

WORDS OF the WILD

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

Stornetta Public Lands: a Pacific Coast Jewel

-- by Victoria Brandon

The Stornetta Public Lands, 1,132 acres located along the south coast of Mendocino County, are adjacent to Manchester State Beach and the Point Arena Lighthouse. There are more than two miles of Pacific coastline with natural bridges, tide pools, waterfalls, sinkholes and blowholes, as well as two miles of the Garcia River, the Garcia estuary, a quarter-mile of beach, and a five-acre island called Sea Island Rocks.

The area is recognized not only for splendid scenic values, but also for natural resources that encompass riparian corridors, extensive coastal wetlands, wind-sculptured stands of cypress, wildflower-strewn meadows, and shifting sand dunes: a varied ecosystem which taken as a whole provides significant wildlife habitat. Otters and seals gambol

in the surf, brown pelicans sail by in distinct single file, and countless gulls and shorebirds call this home.

An abalone "hotspot"

After long ownership by the Stornetta family, which operated it as a dairy, this remarkable property was acquired by The Nature Conservancy, which donated it to the federal government in 2004, on terms including a grazing lease that will expire in 2014. It has been managed since then by the Ukiah Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), whose responsibilities have been greatly complicated because Stornetta is considered an abalone "hotspot" with intense seasonal use by recreational abalone divers. It thus requires strigent oversight by BLM staff and Department of Fish & Game wardens.

Especially before implementation of the Marine Life

Protection Act two years ago, rangers and BLM staff had to patrol every weekend with tides low enough to be suitable for abalone fishing -- watching for poachers, keeping daredevils from rappelling down the cliffs, and stopping people from breaking down fences and

driving all over the ranch. Subsequently a working Gateway partnership with the community of Point Arena and much local citizen involvement have helped. For example, under the leadership of the California Wilderness

Coalition, Redwood Chapter members and others spent a wonderful work day at Stornetta on November 3, engaging in varied volunteer projects from kiosk construction to fence removal. Nonetheless, the BLM's scarce financial and personnel resources are still overstrained by the site's demands.

CA Coastal Monument to expand?

Fortunately help may be on the way. Congressman Mike Thompson, who has represented the area since 1998, has introduced H.R. 4969, adding this land to the California Coastal National Monument--more than 20,000 small islands, rocks and

FLASH!!

Drakes Estero in the Point Reyes National Seashore will finally be protected as wilderness as intended by 1976 legislation, the Obama administration announced Nov. 29. The decision will protect the only wild marine estuary on the west coast, in spite of recent efforts to circumvent the law and extend the lease of a private oyster farm within the area. Sierra Club executive director Mike Brune said, "Secretary Salazar was right to permanently protect this valuable part of our natural heritage, and it will benefit generations to come."



Stornetta waterfall

photo: Copyright: Bruce H. Jensen 2012

Plan revisions about to start for Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests

Get ready to provide input, comments

exposed reefs along 1,100 miles of coast between Mexico and Oregon. National Monument designation would elevate the area's status and would also automatically add Stornetta to the National Landscape Conservation System, thus making it eligible for additional funding.

By permanently protecting this important segment of the California Coast as part of the California Coastal National Monument and potentially offering additional resources, H.R. 4969 provides significant conservation benefits, with no negative consequences.

Current Congressional realities make even the most uncontroversial conservation legislation hard to achieve, but fortunately legislation is not the only route to Monument designation. While encouraging the passage of H.R. 4969, the Sierra Club and others also are urging President Obama to exercise his powers under the Antiquities Act to add this important segment of the California Coast to the California Coastal National Monument. Either way, by law or by proclamation, designation provides valuable conservation benefits for the coastal region.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

To take action directly to the President online, go to: <http://content.sierraclub.org/mypieceofamerica/stornetta-public-lands>.

Alternatively, simply call the White House public comment line at 202-456-1111. Ask him to add the Stornetta lands to the California Coastal National Monument, under his Antiquities Act authority.

If you are willing to go a step further and also to write a Letter to Editor or take more direct action, please contact Ani Kame'enui on the Sierra Club's public lands team in Washington, DC (ani.kame'enui@sierraclub.org) or 202-650-6079. ##

(Victoria Brandon is Redwood Chapter Political Chair)

Three California national forests are gearing up for major revision of their management plans. Forest plans are supposed to be redone every 15 to 20 years, and these were adopted in the late 1980s.

The three are the Inyo, the Sierra, and the Sequoia Forests.

Revising the management plans guiding all national forests has awaited the Forest Service's adoption of its new planning "rule" – a framework to guide the preparation of new management plans. The rule adoption itself went out for several rounds of public comment, with a final planning rule issued in April, 2012. The Sierra, Inyo, and Sequoia are among a small sampling of national forests nationwide selected to be "early adopters" – the first to pursue plan revisions under the new rule.

These three plans will follow the recent Lake Tahoe Basin draft plan (see WOW, April & Aug. 2012.) While a final Tahoe Basin plan is in preparation, the Tahoe Area Sierra Club Group is keeping up public interest by offering outings to potential wilderness areas through its new Wilderness Watchdogs task force.

First to start the ball rolling is the Inyo, on the east side of the Sierra. The Inyo began public outreach on Nov. 16 and 17 with two identical public workshops in its Bishop Forest headquarters to discuss techniques for involving a diverse array of stakeholders—that is, to maximize public engagement. Sierra Club seeks to assure that the agency gets input not just from people who happen to live near the forest, but also forest users in urban areas farther away – such as Los Angeles, Reno and San Francisco, as well as members of the public in other states. These are *national* forests that belong to all Americans.

The first part of the Inyo work shops was a primer on the new planning rule and the plan revision process and a detailed schedule for the

Inyo's "assessment" phase.

The second part of the workshop was discussion of the draft communication & collaboration plan, followed by breaking into small groups to provide input on the plan and answer questions. The "assessment" phase of planning is a preliminary analysis of forest resources and their condition. Sierra Club is urging the agency to consider in this phase new needs based on current and anticipated climate change.

The planning process for these three important Sierra Nevada forests will continue for several years, during which there will be ample opportunities for direct public input, via attendance at meetings and written comments. These forests, covering the heart of high Sierra wilderness areas adjacent to Yosemite and Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park, all contain significant amounts of wilderness. The major interest for the California Nevada Wilderness Committee as the forest planning process unfolds will be recommendation of new wilderness areas.

While only Congress can designate wilderness, agency recommendations to Congress, incorporated into their Forest Plans, are influential with members of Congress. Each of the three forests has several roadless areas eligible for wilderness. These plan revisions will be a great opportunity to let the agency know which areas merit wilderness protection. On the Sierra National Forest, for example, roadless areas just south of Yosemite National Park include the South Fork Merced River and the Mt. Raymond potential wilderness areas.

It is not yet certain whether the forest plans revisions will incorporate new regulations on wilderness stewardship or whether such management direction will be via separate wilderness stewardship plans.



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Wilderness Acquisitions in California and Nevada

-- by Aimee Rutledge

The Wilderness Land Trust works throughout the West. The Trust purchases private property inside wilderness (inholdings) or at the edge of wilderness or potential wilderness. We then transfer it to the federal managing agency for permanent addition to wilderness.

Recent key acquisitions

- An acquisition in Nevada's Black Rock Desert/High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, completing the 52,000-acre East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness, to protect a 320-acre property near the site of the Burning Man festival.
- Adding 160 acres to the Mokelumne Wilderness in Alpine County at the headwaters of Jeff Davis Creek, in the Carson Creek watershed south of Lake Tahoe.
- Adding 157 acres to the Santa Lucia Wilderness in San Luis Obispo County to protect aeries for nesting peregrine falcons.
- Protecting condor habitat in Big Sur by adding 120 acres to the Ventana Wilderness, preventing residential development and motorized access.
- Adding 640 acres to the proposed

Sand to Snow National Monument in the San Gorgonio Wilderness along the North Fork of the Whitewater River near Palm Springs to protect scarce water.

Since founded in Colorado in 1992, the Wilderness Land Trust has protected 362 parcels, comprising 37,493 acres in 84 designated and proposed

photo: Aimee Rutledge



Jeff Davis Peak in Mokelumne Wilderness

wilderness areas across the West, including in Colorado, California, Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Nevada and Washington.

The Trust needs your help to be ready to purchase from private sellers immediately when high priority properties come on the market. We work with private individuals and foundations, who are willing to provide "bridge funding" (either donations or loans) to help the Trust buy private inholdings quickly. Our quick action prevents other private buyers from purchasing the property for development.

Help The Wilderness Land Trust Keep Wilderness Wild

Please help us be ready to protect private properties as wilderness by making a loan or donation to our Wilderness Opportunity Fund.

Here are our current projects on which you may be able to help:

- At the base of the Castle Crags Wilderness rock formations visible from Interstate 5 near Mt. Shasta, to help prevent timber harvests.
 - In the Ventana Wilderness in Big Sur on a bluff overlooking the Pacific, to prevent residential development and motorized access.
 - At the top of the Snow Mountain Wilderness in Lake and Colusa Counties, to stop blockage of a public trail crossing private land.
 - In the Cedar Roughs Wilderness, near the Bay Area, overlooking Lake Berryessa in Napa County, to add year-round, recreational access.
 - In the Jarbidge Wilderness in northeast Nevada, to acquire seven 40-acre parcels to protect alpine settings.
 - In the Mt. Grafton Wilderness in eastern Nevada, to protect bighorn sheep and mountain lion habitat.
 - In the Goshute Canyon Wilderness, also in eastern Nevada, an 80-acre purchase to save sage grouse habitat.
- Please contact Aimee Rutledge, California Program Manager, at 415-606-5895, or David Kirk, Real Estate Specialist for Nevada, at 408-444-8707 to find out how your donation or loan can help protect wilderness. ##

Forest plans

-- from page 2

In the process for forest plan revisions, the Club's Sierra Nevada Resilient Habitats team is urging the Forest Service's regional staff to issue strong guidelines to individual forests to coordinate their planning on a broad regional scale. It's expected that regional guidance on potential wilderness recommendations will mandate studying wilderness characteristics not only of previously recognized and identified Roadless Areas (IRAs), but also additional roadless areas not evaluated earlier. ##

-- Vicky Hoover

Nevada Survey shows support for preservation of Gold Butte

Sierra Club for years has joined the local advocacy organization Friends of Gold Butte and Friends of Nevada Wilderness in seeking protection for a valuable area of public land in southeast Nevada--Gold Butte, a classic Mojave desert ecosystem, adorned with significant rock art. We have led outings, written letters; the Southern Nevada Group has spoken up at public meetings.

Both the Clark County Board of Commissioners and the Mesquite City Council have endorsed a national conservation area with wilderness.

In spring of 2012, the Opinion

Research company, Moore Information, conducted a telephone survey of some 325 likely voters in southern Nevada's Clark County and found that majorities in all subgroups surveyed (by political party, by age, and by frequency of public land use) favored a national conservation area for Gold Butte with wilderness designation for the most pristine sections--with the non-wilderness lands available for a wide range of recreational activities such as off-road vehicle and mountain bike use. Younger voters, (18-54) supported the proposal more widely than voters age 55 and older. ##

California Condors threatened by wind turbines

There are only 400 California condors. And most of them are likely to have close encounters with Kern County's wind turbines at some point in their long lives, according to a warning issued in 2011 by Save the Eagles International (STEI), joined by the North-American Platform against Windpower (NA-PAW) and the World Council for Nature (WCFN).

STEI issued a biodiversity warning concerning the California condor -- regarded as a symbol of wildness. After the state spent tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money and encouraged extraordinary effort by scientists to recuperate the iconic species, politicians in the state now tend to close their eyes to threats to its habitat posed by hundreds of wind turbines.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) biologists have alerted Kern County officials to the problem of planned and existing wind farms posing a threat to the condor. "Until we have a better understanding of the behavior and flight patterns of California condors in the Tehachapi area we strongly recommend that the county of Kern not permit any action that may result in take of California condors," has warned senior biologist Raymond Bransfield.

County officials disagree that condors fly where FWS biologists say they do, and they continue to give the green light to wind turbines where condors fly -- seeking to meet Sacramento's green energy targets--even though much wind-generated power is intermittent and occurs at night when there is a surplus of electricity. Kern County concluded that NextEra Energy's proposed 300-megawatt North Sky River project was a low risk to the condor, stating that no birds had been detected within 18 miles of the site. Then on July 18, 2011, two condors flew near and probably directly over

the site, according to their GPS signals. Although the FWS urged the county to deny approval, the project got the go-ahead in September 2011.

In October the Sierra Club and two other environmental groups sued Kern County over its wind farm approval. The plaintiffs engaged in settlement discussions with NextEra in a good faith effort to resolve the issue, seeking measures to detect condors and temporarily shut down offending turbines to avoid mortality. When discussions proved fruitless, the groups sued BLM in federal court for granting the project a right of way without even an EIS.

Sierra Club strongly supports increased use of renewable energy sources, like wind, but insists that siting must avoid wildlife and other unacceptable impacts.

Condor shadow on the Tehachapi

North America's largest bird, the California condor, is staging a spectacular comeback after verging on extinction 25 years ago. The 200 birds in the wild today (out of about 400 total) are rapidly re-inhabiting their historic range in one of the nation's great achievements of conservation biology.

It was in the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge two hours north of Los Angeles, about 35 miles northwest of the Tehachapi, that the last wild condor was captured on April 13, 1987. The decision had been made to take the last 22 survivors into captivity in a last-ditch effort to save the species. Breeding programs proved a success, and in 1992 the first condors were re-introduced into the wild. Of the 22 wild birds captured in 1987, four still survive.

Weighing about 20 pounds, condors resemble supersize turkey vultures, with bald, reddish-pink-and-orange heads and distinctive white feathers under their black wings. "Condors can travel 200 miles in a day", said Jesse Grantham, Fish & Wildlife Service California condor coordinator, "as they forage for food. The condor has evolved to be attracted to novel objects



photo: Noel Snyder

as it scours vast landscapes for its dinner." A symbol of wildness

Ideal air current topography for condors is the ridge and canyon network that makes up the Tehachapi range, which connects California's coastal mountains to the Sierra Nevada. Condors catch rides on the thermals above the canyons, relying on hot updrafts to soar hundreds of miles.

So far no condor deaths from collisions with wind turbines have been reported. A single death could be catastrophic for the wind industry, the regional economy and, not least, the condor. The loss of an alpha bird could disrupt breeding patterns and an intricate avian hierarchy, according to biologists. Even worse, because condors congregate in large numbers at a kill, a single encounter with a wind turbine could kill multiple birds.

Under the federal and California endangered species acts, it's illegal to kill a condor without first securing a permit to do so--and then only when it is incidental to an otherwise lawful action. Since the government has not issued an "incidental take" permit and is not likely to do so -- if a turbine kills a condor, the operator could be charged criminally. Environmentalists could also ask a judge to shut down a wind farm where a condor died. Already, state regulators have scuttled a huge Pacific Gas & Electric wind project in part due to financial risks of a potential condor-caused cut to electricity production.

Condors expand their range

Conflicts between renewable energy and wildlife (go to next page)

are nothing new. But the condor presents a conundrum that will force some hard choices about the balance we're willing to strike between obtaining clean energy and preserving the wild things.

Back when many existing wind projects were being planned, the condor had yet to appear beyond the core reintroduction sites. But Fish & Wildlife Service maps plotting condor locations and flight

paths between 2005 and 2010 show a huge change, as the condor's range expands.

As the condor begins to go where no condor has gone in decades, developers,

environmentalists and government biologists hope to arrive at a solution that blends conservation science with technology. The San Diego Zoo Safari Park, a major condor research and breeding center, is trying a new U-Haul-size radar system whose spinning antennas could automatically shut down turbines when a bird approaches a wind farm.

Dan Taylor, California Audubon Society director, says more litigation may be inevitable unless a technological fix is found. "We're on a collision course for some potential fatalities," he says. "I think the day a condor is killed by a wind turbine in California changes the course of future development."

Contacts:

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(Joan Taylor helped prepare this article.)



-- by Richard Waller

How I got started

When I was four years old, my father took my brothers and me to Tenaya Lake in Yosemite National Park. We camped at the east end of the high-country lake, we played in the water, we hiked the trails, and I caught my first trout in the clear waters of the lake. We took those trips to Tenaya Lake for four more years, spending two weeks each summer. I fell hard for the clear water, bright granite peaks and slabs, the vanilla smell of Jeffrey pines, the sound of wind in the trees, the flash of aspen leaves in the mountain sunlight.

The legendary Ranger Carl Sharsmith led our evening campfires, and he told us stories of the high country and the tiny flowers. Ranger Sharsmith and the sights and sounds of the Sierra forever ruined me for a life in towns, or jobs with neckties.

As the years went by, I collected and read the writings of John Muir. I backpacked the High Sierra with my Boy Scout troop. Later I worked as a fire fighter with the Forest Service and skied the high country in the winter.

I spent many years hiking, climbing, skiing, fire fighting in the mountains, I thought of each of these activities as arrows in my quiver of experiencing the mountains.

In time, I raised my children in the Sierra on an isolated homestead north of Lake Tahoe. They too learned to love the clear water, bright granite peaks and slabs, the vanilla smell of Jeffrey pines, the sound of wind in the trees, the flash of aspen leaves in the mountain sunlight.

Along the way, my girls were given a horse--a mustang retired from endurance riding. They would take turns saddling Tizzy and going off on two-hour gallops through the Tahoe National Forest. One day, I decided to go for a ride, not having ridden since I was a child. I saddled Tizzy and rode out to our special meadow, with blue camas and a wild trout stream. I realized then,

that this worked for me: a horse was another arrow in my quiver, a way I could wander the mountains even as getting older would take its toll on my hiking long distances.

I bought a horse, another mustang raised on the desert lands of Nevada. Strong, smart, sure footed and analytical, and a bit of a butt. I named him for my favorite poet, Robinson Jeffers.

Five years ago we relocated to the central California coast, to the farm I grew up on. Desiring some friends to ride with, I looked up an organization I had just heard about, the Backcountry Horsemen of California. Hooking up with the men and women of the group, I found people who, like me, loved the mountains and combined their love of the mountains with their love of horses.

Back Country Horsemen of California

So, who are these people, what is the Backcountry Horsemen of California, and why do they exist? During the 1980s it appeared that horse use on public lands was not universally loved, and the threat of restrictions and closures was real. The High Sierra Stock Users Association was formed to represent horsemen in negotiating with public lands administrators.

In 1986 this group joined with similar groups from other states to form the Backcountry Horsemen of America. Each state is a separate chapter, coordinating with the national Back Country Horsemen of America. Currently BCHA has chapters in 23 states with 174 units, with about 13,300 members in all. California's 24 units have about 3,000 members from top of the state to the Mexican border.

Backcountry Horsemen of Nevada has three units, two in the Reno/Carson area and one in Las Vegas.

Well, what do we do, really?
Backcountry Horsemen -- continued page 6

Back Country Horsemen -- from page 5

is first and foremost a political action group, with the mission of preserving equestrian use on our public lands.



We negotiate with the public lands agencies as needed.

To gain a credible seat at the table, Backcountry Horsemen throughout the nation participate as volunteers in conservation projects and trail maintenance. In California we may provide pack support for Pacific Crest Trail crews, or California Conservation Corps work. We may pack trout into lakes, or haul garbage out. Members may help with spring rehabilitation, or build horse campgrounds. Cutting deadfalls across our trails happens every spring, cross cut saw crews pack into our wilderness to open trails. Since the Forest Service particularly has such limited resources available to care for our wilderness areas, the horsemen are increasingly valuable.

In 2011 BCHC members reported Volunteer Service Hours value of 4.4 million dollars.

Backcountry Horsemen also educate each other and the public. Backcountry Horsemen practice and teach "Leave No Trace" and "Gentle Use" ethics. As a Backcountry Horsemen member, you can learn to build a wilderness bridge, or pack a mule, and lead a string of mules. Working together with the Forest Service, we teach the safe handling of tools. You too can become a Forest Service certified crosscut sawyer or chain saw user.

A major focus of the organization is to teach our children to

love the national treasure of our public lands, we teach youth to ride, pack, set a clean camp, to love our wild lands.

The Horsemen are very involved in public lands issues. Trail closures or bureaucratic indifference affect all of us public lands users. Back Country Horsemen of America is strongly pro-wilderness, and at their annual meeting in 2012 their chief speakers were the wilderness leads of two federal wilderness agencies. BCHA also decided to join the national effort to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014.

We see a strong congruence between the goals and activities of the Sierra Club and the goals and activities of the Backcountry Horsemen. The horsemen would like you to know, that we may very well be able to help with your wilderness projects, such as service trips: just let us know what you have in mind. Some events may benefit from pack mule or horse support.

We invite all of you to come to our 2013 Rendezvous to be held in the George Ingalls Equestrian Event Center, in Norco, March 22 - 24. This southern California location is north of Corona, in Riverside County. In 2013 the event theme will be: **"From your backyard, to your back roads, to your backcountry"**

The Rendezvous is open to the public: "The BCHC Rendezvous follows a tradition of gathering together of outdoor enthusiasts, with equine training clinicians, scores of vendors, horse and mule packing seminars, Gentle Use/ Leave No Trace classes, Western Art Show, Awards and Accolades, Dutch Oven Cook-off, Trail Trials, Beer and Wine tasting, Cowboy Church, Youth Classes, Raffles and Auction."

I gain new knowledge from the Rendezvous presenters each year on wilderness travel and recreation. I highly recommend the 2013 Rendezvous to you. Visit us at www.bchc.org/ www.bchc-lpunit.org/ www.backcountryhorse.com/ ##

(Richard Waller is 1st Vice President of Backcountry Horsemen of California, and Project Director, Backcountry Horsemen of California, Los Padres Unit)

September named national wilderness month

For the fourth year in a row, President Barack Obama issued a proclamation designating September as national wilderness month. In part, the 2012 proclamation stated:

"Today, our wilderness areas reflect an essential part of our national character, and as a people, we are immeasurably richer for their presence. Protected wilderness areas are recreational escapes for families, natural classrooms for students, living laboratories for scientists, irreplaceable retreats for sportsmen and women, and historical treasures for the American people. These landscapes provide clean air, clean water, and essential habitats for fish and wildlife, and they serve as critical storehouses of biodiversity....Our lands and waters also help drive local economies by creating jobs in tourism and recreation. Our open spaces are more precious today than ever before, and it is essential that we come together to protect them for the next generation.

Generations of visionary leaders and communities have given of themselves to preserve our wild landscapes, fulfilling a responsibility that falls to us all as Americans and as inhabitants of this small planet. During National Wilderness Month, let us celebrate the progress we have made and let us recommit to protecting the land we love for centuries to come." ##

Next Wilderness Meeting Feb 16-17

The next meeting of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee will be the annual joint meeting with the Desert Committee in Shoshone, CA, the weekend of February 16 - 17, 2013. This is guaranteed to be the most enjoyable gathering of the year. Hikes, lively, timely presentations, networking, agency and SCA contacts, social scene. Updates on Wilderness50, energy issues, legislation, stewardship, outings, and ? Don't miss out. From about noon Sat to noon Sun, potluck dinner Sat. Contact Vicky. hoover@sierraclub.org or Terry Frewin, terrylf@cox.net.



Outings

Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!



January 2, 2013 -- Wed New Year Big Sur trail work

Start the year with this day trip, a moderate 7 mile hike from Terrace Creek to Pine Ridge Trail, with a ½ hour shuttle. There is work for all abilities--to include crosscut saw work and brushing as well as "trail gardening." Bring own work gloves, sturdy work clothes and footwear, lunch, water, item for potluck snacks, flashlight. Contact LEADER Steve Benoit for reservation/details: stevebenoit2000@yahoo.com or (831)394-4234.

January 18-20 -- Fri - Sun Death Valley Restoration

We will work with Death Valley National Park Wilderness Coordinator Charlie Callagan on wilderness restoration activities: this time, debris cleanup in Panamint Valley area. Hike in one and a half miles and carry out what we pick up. Camp at Panamint Springs or Wild Rose Campground. Arrive Fri pm and start work, continue work Sat, with potluck Sat night. Sun maybe work or recreation. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com, (661)944-4056.

January 19-21 -- Sat - Mon Marble Peak Trail work

Spend the three-day Martin Luther King weekend doing important trail work on the Ventana Wilderness Marble Peak trail.. Good introduction to trail work: something

for all abilities, from crosscut saw work and brushing to trail "gardening. An easy backpack 5 mile round trip to camp at Willow Springs Camp. Because this is our first trip here since last spring, there will be plenty to do. Meet 8 am at Gorge Parking lot, Arroyo Seco. Bring work clothes, food, water, camping gear, etc. Contact Leader Betsy MacGowan for reservations/details, bmaccgowan@hotmail.com or trailcrew@ventanawild.org.

Feb 2-3 AND Feb 9-10 Sat-Sun Arroyo Seco Trail work: 2 trips

Help Ventana Wilderness Alliance do trail work via a moderately difficult 4 mile round trip backpack to Cook Springs Camp, plus another mile to work location on Arroyo Seco Trail. Work for all abilities. We will brush and may remove fallen logs. See if there are any spring wildflowers yet. Meet 8 am at top of Nacimiento-Fergusson Rd, at gate to Cone Peak Rd. Bring gloves, sturdy work clothes and footwear, pole to cross creek, water, camping gear, food, loppers and/or saw if you have, otherwise tools provided, potluck snack for Sat night. Contact Betsy MacGowan, see Jan 19-21.

Feb 18-20 -- Mon - Wed Gold Butte, Nevada, car camp

Join Vicky Hoover after the Shoshone Wilderness-Desert meeting to enjoy car camping in a remote corner of public lands in Southeast Nevada, 3 hours n.e. of Las Vegas. Contact vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org, or (415)977-5527.

March 2-3 -- Sat-Sun or Fri-Mon Death Valley Tour

Meet in Shoshone, south of Death Valley at 8 am Sat. Tour to Badwater, Natural Bridge, Golden Canyon, and Artists Drive. Short hikes and lunch stop along the way. Camp Sat at Texas Springs (fee). Sun drive to Zabriskie Point, visitors center, Salt Creek--home of rare Salt Creek Pupfish. Then hike Mesquite Flats Sand Dunes. Mon option includes camping in park and hike up Mosaic Canyon. Fri option includes Tecopa camping and pm hike at China Ranch. Contact leader to reserve. Carol Wiley, desertlily1@verizon.net (760)245-8734.



photo: John Miller, BLM

Wilderness activists join staff and friends of Wilderness Land Trust on a Sierra hike near Carson Pass to visit the new addition to the Mokelumne Wilderness at head of Jeff Davis Creek. They enjoyed the lush meadow and broad views along the trail. They hiked up to Jeff Davis Peak but failed to climb it. (See article page 3.)

March 2-3 AND 16-17 -- Sat - Sun Two Marble Peak Trail weekends

Spring is a beautiful time to work on the Marble Peak Trail. See Jan 19-21 for description of outing. Contact Leader Betsy MacGowan, see Jan 19-21.

March 15-17 -- Fri - Sun (or Mon) Mojave National Preserve

Meet Friday, 1:00 pm at Sunrise Rock primitive campground. Then hike to Teutonia Peak (4 mi rt). Sat includes a trip to Hole in the Wall Visitors Center and a 6 mile hike on Barber Peak Loop Trail. Potluck Sat. night. Sunday enjoy hiking Kelso Dunes. For 3-day option, camp at Granite Pass (primitive) and visit Amboy Crater Mon am. Contact Carol Wiley, see March 2-3.

March 29-31 -- Fri - Sun Wilderness Character Inventory

Join our annual Sierra Club Wilderness Committee/ Mojave Group spring service trip with Needles BLM Field Office to help wilderness--this year we'll document wilderness characteristics of an area not now wilderness that has not been recently studied. We enjoyed similar work last spring. Car camp with central commissary, usual exorbitant fee. Contact Vicky Hoover, see Feb 18 -20. ##

photo: Geoffrey Smith



After the Wilderness Committee's September meeting in Fresno, hosted by the Tehipite Chapter, Chapter outings leader Karen Hammer, with help of Chapter chair Bill Fjelbo, led group members on a Sunday hike along Willow Creek, north of Bass Lake. The beautiful day enjoying nature reminded all of why we work to preserve wild places.

Wildling Museum prepares for Wilderness 50th Anniversary



One of the most important ways Sierra Club Chapters can celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014 and publicize the values of wilderness is to work with their local museums, galleries, and libraries to promote exhibits of paintings and photographs of wild places. By contacting museums well in advance, to reserve space, volunteers can assure that the golden anniversary will heighten public interest and appreciation for wild values.

An outstanding example of a small California museum whose general programs mesh well with the wilderness theme is the Wildling Museum. Indeed, its motto is "America's Wilderness in Art". Presently located in the small

community of Los Olivos, a few miles from U.S. 101 between Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, the museum expects to have moved to larger quarters in nearby Solvang before 2014. Executive director Stacey Otte already has plans to keep a core wilderness display for the entire year at the new Solvang site, with additional changing exhibits as 2014 progresses.

Santa Maria volunteer Jerry Connor, who along with Jim Hines of Ventura, has taken on the task of anniversary coordinator in the Los Padres Chapter, is also working with locations in Santa Barbara for additional displays.

Since it opened in 1997, the Wildling Art Museum has become a vital part of the cultural landscape of Santa Barbara County. The Museum has attained national recognition for its exhibitions, publications, and educational programs

Mother Lode Chapter volunteers in northern California are

also preparing for museum displays and are working with a nature-focused museum in Redding known as Turtle Bay for possible exhibits in 2014.

We hope museum and other exhibits will be an integral part of wilderness celebrations in many communities around the nation. Many airports also have display cases in their long corridors that can be reserved ahead of time. As of late 2012, 46 Sierra Club Chapters



around the country have joined in the organizing effort for the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. ##

-- Vicky Hoover

WORDS OF the WILD

The Sierra Club California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, an issue committee of the CA/NV Regional 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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