



WORDS OF *the* WILD

Vol. XXIII, No. 3 December 2020

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



California becomes first state with "30 by 30" as official policy

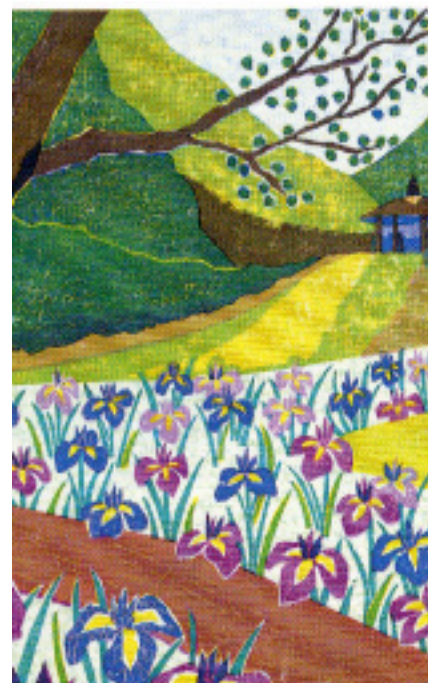
On October 7, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order N-82-20 which takes critical steps to conserve California biodiversity and build climate resiliency. The Executive Order mandates California's goal to conserve at least 30 percent of California's lands and coastal water by 2030. The California Natural Resources Agency will need to come up with a strategy that achieves this goal in a way that protects biodiversity, combats climate change, improves conservation of natural and working lands, expands access to outdoor and recreation areas, and safeguards food security.

Governor Newsom's executive order enlists California's innovative spirit to bring its vast network of

natural and working lands – forests, rangelands, farms, wetlands, coast, deserts and urban green spaces-- into the fight against climate change. A core pillar of Governor Newsom's climate agenda, these novel approaches will help clean the air and water for communities throughout the state and support California's unique biodiversity. The hope is to reduce the state's carbon footprint while also bolstering economic growth.

On issuing the order, Governor Newsom stated, "Once again, California is taking on the mantle of global climate leadership and advancing bold strategies to fight climate change. The science is clear that, in our existential fight against climate change, we must build on our historic efforts in energy and emissions and focus on our lands as well. California's beautiful natural and working lands are an important tool to help slow and avert catastrophic climate change, and today's executive order provides important new tools to take on this existential threat."

In response, numerous environmental organizations issued supportive, and commendatory statements. For Sierra Club, Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California, said, "The governor has helped move the nation forward today by establishing California as the first state to embrace 30 by 30. He



has also required that identifying how to achieve the 30 by 30 goal will involve a stakeholder process. That's important. We all need to work together to effectively address the climate emergency."

And Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director, added, "Scientists tell us that to mitigate the climate crisis and protect communities, we must protect nature. This order brings our country closer to protecting the 30 percent of lands and waters that experts say is needed to avoid the worst consequences of climate disruption.... Sierra Club is

-- continued page 2

Featured in this issue :

30 by30 now California policy	pp. 1-2
Wilderness Workshop: virtual	pp.3-4
Pack Stock Center offers help	p. 5
Nevada lands and military	p. 6
Tribes oppose military takeover	p. 7
Conglomerate Mesa & K2 Gold	p. 8
Bodie Hills land acquisition	p. 8
Ocean protection intro	p. 9
Outings	p. 9
Book review	p. 10



California adopts “30 by 30” as official state policy --from page 1

committed to ensuring this process improves access to nature for communities most harmed by the climate crisis and loss of green space.” Scientists call «30 by 30» the minimum necessary to avert crises of biodiversity and species extinction and generally regard it as an important interim step towards the ultimate goal of protecting 50 percent of the world’s lands and waters by 2050.

What does the E. O. say?

WHEREAS the State’s long-term vitality is threatened by the loss of biodiversity - the variety and variability of plant and animal life in our State - and the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS California’s natural and working lands – our forests, range lands, farms, wetlands, coast, deserts, and urban greenspaces – sustain our economy, support our unique biodiversity, contribute to the global food supply, support outdoor

of habitat, spread of invasive species, decreasing water supplies... and

WHEREAS the climate change crisis is ...impacting California [by] intensifying wildfires, mud slides, floods and drought, sea level rise, and extreme heat, that threaten our economy, communities, public safety, and cultural and natural resources; and

WHEREAS national, subnational and indigenous leaders across the globe are coming together to ... implement nature-based solutions to our climate and extinction crises, ...absorb carbon pollution from the atmosphere, ...protect communities and natural places from climate-driven disasters, and restore healthy ecosystems; and

WHEREAS addressing the biodiversity crisis and accelerating nature-based solutions requires inclusive partnerships and collaboration among federal, state and local governments, California Native American tribes, communities, businesses, investors, labor, conservationists, outdoor enthusiasts, academia, land managers, and other stakeholders;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California... do hereby issue the following Order ...effective immediately to combat the climate and biodiversity crises:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. To combat the biodiversity and climate crises, the California Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the California Environmental Protection Agency and other state agencies, is directed to establish the California Biodiversity Collaborative (Collaborative) to bring together other governmental partners, California Native American Tribes, experts, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders from across California to protect and restore the State’s biodiversity....


2. To support the global effort to combat the biodiversity and climate crises, it is the goal of the State to conserve at least 30 percent of



condor photo: Marcio Jose Sanchez-AP

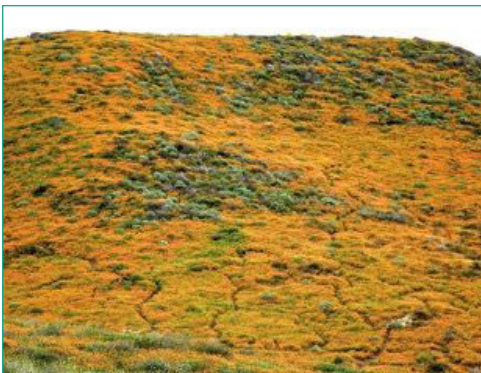
California’s land and coastal waters by 2030. The California Natural Resources Agency and other relevant state agencies, in consultation with the Collaborative, are directed to develop and report strategies to the Governor no later than February 1, 2022, to achieve this goal in a manner that:

- Safeguards our State’s economic sustainability and food security.
- Protects and restores biodiversity.
- Enables enduring conservation measures on a broad range of landscapes, including natural areas and working lands, in partnership with land managers and natural resource user groups.
- Builds climate resilience, reduces risk from extreme climate events and contributes to the State’s effort to combat climate change.
- Expands equitable outdoor access and recreation for all Californians.

Ambitious goal! the Sierra Club’s California/Nevada Wilderness Committee is proud and excited to be part of this vital vision, working closely in collaboration with Sierra Club California staff, the Our Wild California campaign, and our Chapters from across the state (and the country) to rally Sierra Club support for this far-reaching initiative--to Preserve Nature. Check out <http://biodiversity.ca.gov/> 



-- compiled by Vicky Hoover



California poppy landscape

photo: Bob Cates

heritage, and provide clean water and air; and

WHEREAS since time immemorial, California Native Americans have stewarded, managed and lived inter-dependently with the lands that now make up the State of California; and

WHEREAS soils are home to more than a quarter of the world’s biodiversity and California boasts more than 2,500 different soil types; and

WHEREAS California’s rich biodiversity, accounting for about one third of all species found in the nation, is increasingly threatened by loss

2020 National Wilderness Workshop goes virtual

-- by JoAnne Clarke

The 2020 National Wilderness Workshop was to be held at the University of California, Merced, one of the most diverse college campuses in the country. Our Wilderness Committee's goal was to recruit both presenters and attendees who would reflect the diversity of our national citizenry. Then, the advent of COVID-19 and our necessary move to a virtual workshop platform threatened that goal.

The purpose of the annual workshop is to bring together wilderness managers, stakeholders and volunteers to address wilderness stewardship matters that benefit from national-level conversation and action. While the first six years of workshops were successful, they were led and attended by a heavily white and older demographic. The earlier workshops included small numbers of people of color, generally some nine to ten percent of the total.

Wilderness, and the stewardship of our wilderness resources, can be maintained only if we engage all diverse parts of our community audience to protect and care for wilderness and wild places.

The theme for the 2020 workshop, "Wilderness in a Time of Change", focused on four broad topics of Ecological Change, Cultural Change, Scientific Change, and Managerial Change--one on each conference day in the second week of October.

The 25-person planning team (which included two representatives from the Club's CA/NV Wilderness Committee, Vicky Hoover and myself) focused on recruiting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to speak at and to attend the workshop and on developing workshop sessions around a variety of topics relating to equity, inclusion and justice in wilderness.

The planning team was highly successful in developing meaningful sessions and recruiting diverse

presenters from a range of cultures, identities, and backgrounds.

Our California/Nevada Wilderness Team Committee saw the 2020 National Wilderness Workshop as an opportunity to recruit new members with fresh energy and perspectives. We successfully applied for a \$4,750 Sierra Club Grassroots Network grant to finance conference registration, travel, meal allowances and travel and lodging, as well as scholarships for people from communities that have historically been underrepresented in the wilderness field..

By late spring the planning team realized, reluctantly, that the COVID-19 pandemic made an in-person event impossible and had to change the way the workshop would be held. With some travel



banned and large gatherings discouraged, we agreed that a virtual platform was the only practical alternative to cancellation. So our CA/NV Wilderness Committee faced the tough question--What to do about our grant?.

Our team decided to amend the grant request, changing the use of funds from travel reimbursements to a combination of scholarships for virtual workshop registration fees: an event sponsorship, with funds to go to the lead planning organization, Society for Wilderness Stewardship, for scholarships for underrepresented individuals, and \$1,750 in addition to scholarships provided by the CA/NV Wilderness Committee for attending the virtual workshop.

With the support of the Grassroots Network support team we were able to gain approval for this new approach. Our grant amendment was approved and the funds reallocated to a \$3,000 sponsorship to the workshop and \$1,750 for reimbursement of registration fees to qualifying individuals.

Per Heather MacSarrow, Executive Director of the Society for Wilderness Stewardship, who chaired the Planning Team, the Sierra Club's focused sponsorship had a meaningful impact:

"By working with the Sierra Club Nevada/California we were able to make great strides in representation at the workshop. We increased the number of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) from the previous highwater mark of 18 up to 97, a 439 percent increase. BIPOC individuals made up 22 percent of the total work-shop participation. The Sierra Club sponsorship was integral to this achievement.

Of the 30 people sponsored by the Sierra Club, 22 (a whopping 73 percent) were BIPOC individuals. Those 22 individuals make up almost a quarter (23 percent) of the entire slate of BIPOC individuals at the workshop. A huge majority, 26 out of 30 (or 87 percent), were young professionals. This is a very important metric.

While SWS provided free registration to students (where a majority of BIPOC attendees came from), that did not encompass the next group that has the most sizeable chunk of BIPOC individuals--young professionals. They are a vulnerable group, as they are not covered by free student registration, but are also not yet making enough money to afford to attend themselves, and have not achieved a career level where their employer will prioritize paying for them to attend. Lastly, out of the 30 people sponsored, 25 were women and five

-- continued page 4

Wilderness Committee workshop sponsorship highlights diversity

-- from preceding page, p 3
were men. This strong support of women to participate in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workshop has broad implications for their continued participation in this important field.

The Sierra Club sponsorship also covered the majority of the speaking fee for the NWW Keynote Speaker, Maite Arce--who is the Founder, President and CEO of the Hispanic Access Foundation. She has done much to generate higher levels of integration between people of color and the conservation sector, including: leading Latino advocates and communities to make key contributions in the designation of six national monuments and permanently authorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, placing more than 400 young people in internships and jobs on public lands and watersheds, and engaging hundreds of partners in recreational, volunteer, stewardship, and roundtable events through signature initiatives including Latino Conservation Week. The Sierra Club's sponsorship of Maite not only brought an important voice to the table for NWW, it connected Maite's work with the wilderness workshop in an indelible way.

The Sierra Club sponsorship of the 2020 NWW has helped us to make significant headway in our longstanding goals of broadening the wilderness stewardship community and building a more diverse and representative cadre of speakers and attendees at the NWW. The inroads created here by the Sierra Club are not one-time contributions. They have laid the groundwork for ongoing growth in these areas and helped lead the way for future years."

Daily program highlights

Yosemite National Park, (where the original workshop plans for Merced, CA,

had hoped to offer a field day) highlighted the opening day of the workshop with presentations on <Science and Data in Yosemite Wilderness>; <Wilderness Center Education>; <Patrolling in the Field>; <Collaboration with State Agencies and Park Partners in the Management of Wilderness>; and <Youth and Outreach>, presented by the UC Merced Yosemite Leadership Program.

As noted above, the theme for the



While much attention in Yosemite focuses on crowding in the narrow Valley, more than 90 percent of this premier national park is designated wilderness

2020 workshop, "Wilderness in a Time of Change", focused on the four broad topics of Ecological Change, Cultural Change, Scientific Change, and Managerial Change on the following four days.

Ecological Change featured a panel discussion; <Should We Actively Manage for Resilience?--Ecological Intervention in Wilderness Through the Lens of Restoration>, which explored a spectrum of viewpoints and scientific applications: Whitebark Pine restoration in Montana, Giant Sequoia restoration in California, deciding not to pursue restoration in wilderness in the Pacific Northwest, decision making in Yosemite National Park and an academic framework. This was followed by a <Resilience in Wilderness Town Hall--What Does Ecological Resilience Mean and What Does Wilderness Have to Do with It?>

The *Cultural Change* day began with a discussion on Tribal wilderness and protected areas, studying relationships between protected areas and Tribes,

viewed through a three-layer arc: academic history, traditional area access, and examples of collaboration. Next, we heard a presentation, which was especially well-attended on the Zoom platform, on <The Rise of Affinity Groups: Building a More Empathetic Wilderness Community>.

Scientific Change delved into a discussion on <Wilderness Economics: Exploring the Ways that Wilderness

Lands Support Our Economy and Human Well-Being> followed by a panel on <The Benefits of Natural Spaces: Exploring the Nexus of Healing, Well-being, Social Justice and Access to Wilderness and Other Natural Settings>.

The *Managerial Change* program studied <Wilderness Stewardship and How COVID-19 Has Changed Recreation> and <How Land Management Agencies and Non-profit Groups Are Adapting to Those Changes>.

Next on the program, we heard from four practitioners on <Innovation in Community Based Stewardship>, and, finally in closing, <Shared Stewardship in Wilderness -- Recent Research and a Story of Building a Shared Stewardship Relationship>.

Each morning began with a virtual «coffee hour» which featured informal follow-up discussions on the previous day's presentations. A movie night viewed a short film about the USFS Pacific Southwest Region's Pack Stock Center of Excellence (See related article, p 5). The film showcased the time-honored tradition of pack stock and how they can be used as a tool to help wilderness managers preserve wilderness character.

This first-ever virtual national wilderness workshop was a successful experiment, and the virtual format allowed for more than 100 additional participants who wouldn't have attended an in-person meeting. 🌿

Traditional pack stock use helps wilderness stewardship

Forest Service supports “Pack Stock Center of Excellence”

-- by Togan Capozza, U.S. Forest Service

As the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act approached, wilderness managers in the Forest Service’s Pacific Southwest (PSW) Region realized they had a problem. Shrinking budgets had put an important tool for managing wilderness at risk of disappearing within a matter of a few years. The last of the PSW Region’s packers and their animals were quickly approaching retirement. Managers worried that once vacated, these positions and the unique skillset they possessed would not be replaced--unless something changed.

When the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, the Forest Service was responsible for managing 1.2 million acres of wilderness in California. By 2013 the number of wilderness acres had increased to nearly 5 million acres. During this same period, the number of packers and animals had steadily declined. In the 1960s, the program included an estimated 650 animals and 30 packers. In 2013 only about 120 animals and seven permanent packers remained.

The Wilderness Act generally prohibits motorized and mechanized transport except in emergency situations, making pack stock an important tool for land managers working deep within wilderness areas. Most mules carry 150 to 175 pounds and can efficiently transport the necessary tools, supplies and equipment to support a variety of projects. Katy Bartzokis, lead packer on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, described the breadth of work, “We support a lot of monitoring, ecosystem work, rehab projects, fisheries, fires, archeology, hydrology, botany, law enforcement, you name it.”

With the uncertain future of the pack stock program looming, the few remaining packers came together to chart a path forward for this historically significant program that provides critical support for wilderness management. Michael Morse, Wilderness and Trails Program Manager on the Inyo National Forest, explained, “We were at a point in our history that I felt that if we didn’t do something new, that we became more of a tool that could be utilized for all kinds of different things, we were going to be extinct in no time. So, then we came up with the idea of The Center of Excellence.”

In 2013 the Pacific Southwest Region’s Pack Stock Center of Excellence was formed with a vision of providing “regional coordination for the efficient utilization of pack stock

“it’s not history. It’s not just romance. it’s how you get the job done.”

resources to support the efforts of wilderness managers in preserving wilderness character, and to ensure ongoing capability for use of primitive skills and tools, by offering high quality, hands-on pack stock and primitive skills education, practical experience, community outreach, and field services in support of fire, ecosystem, and wilderness management.”


The foundation of this new organization was built on sharing resources. Recognizing that budgets would not allow for packers on each forest, the Center was designed to mobilize the remaining pack strings to wilderness areas across the Region to support priority projects, offer training, provide community outreach, and emergency response. An annual apprentice program was also included to mentor and train four employees each year to ensure continuity of the program.



Wilderness crew using pack stock to move boards in the Eldorado National Forest

The Pack Stock Center of Excellence has helped ensure that the Forest Service pack stock legacy and access to this crucial traditional tool to support wilderness stewardship will continue into the future. Mike McFadin, a Wilderness Manager on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest explained, “As long as we have public lands and wild open spaces that people value, the need for that work is never going to go away. And it’s not history. It’s not just romance. It’s how you get the job done.”

At the National Wilderness Workshop’s (see pp. 3-4) movie night, a short film about the Pack Stock Center of Excellence was the featured offering, and the following USFS Pacific Southwest Region employees were available for the Q&A session at the end: Ken Graves, Pack Stock Center of Excellence Co-Director, and Christina Boston, Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Leader.

To learn more about the Pack Stock Center of Excellence and how the program supports wilderness management, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/PackStockCOE. 

Togan Capozza is Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers and Pacific Crest Trail Program Assistant, USFS, Pacific Southwest Region.

photo: Pack Stock Center of Excellence



photo: Pack Stock Center of Excellence

Nevada update: Military threats to take over wild lands in Desert Refuge and Fallon area

-- by Brian Beffort

Currently, the fates of both the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and wildlands surrounding the Fallon Naval Air Station are being determined by the DC Congressional-process "sausage factory".

Both of the proposed military expansions, threatening the integrity of the Desert Refuge and Fallon area Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas, were denied this past summer by both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. Both committees recommended instead only a time extension for the lease each base has over its use of public lands (either 20 or 25 years, depending on the committee).

Later in the summer, Utah Congressman Rob Bishop's amendment to allow the Air Force its proposed expansion over the Desert Refuge was beaten back, thanks to yeoman work from Nevada representatives Steven Horsford, Dina Titus and other members of Nevada's congressional delegation. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto has since offered legislation that would allow the Navy much of their proposed expansion over Fallon-area wildlands. (See the adjacent Fallon update for more details of that proposal.)

One threat to Sierra Club's goal to protect these wildlands is President Trump's promise to veto the National Defense Authorization Act if the military does not get their proposed expansions. He also opposes a provision in the bill to rename several military bases presently named for Confederate officers.

A glimmer of hope is that time is very short for the remainder of this Congress. The proposed expansions may not happen, because funding the government, providing COVID and economic relief, and the impending holiday schedule for senators and representatives are more likely to take precedence.

Unfortunately, if the military's proposed expansions do not happen this Congress, that win is only temporary. The military will be back -- and so will we--to defend our natural heritage against military assault. ~

(Brian Beffort is Toiyabe Chapter Director)

Threat to central Nevada wildlands near Fallon:

Here's what's at stake -- by Connie Howard

In addition to the proposed expansion of Air Force bombing activities across the Desert National Wildlife Refuge in southern Nevada, the Navy seeks to expand bombing and other on-the-ground military activities near Fallon, in central Nevada. To be exact, the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) has proposed to expand its operation in the Fallon Area by over 600,000 acres of public land.

For some perspective, this proposed expansion of the three bombing ranges, B-16, B-17 and B-20, represents a quadrupling of the size of the FRTC, from 232,284 acres to 898,758 acres (1,404 sq. mi.). This would result in a loss of more than 600,000 acres of beloved public lands in and around the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The proposed expansion would remove the wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation of 12% of the Stillwater Range, 47% of Job's Peak, and 11% of the Clan Alpines WSAs.

This proposed expansion is in the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which is "must-pass" legislation by the end of 2020.

This unique landscape includes mountain ranges, expansive valleys, diverse wetlands, high

desert, important wildlife areas, and precious geothermic and geologic features. It is home to abundant wildlife, including migrating birds, bighorn sheep and other large game animals that would be threatened by both the expanded bombing ranges and development as well as the increase in noise. Near by, the Fallon Paiute Shoshone, and Walker River Paiute Tribes have resided and practiced their ways of life in the Western Great Basin for at least 10,000 years and rely on it for their subsistence and cultural practices.

Representatives from the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club attended the public meeting in Fallon held early in 2020; not one person spoke in favor of the expansion. Many people noted that the FEIS showed a disregard for the hundreds of careful comments and concerns raised.

Nevadans are speaking loud and clear in solidarity that these public lands should not be withdrawn for military expansion. The Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, the National Congress of American Indians and the Nevada State Legislature all have adopted resolutions formally opposing the proposed expansion of NAS Fallon. And local Nevada counties and veterans, conservation, and wildlife organizations have joined the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe in calling on Congress to reject the Navy's flawed proposal. ~

Late Update--as Congress acts:

On December 3, the Senate/House conference committee met to iron out differences between the two Houses' versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The result had some good news and some bad. The good: the conferees rejected both proposed military expansions --by the Air Force for the Desert Refuge and by the Navy for the Fallon Naval Base; they authorized only 20-year status quo extensions of the present areas used by the military. The bad--they rejected the wilderness proposals that were included in the House version of the NDAA for both California areas and Nevada--so no new land protection for now. (On Dec. 8, the House approved the conference version.) Trump may still veto the NDAA over his opposition to renaming certain military bases currently named for members of the Confederacy, but the Senate could override his veto. He will have pressure not to veto since the NDAA pays for the troops. Whether or not he vetoes the NDAA, there is wide agreement that both proposed expansions will come back in 2021 with stronger force. The Navy, in particular, is making the argument that pilots' lives will be lost without the proposed Fallon expansion; this argument will be very hard to counter. The Navy is expected to be even more aggressive and may get better cooperation from the DOI on issues such as wilderness and lands to the Tribes in potential negotiations. It may be easier to defend the Desert Refuge than the Fallon-area wildlands. ~ -- Connie Howard
(Connie Howard is Toiyabe Chapter executive committee member and Chapter lead on parks and refuges)

Tribal perspectives on military threat to Desert National Wildlife Refuge

This past summer, two bands of southern Nevada Piutes weighed in strongly to defend their ancient lands that are now encompassed in the Lower 48's beleaguered national wildlife refuge--the huge Desert Refuge northeast of Las Vegas

-- by Curtis Anderson and Deryn Pete
Las Vegas Band of Piutes; in Nevada, in
Independent, Aug 14, 2020

The Desert National Wildlife Refuge, and the Sheep Mountain Range within, are known as Nah'gah Kai—a landscape and mountain range that hold special meaning for our people, a landscape central to our Nuwuvi history, stories and beliefs, a landscape that has been under constant attack by the United States Air Force for decades. Cultural sites, bighorn sheep, the endangered desert tortoise, among many other precious resources central to our people's ways and culture, have been within the bombing practice area of Air Force pilots. Right now, the Air Force is pushing to ramp up its destruction of our people's history and culture..... It is critical that Congress ban the expansion of their bombing range in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) as it will inflict permanent damage on this sacred site and neglect Tribal Sovereignty.

The Moapa Band of Paiutes wrote and passed Resolution (#M-18-03-07) which opposed the expansion of the Nevada Test and Training range into the Refuge in 2018. The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe has also passed Resolution #19-005 in 2019. This resolution similarly rejects the expansion of the bombing range, and the Air Force's jurisdiction within the Refuge. These resolutions were both passed unanimously by the Tribal Councils and are the words and will of the Tribes.

As Sovereign Nations, with the unique Trust relationship with the United States, these Tribal resolutions must be acknowledged and respected. Western expansion has historically reduced the ability of Southern Paiutes to use the expansive lands they considered their homeland.... So much has been taken from the Indigenous people of this land. A country cannot justify the continued destruction, loss of history and bombing of irreplaceable artifacts. These sacred sites within the Refuge are central to our people's traditions and identity.... Tragically, these efforts to preserve our history and ancestral lands continue to be neglected for the advancement of the

military-industrial complex. The Air Force already controls nearly 3 million acres of land in Nevada— leaving our Tribal communities with limited access to our traditional resources and historical places. Expanding this destruction is a grave injustice to our ancestors, our elders, and the entire Nuwuvi community. Much harm would also come to our Nah-gah, the Bighorn Sheep, who we consider one in the same with our peoples. We have shared these sacred lands with the Nah-gah since time immemorial. As Indigenous People of this land, we cannot allow the continued and irreversible damage that existing bombing and military destruction has inflicted on our traditional lands....The Air Force has not upheld its promises to Native people nor acted in trust as stewards of our people, lands and culture. As a Sovereign Nation, the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe's message to the Senate and President is clear: we urge them to ban the bomb range expansion. The U.S. government must fulfill its trust responsibilities and work with us to protect our sacred lands in the Desert Refuge for the generations to come. ~

(Curtis Anderson is the Chairman and Deryn Pete is the Vice-Chairperson of the Las Vegas Band of Paiute Tribal Council.)

Sacred lands must be preserved, not bombed

A related concerned opinion, from From Indian Country Today, Aug 14, 2020: --- by Greg Anderson, Chairman of the Moapa Band of Paiutes

The Desert National Wildlife Refuge, and the Sheep Mountain Range within, are known as Tuhut in the Nuwu (Southern Paiute) language, a landscape and mountain range that holds special meaning for our people. A landscape central to our Nuwu history, stories, culture and beliefs, this is a landscape that has been under constant attack by the United States Air Force for decades. Cultural sites, bighorn sheep, the endangered desert tortoise, among many other things central to our culture that have been within the bombing practice area by Air Force pilots. Now the Air Force is pushing to ramp up its destruction of our people's history and culture that is inseparable from the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. If the United States Congress caves to the threats of President Trump and do not pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) as is currently written, our people would lose irreparable pieces of our history, identity, culture, and even a piece of our hearts forever. ~

indiancountrytoday.com/opinion/

New southern Nevada national monument "Avi Kwa Ame" proposed



Local tribes and national conservation groups are lobbying to establish a new national monument in southern Nevada that would preserve Indigenous cultural sites and critical environmental habitat.

The proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument would protect 380,000 acres of Mojave Desert, south of Las Vegas in southern Clark County.

"Avi Kwa Ame" is Mojave for "Spirit Mountain." The mountain and sur-

rounding area are sacred to multiple Native American tribes, including Yuman-speaking tribes, Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute. Spirit Mountain is the Yuman tribes' spiritual birthplace and figures prominently within their ideology, and the Hopi and Chemehuevi also consider the mountain a sacred site. In 1999, Spirit Mountain and 48,000 acres around it were listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property; in 2002 Spirit Mountain became wilderness. But the designation helped only the mountain, not surrounding landscapes. To Indigenous people, the mountain's influence encompasses the whole region. ~

Conglomerate Mesa saga continues

Drilling starts on Conglomerate Mesa

K2 Gold has started drilling at Conglomerate Mesa--remote public wildlands east of the Sierra, west of Death Valley. The Vancouver-based company is permitted access only via helicopter to conduct exploration at four different drill sites with sixteen total drill holes. The approved plan does not allow new road construction. While their going ahead with actual drill operations is an unfortunate setback for the land and the local communities' efforts to protect Conglomerate Mesa, this does not take away from our long-term fight to win permanent protection. (see WOW, Apr & Aug 2020, Aug 2018, Dec 2017)

photo: Josh Patterson



Friends of the Inyo sponsors "Stand for the Land" rally in Lone Pine on October 25.

Through a K2 Gold mid-October press release, and from on the ground confirmation, we know they began drilling in the second week of October. It's important to remember that K2 Gold is currently operating on the 2018 project plan approved by Ridgecrest BLM and upheld by the BLM State Office--limiting them to only four drill holes at four sites, 16 total drill holes.

'Stand for the Land' rally says "No"

On October 25, about 100 environmental and Indigenous rights activists peacefully occupied space in Lone Pine to stand in protest of K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metal's mining at Conglomerate Mesa. We want to extend a sincere thank you to the indigenous leaders, activists, and citizens who showed up for the Stand for the Land event! And a big thank you to Payahuunadu Alliance, Indigenous Women Hike, INYO 350, South County Advocates, and Sierra Club Range of Light Group for leading the organizing efforts.

With about 100 people in attendance, we stood together, masked and distanced, with our message: *Conglom-*

erate Mesa is worth more than gold.

Currently, the CEO of K2 Gold is in the town of Lone Pine, and the company rents an office space in the Chamber of Commerce Plaza. K2 is meeting with people in town to try to convince us that carving a road and drilling holes into pristine public lands is good for Inyo County.

K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metals are preparing for their next phase of exploratory drilling plus destructive road construction at Conglomerate Mesa. In the coming months, we must be prepared for a BLM public comment period on brand new road construction at Conglomerate Mesa and 120 drill holes. We will use this comment period as another opportunity to oppose K2 Gold's "Mojave Project." Friends of the Inyo and our partners will alert everyone the moment a public comment opportunity arises. K2 Gold is coming for the entire Conglomerate Mesa area all the way down to the town of Keeler. ♪

-- from Friends of the Inyo
<https://friendsoftheinyo.org/>



Sage grouse, Eastern Sierra

Land acquisitions in Bodie Hills

Did you know that it's nearly impossible to replicate sage grouse habitat? These seasonably vocal, magnificent birds require habitat with very specific conditions and are strident about returning to the same location every year.

The Wilderness Land Trust has closed on two properties totaling 960-acres in the Eastern Sierra--the former Flying M Ranch lands and the Mormon Meadows/ Coyote Spring property. This land provides vital habitat for sage grouse and other species in the rare and diverse sagebrush steppe that is vastly under-represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The newly acquired land also contains a critical water source for nearby wildlife.

The properties are located in the Bodie Hills, adjacent and integral to three Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas -- Bodie Mountain, Mount Beideman and Mormon Meadows.

Both acquisitions help consolidate water resources and endangered species habitat land into public ownership in the Bodie Hills, which still includes many private lands. The prevalence of private lands is part of the reason designation has been a challenge in this area. By consolidating public ownership and management of important wild resources, the Wilderness Land Trust hopes to boost chances for future designation. (These acquisitions follow-up on the Trust's 2007 Cedar Hill acquisition and transfer of more than 3,700 acres to BLM in the Bodie Hills.)

The Wilderness Land Trust has worked with BLM to secure LWCF funding to acquire part of these properties and continue to work with them to secure the remaining funding needed to transfer all of the property. We are also partnering with the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Improvement Program, the USFWS Partners for Wildlife program, and BLM to complete sage grouse habitat restoration prior to transfer to BLM. ♪

-- from Wilderness Land Trust website: <https://wildernesslandtrust.org/> and information from Aimee Rutledge, WLT vice president and Senior Lands Specialist.

photo: Tatiana Gettelman & Wilderness Land Trust



During 2021, as part of our Wilderness Committee focus on “30 by 30”, we plan a series of articles on ocean protection. To set the mood and get us started, here is just the introduction of a recent essay by Alexandra Carter, of the Center for American Progress:

To Save Nature, We Must Protect 30 Percent of U.S. Ocean

Long before she alerted the world to the danger of the pesticide DDT, marine biologist Rachel Carson wrote in her book, *The Sea Around Us*, “It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose, should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself.”

Today, in the face of a mass extinction of the plants, animals, and microorganisms that keep our air clean, our water pure, and our food supplies plentiful, her words ring even truer. The planet has lost 60 percent of its wildlife since 1970. Two-thirds of wetlands have disappeared, and nearly 33 percent of reef-forming corals and more than a third of marine mammals are threatened with extinction. Three-quarters of the planet’s lands and two-thirds of its ocean areas have been significantly altered by human activities. At the same time, climate change is making the ocean hotter, more acidic, and less habitable for fish and wildlife.

But the ocean is not just a victim of climate change—it can also be a powerful source of solutions. Protecting the ocean could provide one-fifth of total global greenhouse gas emission reductions needed to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Potential solutions include protecting the blue carbon ecosystems that sequester carbon; housing the offshore wind energy needed to achieve a clean future; ensuring that fisheries are climate-ready; and reducing ship speeds. Together, these solutions could reduce carbon emissions; promote coastal resiliency and adaptation to ready communities for climate impacts such as sea-level rise and storm surge; and establish a pathway to protect 30 percent of U.S. ocean habitats and ecosystems by 2030: the goal known as 30 by 30. ☺

--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



We did some good trail trimming work

September Trip report: Kingston Range Wilderness Service, “Trimming the Trail”

After our planned spring 2020 desert wilderness service trip was cancelled, it ended up taking place around the September public land day weekend. By then, wilderness committee members who had joined past trips were used to helping BLM as individual volunteers--as we did in July in Nevada. So in late September we joined the Bureau of Land Management’s Needles office wilderness lead, Mona Daniels, for three nights’ camping at tHorsethief Campground (yes, a REAL campground with REAL facilities) at the edge of the Kingston Range Wilderness--a little northeast of the Mojave Preserve--to repair the Amethyst Canyon trail leading into the wilderness.

Two unprecedented (for us) things occurred on this trip. First--we coped with heat. Although the California desert has a popular reputation for heat, our traditional spring trips had experienced only moderate temperatures. But in late September--even at 4000 feet-- it was hot from

sunrise to sunset. So Mona limited our work to only a couple of hours each day, and afternoons were devoted to relaxed sitting and chatting.

And the moment the sun disappeared---evenings were delightful.

The second unusual feature was that, due to wildfires farther south -- and elsewhere in California, the BLM had closed

the desert to all types of ignition--no flames allowed. No stove. I hastily devised never-tried cold meal menus -- no problem: but what about our morning coffee? Fortunately, with a small generator and an electric hot plate, we made coffee for the eight of us and had hot dishwashing water. Certainly, this once we had no need of the usual hot soup to keep us warm evenings.

Work on the trail proceeded well, and two of our participants--landscape gardeners by profession-- showed us how to prune back bushes most effectively. But -- we failed to finish the job. (What do you expect if you work only two hours in the morning?) Mona has invited our volunteers back next spring, end of March, for another round of Amethyst Trail work in the Kingstons--we’ll work longer-and we’ll savor hot food. ☺ vnh



photo: Sean Stout--a selfie

But we spent more time sitting, like this

The Great Pivot: Creating Meaningful work by restoring Nature

-- by Justine Burt

It is not a new concept that most of our world, but particularly the high consuming developed nations like ours, need to change radically in how we do things in order to sustain a livable future.

Justine Burt, who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, urges an altered way of thinking—lengthening our time horizons to take in future generations and always consider our actions in relation to their effect on our grandchildren—and theirs.

At the same time she considers the need that people have to make their living – and in a way that gives them fulfilling lives. Unemployment statistics, she notes, don't give the whole story: "There's a yawning gap between employment we have and that which we deserve: stable, engaging work to fill lives with purpose."

Instead of lamenting the way automation takes jobs away, look at the upside: automation has freed people from drudgery—many times in the past. People have then-not always easily-moved on to different types of work. Society should move toward two main goals: assuring every person's need are met and staying within planetary limits.

She focuses on certain changes that

can give us "the biggest bang for the buck"--- renewable energy, low-carbon mobility, reducing food waste, and restoring nature. This review is limited to jobs in "nature restoration"--with categories that the author views as "pivots" for our society:

****Carbon farming.** Such projects remain a "largely untapped resource for addressing climate change." Applying compost to grasslands helps sequester carbon and tackles both topsoil erosion and carbon emissions. Various techniques sequester carbon, leading to jobs for planners, contractors, farm managers, technicians, etc.

****Restoring healthy forests:** keeping residential development out of fire-prone forests or grasslands, or making national forests more hospitable to wildlife habitat can (with funding) lead to fulfilling jobs for researchers, planners, forest technicians—"boots on the ground" helpers.

****Construction products and furniture:** Much furniture can be made from discolored wood, with wood scraps used for biomass, and salvage timber can make oriented strand board (OSB) a

type of compressed particle board. Finding new uses for small-diameter tree topwood, pulpwood and sawmill byproducts can lead to jobs for green-chemists, forest technicians, sawmill and OSB workers, furniture makers, and more.

****Restoring healthy waterways:** the world's oceans, freshwater bodies, rivers between them, and adjacent wetlands provide ecosystem services—they act as natural filters and sponges, regulate flood peaks, and provide habitat. San Francisco Bay tidal marsh restoration is an example of a multi-jurisdiction coordinated restoration effort. Jobs for future large-scale marine ecosystem restoration include engineers, scientists for design and monitoring,

****Wildlife defense and restoration,** including wildlife overpasses and underpasses, and also rewilding of impacted areas. Much education is needed first to prevent targeted wildlife killings, and then reintroducing many species to once-native habitats can provide numerous, varied jobs

This small book is by no means a complete guide to a sustainable future, but its emphasis on putting people to work and blending new and interesting jobs with achieving sustainability and helping strengthen Nature appealed to me. *The Great Pivot* offers a good overview of opportunities in nature restoration – and for other ways to build more sustainable human communities. A detailed bibliography, end notes, and index are helpful. MP Publishing, 2019. ISBN:078-1-935994-34-3. 276 pp. paperback.

-- reviewed by Vicky Hoover

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

Chair: Anne Henny, SF Bay Chapter (510) 289-2294
 Heather Anderson (559) 681-6305: Arts and Wildlands liaison
 Judy Anderson (818) 248-0402: wilderness management
 Victoria Brandon (707) 994-1931: Redwood Chapter coordinator
 Joyce Burk (760) 252-3820: Southern CA forests co-chair
 Cindy Buxton (619) 934-0323: San Diego Chapter coordinator
 Alan Carlton (510) 769-3403: Forest Planning liaison
 Sandra Cattell (661) 714 -2850: Angeles Chaptercoordinator
 JoAnne Clarke (209) 233-7380: Tehipite Chapter coordinator
 Eric Diesel (650) 847-8646: Southern CA forests co-chair
 Larry Dwyer (775) 786-8564: Toiyabe Chapter coordinator
 Steve Evans (916) 442-3155: Wild & Scenic Rivers
 Joe Fontaine (661) 821-2055: Wilderness Watch, Kern Kaweah Ch.
 Terry Frewin (805) 966-3754: CA Desert areas
 Hermi Hiatt (702) 361-1171: Friends of Nevada Wilderness
 James Hines (805) 340-9266: Los Padres Chapter & Wildlife coord.
 Vicky Hoover (415) 977-5527: Newsletter editor, Outings
 John Moore (916) 731-7153: Mother Lode Chapter coordinator
 Mike Painter: (415)752-3911: Californians for Western Wilderness
 Geoffrey Smith (858) 442-1425: Wilderness Listserv manager
 Mike Splain (831) 359-2489: Ventana Chapter coordinator
 OPEN-San Francisco Bay, San Geronio, and Santa Lucia Chapter coordinators

2101 Webster St.,
 Suite 1300,
 Oakland CA 94612



Preserve the best; restore the rest

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 The California/Nevada Wilderness Committee acknowledges that our San Francisco members live on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize that, as the original stewards of this land, the Ramaytush Ohlone understood the interconnectedness of all things and maintained harmony with nature for millennia, and we honor the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples for their enduring commitment to *wahrep*, Mother Earth.