

Inside: Lobbying — It's Your Turn!



SIERRA CLUB Canyon

Grand Canyon Chapter • Arizona

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Saving Wilderness in the Saguaro State

By Rob Smith

In literally the last few moments of the 101st Congress the Senate gave final approval to the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990, culminating what for some wilderness activists was nearly a 20-year effort to preserve Sonoran desert BLM lands in the National Wilderness Preservation System. With the president's signature on Nov. 28, Arizona's wilderness lands were more than doubled in size by the 2.4-million-acre bill.

The Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club had joined with other conservationists as part of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition to push a 4.1-million-acre proposal for both BLM and national wildlife refuge areas. The final wildlife refuge boundaries, which include 1.3 million acres, closely follow what both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the AWC had proposed. The 1.1 million acres of designated BLM lands represent a slight gain over the 1 million acres proposed by the BLM, but another 100,000 acres remain under wilderness study area protection or are included within the newly established Gila Box National Riparian Conservation Area.

Wilderness advocates had significant influence over which BLM areas were protected. Although five areas recommended by BLM were dropped in Rep. Bob Stump's (R) district, nine non-recommended areas were added to the bill elsewhere due to citizen support. The greatest acreage gains were in Rep. Mo Udall's (D) district, where the BLM had recommended only 25 percent of their wilderness study acreage, but had to accept 85 percent of that as new wilderness.

The first bill was introduced in the spring of 1989 by both Arizona Senators Dennis DeConcini (D) and John McCain (R), and included only 900,000 acres of wilderness, all but 30,000 acres on BLM lands. That was closely followed by Udall's bill for 2.7 million acres, about an equal division between wildlife refuge and BLM lands. The final version basically split the difference on BLM areas, and reflected compromises between conservationists, hunters and the military on roads and

overflights for the two big wildlife refuges, Kofa and Cabeza Prieta.

The final legislation included almost every area with significant amounts of flowing water, an extremely valuable feature in the desert for both recreational and ecological reasons. Equally important was language in the bill explicitly creating a federal wilderness water right for instream flows.

The battle over water rights ground things to a halt several times during the congressional process. At one point it looked as if the Arizona House delegation would split on the issue when Reps. Jon Kyl and Jay Rhodes (both R) demanded that the federal water right be processed first through the state court system. Conservationists strongly objected to this attempt to limit the ability to protect wilderness water through the federal courts if necessary. Udall pressed ahead with his bill as drafted without the weakening state water provisions, and finally the delegation came back together in support of the final version with

approval by the Senate.

The added Senate language was unnecessary and even somewhat foolish, but it was not damaging to the concept of wilderness water rights. This was due to the hard work of both Arizona senators, and especially McCain, who refused to accept major changes that would undo the deals made in the House. One provision said that an Arizona wilderness water right would not be taken from the water allocations already made for the Colorado River's Upper Basin (which it never would have anyway). Armstrong generated some headlines in Colorado regarding his amendment denying a water right from the Colorado River for two of the refuge areas. That was, though, that the Colorado did not actually flow through either of these areas — their wilderness boundaries came down to the high water line, and a wilderness water right within the areas remained intact.

Increased motorized use and developments for ranchers was raised as an issue early on,

The designation of the hotly contested Gila Box as a National Riparian Conservation Area was an artful compromise between conservation interests, which wanted to save the area from mining and off-road vehicle abuse, and the local communities which opposed anything called "wilderness." The model for the Gila Box designation was drawn from the San Pedro NRCA, which had been established only a couple of years before for a BLM river corridor to the south. The conservation area designation included a mineral withdrawal and restricted motorized vehicles to existing roads. Grazing is allowed, but only where it does not interfere with protection of streamside values, which means not along the river bottoms. The area is to be managed overall to protect environmental, scientific and recreational values. The local towns view the conservation area designation as more flexible than wilderness and as a tourist draw. Rep. Jim Kolbe (R) crafted this compromise to fit this unique situation, and the final boundaries in-

AZ Wilderness Act — A Grassroots Perspective

By Jim Vaaler

On Nov. 28, President Bush signed the "Arizona Desert Wilderness Act" in law. This stroke of the pen made over 2 million acres of Bureau of Land Management and United States Fish and Wildlife Service lands wilderness. We can be proud that Arizona is the first state to have all its public land management agencies go through the wilderness process.

"All I saw was the surface of the earth unblemished . . . what I saw was enough . . . enough to call it beautiful. Enough to call it WILDERNESS!"

Many Sierra Club activists and outings leaders have been working on this project the past 16 years. But many, many more Sierra club members contributed to this great victory. Anyone who wrote a letter, attended a hearing, made a phone call, participated in a field trip or helped run a booth on behalf of wilderness played an important roll and shares in the realization of the "Arizona Desert Wilderness Act."

This wilderness bill was not handed to us on a silver platter. Far from it. It was the result of continuous hard work by many different people over a long period of time.

A good example of how this hard work has payed off was at the field hearing in Phoenix. Because the Sierra Club members had conscientiously prepared them-

selves, they were able to resist being sidetracked and present concrete arguments for wilderness designation. The Sierra Club, in cooperation with the Wilderness Coalition, countered the opposition of mining interests and demanded that philosophical arguments be backed up with solid facts and figures.

But in my mind all other reasons for preserving this area, good as they are, fall second to one reason: THE SONORAN DESERT. On a recent chapter Sierra Club trip I led to what is now the Harcurar Wilderness Area, I saw no majestic spires, no lush oasis, no narrow canyons, no petroglyph covered rocks. All I saw was the early morning sunlight upon a gently sloping terrain covered with saguaro cactus, palo verde tree, ironwood tree, mesquite, creosote bush, cholla, ocotillo and other plants indigenous to the Sonoran Desert. All I saw was the surface of the earth unblemished. What I saw was the desert. And what I saw was enough. Enough to call it beautiful. Enough to call it WILDERNESS.

I believe that this latest bill proves that wilderness, hiking and the outdoor experience is not merely a passing fancy or just a physical experience to bag a peak or hike a canyon. But that it transcends all this and realizes certain values that the Earth is all we have and we have done our small part to save a small bit of it. May others follow our lead.

The job before us now is to make sure the BLM and the USFWS follow up on this mandate in good faith. Consultation with other government agencies such as the Forest Service should prove useful. Dis-

"I believe that this latest bill proves that wilderness, hiking and the outdoor experience is not . . . just a physical experience to bag a peak or hike a canyon. But that . . . it realizes certain values that the Earth is all we have . . ."

course with members of the interested public who intend to use these wilderness areas as they are intended to be used will be essential.

This story wouldn't be complete without a thank you to the founding members of the club; people like Edith Reeves, John Ricker, Dewey Wildoner, Jack and Betty Hallen, Don Campbell, Don McIver, Jerry Lobel and others who founded a group and then a chapter of the Sierra Club. They started a viable and interesting outings program (the only one in the Phoenix area at that time) which attracted people like myself. Without this initial effort, it is hard to imagine how any of our successful wilderness campaigns could ever have happened.

As for myself, I look forward to leading trips into these new and fascinating areas. Look for these trips in upcoming issues of the *Canyon Echo*.

Goddard Still Needs Your Support

After a lengthy evaluation of the candidates, the Grand Canyon Chapter endorsed Terry Goddard for governor. A detailed comparison of the candidates appears in the November 1990 *Canyon Echo*. The run-off election on Feb. 26 is likely to be close. For Goddard to overcome the Republican advantage in voter registration, he will need plenty of volunteer assistance. The Goddard campaign needs assistance with neighborhood walks which will occur statewide every weekend in January and February; with phone banks; and with literature distribution at your local polling place on election day. The more volunteers that come from the environmental community, the more the importance of environmental issues will be impressed upon our next governor. If you have an hour or two, like to meet interesting people and become more knowledgeable about Arizona politics, please contact:

Phoenix area: Mary (602) 256-6226
Tucson area: Jan (602) 326-2603
Rural areas: Diana (602) 256-6226

additional procedural explanations which did not change existing law.

Well, not quite everyone came back together. Rep. Stump remained true to his convictions and consistently argued against any wilderness in his district and voted against the bill at every opportunity. He alone among the entire Arizona delegation could not even support the bill on final passage.

Water rights became an issue up until the final days in the Senate, too. Despite a united front from both DeConcini and McCain, Senators Jim McClure (R-ID), Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) and Bill Armstrong (R-CO) continued to find reasons to hold the bill from a final floor vote. Only after various provisions were added to the legislation did they allow it to get final

but quickly dismissed by most on the Arizona congressional delegation because the cattle industry could not show any evidence that changes were needed to existing wilderness grazing guidelines. However, similar arguments for access and developments were then raised by hunter groups and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. After months of discussion, a compromise was reached — incorporating by reference in the legislation existing agency guidelines for allowing wildlife management activities in wilderness. The fundamental concept remained, though, that the federal wilderness land manager retained responsibility for protecting wilderness values and kept control over what actions were allowed consistent with that.

clude more acreage than was in the original wilderness study area.

Perhaps the most significant area to be added to the national wilderness system in this bill was the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, nearly 800,000 acres in all. By far the largest of the new areas and the biggest in the state, this wilderness will forever guarantee the visitor unparalleled vistas of ragged mountain ranges breaking through the desert plains. It is home to desert bighorn sheep in the mountains and to the endangered Sonoran pronghorn on the desert floor. It was an area once proposed by former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall for a national park. The passage of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act

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Environmental Action: Lobbying — It's Your Turn!

By Craig O'Hare

This article is the second in a three-part series on environmental action techniques. In the last *Canyon Echo*, an overview of lobbying fundamentals was presented. This article goes into more detail on the three main types of lobbying: letter writing and letters to the editor, phone calls and in-person meetings. A four-page primer on environmental action strategies is available from the Rincon Group (620-6401).

Letter Writing — Letters are indeed read (at least by legislative aides if not the official) and are a major influence on politicians. Recently, one U.S. Senator said he had "heard a lot" from his constituents on a particular bill. When asked how many letters he had received, he said seven to eight. Your letters do make a difference! The Sierra Club frequently sends out "action alerts" on legislation needing critical attention. Background on the bill and the particular points to stress in your letter are completely spelled out. All you need to do is paraphrase the materials into your own

words. Letters need not be typed. In fact, some legislators view (legible) handwritten letters as more "real." Even a brief four- to five-sentence letter is fine. Don't sweat over every sentence or feel like you have to prepare a literary masterpiece. The important point is to get your basic message across and ask for a response. Be sure to refer to the bill by its name and number and include your return address. If you get a written response (even a form letter, called a "robo letter"), write a follow-up letter addressing their arguments and/or reiterating yours.

Letters to the Editor — This form of lobbying and public education is too often ignored or overlooked. Letters to the editor of your local paper are an excellent and inexpensive way to communicate environmental issues to thousands of people and to public officials. Buying equivalent ad space for a letter would cost hundreds of dollars. That's how important letters to the editor are! These are the "pulse" of a community and are read daily by politicians' staff. Letters should generally be

less than 200 words. Brief three- to four-sentence letters that comment on an article or editorial that the paper ran increase the likelihood of your letter getting printed. The letter should be written directly to the newspaper. Most papers won't print a letter that you've written to someone else and "cc-ed" (copied) to them. However, one time-saving trick is to use the same brief letter you send to a politician to use as your letter to the editor. Just change the heading and salutation. Include your address and daytime phone number. If your letter praises an elected official, send a copy of it to his or her office to make sure they know you are rewarding their efforts. Even if you're not an egomaniac, it's fun seeing your name in print!

Phone Calls — While generally less effective than letters, phone calls are critical when the issue is time-urgent. You'll probably only get to talk to an aide unless you're calling a local official or state legislator. Calling U.S. legislators' offices in Washington, D.C., is more effective than calling their home office. Calling

before 8 a.m. is fairly inexpensive (a 4- to 5-minute call is less than a dollar). Contacting their home offices in Phoenix or Tucson is the next best thing. If you can't reach an aide, leave your message with the secretary and request that he or she pass the information along. Always make a note of who you spoke with and what they said. If they don't know their boss's position on an issue, ask them to find out and get back to you. Many Sierra Club groups have established "phone trees" where participants are quickly notified of time-urgent issues and upcoming meetings. Ask to be a part of your group's phone tree or help set one up.

In-Person Meetings — Whether a city council member or a U.S. Senator, be persistent in scheduling a meeting with the actual official. To be successful, you'll have to schedule the meeting far in advance. Often you'll have to settle for meeting with an aide — although their influence should not be underestimated. Be prepared and have a response

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Preserve Arizona Wolves (PAWS), Bobbie Holaday, 268-1089.
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Send articles to Editor — Sierra Club, at above address. Articles should be typed, double-spaced. All conservation articles will be reviewed by the chapter Conservation Chair, and must be approved for publication. There will be no exceptions.

ECHO DEADLINES

Material should be mailed early enough to be received by the deadline.

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SIERRA CLUB Grand Canyon Chapter ELECTION RESULTS

Listed below are the winners of the Chapter and Group 1990 elections:

Grand Canyon Chapter ExCom

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Marilyn King
Don Lyngholm
Craig O'Hare
Wil Passow

Palo Verde Group ExCom

Dana Larson
Jerry Nelson
Don Steuter
Wil Passow

Rincon Group ExCom

Nancy Kelly
Marilyn King
Lee Stanfield
Lainie Levick

Kofa Group ExCom

Lil Flick
Kathryn Michel

Ramparts Group ExCom

Myreen Aschenbach
Craig Friesner

Plateau Group ExCom

Results not yet available.

Chiricahua Group ExCom

No candidates
No votes cast.

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Jim Vaaler, Chair
Tom Wright
Mike Brady

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Conservation Corner

Reach IV Project Overrides Wildlife Needs

By Don Steuter

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers together with the Maricopa County Flood Control District is poised to begin work on the Reach IV segment of the Arizona Canal Diversion Channel (ACDC). Stretching some 4 miles from 12th Street and Northern to the Cudia City Wash near 40th Street and Camelback, the final leg would complete the massive \$400 million project that is intended to intercept flood waters from the north of the canal and channel them some 17 miles westward to Skunk Creek. Designed to accommodate a 100-year-flood event, the completed phases consist mainly of open concrete ditches as now visible to motorists using bridged crossings in central and west Phoenix. Opposition to the ACDC has occurred at many stages, but nowhere has the public been so outspoken as in the town of Paradise Valley, the easternmost segment and headwaters for the Corps concrete ditch.

It is difficult to imagine something more incongruous than an open concrete ditch in Paradise Valley. Like an island in the metropolitan area, the town has strived to maintain its desert qualities, rejecting green lawns for natural sonoran desert, and preserving washes and drainages rather than opting for man-made structures. As a result, the town provides surprisingly good wildlife habitat. Rabbits, quail and many species of birds are evident to the casual observer, and residents report sightings of roadrunners, raccoons, desert tortoises, nesting hawks and even gray foxes and coyotes. This habitat is bordered by the lush vegetation along the canal, the southern boundary of Paradise Valley. Unfortunately, construction of the Reach IV ditch will remove a wealth of mature desert vegetation — over 900 trees, mostly palo verde and mesquite, according to one count — and will create a boundary that will deny wildlife access to the canal. In addition, the lower ¼ mile of Cudia City Wash is to be stripped of vegetation to make way for a concrete sedimentation basin, a further barrier to wildlife moving down the wash toward the canal area. No less threatened than wildlife is the recreational use of this area. Joggers, bikers, birders, hikers (the canal is part of the County Sun Circle Trail) and people seeking refuge from the noise and confusion of the city will soon find only a 35-foot wide, 25-foot deep sterile concrete ditch adorned with shrubs and potted trees, if this project follows the current plan.

Much of the problem regarding the ACDC has to do with the excessive length of time involved in its planning and construction. Originally conceived in the late '60s, the project was expanded after the 1972 floods to include the present Reach IV segment, and in 1976 a Final Environmental Impact Statement was published. Ten years later, after the addition of the Cudia City Wash sedimentation basin and other design changes, the Corps issued an "Environmental Assessment" that addressed itself more specifically to Reach IV. "In many places, the density (of vegetation) would provide adequate cover for small mammals," the document stated of the Cudia City Wash sedimentation basin, and added that "the water provided by the Arizona Canal year-round would certainly invite wildlife to remain in the area." Despite these observations the Corps issued a "Finding of No Significant Impact." Earlier this year, in view of the increase in environmental awareness and concern for the future of urban wildlife in particular, the Sierra Club asked the Corps for a full Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to restudy the entire Reach IV project.

While work on the Reach IV project is ready to begin, construction of the Paradise Valley segment of the ACDC is not expected for another year and is dependent on further funding from the federal government. Alternatives to an open concrete ditch include a bioengineered approach consisting of a natural drainage from Cudia City Wash to 32nd Street together with upstream detention basins to slow flows, or covering the concrete ditch as is already planned in parts of the Biltmore area further west. The first alternative, some experts say, would require literally hundreds of detention basins, or small dams, to sufficiently moderate flows to allow bioengineering to work. A covered channel, while not providing the same riparian qualities as the bioengineered approach, would leave upstream washes unaffected, allow wildlife access to the canal and would vastly improve the overall aesthetics of the general area. Either alternative, officials claim, would require more money than the existing plan, and availability of additional funds is uncertain at this time.

If you are concerned about this issue, contact the following officials and urge them to consider the alternatives for an open concrete ditch in Paradise Valley: Jim Bruner — Chair, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, 111 S. 3rd Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85003. ph. 262-3415; Dan Sagramoso — Maricopa County Flood Control District, 3335 W. Durango St., Phoenix, AZ 85009. ph. 262-1501; Jon Kyl — Representative, 313 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515.

For more information, call Don Steuter at 956-5057 or Jerry Nelson at 279-4668.

SAVING WILDERNESS

Continued from page 1

realizes the dream of protecting this magnificent and unspoiled Sonoran desert ecosystem for all time.

This bill does not end the efforts for desert wilderness protection in Arizona, and there were a number of deserving areas which were simply dropped out in last minute political dealings despite their lack of resource conflicts. However, the legislation is a major step towards protecting some of the most fragile and threatened ecosystems and landforms we

have. The bill's provisions on wilderness water rights and its treatment of grazing and wildlife management will hopefully serve as precedents for future wilderness legislation here and elsewhere. It is a fitting legacy for lifelong wilderness champion Mo Udall to leave behind as he enters his final term in Congress. And it is a tribute to the many individual wilderness advocates throughout Arizona who were willing to pay the price in time, dollars and hard work to save that which is priceless.

LOBBYING

Continued from page 2

ready to all the "counter arguments." Conservation chairs and issue specialists are happy to help brief you before your meeting. Refer to and leave hand-outs if you have access to them. Focus on one or, at most, two issues and keep them on the subject you are there for. Politicians have a great way of straying from the subject to keep you from getting that all-important *commitment!* Remember, if they ask you a question you don't know the answer to, don't "wing it" or make one up. Your credibility is on the line. Write a follow-up thank-you letter after your meeting and include responses to questions you couldn't answer. It's extremely helpful if you call your Conservation Chair after the meeting and let him or her know how the meeting went. Your information is valuable in developing effective

strategies to deal with the politician in the future. If you've never lobbied in person and you're still a little nervous about it, here's another option: ask to go to a meeting with an already experienced volunteer activist. This "buddy system" approach is a great way to ease into the whole thing. You'll quickly realize that it's not only "no big deal," but that meeting and *influencing* politicians is rewarding.

Our elected leaders need to hear from *all* of us about the concerns we have regarding environmental degradation and what can be done about it. Whether it's a letter or two a month or frequent meetings with legislators, your own personal lobbying efforts are crucial to the future of our planet and its natural inhabitants.

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Yes, I want to join! I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

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1991 SIERRA CLUB BACKPACKING CLASS

"Walking softly in the wilderness"

WHERE: Unitarian Universalist Church of Phoenix, 4027 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley, AZ.

WHEN: Monday, Jan. 28; Feb. 4, 11, 18, and 25; 6:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

WHAT: Compass and map reading, wilderness ethics; equipment, clothing and shelter; food and stove selection; mountain medicine and outdoor survival. Field experience will include three day-hikes along with an overnight backpack into the wilderness.

Also, there will be an expedition slide show and a final social potluck. The class is open to

everyone: beginners, experts or armchair travelers.

COST: \$40 for entire course with a backpacking guidebook available at optional, extra charge.

RESERVATIONS: For reservations, call Jerry Nelson at 279-4668 or Wil Passow at 946-5631; or mail your check and reservation to: Sierra Club, c/o Jerry Nelson, 711 E. McLellan, Phoenix, AZ 85014.

The Sierra Club backpack class is sponsored by the Palo Verde Group of the Grand Canyon Chapter.

Palo Verde Group Thanks Kraemer

The Palo Verde Group wishes to thank Gary Kraemer for his work with our Excom over the past years. Phoenix's loss is Tucson's gain, and we know he will continue to be an asset to the environmental cause in southern Arizona. Good luck, Gary.

Publications Committee Formed

A Publications Committee for the *Canyon Echo* has been formed and was officially sanctioned by the State Excom on Nov. 17. Wil Passow and Jill Alexander were appointed editors for the *Echo* and members for the Publications Committee were selected. The purpose of the committee is to facilitate publication of the *Echo* by reviewing submitted material and to recruit volunteers to act as liaisons and editorial assistants to insure the timely publication of the newsletter. Committee meetings will generally be held the first Tuesday after the monthly deadline.

Echo Publications Committee Members

Don Steuter — chair, 956-5057
Jill Alexander — editor, 843-3660
Wil Passow — editor, 946-5631

Jerry Nelson, 279-4668
Don McIver, 561-0814
Paul Pierce, 279-2025
Jesse Chanley, 969-9059
Ann Carr, 795-6008

Committee Volunteers

Merideth Green, 893-6642
Leslie Lindner, 942-9786
Chris Rossi, 730-9801
Ken Baker, 833-4250

