

WORDS OF the WILD

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

President Obama signs new wilderness into law

March 30, 2009 was an historic day for wilderness in California – and other states. When the president signed the monumental Omnibus Public Lands Act, California achieved an additional 700,000 acres of wilderness, the largest addition since the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. Here is President Obama's statement on signing the bill:

"Today I have signed into law H.R. 146, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. This landmark bill will protect millions of acres of Federal land as wilderness, protect more than 1,000 miles of rivers through the National Wild and Scenic River System, and designate thousands of miles of trails for the National Trails System. It also will authorize the 26 million-acre National Landscape Conservation System within the Department of the Interior.

Among other provisions, H.R. 146 designates three new units in our National Park System, enlarges the boundaries of several existing parks, and designates a number of National Heritage Areas. It creates . . . four new national conservation areas and . . . establishes a collaborative landscape-scale restoration program with a goal of reducing the risk of wildfire and authorizes programs to study and research the effects of climate change on natural resources, and other research-related activities.

Treasured places from coast to coast will benefit from H.R. 146, including . . . remarkable landscapes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. . . . This bipartisan bill has been many

years in the making, and is one of the most important pieces of natural resource legislation in decades."

BARACK OBAMA, the WHITE HOUSE, March 30, 2009.

California won more new wilderness than any other state, in three separate bills: (see WOW, Apr 2009, Dec 2008.)

** The Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act designated more than 472,000 acres of wilderness and four wild and scenic rivers totaling 73 miles near Santa Clarita and in the Eastern Sierra, including the White Mountains and the headwaters of the Owens River.

** The California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act protected 190,000 acres in Riverside County as wilderness, including parts of Joshua Tree National Park, and 31 miles in four wild and scenic rivers.

** Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Wilderness Act of 2008 set aside close to 70,000 acres of wilderness, including the new John Krebs Wilderness, named for the former Congressman who worked to protect these lands in the Mineral King Valley.

One provision of the Omnibus, strongly opposed by the Sierra Club, mandated the Department of Interior to study a land exchange in Southwest Alaska that could put a road through wilderness in Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

San Diego County sparks a new wilderness effort

In mid July, Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA49-northern San Diego County) announced his intention to introduce the "Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Wilderness Act of 2009," a bill strongly supported by conservation groups because it would protect two of southern California's most important areas of open space as wilderness.

The Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Wilderness Act of 2009 would add more than 7,796 acres in San Diego County to the existing Agua Tibia Wilderness and would expand the Beauty Mountain Wilderness by an additional 13,635 acres. Rep. Issa's bill would build on successful Riverside County legislation sponsored by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Rep. Mary Bono Mack (R-CA45) which established the Beauty Mountain Wilderness and



San Diego activists view Cottonwood Creek drainage on a recent trip to the proposed Agua Tibia Wilderness Addition

enlarged the Agua Tibia Wilderness. Riverside and San Diego Counties share these two areas.

Thousands of hikers and equestrians each year enjoy Agua Tibia's deep
-- continued next page

photo: Geoffrey Smith

Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge

– new plan expected soon

-- by Marge Sill (based on Friends of Nevada Wilderness website)

Tucked away in remote northwestern Nevada is Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Its vast beauty will take one's breath away. Birds of prey ride thermals along spectacular cliffs and deep gorges; high volcanic tables of grass, sage, and wildflowers rise above the surrounding landscape which is dotted with small lakes; and mother antelope nuzzle their young. Today the Sheldon and its sister refuge to the north, Oregon's Hart Mountain, preserve the nation's best remaining tracts of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

The refuge has a long history. Native Americans used the area and left petroglyphs, stone tools, camp sites, and other evidence of their occupation. Historic homesteads and ranches are a testament to the hardy pioneers who lived and worked here for many decades. During the 1930s and 40s, over one thousand Civilian Conservation Corps employees lived at Camp Sheldon, and many structures they built still stand. The Charles Sheldon Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931, and in 1936 the Charles Sheldon Antelope Range was created, bringing the total acreage to almost 600,000. In the 1970s the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was granted total jurisdiction of the

conveyed its recommendation of eight units totaling 341,500 acres to the President and Congress. However, over the intervening decades, some refuge managers forgot about their wilderness recommendations and built roads, facilities, and developments for livestock within these wild places, and allowed some unrestricted ORV use. The Sierra Club, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, and many volunteers are working with refuge personnel to undo some of that damage. This past June, volunteers worked for two days to remove fence and restore wilderness values.

The prospect of wilderness at the Sheldon is exciting to all who have visited this magnificent place.

Preparation of a new comprehensive conservation plan for the Refuge began in May, 2008, with public scoping. The draft management plan and environmental impact statement should be out for public review this October. The refuge identified seven goals for the upcoming plan:

- ** Protect and maintain upland habitats that support pronghorn antelope, greater sage grouse, pygmy rabbits, etc.

- ** Manage feral horses and burros to benefit native wildlife and plant species.

- ** Restore and maintain wetland habitats.

- ** Protect paleontological, prehistoric, and historic values.

- ** Provide visitors with high quality recreational and educational experiences.

- ** Protect and manage the refuge's Wilderness Study Areas.

- ** Collect scientific information.

For more on the refuge planning process, visit www.fws.gov/sheldonthartmet./Sheldon/index/html.

Sheldon restoration outing

At the first annual Sheldon Rendezvous, June 19-21, more than 60 volunteers, split into nine work parties including the kids' crew, pulled down and removed about 10 miles of barbwire fence, making it safer for pronghorn and other

wildlife. Volunteers also walked about 15 miles of the refuge's east boundary, placing metal refuge signs every ¼ mile. Dedicated volunteers totally rebuilt the protective fence around Murdock Spring to encourage the damaged riparian area to heal. Kids pulled invasive weeds in the campground and then enjoyed a nature hike. ##

San Diego proposal -- from page 1

canyons and coastal sage scrub via the rugged Cutca Trail. Beauty Mountain, as its name implies, is a scenic jewel of chaparral, fascinating rock formations and oak woodlands. Both areas offer superlative recreational opportunities as well as priceless habitat for wildlife. They serve as critical plant and wildlife corridors between Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the coastal mountains.

"Folks are consistently amazed at the rugged beauty when I lead outings here," said Geoffrey Smith, a San Diego wilderness activist who has led conservation outings into wild areas for 25 years. "Recently, a group of us spent an entire day on the beautiful pristine Cutca Trail and adjoining trails, and met no one else. With population pressure from the nearby growing city of Temecula, the need to protect these wild places is critical."

Rep. Issa toured both areas and agreed to help protect them for their scenic and habitat and recreation values. He seeks public input until Aug. 17, 2009 on the idea of protecting the areas.

Please e-mail Representative Issa at beautymountain@mail.house.gov to thank him for his efforts to protect these beautiful places. If you have visited either area or are one of his constituents, please let him know.

The California Wild Heritage Campaign has identified at least ten other areas in Rep. Issa's district that also deserve wilderness or wild river designation; these are San Felipe Hills, San Ysidro Mountain, Santa Margarita River, San Luis Rey River, San Mateo Creek, Barker Valley, Caliente, San Diego River Gorge. In your email to Rep. Issa, please ask him to consider adding one or more of these places to his bill, especially if you are familiar with an area.

(California Wilderness Coalition provided information for this article.) ##

photo: Graham Stafford



Volunteers remove fencing at Sheldon Refuge Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. In 1993, the Service used donated conservation funds to purchase and retire livestock grazing permits, creating one of the largest and most important blocks of ungrazed sagebrush-steppe habitat.

Reviews conducted in the early 1970s identified a large portion of the Sheldon Refuge as having wilderness values, and the agency

The Dust That Binds

Fighting off-road vehicle impacts to communities and health

--by Terry Weiner

We can draw lines on a map and set aside wilderness, but issues affecting wilderness are connected to the rest of California too. Didn't John Muir talk about finding out that things are hitched to all others?

Recognizing that off-road vehicle recreation affects not only wild lands, but also non-wilderness lands and residential communities, the California/Nevada Desert Committee (a sister group to the Wilderness Committee) recently established an ORV Issues Subcommittee. Its goal is to raise the awareness and priority level of ORV impacts within the Sierra Club and other conservation organizations, as well as with the public, the media, and decision makers. The deleterious impact of increasing amounts of ORV recreation on our land, air, climate, water, and cultural resources, and to our human communities, compels support for future state and national legislation.

Geologist Howard Wilshire, author of *The American West at Risk: Science, Myths and Politics of Land Abuse and Recovery* (see review, page 6), has documented that damage to one area promotes damage nearby in an ever-widening ripple:

**On June 24, 2009, Stanislaus National Forest Service researchers arrived at a high elevation mountain meadow undergoing a five-year study in time to see a pick-up truck being loaded up with motorcycles and beating a hasty retreat. Upon entering the meadow on foot, the researchers found the meadow badly scarred with deep wheel ruts from spins and zigzags across it. Protective fencing wire had been cut.

**In May 2009, roughly 500 off-roaders rallied in Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument to protest the 2000 BLM closure of the Paria River to motorized vehicles. Hundreds deliberately drove their machines up the muddy river in mass violation of federal law.

**In the state-managed Desert Cahuilla Prehistoric Area in Imperial County, riders in jeeps and on dirt bikes blaze new trails up fragile, colorful sandstone hills, damage 10,000-year old desert pavement,

crush petrified wood and jeopardize ancient Native American sacred sites.

**During the 2008/09 off-roading season at the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area in San Diego and Imperial Counties, dozens of injured children and adults were air lifted to distant hospitals. On holiday weekends, the entire desert basin around this 80,000 acre Ocotillo Wells "Open Area" is filled with a purple haze of mixed air pollution, dust and particulates, which, when winds blow east, affects air quality in the adjacent Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the town of Borrego Springs.

**In Kern County, a ranch owner who has tried to work with the County to craft an Off Road Vehicle (ORV) ordinance suffers at all hours of the day and night from noise, fumes and dust from off-roaders tearing up the road that she pays to maintain. Kern County Community ORV Watch (COW), a citizen/property owner organization, recently learned from the D.A.'s office that they will not under any circumstances prosecute misdemeanors and citations against illegal off roaders. The Kern County sheriff has promised NOT to enforce the laws on trespass on private/public access dirt roads. Yet, the local folks supported the sheriff's 08/09 CA. State OHV grant application for law enforcement funding.

As Sierra Club advocates for our natural and cultural resources, we need to connect to non-conservation-oriented California citizens. The Kern County situation is far from unique. In many rural areas, public lands are interspersed with private parcels. Where ORV routes abut wilderness, as in the Morongo Basin of the Mojave Desert, for example, BLM designated ORV routes hop-scotch the boundaries of private property. Rural homeowners, from the southern deserts to the Oregon border, are

increasingly besieged in their homes and neighborhoods.

ORV-Subcommittee gains support

The ORV Issues subcommittee, with a dozen active members meeting monthly via conference calls, is working to gain support among conservation leaders in each of the 13 California and Nevada Sierra Club Chapters. We are building relationships and forming coalitions with grassroots community groups and property owner groups. To this end, the Desert Committee has become a member of the Alliance for Responsible Recreation (ARR) – a vigorous association of property owner and conservation groups dedicated to protecting public and private lands from irresponsible ORV recreation. We plan to engage with ranchers, hunters, equestrians, mountain bikers, and other non-traditional allies. We also assist all five Bureau of Land Management (BLM) field offices in the Desert District in monitoring intrusions and impacts of ORVs in wilderness and other protected areas.

Our group designed two ORV-related resolutions, which the Regional Conservation Committee approved in September 2008. One is to support state legislative redress for ORV recreation's negative impacts to public and private lands, to the air, water, soils, and to our cultural heritage. The second urges the California Air Resources



Vehicle damage in Desert Cahuilla Prehistoric area

Board (CARB) to explicitly include recreational off-road vehicle emissions in its plan for reducing global warming gases.

We also publicize problems of ORV recreation in the context of our

-- continued next page

photo: Larry Hogue

Wilderness at risk in Point Reyes Seashore

Drake's Bay Oysters shell out a threat

-- by Tom Post

What do oysters have to do with Wilderness? A lot, if they are interfering with the intent of Congress. There has been much ado in the San Francisco Bay Area lately about the battle between Wilderness added to the Philip Burton Wilderness in Point Reyes National Seashore and the Drakes Bay Oyster Company, operating in the Drakes Estero [Estuary] portion of Point Reyes. The issue may be confusing, but here are the basic facts.

Back in 1962, Congress established Point Reyes as a National Seashore. The intent was to preserve for public recreation and enjoyment an area of significant ecological importance. In 1976, Congress designated more than 25,000 acres of Point Reyes as Wilderness and 8000 acres as potential wilderness. Drake's Estero is among the areas designated as potential wilderness. (It could not immediately become Wilderness because a commercial oyster operation had an existing 40-year lease there, and commercial operations are not permitted within Wilderness.) But the lease, which Congress recognized, is due to expire in 2012, and Congress explicitly directed the area to go automatically into Wilderness at that time.

Drake's Estero is the only estuary along the West Coast designated as wilderness. The Estero and its watershed are home

purchased the lease from Johnson's Oyster Company in 2005, he was fully aware that the lease was to terminate in 2012. However, it was not long before he began trying to get out from under the deal that was brokered over 30 years ago. He got the attention, and, as a local businessman, the sympathy of Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Senator Feinstein considered adding a rider in 2008 to a congressional bill allowing the oyster operation to extend its lease, but opposition from Sierra Club and others to subverting the will of Congress persuaded her to attempt to find a way for Kevin Lunny to move his operations to Tomales Bay, where there is an existing oyster operation. However, Lunny resisted this effort and so far appears adamant on staying put. This year, Senator Feinstein has attached a rider to the Interior Appropriations bill to gift the oyster company a no-bid lease commercial extension to remain in Drake's Estero.

The National Park Service has staunchly defended the integrity of Point Reyes and the intent of Congress to make Drakes Estero a part of the Philip Burton Wilderness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Please raise your voice in opposition to Sen. Feinstein's plan. She has persuaded local Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey to support her efforts on behalf of the Drakes Bay Oyster Company. Please contact Congresswoman Woolsey and urge her to defend the clear intent of Congress and the original plan for completion of the Point Reyes Wilderness.

Point out that:

** It is not suitable to legislate such important changes to wilderness law through a rider on an appropriations bill.

** It is crucial that our local community and our California Representatives back the original intent of Congress by completing the wilderness designation for the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. The

clear mandate from Congress for wilderness deserves respect.

** An extension of the oyster farm lease would open the door to commercial profiteering on our national parks and national seashores. If we allow an exception to the law made for this one company, then we may all suffer the consequences as further commercialization of our national parks and national seashores will have officially begun. Wal-Mart Falls anyone?

**The proposed rider gives the business veto power over scientific recommendations that protect park resources and wildlife from the impacts of the business's operations.

Contact Rep. Woolsey and Sen. Feinstein at:

Lynn Woolsey: (202) 225-5161 or (415) 507-9554; *fax*: (202) 225-5163.

By mail: Honorable Lynn Woolsey, 1050 Northgate Dr., Suite 354, San Rafael, CA 94903.

Dianne Feinstein: (202) 224-3841: (415) 393-0707 or (310) 914-7300.

Fax: (202) 228-3954. *By mail*: Honorable Dianne Feinstein: One Post St., #2450, San Francisco, CA 94104.

Tom Post chairs the San Francisco Bay Chapter Wilderness Committee. As a Chapter outings leader, he also leads hikes to Point Reyes. ##

ORVs and Dust -- from page 3

dwindling fossil fuel reserves; increasing amounts of airborne dust reduce reflectivity of the snow pack, causing earlier melting and seasonal water shortages; unbroken desert soil crusts absorb carbon; and vehicular recreation is related to the childhood and adult obesity epidemic. (For a thorough analysis of these issues, view the CD, *Thrillcraft- The Environmental Consequences of Motorized Recreation* by George Wuerthner. Go to www.stophrillcraft.org).

Please work with us to move the public and our legislators to support stronger ORV legislation that can reduce the multi-faceted, expensive, and often-irreparable impacts of off-road recreation on our private and public lands, including those designated as wilderness.

Terry Weiner chairs the Desert Committee's ORV Issues Subcommittee; she also serves as Imperial County Conservation and Projects Coordinator, Desert Protective Council. terryweiner@sbcglobal.net; (619) 342-5524. ##

photo: Jeff Jolin



Hikers at Drake's Estero learn about the issues

to several endangered plants, animals, mammals and serve as important bird habitat. The Estero also contains an extremely important harbor seal population on the central coast. When Kevin Lunny

Saving the Earth through Art

-- by Heather Anderson

Have you ever thought about visual art as inspiration for more interest in the environment?

Walking Jim Stoltz wrote about music in "Saving the Earth, One Song at a Time", (WOW, Apr 2007). Artists (painters, printmakers, photographers) have also worked to highlight our natural environment with visual art. Ansel Adams is one of the best known of these to capture the beauty of wild nature as something to cherish and protect. Almost anyone can understand beautiful black and white photographs, and his coffee-table books have enriched our lives, urged us to look closely at nature, and visit national parks and wilderness.

My quest for an art education that teaches about the environment



"Wrangell-St. Elias", oil, 36" x 48", by Heather Anderson, from her National Park series

through art began with Alan Gussow, artist and environmental advocate who testified in hearings, daring to put a dollar value on the aesthetics of a natural landscape. Later, he organized an exhibition (sponsored by the Sierra Club) of works by artists who had an intense feeling for the land. His follow-up book, *A Sense of Place, the Artist and the American Land* (1972), the first of its kind to link the paintings and words of landscape artists with the environment, started me on a forty-year effort to share a passion for our land with fellow art teachers, helping them teach about our natural environment through art (Ph.D. dissertation, 1984). Artists since cave painters have been inspired by nature. Post Impressionist Paul Cezanne once stated that painters

ought to dedicate themselves entirely to a study of nature and produce pictures for teaching. Two World War 11 abstract painter émigrés were German-born Hans Hofmann and Armenian Arshile Gorky. Hofmann felt he brought the landscapes home in his mind, while Gorky stated that he did not paint in front of, but from within nature.

Unlike Walking Jim, I have not hit the road (with a car full of paintings), nor founded a non-profit organization like his Musicians United to Sustain the Environment (M.U.S.E.), or staged a show to excite an audience of thousands with free events and media outreach. I have only made a few paintings, held a few exhibits dedicated to wilderness in series like Mountains, Glaciers, Rivers, and National Parks. I have also worked at a local river park with public school classes through our San Joaquin River Parkway Trust. Students learned about the river, its Native American history, its flora and fauna, and then drew and painted on-site until time to board the bus back to school. My quiet quest as artist-educator-environmentalist has not yet garnered many environmental enthusiasts.

Do environmentalists appreciate visual art? I have seen them walk right by artwork on display, even though the subject matter may depict the very mountains where they have hiked and climbed. The viewers, however, are not at fault, since they probably have had little art education and experience appreciating two-dimensional artworks. We build a museum every other week in our country, but fail to educate our students in the arts. Art seems not to be in the vocabulary of our environmental movement.

And I am not talking only about representational (realistic) art. Artists often use "artistic license" with color or composition. For example, in a mountain painting, space implied through the

overlapping of mountain ridges is very important for me, but if I painted every mountain gray, it would be very boring. So I use abstract color to get the ambience or impact of the landscape. Ansel Adams said that he didn't photograph merely what he saw, but what he felt about what he saw. Artists reach out to help folks see, to share Rachel Carson's Sense of Wonder so that viewers, too, will care about the magnificence of our environment; we just don't always do it realistically. Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) is not an historically accurate, visually realistic panorama; it is a passionate plea to open our eyes to the tragedy of war.

The arts are not valued enough. At Berkeley in the '40s, sciences were taught in a three-story, well equipped concrete building, art in WW1 wooden barracks. Current thought touts more and better science and math education, not arts education. Recently I read that Brandeis University is closing their art museum and selling its collection. What would happen if they announced the closing of their sports program? Public education today is largely cognitive, not visual. If children are to become adults sensitive to their natural environment, they must first learn to see it. It has been said that if you haven't learned to draw, it is because you haven't learned to see. Seeing and art go together. It is through the arts that we may come to understand the beauty and wonder of the universe.

We hope for change. President Obama has already publicly championed the importance of arts education, drafted the first-ever cultural arts platform, created an Artists Corps, and increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Robert Capanna, director of Settlement Music School, the nation's largest community arts education institution, remarked that creativity and innovation are key to our country's future competitiveness. Although the country faces serious challenges, he said, "the arts can be part of the solution."

Part of the environmental solution? Artists, musicians, and writers like to think so.

Heather Anderson, Fresno, is conservation chair of the Tehipite Chapter. ##

Book Review

The American West at Risk: Science, Myths, and Politics of Land Abuse and Recovery;

by Howard G. Wilshire, Jane E. Nielson, Richard W. Hazlett

-- by Doug Prose

Wilshire, Nielson, and Hazlett, three geologists, have crafted an unusual and fascinating chronicle of land use and its environmental consequences in the American West, beginning with the arrival of Europeans in the 19th century. The book's approach is bold. The authors analyze the environmental consequences of all types of land uses in the West with the insight of scientists who have long been in the trenches of western environmental science.

The authors venture into realms rarely probed by writers from the reserved, insulated science world; they weave into the storyline the politics, motives, and myths that were held by the people and governments who carried out or sanctioned damaging land use practices. They do this with a touch of irony and dry humor, which brings the book's scientific analyses to vivid life.

A glance at some of the chapter titles in this book reveals a broad, creative, compelling, subtly humorous perspective on the American West. Once and Future Trees. Raiding the Range. Digging to China. No Habitat but Our Own. Tragedy of the Playground. Even the appendices look interesting: Biochemical War and You. Destroyer of the Worlds. Plutonium Fields Forever. There are 150 pages of notes and references, which make for lively reading by themselves! It's the kind of book you'll use to unearth hard-to-find facts on a particular environmental issue.

(Editor's note: Not to be missed is the striking conclusion chapter entitled, "The Needs of our Posterity" highlighting the changes essential to our lifestyle if dire consequences for posterity are to be avoided.)

Howard Wilshire and Jane Nielson honed their political insights through careers as government scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey. Wilshire, now retired from the USGS, spent much of his career studying the effects of human activities on desert lands. His work often put him at odds with off road

vehicle users, mining companies, oil and gas companies, the nuclear industry, the military, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Wilshire's own agency tried, and failed, to silence him when the going got hot on several occasions. Because of Wilshire's solid research and steadfastness, the West bears many fewer scars today.

Essentially, the *American West at Risk* offers a new and more truthful look at the dramatic story of the settling of the West, since the story's fabled elements of oversized dreams, schemes, greed, corruption, hardball politics, religious fervor, audacity, and desperation are commonly tinged with a romantic hue in historic accounts. Much of the damage inflicted on the fragile West in the century or so after the pioneer days was done by the ruthless hammer of big money and power, with virtually no regulatory oversight and no regard for environmental consequences. But things have changed. Westerners have deepened their understanding of, and concern for, western ecosystems and have gotten active politically to protect their lands.

So the authors look to the future with cautious hope. In their words: "Although the west may be severely at risk, the present authors do not believe that it will be lost. There is much room for optimism that western folks will find ways to extend what remains of our natural bounty farther into the future than our current course can take us."

Doug Prose is a documentary filmmaker with Earth Images Foundation, and a former geologist who worked on environmental issues with Howard Wilshire at the U.S. Geological Survey. ##



Next Committee meeting

The California/Nevada Wilderness Committee will meet Sat and Sun, October 24 and 25, 2009, in a special memorial meeting honoring past Committee member Stan Weidert (see WOW, April 2009) to be held at Stan's own home in Shingletown, CA. The Committee extends a deep thanks to Stan's brother and sister-in-law, Carl and Marti Weidert, for giving us the extraordinary opportunity to meet there.

After our issues meeting, Saturday 10 to 5, we'll host dinner for participants and offer camping space before our hike on Sunday, to the BLM's Skedaddle Wilderness Study Area, on the CA/NV border, one of Stan's favorite places. Please join us Saturday and Sunday, or either one. Contact Vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org or (415)977-5527.

Next April's upcoming WESTERN WILDERNESS CONFERENCE 2010 will be a major item on our agenda. (See WOW, April 2009, and see www.westernwilderness.org.)

WOW! Going Paperless!

The California/Nevada Wilderness Committee encourages Words of the Wild recipients to GO PAPERLESS! Those who agree to go paperless will receive an email from editor Graham Stafford with a link to the PDF in the Sierra Club website for each newsletter issue. (Approximately 3 per year.) If you wish to print sections of the newsletter for reference, etc. you can do it from the PDF.

Going paperless is easy! Just send email to graham@grahamstafford.com. Put "Paperless WOW" in the subject line and YOUR full name and email address in the body of the email.

Example:
Subject: Paperless WOW
Body of email: Graham Stafford
graham@grahamstafford.com

**We
Work
to
keep
It
Wild!!**



Outings



Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!

August 14-16 – Fri - Sun Pasco Cyn Trail Maintenance

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Austin-Tonopah Ranger District for a weekend brushing trails in Pasco Canyon, a Forest Service multi-use trail into the Alta-Toquima Range, approx 5 hrs east of Reno. Please contact Sheena Britschgi at (775)324.7667 for details.

August 21-23 – Fri - Sun Knott Creek Project

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Winnemucca BLM to rehabilitate an area of illegal trespass at Knott Creek Reservoir in nw Nevada's Alder Creek WSA, in Pine Forest Range (approx. 5 hrs north of Reno). Contact Pat Bruce, Field Project Coordinator at (775)324.7667.

September 12 -- Sat Deep Creek day hike



photo: Jim Case

The CANV wilderness committee organized a Nevada service trip July 10-12 with BLM's Ely Field Office; the main job was to remove a culvert buried under a former vehicle route in the new Grafton Wilderness. Six participants and BLM Wilderness Ranger John Miller worked hard to dig it up, but that wasn't the end of the job; they carried the two culvert sections 3/4 mile to the edge of the wilderness.

Deep Creek flows from San Bernardino Nat'l Forest into the Mojave River, providing important wildlife habitat for bobcats, bears, etc. Join Calif. Wilderness Coalition (CWC) for a moderate 7.5 mile r. t. hike on the Pacific Crest Trail along the proposed wild and scenic river section. We may get feet wet and cool off in the river! Contact Marisa: mlcalderon@msn.com.

September 19 – Sat

Indian Pass Day Hike

This magnificent Sonoran desert area --rugged peaks and desert washes is important to the Quechan tribe. Hike with CWC about 4 miles round trip and xc through the largest Sonoran woodland in North America, with views of Palo Verde and Trigo Mtns, and Colorado River. Contact Laurel (909)260-8833 lwilliams@calwild.org.

September 18-20 – Fri - Sun National Public Lands Day

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness in the Black Rock Desert for this popular service trip. We expect over 70 volunteers for this family-friendly event, with educational programs for the kids, lots of family activities and Dutch oven cooking. Contact Pat Bruce, see Aug 21-23.

September 18-20 – Fri - Sun Walker River Service trip

Help Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Bridgeport Ranger District eradicate invasive Salt Cedar (*Tamarix*) on East Fork of Walker River for National Public Lands Day. Work will consist of cutting shrubs down with saws and loppers. Also, some campsites to be cleaned up if time allows. Camp out Fri and Sat nights. Friends provides Sat dinner. Contact Wes Hoskins, Forest Project Coordinator at (775)324-7667.

September 25-29 – Fri - Tues Gamboa Trail Ventana Service

Join Ventana Wilderness Alliance at end of the Cone Peak Rd, off Nacimiento-Ferguson Rd, to work on the Gamboa Trail from the North Coast Ridge Trail down to Ojito Saddle, in honor of National Public Lands Day. Come for entire time or just weekend! Space will be

limited. Contact Dave Knapp: daveknapp@ventanawild.org

October 10 -- Sat Castle Mountains Day Tour

The Castle Mountains along the CA-Nevada border are surrounded on three sides by the Mojave National Preserve. We'll drive past the densest Joshua Tree forest in the world and hike for expansive views, history of Hart mine area, and glimpses of desert species. Lunch at unique Hotel Nipton. Contact Laurel 909-260-8833 lwilliams@calwild.org.

October 17-18 -- Sat - Sun Exploring Soda Mountains

Explore and appreciate Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) east of Barstow and just north of I-15. Potluck and car camp Sat evening near Cronese Lakes. Sun: full day for moderate hike to rugged ridges and deep washes—comment on uncertain future of this unique, little known WSA. Join for day or overnight. Contact leader: Craig Deutsche, (310)477-6670, craig.deutsche@gmail.com.

November 7-8 – Sat - Sun Death Valley "Bowling Alley"

Car camp & hike in narrow strip of land between Death Valley National Park and Fort Irwin. Explore unique and beautiful geology, perennial springs, desert tortoise and bighorn sheep habitat. Rough route-driving to our car/tent campsite; day hike from there. Potluck dinner Sat. Join for day or overnight. Hike leaders: Kate Allen & Carol Wiley. Contact Laurel – see Sept. 19.

November 21-22 -- Sat - Sun Surprise Canyon

This beautiful desert canyon with year-round stream on eastern edge of the Panamint Valley was degraded by extreme off-road vehicle use but is recovering. Hike and rock scramble several miles up the canyon to explore the river (proposed wild and scenic) and riparian habitat. Car/tent camp and potluck dinner Sat. Join for day or overnight. Hike leader: Tom Budlong. Contact Laurel at CWC - see Sept. 19. ##

WILDERNESS protected in Southern Sierra and east of Mono Lake

The Wilderness Land Trust's ongoing effort to complete the wilderness legacy envisioned in the 1964 Wilderness Act has moved forward with the acquisition of 2,635 acres in the Southern Sierra Nevada. The Trust purchased a 200-acre inholding in the Domeland Wilderness and a 2,435-acre property adjacent to the Sacatar Trail Wilderness. Both parcels are in Tulare County east of the Sierra crest and will be conveyed to the Bureau of Land Management to be administered as wilderness.

Tim Smith, BLM Bakersfield Field Manager, said, "The initiative that the Wilderness Land Trust has taken to work with willing sellers to conserve these lands will greatly benefit the public in the preservation of wilderness."

The 200-acre inholding in the BLM Domeland Wilderness Addition is along a major tributary to the South Fork Kern River within a quarter-mile from the Pacific Crest Trail. Its lush riparian habitat

and pinyon-juniper woodlands are surrounded by rugged granite peaks. The 2,435-acre property adjoining the Sacatar Trail Wilderness includes expansive wet meadows and an isolated stand of Joshua Trees --unusual at an elevation above 7,000 feet. Both parcels support rich archeological resources, numerous springs, and opportunities for backcountry hiking.

The Domeland Wilderness inholding will automatically be incorporated into the surrounding wilderness area when it is conveyed to the Bureau of Land Management. The 2,435-acre ranch adjacent to the Sacatar Wilderness will expand the adjoining wilderness area through a process outlined in Section 6 of the 1964 Wilderness Act, whereby lands adjacent to congressionally designated wilderness areas can be annexed to those wilderness areas through administrative means if the lands are donated to the federal government. (WOW, Dec 2008, pp 3,6)

Also, in June 2009, the Trust

completed the preservation of 40 acres of private lands (inholdings) within the Granite Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) east of Mono Lake, California. This WSA is adjacent to the newly designated Granite Mountain Wilderness Area and within the viewshed of the Mono Lake National Scenic Area. The presence of private lands is a major reason why this part of the WSA was left out of the Granite Mountain Wilderness when designated in the Omnibus bill in March (see page 1.)

The Granite Mountain WSA consists of Great Basin sagebrush and piñon-juniper habitat, migrating sand dunes, basaltic plateaus, and granite ridges. Among the area's wildlife are black-tailed jackrabbit, American badger, grey fox, golden eagles, the Mono Lake mule deer herd, and predators like bobcats and mountain lions. The WSA contains several archaeological sites, including the historic wintering areas of the Mono Lake Paiutes. The 360-degree view from the top of 9,000-foot Granite Mountain includes the Sierran scarp, the Mono Craters, the White Mountains, and the Excelsior Range in Nevada. (from the Wilderness Land Trust) ##

WORDS OF the WILD

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

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