

WORDS OF *the* WILD

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

President Obama proclaims San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

-- by Don Bremner

Happy 50th anniversary for Wilderness!

How many different anniversaries are mentioned in this WOW?

On October 10 President Barack Obama appeared in Los Angeles to proclaim a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The select status which President Obama conferred on much of the rugged mountain range that frames the northern skyline for the Los Angeles region sets the stage for welcome changes to protect the environment and improve the recreational experience for its many visitors.

In the opening sentences of his October 10 proclamation designating 346,177 acres, a little more than half of Angeles National Forest, as a national monument, the President stressed the importance of this haven of wild nature so near a major urban metropolis:

"Over 15 million people live within 90 minutes of this island of green, which provides 70 percent of the open space for Angelenos and 30 percent of their drinking water. Millions recreate and rejuvenate in the San Gabriels each year, seeking out their cool streams and canyons during the hot

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Going Wild: Regional and national events mark 2014 anniversary

What do Vallejo, Claremont and Red Bluff have in common?

They're the three California communities that hosted big regional 50th events in fall of 2014 – the early September Visions of the Wild Festival in Vallejo, late September's Walk for the Wild in Claremont, and Wilderness Treasures Rendezvous in early October at the Tehama County Fairgrounds in Red Bluff.

For the Vallejo event, Sept. 3 to 6, the Forest Service and the Vallejo Arts Community teamed up, with Sierra Club and other organizations as partners to conduct this outreach event



photo: Bruce Hamilton

Sierra Club president Dave Scott gives a keynote talk at Albuquerque

to attract the diverse communities that make up a larger percentage of Vallejo's population than other cities.

The event began on the Sept. 3 actual anniversary date of the signing of the Act by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and to celebrate this occasion, Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell was present from Washington DC, as was Forest Service's national wilderness coordinator, Elwood York, and California regional forester Randy Moore. They spoke at the opening reception, which also featured a display of work by artists from Vallejo's vibrant arts community; there was a special "arts walk" to visit open studios in the downtown area

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President Obama signs San Gabriels proclamation while Reps. Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, and Grace Napolitano look on, as well as Belinda Faustinos and Daniel Rossman with the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign.

photo: Don Bremner

photo: Vicky Hoover



Sept. 3 Walk for Wilderness in downtown Vallejo

area after the reception. Many events during the four day festival took place in the historic Empress theatre. Saturday saw a bounty of different field trips to nearby nature areas.

Public lands day celebration in southern California

On September 27 it was the turn of the California Wilderness Coalition and the Bureau of Land Management to take the lead in putting on a lively festive event at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, on the eastern edge of Los Angeles County. Both the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter (Verdugo Hills Group) and the San Gorgonio Chapter had volunteer-staffed booths. Participants who signed up for the day's feature-- the "Walk for the Wild" -- received an extra bag of mementos, including a commemorative Tom Killion 50th poster and an event t-shirt, and learned about wilderness at five interactive stations along the walk. Environmental organizations, local community groups, and federal wilderness managing agencies had informational and entertaining

photo: Vicky Hoover



San Gorgonio Chapter booth at Claremont Wild event

booths. Food trucks stood by, and live music was provided by local bands performing in the lunch tent.

Northern action in Red Bluff, Tehama County

October 10 to 12th saw a grand fair in northern California; the Forest Service, from Lassen National Forest, organized a big-tent Wilderness Treasures Rendezvous, assisted by partners such as the Sierra Club's Shasta Group and Back Country Horsemen of California. The three-day event featured Jim Pfitzer's one-man play on Aldo Leopold, plus films like *Green Fire* and *Mile, Mile and a Half*; the Turtle Bay Museum wildlife



photo: John Livingston

Shasta Group volunteers at Red Bluff Wilderness Rendezvous

show, a wilderness art fair, music by the "Fiddlin' Foresters" and a Dave Stamey concert; seminars, workshops, and demonstrations, and more. Sierra Club's Shasta Group took part in the entire event while also cheering the 30th anniversary of the California Wilderness Act of 1984, which made the Trinity Alps wilderness.

Wild in Las Vegas

In Las Vegas, the Southern Nevada Group celebrated the wild when the Clark County Board of Commissioners, on the Group's invitation, issued a proclamation honoring the big wilderness anniversary. And Nevadans this year celebrate 25 years of the Nevada Forest Service Wilderness Act of 1989. ~

Lisa Ronald, Communications Director for Wilderness50, sends this summary report:

Overall, nearly 1200 people attended the October 15-19 National Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, which boasted 84 track sessions with more than 200 speakers, an evening poster session, and 31 plenary presenters including Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, author Terry Tempest Williams, New Mexico Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, NASA astronaut Joseph Acaba, Native American educator Dr. Gregory Cajete, Outdoor Afro founder Rue Mapp, long-time activist Dave Foreman, outdoor business leaders, and directors of the four wilderness management agencies.

The Youth Summit brought together 80 next-generation wilderness advocates under the age of 25, including the 14 Youth Leader Scholarship Winners sponsored by Ahnu, Osprey, Sierra Club and the Forest Service.

The silent auction—over 150 items including vacation packages, artwork and outdoor gear—raised more than \$12,000.

Other associated events included the two-day pre-conference wilderness stewardship training for 100 participants; 20 field trips to New Mexico wilderness areas and cultural sites; the two-night People's Wilderness Film Gala; an exhibit hall with more than 50 exhibitors and art displays including Peter Kola paintings and images from the "Wilderness Forever" Smithsonian exhibition in Washington D.C.; a showing of the movie *Wrenched*; the Aldo Leopold one-man live play; various gatherings hosted by the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, The Wilderness Society, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, and the University of Montana's Wilderness Management Distance Education Program; and the public outdoor 'Get Wild' Festival.

Find audio recordings of all plenary presentations at: www.wilderness50th.org Visit our facebook page for photographs from the conference: <http://www.facebook.com/50thAnniversaryOfTheWildernessAct>.

California and Nevada Sierra Club volunteers and staff at -- go to page 3 bottom

San Gabriel Mountains -- from page 1

summer months, their snow-capped mountains in the winter, and their trail system and historic sites throughout the year.”

Speaking to about 200 invited guests at Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas, Obama said, “It’s not enough to have this awesome natural wonder within your sight. You have to be able to access it. So everybody in this diverse community, no matter where they come from or what language they speak, can enjoy everything this monument has to offer.”

The President hit the nail on the head.

Crowds of people seeking to enjoy the mountains -- picnicking, hiking, cycling, wading in streams -- have often overwhelmed popular recreation areas. More recreational facilities and uniformed rangers to patrol popular areas are needed, especially along the San Gabriel River north of Azusa.

The monument area includes peaks, canyons and streams that are home to rare and endangered species, including Nelson bighorn sheep, mountain yellow legged frogs and bears, mountain lions and other wildlife and birds. Historic features include Native American artifacts and the Mt. Wilson Observatory. Obama, citing these features, used his powers under the 1906 Antiquities Act to designate the monument. It was his 13th designation, with a total of about 3 million acres; he added, “And I’m not finished.”

The \$4.5 million in promised additional funding will help, including \$3 million by the National Forest Found-

ation, \$500,000 by other foundations, and \$1 million by the Forest Service.

Sierra Club members who hike the mountain trails can help in various ways to achieve the monument’s objectives of preserving the forest and improving the recreational experience; they can perform volunteer work to maintain trails; participate in shaping the management plan, and use Sierra Club hikes to inform fellow hikers of the monument’s potential for future preservation and recreation.

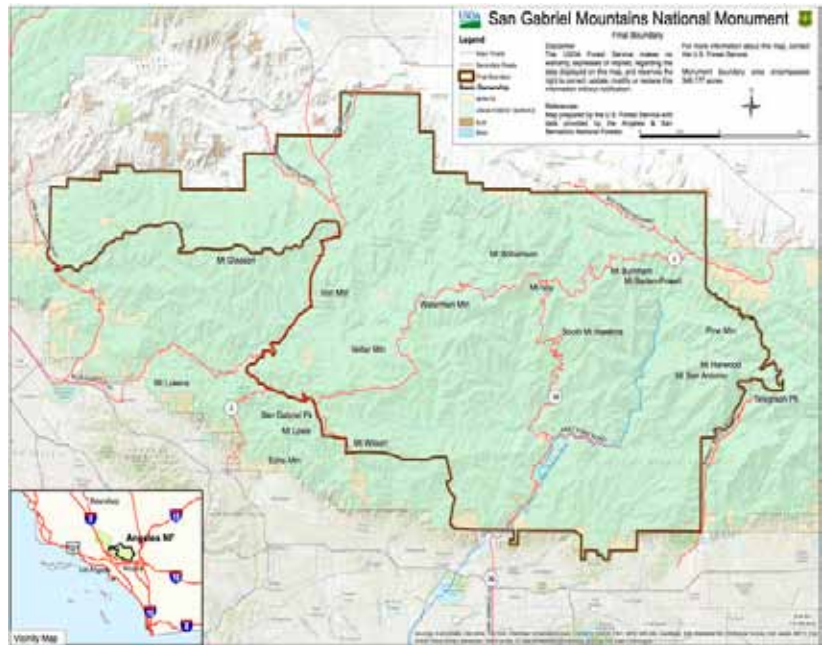
Although Rep. Judy Chu

(D- CA27) introduced a bill in Congress last June for a San Gabriels National Recreation Area to include much of Angeles National Forest, (see WOW, August 2014) that bill stalled in a highly partisan, divided Congress. Chu then worked with the Obama Administration for a monument proclamation. Because of objections from San Bernardino County supervisors and others, San Bernardino County portions of the San Gabriel mountains, Mount Baldy, the Mt. Baldy ski area, and Cucamonga Canyon were left out of the monument. Also left out was a large area in the southwest part of Angeles National Forest.

Still, monument supporters who had worked for years for more resources for the forest were delighted with the president’s action. As one said, “We’ll take half a loaf--or two-thirds of a loaf.”

Efforts continue to designate another 120,000 acres of wilderness in the San Gabriel range, said Angeles Chapter Forest Committee co-chair John Monsen. This includes the 18,000-acre Condor Peak proposed wilderness area north of Sunland-Tujunga and Mt. Lukens less than 10 miles as the crow (or condor) flies from La Crescenta and La Canada in the area omitted from the new National Monument. ∞

Don Bremner is co-chair of the Angeles Chapter’s Forest Committee.



Albuquerque Conference--from page 2

the national wilderness anniversary conference in Albuquerque included Heather Anderson, Camille Armstrong, Cindy Buxton, Alan Carlton, Dave Czamanske, Larry Dwyer, Anne Fege,

Bruce Hamilton, Anne Henny, Vicky Hoover, Fran Hunt, John Moore, Teri Shore, Geoffrey Smith, Mike Splain, Harold and Janet Wood. Dan Chu, Director of the Our Wild America campaign, came from Washington DC, and Club president Dave Scott was there as a plenary speaker. Harold Wood gave a talk on John Muir in one of the concurrent sessions -- (84 sessions organized in six subject tracks during eight time slots--civic engagement, education, experience, history, science, and stewardship.) Anne Fege moderated one session. On Saturday about 55 to 60 Sierra Club attendees took time out from the Get Wild Festival to hobnob at a special Club happy hour. ∞



Directors of the four federal agencies spoke at an Albuquerque luncheon panel; here posing with Connie Myers, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, and Susan Fox, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.

John Muir Earth Day Address (excerpt from keynote speech at Muir Historic Site, Martinez, California)



-- by Bruce Hamilton

Happy Earth Week and welcome to this event. I am Bruce Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director of the Sierra Club. No, despite my white beard and Scottish heritage, I did not know John Muir personally. This year marks the 100th anniversary of his death and I dare say I am not that old.

But I can say that John Muir has shaped my life, and I hope that by coming to his homestead today and by learning a little bit more about this remarkable man he will shape your lives, too. ...

I believe the lessons John Muir has for present and future generations are not about inspiring others to match his major accomplishments. Instead, the lesson John Muir holds for us this Earth Week and every week is to enjoy, explore, and protect the Earth in our daily lives. And when you look into the life of John Muir it is hard to find anyone else in history who excelled more at enjoying, exploring and protecting this beautiful planet.

So here are the qualities of John Muir that I think we need to emulate and remember him for:

Muir had contagious enthusiasm for the natural world. He was personally excited by witnessing a fairy orchid or a water ouzel, but he then felt compelled to share that enthusiasm with everyone he met and all his readers. His magazine articles, books, public speeches, hikes, and meetings with influential decision-makers were magical and transformative. It is no wonder that when President Theodore Roosevelt decided to visit Yosemite he insisted that John Muir accompany him and be his guide. Muir was not a scold or a preachy doomsayer of an environmentalist; I imagine that he was fun to be around.

Muir was always full of wonder. He was trained as a scientist and he was a renowned inventor, but Muir was not made to be a cold lab-bound government scientist. In fact, after he nearly went

blind from an industrial accident he decided to abandon toying with the inventions of man and instead chose to dedicate himself to studying and reveling in the wonders of nature. His laboratory became the world, and he was full of endless questions about the wonders and glories of the natural world. He would see a glacier in Alaska and wonder how fast it was moving. He would see a tall pine tree whipping around in a strong wind and wonder what it would feel like to be in that tree top swaying in the gale force winds. He would see a waterfall and wonder what it would look like to see the moon from behind the falls at night. He would then follow his curiosity to its logical conclusion and then recount his adventures and findings in a way that filled all he met and all who read him with that same sense of wonder and discovery.

Muir was joyful, not a sourpuss. You can't read Muir today without sensing his almost boundless energy and rapture: "Another glorious Sierra day in which one seems to be dissolved and absorbed and sent pulsing onward we know not where. Life seems neither long nor short, and we take no more heed to save time or make haste than do the trees and stars. This is true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality." He felt divine beauty everywhere: "God never made an ugly landscape. All that the sun shines on is beautiful, so long as it is wild." He overflowed with emotion: "Another glorious day, the air as delicious to the lungs as nectar to the tongue."

Despite the fact that he would occasionally hob-nob with Presidents, Governors, captains of industry, and the elite, he was also a humble man who saw himself as a tiny speck in the broader Universe and someone who was at ease hanging out with laborers, Native Americans in an Alaskan

village, or the crew on a boat trip. When he set out on his famous 1,000 mile walk to the Gulf of Mexico he scrawled in the front of his journal, "John Muir, Earth-Planet, Universe" as his address, demonstrating his humble sense of place.

John Muir was a story teller, but one who would tell stories to teach a lesson or inspire the reader rather than to draw attention to himself or try to impress his audience. The wonderful part of Muir's writings that allows them to stand the test of time and still inspire readers 100 years after his death is that he knew how to draw people into the experience he was conveying and keep the reader engaged as the story unfolds. So you can read about him riding an avalanche, almost falling off a Sierra peak, crossing a glacier with his dog Stickeen, or witnessing the glories of a water ouzel and just get enthralled in the shared experience.

Muir was a risk taker. He was not one to think small and settle for easy victories because they would take less effort. All his life he had taken on big challenges and as a result he managed to achieve big victories. He was perfectly willing to take on the biggest and most powerful forces in the United States in the cause of protecting wildness and beauty. The loggers, dam builders, ranchers, and miners had more money and influence at the outset of every conservation campaign, but that did not stop John Muir from taking them on and waging the good fight. Yosemite would just be a state park--only protecting Yosemite Valley floor and the Mariposa Grove of sequoias, except John Muir had the courage and conviction

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Muir on Earth Day and marking centennial of his passing -- from p. 4

and guts to fight for the bigger park that we know and love today. He was a visionary in the best sense of the word – he dreamed big dreams but not impractical dreams and then dedicated himself to making those dreams come true.

So put this all together, and what I am proposing is that to be a modern day John Muir you need to be joyful, full of wonder, enthusiastic, humble, willing to take risks, and able to tell a good story. Is that too much to ask of any of us?

So once we've marshaled these essential qualities of our character, what is it we can do with them to help protect the natural world? People of Faith regularly ask themselves: What would Jesus do? On this Earth Week I think we should all ask ourselves: What would John Muir do?

I can tell you one thing John Muir did not do. John Muir didn't send \$35 off to the Sierra Club and urge its staff to go save Yosemite for him. He assembled his friends, family and colleagues and asked them to join with him to explore, enjoy and protect the Sierra Nevada by joining the Sierra Club. Together

John Muir in Alive and Well in a World that is "One Great Dewdrop"

--by Harold Wood

"When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with continents and islands, flying through space with other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty." - John Muir

Muir's contemplation of the Earth "as one great dewdrop" seems especially relevant to a generation raised on seeing NASA photographs of Earth from space, literally confirming Muir's perception of a century earlier. Muir was not parochial in his views but took a global perspective... Only by looking at Earth the way Muir did, as "one great dewdrop," will we succeed in addressing all our global problems.

Muir scholar Harold Wood is Chair of the Sierra Club John Muir Education Team and webmaster of the Sierra Club's John Muir Exhibit website. He is a frequent presenter and educator about John Muir. He is Chair and webmaster of Sierra Club LeConte Memorial Lodge Committee, which oversees the Club's historic stone building and educational program in Yosemite Valley. For more detail from Harold Wood, go to: http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/life/John_muirs_legacy_is_alive_and_well_in_a%20world_that_is_one_great_dewdrop.aspx

they would make a difference by taking personal responsibility for protecting the earth. So, first I would suggest that each of you make a pledge to take personal responsibility for protecting some part of the natural world that you care about the most. It may be in your neighborhood, on the coast, in the Sierra, or in Alaska. The important thing is that you are passionate about protecting that place and its beauty

So please take John Muir's advice this Earth Week and "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.

Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves." But when you climb that mountain, remember that you need to return the favor and find some way to make sure that mountain is safe from harm. When Muir decided to start the Sierra Club he said, "Let us do something to make the mountains glad." Thank you, and Happy Earth Week. ☸

(Bruce Hamilton is deputy executive director of the Sierra Club)

Cheering 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act



On October 31, 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the California Desert Protection Act.

From Oct. 31 to Nov. 9 this fall,

members of the CA/NV Wilderness Committee were in southern California to take part in several Desert Act 20th celebrations, and they enjoyed camping and hikes in between.

Many a glass was raised to desert wilderness at their first campout dinner at Hole in the Wall in the Mojave National Preserve. On Nov. 1, they

joined the Preserve's big Mojavefest celebration at the Kelso Depot— followed by a star gazing party at Hole in the Wall. On November 2, Desert Act leader Judy Anderson organized a Sierra Club celebration in the Mecca Hills, for volunteers, allies, and BLM staff.

On Thursday, Nov. 6, was the big celebration with Desert Congressional champion Sen. Dianne Feinstein. The Wildlands Conservancy generously hosted a gala lunch for more than 200 invited guests at its Whitewater Preserve north of Palm Springs, at which the senator lauded the leading volunteers— like Judy, Jim Dodson, and the late Elden Hughes—who made it happen.

She and other speakers reminisced about the historic campaign and looked ahead to a new desert bill.

On the Nov. 8-9 weekend they joined the Desert Committee's fall meeting at Saddleback Butte State Park in the Antelope Valley; it featured a buoyant Desert 20th celebration. ☸



Sen. Dianne Feinstein at Whitewater, 20th anniversary gala for CDPA

photo: Larry Freilich

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, by Elizabeth Kolbert

Reading about extinctions in geological time can be boring. But, this is a book about an extinction taking place right before our eyes, now! It is not new. I was telling students twenty years ago that the next species may be us! As biologist E.O. Wilson hints, it is not just the survival of our own species at stake; it is the ongoing evolution of the most incredibly unique and beautiful creations known.

Earth has lived through five prehistoric mass extinctions or biotic crises and has now entered the Anthropocene, a new term scientists are using for the present geologic epoch that began when human activities had a significant impact on Earth's ecosystems. It is the period that most concerns us, our endangered species of plants and animals and our diminishing natural resources of water, oil, food, clean air and water.

Learning about the demise of Central America's golden frogs while reading her children's nature magazine, Kolbert felt a need to tell this story. She booked a flight to Panama to find out for herself the identified cause of the golden frog's disappearance. It appeared to be the spread of a fungus that is also killing off our own Sierra mountain yellow legged frogs. Digging deeper, she discovered that amphibians are the most endangered class of animals, with an extinction rate about 45 thousand times higher than the background rate. The "background extinction rate" is normally about one species to disappear every 700 years, while present mass-extinctions appear to be "off the wall."

Being a lover of the wilderness and its wildlife, I hadn't given much thought to the vast undersea ecosystems of the world's oceans and their varied marine life, before our recent national Wilderness50 conference. Until I



The Wilderness Writings of Howard Zahniser -- edited by Mark Harvey

Mark Harvey, whose biography *Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act*, was reviewed by Heather Anderson for WOW in December 2010, now has a new book publishing the many writings of Howard Zahniser, chief author of the Wilderness Act. While

heard oceanographer Sylvia Earle's Wilderness conference keynote address, I had little knowledge of the extent of threats to marine life forms. Coral reefs are expected to be one of the first ecosystems to go completely extinct, due to acidification from rising methane and carbon dioxide. CO2 is being massively returned into the air as we burn coal and oil.

Elizabeth Kolbert's love of nature, (as well as that of Rachel Carson from previous years) shine through the book, but we are not let off the hook. Twenty years ago Bill Moyers said we may have forty years to mend our environmentally destructive ways. Now, there are only a potential twenty left as we too slowly begin to turn to alternative energy, conserve water and energy, and clean our air.

Kolbert's fascination with biology, her skill as a science writer and her eloquent and passionate voice on issues resulting from our assault on the ecosphere make this book a page-turner. A staff writer at the New Yorker, she is able to pinpoint the effects of climate change in this new Anthropocene period, as it causes a sixth mass extinction that may destroy up to fifty percent of all living species on our planet within this century. We know what to do.

The Sixth Extinction / An Unnatural History by Elizabeth Kolbert. Henry Holt & Co. 319 p. ~

-- **Reviewed by Heather Anderson**
(Note: In 2011 Kolbert won the Sierra Club's David Brower national award for outstanding environmental reporting.)

working on the earlier biography, Harvey came across Zahniser's writings from various phases of his career and decided at once these eloquent, inspiring writings needed to be made public at long last. This 2014 book is the result.

Harvey is professor of history at North Dakota State University. He spoke during 2014 at the Visions of the Wild Festival in Vallejo, California, and at the national wilderness anniversary conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Long before he began work for The Wilderness Society Howard Zahniser worked for years for the Bureau of Biological Survey, which after 1938 became the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; here he was able to put to use his facility with words—writing speeches for the Survey's Directors and composing radio broadcasts for the national Farm and Home Hour. He also began a monthly column for Nature Magazine, on seasonal wildlife observations. From one such column, called "In the month of May", Harvey gives us: "...even the casual attendant has little need for program notes on the pageants of Nature. He needs only a word in the ear: 'Attend!' If he looks, he cannot help but see. No straining of ears to hear the music, no effort to catch the fragrance of blooms, no difficult adjustments—to sense that all living things are in love."

In 1946, Zahniser responded to the Forest Service's plan to issue permits for a mechanized ski lift, road, and hotel in its San Geronio Primitive Area east of Los Angeles. "Preserving the few remaining remnants of primitive America is as difficult an enterprise as mortal men could undertake...."

"California skiers will not have any unreasonable inconvenience without a commercial resort at San Geronio. Skiers themselves will, in fact, suffer a serious loss if the San Geronio Primitive Area is invaded by the proposed highway, hotel-resort, and ski-tow. They will lose...the choice of finding -- *continued next page (7)*

Why Wilderness? (Hint: It's not all about us)



Professor Rod Nash, nationally eminent wilderness historian and writer, spoke in April at Fresno City College, on the invitation of the Sierra Club's Tehipite Chapter, about the significance of wilderness on its 50th anniversary. After his well-attended talk, he gave permission for this recent Op-Ed he has written on wilderness to be included in this issue of *Words Of the Wild*. Professor Nash is directing this essay to the rationale for Wilderness in the next fifty years.

As a species, we have been lousy members of the ecological neighborhood. We've followed with a vengeance the Old Testament advice to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain. That means conquest and control, breaking the will of self-willed, or wild, land. What's left are remnants— islands in a sea of modified land. At present in the contiguous United States the amount of protected or designated Wilderness is very close to the amount of pavement—about two percent each. And you know which way the wind is blowing. Wilderness is an endangered geographical species, and our generation needs to

-- by Dr. Roderick Frazier Nash,

appreciate its accountability.

Laws protecting wilderness (notably the Wilderness Act of 1964) were an American invention and one of the best ideas our culture ever had. The traditional argument for them was very anthropocentric. Whether involving scenery, recreation, tourism economics, or nature's "services," it was all about us. But a new, ecocentric argument looks at protected wilderness as a long overdue demonstration of restraint on the part of a species notorious for its excesses. This way of thinking sees nature as a community to which we belong, not a commodity we possess. It understands that natural rights philosophy could extend to the rights of nature. This means that humans should—in some places and in some ways—stand down.

When we defend or extend the National Wilderness Preservation System we deliberately withhold our technological power. We put limits on the civilizing process. Think about self-willed land: we didn't make it, we don't own it, it's not "about" us at all! When we go to designated Wilderness we are, as the 1964 Act

says, "visitors" in someone else's home. As such there are house rules to be followed. Some of them concern what we bring into those places where the wild things are. Of course this restraint means some conditioning of our freedom, but that's the price we pay for membership in a community or society. We pay it, for instance, every time we pause at a stop sign or observe a speed limit. In this case the limitations have to do with other forms of life and how we share the planet. John Locke's social contract could and should become Aldo Leopold's ecological one.

Wilderness is a place to learn gratitude, humility and dependency. It's where we put our species' needs and wants into balance with those of the rest of the natural world. Even if we never visit them, wilderness areas have value as symbols of unselfishness. They are gestures of planetary modesty on the part of the earth's most dangerous animal. A nation that creates and maintains protected wilderness is showing capability of a kinder, gentler and more sustainable relationship with this planet. Can anything really be more important? ~

Zahniser Writings review - - from page 6

their recreation in a wilderness if they so wish.... Destroy the heart of this primitive area now, and southern Californians will find that they have enough resorts but no wilderness skiing.... and the freedom of choice now enjoyed will have been denied to all...."

Zahniser attended all the Sierra Club biennial wilderness conferences held from 1949 to 1974. From his speech at the seventh conference, in 1961:

"It is a bold thing for a human being who lives on the earth but a few score years... to presume upon the eternal and covet perpetuity for any of his undertakings. Yet we who concern ourselves with wilderness preservation are compelled to assume this boldness...

"If we are to anticipate a wil-

erness-forever future... we must take this difficult first step. It is a step that is so difficult not because it goes so far but because it must be taken by so many. A whole nation steps forward...."

In one of his last speeches, in April 1964, he noted the essence: "We are establishing for the first time in the history of the earth a program, a national policy, whereby areas of wilderness can be preserved.... It is the charter of a program that can endure."

The Wilderness Writings of Howard Zahniser, edited by Mark Harvey, foreword by William Cronon. Weyerhaeuser Environmental Classics, University of Washington Press, 2014. 224 pp., 25 illust., \$30.00 hardcover. www.washington.edu/wupress. ~

-- reviewed by Vicky Hoover

Dr. Nash is Professor Emeritus of History and Environmental Studies, University of California Santa Barbara; author of *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967, 2001, new 2014) and *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (1989). He can be reached at canyondancer@earthlink.net.



A Central Coast Marine Sanctuary would benefit region

--by Andrew Christie

A new report commissioned by Sierra Club California points to the economic benefits that would come to California's Central Coast, and particularly San Luis Obispo County, if the region were to receive National Marine Sanctuary designation. The report finds that if the San Luis Obispo County coastline were designated as a National Marine Sanctuary, the region could expect increased economic activity of more than \$23 million annually as well as the creation of at least 600 permanent local jobs.

California has four National Marine Sanctuaries. The Channel Islands Sanctuary is off the mainland in Southern California, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary is adjacent to a large population with a robust tourist economy, and Cordell Bank and the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuaries are directly adjacent to each other and

border much less dense populations. The report evaluated documented economic stimulus provided by each of these sanctuaries to estimate the likely economic benefits that would come to Central Coast communities if they succeed in securing the new designation.

For a region to be considered for designation, a community must present its case to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) about why the nominated region is worthy of sanctuary status. Sierra Club is supporting the effort of local activists, businesses, and coastal tribes in making the case for designation of the waters off San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara County as the **Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary**.

Michael Thornton, an organizer with Sierra Club California, said, "San Luis Obispo has long been identified as a prime candidate for sanctuary designation. It sits between the Channel Islands and Monterey Bay sanctuaries.

Including this coastal region in the sanctuary system would provide an important connected stretch of coastline essential to the well-being of a wide variety of aquatic mammals, birds and other sea life. A healthier ocean benefits all species, including humans, that depend on it." (See WOW, April 2013)

Editor's note: National attention went to marine sanctuaries in September when President Obama enlarged by six times the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, originally named by President George W. Bush in January 2009. The resulting 370,000 square nautical miles (490,000 square miles) of protected area in the south-central Pacific Ocean is now the largest marine reserve in the world that is completely off limits to commercial resource extraction including fishing. The coral reefs and marine ecosystems here are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. ♪

(Andrew Christie is director of the Santa Lucia Chapter)

Northern fur seals gain in Farallons

Jonathan Shore, Wildlife Refuge Specialist with the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge off the coast of San Francisco, reports: "We have the results of Northern fur seals counted from this year's aerial survey. We are seeing continued increase and expansion of the breeding colony located in an area known as Indian Head Beach on West End Island (designated Wilderness area). Fur seals likely numbered at least in the tens of thousands at the South Farallon Islands (SFI) before being locally extirpated by sealers during the early 19th century. The first confirmed pup born on SFI since extirpation was in 1996. This season we counted over 1,000 individuals! Quite the increase in a short amount of time."

The Farallon National Wildlife Refuge is part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex; the

majority of the Farallon Refuge is designated wilderness, since 1974; the Refuge this year has been celebrating the 40th anniversary of its wilderness. (See WOW, Dec. 2013.) ♪



Northern fur seal group, Farallons Refuge

photo: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

From Billions to None--new film on extinction

This summer, filmmaker David Mrazek's *From Billions to None* had its world premiere as a finished film designed as part of national attention to extinction that marks the centennial of the death, Sept. 1, 1914, of the last known passenger pigeon, Martha, at the Cincinnati zoo.

Making a movie about passenger pigeons has a visual problem — and a big one: *The central character has been dead for a century.*

But in this 21st century, that is merely a challenge. Wyatt Mitchell, the main animator, started the project as a student and continued after graduation. That is a strong point of the movie on the art side. Another big plus is the aerial visuals shot by quadcopter "pilots" in Wisconsin.

Mrazek takes the film beyond the specific of passenger pigeons to the global by tying it to what we are doing with pillaging the natural resource.

Joel Greenberg nailed the central thrust of the film when he said: "As a cautionary tale, to the proposition that no matter how common something is — water, oil, something alive — if we're not careful, we can lose it." Greenberg is both a main character in the film and a co-writer/co-producer. He authored *A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction*, which is earning worldwide acclaim. (see WOW, Aug 2014 review.) ♪

For more information, go to billionstonone.com.



U.S. Forest Service planning shortchanges Wilderness

-- by Fran Hunt

The forest planning process now underway for the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests offers a great opportunity to create strong and effective forest plans through a process that emphasizes good public involvement and science-based conservation. Critical to the planning process is the U.S. Forest Service's review of potential new wilderness areas on each of these important national forests in the heart of the Sierra Nevada. The agency plays a major role in the protection of our nation's wilderness values and has a statutory obligation to inventory and evaluate potential wilderness areas during forest planning.

The Sierra Club and our allies are increasingly concerned that, unfortunately, the Forest Service is shortchanging its wilderness assessments and may fail to properly identify potential new wilderness areas on these three forests. Not only is the agency rushing the process, but it appears intent on eliminating certain roadless areas from serious wilderness consideration (detailed evaluation),

if even small portions of these areas are affected by authorized off road vehicle use. There is no legal authority to support this automatic exclusion of areas, which is affecting almost twenty percent of the federal lands the Forest Service initially inventoried for wilderness consideration on the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia Forests.

What's more, the agency is currently indicating that it will not allow any more public participation and comment in the next steps of wilderness evaluation until after it has selected which areas, if any, to formally consider recommending as wilderness. These candidate wilderness areas will be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) scheduled for release next April. Given the Forest Service's aggressive forest planning timeline, it will be extremely difficult for wilderness advocates to push for recommendation of any areas that the agency improperly (and without public comment) eliminates from wilderness review between now and April.

On October 30, the Sierra Club joined The Wilderness Society and other

allies on a letter to the regional forester urging the Forest Service to follow its own established guidelines to "ensure that the process for inventory and evaluation is transparent and accessible to the public for input and feedback" by making its draft evaluation decision documents available for meaningful public participation opportunities before the DEIS is released.

Spotlight on special Inyo Forest Wildlands: The Glass Mountains

Right in the middle of the Inyo National Forest lies the only east-west trending mountain range in the Eastern Sierra, the Glass Mountains. The range's high elevation and its location between the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains create a rare mix of Great Basin, Mojave, and Sierran habitats and vegetation. With diverse forests ranging from pinyon to limber and Jeffrey pine, as well as snowbank and riparian aspen groves, abundant meadows, spring-fed creeks, steep-walled canyons, obsidian deposits, and high volcanic ridges, the Glass Mountains represents a wonderful and truly unique ecological, recreational, and cultural resource. This range also contains valuable roadless areas and is an important migratory corridor for species facing the impacts of climate change. The Inyo Forest's planning process gives us a chance to seek increased protections for the Glass Mountains, which Sierra Club Range of Light Group volunteer leaders as well as the Friends of the Inyo have identified as containing candidate areas for designation as Wilderness.

Wilderness50 comes to Main Street America

Jon Erickson, Wilderness Program Manager in the Eldorado National Forest, last fall saw artistic banners strung up along the Main Street of historic Placerville (just off U.S. 50), and he got an idea: In 2014 Placerville Downtown Association's banners should highlight wilderness and should display on one side the logo for the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

In Jon Erickson's words: "Last October I was deeply moved by the depth and creativity of our local artistic community as displayed by the "Banners on Parade" event. I am the Wilderness manager for Desolation Wilderness and a member of the Eldorado National Forest group working on developing local events and

activities to celebrate our American Wilderness heritage and [am now] seeking to challenge the business and artistic community of El Dorado County to join us in celebrating our American Wilderness heritage on its 50th Anniversary."

The Placerville Downtown Association adopted Ranger Erickson's idea, and here is one of the numerous banners that one saw along historic Main Street, Placerville, last summer. ☺

photo: Jeff Hunter



Sign up for Inyo Forest News!

We have a helpful new resource for people who care about the Inyo and other CA national forests. Please sign up for our new e-newsletter, *Inyo Forest News*. Email me directly and ask to be added to the list or sign up online at: https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/SignUp_Inyo.html?jsessionid=7ED05E6A9BEA937659FBCF19D4540E99.app234a. ☺

Contact Fran at fran.hunt@sierraclub.org.



Wilderness: Personal reflection from a Sierra Club director

-- by Chuck Frank

Like so many Sierra Club members and supporters, my inspiration and passion for our work comes from seeds planted early in life. Growing up in the suburbs of

Chicago I spent many a day and night on the Lake Michigan beach in all seasons. I fondly remember fishing with my parents and siblings in Wisconsin, Canada, and Mexico among other places. And also many summers in Sun Valley, Idaho, fishing, horseback riding, and hiking. At nine years old, I went off to camp in Minong, Wisconsin, and started camping out in the Great North Woods and hearing passages from Aldo Leopold's *Round River* and *Sand Country Almanac*. I was hooked for life!

I began backpacking in college and haven't stopped since 1971. And I continue to canoe in the Canadian wilderness. I joined the Sierra Club in 1975 in order to help protect those places I had visited that were a part of my soul and those that I had not yet visited. We all have our own reasons for loving and being inspired by wilderness and wild places. Regardless of what they are, we all share a deep and spiritual connection that goes beyond rationale or logic to the core of who we are. And we share this passion as the driving force for all the work we do at Sierra Club.

Over the years, my advocacy has expanded beyond wildlands protection to a broad portfolio of interests. But it is all inspired by our core mission of protecting our precious wild places, big and small. Below, I've excerpted a few passages from my hiking journals that I hope strike a chord in you and represent

how we all feel. And invigorate you to even higher levels of commitment.

"Vista Ridge – The sun warms my back. A gentle mountain breeze blows from behind me and I feel it caress the back of my ears and through the hair on the underside of my legs. I hear it sway the tree tops. An occasional bug buzzes by. The purple lupine and other white wild flowers blanket the meadows above and below me interspersed with some midget trees and some large ones as well. Beyond in almost every direction are numerous ridges rising from the valley floor through which the Suiattle River flows. Above all this beauty, dominating the view, are the meadows and peaks of the Cascade Mountains. Endless blue sky with a few light, magical clouds provide the background. The grandeur is overwhelming--the peace and beauty overpowering.

Being here creates the opportunity to just be. To just exist. No outside occurrences can affect me for now. There is a chance to be a part of the universe which has been for millions of years and will be for billions more.

I hope someday to return to this spot. It won't be any different. That's the beauty. With all that goes on in our daily lives that makes us crazy, what really matters never changes. Life and death – the universe, it keeps going on. How small and insignificant are the elements of mankind. (1986, *Glacier Peak Wilderness*)

"Wilderness is like the canary in the coal mine. If our wilderness areas are compromised, what will become of the rest of our planet and all the living creatures who depend on it for our survival.

Day by day we live our lives. The quality of the days, how we live them,

IS the quality of our life. Things to remember: Northern Lights. Wind Devil. The Ridge over Dead Horse Lake. Porcupine Pass and Oweep Basin. The narrow trail on Porcupine Pass & Dead Horse Pass. Watching the storm overlooking the basin above Rock Creek. Fishing especially at Milk Lake. Hiking off trail. Camp fires at Lampert and Uinta Lakes, people along the trail. Being here for two weeks." (1990, *High Uintas Wilderness*.) ~

(Chuck Frank is the first Sierra Club Director from Illinois, elected in 2013. He has spent time in many wilderness areas--favorites are the Wind River Mountains (Bridger Wilderness) in Wyoming, Sawtooths in Idaho, Canyonlands in Utah and the Cascades in Washington State. When not in wilderness, he spends time on Sierra Club work or with his family.)

Next Wilderness meeting February 7- 8, 2015, Shoshone, CA—annual joint meeting with CNRCC Desert Committee.

The next meeting of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee will take place Saturday and Sunday, February 7 and 8, 2015. Join us for fun, networking, timely presentations on worthy wildlands and desert matters—including desert wilderness, interaction with agency staff, scenic desert surroundings, food and drink, with happy hour and potluck dinner Sat. Meet the young SCA work crews. Camp or other accommodation nearby. All interested wildlands advocates invited. Contact Vicky: vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org or Terry Frewin: terrylf@cox.net. See you in Shoshone.



Dusy Basin, Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness, California. photo from Chuck Frank



Outings



Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!

A Kid-sized "Christmas Bird Count" sweeping America

-- by Tom Rusert

Thousands of young naturalists brave the wild winter, through snow and rain, blizzards, ice storms and the infamous polar vortex, seeking to spot, identify, and count winter birds across North America. An enthusiastic new generation of young birders now eagerly participates in one of the many "Christmas Bird Count for Kids" events held from coast to coast in the United States and Canada.

"Communities and nature related organizations interested in getting kids out of the malls and into nature work together to make this growing family holiday event a success" according to co-founder Tom Rusert.

Recognizing the growth trend in the traditional Audubon CBC events, the idea of a CBC 'just for kids' evolved. In 2007, after 14 youngsters were turned away from the rigorous 24 hour regular Christmas bird census in Sonoma Valley that the non-profit group Sonoma Birding had already established, the parents of several of the kids asked Sonoma Birding if they would offer an alternative. In response, Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie, founders of Sonoma Birding, hosted the first Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids), a youth and family oriented alternative to the century old traditional CBC.

The success of this 2007 inaugural CBC4Kids spread excitement and interest throughout the Northern

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

Dec 29 - Jan. 2 -- Mon-Fri

Carrizo Plain Holiday Service

Celebrate end of the year with CNRCC Desert Committee in this national monument and help pronghorn antelope, denizens of this vast grassland. Welcome hike Dec. 29, 2 ½ work days modifying barbed wire fencing, and a day to explore. Accommodation at old ranch houses. Limit 12, \$30 covers four dinners and New Year's breakfast. Contact leader: Craig Deutsche, craig.deutsche@gmail.com, (310)477-6670.

Jan 10 - Sat - Pt Reyes Kids Bird Count, see box below.

Jan 29 - 31-- Thurs-Sat

Death Valley Wilderness Restoration

Join CNRCC Desert Committee in restoring wilderness values in this remote beautiful national park. The work this time is the clean up of marijuana grow site. Gather early Thurs afternoon; work on the grow site on Fri, and possibly Sat. Group size limited. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com, (661)944-4056.

California birding community, rapidly building momentum to spread the CBC4Kids movement across North America in more than 100 locations. For their achievement in innovating a high-quality half-day CBC offering to introduce youngsters to the essence of the century old birding event largely geared to adults, the American Birding Association awarded Rusert with the Ludlow Griscom Award, first given to Roger Tory Peterson over 30 years ago. And, more recently, Rusert and Peterie received a "Conservationists of the Year" Award which was presented at the Muir home in Martinez, California.

For more info on CBC4Kids, visit www.sonomabirding.com.

Save the Date: 5th Annual Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) Saturday, January 10, 2015 - 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Feb 6 -- Friday

Mojave National Preserve Service Day

Join CNRCC Desert Committee and National Park Service in a restoration project on February 6, one day before the Desert and Wilderness meeting Sat and Sun. (see box p. 10) Start Fri 9 am, work through mid-afternoon, and adjourn in time to reach Shoshone for dinner. Bring water, sun screen, hat, lunch. Tools provided. Contact Sid Silliman for project details, directions, and to RSVP (gssilliman@verizon.edu).

Feb 13 - 14, Fri (evening)-Sat

Nevada Valentine's Day Service

Give our public lands a valentine by helping on a Feb 14 service project with the CA/NV Wilderness Committee together with Friends of Nevada Wilderness and BLM Las Vegas to improve one of the southern Nevada wildernesses. Optional sociable campout Fri night. More details & to sign up: Vicky Hoover, (415)977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.

March 14 - 15 -- Sat-Sun

Carrizo Plain Serve and Discover

We pray for winter rains, and if they arrive we can look forward to spring wildflowers in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. Our service on Sat will either remove or modify sections of fence to facilitate the mobility of pronghorn antelope. These residents prefer to crawl under rather than jump fences to escape predators. Sunday will be, at the choice of the group, either a hike in the Caliente Range or else a tour of popular viewing areas in the plains. Leader: Craig Deutsche. (see Dec 29-Jan 2)

March 27 - 29 -- Fri-Sun

Old Woman Mountains Service

Join Mojave Group and the CA/NV Wilderness Committee for our annual desert wilderness service project with Needles office of BLM. This year we'll restore a 5-mile stretch of Sunflower Spring Road or develop an interpretative trail of the area. BLM is partnering with Native American Lands Conservancy here; enjoy a joint campfire and stories with their tribal elders Sat night. Central commissary, contact Vicky Hoover, see Feb 13-14.

photo: Duy Nguyen



California activist hikes John Muir Trail to mark Wilderness50th anniversary

-- by Teri Shore

After backpacking in the Sierra Nevada for nearly two decades, I finally through-hiked the John Muir Trail (JMT) this year in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. I usually go on organized Sierra Club trips as a leader or participant with the San Francisco Bay Chapter Backpack section, but this time I was going solo.

As part of my personal JMT challenge, I raised funds through a crowd-sourcing campaign to support the trip and wilderness protection in California. I was thrilled to present the \$1,000 that I raised hiking the JMT for California wilderness protection to Sierra Club's wilderness maven Vicky Hoover at the National Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Sierra Club helped spearhead the jam-packed wilderness marathon. I presented the check at a gathering there of Sierra Club activists, to support the CA/NV Wilderness Committee.

The JMT is an epic, 211-mile path through the Sierra Nevada Mountains from Yosemite to Mount Whitney—the tallest peak in the lower 48 states. The trail winds through four magnificent wilderness areas: Yosemite, Ansel Adams, John Muir and Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness. It took me 21

days to cover 185 of the 211-mile JMT, starting in Tuolumne Meadows on July 7 and summiting Mount Whitney on July 27.

Any Sierra Nevada backpacker knows that afternoon thunder showers are normal. But this July, unusual monsoon weather dumped not only rain, but hail and even snow on the high peaks.

It was my 14th day on the John Muir Trail when an early morning snowstorm hit as I climbed up 12,130-foot Pinchot Pass. As thunder and lightning intensified, I crouched down next to a boulder and tree for safety to figure out my next move: turn back, sit it out, or keep going?

A group of hikers soon came up the trail behind me, to my relief, and together we chanced it to the top and over. Later I learned that anyone who was on a high pass that morning was pelted by snow—and survived. But the bad weather did send many folks home.

I trekked on, donning rain gear or hunkering down in my tent during rain and hail. And when the sun shone, I dipped into an alpine lake or stream and sprawled across warm granite to dry. I Finally, reached 13,152-foot Forester Pass, highest pass on the Muir

Trail and the last obstacle before Mt. Whitney and home.

Then suddenly, smoke. Hikers coming down the mountain had seen trees going up in flames. First snow, now fire! Fortunately, the small blaze died down, though the smell of smoke lingered in camp all night.

After a tough climb up and over Forester followed by the rocky ascent of Mt. Whitney a few days later, I splashed my way down to Whitney Portal and a warm hotel bed.



In front of Banner Peak

photo from Teri Shore

On to Albuquerque

The JMT adventure seemed long ago by the time of the big wilderness conference in mid-October. A who's who of the wilderness movement converged for the largest national gathering since the Wilderness Act was signed. My claim to fame at the conference was asking astronaut Joseph Acaba how we were going to designate wilderness in space!

See photos and trail journal here: <https://johnmuirtrail2014rainandfire.shutterfly.com/>

(Teri Shore is an avid backpacker and wilderness advocate who has led backpack trips for the San Francisco Bay Chapter since 1996. She has climbed Mt. Shasta and many non-technical Sierra peaks including Mt. Conness, Mt. Dana, and Mt. Hoffman and has completed long treks in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.)

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The Sierra Club 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.

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