

SIERRA

September 1959

CLUB BULLETIN



When men will
get up and
testify that
there is no
justification
for preserving
wilderness,
they are putting
words in the
mouths of the
unborn.

—ERNEST SWIFT

The Population Problem—Some Reactions PAGES 4-6

RUSSELL H. VARIAN

The death of Russell H. Varian in Alaska on July 28, at the age of 61, received nation-wide notice as the loss of a brilliant physicist to the scientific world. Those who knew him in the Sierra Club will feel an even keener sense of loss for a friendly, pleasant companion of camp and trail. His favorite song for campfire entertainment was "Oh, I'm Not Meself at All" — yet seldom was there a man who was more "himself" at all times: kind-hearted, generous, and modest.

His work in the development of the klystron tube, twenty years ago, led to the perfection of radar for military and civilian use. In 1948, with his brother Sigurd and four others, he formed Varian Associates, one of the country's most notable electronics firms, of which he was board chairman at the time of his death.

A member of the Sierra Club since 1937, he had been active in the Loma Prieta Chapter, and in recent years, with his wife Dorothy, had devoted much time to the club's Conservation Committee.

This year Russell and Dorothy contributed \$2,500 to help finance further study and photography of the Cascades. Since his death, generous gifts from his friends of more than \$5,000 (through the club's Conservation and Memorial Fund) have initiated a preservation program for Castle Rock Memorial Park on the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga summit.

NOTE TO LIBRARIANS (AND SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN COLLECTORS): THIS IS NUMBER 6 OF VOLUME 44. THERE WAS NO JUNE 1959 ISSUE.

THE SIERRA CLUB,* founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of mountain regions. Participation is invited in the program to enjoy and preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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COVER: Wilderness trail, Glacier National Park. Photo by Cedric Wright.

Sierra Club Publishes Book On Mammoth Lakes Area

At a time when prolonged heat waves in the area have set a new record in the valleys and depleted the snow pack of the back country to a serious low, leaving with it jaded interest and fagged minds, comes refreshment in the new publication *The Mammoth Lakes Sierra*.

The new book is advertised as a handbook for roadside and trail, a statement that is most modest, for its contents provide not only a wealth of information for guidance but paragraphs new to many who have lived most or all of their lives in the region it describes and pictures.

Inside cover maps are complete and accurate from point of entry at Sherwin Summit to the foot of Conway Grade, excellent for reference both for the newcomer and the native.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club, the title page contains the name of Genny Schumacher as its author, ably assisted by such well known authorities in their separate fields as Dean Rinehart, Elden Vestal and Bettie Willard.

Pen drawings complement the text with silhouettes of the mountain peaks, as seen by the motorist, in most effective manner, and pleasing lens work by some widely known cameramen lends its charm to the book.

Not only is the motorist taken on loop trips and given a description of his view but the side roads are carefully covered as an extra bonus.

The hiker, fisherman, hunter and skier all are served interesting facts and directional data, so accurate and entertaining in its reality that the reader breathes the stimulating aroma of the fir and pine and sees the beauty of the tiger lily and the glow of coals as the campfire wanes.

Chapters on geology, trails, trees, wildflowers, birds, mammals, fish, etc., are valuable to the student of nature, and information on the origin of place names answers questions often asked.

History of the region portrays colorfully the early mining camps, the cattle spreads and life and habits of the Piute Indian.

In concluding the reading one is impressed by the amount of research which has gone into its making and its value to readers young and old on a most interesting section of the Sierra.

BRIDGEPORT (Calif.) *Chronicle-Union*

(THE MAMMOTH LAKES SIERRA. By Genny Schumacher. The Sierra Club, San Francisco. First printing August, second printing October 1959. x + 146 pp., maps, illustrations. \$1.95.)

Book Reviews

LANDSCAPES OF ALASKA: Their Geologic Evolution. Prepared by members of the United States Geological Survey. Published in cooperation with the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. Edited by Howel Williams. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1958. xii, 148 pages, illus.; maps. \$5.00.

The new state of Alaska contains within its borders almost as great a variety of geographical, geological, and climatic features as all the rest of the forty-nine states together. To compress within one book such a varied picture is a remarkable achievement, but Professor Williams has accomplished it in a highly successful manner, with able assistance from the other contributors. The book is designed to interpret for the lay visitor to Alaska what the technical scientist has discovered about the origin of the mountains, the lowlands, the maze of islands and inlets, and the bleak Arctic plain. The landscape comes almost alive as one sees it in the light of its evolution through geologic ages. Here in Alaska it is in what might be termed a "raw" condition, undisturbed by man-made scars. Moreover, one sees the creating processes still in action—the rivers, and the sea.

The choice of photographic illustrations is excellent and the reproduction superb. And the maps—rarely has a book been blessed with maps so competently produced to supplement the text. They are works of art as well as scientific

masterpieces. This is "Book No. 1" for all who are interested in Alaska as our frontier state in every sense, including the frontier of Conservation.

FRANCIS P. FARQUHAR

MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS. Prepared by the Division of Ranger Activities, Grand Teton National Park. Edited by E. K. Field, Forester, Region Two, National Park Service. 87 pp. Sketches.

The Grand Teton Park Ranger rescue team offers here the benefit of its years of mountain rescue experience. The bulk of the text is concerned with mountain rescue operations, while a few chapters are devoted to search operations. Technical material was supplied by Park Ranger F. Douglas McLaren and Seasonal Park Rangers Richard Emerson and John Fonda. Detailed evacuation procedure is described showing use of the Stokes litter and resulting problems of rope management. Organization, equipment, and rescue planning are discussed in some detail. While it is improper to suggest that this handbook falls short of a completeness to which its authors may never have aspired, it is unfortunate that more space was not given to the problems of improvised rescue situations. The need for a comprehensive rescue manual still exists; however, this work contains information and describes methods of which all mountaineers should be aware.

ALLEN STECK



Logs and Lots—or National Park?

BY MID-AUGUST the clear-cutting chain saws of the lumbermen—working on a speed-up schedule—had sliced their way through several hundred acres of virgin forest on Northern California's Point Reyes Peninsula. It made little difference that legislation had already been introduced in Congress to make the Marin County peninsula a national seashore park—or that the forest if left standing could offer recreation, breathing space, and solace to future generations of residents of the crowded San Francisco Bay Area and visitors from all over the nation.

The Point Reyes Peninsula, bypassed by civilization for 300 years, has now been discovered—not only by the lumbermen but by real estate interests. A long strand of yet-unspoiled beach at Drake's Bay is being promoted for building sites.

At stake in the race between the conservationists and the "developers" is the superb area of beaches, cliffs, rolling hills, lakes, streams and forests described in a National Park Service report as providing "a combination of scenic, recreational and biological interests which can be found nowhere else in this country as near a large center of population."

The conservationists are at least giving the commercial interests a run for their money. Congress last year appropriated \$15,000 for a survey of the area by the Park Service to get facts regarding the feasibility of making the area a park. The survey is now under way but will not be completed before next spring.

On July 23 California's Senator Clair Engle and Representative Clem Miller of Marin County introduced identical bills in the Senate and House to authorize creation of a 35,000-acre national seashore park at Point Reyes and issued a joint statement cogently setting forth the case for preservation of the area. They noted that 3,000,000 people live within 75 miles of the peninsula and that within four decades the figure could be expected to be 10,000,000. But even this tremendous increase does not fully measure future pressure on parks. Because of increasing congestion, higher incomes, more leisure and mobility, the demand for outdoor recreation will within those four decades be close to ten times the present level. Unless

the required breathing space is acquired soon, it will disappear forever, paved over by highways and housing tracts.

On July 29 a large group of Senators and Representatives introduced the well-named SOS bills—Save Our Shorelines. The bills authorized the appropriation of \$50,000,000 for the creation of ten national shoreline areas, including Point Reyes; another \$10,000,000 to match state funds for creation of further shoreline parks; and \$400,000 for a Park Service study on the Federal acquisition of ten additional shore areas.

But the mills of Congress grind slowly. Thousands of bills are tossed into the hopper each session, and the survival rate is low. If these excellent shoreline appropriation bills are to pass, public opinion must be mobilized behind them. One of the most hopeful developments is a project of the Marin Conservation League and the Sierra Club's San Francisco Bay Chapter for a documentary film on the area's scenic and recreational possibilities for showing to clubs, schools, and other groups. Most of the footage has already been shot by Mrs. Eric Reynolds, a distinguished wildlife photographer, but contributions are needed to pay further expenses.

The park project has been enthusiastically endorsed by San Francisco Bay Area newspapers and civic groups. Opposition comes from Point Reyes dairymen, farmers, and property owners who are afraid that a park would interfere with dairying and agriculture, from potential subdividers, and from some residents who want the peninsula to remain as it is, a futile hope in view of the march of "progress" toward the area. Some of this opposition might be overcome if it were understood that national parks have proved to be a great financial stimulus to the areas around them.

Meanwhile realtors are busy promoting "Drake's Beach Estates," and the magnificent Black Forest on Inverness Ridge may well be logged over before Congress can take any final action, which is not expected for another year.

Those interested in saving the Point Reyes

Peninsula as a national seashore area may take several courses of action: (1) Exercise their constitutional rights as citizens to write letters to Senators and Representatives urging action on the Miller-Engle Point Reyes bills (S. 2428 and H.R. 8358) and the SOS bills (S. 2460, H.R. 8445, and H.R. 8449). (2) Letters to the Secretary of the Interior urgently requesting immediate attempts to prevent destruction of park values by lumber and real estate interests. (3) Contributions to the Sierra Club's Point Reyes film fund. (4) Distribution of reprints of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* of September, 1958, "Report on Point Reyes."

In the contest for the future of Point Reyes, the "developers" are running ahead of the conservationists. But it's still anybody's race.

HAROLD GILLIAM

Point Reyes Film Facts

The Sierra Club Point Reyes film is 16 mm. color with music and commentary, and will run for 30 minutes. A preview of footage already taken by Mrs. Eric Reynolds shows a great variety of interest—bird and animal life, flowers and trees, inland and seacoast scenery, and outdoor activities to make every viewer wish to be there.

Estimated cost is \$5,000. Contributions already received total \$1,200 (of which \$500 was generously donated by Howard Hirstel of the Sierra Club at the opening of the fund appeal). This Bulletin affords the first opportunity to tell the entire membership about the film. The committee is confident that many club members will help make possible the early completion of the film by sending their gifts—large or small—to the Point Reyes Film Fund at the club office.

*Down go Douglas firs
on Inverness Ridge—
National Park Service photo*



FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE QUESTION OF EXPANDING POPULATION

How Dense Should People Be?—II

The April Bulletin discussed the relation of population to conservation. We asked several prominent people for their reactions, excerpts from which appear below. Mimeographed copies of their full statements are available on request (25¢ will cover cost).—Ed.

LUNA B. LEOPOLD

Conservation means the maintenance of a level of quality in human experience; it stands in bold contradistinction to the philosophy that ever-expanding quantity is a sufficient goal to satisfy the mind of man.

David Brower took a courageous step when he introduced into the *Sierra Club Bulletin* in unavoidable terms his conviction that the problem of population stands high on the agenda of any organization which purports to deal in conservation matters.

... There are many conservationists who wish to confine their conservation activities to contemplation of the sweet smell of alpine meadows. The complexity of the modern world should disabuse our minds of the comfortable feeling that we will save any wilderness by a bit of barbed wire at the end of the present paved road. The pressure gradient is too steep for that. And the pressures all boil down, ultimately, to pressures of people—people who want to spread out because they find they are uncomfortably close together. . . .

What adherents of wilderness seek to preserve is the indefinable quality of experience which separates the mass-produced and mass-enjoyed from the undiluted bigness of the natural world. When this quality is removed, no matter what the quantity of the substitution, the very heart of the experience is gone.

The kind of quality here involved can stand but little dilution or degradation. The pressures of population are inevitably di-

rected toward such dilution and degradation. Indeed, the population issue is the basic problem in conservation. Before this problem can be effectively approached, there must be a realization that the problem exists as something directly concerned with human life and with the nature of human experience. We who call ourselves conservationists should be the first to realize that this problem sits squarely on our doorstep.

LINUS PAULING

I myself have no doubt that this problem is the most important one that we face, except for that of the possible destruction of the world in a nuclear war. Also, I have no doubt that it will be solved—just as I am sure that the problem of world destruction through war will be solved. The solution of the population problem is control of conception, and limitation of the population of the world to the number that can be properly supported by the resources of the world.

HARRISON BROWN

It seems to me axiomatic that wilderness and high population density are incompatible.

I have recently been involved in making some projections of the population of the Pacific States over the next half century and it is difficult for me to visualize any combination of circumstances, not involving catastrophe, which will result in a total population fifty years from now in California, Washington and Oregon of less than 87 million persons. New urban areas will in all likelihood equal in area the present city of Los Angeles multiplied fifteen-fold.

Under the circumstances, it is going to be extremely difficult to maintain wilderness areas of any sort. Long ago I stopped going to Yosemite Valley—Times Square is hardly more crowded. Our National Parks

simply are not large enough to give our people the feeling of communion with nature which I believe is essential for a good life.

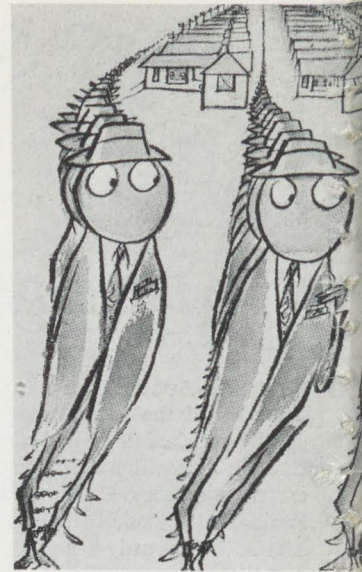
SIR JULIAN HUXLEY

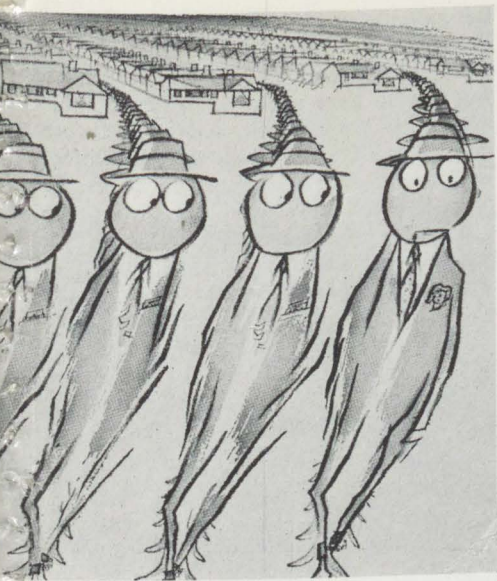
Over-population is, in my opinion, the most serious threat to the whole future of our species. If nothing is done to check it, our descendants will have to live in a world with far fewer opportunities for enjoyment and fulfilment, far more frustration and misery, less hope, and worse prospects for the future. This is not merely a matter of concern for our remote descendants, but will already become serious in our grandchildren's time, if nothing is done to halt the threat. Emphasis is often laid on the threat to food supplies, and of course this is very serious for underdeveloped countries like India, and basic for the whole world. However, an expanding population also threatens wild life and wilderness areas and man's enjoyment of nature in general. This is already serious in overcrowded countries like Britain, and if nothing is done about it will become increasingly serious even in countries like the U.S.A. with their open spaces and National Parks. I am very glad that you are trying to make your readers understand this.

RAYMOND B. COWLES

All animals except man live only on the annual or the perennially recurrent produce of the sun, air, and rain, the renewable resources that unendingly replace themselves. All living things but man have always been limited in numbers by the requirement that they must and can live only on the annual ration of these renewable resources, and unfortunately man is facing this experience for the first time in recent centuries.

In the biological sense man differs from





his fellow living creatures chiefly in the fact that he has had the intelligence to learn how to use the vast non-renewable resources, those that however great the quantity may be, are in the end limited, and are finite and nonrenewable. These are the resources that have given man the tools with which to exploit to their maximum the riches of the renewable wealth on which his existence basically and ultimately depends. In a way the finite resources, the nonrenewable wealth, especially of coal and oil, are his chief capital with which to continue the control and exploit nature to the maximum.

The "population explosion" is accelerating the pace or rate at which we are destroying our known finite resources of capital—the resources that we know how to use, and this is also reducing the sorely needed capital resource of time. Time may be infinite in one sense, but like solar energy it is meted out, doled out, whereas the demands of human beings are accelerating at a bewildering and increasingly dangerous rate. Population pressure telescopes time, and we may be cheating ourselves or our children of a continuingly rich future.

WILLIAM VOGT

We are confronted with a series of phenomena and events that are as real as the highways and suburbs that are crowding us off the land. No matter what one's philosophic approach or the dogma to which one adheres, these are facts and no amount of wishful thinking, rationalization or talk can exorcise them.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

It seems to me self-evident that the problems of conservation and of maintaining wilderness areas cannot be considered apart from the problem of population increase at

unprecedented rates. The short-term threat is the H-bomb: the long-term menace—to man, to nature, to civilization—is a population increase which will raise human numbers from 2.8 billions to 5.6 billions in about forty years.

JAMES BONNER

Population control has already arrived in many parts of the world. It has, in particular, arrived in those parts of the world which are most industrialized. It has come in spite of church doctrine, as in France, which was the first nation in which population became stable. Populations are almost stabilized in Sweden, Switzerland, and now in Japan—in countries that have gone through the Industrial Revolution and successfully made the transformation from an agricultural to an urban industrial life. The population of the U. S., it is true, is expanding rapidly, and it is in fact growing more rapidly than the population of India. . . .

Population control in the U. S. and in the world is inevitable. All one has to do to realize this is to make some simple calculations. If the population of the world were to continue to grow at the present rate for another 700 years, there would by that time be only room for each person to stand up—he couldn't sit down any more. This is an obvious impossibility. The human population has to taper off and stabilize itself at some realistic level.

ROGER D. HALE

Ethics, religion, morality and mores notwithstanding, man is a physical as well as a spiritual being. As a physical living being, it is theoretically possible for him to reproduce at a biological maximum. All living beings are subject to population controls: such as predators, disease, or starvation. Except for man, other forms of life are subject to these controls as exercised by nature. Man—through the gift of unusual intelligence—has consciously learned to understand and limit these "natural controls" as they apply to himself—that is, all but the most important control of all—self-control. Unless he learns to replace natural controls by self-control he will meet disaster through the pressure of sheer numbers.

IRA N. GABRIELSON

Every conservationist and every thinking biologist has been talking for years about the consequences of the terrific increase in human population that is occurring in many parts of the world. I see no particular virtue in dodging the fact that it will certainly intensify the drain on all natural resources, including recreational resources. To do anything about it, we are going to have to come out in the open and look at the problem squarely. . . .

SAMUEL H. ORDWAY

We here at the Conservation Foundation concur in the view that the current rate of population growth is the most challenging problem of our time. It is basic to all conservation problems because it is human demands upon all resources which are jeopardizing the resource base. We are delighted that the Sierra Club . . . is taking a clear and firm stand on the importance of every effort to limit the trend. It seems to me that the conservationists should constantly publicize the problem.

LOWELL SUMNER

As a biologist the human population explosion, and its declining spiral of natural resources, is to me the greatest threat of all. If we were lemmings in the last year of a cycle of abundance we could not be expected to forecast our inevitable fate. But we are supposed to be better educated than lemmings. Hence it is to me astounding that our educational institutions whose purpose is to show us how to deal intelligently with life's problems, for the most part scarcely seem to perceive the existence of this tremendous, over-shadowing problem. Almost more unbelievable, in all our land there is hardly a college course available on that most basic of all the Humanities: *Human Ecology*.

But the time is ripe, even dangerously over-ripe, as far as the population control problem is concerned. We shall have to face up or ultimately perish, and what a dreary, *stupid*, unlovely way to perish, on a ruined globe stripped of its primeval beauty. Indeed, to one who holds the earth and its extraordinarily complex and finely balanced living envelope in deepest awe and reverence, the destruction of global ecology through blind and uncontrolled human multiplication would appear to be the sheerest and most final blasphemy of which man might be capable.

GEORGE MARSHALL

. . . Some may say we should keep to our knitting which takes more time as it is than anyone can give to it regardless of how much time he spends. I do think that we should be careful not to spread ourselves too thin and take up every important issue concerning humanity as members of the Sierra Club. However, I feel that there are some, like population, that are so directly important to the future of our work that although they may not be our primary con-

The illustration, by cartoonist philosopher Robert Osborn, is from "Osborn on Conformity," courtesy Better Homes & Gardens (October 1957).

cern as a Sierra Club, we can hardly close our eyes to them.

My father-in-law, Louis I. Dublin, asked me if I would accompany him on his visit to Aldous Huxley. (Dr. Dublin has been for many years a leading expert on population problems as well as a leader of the public health movement. He was one of the organizers of the World Population Conference in Rome in the mid-nineteen fifties.)

It was an impressive thing to listen to the discussion between these elderly gentlemen, mostly around various aspects of what is happening to population in particular countries and in the world as a whole. Both agreed that it is the most important international problem and that what was being done through many aid and other international programs is pretty meaningless unless substantial progress is made in curbing present trends of rapid population increase.

A. STARKER LEOPOLD

I am convinced that this whole population problem transcends all other conservation issues in basic importance, and I am proud to see the Sierra Club take its place among organizations that would like to face this one squarely.

LEWIS MUMFORD

It would be a help if studies were instituted to show how the opportunities for living would be altered by successive stages of growth—what a smaller population would provide in addition to what we now have, and what a billion, 5 billion, or 20 billion more would permanently take away, no matter how great our technological advance. Since the natural environment will suffer increasing degradation under population pressure, however orderly or rational, it is a special duty of all conservationists, regionalists, and naturalists to take the lead. . . .

WILLIAM H. WHYTE

Enjoyed your piece on population: from a long range point of view the increase is all important. Funny how Americans assume that growth per se means a rising standard of living. We should know better already.

FAIRFIELD OSBORN

It is a delusion to think that our country will be better off, either materially or spiritually, with an ever-increasing population. It is time that we Americans decide what we intend to do about this mounting problem. The choice is both an individual one and a collective one.

DURWARD L. ALLEN

. . . Some of the best minds of our time are awakening to the potentialities in this overshadowing biological force. A resource must

be evaluated in terms of the number of people it must serve—any other viewpoint affirms, in effect, that we can get something for nothing and that two people can occupy the same space at the same time. In terms that Frank Darling sometimes uses, our out-of-doors is the "tenderest" part of our human "range." Under the pressure of population increase it is the first thing to be degraded and destroyed.

I note by the latest issue of the *Population Bulletin* that at our present rate of increase we will have 260 million people in

this country by 1980. The realities of population pressure will be catching up with us rapidly from here on. I am sure that many people who have refused to recognize this problem in the past will be doing so before long. It is a favorable sign that the subject is discussed ever more freely in the public press, as it certainly should be.

Your progressive, up-to-date concepts and program in the Sierra Club should give comfort to conservationists all over the continent. I wish we might have more regional groups of such stature.

Board Acts on Road Standards

The Board of Directors held a day-long meeting in San Francisco on April 25 and organized for another year.

The five directors elected in April included four incumbents, and since the Board, under the by-laws, takes office on the first Saturday in May, the incumbent Board of 15 constituted the quorum. In preparation for the next administrative year, a new slate of officers was chosen. At the club general election all the proposed revisions of the by-laws had passed. Under these, designation of certain categories of memberships and certain club committees was left to the Board instead of being specified in the by-laws. So the Board decided to continue the existing categories of life and patron members and to continue the present committees with functions as they have been, subject to future redefinition. The office of Associate Secretary of the Board was established, with the holder of this office to have primary responsibility, under the Secretary, for preparation of minutes of the Board, and to have full right of participation in discussions in Board meetings without vote. Holway R. Jones was elected to the post.

The incumbent honorary officers were re-elected and three new patron members were elected. The latter were Max McGraw, supporter of wildlife preservation and donor of funds for publication in book form of "This Is the American Earth," and Helen and Joseph LeConte, who have recently donated to the club the valuable collection of photographic negatives made by their late father, Joseph N. LeConte, former Honorary President.

National Park Service road standards were discussed at length. The Board adopted an introductory statement, five conclusions, and four recommendations, and decided to continue further study under a new committee (since the former chairman is now President). Main features of the recommendations:

- The National Park Service should establish general numerical limit standards essentially as proposed tentatively by the Service in September 1958.

- There should be created additional limit standards in relation to the width of the band of scenic alteration. These would deal with such elements as the use of humps and dips, variation of gradient, substitution of long-radius curves for tangents, lessening the depths of cut and fill, avoidance of any damage to natural structures

of unusual scenic value, and minimizing of visible scars.

- A top management policy should be established to provide that the use of limit numerical standards is considered good practice and is mandatory wherever such use will lessen the damage to scenic and other park values.

The Board also supported these proposals, from various sources, regarding national parks:

Two new parks—a Great Basin National Park in the Wheeler Peak-Lehman Cave region of Nevada, and a C&O Canal National Park in Maryland.

Changes in the boundaries of Death Valley National Monument, involving several additions and a deletion.

Expediting the program for acquisition of the Big Meadow area adjoining Yosemite National Park and for a careful study of its potential as an interpretive park entrance to supersede the Arch Rock entrance. The Board urged that pending this there be no realignment of the All-Year Highway between El Portal and Yosemite Valley.

The Board recognized the importance of preserving segments of scenic seacoast from increasingly encroaching "development," and resolved to support the creation of a national seashore in the vicinity of Point Reyes in California. Similar proposals for national seashores, both east (Cape Cod) and west (Oregon Dunes), are being studied.

The Board urged immediate action to close and obliterate, as soon as possible, the road put through Berdoo Canyon within Joshua Tree National Monument.

Considering national forest matters, the Board supported the extension of the Cucamonga Wild Area by adding a tier of sections south of the existing boundary, as recommended by the supervisor of San Bernardino National Forest.

The Alaska Sportsmen's Council was commended for efforts to establish a conservation policy in the State of Alaska.

Turning to internal matters, the Board approved the establishment of a new chapter—Great Lakes, to serve members in the general area of Chicago—and also delegated to the Council authority to approve chapter by-laws and changes therein.

Various study assignments were made to chapters and committees.

LEWIS F. CLARK

Mountain Talk



CROSSING the Sierra passes these days may be easy or hard, depending upon the snow pack, the weather, your burden and your wind. A few decades ago, before the trails were in, there was rough going of a kind that is difficult to imagine now.

It is possible, however, to get a whiff of the old dangers, fears and hardships by reading the early numbers of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*. For instance, go back to July 18, 1908, when three Sierrans led an equal number of Kanawyer's best mountain mules over a gap in the Goddard Divide and found a way down talus and around cascades and falls to overcome the chief obstacle to a high mountain route between Yosemite and Kings Canyon.

The leader of that pioneering journey, Joseph Nisbet LeConte, wrote about it in the next *Bulletin* (January 1909).

This LeConte was "Little Joe," born in 1870, son of the redoubtable Professor whose Sierran ramblings that same year were recalled in this space (*SCB*, February 1959). The son was a lifelong ornament of the campus at Berkeley, growing up there with the university and becoming a distinguished professor of mechanical engineering. But we are concerned with his mountaineering, equally distinguished in the course of 44 Sierra expeditions.

LeConte, a charter member and an officer of the Sierra Club, had been working up to the "High Mountain Route" for years. From Volume I on, the *Bulletins* are rich with his accounts of exploring the sources of the Kings and San Joaquin, and ascents of the Palisades and the Evolution peaks. His excellent photographs (using "the newly perfected celluloid film") and his maps added to

the value of detailed descriptions of routes.

In 1908 he was ready to make his great contribution to the work begun by Theodore Solomons, who was the first to conceive a Sierra crest pack trail.

With James Hutchinson, Duncan McDuffie and the aforesaid mules, LeConte left Yosemite by way of Nevada Fall and the Sunrise Trail. On July 4 they crossed Donohue Pass; one of the mules broke through soft snow on the descent to Rush Creek, and had to be repacked, but that night they were at Agnew Meadow.

The way is familiar to us now—it is the John Muir Trail, of course. A half-century ago it took a pathfinder to trace it.

From Reds Meadow (luxurious baths in the hot spring, the last letters home) they went via Mammoth Pass to Fish Creek and the first real wilderness. Sorting out old sheep trails took time, thunderstorms brought delays, sometimes the grazing was poor. By the 10th they had reached the Mono Creek drainage and were climbing Mount Abbot, so they thought. Painfully working along a knife-edge, they reached an impossible notch on the other side of which was "a clear cliff of 1,000 feet: the north face of Mount Abbot." Even as you and I.

Down Mono Creek they went, resuming the journey, to a crossing at Vermilion Valley (now under a reservoir) and up the Bear Creek trail to a rainy night's camp. On the 13th they had two more tries for the top of Mount Abbot, and succeeded in making a first ascent of the peak. Then down Hilgard-Creek to Bear Creek, up to the base of the Seven Gables, some pass-finding, and down into Blaney Meadows for a wash-up

day at the hot spring and a splendid dinner topped off with "a whisky gelatine most artistically concocted."

On July 16 and 17 the little party traveled up the San Joaquin's south fork to Evolution Creek, threaded the wonderful valley at the base of The Hermit, and made camp at Evolution Lake. Before them was the Goddard Divide—"the key to the whole situation."

"If we failed in crossing it our plan of a High Mountain Route failed, for the great spurs and cañons between Mount Goddard and Woodworth Mountain formed an impassable barrier to the west of the Middle Fork of the Kings River, which does of necessity force the traveler as far to the west as Tehipite Valley."

The gap in Goddard Divide, 12,000 feet above sea level, had been crossed by the Geological Survey the year before, when everything in the area was under snow. LeConte himself had seen the gap free of snow in 1904 and had considered it not feasible for pack animals on the south side. On the eve of the crossing he slept badly.

"Long before the sun rose over the battlements of Mount Darwin," the mules were loaded and the party moved through the lake basin straight up to the pass. At 9 a.m. the three men stared down the other side into "an awful looking gorge in the black metamorphic rock, partly choked with snow."

Without pausing they plunged down over the talus piles. The well-trained mules cooperated, and they passed "a little black lake," the highest source of the Middle Fork of the Kings. The canyon closed in, and they were forced to take the animals down the creek bed. By 11 o'clock they had gone a mile, and stopped to rest and eat.

The stream's course down the gorge became impracticable, so they climbed out on the south side to see for the first time the "stupendous panorama" of the head of the Middle Fork. The creek dropped off, they saw, in waterfalls. Directly below them were cliffs. So they worked across the talus slopes, back and forth and around, "taking greater and greater chances with our animals."

At 4 p.m., tired and soaking wet, they came to a meadow at the foot of the steep descent and camped in a grove of pines. "We were . . . happy in having accomplished our principal object."

They had taken pack animals over Muir Pass and down the headwaters of the Middle Fork in what is now officially called LeConte Canyon. The epochal trip didn't end until July 27 at Kanawyer's camp in Kings Canyon, but this was the climax.

The key had been turned, and the future John Muir Trail was unlocked.

FRED GUNSKY

Bulletin Board

*Starred items call for
your interest and attention*

Of National Import:

★ The U.S. Forest Service will hold two hearings on the proposed Glacier Peak Wilderness Area in October, 1959. The first hearing will take place in the Fairhaven Junior High School Auditorium, 110 Park Ridge Road, Bellingham, Washington, at 9 a.m. on October 13. The second will be held at 9 a.m. on October 16 in the Pioneer Junior High School Gymnasium, Russell Street, Wenatchee, Washington.

The proposed Glacier Peak Wilderness Area in Washington, consisting of some 423,000 acres, contains some of the most magnificent scenery in the United States. However, the Forest Service boundaries would eliminate the beautiful valleys of the Agnes, Suiattle, Whitechuck and Stehekin rivers—major, integral units of this extraordinary area.

Oral or written views may be presented in person at the scheduled Forest Service hearings, or written comments may be mailed in to Regional Forester J. Herbert Stone, P. O. Box 4137, Portland 8, Oregon, by October 30, 1959.

★ Action on the vitally important Wilderness Bill has been postponed by the Senate Interior Committee until Congress reconvenes in January, 1960.

Forest Service "show-me" trip to Kern Plateau, arranged for Robert Wolf of the U.S. Senate Interior Committee, through Senators James E. Murray, Thomas H. Kuchel, Clair Engle, and Representative Harlan Hagen. The party traveled 40 miles by horseback across the country the Forest Service proposes to open up for "mass recreation" by means of

Approximately 290,000 acres of public land east of the Kern Plateau is proposed for management and development by the California Fish and Game Department. To be called the Monache-Walker Pass Wildlife Management Area, this refuge would continue to have its grazing and forestry resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

At the conclusion of a six-day, 60-mile pack trip through the Sierra from Silver Lake to McGee Creek Canyon, in the area which the proposed Mammoth Pass road would traverse, Justice William O. Douglas of the United States Supreme Court made the following statement:

"In terms of preserving what little remains of our wilderness heritage, another road would be the worst thing that could happen.

"The back country is very heavily pounded now by foot and horse travel. Easier access would quickly result in vast deterioration of the country which the road would make more easily accessible.

"Looking ahead 100 years, I can only conclude all road building into wilderness areas must cease."

Justice Douglas, who made the trip with several Sierra Club members, is gathering information for a book on the American wilderness to be completed next year.

logging the area carefully first. The photographs are of a freshly bulldozed pioneer road extending beyond the careful logging already accomplished at Poison Meadow, at the end of the new Brush Creek timber-access road into the virgin Kern Plateau country. The Wolf report recommended that the Forest Service delay its proposed road into the

On the California Scene:

Governor Brown has signed into law AB 720, thus transferring all administrative authority over California's State Park system from the State Park Commission to the Division of Beaches and Parks. The State Park Commission now becomes primarily an advisory body, but it will continue to set "general policy" for the State Park system.

New Chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks, Charles A. De Turk, is proceeding with a program of park acquisition and development.

The long-worked-for enlargement of Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Marin County, is beginning to take shape, but this summer the virgin redwoods of Kent Canyon—an integral part of the future park—were logged.

Efforts to remove the scenic Monterey Coast Highway (Route 1) from the state freeway plan have been successful.

Another proposal to create a series of dams to impound the waters of the Kings River is before the California Water Resources Board. The Sierra Club opposes this proposal, which would invade Kings Canyon National Park for the generation of hydro-power.

EDGAR AND PEGGY WAYBURN

east side of the plateau from Kennedy Meadows, in order to protect "the opportunity for the best long-term multiple-use decisions." The Forest Service within a few days thereafter advertised for bids on the east side road—a road also opposed by leading conservationists who have studied the matter. (Photos by David Brower.)

