks, and so forth were allowed in wilderness areas, there would be almost universal support for wilderness designation.

Of course, if we permitted all these activities, there would be no wildlands left. What he doesn't get is that using a bike diminishes the wilderness qualities of the area that Congress clearly intended to preserve.

Wilderness designation and preservation is about self-restraint and humility. It's about sharing the land with other creatures. Only 2.7 percent of the lower 48 states is designated wilderness. Is it too much to ask that these lands be set aside primarily to provide for the rest of the life on the planet which are fellow travelers? ☞

(Long time wilderness activist leader George Wuerthner, based in Oregon, presented a Saturday evening program on current threats to our wildlands areas, at the February 2018 Shoshone meeting of the Sierra Club's CA/NV Wilderness and Desert Committees.)

DID YOU Know: This Year is for the Birds?

Another anniversary to cheer! 2018 is the Centennial year of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Passed by Congress in 1918, the Act implemented a treaty established two years earlier between the U.S. and Great Britain – acting for Canada—to protect birds that migrate between the U.S. and Canada.

National Geographic and the National Audubon Society are partnering to celebrate 2018 as the Year for Birds and to help people understand the importance of birds to our world as well as the wonders of their long-distance migrations. For California, where the Pacific flyway sees an exceptionally large number of birds on their long distance migrations, this anniversary may be of more than average interest.

The 1916 Treaty and the 1918 Treaty Act came in response to growing public concern about the extinction or near-extinction of



Audubon passenger pigeon

various bird-species – which had been hunted for sport, for food, or for their feathers—to satisfy a craze for decorated women’s hats. Particularly shocking had been the 1914 death, in captivity, of the last passenger pigeon. Extinction of this species, endless vast flocks of which had not so long before darkened skies for miles upon miles sent a ripple of alarm through the country. (See WOW, Aug. and Dec. 2014)

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act made it unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill any migratory bird, without a special permit from the Secretary of Interior. Since its passage, the MBTA has broadened its international scope via later treaties with Mexico, Japan, and Russia, and has protected additional species not initially covered. (adding eagles, hawks, etc. for example.) It was amended in 1962 to allow Native American tribes to collect feathers for religious ceremonies. By now, more than 1,000 species--nearly all Native birds--are included, so that the term “migratory” may be mainly historically evocative. Nearly half of all known bird species are migratory. Specific birds the Treaty is credited with

Sage grouse, northern Nevada



saving from extinction include the snowy egret, wood duck, and sand hill crane—among others. The Act is considered to have saved many billions of birds.

New threats to birds today, from climate change as well as from an administration bent on reducing protections for many species, make it especially relevant to celebrate birds in 2018. and learn about their value.

Current Threats to Birds

According to the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) “The proposed federal budget would gut major programs and protections for birds and their habitats, especially on the public lands that belong to all of us — the American people. Congress is also considering rollbacks of cornerstone environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

This could hardly happen at a worse time for birds. One-third of migratory bird species have already lost significant populations as threats to wildlife increase. Birds are sensitive indicators of environmental health, and they’re sending a message that Congress needs to hear.”

Write or call your member of Congress to support bird conservation. Tell them that drastic budget cutbacks that will reduce on-the-ground bird conservation — won’t fly. vnH

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.



2101 Webster St.,
Suite 1300, Oakland
CA 94612

Co-Chair, north: Anne Henny, SF Bay Chapter (510) 289-2294
Co-Chair, south: James Hines, Los Padres Chapter (805) 340-9266
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
Vicky Hoover (415) 977-5527: (newsletter editor)
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

The eagle ranges far and wide
Over the land
Farther than any creature;
And all things there are related,
Simply from having existence in
The perfect vision of this bird.

-- F. Scott Momaday
House made of dawn, 1966

