



WORDS OF *the* WILD

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

Celebrating Thirty Years

Some reminiscences of the California Desert Protection campaign

-- by Judy Anderson

My first ever encounter with the California desert was on July 10, 1967, a drive from Las Vegas to Los Angeles in 100+ degrees in a two-door Chevelle without air conditioning. The sun was in my eyes; everything seemed to be melting; it was horrible; I hated it.

Then how was I out in the desert savoring wild areas by 1968?

The desert grows on you: In earlier days, while I was still in college I had read "Time and the River Flowing", a Sierra Club book on the Grand Canyon. After I moved to Los Angeles to work on Colorado River issues, Sally Reid then coached me on RARE 2 forest wilderness issues--which taught me much about why we needed to protect wild places. I got the task for drawing maps for areas we wanted to protect as wilderness; my mapping skills became enormously helpful in the desert effort. I also worked with the Angeles Chapter on energy issues,

and at that time there were proposals for nuclear power development on the Colorado River near Blythe and for a

the Desert Committee to get the Club to pay attention to the big California desert. Bill's trips and those led by his successor

Lyle Gaston followed Sierra Club principles of taking people to visit places that need protection. There was a geology trip to the Whipple Mountains led by a UCSD geologist. I learned from Cal Tech's Mel Gainder about geology, --fascinating geodes. Issues were everywhere: geothermal in Imperial County: birds shredded and vaporized;

transmission lines; gas and oil
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photo: Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter Archives

President Clinton signing California Desert Protection Act on Oct 31, 1994, as members of Congress and desert leaders look on. Alan Cranston stands behind the president, just to his right. Left of the president is CA Rep. George Miller; to Miller's left is Judy Anderson.

nuclear waste dump west of Needles. This energy issues work brought me to desert matters almost accidentally when I went to the proposed nuclear dump site, west of the Turtle Mountains. I was astonished to see how dramatically wild the place was: not good for nuclear waste but great for wilderness. My new desert outlook got strengthened one Thanksgiving as I explored Death Valley on my own--desert pupfish, cactus wrens, quail, jack rabbits!

I went on several Sierra Club Desert Committee Desert Study trips, organized since 1971 by Bill Holden, who started

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The California Desert Protection Act is the largest wilderness bill ever passed by Congress for the Lower 48.

pipelines crisscrossing everywhere. I was awed by spring wildflowers, long vistas--and the disturbing way scars were so long-lived-- I was hooked. Jim Dodson, Desert Committee chair after Lyle, snagged me for a trip to Hunter Mountain, and when Elden Hughes showed up there with a copy of the BLM's draft desert plan, with its obvious inadequacies for protecting the wild places we knew about--our work started.

The study trips

The first big task was to use our Desert Study trips to determine just where were the areas that needed protection, and to describe their many values. I would go out with Dr Mabel Barnes,

and safety. Once in a while we had BLM staff join us. George Barnes led our caravan when we drove north over steep and rocky Steele Pass to the Eureka Dunes looking for *dedekera*, a new rare dune plant discovered by our botanist friend Mary DeDecker.

There were desert trips with Harriet Allen from San Diego to the muddy slopes of the Coyote Mountains heading out on the Interstate as it winds over the escarpment down to Imperial County and its Desert: this particular area has shell artifacts, geoglyphs, and odd concretions.

The campaign

The California Desert Protection League launched officially in 1980. Since none of us felt right being "chair", we became the three Directors. Doug Scott, then in our DC office, said to me, as I chaired League meetings, that "if I myself could know everything that was going on, it wasn't big enough." The message in that was: Keep inviting more to empower those you have.

By this time I was chair of the Angeles Chapter. We worked out among ourselves

narrative descriptions were needed. Stan used his professional familiarity with legal descriptions to edit the narratives. BLM desert plan documents gave us a first draft for boundaries; where we wanted bigger areas, we needed a rationale. Stan edited, amended and kept consistent the detailed information we gave to Senator Cranston. Our attention to detail made it hard for opponents to find a weak spot. Once Senator Cranston surprised us: he wanted a lily sanctuary in the bill that we were ignorant of. We had to check it out quickly.

We always feared we'd be pressured to give up some acreage of our proposed wilderness areas. We made a secret list of priority areas we would not give up. Colorado Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell requested that six vehicle routes be kept open, and we gave him and the off-roaders that. The Military, Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District, Southern CA Edison, and Southern CA Gas all asked for and got boundary adjustments for their infrastructure.

Author Frank Wheat operated in a different dimension: Washington DC. I was surprised by all the trips to DC he took visiting offices of his Hill friends, remembered from other issues.

Unexpected support came from artists in Santa Barbara belonging to the SCAPE Group (Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment.) They heard about our campaign and, led by Larry Iwerks, drove to the desert to paint. Their resulting exhibit travelled to Los Angeles and Glendale, then to Visalia, and on to DC, including a prominent display in the Capitol Rotunda.

The tours

CDPL organized two desert tours with Senator Cranston, one with Senator Wilson, and one with Senator Feinstein. Cranston flew into the Ridgecrest airfield and was met by a mini caravan with a USGS geologist; we took him to the proposed Death Valley expansion. With us were three Hollywood stars recruited by Kim Cranston-- Shelley Duvall, Ed Begley Jr. and Morgan Fairchild. The Senator was with us for several days: he slept in a tent on the ground as did Begley. But Duvall and Fairchild used the motorhome we had brought in.

That tour went well. Professor Stebbins found a lungless salamander on the dunes in Saline Valley. We found -- continued p. 3

Bob Cates Collection, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter Archives



Judy Anderson leads a CDPL meeting in San Bernardino Mts.

who was chair of the Mathematics Department at Occidental College--I was her driver--our trips together went on all during the 1970s. Later, trips with Bob and Maureen Cates were to find and report rock art locations, especially in the proposed expansions of Death Valley on the east and north. In the school Christmas break, Jim and I and usually Mabel would visit a part of the desert we knew little of, staying in a motel to allow maximum exploring. For example, Whipple Mountains, Bradshaw trail, Mecca Hills, McCoy Mountains, eastern Imperial County, Clark Mountain, the Barstow-Vegas motorcycle ride route, Hunter Mountain, Amboy, Hidden Valley, Providence Mountains.

We carried heavy-duty phone walkie talkies. We used them in pairs -- one in the vehicle at the head of a caravan, one at the tail vehicle. The cars were spaced well apart to let dust clear the road between cars. We tried to keep the number of vehicles small for efficiency

our special individual focus. Elden's three volumes of photos and his personal mission to put a foot on the ground in each area we sought for wilderness (and to photograph them) was as massive a job as my special job of preparing maps. His involved months of driving and camping. He got a feel from being there, on the ground, that just viewing maps in an office doesn't impart.

We knew early on that a Congressional bill would be needed. In 1984, after the California Wilderness Act passed, that Senator Cranston had worked on, we finally could get him interested in a desert bill--as his next big thing. Having a bill in Congress called for a whole new level of action. We began a daily check-in of Jim Dodson, myself, me, Kathy Files in Senator Cranston's office, and our DC staffer Debbie Sease. We soon included Elden Hughes.

Bob Cates worked from home and from the CSU library, collecting scientific endorsements from around the world. Add in another unheralded worker from home, Stan Haye: as maps were done,

Molok Luyuk campaign scores at agency Community Meeting

-- by Bob Schneider

What does “a sea of purple” portend?

National Monument campaigns have many milestones-- from kitchen meetings that discuss ideas and strategies to fundraising and support building. You need science, public support and now Tribal support and leadership.

Further along in the campaign might be a visit from the Interior Secretary—as happened in September 2023 when Secretary Deb Haaland visited the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument to see for herself the Molok Luyuk expansion area.

The most recent milestone for the Molok Luyuk effort was a community meeting hosted by the US Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service

(locally the BLM Ukiah Office and the Mendocino National Forest)



Ready to speak at Woodland

to learn local support for the Monument expansion. This was on December 13, 2023, in Woodland, California.

Over 200 hundred people attended the public meeting, representing coalition group members, business groups, elected officials, Tribes, and many others. Agency folks included Nada Wolff Culver, principal deputy director, Bureau of Land Management; Karen Mouritsen, Bureau of Land Management California director; and Wade McMaster, Mendocino National Forest Supervisor, representing Regional Forester Jennifer Eberlien.

The Molok Luyuk campaign handed out bright purple t-shirts to supporting individuals. The meeting was from 2-4 pm, but the agency representatives extended the meeting past 5 pm to let all who wanted to speak have their three minutes. Seventy-five people spoke and seventy-five spoke in support! Not one



photo: Anne Henry

“Sea of purple” at Woodland community meeting

dissent! The Sierra Club was well represented. Perhaps, most rewarding to the campaign organizers was looking out to the audience at a sea of purple t-shirts with the words Molok Luyuk and an adobe lily on the front.

Now we wait and continue to apply pressure, asking supporters to keep urging the president to expand this national monument.. Recent ads by Vet Voice and others and letters to the editor continue to advocate for Molok Luyuk! Please check <https://www.expandberryessa.org/>

Desert Protection Act at 30 -fr p. 2
petroglyphs on Hunter Mountain. Press was invited the second day, when the Senator climbed a ridge with hikers from Desert Survivors. The CDC (the coalition of opponents) dogged the trip; Cranston stopped to speak with them at one point--he loved the challenge of meeting opponents. On the third day I drove the senator with Joe Fontaine, who took him to Bakersfield for his return flight to DC.

Senator Wilson had only one day with us in a two-engine plane. I was in the co-pilot seat directing the route over Eagle Mountain and to an Arizona airport east of the Whipple Mountains, where vans drove him to a wash where Elden and his wife Patty had food and drinks set up.

I wasn't present on the second Cranston trip, a campout in Joshua Tree National Monument, but Los Angeles staffer Bob Hattoy and Dr. Stebbins were. Stories were that Stebbins was a wildlife magnet: shy bighorn sheep walked by him; that evening, when Stebbins and the senator hooted at the full moon, owls answered them. And--did they *really* witness a battle between a rattlesnake and a coyote??

Senator Feinstein was met in Palm

Springs in a pair of vans, and we drove up to J Tree. Spring wildflowers called for various stops where she took many photos. She even made a small watercolor of flowers, for her own enjoyment.

Congressman Levine, who finally agreed to be the House sponsor of the bill, went out with me via I-10 to Mecca Hills, But his staff, scared by a tarantula, refused to go past the entrance to Ladder Canyon.

Poor Cranston—he started our bill on its way through Congress but could not stay to victory. He always was paired with a Republican senate colleague who opposed the bill. Not until November, 1992, when TWO Democratic senators in support were elected—Feinstein and Boxer, was there a clear path to success.

For the day the President signed the bill on Halloween, 1994, Jim, Elden and Patty, Peter and Joyce Burk, and I were invited to DC. Because there was so little time between bill passage and signing, and because Clinton was preoccupied with the imminent election, the decision to have a real signing ceremony was last-minute. We had to get plane tickets in a hurry; we went through a security clearance; then, the question – where to stay in DC.?

Then-Sierra Club staffer Marty Hayden offered his house, with two guest rooms.

On the big day, we Californians trooped together to the front of the White House; we watched Senator Cranston get out of a cab and go up to that front gate; he was quickly admitted—but we had to trundle around the fence to the back gate, where we got into a long security line. They had us wait in a side room until the president showed up, then everyone got a chance to shake his hand, and we lined up behind his desk. The president looked at the big group and called for more pens. When a stack appeared, he signed the bill carefully, only one stroke of his name with each pen. After he finished, everyone received a pen. The group of us celebrants then walked over to the Interior Department, not far away, where far more people than had been admitted to the signing joined us, socializing in a jubilant reception, I thought--only one thing now left to do: plan a big party in the desert to celebrate. When spring came, when the weather was nice, *we did it*: a triumphant party in Joshua Tree National Park. 🌸

(These personal reminiscences are not meant as a campaign history; for that, go to Frank Wheat's book, *California Desert Miracle*.)

California's next landscape-level opportunity to protect wildlands

-- by Bruce Hamilton

While there is much-deserved attention to protecting more of the iconic Sierra Nevada, California Desert, and California Coast, one of the state's largest, wildest, and most biodiverse unprotected landscapes has been overlooked by most conservationists. I'm talking about the Diablo Range.

The Diablo Range? What is that? Where is it? Why have most Californians never heard of it or spent time there?

The Diablo Range is a 200-mile long mountain chain that runs between US Highway 101 and Interstate 5 from Carquinez Strait in Contra Costa County in the north to the Antelope Valley in Kern County in the south. It covers 3.5 million acres – an area five times larger than Yosemite National Park – and touches 12 counties. It is mainly composed of chaparral, grasslands, and oak woodlands – three of the least protected and most biodiverse ecosystems in our state.

It is the ancestral unceded land of

Pinnacles National Park—but only about 25 percent of the entire range is in protected status.

Aside from Pinnacles National Park, the range has a swath of federal public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management, but future protection through federal designations is limited. There are two BLM Wilderness Study Areas in the Panoche Hills, but few conservationists know of them. The BLM public lands also include the Panoche-Coalinga Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the Monvero Dunes Research Natural Area, Tumey Hills, and Griswold Hills. And conservationists have developed a wilderness proposal for the Joaquin Rocks area near San Benito Mountain.

National and statewide campaigns to protect 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030 are designed to protect endangered biodiversity and to preserve connecting corridors for wildlife passage, in this time of rapid

climate change. Due to past conservation campaigns, large proportions of the Sierra Nevada, California Desert, and California have been protected to meet 30x30 goals. But to protect the most threatened species, most threatened ecosystems, and most threatened wildlife corridors we also need to focus attention on the overlooked Diablo Range.

The northern area around Mount Diablo and north of Altamont Pass has over 120,000 acres of protected

lands, which include many regional and county parks as well as the core state park. This represents about 75 percent of the lands Save Mount Diablo regards as important for preservation. But when you factor in the highly vulnerable part of the range south of Altamont Pass, the entire range is 75 percent unprotected. South of Altamont Pass the range is also largely unoccupied, with few roads and a scattering of rural homes and ranches.

In contrast, the Sierra Nevada is

twice as large as the Diablo Range and is about 52 percent protected.

This largely intact wild landscape not only provides a great refuge for wildlife in a time of climate change, but also serves as a huge carbon sequestration sink. Also, as climate change has increased the frequency and severity of droughts and the scale and severity of wildfires, the lack of human infrastructure and occupation has limited the damage of fires. This has allowed the Diablo Range to evolve under a more natural wildfire regime than other more populated landscapes where constant fire suppression has increased fire danger and fire damage.

The almost 400,000-acre Santa Clara Unit (SCU) wildfire in 2020 – one of the largest fire complexes in California recorded history – was in the remote and sparsely occupied Diablo Range. As a result, there was no loss of human life, and few human homes and infrastructure were damaged. Three years post-fire, the vegetation and wildlife are recovering nicely, even leaving chaparral and grassland ecosystems rejuvenated. This is in marked contrast to the human tragedies that occurred when large wildfires burned through wine country or mountain communities in forest habitats.

Most of the southern Diablo Range is composed of large private ranches with little public familiarity or access. To date its remoteness, ruggedness, and lack of access has been its ticket to remaining wild, but that is changing. Proposals for energy development, reservoir development, transportation projects, mining, off-road vehicle recreation, and urban encroachment all threaten the integrity of the range. Within the past few years, conservationists including the Sierra Club and Save Mount Diablo have fought reservoirs and reservoir expansion, a proposed off-road vehicle park, new subdivisions, and a poorly sited industrial-scale solar energy farm.

Seeking to protect private lands, organizations such as Save Mount Diablo, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, and The Nature Conservancy are acquiring easements and/or buying lands to protect vital habitat and corridors.

When a huge solar farm was proposed for the Panoche -- continued page 5



many Indigenous peoples including the Miwok, Ohlone, Chumash, and Yokuts. While lacking federal recognition, members of these tribes still live in, work on and hold sacred these ancestral lands. For some, Mount Diablo (which the Ohlone call Tuushtak) is the center of their universe and where life began.

Today, the Diablo Range includes three well-known state and federal protected areas – Mount Diablo State Park, Henry W. Coe State Park, and

The Diablo Range -- from page 4

Valley, the Sierra Club and its allies sued, arguing that it was inappropriately sited and sized and would harm habitat for endangered species such as kit foxes and blunt-nosed leopard lizards. The project was eventually modified and downsized to 1,300 acres, with 25,000 acres (almost 40 square miles) of habitat mitigation on adjacent private ranchlands. These protective easements now help connect the BLM's Panoche Hills, Tumey Hills, and Griswold Hills.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has a vision for the San Andreas Linkage (named for the San Andreas Fault that runs through the Diablo Range). It is "focused on securing locations that expand on existing protected areas and connect them to adjacent conserved lands..." TNC has already protected 100,000 acres, and their stated goal is "to create a series of wildlife corridors that span nearly 600,000 acres—a refuge on the scale required to sustain the full suite of the region's native species in the face of climate change.... This reconnected habitat will support a climate-resilient wildlife linkage and provide water resources for native species. It will also prevent further energy development from disrupting and fragmenting ecosystems."

Save Mount Diablo continues its highly effective advocacy to head off inappropriate development and add to the protected lands in the northern Diablo Range. Recently, its Board expanded its conservation programs south to include the entire Diablo Range. It has done more than any other group to raise the profile and public support for Diablo Range protection. (For a series of blogs and videos, go to <https://savemountdiablo.org/?s=diablo+range+revealed>.)

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority has ten Conservation Focus Areas in its Greenprint – five of which are vital to protection of the Diablo Range. These include key watershed lands like Pacheco Creek, Upper Coyote Creek, and Upper Alameda Creek, as well as the 3,700-acre Coyote Valley. The latter's farmland will help connect

wildlife habitat—an area larger than any Lower 48 national park.

The Diablo Range is home to the densest population of nesting golden eagles in the world. It is a key stronghold for the endangered but recovering California condor. It is home to many rare, endangered, and endemic native plants and animals. The eastern flank is a disconnected northern extension of the Mojave Desert ecosystem, where you can find kit foxes, blunt-nosed leopard lizards, giant kangaroo rats, antelope ground squirrels, and roadrunners. There are herds of tule elk and a remnant population of pronghorn. Endangered Bay checkerspot butterflies have a last stronghold here. The range contains large swaths of serpentine soils, home to rare plant species that live nowhere else. Some soils are vertic clays, which also support rare and endemic plant species. In spring, native wildflowers produce eye-popping floral displays that paint hillsides and valleys in yellow, purple and orange.

The case for the Diablo Range as a critical wildlife corridor was demonstrated in 2021 when an endangered California condor flew around the flanks of Mount Diablo for the first time in over 100 years. In 2023, a flock of six condors ventured north from Pinnacles National Park to the Mount Diablo area.

While the Diablo Range is large enough to support a healthy population of mountain lions, the smaller Santa Cruz Mountains host a threatened and genetically isolated lion population. Through the efforts of conservationists, a protective connecting corridor will allow passage across the Coyote Valley south of San Jose to link these two ranges and their wildlife populations.

The Diablo Range is remote, rugged and has huge elevational variation. Hikers joke that one goes to the Sierra Nevada to train for trekking in the washboard backcountry of the 23,300-acre Orestimba Wilderness in Henry W. Coe State Park--at 87,000 acres, the



photo: Scott Hein

Panoche Valley in the Diablo Range

largest state park in northern California.

Mount Diablo rises from the Sacramento Delta to 3,849 feet. The summit of the range is San Benito Mountain at 5,241 feet. Mount Hamilton, where the University of California has an astronomical observatory east of San Jose, sits at 4,360 feet (Copernicus Peak).

The wild, unbroken ridges viewed from San Benito Mountain were described by William Brewer in 1861 as: "Chain after chain of mountains, most barren and desolate. It was a scene of unmixed desolation, more terrible for a stranger to be lost in than even the snows and glaciers of the Alps."

In summary, the Diablo Range is wild and wonderful. But to paraphrase that old desert rat Edward Abbey, a wild place like the Diablo Range "needs no defense, only more defenders."

To learn more about the Diablo Range, including its natural history, fire recovery, threats, conservation successes, recreational opportunities, and future challenges, check out Save Mount Diablo's new 83-minute video "*Fire, Drought, Rain and Hope: Three Wild Years in the Diablo Range*," produced by Joan Hamilton. View Joan Hamilton's video on Save Mount Diablo's website <https://savemountdiablo.org/> or at Audible Mount Diablo <https://audiblemountdiablo.com> In addition, Audible Mount Diablo has videos about condors, local peregrine falcon recovery, Native perspectives and uses of plants, the history of protection efforts in the region, and other aspects of Diablo Range natural and cultural history and conservation advocacy. ♪

(Bruce Hamilton is former Sierra Club Conservation Director; Joan Hamilton is former Sierra magazine editor-in-chief.)

A Road Less Traveled Gateway to wild country -- State Route 120 in Mono County, California

-- by Kristine Green

State Route 120 runs from Manteca near Stockton, California, to that little town of Benton on US Highway 6, which is just a stone's throw from the Nevada border. It crosses the Sierra Nevada, through Yosemite National Park, with its highpoint at Tioga Pass (elevation 9,945 feet). Just that spectacular part could take up an entire article, but everyone has heard about Yosemite. This article is about the less traveled eastern part of the route.

This 45-mile stretch of State Route is your gateway to wild terrain between the Sierra and the White Mountains. It's not well-known, which makes one feel like an explorer discovering new lands as you pass vivid landscapes of forests, wilderness, shoreline tufas, wetlands, riparian, sagebrush, and meadows. It skirts threatened ecosystems, endangered species, wild horses, and birding spots. It includes historic sites. It has seasons and fall colors. I hesitate to even share it, as I would love to keep it for myself, close at hand for when I want to be alone with vast landscapes on a lonely, dramatic stretch of highway.

What it doesn't have is any services, convenience stores, hotels, pit toilets, or gas stations; that is, until you get to Benton.

The only public restrooms are at either end of the stretch at the south shore of Mono Lake and at Benton Park.

After the long descent east of Tioga Pass, State Route 120 jags south at US Highway 395 and soon picks up eastward with vistas of Mono Basin National Scenic Area and the Bodie Hills. Both are areas of continuing environmental concern, and the Sierra Club has a long history of fighting to keep water in Mono Lake. The Sierra Club petitioned the Secretary of the Interior in 1977 to protect the lake. A land bridge had become exposed due to water exportation by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which had lowered the lake level 45 feet in 40 years. The Sierra Club along with



Granite Mountain, from State Route 120

Then 120 passes along the south shore of Mono Lake within easy reach of the unworldly tufas, nesting osprey, alkali flies, and brine shrimp. Also accessible is Navy Beach where it's rumored that a secret US military installation tested new weapons during the '50s and '60s. Explosive evidence of volcanism appears with moonscapes of Mono Craters and Panum Crater and Paoha Island. The most recent eruption was a mere 300 years ago. The highway had its origins in the early 1930s.

One of the historical stops is Mono Mills set in the Inyo National Forest amidst the world's largest Jeffrey pine

forest. Mono Mills provided lumber to Bodie mines starting in the 1880s. Cross ties from a narrow-gauge railroad and rusty artifacts still litter the area.

The forest opens up into meadow lands and a rocky pass that drops down into the Adobe Valley. If you're traveling west, it looks like a large bluff with the colors of the Southwest. There's an area that was once chock filled with sage grouse. Not so much today. North of the road is Granite Mountain, 8920 feet, within the BLM-managed Granite Mountain Wilderness.

If you venture off the road a bit and

into the Inyo, there's the Indiana Summit Research Natural Area (RNA), which was established in 1932 to protect Jeffrey pines. This is a Native American harvest area of piagi, a food resource for local tribes. The insects descend tree trunks and

the larva get captured in the trenches dug around the tree base.

The road straightens and bisects the valley with the forests and canyons of the Glass Mountains spilling down into the far landscape on the south. In 1865, Frank Shaw owned a cattle ranch here. Legend has it he kept a Mammoth Jack donkey in a high walled corral. Adobe Creek runs through the remnants of an old corral here, and you can sometimes see herds of wild horses drinking here.

North of the highway, sage-brush steppe stretches to Nevada through the low-rolling hills of Pizona. Nestled there is the 638-acre River Spring Lakes Ecological Reserve -- *continued page 7*

MAY 15, 2024

May Wilderness meeting and Program: A 27 Year Journey Photographing Wildflowers on Our Western Public Lands

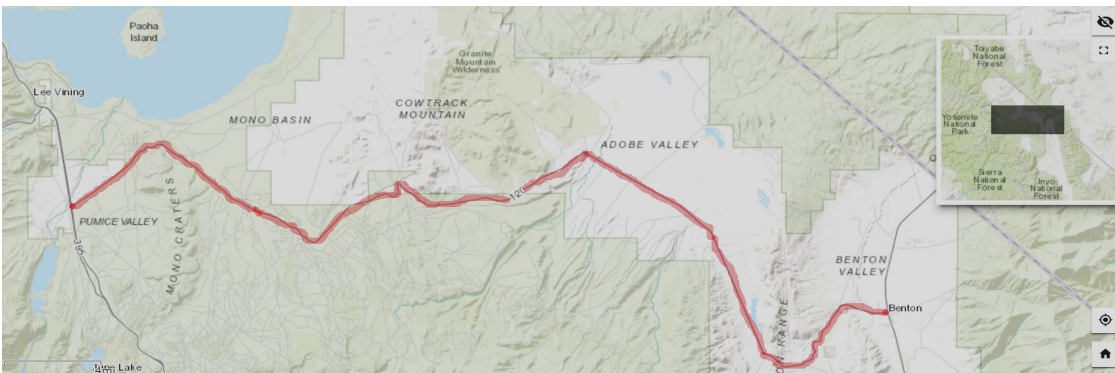
Rob Badger and Nita Winter, recipients of Sierra Club's 2020 Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography, will bring their dazzling photography of California wildflowers to us in a colorful program. They have published a book, *Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change*. Information at wildflowerbooks.com, or WinterBadger.com.

Email Committee chair JoAnne Clarke to get a zoom link. jo_clarke@att.net

Wild gateway route 120 --from page 6

managed by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The spring sports a population of spring snails and possibly amphibians, snakes, skippers, and migrating waterfowl. The reserve includes both alkali meadow and transmontane alkali marsh. Nearby, barely still standing, is an old wood house and another corral, still used for horses.

As you go flying over a series of huge “roller coaster” road bumps, Black Lake Preserve shimmers in the distance -- 526 acres of wetlands managed by the Eastern Sierra Land Trust. It’s a pit stop for a multitude of migrating and year-round birds. One year, avocets were all the rage; another year it was grebes.



CA state route 120, from U.S. 395 east to Benton

The valley narrows into a notch in a rocky spaghetti Western landscape that frames distant Montgomery Peak in the Whites. There’s pinion, ephedra, rabbit brush, and wildflowers. Last year prickly poppy lined the road. Sometimes there are cattle.

For about \$250 a night one can stay at Dutch Pete’s Ranch, an isolated little dwelling at the end of the valley. Dutch Pete, originally from Holland, purchased the ranch land in 1878 and operated a stagecoach stop. The original corral and paddocks are still on the 160-acre property, which now includes a star

photo: Kristine Green



Black Lake Preserve

WILD 12--the 12th World Wilderness Congress to be in Rapid City, South Dakota

The quadrennial series of World Wilderness Congresses began in the 1970s and continues to bring together worldwide leaders on preserving wild spaces in their countries—inspired by the US. establishment of a National Wilderness Preservation System sixty years ago in 1964. Organized by the WILD Foundation, <https://wild.org/>, most of these global gatherings have taken place in other countries, but this year, 2024, for the third time, the World Wilderness Congress will be in our country. WILD12 will be held in Rapid City South Dakota,

on Tribal lands, from August 24 through 31, 2024. WILD 8 was held in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2005, and WILD 4 took place in Boulder, Colorado, in 1987.

WILD 12, according to leaders of the WILD Foundation, is “motivated by the belief that traditional Indigenous lifeways and leaders guard knowledge and traditions. This can help improve the practice and outcomes of wilderness conservation. Our hope is to create a platform – with wilderness at its heart – that sparks transformational changes in global society and propels Indigenous leadership to its center.”

This event will address global wilderness issues. For information or to register, go to:

<https://wild.org/wild12/>

Another wilderness conference, in October, is more attuned to celebrate the 60th anniversary of America’s Wilderness Act:

Great Old Broads for Wilderness (Broads) will host “Wilderness & Beyond” -- a celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act



and the 35th Anniversary of Broads. The event will be October 14 - 17, 2024 at YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. The conference will focus on education to strengthen attendees’ skills to successfully advocate for expanded public land protections--via panels, speakers, activities, and with a mix of fun thrown in!

We’ll gather together in a gorgeous setting and learn from each other, celebrate our wins, get inspired to keep moving forward.

Don’t let “Conference” in the name fool you. We think of it more as a “shindig”! This event will be FUN: For more information, go to: <https://www.greatoldbroads.org/events/oct-14-17-wilderness-beyond-conference/>.

observation platform. Also here is the winter closure gate, as the valley fills with snow in the winter.

Then 120 drops down into the Benton Valley and passes through Benton Hot Springs and historic old Benton crowded with historic relics. Up Yellow Jacket Road is the home of the Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe, aka “Hot Water Place People.” The Benton Reservation was set aside by President Woodrow Wilson in 1915, and through the persistent efforts of past Tribal Chairman Joseph C. Saulque, the claim was restored to tribal control in the 1970s. The tribe operates Benton Station Cafe and gas station at the intersection of Route 6, which is the terminus of this road less traveled. 🌀

California's Wilderness Areas, 1964 to 2024 for the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act



On September 3, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law – establishing a National Wilderness Preservation System -- “for the use and enjoyment of the American people.” The Act provided for Congress to add new areas to the system, and the initial 54 areas have become 803, with California having more wilderness areas than any other state--152. Here we list and briefly describe all California's federal wilderness areas:

info following name: year it became wilderness, managing agency(ies), size in acres, general location, (large wildernesses, over 100,000 acres--shaded) [agencies: BLM-Bureau of Land Management; NPS-National Park Service; FWS: Fish & Wildlife Service; Forest Service.]

- **Agua Tibia Wilderness** - 1975; BLM & Forest Service; 17,961; desert, in Riverside and San Diego counties.
- **Ansel Adams Wilderness** - 1964 *; FS and NPS, 231,619 ; central Sierra Nevada. *originally “Minarets” Wilderness,;
- **Argus Range Wilderness** –1994; BLM; 65,726; desert, Death Valley area.
- **Avawatz Mountains Wilderness** - 2019; BLM; 89,500; desert-n. of Mojave Preserve
- **Beauty Mountain Wilderness** - 2009; BLM, Southern CA chaparral; 15,628 acres.
- **Big Maria Mountains Wilderness** -2009; BLM, 45,384; desert, near Colorado R.
- **Bigelow Cholla Garden Wilderness**-1994; BLM, east desert, 14,645 acres.
- **Bighorn Mountain Wilderness**-1994; BLM, 38,599; San Bernardino Mts foothills.
- **Black Mountain Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 20,548; western Mojave desert
- **Bright Star Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 8,191; southern Sierra and desert edge
- **Bristol Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 71,389; desert west of Mojave Preserve.
- **Bucks Lake Wilderness** – 1984; Forest Service; 23,578; northern Sierra Nevada.
- **Buzzards Peak Wilderness** - 2019; BLM; 11,840; southern desert near Colorado R
- **Cache Creek Wilderness** - 2006; BLM; 27,296; central CA Inner Coast Range.
- **Cadiz Dunes Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 19,935; desert, east Mojave area.
- **Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness** - 2009; Forest Service, 5,575; SoCA chaparral.
- **Caribou Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 20,839; northern CA; Lassen area.
- **Carrizo Gorge Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 14,740; San Diego County area desert.
- **Carson-Iceberg Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 158,147' north-central Sierra.
- **Castle Crags Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 10,999; northern CA, Shasta area.
- **Cedar Roughs Wilderness** - 2006; BLM; 6,287; central CA Inner Coast Range.
- **Chanchelulla Wilderness**-1984; Forest Service; 8,022, north CA, inner coastal range.
- **Chemehuevi Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 85,864; Colorado river area
- **Chimney Peak Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 13,140; southern Sierra Nevada.
- **Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness**-1994; BLM; 99,548; desert, east Riverside Count
- **Chumash Wilderness** - 1992; Forest Service; 37,793; southcentral Coast Range.
- **Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 38,167; central Mojave desert.
- **Clipper Mountain Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 33,843; desert, just s. of Mojave Preserve.
- **Coso Range Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 49,296; Owens Valley, w. of Death Valley
- **Coyote Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 18,631; Imperial County desert.
- **Cucamonga Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 13,007; San Gabriel Mts., north of Los Angeles.
- **Darwin Falls Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 8,189. desert, Death Valley area.
- **Dead Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 47,158; Colorado River area.
- **Death Valley Wilderness** - 1994; NPS; 3,190,455.; approx. 3,145,105 in CA, 45,350 in NV. In Death Valley NP. Largest wilderness in Lower 48 states.
- **Desolation Wilderness** - 1969; Forest Service; 64,041; Sierra, near L. Tahoe.
- **Dick Smith Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 71, 275; southcentral Coast Range.
- **Dinkey Lakes Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 30,863; central Sierra.
- **Domeland Wilderness** - 1964; BLM and Forest Service; 133,720; southern Sierra
- **El Paso Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 23,679; desert, just south of Sierra.
- **Elkhorn Ridge Wilderness** - 2011; BLM; 11,001; northern CA, Coastal Range.
- **Emigrant Wilderness** - 1975; Forest Service; 112,723; Sierra, just n. of Yosemite.
- **Farallon Wilderness** - 1974, FWS; 141; ocean, outside of San Francisco Bay.
- **Fish Creek Mountains Wilderness** - 1994 BLM; 21,390; Imperial Cty, s. of Salton Sea
- **Funeral Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 25,707; desert, east of Death Valley.
- **Garcia Wilderness** - 1992; Forest Service; 13,987; Central Inner Coast range
- **Golden Trout Wilderness** - 1978; Forest Service; 303,713; southern Sierra.
- **Golden Valley Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 37,786; desert, western Mojave.
- **Granite Chief Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 28,374; Sierra, north of L. Tahoe.
- **Granite Mountain Wilderness** - 2009; BLM; 31,059; Glass Mts., east of Mono L.
- **Grass Valley Wilderness** – 1994; BLM; 30,186; desert, western Mojave.
- **Great Falls Basin Wilderness** – 2019; BLM; 7,810; desert, Death Valley area.
- **Hain Wilderness**-1976, NPS; 15,985; Pinnacles National Park, Inner Coast range.
- **Hauser Wilderness**- 1984; Forest Service; 6,919; San Diego County.
- **Havasu Wilderness** (& in AZ) - 1990; FWS; 17,801; about three-fourths in AZ.
- **Hollow Hills Wilderness** - 1984; BLM; 22,236; desert, just n. of Mojave Preserve.
- **Hoover Wilderness** - 1964; 128,044; Forest Service; just ne. of Yosemite Park.
- **Ibex Wilderness** - 1994; 28,822; BLM; just east of Death Valley N.P.
- **Imperial Refuge Wilderness** - 1990 (& in AZ) ; FWS; 15,056; Arizona has 9,220 acres. California about 5,836.
- **Indian Pass Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 43,179; desert, Colorado River area.
- **Inyo Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM & Forest Service; 199,208; desert, Owens Valley east side.
- **Ishi Wilderness** - 1984; BLM & Forest Service; 42,079; north Sierra foothills.
- **Jacumba Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 31,358; desert, on Mexican border.
- **Jennie Lakes Wilderness**-1984; Forest Service; 10,510; Sierra, east of Sequoia NP
- **John Krebs Wilderness** - 2009; NPS; 39,740; just south of Sequoia Nat'l Park.
- **John Muir Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 652,903; central Sierra Nevada.

CA Wilderness areas -- from page 8

- **Joshua Tree Wilderness** - 1976; NPS; 595,364; desert, Joshua Tree Nat'l Park.
- **Kaiser Wilderness** - 1976; Forest Service; 21,986; central Sierra Nevada.
- **Kelso Dunes Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 144,915; desert w. of Mojave Preserve.
- **Kiavah Wilderness** - 1994; BLM & Forest Service; 86,245; southern Sierra.
- **King Range Wilderness** - 2006; BLM; 42,695; northern CA coast.
- **Kingston Range Wilderness**-1994; BLM; 252,149; desert, n. of Mojave Preserve.
- **Lassen Volcanic Wilderness** - 1972; NPS; 79,061; northcentral CA interior.
- **Lava Beds Wilderness** - 1972; NPS; 28,460; far northern CA.
- **Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 28,052; desert, Salton Sea e.
- **Little Picacho Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 38,216; Colorado river area.
- **Machesna Mountain Wilderness**-1984; BLM & Forest Service; 18,278; south Inner Coastal range.
- **Magic Mountain Wilderness** - 2009; Forest Service; 12,178; n. of Los Angeles.
- **Malpais Mesa Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 31,906; desert, west of Death Valley.
- **Manly Peak Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 12,897; desert, just west of Death Valley.
- **Marble Mountain Wilderness** -1964; Forest Service; 225,114; far northern CA.
- **Matilija Wilderness** - 1992; Forest Service; 29,207; southcentral Coast Range.
- **Mecca Hills Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 26,356; desert, south of Joshua Tree NP.
- **Mesquite Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 44,804; desert, north of Mojave Nat'l Preserve.
- **Milpitas Wash Wilderness** - 2019; BLM; 17,250; desert, Colorado river area.
- **Mokelumne Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 104,048; northcentral Sierra.
- **Monarch Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 44,243; Sierra, e. of Kings Canyon NP.
- **Mount Lassie Wilderness** - 2006; Forest Service; 7,272; Inner coast range, nw CA.
- **Mount Shasta Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 36,981; central northern CA.
- **Mojave Wilderness** - 1994; NPS; 695,200; the wilderness in Mojave Nat'l Preserve.
- **Newberry Mountains Wilderness**-1994; BLM; 26,102; desert, eastcentral Mojave.
- **Nopah Range Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 106,623; desert, e. of Death Valley, NV border.
- **North Algodones Dunes Wilderness**-1994; BLM; 25,895; desert, Salton Sea s.e.
- **North Fork Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 8,158; n. central inner coast range.
- **North Mesquite Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 28,955; desert, north of Mojave Preserve.
- **Old Woman Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 165,172; desert, East Mojave.
- **Orocopia Mountains Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 51,289; desert, s. of Joshua Tree NP.
- **Otay Mountain Wilderness** - 1999; BLM; 16,893; desert, on Mexican border.
- **Owens Peak Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 73,868; southern Sierra.
- **Owens River Headwaters Wilderness** 2009; Forest Service; 14,698; eastern Sierra.
- **Pahrump Valley Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 73,726; east of Death Valley, at NV border.
- **Palen/McCoy Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 236,488; desert, Riverside County.
- **Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 39,955; desert, east of Salton Sea.
- **Phillip Burton Wilderness** - 1976; NPS; 27,315; north of San Francisco Bay.
- **Picacho Peak Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 8,860; desert, southeast of Salton Sea.
- **Pine Creek Wilderness** -1984; Forest Service; 13,260; San Diego Cty. chaparral.
- **Pinto Mountains Wilderness**- 2009; BLM; 24,348; just north of Joshua Tree NP.
- **Piper Mountain Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 72,192; just north of Death Valley NP.
- **Piute Mountain Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 48,080; southeast of Mojave Preserve.
- **Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness** - 2009; Forest Service; 26,839; San Gabriel Mts.
- **Red Buttes Wilderness** (& in OR) - 1984; Forest Service; 20,130; CA has 16,353 acres, OR about 3,777 acres.
- **Resting Spring Range Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 76,312; desert, ne. of Death Valley NP.
- **Rice Valley Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 41,777; desert, eastern Riverside County.
- **Riverside Mountains Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 24,004; Colorado River area.
- **Rocks and Islands Wilderness** - 2006; BLM; 6; on northern California coast.
- **Rodman Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 27,690; desert, central Mojave.
- **Russian Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 12,521; north CA, Trinity Alps area.
- **Sacatar Trail Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 50,451; south-east Sierra Nevada.
- **Saddle Peak Hills Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 1,530; just east of Death Valley NP.
- **San Gabriel Wilderness** - 1968; Forest Service; 35,738; San Gabriel Mts.
- **San Geronimo Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 101,574; San Bernardino Mts.
- **San Jacinto Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 32,186; San Jacinto Mts, southwest of Palm Springs.
- **San Mateo Canyon Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 39,412; San Diego coast.
- **Santa Lucia Wilderness** - 1978; BLM & Forest Service; 20,241; central coast mts.
- **Santa Rosa Wilderness** - 1984; BLM & Forest Service; 78,576; San Jacinto Mts, south of Palm Springs.
- **Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness**-1994; BLM; 33,772; San Diego inner coastal mts.
- **Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness** -1984; NPS; 768,222; southern Sierra.
- **Sespe Wilderness** - 1992; Forest Service; 219,209; south central coast mts.
- **Sheep Mountain Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 43,182; San Gabriel Mts.
- **Sheephole Valley Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 188,169; north of Joshua Tree NP.
- **Silver Peak Wilderness** - 1992; Forest Service; 31,415; central coast area.
- **Siskiyou Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 179,847; far north CA, inner coast.
- **Snow Mountain Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 60,222; central inner coast.
- **Soda Mountains Wilderness** - 2019; BLM; 80,090; just n. of Mojave Preserve.
- **South Fork Eel River Wilderness** - 2006; BLM; 12,868; n. central Inner Coast range
- **South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness** -2009 20,158; Forest Service; SoCA chaparral.
- **South Nopah Range Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 17,059; NV border e. of Death Valley.
- **South Sierra Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 60,280; southern Sierra.
- **South Warner Wilderness** - 1964; Forest Service; 70,206; northeastern CA.
- **Stateline Wilderness** -1994; BLM; 6,964; n. of Mojave Preserve, at NV border.
- **Stepladder Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 83,195; East Mojave, near Colorado River area.
- **Surprise Canyon Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 24,442; just west of Death Valley.
- **Sylvania Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 18,682, just north of Death Valley.
- **Thousand Lakes Wilderness** -1964; Forest Service; 16,526; north of Lassen NP.
- **Trilobite Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 37,308; just south of Mojave Preserve.
- **Trinity Alps Wilderness** - 1984; Forest Service; 537,357; north Inner Coastal.
- **Turtle Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 177, 309; Colorado River area.
- **Ventana Wilderness** - 1969; Forest Service; 236,726; central coastal areas.
- **Whipple Mountains Wilderness** - 1994; BLM; 76,123; bordering Colorado River.
- **White Mountains Wilderness** - 2009; Forest Service; 230,966; CA/NV border.
- **Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness** - 1964; BLM & Forest Service; 182,298; northcentral Inner Coast range.
- **Yosemite Wilderness** - 1984; NPS; 704,624; in Yosemite NP, central Sierra.
- **Yuki Wilderness** - 2006; BLM & Forest Service; 56,239; central Inner Coast. ♪

Nevada's only 60-year old Wilderness--the Jarbidge

-- from Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Friends of Nevada Wilderness celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, and their own 40th Anniversary, by connecting with Jarbidge Wilderness, Nevada's first and only Wilderness Area designated with the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Friends is working closely with the Forest Service to host various stewardship events and initiatives throughout the year. The FNW professional and volunteer trail crews will maintain over 20 miles of trails in the backcountry of Jarbidge all season long, working closely with Backcountry Horsemen of Nevada for pack support. The crews will set up basecamp along the East Fork of the Jarbidge River, and clear trees, repair damaged tread, and brush overgrown trails. Out in the field, the crews will install new junction signs to help users navigate the huge Wilderness trail system.

Have you visited the magnificent Jarbidge in far northeastern Nevada?

The Forest Service has also prioritized improving kiosks at trailheads and are working with FNW to lead volunteers out to install kiosks and display new maps with up to date content. Friends created a beautiful weather proof recreation map of Jarbidge with updated trail statuses, trail distances, and other information. The maps can be purchased online at nevadawilderness.org/shop.

To help celebrate the Wilderness Act, Friends is also creating and distributing a "What is Wilderness" brochure, with a special insert on Jarbidge Wilderness. Thanks to two bilingual staff members at Friends, a Spanish version of the information is available as well. These brochures, along with bilingual Leave No Trace cards, will be handed out to trail users and to nearby communities.

This is an exciting time for Jarbidge Wilderness, and Friends of Nevada Wilderness invites you to join in the 60th celebration. You can sign up for projects and events at nevadawilderness.org/calendar_of_events 🌀

Kw'tsán: New national monument proposal Protecting Sacred Tribal Lands in southern California

The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe has proposed a new Kw'tsán National Monument to protect more than 390,000 acres of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe's homelands, located in Imperial County, California.

The Tribe's Kw'tsán Monument Fact Sheet states, "These lands, currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, contain incredible cultural, ecological, recreational, scenic, and historic values that must be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations....the Quechan people remain committed to the preservation of cultural values, belief systems, life ways, traditional practices, and the sovereign legal rights of Native American people.

"The Fort Yuma Quechan Tribal Council is requesting that the Biden Administration designate this new monument through the Antiquities Act, and establish an inter-governmental stewardship agreement between the Tribe and federal agencies. This would mean that Quechan values, knowledge, expertise, and worldviews will be incorporated into the new monument management plan. Tribal citizens will be able to continue conducting

ceremonies, cultural activities, and gatherings within the protected area.

"The proposed national monument is part of a greater cultural landscape,



photo: George Wuertner

In the Picacho Peak Wilderness Area

connecting Avi Kwa Lal, Palo Verde Peak, the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, and Spirit Mountain in Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. The boundary incorporates the Indian Pass Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Pilot Knob (Avikwalal), Singer Geoglyphs (ACEC), Buzzards Peak, and Picacho Peak Wilderness areas."

Sierra Club's San Diego Chapter, in whose territory the proposed monument lies, fully supports the Kw'tsán proposal.

Learn about the [Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe](http://www.protectkwtsan.org/) and the proposed [Kw'tsán National Monument](http://www.protectkwtsan.org/) at <https://www.protectkwtsan.org/>

Take action to help by signing the petition to the President at: <https://www.protectkwtsan.org/actnow>. 🌀

Gold Butte National Monument gets a bioblitz

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Las Vegas Field Office are hosting a BioBlitz at Gold Butte National Monument (GBNM) on May 2-6, 2024. This is a first for the monument and expectations are high for a successful event. The public is invited to attend and participate in activities.



On a Sierra Club Gold Butte outing in 2010

In a BioBlitz, ordinary citizens become citizen scientists. They are paired with experts and formed into small teams. The teams go to specific areas at certain times to find, identify, and document their targeted species. For example, a "bird" group might go to a spring and sit quietly while waiting for birds to come to the area. Citizen scientists help by pointing out the birds so the experts can identify what bird it is. At the same time other citizen scientists can write down the information or take pictures. During this process citizen scientists gain knowledge and experience. In the end, your help contributes to the universal body of knowledge. Every job is important and every person's contribution is truly valued.

For more information, please contact NDOW biologist Matt Flores at: mhflores@ndow.org. 🌀

A visit to Nevada's Avi Kwa Ame National Monument on its first anniversary

A year ago we reported on the overnight campout of three Wilderness Committee members to celebrate the brand new, just designated Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. (WOW, April 2023).

This spring we all joined sister organization Great Old Broads for Wilderness on a "Broadwalk" - in a four-day campout in the new monument as it turned a year old. Camping outside the monument itself, in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area along the Colorado River's Lake Mojave, at the Cottonwood Cove's developed campground, Broads joined tours each day into the monument. We visited



photo: Annie Gottlieb

Broads enjoy hiking in Avi Kwa Ame National Monument

the Walking Box ranch, a vestige from 1930s movie stars; the "Mystery" ranch, a private haven for artists and scientists, where we did a



photo: Kaye Berman

Grapevine Canyon petroglyph

stewardship project reconstructing an old pond for wildlife use, and the dramatic petroglyphs and rock

outcrops in Grapevine Canyon.

All this with good friends and amidst the lovely Mojave desert landscapes. We had presentations from board members of Friends of Avi Kwa Ame Alan O'Neill (retired



Outings

Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!



--May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds. -- Edward Abbey

Wilderness Committee Spring Desert Outing

Wilderness committee outings members showed up at the Amboy Crater National Natural Landmark, one of very few developed sites in the Mojave Trails National Monument, for our planned spring service work project (building a new trail in the Amboy area lava fields) with BLM's Mona Daniels--with whom we had worked once a year for at least 15 years. But, this time it was different. At the very last minute, just as we arrived on site, a message from Mona said that due to a freak storm that was causing localized flooding, and risk of broader flooding, BLM had to cancel the project. So there we were at our campsite, 11 of us, equipped with three days of food, with nothing to do but eat, drink, and enjoy beautiful desert hikes amongst the spring wildflowers. Well--not quite nothing--Mona did leave us with a job --removing some rocks from within Amboy Crater that tourists had arranged in very non-natural

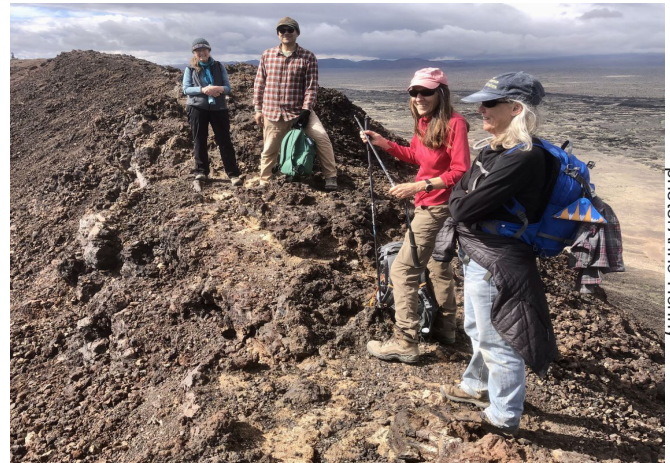


photo: Anne Henny

Spring service trip members Susanna, Moises, Joan, and Janet on their mission to remove rocks in Amboy crater from artificial placements

patterns. Not right for a "Natural" landmark.

Trip leader Anne Henny organized us into groups--some for the longer trek to the Crater for rock removal, others for shorter forays along the desert trail and collecting trash from the site. Much of Saturday was spent keeping ourselves and our camp dry from a series of rain squalls with the help of tarps; Sunday weather was good, and Anne led a group to visit the Sheephole Valley wilderness, a half-hour's drive to the south. vnh ∞

superintendent of the Lake Mead NRA), and Mystery Ranch owner Kim Garrison-Means about the campaign to establish Avi Kwa Ame. We saw the enticing invitation to their first anniversary celebration, days later, and regretted we couldn't stay for it; see the lively invite to the left. ∞



photo: Bruce Hamilton

Hikers in San Francisco Bay Area enjoy a spring backpack in the Ohlone Wilderness, south of Livermore, this is a REGIONAL Wilderness preserve under the the East Bay Public Lands District: <https://www.ebparks.org/>

A Lifetime California Condor Sighting

-- by Alasdair Coyne

Returning from a visit to the Sespe Hot Springs, last October, we had passed the top of Johnston Ridge



and were following the contours trail leading to Mutau Flat. Ahead we

saw clearly two adult condors (each standing about 4.5 feet tall) perched on dead tree branches next to the trail. We stood and watched them for at least 20 minutes, but eventually we had to go on.

We fully expected them to fly off when we got too close, but they stayed on those branches until we were right beside them. After we snapped pictures, they both took flight and headed out across the steep valley below.

In doing so, they passed right over our heads. What an experience! Two of the biggest land birds on Earth, weighing maybe 28 pounds, gliding past only a few feet above us, and soaring away over the valley.

It would seem they were attracted to a deer kill nearby, as we saw where



a heavy carcass had been dragged across the trail there. ☞

(Alasdair Coyne [sespecoyne@gmail.com] directs a small regional organization "Keep Sespe Wild ", from Ojai CA. This news item first appeared in the group's newsletter, *The Sespe Wild*, of Dec. 2023. Alasdair took the photos included here.)

Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, an issue committee of the California Conservation Committee, advocates for preservation of unroaded, undeveloped public lands in a wild state through legislation and appropriate management, and sponsors stewardship and wilderness study outings.

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OPEN--San Francisco Bay, Kern Kaweah, Santa Lucia Chapter coordinators--volunteers sought.

FIRST CLASS

from:
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Land Acknowledgement

Wilderness Committee member Janet Barth, from The Range of Light Group, eastern Sierra, shared this with us:

I live in the tiny unincorporated community of Benton, California, on traditional lands of the Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiutes, (People of the Hot Water), who are one of the few indigenous peoples in California still residing on, and stewarding, the lands of their ancestors.

La crisis climática está aquí. No hay un planeta B. ¡Manténgamos las tierras silvestres!