



SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

April
1950

➔ SAN JACINTO—YOUR HELP IS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY ◀

Miscellany

If it seems to you that this whole April number is devoted to exhorting you to read this and pleading with you to write that, then—well, perhaps it is. Most of the time the Sierra Club is in some way serving its members, but every once in a while it's the members' turn to give their services to the club and its major purposes. This is an example—and an urgent one—of the need for help from all who believe it important that another generation know what a bit of wildland looks like. Your statement on San Jacinto may be the one to turn the balance. Can you afford to withhold it?



Maybe it's a good thing the error was made in the February *SCB* rather than after this year's Base Camp, when so many more people would have caught us at it. At any rate, Angus Taylor (who made the photograph) writes us that the cut at the top of page 9 is mislabeled. The lake is Hungry Packer Lake, not Midnight Lake. And the only named peaks in the picture are Mounts Wallace (center) and Haeckel (right)—both so far away that we have to remember what perspective does, and not try to attach one of the names to something lower but nearer the camera.

While we are apologizing, we had better try to make up for that garbled page 2 in March. We don't quite know how that unheard-of Point crept into the Contents, nor how we can put a price on it. But we hope that you found the map on page 6, although we directed you to page 4.

Worst error, however, was in the dates of the San Jacinto hearing. By now you must know the hearing opens on Thursday, April 20.

Corrected copies of the March *SCB* are at the club office for those requesting exchange.

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Credits: Cover. If this mountain pine is in any way a symbol of San Jacinto, should it be allowed to fall, "leaving an empty space against the sky"? Photo, D.R.B. Page 5, Dick Shideler; page 11, Morley Baer.

THE SIERRA CLUB, founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast. Since these resources receive best protection from those who know them well, the club has long conducted educational activities, under the committees listed below, to make them known. Participation is invited in the program to preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 35

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NUMBER 4

... TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE ...

Climax Near in San Jacinto Battle

One for a Thousand

Perhaps San Jacinto hasn't done anything for you. But other wildland places must have, in one way or another, or you wouldn't have allied yourself with an organization that serves the cause of conservation. The charm of wilderness must have meant something special to you. It must still mean that something—perhaps an inner feeling of pleasure as you look at untracked snow, or at the flash of a trout, or at the wide-eyed wonder of a fawn in a woodland dell. Possibly wilderness has meant most to you when you watched the joy of a child as he first set foot in it—returning you, if only for a moment, to your own first knowing of things that were not paved, littered, and muddied, but were as fresh as their creation left them.

If a so-what? feeling wells up in you about now, please read no farther.

If, however, you're looking for a chance

to make your contribution as a conservationist, please stay with us.

All the nation's wilderness is implicated in San Jacinto. The progress of events which now threatens to destroy the natural beauty of that place can destroy wilderness anywhere. It is a progress which fattens on apathy. It is not good progress. The damage can be stopped if you will devote five or six hours to the cause before April runs out. In short, we're asking you to put in about one hour toward helping wilderness for every one thousand hours that wilderness has helped you.

Unturned Stones on San Jacinto

Much might have been done to save San Jacinto, but many of us let it slide. Some counseled defeatism; the chance of victory was too slim to merit the effort. Others were busy with their personal affairs or with other conservation matters that seemed more urgent. Still others simply

BACKGROUND. Developments in the fight to save San Jacinto State Park have been presented in previous numbers of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

The chips are down now.

The San Jacinto Winter Park Authority has requested an easement across a piece of Forest Service Primitive Area in order to build a tramway into San Jacinto State Park, which includes and surrounds the main peak of Mount San Jacinto. The Forest Service will hold a public hearing on the matter in Riverside beginning April 20.

The purpose of the hearing is to discuss elimination from the Primitive Area of a half section of mountainside—which could not be primitive with a tramway on it.

An important corollary, however, is whether the United States Forest Service should permit violation of an agreement intended to protect a resource that is rare in Southern California—a bit of truly alpine terrain. In discussion of the issue, conservationists everywhere will have a chance to make their individual voices more effective by informing themselves and protesting this drive to exploit an irreplaceable wilderness.

procrastinated. A few kept plugging right along, but they were too few.

This isn't a new story. It's old, too old. Those who would exploit the wild country which the nation ought to be preserving are almost invariably well financed; and they stand to gain enough to make it worth their while to gamble. They claim progress as an ally, and shout obstructionist at all who stand in their way. They shout it so loudly and so often that the faint-hearted, would-be conservationists back away embarrassed at their seeming impertinence, saying meekly, "Oh, I guess we shouldn't be obstructive," not realizing that as soon as everybody becomes 100 per cent constructive there won't be any wilderness left.

If there is to be conservation, there must be conservationists—conserving, obstructing, defending, plodding, thrifty, far-sighted, damnably conservative conservationists. And there have to be a lot of them, generous of their own time, mindful of no personal gain, devoted to common good. There have been good conservationists, else we'd have no national parks, state parks, or national forests today. The prodigals, the developers, the exploiters—the cut-and-get-outers—would have spent more of our resources by far than they have, for they work fast and leave little.

They're hard after some of the scenes we hold most precious in each of the national parks and forests. They're hard after San Jacinto. *You've* got to stop them; not weakly, not looking behind you or to either side to see which way the wind is blowing; not wondering who won't roll your log if you don't roll his. The weakness that will let us lose the freedom of the wild places will let us lose other freedoms, too. We still need men to match our mountains; men who are obdurate, granitic—who can stand up and shout right back, *keep your hands off!*

If we are presently so cynical that we label such a line of reasoning as "the old school try" we're in for losing a lot of the wilderness that our fathers thought they were saving for posterity.

Yes, much might have been done to

save San Jacinto. There are still some last lines of defense worth holding:

1) We can let the Forest Service know, and through them the Department of Interior, that we do not approve the granting of access across the Forest Service Primitive Area section that blocks the tramway.

2) We can demand postponement of all plans until the required report is completed on estimated costs, maintenance, and income. This report, to be the result of a study by the firm of Coverdale and Colpitts, will be a public document when complete. On economic grounds alone—irrespective of the esthetic damage that would be wrought were the project to succeed or fail—thorough examination of the report should precede any development. All statistics so far appearing in the public print come from a self-interested group whose estimates on total costs have already grown steadily from \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000—a disparity that in itself does not build confidence in the project.

3) The courts may be asked to rule on the constitutionality of legislation which, if it is allowed to stand, will undermine the California state park system and must inevitably undermine the confidence of the people as a whole in the safety of their scenic resources and the funds generously donated to acquire them. How can they ever again leave these resources to the mercy of their state government—a government which builds state parks by means of constitutional amendment, only to allow them to be destroyed by ill-conceived legislative action, under pressure of a local real estate and promotional lobby?

4) The legislature may be asked to rescind the Winter Park Authority. But this is a long, long shot. A move in this direction in 1949 came to no avail because the measure was not introduced by the local legislator and therefore violated tradition and (or) convention. Moreover, the Legislature approved the project three times (it was vetoed twice before) and about \$200,000 has been expended in surveys and promotion on the strength of the final approval.

5) We can attempt to explain the economic hazard of speculating either in Palm Springs real estate or in the \$10,000,000 "revenue" bonds from which the tramway would be financed. Once the tramway lost its initial novelty appeal, inflated values would have to drop seriously.

How to Kill a Park

If the tramway is in, wilderness is out. If the San Jacinto wilderness goes, others may be sent down the same one-way road. If you were promotion-minded, how might you go about sending it there? These could be the mileposts on that road:

1) Get the people of the state to vote a state-park program. Put it into the state constitution, where it will look safe.

2) Get your outside contributions where you can. If, for example, you can acquire some Primitive Area by promising to keep it just as primitive in the state park as it has been kept, go right ahead and make the promise.

3) Solicit contributions from public-spirited organizations and the public all over the country. Tell them you're building a magnificent park for all the people, for all time.

[Now you've got your state park. The next steps aren't so hard as you'd think. Forgetting the interests of all the people, think of what it would mean to you and your neighbors adjoining the park if you could acquire a special concession in that park:]

4) Get a bill through your state legislature permitting every conceivable development in the park that will work to your special benefit.

5) If the bill fails two or three times, try a fourth, preferably when friends of the state park are busy elsewhere—busy with a war, for instance. Shout that you are working to help all the people, the masses—all, that is, who can pay your price to enjoy your concessions.

6) Don't let anyone look at your promotional plans too critically. If protective features in the legislation (how did those get in?) require that competent economic studies be made, don't hurry to let people

see the studies. Get private groups to buy your bonds, so the Securities Commission won't come snooping around.

7) Don't let any agency hamper you with stringent contractual clauses. Set aside funds for dismantling if the project fails? Absurd! This thing is too fabulous to fail!

8) If you can claim that you are going to serve any particularly large group, such as skiers, by all means do so. Claim it often. If no competent experts go along with your claim, say it again.

9) Don't worry if your estimated expenditures jump from \$1,000,000 up to \$10,000,000 in five years. Chances are no one will notice, these days, that the decimal point has moved over. If they do, snow them under with talk of what a colossal, stupendous, epoch-making improvement on the landscape you are bringing about. Call it the Eighth Wonder.

10) Get enough higher-ups behind you so that you can ride roughshod over any



These boulders and trees may not themselves suffer harm from too many visitors—but what of the mood of which they are symbols?

government agency that asks you questions. [Now for the big-time operating:]

11) Persuade steel companies, and so on, to put up the big money for your experimental engineering. Talk superlatives: the biggest, the highest, the longest, the fastest, the most crowded—no, delete that last one; it isn't politic—brush the last feeble opposition aside and start construction.

12) Don't worry about a legal right of way. No court would dare to stop so magnificent a project. The conservationists who put up all those funds to buy the park would never put up more to protect it.

13) When your tramway is up and you've boomed real-estate values in all near-by towns, you can start writing your own ticket. Don't waste much time on the little people, for they'll only crowd your facilities; design your operation for big spenders. And if any strange characters start poking into the corners of your private preserve to find out what the state park used to be like, fence them out!

Where Will It Lead?

Any resemblance between these milestones and what is happening on San Jacinto is not entirely a coincidence. We have free-wheeled a little to give the description of them a lightly ominous touch. There is much less exaggeration, however, than we wish there were. The steps al-

ready taken toward destruction of the chief value of the San Jacinto preserve—its wilderness—are in the San Jacinto Winter Park Authority's record as facts which will shock all who stop to ponder them.

The pattern being laid out on Mount San Jacinto is extremely dangerous. It is a pattern under which, even in the most scrupulous hands, any wilderness areas can be cut to fit. Certainly the California state-park system could be reduced to a scattering of useless remnants.

Consider, for example, any redwood park—perhaps one still being acquired: Many men, ardently mindful of the public good, have labored hard to set this area aside as a sanctuary for mankind. Thousands of dollars of public funds have already gone into it; millions will have to go into the project to bring it to successful completion. To what avail? So that a "Redwood Summer Park Authority," with the blessing of the state legislature, can take over? So that the State Park Commission can be forced to abdicate its administrative position in the heart of the redwood grove?

It is now apparent what we stand to lose. San Jacinto is a testing ground. If the pattern of invasion and exploitation succeeds here, will the safety of *any* state park lie only in the inability of the promotional mind to dream up a money-making venture? D. R. B.

Wilderness Defenders Must Speak Now

The hearing scheduled for April 20 in Riverside may be considered the United States Forest Service's way of saying, "All right, all you people who say you're conservationists—this is when we need to have you tell us if you really approve our wilderness policy. How many of you believe we should do everything we can to protect the primitive character of the San Jacinto area?"

Our answer should be overwhelming—both in volume and in firmness. The Forest Service will have to recommend, on the basis of evidence presented, either for or against granting of an easement across

a portion of a primitive area. Pressure for the tramway is tremendous, opposition so far not well enough organized to be a match for powerful lobbying. Although many of us are convinced that the proposed construction is not in the public interest, only our concerted protests now can disprove the assertion made in Washington by a proponent of the project that "99 per cent of the people of California want the tramway built."

Some San Jacinto History

The record shows that the Forest Service has worked hard and consistently for

protection of the San Jacinto wildland. Establishment of the Mount San Jacinto State Park in 1930 was made possible only by the remarkably fine coöperation of the Forest Service. Through three-way exchanges between the Forest Service, the State Park Commission, and the Southern Pacific Company (owner of "checker-board" private holdings), a consolidated block of publicly owned land was obtained. Of this, something under twenty square miles at the center of the area—including the main and subsidiary peaks of San Jacinto and the small alpine valleys lying below them—became the San Jacinto State Park. North and south of the park, another thirty-three square miles, consisting largely of precipitous slopes on the desert side, but containing forested watershed on the south, remained under Forest Service jurisdiction. The whole was to be administered as a primitive area, without roads or resorts. This wildland recreational resource is valuable for its scientific interest as well as for its high-mountain scenic beauty, and especially important by reason of its rarity in a land famous for beaches, orange and date groves, and deserts, but boasting only small samples of alpine terrain. The understanding has been lived up to by the Forest Service, but was repudiated by the California Legislature in 1945—a time at which too many conservationists were busy fighting elsewhere to come to the defense of San Jacinto.

The Implications

It is not difficult to imagine the effects upon a primitive area of a tramway and the attendant construction of a luxury resort. But the danger involved is not restricted to the San Jacinto State Park and Primitive Area. If it is here proved possible to circumvent the authority charged with protection of an area (in this case the State Park Commission) by a well lobbied bill in the Legislature, is any of our parks safe? What assurance can we have that chain saws will not some day move into one of our choicest redwood groves? How can we be sure that fine old buildings in historic Columbia won't be

razed to make room for some commercial building?

Inescapable Effects

Construction of a tramway must inevitably destroy the wilderness quality of the mountain-top park. The tramway itself would be an invasion, let alone the crowds it is expected to bring—at least initially—and the resort that must be built to accommodate them.

Proponents of the tramway, seemingly knowing too little about wilderness to be talking about it, insist that as things are now, a beautiful wilderness is just going to waste because so few visit it. With the tramway, we are assured, as many as four thousand people a day can be brought to taste the delights of high-mountain solitude and quiet, to stroll hushed woodland trails, enjoying the remoteness and the scenery.

Or can they?

But whether the majority of the expected four thousand daily visitors explore the territory adjacent to the tramway terminal or spend more of their time gazing down to the desert from one of the five levels of the glass-walled restaurant and bar, there would be no wilderness left within the state park. Wilderness is incompatible with development and mass visitation, and is destroyed by them. Disturbance would radiate out in widening circles from every alien structure, and the boundaries of wildness, pushed far away by the resort and its activities, would recede beyond the reach of those who had sought it in the company of too many fellow men.

Probable Sequelae

If the tramway is not successful financially and is eventually abandoned, there is scant hope that the wilderness can be restored, even then. The contract providing for the construction and operation of the tramway and related developments—including virtually anything the Winter Park Authority wants to construct anywhere within the eight square miles to which it is "limited"—makes no provision for their removal when operation of the resort is discontinued.

Even though the tramway ceases to run, the expansive restaurant stands deserted, and the sounds of resort operation fade away, the wilderness will still be irrevocably lost. In the Hudsonian zone there is no jungle growth to swallow and disintegrate the works of man. Dragging decades will not remove, but will only make more unsightly, the rusting towers, the empty-windowed buildings, the trampled paths and driveways, the unconcealed debris.

Room for Doubt

There are more reasons for believing that the tramway, as presently described,

will fail or be abandoned than that it will be a long-term success. It just doesn't seem possible that there will be enough patronage, day after day, year after year, to pay operating expenses and amortize the construction loans. Why, then, the great promotional steam being generated by backers of the tramway? Is it that their ardor exceeds their engineering and business sense? Do they plan complete luxury-resort development of the *entire* mountain-top park? Or don't they mind risking other people's investment money so long as the initial construction booms their own business? C. E. M.

Regional Parks Association Defends San Jacinto

[Statement by President Herbert L. Mason of the Regional Parks Association, Berkeley, California to Regional Forester P. A. Thompson, U. S. Forest Service; March 29, 1950.]

Regional Parks Association is a California corporation formed: "to organize efforts for securing [regional] parks and park areas in the hills and along the shores of the San Francisco Bay Region; . . . to foster a balance of uses in the park system, including the preservation of suitable areas in their natural condition or their restoration to such condition."

It is understood by this association that the Secretary of the Interior has requested a recommendation from the United States Forest Service as to whether the Secretary shall grant a right of way for a large scale commercial tramway development across a portion of the San Jacinto Primitive Area into the heart of the State Park, which had been dedicated by the State of California as a Wilderness Area.

With respect to possible encroachment into similar areas of national importance in our National Park System, Secretary Chapman recently stated:

"I am prepared to insist that there shall be no encroachment unless the welfare or the safety of the Nation requires it. I am keenly aware of the importance of prece-

dent, and particularly of any precedent that will encourage the breaking down of standards of protection that have been established and confirmed through the long experience of men and women who have been willing to devote time and energy and money unselfishly for the public good.

"I have long appreciated that if these great possessions of ours are 'whittled away'; if they are allowed to be impaired for any but the most compelling reasons, the process is bound to be cumulative, and the end product will be mediocrity; that we shall be deprived of the reason for our pride in this great heritage we now possess."

Secretary Chapman has very well expressed the basis for the concern of Regional Parks Association in connection with the proposal to invade the San Jacinto Primitive Area and State Park. We feel very strongly that such a precedent could "whittle away" even the smaller parks that our association is particularly concerned with.

We therefore respectfully urge that "unless the welfare or the safety of the Nation requires it," permission to cross the land of the United States shall not be granted.

Audubon Camp of California Announces Third Season

This is the third year that the National Audubon Society is to conduct its summer camp at Norden. Five two-week sessions, from June 18 to August 26, give ample opportunity for teachers, youth leaders, camp counselors, and other adults with a hobby or professional interest in nature, to participate in this most interesting and rewarding summer vacation.

Situated at the Sugar Bowl near Donner Pass, at 7000 feet elevation, the camp is in a region of abundant plant and animal life. Five climatic zones, each with its characteristic plants and animals, may be visited on a day's trip. Timberline and alpine meadows are within easy reach, and a short drive down the eastern slope brings one to the Nevada desert.

Instruction includes demonstration of

teaching techniques and the understanding of the interdependence of living things, and conservation problems with workable solutions. Field trips, group discussions and individual consultations, as well as the extra-curricular entertainments, make for a well-rounded program.

Dr. Lloyd G. Ingles, Professor of Zoology at Fresno State College, will be the Director of this camp in 1950. Any man or woman, eighteen years or over, regardless of professional background or present knowledge, may attend the camp. Address applications for enrollment, and all inquiry until June 14, to Mrs. Ethel E. Richardson, 887 Indian Rock Avenue, Berkeley 7, California. After June 14, to Audubon Camp of California, Norden, California.

Round Table Offers Interesting Fare

Bay Area residents will have an opportunity to hear outstanding speakers on a subject of lively interest to anyone who has ever traveled a wilderness trail, cast a fly on a remote stream, or pointed his skis across an unmarked slope.

"Keeping the Wilderness Wild" is the title of a round-table discussion to be presented by the University of California Hiking Club on the evening of Tuesday, April 18, in Berkeley. Topics to be discussed by men who are recognized experts in their respective fields include the role of education in wilderness preservation, water rights, need for regulation (or lack of it), wildlife conservation, and complications arising out of present mining laws. Speakers scheduled to participate are:

Bernarr Bates, Travel Editor, *Sunset Magazine*; Oliver Kehrlein, Sierra Club Director; Richard M. Leonard, Secretary, Sierra Club; A. Starker Leopold, Chairman, Wildlife Conservation, University of California; P. A. Thompson, Regional Forester, U. S. Forest Service, Region V.

The meeting, sponsored by the University of California Hiking Club, is open to the public without charge, and all who are interested are cordially invited to attend. The program begins at 7 o'clock (note early hour!) in 2000 Life Sciences Building, on the Campus.

The University of California Hiking Club, activated two years ago, is sponsoring a variety of interesting trips as well as excellent educational programs.

Mountaineers' Outing Announced

The Mountaineers of Seattle cordially invite members of other clubs to join them for their two-week summer outing at a base camp to be established on Berg Lake, at the foot of Mount Robson (in Canada),

from July 29 to August 12. Cost of the outing will be approximately \$90, which includes the trip by car from Seattle.

Inquiries may be addressed to The Mountaineers, Box 122, Seattle 11.



AT THE MOUTH OF THE CARMEL RIVER

Laidlaw Williams

Appeal Made for Preservation of Beach Park

"There is only so much of it, and there never will be more," said Newton Drury, Director of the National Park Service, when he learned of the drive under way to save the Carmel River mouth beaches. These words, the cry of every conservationist, are particularly applicable to the stretch of California coastline whose beaches are rapidly being marred by commercial and residential encroachment.

"There are no finer seacoast areas anywhere," Mr. Drury went on to say, "and no scenic or recreational resource in the United States is more sorely in need of preservation."

The Point Lobos League, a conservation group under the leadership of Francis Whitaker, has organized the campaign to save the mile-long stretch of beach, which lies in a sweeping curve from the rocks at Stewart Point south over the Carmel River mouth to include San Jose beach close to Point Lobos. The purchase of one hundred acres of adjoining land will claim these beaches for a State Park.

Until it was recently threatened by the establishment of a subdivision, this span of beaches lay quietly in Carmel's doorway, long taken for granted as a permanent birthright of the people. Year after year, in sun and fog, it has been a favorite subject for artists, the background for innumerable novels and the focus of much poetic expression, stirring and exhilarating the emotions of men. A natural invitation for walking, fishing or sunning, it happily fulfills an ever-increasing recreational demand.

Point Lobos Reserve will benefit immeasurably by the addition of this new park area. Much of the increased recreational overuse which is now damaging the Reserve will be transferred to these nearby beaches. Natural scientists are emphatic about the need of this protective measure for Lobos, where every effort is made to maintain the undisturbed natural state.

Also to be protected is the Carmel River Lagoon, fanning out from the river mouth through clumps of tules, an excellent ex-

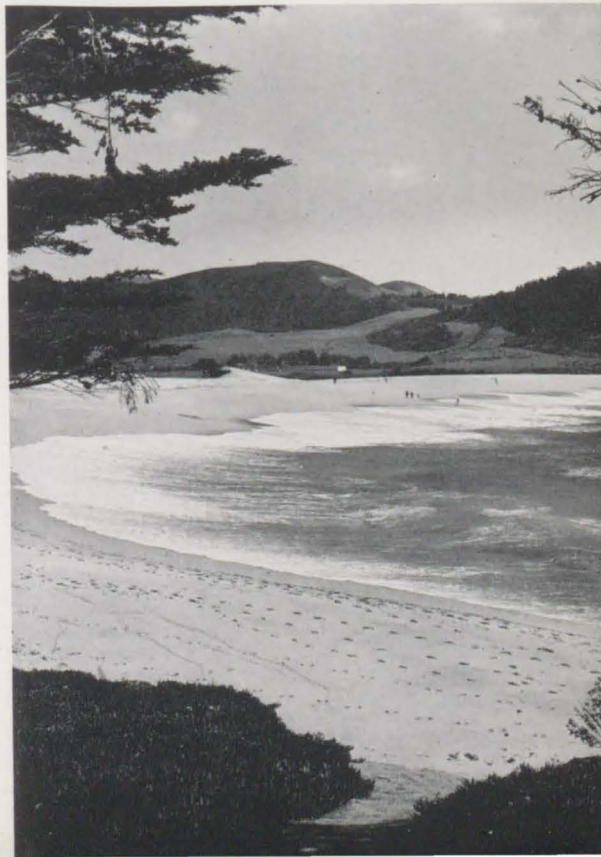
ample of a fast-vanishing type of habitat for land, shore and marsh birds. Unless this, too, is preserved, it will undoubtedly be destroyed, and the ducks and loons, the herons and rails, the rare white-tailed kite and the transient Emperor goose will all simply disappear.

This campaign to establish a wildlife sanctuary, to offer recreational facilities to a growing population, to relieve the pressure on Point Lobos Reserve, and to preserve an area unsurpassed in beauty, is of state-wide interest. Twenty-five thousand dollars raised by public subscription will be added to county funds and matched by state funds to achieve the purchase price.

The appeal is urgent to all of those who have once set foot on the white sands of this enchanted spot. Donations may be sent to the Point Lobos League, Box 2294, Carmel, California.

MARGARET MILLARD

Beach near Carmel River mouth. In public ownership, it would provide needed recreational opportunities.



Action Needed Now to Protect San Jacinto

With announcement that the United States Forest Service is to hold a hearing on the status of the San Jacinto Primitive Area in Riverside on April 20-21, it becomes imperative that all friends of wilderness act immediately to defend an important recreation area.

Sierra Club members have an obligation to help in the defense of this Primitive Area. A few will find it possible to attend the hearing and speak in favor of maintaining the present wild status; some can address meetings of other groups, alerting them to the threat and guiding them in combatting it; but everybody can talk it over with his friends, urging them to act, and everybody can write a letter to the appropriate officials (see below).

For more information, if you need it, see the comprehensive story of San Jacinto by Harry C. James in the Winter number of *The Living Wilderness*, a copy of which has been sent to you by the Sierra

Club. Read the articles beginning on page 3 of this *Bulletin*.

You know well what it means to you that there are state parks, to be enjoyed for their beaches, for their redwoods, for their peaks and mountain meadows, for their waterfalls and lake views. We can only assume that these same parks will mean the same to those who come after us—if they can be protected from the exploiters who would turn every last scenic resource to their own commercial ends.

Your pen can yet be more powerful than the exploiter's dynamite and drill if you use it at once.

Place and Time of Hearing: Riverside County Courthouse, Riverside, California, beginning at 9 a.m. Thursday, April 20, 1950.

Who Can Be Heard: Individuals, or authorized representatives of organizations.

How to Be Heard: Apply (as individual or representative) by April 14 to P. A. Thompson, Regional Forester, 630 Sansome St., San Francisco 11, Calif.

Where and When to Write: To Mr. Thompson (see above) by April 27, 1950.

What to Say: Your own reasons for wanting this—or any—primitive area to remain under administration that will preserve its wilderness character.