

# WORDS OF *the* WILD

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

## Central Coast Heritage Act re-introduced -- new hope for preserving California wildlands

-- by Jim Hines



Soda Lake in Carrizo Plain National Monument

Some of the most beautiful areas of California's central coast region would be protected forever as federal wilderness under the recently introduced Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (HR 4072). This legislation by freshman Congressman Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) would add 250,000 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System in the Los Padres National Forest of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties as well as in the Carrizo Plain National Monument in San Luis Obispo County.

The Los Padres National Forest contains some of the wildest, most rugged and remote places anywhere in California. This legislation protects entire watersheds--which benefits local communities--and protects wildlife habitat including feeding grounds for the endangered California condor, and adds more than one hundred miles of rivers to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System--which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2018.

Protecting the Carrizo Plain,

one of the Bureau of Land Management national monuments on the Trump Administration hit list, is a vital part of this legislation. The Carrizo Plain is home to endangered species, native American sacred sites, and ecosystems where antelope still roam.

The bill also calls for two new National Scenic Areas in the Los Padres Forest: Condor Ridge NSA--the ridge line overlooking the majestic Gaviota Coast north of Santa Barbara--and Black Mountain NSA east of San Luis Obispo--



Congressman Salud Carbajal visits Carrizo Plain with BLM staff

where wild horses roam free.

The 400-mile Condor Trail would be officially designated as a National Recreation Trail. The Condor Trail (see WOW, April 2016) is the only through trail in the Los Padres Forest, allowing walkers, hikers and backpackers to traverse the entire Los Padres on one central trail.

The Central Coast Heritage Protection Act is cosponsored by Julia Brownley (D-Ventura) and Jimmy Panetta (D-Monterey). Congressman Carbajal's predecessor, Lois Capps, originally introduced this bill in 2014. (See WOW, Aug 2014) ♪

## The Fight for Conglomerate Mesa

-- by Fran Hunt

Conglomerate Mesa--a very special wild part of Inyo County in eastern California, adjacent to the Malpais Mesa Wilderness and Death Valley National Park--is under threat. The mesa's beautiful, rugged, unroaded landscape is dotted with Joshua trees, pinyon pine and juniper. Conglomerate Mesa also provides habitat for rare plants like the Inyo rock daisy, as well as for bobcats, Mojave ground squirrels, Townsend's western big-eared bats, golden eagles, mule deer and mountain lions.

This remarkable roadless area is now under severe threat because a Canadian company, Silver Standard Mining Inc. (SSR), wants to drill seven exploratory sites to locate -- and then mine -- gold deposits in the heart of the area. The type of gold located in Conglomerate Mesa is Carlin gold, which is found as a fine powder substance within rock. Mining of Carlin gold from Conglomerate Mesa would -- continued on page 2

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## Threat to Conglomerate Mesa -- from p 1

require a large open pit industrial-scale cyanide heap leach mining operation. Open pit cyanide heap leach mining involves:

- 1) digging enormous pits;
- 2) piling the extracted ore into heaps that would cover many football fields several hundred feet high;
- 3) spraying a cyanide solution over the heaps so that the cyanide trickles down through the ore, bonds with microscopic flecks of gold or silver, and is channeled into a holding pond.

Toxic, cyanide-laced wastewater from these processes can pollute water sources nearby, and the large volumes of water required can deplete freshwater supplies in the surrounding region. Sometimes, several hundred tons of ore must be mined to produce very small quantities of gold. For example, Nevada's Carlin Trend Mine mined 129.8 million *tons* of ore in 1989 to recover 3.7 million *ounces* of gold. Cyanide heap leach mining would permanently reshape the Conglomerate Mesa landscape, damaging the area's wild character, degrading cultural resources and wildlife habitat, and polluting scarce local water systems.

The area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM's Environmental Assessment for the project, open for public comment through November 20, described three exploration alternatives and one no-action/ no-drilling alternative. The Sierra Club joined comments prepared by the Center for Biological Diversity and by Friends of the Inyo supporting the no-action/no-drilling alternative. Thanks to the efforts of these and our other many partners, including the California Wilderness Coalition, more than 5,000 people submitted comments to the agency supporting protection of this unique and important place.

In addition, strong turnout from Sierra Club members and other local allies at the November 14 meeting of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors forced the Board to abandon its draft comment letter to the BLM – a letter which favored exploration and mining of Conglomerate Mesa.

Conglomerate Mesa has long been important to local tribal members for traditional uses. The mesa and its surroundings offer great hiking, backpacking, camping, rock scrambling,

hunting, bird watching, star gazing, wildflower viewing, and photography. Until 1994, the area was part of the Cerro Gordo Wilderness Study Area, and it was recently designated and somewhat protected as part of the California Desert National Conservation Lands. The Sierra Club and other wildland advocates still hope to see Conglomerate receive the permanent wilderness protection it deserves.

It may take several months for the BLM to make its decision on exploration, or the Trump Administration may fast track the project. The Sierra Club will continue to work with our allies to defend this special area from industrial-scale open pit mining. Anyone who's interested in helping defend Conglomerate Mesa should contact Sierra Club's Eastern Sierra Organizer Fran Hunt at [fran.hunt@sierraclub.org](mailto:fran.hunt@sierraclub.org). 🌿

## Granite Chief Wilderness grows

The Granite Chief Wilderness is now larger by 3,347 acres! The American River Conservancy's Wilderness Campaign had spent about \$two million to acquire land and to decommission 26 miles of old logging roads, restore 20 miles of native trout streams and four mountain meadow systems during the summer of 2016. This restoration work allowed the Tahoe National Forest to declare this landscape wilderness-eligible, accept title and append these 3,347 acres to the Granite Chief Wilderness, northwest of Lake Tahoe--all within two years of ARC's acquisition. The wilderness expansion became official in mid-August.

This project has preserved a lovely part of the Sierra, including prime habitat for black bear, American marten, goshawk, song birds, native trout--and mountain meadows filled with Sierra lily, columbine, giant mountain larkspur, and legions of butterflies. It's great to have new wilderness, without depending on Congress. *Thank you, American River Conservancy!* 🌿

### Conglomerate Mesa insider note:

Longtime Conglomerate Mesa activist and CA/NV desert committee member Tom Budlong adds: "Conglomerate Mesa is a high-elevation Joshua tree nursery— significant, since normal lower elevation Joshua trees elsewhere are stressed by global climate change. The area is very remote, and *de facto* wilderness,—from its high point you see NO sign of civilization, even on clear days: no evidence of mining, no roads. While the exploration specifically being requested will have a relatively small impact itself, it is highly likely to lead to an extremely damaging mine operation." 🌿



photo: Joanne Hin

Joshua trees on the way in to Conglomerate Mesa



# Don't Bomb the Bighorn!

## Save the Desert National Wildlife Refuge

The Desert National Wildlife Refuge, just outside the city lights of Las Vegas, comprises nearly 1.6 million acres and is home to one of Nevada's largest desert bighorn sheep populations. It is the largest wildlife Refuge in the Lower 48.

Yet, AGAIN, it is under assault by the military. (See WOW, April 2017.)

Wilderness quality land immediately threatened by this round of military expansion is the Sheep Range Complex (Sheep Range, Las Vegas Range, Gass Peak). This complex is a key part of the 1.2 million acre area of the Desert Refuge proposed as Wilderness by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 1971.

Back in the 1940s, the military gained joint administration with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the western half of the Refuge. This eliminated public access and cast doubt on future wilderness designation for that portion of the Refuge. Now, the Air Force wants to seize control of most of what's left of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. This would not only threaten wildlife and indefinitely close public access, it would prevent future wilderness designation for the area.

A Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for the proposed expansion of Nellis Air Force Base was expected Dec. 8.

Originally protected in 1936 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide habitat for the iconic desert bighorn sheep, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge encompasses six major mountain ranges in south-central Nevada, with the highest quality, intact habitat for desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife that depend on Great Basin and Mojave Desert ecosystems. With the exponential growth of Las Vegas over the past decades, reaching right to the refuge boundary, this haven for wildlife is critical.

The Fish & Wildlife Service has managed the Refuge to protect its rich biological diversity and wildlife habitat, maintain the integrity of the recommended wilderness areas, and safeguard invaluable cultural resources. The Air Force claims it needs more space to fly in from multiple directions to do live fire bombing tests and training, but the military already controls millions of acres of land in Nevada, and they already have unlimited ability to fly over the Refuge for training purposes. We have already sacrificed enough of the Desert Refuge, it is time to make a stand for the rest.

*Background:* At the end of 2016, the Department of Defense released a scoping



photo: Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Public meetings have been scheduled. We need you to come out to one or more of these meetings and be a voice for Wilderness and for wildlife in the Desert Refuge! Desert bighorn sheep need YOU to take action!

Jan. 17 - Caliente, NV (Caliente Elementary School)

Jan. 18 - Alamo, NV (Pahranagat Valley High School)

Jan. 23 - Las Vegas (Aliante Casino + Hotel)

Jan. 24 - Beatty, NV (Beatty Community Center)

Jan. 25 - Tonopah, NV (Tonopah Convention Center)

The schedule for all meetings includes:  
5:00-6:30 pm (open house/comments)  
6:30-7:00 pm (USAF presentation)  
7:00-9:00 pm (open house/comments)

To learn what a special place this Desert Refuge is, join the CA/NV Wilderness Committee outing Feb 17-19. See Outings, p. 7.

document of proposed alternatives for the military expansion. They are using the input they received on that scoping document to prepare the new draft of proposed alternatives.

Comments on the 2016 Scoping EIS from Friends of Nevada Wilderness addressed concerns on impacts to wildlife, proposed wilderness, and public access, pointed out the Fish and Wildlife Service's recommendation of 1.3 million acres of wilderness 40 years ago, and that the agency's 2009 Comprehensive Conservation Plan included the mandate: Specially Designated Areas: *Protect and maintain the wilderness character of the proposed Desert Wilderness Area by prohibiting motorized vehicles...*

"The Air Force needs to provide a detailed description of how it will adhere to and implement the management plans laid out in the 2009 document for each of the alternatives being considered in the LEIS for the reauthorization and possible expansion of the military area. As part of the LEIS the Air Force needs to provide a proposed budget for management of wildlife on the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) under each action alternative" and "all action alternatives should include efforts to improve wildlife and habitat management on lands [under military] jurisdiction."

### Importance of Wilderness Resource

Although Congress has yet to act on the [agency's wilderness] proposal, the Fish and Wildlife Service continues to manage these areas to protect their wilderness values. "The importance of the Wilderness Resource in the Desert Refuge has vastly increased as the Las Vegas Valley has exploded with development."

Last year, Senator Harry Reid and Congressman Joe Heck helped prevent the transfer to the Air Force of more than 800,000 acres of National Wildlife Refuge System lands from becoming bombing ranges. Unfortunately, the latest attack on southern Nevada's wild Desert Refuge is this time coming directly under military request..

The Desert Refuge is a very special place to many people—and to wildlife. We must assure that the military takes NO actions that diminish the wilderness values and public's access to these remarkable wild lands

**#dontbombthebighorn!** ∞

(Thanks to Friends of Nevada Wilderness).

# Roaming the Wilderness: Howard Booth 1927-2017

-- by Vicky Hoover

In late summer, 2017, we lost a long time wilderness hero—a valiant voice for the never-enough appreciated wildlands of southern Nevada.

Taj Ainlay, chair of the Toiyabe Chapter's Southern Nevada Group, noted: "Howard Booth was one of our longest serving members, an avid hiker and a champion of environmental conservation.

"In 2005, Howard became the recipient of the Sierra Club's highest honor, the John Muir Award, which honors a distinguished record of achievement. He was also recognized in 2015 by Senator Harry Reid for his 50-plus years of service for Nevada's wild places."

Howard was born in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, on March 15, 1927. He grew up in Manasquan, New Jersey. He joined the Army in 1945 and served in Italy at the end of World War II. Upon his return he earned his college degree in Meteorology. As Air Force reservist he was called to duty also in the Korean War.

Howard came to Nevada in 1957 and was employed as meteorologist at the Nevada Test Site by the National Weather Service until retirement in 1982.

When not at work, he explored the vast Las Vegas area backcountry. His appreciation for Nevada grew as he discovered and explored the desert, mountains and public lands nearby. His passion for the outdoors

molded him into an ardent conservationist and determined fighter for wild public lands.

In 1989 on a volunteer service trip for the BLM, Howard met his future wife Ursula.

They moved to Boulder City, and the work for wilderness was now shared.

In July this year Howard fell ill in Alaska. He was hospitalized there and then with Ursula's help taken back to Las

Vegas. He saw many good friends and died peacefully on August 16, 2017.

## Howard's Work for Wildlands: Red Rock Canyon NCA

He was one of the first to see the true value of these overlooked desert landscapes, and to seek to know them intimately, on countless exploration trips to roam the quiet, scarcely-visited public lands surrounding his home base of Las Vegas. With careful precision he documented the scenic features of the desert and mountain areas across southern Nevada—his detailed photographs and notes later were instrumental for southern Nevada wilderness designation.

Well before the wilderness campaign was launched, however, he had learned the basics of public engagement in the campaign to establish the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Due to proximity to Las Vegas and its spectacular features, the Redrock Canyon area became the first highly-publicized, lengthy effort to preserve Bureau of Land Management lands in southern Nevada. Howard was a steady leader in that campaign, which involved many citizens' groups. His knowledge and enthusiasm attracted young volunteers.

Howard led a 1961 Toiyabe Chapter scouting tour to the area. After a BLM public meeting that year on the future of the Red Rock lands, he was on a subcommittee appointed to study methods of protection. A League of Women Voters survey and Sierra Club proposed a 64,000 acre national monument under BLM. In 1967, Secretary of Interior Udall approved a 62,000-acre national recreation area to be jointly managed by BLM with the Nevada Division of State Parks. When BLM released a management plan in 1968, proposing ambitious facilities, Howard and others opposed this as too invasive, disruptive of wildlife and spoiling the area's natural qualities. They fought for more protection. BLM's final plan, in 1975, called for educational interpretation and

protective guidelines. After the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation area of 83,000 acres was designated in late 1990, visitation skyrocketed: Howard urged trail construction to alleviate landscape braiding by helter-skelter use trails.

Howard and allies sought expansion of the Red Rock Canyon NCA, and in 1994, President Clinton doubled the size to 196,000 acres. Between 2000 and 2003 the threat of a big private development on adjacent Blue Diamond Hill was the big issue.

## Wilderness comes to southern Nevada

After Nevada Senators Richard Bryan and Harry Reid secured lands protection in northwest Nevada in 2000, wilderness fever ran high in Nevada, and southern Nevada's Clark County was the next goal.

Howard's extensive documentation of wild values of southern Nevada helped form the basis for drafting a Clark County bill. He pushed especially for including two areas partly within Red Rocks—the La Madre Mountain and Pine Creek Wildernesses-- and for lands south of Boulder City—areas like Black Canyon, Bridge Canyon, Eldorado and Ireteba Peaks, next to the Colorado River.

After the 2002 Clark County bill passed, with its 452,000 acres of new wilderness, Howard did not sit back and rest. He worked closely with the land managers in preparing wilderness management plans. He took the BLM's Las Vegas District planner on hikes into the new wilderness. As draft plans appeared, Howard gave valuable assistance for activists' comments, sharing his careful, site-specific insights on wildlife habitat, vehicle routes to close, water resources, and more.

Thank you, Howard Booth, champion of southern Nevada wilds. We miss you! 🌿

(from Toiyabe Trails, memorial service obituary, and Howard's own RRCNCA notes.)

photo: Ursula Wilson-Booth

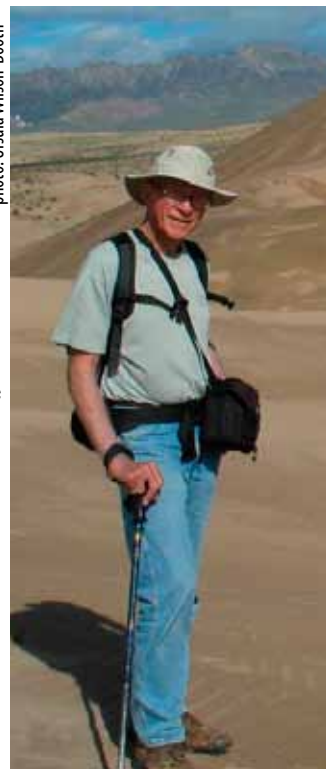


photo: Ursula Wilson-Booth



# George Barnes: 1936-2017--Honoring his memory

-- by Judy Anderson

George Barnes, a fixture in the Sierra Club involvement with the deserts, and especially off-road vehicles, has left us. California desert and wilderness activists were stunned to receive on November 10 this notice from George's son Keith: "I regret to inform you that my father, George Barnes, passed away earlier this week at the age of 80. He died of natural causes surrounded by family. We are respecting his wishes of not having a service. In keeping with his dedication to making the world a better place, please remember him through your charities of choice."

Sierra Club volunteers come in all shades. George Barnes was unique, truly. Forever in a woolen checked shirt, (camo for ordinary civilians), he was adept at parrying personal questions and photos, by diverting attention, or simply turning away. No "selfies", no group photos. Hiding in the weeds, emerging only where needed. The tales of his commitment and selflessness are real. A mountaineer and climber who doesn't tell of his adventures unless pushed.

When his Litton Computer Services job took him to mountain locations, his time off would be spent working his way up the ravines and along the crests. He must have been a genius at blending in with different cultures: he went to Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, North Africa, Alaska.

Born into a family of professional mathematicians who loved the desert, George--probably the smartest person I've ever met--chose physics instead. He was ever practical, but realistic and comprehensive in looking at all possible solutions to a problem. For years I gathered bits of information about him when I carpoled with his mother Mabel, frail after a bout with cancer, to Desert Committee meetings. George's wife, Joanne, worked with the Ski Patrol at Lake Tahoe. Their two sons showed up for a few years on his desert camping trips. He shared his parents' interest in flying, and his interest went

beyond airplanes to vehicles suitable for desert driving. New truck models were examined for clearance, reliability, and repair costs. George's vehicle recommendations were so trusted that



photo: Vicky Hoover

George in the desert with Stan Hays, 1991. He served long as CA/NV Wilderness Committee vice chair.

desert gatherings looked like 4-Runner conventions. He also appreciated a fast European car when not camping; Nevada roads were fastest from Palo Alto to Furnace Creek. Who knew?

With military precision, George organized a crew of volunteers to observe and document protest rides after BLM cancelled the infamous Barstow-to-Vegas race. He identified lookout positions, photos needed, etc. Others took the public spotlight--films for media, and interviews. His involvement in off-road-vehicle concerns extended to California's Off Highway Vehicle Division. He even persuaded me to agree to being appointed to the Commission. During my eight years as commissioner, he was a fixture at OHV Commission meetings. Seldom speaking himself, he marshaled votes and got others to raise key issues.

George's office and gear were set with everything in its place, clean, and available. He could, if he wanted, disappear from his Palo Alto home for a week in Death Valley to climb a peak or follow a game trail, and the

NPS wouldn't notice his presence. The fastest way to gain his attention was to drive off the pavement and leave tire tracks... he would instantly investigate: was it a prospector, a peak climber, a drug dealer seeking a good drop zone, a botanist checking on a sensitive species, a hunter trying to add a bighorn trophy? His memory of these tracks around Death Valley was encyclopedic.

For 30 years he led the Sierra Club annual meeting with Death Valley National Monument--later Park--staff. Comprehensive agendas had time for him to share with the current Superintendent and staff his latest observations on bighorn sheep, burros, wilderness proposals, bats, Yucca Mountain, Amargosa River and more.

George's knowledge of the desert around Death Valley was put to the test in the 1980s when wilderness and possible expansions of DV were being considered. He took on the task of preparing a range of alternatives with realistic boundaries, and what we wanted in the best of possible outcomes. In typical style, there was only one copy of each alternative. The originals were in his head...and it was an honor for me that he sent them to me in 1988. And the best of outcomes became law in 1994.

Those who wish to honor George and increase their own effectiveness would do well to emulate his disciplined practice of spending an hour a day on one of his projects. As Brock Evans would say, *endless pressure, endlessly applied*.

As Karen Schambach, his colleague against off-road vehicle abuse, stated, "George used his mountaineer's heart and engineer's mind to protect the western lands he loved. Generous with praise for the work of friends


and colleagues, George never sought acknowledgment of his own accomplishments. His spirit will live on in the wild places he helped to save from the ravages of civilization." 

photo provided by Bob Gates



George in Alaska's Brooks Range, 1963

photo from Keith Barnes



At a family gathering in 2016

The Forest Service expects to release its Final Plan for the Inyo National Forest in late January of 2018. This follows nearly four years of effort and active engagement from Sierra Club volunteers and staff seeking stronger protections for treasured forest areas. The Sierra Club will respond to this Final Plan with the full array of our advocacy, outreach, and communications tools. We'll partner with our allies, including The Wilderness Society, Friends of the Inyo, and Defenders of Wildlife, to analyze the plan, and we'll share our findings widely with Inyo Forest advocates and the public.

If necessary, we'll work with partners to prepare an administrative appeal, known as an "objection," to the Final Plan if it fails to meet key requirements of environmental law or to adequately protect and provide: 1) new recommended wilderness areas, 2) vulnerable fish, wildlife and plant species and habitats, 3) streams, mountain meadows and other valuable aquatic resources, and 4) scientifically based approaches to fire management that both truly improve forest health and reduce wildfire threats to local communities. There will be a 60-day period following the release of the Final Plan, during which objections can be filed with the Forest Service.

People who are dissatisfied with the final plan and who have been previously involved in the revision process can object in writing to the Forest Service's proposed decision. An objection is an administrative challenge—not litigation—and provides one more opportunity to work with the Forest Service to resolve outstanding concerns. The agency generally issues a formal written response to objections, which can identify changes to the plan, within 90 days of the close of the administrative review period; this period may be extended. [Please see the Forest Service's detailed 86-page publication, "A Citizens' Guide to National Forest Planning," for additional information

Thanks for Sandra Cattell's article in your August [2017] issue about the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument--and new legislation proposed to expand it.

Yes (although an elder), I am thrilled that I have lived to see our San Gabriel Mountains a national monument.

I grew up with those mountains in the nineteen twenties and thirties in the Pasadena area, my compass for north as I looked out my front-room window. Many winters, I was able to see them tipped with snow and, in 1933(?), as a really snowy range--with snow extending as far south to Pasadena. What a special treat for us neighborhood children to hurry out and build snowmen and throw snowballs, when we had not ever seen snow before.

As a teen without transportation and with workaholic parents, I never was able get close enough to walk into the San Gabriels, to see them up close or visit their wildness. I hadn't known or experienced that word. I had only seen 1930s Southern California suburbia. But those mountains were imprinted in me, so much so, that after my 1950s' honeymoon hike in our Sierra Nevada range, I later became a convert to



photo: Todd Vogel

Backpackers in South Sierra potential wilderness, Inyo National Forest

on engaging in the forest planning process.]

The other two Sierra Nevada national forests that started their plan revisions at the same time as the Inyo are lagging behind the Inyo in scheduling release of their final plans because their plans required more extensive revisions from the drafts; look for an update on the Sierra and Sequoia forests in the next issue of WOW. For previous forest planning coverage in our newsletter, see WOW April, Aug and Dec 2013; April and Dec 2014; Aug 2015; Apr 2016. ♪

environmental and wilderness activism with the Sierra Club. And I included the environment in the art classes I taught.

Now, in a few generations, my street, which formerly served as a baseball diamond for kids, has grown into a ten lane freeway winding through a Southern California megalopolis.

I support the proposed San Gabriel Mountain National Monument expansion legislation, including Proposed National Recreation Area, Proposed Wilderness and Proposed Wild and Scenic Rivers. I commend those who, with their labor and organizational expertise, have worked tirelessly to protect rivers, trails, public lands and provide education, recreation and solace to growing Southern California communities, and especially our youth. ♪

-- Heather Anderson, Fresno

## Next Wilderness meeting Feb. 10-11, 2018, Shoshone, CA—annual joint meeting with CA/NV Desert Committee.

The next meeting of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee will take place Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 10 and 11, 2018. Fun, networking, awesome insights on wild topics. Meet agency staff, meet the young SCA work crews. Happy hour and potluck dinner Sat. plus evening program. Scenic desert ambience; camp or accommodation nearby. All interested wildlands friends welcome. Contact Anne Henny: anneth16@sbcglobal.net, or Terry Frewin: terry1f@cox.net. See you in Shoshone. ♪





# Outings



*Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!*

*Nearby Nature hike*

**December 23 - Sat**

## **Chandler Preserve Hike**

Palos Verdes Group takes you to this preserve in Rolling Hills Estates where intensive habitat restoration has added native wildflowers and shrubs to the hillsides. George F Canyon Trail, moderate, 6.5 miles, 600' gain, 2.5 hours. Meet 8 am on Palos Verdes Dr East 1/8 mile south of Palos Verdes Dr North, at trailhead. We will take the June's, Dapplegray, Dale's, Empty Saddle, Saddlehorn Loop. Minors permitted if accompanied on the hike by a parent. Wear lug sole boots, bring a snack and water. If rain likely, wear rain gear. Leaders: Terri Straub, (310)544-5017, terristraub@hotmail.com, and Steven Morris.

(The 28.5-acre Preserve features slopes and grasslands through coastal sage scrub and riparian habitats and is home to some special native wildflowers, including the common fiddleneck, Western tansy mustard, and longleaf bush lupine. Its valuable native habitat capable of supporting native birds and insects includes habitat favored by the endangered Palos Verdes blue butterfly.

*Nearby Nature hike*

**January 6, 2018 - Sat**

## **Mt Diablo State Park hike**

Join S.F. Bay Chapter's Mt Diablo Group to climb above winter fog on a leisurely to moderately paced "necklace" hike



Bald Ridge in Mt Diablo State Park

around the mountain. Includes optional 1/2 mi walk around Summit Interpretive Trail following the hike. Meet 10 am at Juniper Campground. If you like to go fast, take minimal breaks, and get back really early this is not the hike for you. Mellow hikers especially welcome. 2B (8.5 miles / nearly 2000 ft of uphill). Return to cars: Approx 4:30 pm. For info, contact Leader: Steve Bakaley (slbakaley@gmail.com).

**January 13 -15, 2018 - Sat-Mon**

## **Ventana Wilderness service**

For Martin Luther King weekend join Ventana Wilderness Alliance Cold Spring "car camp" (walking the last 1/4 mile in to Cold Spring) and work on the Big Sur Trail—along Logwood Ridge and approx a mile down Devil's Staircase. Although cleared in 2016, the trail needs major work due to lots of new growth plus fire impact. See <https://www.meetup.com/Ventana-Wilderness-Alliance-Meetup/events/245690558/>. Contact leaders Betsy MacGowan or Maria Ferdin at [betsy@ventanawild.org](mailto:betsy@ventanawild.org) or [runcyclegirl@gmail.com](mailto:runcyclegirl@gmail.com).

**January 28 -- Sun**

## **Delta Bird Watching Safari**

Join Tish Brown and Lidia Campos of S.F. Bay Chapter's Delta Group at 9:30 am for carpooling in parking area near Macy's/Chevron on Somersville Rd in Antioch. We'll head to the Cosumnes River Preserve of the Nature Conservancy and Thornton agricultural area to see migratory birds, including sandhill cranes, tundra swans, snow geese, ducks and raptors. Back between 4 - 4:30 pm. Easy (1A), bring: lunch and binoculars. Heavy rain may alter plans. Contact leader: Lidia Campos (925)240-5795. [lidiacampos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lidiacampos@sbcglobal.net).

**February 9 -- Fri**

## **Mojave Preserve Restoration**

Join CA/NV Desert Committee and the National Park Service for a restoration project in Mojave National Preserve (MNP) on Feb 9, one day before Wilderness & Desert meeting Sat and Sun. Gather Fri 8:45 am, work through afternoon, and adjourn in time to reach Shoshone for dinner. Our main task is to remove "culturally planted species" (tamarisk, fan palm, sunflowers) at Desert Studies Center, Zzyzx. Contact Sid Silliman for details, directions, and to RSVP ([gssilliman@cpp.edu](mailto:gssilliman@cpp.edu)). Don't miss this pre-Shoshone service opportunity.

**February 17-19 - Sat-Mon**

## **Desert Refuge service-Southern Nevada**

For Presidents' Day weekend, a special service trip with CA/NV Wilderness Com and with Friends of Nevada Wilderness. The vast Desert National Wildlife Refuge is under great threat from military expansion. Join our service trip to find out what's so special about this place as we help the agency (Fish & Wildlife Service)

reinforce the trailhead for the Gass Peak Trail. Meet Sat am probably at Refuge visitor center. Car camping with central commissary; contact Vicky for more info and to sign up. [vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org).

**Feb 26 -- March 1 -- Mon-Thurs**

## **Death Valley Tour**

Join Mojave Group to tour the historic Shoshone community near Death Valley and then primitive camping in the area. The next day we go to China Ranch and hike in Amargosa Cyn. Next day drive through Death Valley, visit scenic sites, and hike in beautiful canyons. Camp that night in Furnace Creek area. The last morning hike the dunes, then head home. Details later. To sign-up contact Carol Wiley at [desertlily1@verizon.net](mailto:desertlily1@verizon.net) or call (760)245-8734.

*Nearby Nature hike*

**February 28 - Wed**

## **Laguna Coast from top to bottom**

Travel Laguna Coast Wilderness from the Top with Angeles Chapter Orange Cty Sierra Section. Moderate 8 mi, 1400' gain/loss hike starting at end of Ridge Park Rd in Corona del Mar. Great views along Bommer Ridge, Emerald Cyn Rd, Old Emerald Trail, then returning on Bommer ridge. Meet 8:30 am at Ridge Park Rd trailhead. Bring 1-2 liters water, snack, hiking boots/lugsoles, sun protection. From PCH drive up Newport Coast Dr 2.4 mi to Ridge Park Rd and turn R. Drive 1.5 mi to end. Park on street. Restrooms at Coastal Peak Park on R. Rain cancels. Leaders: Sharon Kirk - (714)376-3197 [sl.kirk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sl.kirk@sbcglobal.net); Donna Specht (714)963-6345 [donnaspecht@juno.com](mailto:donnaspecht@juno.com).

**March 20 - 23 -- Tues-Fri**

## **Mojave National Preserve Tour**

This Mojave Group outing begins Tuesday noon at Sunrise Rock campground on Cima Road. We will hike Teutonia Peak for scenic views. (3 miles rd. trip.) Next day drive to Rock House and hike the 1-mile loop trail, then camp Midhills. Thurs, we hike in area. Fri tour the famous Mitchell's Cavern at 11 am. Details later. To sign up contact Carol Wiley-- see Feb. 26-Mar 1.

**FLASH-Just opening--March 24 - 25 OR**

**March 30 - April 1 (Easter)**

**Desert wilderness service** -- join CA/NV wilderness committee for customary spring desert frolic -- contact Vicky Hoover ([vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org)) if one or both dates suits you--*and you're game for fame* 🐾

## Chair's Column-- Jim Hines: "A Dark Vision for our Lands"

There is a massive change in how the people who make decisions and manage YOUR national public lands view America's precious national public lands. Lands which hold our natural and historic heritage, which allow millions of Americans a place to enjoy, recreate, learn and be amazed at nature's grand creations, lands which provide a sanctuary for wildlife, allow for serious scientific study for the changes which are going on in our climate--lands which belong to all Americans.

YOUR national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, national monuments, national historic parks, national conservation areas and offshore national marine sanctuaries are all in jeopardy in a massive turn of events coming from Washington DC.

I was raised with a vision for our national parks and other public lands, that these lands would be protected, and be places where we can all go and enjoy, appreciate and learn.

But after three trips (a total of 15 days) to Washington DC this year and having meetings with the players who are now in power in DC, I have

come away with a sense that all that we know and care about when it comes to our national public lands has turned upside down. Those in Congress and in the Trump Administration are powerful players who see YOUR national public lands as nothing more than places to mine, drill, extract and use in any way without any regard to the sacredness of Nature or the importance to America's historic heritage.

Meeting after meeting with Secretary of the Interior, Deputy Secretary of the Interior and their senior staffs, meetings with members of Congress who aim to remove the protections currently afforded to our national public lands have shown me a dark vision for special places like Cape Cod National Seashore (oil drilling proposed offshore), Bears Ears National Monument (coal mining), Wrangell-Elias National Park (copper mining), Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (offshore oil drilling), Flathead National Forest (oil and gas drilling) -- and the list just goes on and on and on.

Plans are now in the works to remove protections for YOUR national public lands either through the legislative process or the direct action by the Secretary of the Interior (Secretarial orders)

or the President of the United States (executive orders). Many ways are being devised, including a newly released proposal to raise national park entrance fees to over \$70.00 per visit, making it harder and harder for working Americans to afford a wonderful visit to their national parks. Plans would actually remove areas of the national park system from national park status and remake the entire national public land system to support more fossil fuel development at any cost, with no environmental review needed--the staff at Dept of Interior tells me.

This is a national disgrace: for a nation to be great, a nation has to have reverence for her land.

Rise up, stand up, speak up, we all need to make our voice heard loud and clear in full support of YOUR national public lands. OUR national public lands, America's national public lands. ♪

**FLASH--it's happening in OUR region:-. On Dec. 5, Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke announced his recommendation to the President to "Eliminate vast portions of the Gold Butte national monument and allow 'traditional' uses like mining, logging and drilling in protected areas."**

## WORDS OF the WILD

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



2101 Webster St.,  
Suite 1300  
Oakland CA 94612

Co-Chair, north: Anne Henny, SF Bay Chapter (510)289-2294  
Co-Chair, south: James Hines, Los Padres Chapt. (805) 340-9266  
Judy Anderson (818) 248-0402: wilderness management  
Cassie Barr (510) 336-7022: San Fran. Bay Chapter coordinator  
Victoria Brandon (707) 994-1931: Redwood Chapter coordinator  
Joyce Burk (760) 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) 786-7584: 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  
Vicky Hoover (415) 977-5527: newsletter editor  
John Moore (916) 731-7153: Mother Lode Chapter coordinator  
Mike Painter: (415)752-3911: Californians for Western Wilderness  
Par Rasmussen (702) 215-9119: Southern Nevada coordinator  
Geoffrey Smith (858) 442-1425: List manager



*"In wilderness I sense the miracle of life, and behind it our scientific accomplishments fade to trivia."*

- Charles A. Lindbergh, *Life*, 22 December 1967 r