

# WORDS OF *the* WILD

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

## Get Ready for 2018: Commemorating 50 years of River and Trail Protection

-- by Lisa Ronald

Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Trails are the capillaries that connect us to our public lands and bring us memorable, lasting experiences that impress the indifferent and inspire the choir. They are the life-blood of an American story.

That story began in the



1960s when outdoor enthusiasts and visionary congressional leaders demanded the creation of a protected system of free-flowing rivers to balance America's policy of rampant dam building as well as a system of trails for preservation, public access, travel, and the enjoyment and appreciation of the great outdoors and our Nation's history. The 1968 passage of the Wild and Scenic

## National Monument Expansion: San Gabriel Mountains Forever Act Introduced

-- by Sandra Cattell

A wilderness experience is right next door to us. We can hike, ski, picnic, camp, ride horses, play in the water, or just sit and enjoy nature within an hour's drive for most southern Californians. You can see Nelson's bighorn sheep, condors, and more than 300 California-endemic species that grow/live ONLY in the San Gabriel Mountains right in the middle of Los Angeles County (and a bit of San Bernardino County). Part of the major wildlife corridor of southern California, this watershed provides one third of L.A.'s drinking water. However, being the neighbor of over 11 million people also has its



photo: Carole Scarlock

Condor Peak proposed wilderness--included in new bill, HR 3039, by Judy Chu

Rivers Act and the National Trails Act created the National Wild and Scenic River and National Trails Systems.

Today, more than 12,000 miles of rivers are protected in 40 states and Puerto Rico for recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, scenery, and cultural heritage. While many of these rivers are in truly remote and wild areas, others are near urban centers or are popular with families for swimming and picnicking. Yet, fewer than one percent of all of our rivers currently are designated as Wild and Scenic, and federal funding to manage rivers and trails is now under threat.

The National Trails System is larger than the Interstate Highway System in length, and includes 11 National Scenic Trails, 19 National Historic Trails, and more than 1,300 National Recreation Trails (including 21 National Water

downside. How do we protect the ecology of the area from overcrowding, while at the same time assisting accessibility to the mountains from nearby communities?

Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA27) seeks to help resolve this problem. In June she introduced a bill to expand the present San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, on the north side of the Los Angeles Basin. Her bill, the San Gabriel Mountains Forever Act, HR 3039, proposes to expand the area by 31,000 acres, expand existing wilderness areas and add two new wilderness areas, Yerba Buena and Condor Peak. In addition, she -- *continued page 2, col. 2*

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## Rivers & Trails 50th 2018 -- from page 1

Trails) in all 50 states.

In 2018, Americans will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of our Wild and Scenic River and National Trails Systems. The anniversary will remind us that we all can play a role in stewarding free-flowing rivers and properly maintained trails, and that we must work together to protect additional rivers and trails. The future of Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Trails depends on expanding the constituency for these rivers and trails and awareness of their benefits to communities--including thriving economies, clean drinking water, and recreation.

*What can you do?* We encourage you to “Make Your Splash” and “Find



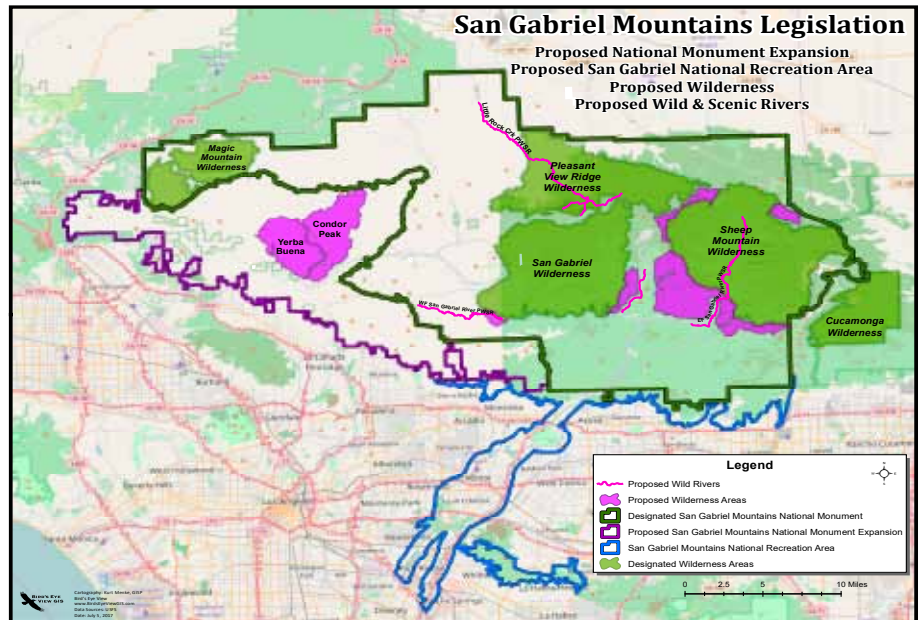
Your Trail” in 2018 by leveraging anniversary momentum and tools to build wild river

awareness around your conservation work. Begin planning local events to get families into nature next year to highlight the value of rivers and trails near you. Visit the Rivers Anniversary Website to learn more: [www.wildandscenicrivers50.us](http://www.wildandscenicrivers50.us)

-- Lisa Ronald, Wilderness Institute, Missoula MT, is Wild & Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary Coordinator: [lisa@wilderness.net](mailto:lisa@wilderness.net).

### Why the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act?

“This law charted a whole new philosophy and course of action. Until 1968, the nation had undertaken to protect forests and parks, refuges for wildlife, and reservoirs to conserve water. Rivers, however, had been continually sacrificed to pollution and progress, rendered unfit for fishing and canoeing, unsafe for swimming, their beauty destroyed. Now, at last, the wild rivers were to be identified as a valued national resource, a heritage belonging to all Americans, to be kept free of dam-building projects and commercial encroachment.”



**San Gabriel Mountains** -- from page 1 proposes protecting 25 miles of waterways as wild and scenic rivers --parts of the San Gabriel River and Little Rock Creek (The San Gabriel River Recreation Area).

Rep. Chu’s bill is the latest step in a long-standing history of efforts to protect the San Gabriel Mountains, and it also is a good comeback to the new Administration’s effort to challenge and belittle national monuments established by recent presidents, including President Obama. Trump-appointed Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke has reviewed all the recent national monuments, seeking to eliminate or shrink many, to open them for development, mining and oil drilling.

### Protection, Access, and Social Justice

Back in 2003, then-Congresswoman Hilda Solis asked for a feasibility study on how to increase protections for the San Gabriel Mountains. I was part of a group that went to Washington DC to advocate for two areas that were designated as Wilderness (Pleasant View Ridge and Magic Mountain). At the dedication, we were all honored by a spectacular flyover of five condors.

John Monsen, Co-Chair, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Forest Committee and former Sierra Club San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign staff, adds to our history: “The Sierra Club is part of the San Gabriel Mountains Forever coalition, which has worked for a decade to protect the San Gabriel Mountains and improve access for all. The coalition includes 13 environmental, community and social

justice groups. SGMF worked to achieve an alternative designation for the San Gabriel Mountains—as Congress refused to legislate our ideal--wilderness. Working with Rep. Chu, we urged President Obama to create a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.” He did this on October 10, 2014--protecting 346,177 acres, including three more wilderness areas.

Monument Manager Matthew Bokeach spoke at our June Forest Committee meeting, and we feel the Monument is in great hands. The coalition also helps to expand access to the San Gabriel Mountains and educate the public. Bus transportation to parts of the SGM has been very successful, as is their Leadership Academy. Roberto Morales, since then Sierra Club staff, tells us: “I would not be doing this work with Sierra Club if it wasn’t for attending the SGMF Leadership Academy. The Academy has effectively engaged ethnically diverse youth from Los Angeles area communities to be advocates and stewards of our public lands.”

Our story has taken a new twist. The SGMF is now working to defend the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument against threats from the Trump Administration. We generated thousands of post cards and comments supporting our monument. A small group of us recently went to Washington DC to promote protection of the existing monument, as well Rep. Chu’s new expansion bill.

(Sandra Cattell is Santa Clarita Group Chair, Angeles Chapter, and a member of the National Wildlands Team.)

## Support new bill in Congress: "Every Kid Outdoors Act"

Our children's lives are out of balance. Kids today spend less time outdoors than did any previous generation in history. The growing divide between kids and nature has dire consequences for the health of our children and our planet. On average, America's youth are plugged into electronics for the equivalent of a 40+ hour work week, while devoting just minutes a day to unstructured outdoor play. At the same time, nearly one in three children is overweight or obese, and we



At an Every Kid in a Park event in Baltimore, MD, with kids inside a tent they just learned how to pitch.

are seeing more and more kids develop what were once adult-onset only chronic diseases.

More than 80 percent of Americans now live in urban areas, and fewer than half of our kids live within walking distance of a park. Barriers to spending time in nature include distance to green spaces, the cost of transportation, school budget cuts for field trips, busy schedules and more. Too many parents seem to fear letting their children outside without strict organized supervision. And, not all kids and communities feel welcome and valued to visit our national parks and other public lands for which our country is famous.

Newly introduced legislation, the Every Kid Outdoors Act, **S 1522** and **HR 3186**, would help break down some of these barriers by ensuring all fourth graders and their families have free access to our nation's public lands, waters, and shores. But in order for it to pass, Congress needs to hear from members of the public like you that it's time to make

outdoor access a priority.

A popular federal program allows all U.S. 4th graders and their families to visit our nation's federal public lands, waters, and shores free of charge. This program encourages kids and their families to get outdoors, and ensures that more Americans can enjoy our national treasures. Last year, as we celebrated the Centennial of the National Park Service, we saw record visitation in part due to the successful fourth grader program. Now, to keep on supporting our children's access to these iconic places, we need Congress to continue the program.

The Sierra Club has joined with the Outdoor Alliance for Kids (OAK) to advocate for this bill. We're calling on members of Congress to co-sponsor and help pass the Every Kid Outdoors Act as a testimony to the health and wellness benefits of continuing to get kids and their families outdoors to enjoy America's most awe-inspiring wild places for generations to come.

New Sierra Club President Loren Blackford commented: "Every child deserves the opportunity to get outdoors, regardless of where they live. We applaud the bipartisan Every Kid Outdoors Act, which would encourage more children and families to explore and enjoy America's public lands. The Sierra Club looks forward to the passage of this critical legislation and will help make this vision a reality as part of our ongoing work to ensure everyone has access to nature."

The Senate bill, S 1522, is championed by Senators Martin Heinrich, D-NM, and Lamar Alexander, R-TN. The House bill, HR 3186, was introduced by Rep. Niki Tsongas, D-MA3, and had original cosponsors Scott Tipton, R-CO3; Diana DeGette, D-CO1; and Elise Stefanik, R-NY21, plus 17 new cosponsors. California cosponsors are: Mike Thompson, D-CA-5; Barbara Lee, D-CA-13; Jackie Speier, D-CA14; Zoe Lofgren, D-CA19; Julia Brownley, D-CA26; and Alan Lowenthal, D-CA47.

Tell Congress to support the Every Kid Outdoors Act, so 4th graders and their families can continue to access

our national public lands, waters, and shores for free for one year, helping to foster a lifelong connection to nature and pride in America's great outdoors. We seek many California and Nevada Congressional cosponsors for the Every Kid Outdoors Act to encourage children and families to visit our parks and public lands, so they can begin to develop a lifelong relationship with nature and the outdoors. ♻️

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Please thank present cosponsors, and if your California and Nevada members of Congress are not on that list yet, ask them to cosponsor the "Every Kid Outdoors" Act, S 1522 or HR 3186.

-- Jackie Ostfeld  
Associate Director,  
Sierra Club Outdoors



## New Nevada state parks proposed: State lands are public lands too

-- by Tina Nappe

## Nevada legislature passes bills to protect environment

--by Anne Macquarrie

Governor Brian Sandoval asked the Nevada State Legislature to approve \$15,000,000 in State Park funding this session, providing upgrades to many state parks and creating two new ones--one along the Walker River near Walker Lake and one next to the Tule Springs National Monument just north of Las Vegas.

The new Tule Springs State Park in southern Nevada complements the Tule Springs National Monument of 22,650 acres created in 2014. The new park utilizes 315 acres of state land adjacent to the Monument and will provide facilities for visitors who are interested in visiting the fossil beds protected by the national monument—fossil remnants of a wide variety of Ice Age animals such as mammoths, camels, bison, horses, sloth and Dire wolves.

During his park review, the Governor could not refuse an opportunity to accept three ranches along the Walker River in Lyon County that were offered to Nevada at no cost. The Walker Basin Conservancy has pledged to restore the irrigated lands to their natural landscape. The state will invest in recreation facilities. The total park area is 12,000 acres and includes 28 miles of the Walker River.

As the Reno *Gazette Journal* stated, “Nearly 30 miles of river that’s been largely locked away from the public could become a jewel of Nevada’s state parks system.” And Governor Sandoval, in a written statement, declared: “The recreational opportunities on the ranch land and along the East Walker River are phenomenal.”

The Governor is also promoting the Explore Your Nevada program, encouraging Nevadans to visit every state park – as he did before developing his budget, which reflects his enthusiasm and new investments in state parks. State Parks were initially created to encourage tourism. The upgrades in park use such as cabins at South Fork Dam in Elko and upgrades for trailers reflect a trend in camping with more amenities. Even younger campers may prefer easier camping and may not be able to afford the camping equipment or space to store camping gear, yet still like to visit and be in the outdoors.

The Sierra Club public lands focus has been mostly on federal lands. State lands

The lack of leadership in Washington DC and threats to the environment from Congress means environmental efforts in individual states are more important than ever.



Toiyabe Chapter volunteer Anne Macquarrie and Chapter Director Brian Beffort attending a Washington DC training for Sierra Club’s Chapter Assembly conference and training in Washington DC. for Chapter leaders and staff from 44 states, Puerto Rico and DC.

are public lands too. Isn’t it time to invest our volunteer energy, raise money for, and comment on state park policy? Not only do State Parks have some superb scenery, hug our limited water resources, protect historical sites, provide habitat for wildlife, and offer hike and bike opportunities, but now include thousands of acres of open space.

The Tule Springs and Walker Basin parks would be the first major new state parks in Nevada since Big Bend of the Colorado was added in 1996. Also included in the \$15 million boost Gov. Sandoval wants to provide the state park system would be cabins at Wild Horse State Recreation Area, state park staff presence at Van Sickle Bi-State Park near Lake Tahoe, and plans to preserve historic structures at Ft. Churchill State Park. ♪

(Portions of this article appeared in the Toiyabe Trails, Toiyabe Chapter newsletter, July-Sept. Contact [tinanappe@gmail.com](mailto:tinanappe@gmail.com).

Now that the dust has settled on Nevada’s 2017 Legislature, here’s a thank you to everyone who helped make this legislative session a success, for showing up at committee meetings; writing, calling, and visiting with your representatives; for showing up at lobby days and rallies; writing letters to the editor; and *all* you stepped up to do. *You made a difference!* Here’s a wrap up of Nevada’s newest conservation legislation on natural resources.

Bad news first. Governor Sandoval vetoed AB159, which would have banned fracking in Nevada, and AB277, the bill to defend Red Rock Canyon from encroaching urban development.

Still, overall we did very well.

Our top priority public lands bills passed. The problem water bill, AB298, was blocked. Some major priorities:

**SJR12\***—to rescind SJR1 from last legislative session. SJR1 from the 2015 session urged Congress to pass legislation to transfer federally managed lands to the state. PASSED.

**AJR13\***—expresses support of the Antiquities Act and the designation of Basin & Range and Gold Butte national monuments. PASSED.

**SJR13\*** – Expresses Nevada Legislature support for wildlife conservation. PASSED.

*\*Being resolutions, not bills, these three did not need a Governor’s signature.*

**AB29**--Establishes OHV program in Division of State Parks to administer grants to control and mitigate the effects on the landscape of OHV use. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**SB74**—Enumerates the specifics of water conservation plans. And this bill revises membership (eliminate 1 member) in Western Regional Water Commission. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**AB138**—Allows for the collection of rainwater from single family dwellings for non-potable domestic use, as well as for wildlife guzzlers with certain conditions. PASSED AND SIGNED.

-- continued page 5

# Contemporary Wilderness and American Indian Cultures

-- by Gregory Hansen

Among traditional people, a strong interconnectedness with the land is in many cases still very much alive today. The Lakota phrase *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which translates to mean “All My Relatives” is a good illustration of how all aspects of the universe are still referenced as “relations” in modern times.

Some of the larger reservations have open space that could possibly be set aside with a natural or wild designation, but the concept of designated wilderness does not always fit well into the modern-day agendas of Tribal Councils faced with the same real-life dilemmas of all modern societies, such as water-rights issues and natural resource utilization.

## Tribal Wilderness Designation

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of central Montana set national precedent by being the first tribal group in the United States to establish what is recognized today as designated wilderness within lands surrendered to them, under governmentally sanctioned treaty decisions. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes designated the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness in

Montana (89,500 acres) because of the importance of perpetuating culture and traditional practices.

Wildlands or wilderness areas have always been very important to the peoples of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for the perpetuation of culture and traditional practices. However, after the Allotment Act, the once natural and primitive lands of the Flathead Reservation became congested by settlement and development. Many sacred, cultural sites were destroyed. The only wild and untamed areas that remained were away from so-called “civilization,” in the mountains where the bridge linking the past to present could be found. When these mountain lands became threatened by more development (logging, settlement, etc.), a movement was made to preserve the remaining untouched areas in their natural state. (University of Montana 1999)

The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness was designated in 1979 by the Tribal Council. In 1986 the Tribal Council established a wilderness buffer zone adjacent to the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Area to

further protect from outside impacts and preserve its ecological and cultural integrity.

The Tribal Council Ordinance 79A states:

“Wilderness has played a paramount role in shaping the character of the people and the culture of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes; it is the essence of traditional Indian religion and has served people of these Tribes as a place to hunt, as a place to gather medicinal



Taos Pueblo World Heritage site, New Mexico

photo: Liz Collins, Indigenous Cultures Activist & Environmental Educator

herbs and roots, as a vision seeking ground, as a sanctuary, and in countless other ways for thousands of years. Because maintaining an enduring resource of wilderness is vitally important to the people of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the perpetuation of their culture, there is hereby established a Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Area, and this Area, described herein, shall be administered to protect and preserve wilderness values”. (University of Montana 1999)

The tribes place the basic rationale for wilderness on preserving culture and religion while protecting the natural conditions on these lands in perpetuity, whereas the U.S. Congress focuses more on preserving some of the last remaining natural and undeveloped lands. Special considerations are given for tribal cultural and religious activities, while human uses are not to interfere with preservation of the area.

All of the same management issues that face state and federal wilderness managers are inherent within tribal wilderness management as well. The following list illustrates some “common” issues that are identified in the Mission Mountains -- *continued next page*

## Nevada Legislature -- from page 4

**SB194** Prohibits the sale of body parts from endangered and protected animals. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**SB197** Extends deadline for issuing bonds for environmental projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin PASSED AND SIGNED.

**SB270**—Requires proof of claims for vested water rights (surface, artesian, and percolating water) to be submitted to the State Engineer by Dec. 31, 2027. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**AB298**—A major victory! This bill would have dangerously changed the definitions of several terms in Nevada water law and facilitated the dewatering of rural Nevada to sate the thirst of Las Vegas. Sierra Club was proud to work with the Great Basin Water Network and others to stop this bill. DID NOT PASS

## SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COM.

**AB379** Authorizes local governments to create a parks, trails and open space district. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**AB385** Free admission to state parks for 5th graders. PASSED AND SIGNED.

**SB413 and AB449**—to create and promote Public Lands Day in Nevada. In response to the efforts by federal and state politicians to transfer millions of acres of our beloved, federally managed public lands in Nevada to the state or highest bidders, these two bills establish September 30 as Nevada Public Lands Day. Thanks to these bills, the Governor will be required to proclaim publicly the values of public lands in Nevada; and state parks will allow free admission on that day. PASSED AND SIGNED. ♪

(Anne Macquarie is Toiyabe Chapter Legislative Chair.)

### Tribal Wilderness Case Study:

- manage grizzly bear habitats for a sustainable bear population;
- manage endangered species and habitats for biological diversity;
- protect cultural sites;
- maintain fragile alpine ecosystems;
- manage riparian zones for water quality and wildlife protection;
- manage for municipal watershed protection;
- manage and maintain areas without trails for visitor experience quality;
- manage trail and campsite impacts caused by visitors; and
- manage fisheries to give special attention to waters containing native west slope cutthroat trout and native bull trout.

In addition to these common land management concerns, there are some additional management challenges that tribal wilderness managers must address. For example, should nontribal members be allowed to enter and enjoy tribal wilderness lands and resources? The Mission Mountains Wilderness is managed primarily for tribal members, but does outline special management directions for nontribal members:

1. Use of any tribal lands or waters by nontribal members requires the purchase of a tribal conservation license and activity stamp (e.g., fish, bird hunt, or camp).
2. Nontribal group size limit of eight persons and eight head of livestock in tribal wilderness.
3. Nontribal use of a campsite for longer than three consecutive days is prohibited.
4. It is illegal for a nontribal visitor to carry or use a firearm.
5. No commercial outfitting or guiding on the tribal wilderness lands is allowed.

Although most resource and visitor use management issues transcend federal and tribal wilderness units, tribal managers are obliged to carry out strategies that solve unique issues, such as nontribal visitors. This, in some cases, makes tribal wilderness more difficult to manage than state or federally designated wilderness areas.

### Reclassification of Federal Land to Tribal Wilderness

Return of designated wilderness to tribal groups is rare, but it has occurred. One example is the return of Blue Lake and the surrounding area to the Taos Pueblo, which was legislated through Public Law 91-550, on December 15, 1970. The Blue Lake area, approximately 48,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service land located within New Mexico's Wheeler Peak Wilderness, was returned to the Pueblo as it was one of their most important religious sites. However, legislation required the Pueblo to continue to man-



Blue Lakes Tribal Wilderness, New Mexico

age the land as wilderness. The following excerpt from that legislation explains this unique wilderness management situation:

“Provided, that the Pueblo de Taos Indians shall use the lands for traditional purposes only, such as religious ceremonials, hunting and fishing, a source of water, forage for their domestic livestock, and wood, timber, and other natural resources for their personal use, all subject to such regulations for conservation purposes as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe.

Except for such uses, the lands shall remain forever wild and shall be maintained as a wilderness as defined in section 2 (c) of the Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890). With the consent of the tribe, but not otherwise, nonmembers of the tribe may be permitted to enter the lands for purposes compatible with their preservation as a wilderness.”

Although the government has ceded this area back to the Pueblo, both the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture remain involved in the overall management of the Blue Lake area.

### Conclusion

A native voice from the Alaskan village of Kotzebue renders: “It (wild-places) rejuvenates my Inupiaq spirit. It keeps my spirit alive like a vitamin for my inner strength and spirit. Reminds me of how weak and small we are compared to the powers of the land and ocean.”

Understanding this all-encompassing connection that American Indian people had, and still have, with the land is crucial when attempting to gain a sense of how Indian people view the concept behind modern wilderness designation. The basic concept of designated wilderness being a place one visits to escape the pressures of society is quite contrary to most traditional American Indian beliefs of natural places simply being interpreted as—Home!

Indian people have always lived close to the land, and what today we call “wilderness” in the United States was literally their home with which they had many relationships. American Indian languages have no specific words for “wilderness”.

It is difficult to predict what direction tribal wilderness protection and management will take in the future, but Indian people will always have an important relationship with the natural environment.

Some tribal groups have been successful at integrating the mainstream concept of wilderness into their complex governmental organizations and into existing contemporary American Indian cultures. For more detailed information pertaining to tribally managed wilderness, please refer to the State and Tribal Wilderness Management Toolbox and Manager's Resource Guide located on the Internet at [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).

The above is an excerpt and summary of an article first published in the *International Journal of Wilderness*, in August 2007, Vol. 13, #2. (Go to <http://ijw.org/>)

And see Gregory Hansen's previous article on Native American land management concerns in *WOW*, Dec 2016.

(Gregory Hansen is Indigenous Cultures consultant for Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and Tribal Relations coordinator for the Arizona Conservation Corps. He also teaches Native studies for Indian communities in Phoenix, Arizona, and was co-chair of Wilderness50 for the 2014 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.)

photo: Liz Collins: Indigenous Cultures  
Activist & environmental Educator

# Cell phone towers in the backcountry rob us of wilderness

-- by Jason Mark

(Condensed version of an Op-Ed that appeared on the Opinion page of the San Francisco Chronicle on May 5, 2017.)

The Wonderland Trail in Mount Rainier National Park has been on my backpacker's bucket list for years. The 93-mile-long route circumnavigates the glacier-topped peak and along the way passes through alpine meadows, thick forests, deep valleys. If you time your trip just right, you'll catch cascades of wildflowers in epic proportions.

But my enthusiasm dimmed when a government watchdog group revealed that the proposed construction of new communication towers in and near the park would extend cell phone service into thousands of acres of wilderness. The view would be the same, but the experience would no doubt change. A getaway is no escape if you're tempted to check your email and update your social feeds. Cell phone towers in the backcountry rob us of wilderness.

The planned expansion of cellular coverage at Mount Rainier National Park is part of a larger trend across our public lands. At Theodore Roosevelt National Park, officials are set to approve a proposed cell tower 1,000 feet from the wilderness boundary that might spread phone coverage into the largest wilderness area in North Dakota. Many parts of Yellowstone National Park's vast backcountry (not technically a designated wilderness, but unquestionably wild) already have 4G wireless coverage; officials there are now planning for the construction of a sixth tower that, some conservationists fear, would strengthen cell coverage. Communication signals also stretch into the labyrinthine lakes of Minnesota's Boundary Waters, the most popular wilderness area in America.

This creeping connectivity into otherwise undeveloped landscapes violates the spirit, and very likely the letter, of the Wilderness Act, a bedrock of U.S. conservation law. The act makes clear that many technologies — the chain saw, the bulldozer, the wheel in any form — are incompatible with wilderness. Although the cell towers are being built outside of wilderness areas, their reach easily vaults over the two-dimensional

boundaries on the map, changing the vibe of the wild. The law explicitly prohibits "commercial enterprises" and "mechanized equipment" within a wilderness. The law... defines wilderness as an "untrammelled" place that boasts "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation."

Constant communication is antithetical to those values. The ideal of solitude is rendered meaningless as soon as you're able to stay in touch with people around the world. The feeling of being unconfined evaporates when mental space shrinks to the size of a login page.

I understand that, if you're a stranger to the unique rewards of the backcountry, these concerns might sound like arcane aesthetic objections. So consider this: As a place that lies beyond the daily dictates of the corporation and the state, the wilderness also serves an essential civic function. Wilderness is a physical guarantor of liberty, a place that in U.S. history has served as an escape for the heretic, the political nonconformist, and the fugitive slave. A connected wilderness might be "cool" — Instagram the summit right from the mountaintop! — but...at the cost of sacrificing the wild's civic value.

Twentieth-century conservationists intuitively understood the political importance of wild places. "Of what avail are 40 freedoms without a blank spot on the map?" ecological philosopher Aldo Leopold wrote. Having just witnessed the horrors of World War II, author Edward Abbey made the point more sharply: "The wilderness should be preserved for political reasons," he wrote. "We may need it some day not only as a refuge from excessive industrialism but also from authoritarian government, from political repression..."

That might seem overheated. But in the age of Trump, some of the most centrist and sober commentators have warned about the fascistic characteristics of the new government. When Abbey wrote, computers were the size of a station wagon; there were many places telephone and television didn't reach; today with satellite GPS, Leopold's *blank spots on the map* are gone.

Nevertheless, America's 110 million acres of wilderness still represent something of a digital white space, a place mostly outside the matrix. In this age of



omnipresent connectivity and creeping authoritarianism, that makes wilderness more important than ever.

We live in a world of constant, comprehensive visibility — a digital Panopticon, as it were. Our purchases, our interests, our friendships, our opinions and our movements are tracked and cataloged. This openness may have begun innocently enough: Share your birthday with Facebook, and you'll get plenty of well-wishes.... But, for many of us, the transparency begins to feel more like a constriction, because it means there's almost nowhere left to hide. The same programs that allow for Big Data can also be used for Big Brother surveillance. Imagine: Suddenly, the fitness tracker on your wrist allows the government to know the rhythm of your heartbeat....

As long as it remains off-grid and unconnected, the wild naturally frustrates the pretensions of any authoritarian. While the wannabe autocrat relies on the perception of inevitability — resistance is futile — the wilderness is a bastion of unpredictability. Bones in the underbrush and fearsome forests and lawless storms: as a repository of mystery, the wild keeps a ragged edge... that reminds us that history zigs as often as it zags. As any ecologist can tell you, the wilderness is living proof of how easily attempts at control go awry.

For political reasons as well as aesthetic ones, then, we need to keep wilderness free from the net and out of the web. The cell towers that already send their signals into wilderness areas need to come down. The ones on the drawing board need to be scrapped. The 21st century conservation movement must preserve wilderness from the reach of Wi-Fi, so that the wilderness remains a haven where citizens can walk unwatched. ∞

(Jason Mark is editor in chief of *Sierra*, the national magazine of the Sierra Club and the author of *Satellites in the High Country: Searching for the Wild in the Age of Man* (Island Press, 2015) See book review in WOW, Dec 2015.)

# A focus on National Monuments --- California Senators to Secretary Zinke

## And visits to Nevada's new Gold Butte National Monument

Twice during 2017 the CA/NV



Wilderness committee enjoyed outings to the brand new (designated Dec. 28 in one of President Obama's last actions) Gold Butte National Monument. In February to celebrate the new area and over Memorial Day weekend for our annual Nevada BLM service trip. Six Sierra Club participants admired the newly-placed Monument sign and helped Friends of Gold Butte volunteers led by Jaina Moan and BLM's new acting monument manager Lee Kirk install posts to keep vehicles out of a sensitive wash. Hard, rocky ground and hot weather made this a strenuous—but very satisfying--project. Next day we helped Friends of Gold Butte collect seeds from three different desert plants—desert marigold, turpentine broom, and goleta grass--for future reseeding after fire. vnh

The “review” of recent new national monuments—encompassing the Clinton and Obama presidencies—is over. Thanks to the well over a million Americans who posted their comments in support of keeping all current national monuments—and we know that quite a few comments vigorously promoted expansion for some monuments. Two Nevada monuments—Basin and Range and Gold Butte, plus six California monuments, were on the Administration's hit list. California's Senators sent a spirited comment letter to Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke about the California monuments—from which we quote:



Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write to express strong support for the six California National Monuments as currently designated under the Antiquities Act.... The monuments in California you are reviewing pursuant to Executive Order 13792 are Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, Berryessa Snow Mountain, San Gabriel Mountain, Carrizo Plain, and Giant Sequoia

We firmly believe these six monument designations fall well within the scope and purpose of the Antiquities Act, which enables the President to “declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interests...” In addition, we believe the designation process for all six California National Monuments had beyond adequate public outreach and coordination....

These iconic California landscapes and historic landmarks were designated... in recognition of their “historic or scientific interest” to the nation and special meaning for our state. On behalf of all Californians, we respectfully urge that these national monument designations [be] preserved with present boundaries, to ensure these places remain for generations

to come. Visitors to these six California national monuments enjoy... majestic sequoias, pristine mountain air, geological formations, exceptional Native American and national historical sites, and numerous other wonders to explore. Importantly, California's national monuments also safeguard natural supplies of clean drinking water for some of our nation's most populated urban areas.

Californians overwhelmingly support the conservation of their federal lands, and these six national monuments are no exception. In fact, a poll published in advance of President Obama's 2015 Antiquities Act designation found that 75 percent of Californians statewide and 70 percent in the desert region supported establishing the Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and Castle Mountains National Monuments.

Rolling back these monuments... would have negative impacts on both rural and urban communities. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein, United States Senator  
Kamala D. Harris, United States Senator

## Art and our public lands

On July 13, 2017, ten artists and photographers who went on three separate Sierra Club hikes on or at BLM managed lands in the Sacramento River Bend Recreation Area and painted the landscape while on those hikes gathered at BLM's Redding, CA Field Office for a reception. About 70 people came to view the art, including volunteers, hikers, photographers, and people who'd never been to this scenic outdoor area. The event was covered by KRCR TV on local channels 30 and 7. Sierra Club Shasta Group activist volunteer Mart Weidert helped plan the reception.



Redding reception lands art en plein air.  
photo: Mart Weidert





# 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-- Ed Abbey*

## **August 11 – 13 – Fri-Sun**

### **Perseid Meteor Shower Campout**

Great Basin Group expects about 100 people at this event in Black Rock Desert 100 miles n. of Reno. Playa conditions permitting, we'll camp mid-playa 10 miles from a couple of hot springs. Porta-potties provided but you bring own water, food etc. Probable potluck/Dutch oven meal one night. LNT, dogs on leash--pick up after them. Leader, David Book (775)843-6443.

*Nearby Nature outing:*

### **August 19 - Saturday**

#### **Drakes Head/Limantour Estero**

A moderate day hike to follow in what may have been Sir Francis Drake's footsteps as we explore the Estero Trail in Point Reyes with San Francisco Bay Chapter Hiking Section and Santa Cruz Group, Ventana Chapter. Meet 10 am at Muddy Hollow Trail Head Point Reyes National Seashore, off of Limantour Road. We may see tule elk. We'll certainly hear them. May also see manta rays, leopard sharks, seals. Estimated distance 14 miles; return to cars approx. 6:30 pm. Mellow hikers welcomed. About 1000 ft. elev gain: Leader: Steve Bakaley (slbakaley@gmail.com).

### **August 26 - August 28— Sat-Mon**

#### **Snow Mountain Wilderness**

Join San Francisco Bay Chapter Backpack Section on an 18-mile loop to explore this lightly used Mendocino National Forest area from the wooded trailhead to our campsite below Snow Mountain Peak. Enjoy magnificent panoramic views, wildlife including black-tailed deer, mountain lion and black bears; and chaparral, black oak and beautiful wild flowers. Hike 5-8 miles each day with 1800' elev gain over 7 miles, from 4600'. Leaders Bob Waltenspiel: (707)338-1033, [forestplay@gmail.com](mailto:forestplay@gmail.com) and Aleta Beaupied: (415)664-1064, [abeaupied@earthlink.net](mailto:abeaupied@earthlink.net). Contact Bob.



### **September 8 - 10 -- Fri - Sun**

#### **Carson Pass Wilderness Backpack**

Moderate to strenuous 3-day, 2-night backpack to high altitude lakes in spectacular and lightly traveled wild area near Carson Pass, s. of Lake Tahoe.

Scenery, great variety of mountain views, high mountain meadows, and water. Bring usual backpacking gear, plus bear canister, mosquito repellent. First night at Fourth of July Lake at 8,164 feet elev (5.5 miles, climb to over 9,000 ft.) Next day approx. 7 miles along Summit City Creek to Lost Lakes in Toiyabe National Forest. Experienced backpackers; group size limited to 8. Moderately paced. Individual commissary. Cost:\$40, payable to leader once approved to join. Leaders: Kent Lewandowski: (510)759-6646 [kentlewan@gmail.com](mailto:kentlewan@gmail.com) and Kathryn Leonard: (510)520-3500 [kleonardnet@yahoo.com](mailto:kleonardnet@yahoo.com). Contact Kent.

### **September 9 - Sat AND**

#### **September 10 - Sunday**

##### **Stanislaus Forest protection hikes**

Two day hikes to roadless wild places in Pacific Valley area (east of Bear Valley on Hwy 4) near Ebbett's Pass, with Sierra Forest Legacy, to introduce more people to less-known, but spectacular places in Stanislaus National Forest that we hope to protect in current forest plan revision. Sat night in campground nearby. For info, contact Jamie Ervin (828)403-0418, ([jamie@sierraforestlegacy.org](mailto:jamie@sierraforestlegacy.org)).

*Nearby Nature outing:*

#### **Bolsa Chica Newcomer Hike**

##### **Sept 17 – Sunday**

Join Angeles Chapter Orange County Singles in Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on an easy paced, 5-mile hike, approx 3 hrs. Newcomers welcome. Enjoy natural beauty of one of last remaining wetland ecosystems in Southern California. Meet 8:30 am. From Warner Ave in Huntington Beach turn south on Bolsa Chica St. to end and trailhead (Brightwater). Park on street. Bring camera, water, sun protection, hat, light hiking boots, rain does not cancel. Leaders: Houria Hall, (714)767-5327 [houriazhall@gmail.com](mailto:houriazhall@gmail.com); Donna Specht, (714)963-6345 [donnaspecht@juno.com](mailto:donnaspecht@juno.com); also Ginny Heringer and Julie Garner.

*Nearby Nature outing:*

#### **China Camp Overnight**

##### **September 23 - 24, Sat-Sun**

Join San Francisco Bay Chapter Backpacking for an enjoyable overnight outing at lovely China Camp State Park in the SF Bay Area. Meet at the park and set

up camp Sat. morning, then do a moderate afternoon hike after lunch, return to camp to fix dinners. On Sun. after breakfast we will do a shorter hike. Before return home we plan to visit the park museum which describes the fascinating history of China Camp. Contact leaders to register and prepay fees before trip. Leaders: Allison Murdach – (510)581-6794 [allisonandjo@hotmail.com](mailto:allisonandjo@hotmail.com), and Ernest Castiaux – (510)909-3301 [ecastiaux@hotmail.com](mailto:ecastiaux@hotmail.com).

### **September 29 - October 1 – Fri-Sun National Public Lands Day**

Join Great Basin Group, and others, for volunteer project at Soldier Meadows Hot Spring in Black Rock Desert north of Reno. Most food provided--but you'll have to work for it! There's usually one work day plus one play day. Call David Book (775)843-6443 for more info closer to time.

*Nearby Nature outing:*

### **October 14 - Saturday**

#### **Placerita Canyon Family Hike**

Meet Santa Clarita Valley Group, Angeles Chapter, 8:30 am for easy 2-4 mile, 300 ft. elev gain stroll through beautiful historic Placerita Canyon Park. Good hike for Little Hikers, Easy Hikers and families. Meet 8:30 am in front of Nature Center in the park. Take 14 Freeway to Placerita Cyn Rd. Go south to park entrance and park by the Nature Center. Bring water, snack. Option to enjoy picnic area and nature center after the hike. Rain cancels. Ldrs: Sandra Cattell (661)259-0433 [suncatt@yahoo.com](mailto:suncatt@yahoo.com) and Gaylon S Rodin (661)263-0568 [grodin2@gmail.com](mailto:grodin2@gmail.com).

*Nearby Nature outing:*

### **Oct 15 – Sunday**

#### **Bolsa Chica Newcomer Hike**

See Sept 17; repeat of Bolsa Chica newcomers hike.

### **October 27-29 – Fri-Sun**

#### **Death Valley restoration**

Join Desert Committee clean-up of a marijuana grow site in this beautiful national park. Hike 3 miles up a rugged canyon to gather and carry out trash left behind in an illegal grow site. Sturdy trash bags will be supplied. Potluck Saturday night. For final details on meeting time and camping, contact leader Kate Allen, [kj.allen96@gmail.com](mailto:kj.allen96@gmail.com), (661)944-4056. ♪

# Thoreau's Wilderness legacy on his 200<sup>th</sup> birthday

-- by Vicky Hoover

This July 12<sup>th</sup> was the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Henry David Thoreau. Born a generation before John Muir, Thoreau inspired Muir through his writings—as he inspired many others and, indeed, the whole “modern conservation movement”—as author Douglas Brinkley points out, in a *New York Times* Book Review Section essay from early July. Brinkley describes Thoreau's ending a speech before the Concord Lyceum with the “eight words that in coming decades helped save the Maine woods, Cape Cod, Yosemite, and other treasured American landscapes: *‘In wildness is the preservation of the world.’*”

Brinkley further details the significance of these eight famous words: “Most Americans know Thoreau from reading *Walden*, with its simple assertion, ‘I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately.’ But it's the ‘in wildness’ epigram that's near scripture for environmentalists rallying against hyper-industrialization and climate change.”



Henry David Thoreau

Brinkley ends: “Because Thoreau insisted on the preservation of wildness, we have millions of acres of public lands to explore—and the sanctity of Cape Cod and Katahdin to defend from profiteers and bandits.”

Right on, Doug Brinkley! Right on, Thoreau!

One occasionally sees a mutilated version of Thoreau's heralded phrase, written as “In wildness is the preservation, etc...” That is not what Thoreau said. Yes, wildness is what we now cherish—precisely because, ideally, it preserves the quality of wildness that Thoreau acclaimed. And what do we mean by “wildness”? Principally, from the Wilderness Act itself, we mean a quality that a place maintains by being uncontrolled, unmanipulated by human “management” – left alone. Left free. Untrammelled. That is the wildness that Thoreau envisioned.

Even in Thoreau's day, New England had enough development—enough “domestication” of nature—that he felt compelled to promote “wildness”. Today, with so much more of America paved over and dominated by humans, wildness matters even more. ♪



photo: Vicky Hoover

A recent view onto Walden Pond

## Another anniversary 25 years of Wild & Scenic Sespe Creek

Alasdair Coyne, of Keep the Sespe Wild Committee in Ojai, CA, reminds us that in June, 1992, President H.W. Bush signed the Los Padres Wilderness Act, enlarging the Sespe, Matilija, and Chumash Wildernesses in Los Padres National Forest and preserving 31.5 miles of Sespe Creek as a federal Wild & Scenic River. Something to keep in mind as you celebrate the big 50th of Wild & Scenic Rivers next year (see article, pp 1-2.) ♪

## WORDS OF the WILD

Co-Chair, north: Anne Henny, SF Bay Chapter (510)289-2294  
Co-Chair, south: James Hines, Los Padres Chapt. (805) 340-9266  
Judy Anderson (818) 248-0402: wilderness management  
George Barnes (650) 494-8895: ORV issues coordinator  
Cassie Barr (510) 336-7022: San Fran. Bay Chapter coordinator  
Victoria Brandon (707) 994-1931: Redwood Chapter coordinator  
Joyce Burk (760) 220-0204: 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) 708-3155: Wild & Scenic Rivers  
Steve Fernald (520) 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  
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Par Rasmusson (702) 215-9119: Southern Nevada coordinator  
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*"I have found that people go to the wilderness for many things, but the most important of these is perspective. They may think they go for fishing or the scenery, or companionship, but in reality it is something deeper. They go to the wilderness for the good of their souls.*

Sigurd Olson, "We Need Wilderness," *National Parks magazine*, 1946

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.