



WILDERNESS WATCHER

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Wilderness Preserved, Wilderness Still Threatened

By Kevin Proescholdt

Thirty-five years ago last fall, President Jimmy Carter signed into law the 1978 Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW)

Act. This action culminated a bitter political fight to provide additional wilderness protections to the BWCAW and marked the only time that the 1964 Wilderness Act has ever been directly amended. Despite the additional protections that the 1978 law provided, wilderness protection is still far from complete and many challenges remain in protecting the BWCAW as the “enduring resource of wilderness” envisioned by the Wilderness Act.

The BWCAW is a storied Wilderness, one of the flagship units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It fills the northern third of Superior National Forest, and it remains the most heavily visited Wilderness in the nation. At just under 1.1 million acres, it is

the largest Wilderness east of the Rockies and north of the Everglades. The Boundary Waters is also the nation’s only large lakeland wilderness, where travel occurs primarily via canoe. The BWCAW lies adjacent to Ontario’s 1.2 million-acre Quetico Provincial Park, a

wilderness class park in the Ontario park system. This international Quetico-Superior Ecosystem provides wilderness protection for about 2.3 million acres astride the U.S.-Canada border.



*Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
Photo: Kevin Proescholdt*

The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture first granted the Boundary Waters administrative wilderness protection in 1926, just two years after the Forest Service designated the Gila as the nation’s first wilderness. None of the other early Forest Service administrative wilderness designations came from the Secretary of Agriculture. Early wilderness legends like Ernest C. Oberholtzer, Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, and Sigurd

Olson all paddled the area and worked to protect it.

The BWCAW was an original unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System upon the system’s creation with the 1964 Wilderness Act. But, in a political compromise, the new law contained a paragraph that singled out just the Boundary Waters for continued logging and motorboat use, and the Forest Service quickly allowed snowmobiles to travel anywhere that motorboats could travel. This made the canoe country a Wilderness in name but not in management.

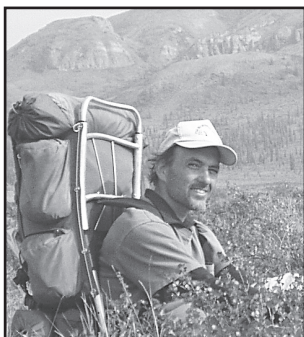
This uncertain status led to a series of lawsuits in the late 1960s and into the 1970s as wilderness advocates struggled to protect the Boundary Waters from copper-nickel mining, logging, and snowmobiles. In 1976 they formed a coalition, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, to push for new legislation in Congress to give the BWCA full wilderness status. Forest

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message from the Executive Director



Of Wolves and Wilderness

*“One of the most insidious invasions of wilderness is via predator control.” – Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac**

Right before the holidays last December, an anonymous caller alerted Wilderness Watch that the Forest Service (FS) had approved the use of one of its cabins deep in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONRW) as a base camp for an Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) hunter-trapper.

The cabin would support the hired trapper’s effort to exterminate two entire wolf packs in the Wilderness. The wolves, known as the Golden Creek and Monumental Creek packs, were targeted at the behest of commercial outfitters and recreational hunters who think the wolves are eating too many of “their” elk.

Idaho’s antipathy toward wolves and Wilderness comes as no surprise to anyone who has worked to protect either in Idaho. But the Forest Service’s support and encouragement for the State’s deplorable actions were particularly disappointing. Mind you, these are the same Forest Service Region 4 officials who, only a year or two ago, approved IDFG’s request to land helicopters in this same Wilderness to capture and collar every wolf pack, using the justification that understanding the natural behavior of the wolf population was essential to protecting them and preserving the area’s wilderness character. Now, somehow, exterminating those same wolves is apparently also critical to preserving the area’s wilderness character. The only consistency here is the FS and IDFG have teamed up to do everything possible to destroy the Wilderness and wildlife they are required to protect.

Wilderness Watch, along with Defenders of Wildlife, Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity, and Idaho wildlife advocate Ralph Maughan, filed suit in federal court against the Forest Service and IDFG to stop the wolf slaughter. Our suit alleges the FS failed to follow its own required procedures before authorizing IDFG’s hunter-trapper to use a FS cabin as a base for his wolf extermination efforts, and that the program violates the agency’s responsibility under the 1964 Wilderness Act to preserve the area’s wilderness character, of which the wolves are an integral part. Trying to limit the number of wolves in Wilderness makes no more sense than limiting the number of ponderosa pine, huckleberry bushes, rocks, or rainfall. An untrammelled Wilderness will set its own balance. The FS’s anemic defense is that it didn’t authorize the killing, therefore there is no reviewable decision for the court to overturn, and that it was still discussing the program with IDFG (while the trapper was in the field killing the wolves). Unfortunately, the district judge sided with the FS and IDFG, so we filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Rather than defend its action before the higher court, Idaho informed the court that it was pulling the trapper out of the Wilderness and would cease the program for this year. In the meantime, nine wolves are needlessly dead.

We will continue to pursue our challenge because the killing program will undoubtedly return. The Forest Service can’t and shouldn’t hide behind the old canard that “the states manage wildlife.” Congress has charged the FS with preserving the area’s wilderness character and the Supreme Court has held many times that the agency has the authority to interject itself in wildlife management programs to preserve the people’s interest in these lands. Turning a blind-eye is a shameful response for an agency that used to claim the leadership mantle in wilderness stewardship.

Wilderness Watch expresses its deep appreciation to Tim Preso and his colleagues at Earthjustice for waging a stellar legal battle on our behalf and in defense of these wilderness wolves. 🐾

—George Nickas



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, America’s leading conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting the lands and waters in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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Boundary Waters (continued from page 1)

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Rep. Don Fraser, a Democrat who represented the Minneapolis area, did the unthinkable in Congressional courtesy by introducing a bill to give the Boundary Waters full wilderness status. Fraser was willing to do this even though the area was in the Congressional district of Rep. Jim Oberstar, who had introduced a bill to remove 400,000 acres from the BWCA and convert it to a less-protected National Recreation Area where logging, resorts, motorboats, and snowmobiles would be allowed. Fraser received significant aid over the next few years from fellow Rep. Bruce Vento of Minnesota, and Rep. Phillip Burton of California, who chaired the key House subcommittee.


The Carter Administration strongly supported wilderness protection for the Boundary Waters, too. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture M. Rupert Cutler, whose doctoral dissertation had in part studied the litigation history of the BWCA, provided that strong leadership for the Administration.

After a three-year fight in Congress, a compromise bill passed in the last hours of the session in 1978, and it was this bill that President Carter signed into law. It provided new, though still incomplete, wilderness protections for the BWCAW and removed the special language in the 1964 Wilderness Act that allowed logging and motorboats in the area. The law ended logging, significantly reduced motorboat use, nearly eliminated snowmobiles, essentially prohibited mining, added about 68,000 acres to the Boundary Waters, and officially re-named

Wilderness in the Courts

Court Upholds Ban on Surface Patents for Mining Claims in Wilderness

In a victory for Wilderness, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decision to deny a patent to the surface estate on a mining claim in the Trinity Alps Wilderness in California. For years, BLM policies misinterpreted min-

ing provisions in the Wilderness Act and issued patents to both the surface and subsurface of valid mining claims. The agency should have issued patents only to the subsurface, and kept the surface in public ownership. The Appeals Court decision confirms the opinion of former Interior Solicitor John Leshy, who corrected this misinterpretation in 1998. Read the ruling, *McMASTER v. UNITED STATES*: <http://tinyurl.com/kk7aqfz> 

In the Courts continued on page 10

On the Watch

Will the Kootznoowoo Wilderness be Spared an Airport?

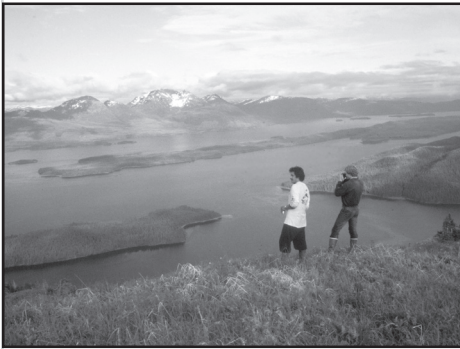


Photo courtesy of wilderness.net

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Alaska Department of Transportation's proposal to build an airport for the community of Angoon on Admiralty Island in southeast Alaska. Access is currently provided by ferry or floatplane. The state's proposed site is in the Kootznoowoo Wilderness. A special provision of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (the law that designated most of the 58 million acres of Wilderness in Alaska) allows the construction of airports and other transportation facilities in Wilderness, with the approval of the President and Congress.

Fortunately, the FAA recently announced its preferred site is on privately owned land, the alternative that Wilderness Watch supports (it's one of three proposed sites and the only one not in Wilderness). However, the battle is far from over—many locals reportedly want to reserve the private lands for additional development, while others believe the State proposed the Wilderness site because it wants to set a precedent for developments in Wilderness. The Alaska congressional delegation's propensity to use legislative riders to force through controversial projects (such as the Izembek Road) makes it likely wilderness supporters will be battling this proposal for some time. You can learn more about the proposed airport and sign up to receive regular project updates at www.angoonairporteis.com. 🌿

Livestock Water Reservoirs Proposed for the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness

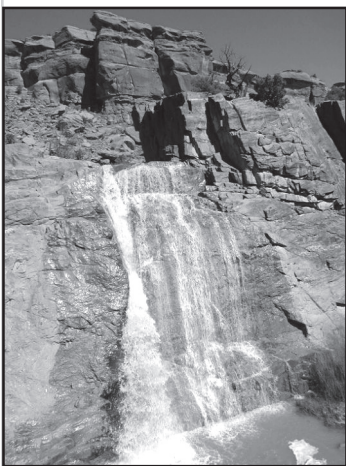


Photo: Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Dominguez Canyon Resource Area in Colorado, which includes the 66,280-acre Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. Wilderness Watch is voicing numerous concerns over the plan's emphasis on conducting extensive habitat manipulation projects—essentially gardening the Wilderness—and its proposals to construct up to 17 new livestock watering reservoirs, likely involving the use of heavy earthmoving equipment, in the Wilderness. BLM appears ready to approve, in the Wilderness, seven to 17 new livestock water reservoirs, which would likely be constructed using backhoes or other large earthmoving equipment and likely serviced in perpetuity by trucks. Neither new facilities nor motorized equipment have a place in Wilderness. The draft RMP also includes ideas to manipulate Wilderness under the guise of protecting naturalness or other values, including building barriers to protect rock art from what is presumably the threat of vandalism. While the plan itself doesn't authorize any of these destructive proposals, it lays the groundwork for decisions in the future and strikes at the heart of Wilderness—its untrammled character.

Read our comments on our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_DominguezRMP.pdf 🌿

Texas Chainsaw Massacre—Forest Service Takes Aim at Five Wildernesses



Photo: Kirk Johnson

Wilderness Watch is asking the Forest Service (FS) to drop its proposal to log five Wildernesses in eastern Texas—Big Slough, Little Lake Creek, Indian Mounds, Turkey Hill, and Upland Island Wildernesses—for the purported purpose of controlling a Southern pine beetle infestation. We see serious problems with the proposal including the fact there is no pine beetle outbreak in Texas. The nearest infestation is in Mississippi. Pine beetles are also natural agents of change in these Wildernesses, part of determining the composition and structure of southern pine forests. In our comments we noted that while the Wilderness Act includes a limited allowance for control of insects in Wilderness, deliberate human manipulation compromises Wilderness from being truly wild as the Act intended. We asked the agency to instead adopt alternatives that keep all intensive management outside Wilderness.

Read our comments on our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Wilderness_Logging_Texas.pdf 🌿

Wilderness Watch Opposes New Wilderness Access Fee for King Range Wilderness



Photo: Bob Wich

Wilderness Watch is raising concerns with a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed new wilderness access fee for the King Range Wilderness. Part of the King Range National Conservation Area, the 42,694-acre King Range Wilderness lies along the Pacific Coast in northern California. In its “business plan” for the King Range Wilderness, BLM wants to institute a first of its kind \$5/person/day fee to visit the area.

In our comments, we let the BLM know the proposed fee would violate the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which prohibits fees for parking at, hiking through, or camping in undeveloped federal sites such as Wildernesses. (The US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals recently affirmed this law in a 2012 ruling against the imposition of such fees for undeveloped areas.) We also argued that Wilderness should be available to all irrespective of one’s ability to pay to experience it, and warned that the BLM plan appeared to be turning Wilderness into a commodity. Lastly, the proposal commodifies and commercializes Wilderness, something the Act prohibits, by allowing a private commercial reservation business to profit from the fee.

Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_King_Range_Wilderness_Fee.pdf 🌿

Road through the Izembek Wilderness Rejected



Photo: Christine Sowl (USFWS)

Wilderness Watch applauds Interior Secretary Sally Jewell’s December 2013 decision to reject a proposed road through the Izembek Wilderness in Alaska. The contentious proposal had placed at risk one of the nation’s premier Wildernesses and the rich wildlife it supports. Wilderness Watch and other national conservation groups sent a letter in mid-August asking Jewell to adopt the Fish and Wildlife’s Environmental Impact Statement recommendation against a land exchange and 20-mile road through the Wilderness. Our letter states the road “...would cause significant ecological damage to public land and subsistence resources and set a disturbing precedent for the National Wildlife Refuge System and all lands currently protected under the Wilderness Act.” Read the letter here: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Izembek_Letter.pdf 🌿

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ESSAY: The Amenity of Wilderness

—by Tom Suk

I'm among the fortunate few who live close enough to walk (or ski) in Wilderness more days than not. But the Wilderness closest to my home—the Desolation Wilderness in California's Sierra Nevada—is often crowded, so I seek out lesser known places. The so-called “Desolation Wilderness,” one of the most-visited areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System, is overrun by phone-chattering crowds, frequent intrusions by unregulated helicopter tours, so many backpackers that permits are costly and difficult to obtain, and rangers whose highest priority seems to be shaking you down to make sure you've got your papers and paid the fee. Yes, this is our National Wilderness Preservation System in the 21st century.

But there are, of course, still places to find a true wilderness experience. We just have to work ever harder to find it.

One of my favorite walks, a lonesome stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) which I won't pinpoint here, is only minutes by car or bicycle from Lake Tahoe—a tourist mecca that sees about 20 million visitors per year. Even on a Saturday in August, the only people I usually see along this segment of trail are one or two “long-trail” (i.e., PCT) hikers. They may remember me as the guy who offers sweet summer fruits from town. Those who answer my “howdy” with an enlightened response to the wilderness around them may even share an ice-cold beer from the drybag-turned-cooler in my daypack.

I'm increasingly struck by people who respond with the less-attentive nod now characteristic of those plugged into some electronic pacifier. Many now hike the PCT focused more on the sounds or trivial digital blinking of their e-gadget than the wilderness around them. But that's not the point of this little story.

I usually walk alone, but on this one day I brought a friend who wanted to see one of my “special” places. After a mile or three, my companion remarked that I “don't say much” when hiking. After a long pause I replied, “No need for banter. There's no awkward silence out here. Only sweet quietude.”

His non-response indicated that he understood and perhaps agreed.

It was a lovely walk. We encountered no one, and saw much. After gaining the Sierra crest, soaked with sweat, we stopped for a rest. I sounded deep into my pack and came up with two ice-cold beers. We sat against a warm rock under the high sun, surrounded by glowing paintbrush, and quaffed our refreshments.

“I can see why there's nobody here,” my pal observed, after a time. “There's no amenities.”

I pondered that for a couple gulps, and asked, “What do you mean by ‘no amenities?’”



Photo: John Lynch

“Well, there's no lakes... no fishing...no good swimming holes...”

“...no waterfalls named after presidents, no prominent summits where you can sign your name in a register, no geysers or hot springs or caves,” I offered, as if to complete the sentence.

“Right,” he acknowledged.

This was a conversation worth exploring, so I reached into my pack for some bread, cheese, avocado, tomato, and spicy mustard. As I prepared

the snack, I explained that I come here for the amenity of Wilderness: Silence. Solitude. Wildflowers in scores of colors around every bend in the narrow, winding footpath. Massive old-growth white pine, red fir, and hemlock in forests that have never seen a saw. Huge, twisted, shaggy junipers on the drier sites, half-dead but defiantly clinging to life and sure to outlast us all.

On my last solo walk here, I'd seen a pine marten disappear behind one such giant, after we pondered each other for a good long while.

“Wow, that's poetic,” he said, only half-seriously. But he did seem interested in exploring the conversation, so I continued.

The value of Wilderness is not in the fish we catch or the registers we sign. It's not in the economic development that often benefits nearby communities due to increased visitation after wilderness designation. It's not even in the

(laudable) prevention of another disastrous new ski village because the land was finally designated as Wilderness. The truest value of Wilderness, I opined, the real reason the Wilderness Act was penned in the first place, is the change that happens within each person when he or she visits and experiences the amenity of Wilderness—the profound changes that result when we encounter self-willed land.

He seemed to be absorbing it, so I went further. Such internal transformations don't happen simply from drawing lines on a map or from stopping the latest proposed dam, gold mine, or logging project. Designation is a crucial first step, but meaningful interactions with Wilderness are possible only due to the diligent advocacy of watchdogs like Wilderness Watch, the humility of managers who understand not trammeling Wilderness for convenience, economy, comfort, or "safety," and visitors' recognition of the need to disconnect from modern human contrivances first and let go of the notion that they're here to catch or consume or accomplish something. (This thesis is a human-centric one, and I acknowledge the position of those who believe the greatest value of Wilderness is intrinsic—that it exists for its own sake.)

Many visitors don't (yet) understand this "amenity" of Wilderness. They tend to want ever more toilets, bridges, handrails, signs, food lockers, picnic tables, benches, cellphone towers, peak registers, geo-caches, shelters,

re-constructed historic structures, interpretive displays, fences to keep their stock animals from running home, and other such developments. It's our job to educate them (at least until the agencies step up to do so) about the amenity of Wilderness, which is shattered by these things.

Later, back in town, I shared with my friend some literature about Wilderness Watch and invited him to join. While all the colors of our advocacy palette (i.e., writing letters, walking the halls of Congress, maintaining a robust presence on the Internet, filing lawsuits, etc.) are crucial to our success, it's also essential that we remember the age-old exercise of building our grassroots, one member at a time. If you're wondering where to start, just take your friends and acquaintances to your favorite places and talk about why you go there. The rest will happen on its own.

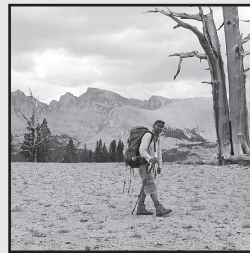


Photo: John Lynch

Tom Suk has been a lifetime member of Wilderness Watch since the 1990s. He was a wilderness ranger in the Sierra Nevada for more than a decade, and currently serves as a senior scientist for a natural resources agency.

Anna Vee Brandborg: Wilderness Watch Loses a Friend

By Larry Campbell

Wilderness Watch lost a long-time friend on November 2, when Anna Vee Brandborg, wife of WW senior adviser Stewart ("Brandy") Brandborg passed away at the age of 88. Both Anna Vee and Brandy have been stalwart wilderness defenders for decades (Brandy was instrumental in passing the 1964 Wilderness Act and has served on the Wilderness Watch board of directors for nearly two decades). Anna Vee is now off exploring unknown territory, having passed over the great divide.


Anna Vee found great joy and inspiration in nature, her animals, and wild places. Her love of family, community, wildlife, and wilderness inspired all who knew her. Her commitment to education launched many supposedly 'unteachable' students into a life of learning, helped to start a community college, and exposed many benighted politicians and policy makers to an enlightened soul. Like Brandy, she never quit.

Marilyn Olsen, a staunch wilderness advocate and long-time friend remembers, "She was a lovely, strong woman. She was a brave supporter and advocate for wilderness. She was very savvy about wilderness issues, knew all the folks involved, and was able to share her insights in a generous, inclusive way. With a positive, cheerful attitude she taught me that though, at times it could be difficult, bleak, and overwhelming being a wilderness defender, maintaining a positive spirit was essential. She was a terrific role model, befriending and promoting women in our movement. Wilderness and its advocates have lost a great friend."



Anna Vee and Brandy

Photo: Kevin Proescholdt

Wilderness Watch expresses our deepest condolences to Brandy and his family. 

Wolf Pups Howling Again on Isle Royale

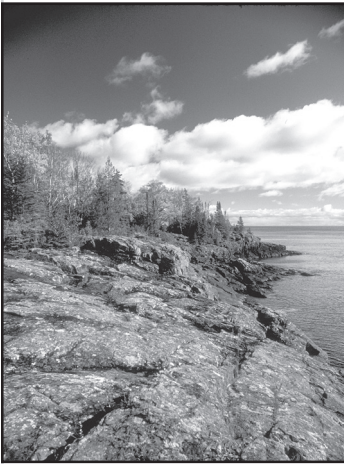


Photo: National Park Service

In the last *Watcher*, we featured the wolves of Isle Royale National Park and Wilderness in Michigan. Their declining population and flattened genetic diversity are at the center of a debate on whether to reintroduce more wolves there. This past summer, we participated in a forum on the future of Isle Royale's wolves, and strongly urged the National Park Service to refrain from reintroduction, and rather let Nature take her course, even if that means the population might become extirpated at some point in the future. You can view the forum here: <http://vimeo.com/npca/review/70503819/367ea6f248>

The National Park Service recently confirmed the presence of at least two and maybe three new wolf pups born last year on Isle Royale. This breeding success eliminates one of the main arguments for transplanting wolves—that the wolves are not reproducing. The success with these new pups doesn't guarantee the long-term survival of wolves on the island, but does show that the population is more resilient than some believe. To read more about this issue, visit our blog: www.wildernesswatch.wordpress.com 🐾

NPS Proposes Fish Poisoning for North Cascades National Park



Photo: Forest Service

Wilderness Watch is questioning the National Park Service's (NPS) proposal to use rotenone to kill stocked brook trout in Sourdough Lake in the Stephen Mather Wilderness, which is within North Cascades National Park in Washington. Sourdough Lake was originally a naturally fishless lake, but it was stocked with brook trout decades ago. The NPS proposes switching to liquid rotenone (CFT Legumine) from its previous use of antimycin as a piscicide to kill the brook trout. Brook trout have worked their way downstream from Sourdough Lake and are hybridizing with endemic bull trout in Ross Lake. While Wilderness Watch supports efforts to end fish stocking and to remove fish from naturally fishless lakes, we raised a number of questions about this proposal. In our comments, we asked the NPS about the efficacy of treatment options, the spread of poison downstream, whether the proposal includes helicopters or motorboats, and

if perpetual poisonings would be required. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WWComments_NCascades_Rotenone.pdf 🐾

Drakes Bay Oyster Company Loses Again



Photo: Bill Ingersoll

Last September, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 against the Drakes Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) in its effort to continue operating in the Phillip Burton Wilderness in California. Former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar ruled in December 2012 that the commercial oyster farm must cease with the expiration of its lease and he added the area to the Phillip Burton Wilderness. The oyster company has fought Salazar's order in the courts since then. Although a federal district court denied the company's request for a preliminary injunction, in late January, the Ninth Circuit court granted the company's request to remain open for three more months while it asks the Supreme Court to consider its case. The company also faces a cease-and-desist order from the California Coastal Commission in 2013 because it's polluting the bay. 🐾

WW Questions Tree Planting Proposal for the Pasayten Wilderness



Photo: Steve Boutcher

Wilderness Watch is urging the Forest Service (FS) to abandon its proposal to plant whitebark pine in the Pasayten Wilderness in Washington following a lighting-caused fire. The FS claims it “needs to establish a whitebark pine seed source...for natural regeneration to occur,” but the project’s Environmental Assessment seemingly contradicts this by stating there are still whitebark pines in the project area.

In our comments, we urged the agency to let natural processes determine the extent of whitebark pine regeneration, rather than have managers determine how many and where whitebark pines will grow in the Wilderness. The project would have a significant negative impact on the Pasayten Wilderness by trammeling the area. Wilderness is an essential component of Wilderness, and nature, rather than humans, should determine when, and where whitebark

pines are re-established. We asked the FS to conduct its experiment on non-Wilderness lands.

Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Pasayten_WBPinePlanting.pdf 🐾

Will Fishers Again Roam Mt. Rainier and North Cascades Wildernesses?



Photo: www.ForestWander.com

The National Park Service (NPS) is analyzing a proposal to reintroduce fishers into Mt. Rainier and North Cascades National Parks, possibly within Wilderness. At one time fishers played an important ecological role in the Cascade Range. Fishers were extirpated there in the 1990s.

Wilderness Watch supports reintroduction of extirpated species where human actions have eliminated an indigenous species like the fisher, where habitat conditions are suitable, and where the population will be self-sustaining. We prefer natural recolonization over overt reintroduction in Wilderness.

In our comments we urged the NPS to consider whether fisher reintroduction is truly needed and if so, if the effort will be successful. We suggested reintroducing fishers outside of designated Wilderness, or, if they are reintroduced in Wilderness, that they be moved by non-motorized means and that monitoring be conducted in uninvasive

ways. We also asked the NPS to analyze the suitability of the habitat to ensure greater success. Read our comments on our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_NCascades_Fisher_Reintro.pdf 🐾

Linville Gorge Wilderness Burn Plan on Hold



Photo: Lonnie Crofts

The FS appears to be listening to the objections of WW and the local Save the Linville Gorge Wilderness group to the agency’s proposal to conduct prescribed burns in the 12,000-acre Linville Gorge Wilderness (LGW) in North Carolina. The agency has proposed prescribed burns throughout the entire Wilderness two to three times in the next 10 years. We recently learned that the FS has placed the plan on hold, although the agency could include it in its updated Forest Plan. Ironically, more than 2,500 acres in the Gorge burned in late November and early December until the FS fought and contained the fire (its cause is under investigation). Save the Linville Gorge Wilderness has started a petition against the plan: www.change.org/petitions/stop-the-burning-of-linville-gorge-wilderness 🐾

Wilderness in Congress

Speak Up to Protect Glacier Peak Wilderness

Bills have begun to move in both the House and Senate to authorize the illegally-constructed replica lookout on Green Mountain to remain in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington. The bills are H.R. 908 (DelBene, D-WA) and S. 404 (Murray, D-WA). After the Forest Service built the new building in 2009, Wilderness Watch sued the agency and won with the federal district court judge ruling the Forest Service had violated the Wilderness Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The court ordered the agency to remove the new structure. The House bill just passed the full House as part of a larger package (H.R. 2954) on Feb. 6, while the Senate bill passed out of committee on Dec. 19. Only lookout proponents were invited to testify at the hearings.

Please contact your two U.S. Senators and ask them to oppose this wilderness-damaging legislation. Use this link to search for your senators: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?OrderBy=state&Sort=ASC

Email your Senators the following message (feel free to personalize with your own thoughts!).

Dear _____,

Please oppose the Green Mountain Lookout Bill, S. 404. This bill would overturn a ruling from the federal courts that found the construction of this new replica lookout violated the Wilderness Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. This building is NOT an historic lookout, but was built new in 2009. Allowing the Forest Service to construct new buildings in Wilderness not only harms the Glacier Peak Wilderness, but

also sets a dangerous precedent for the entire National Wilderness Preservation System. This bill would also bail out the Forest Service for having knowingly violated federal laws. Please block this damaging bill so this part of the Glacier Peak Wilderness can rightfully be restored. Thank you.

Waiving the Wilderness Act for Commercial Filming

Bills in both the Senate and the House would repeal the Wilderness Act's prohibition on commercial enterprise, as it applies to the commercial filming industry. The Wilderness Act bars commercial enterprise, including filming, because the act's framers saw the benefit and the need to protect Wilderness from being viewed and used as a commodity, and from having its management compromised by economic interests. A sportsmen's bill in the Senate, S. 1335 (Murkowski, R-AK), and a commercial filming bill in the House, H.R. 2798 (Latta, R-OH), would re-define cameras in a back-door attempt to weaken the ban on commercial filming in Wilderness. Needless to say, Wilderness Watch opposes both measures.

Grazing "buyout" Bill Introduced

A positive bill in the House, H.R. 2201 (Smith, D-WA), would require the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to permanently retire livestock grazing permits (including those in Wilderness) that are voluntarily relinquished by ranchers. The bill provides a means for conservation interests to compensate ranchers for retiring their grazing permits in Wilderness and other public lands. Livestock grazing was a significant compromise in the Wilderness Act and often seriously degrades the wild character of designated Wildernesses. 🐾

Wilderness in the Courts

Wilderness Watch Challenges Wolf Extermination Program in Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness

On January 7, Wilderness Watch, along with Defenders of Wildlife, Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity, and Idaho wildlife advocate Ralph Maughan, asked a federal judge in Idaho to stop a wolf extermination program by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). The IDFG, with the support of the U.S. Forest Service, hired a hunter-trapper to kill the entire Golden Creek and Monumental Creek wolf packs deep within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONRW). Earthjustice is representing WW and the other plaintiffs.

We filed for an emergency injunction to immediately halt the killing until the case could be heard in court. When a

federal judge in Idaho denied the injunction, we appealed to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Faced with a looming deadline to defend its actions, on January 27, IDFG announced it was halting its wolf killing program.

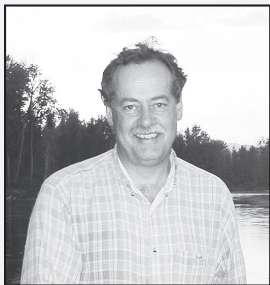
Nine wolves from the packs were killed by the hired trapper. It is unknown how many wolves remain in the two packs.

We will continue to pursue our challenge through the courts because the state will undoubtedly pursue more wolf killing, and the Forest Service failed to protect the wilderness character of the FC-RONRW.

Learn more by visiting our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#WolfExtermination 🐾

Keeping the Solicitations to a Minimum

By Jeff Smith



Recently, I sent a membership renewal reminder to a new member who reached the first anniversary of his donation to our organization. When I opened the Wilderness Watch return envelope he sent in response, I found a receipt for a contribution he had already given, with a hand-written note expressing dismay that I would presume to send him another fund-raising letter so soon.

The problem was the receipt had come from another organization.


Lots of red flags began waving in my head. First, I appreciated this member's philanthropic spirit. As we look around this sweet old world, it's hard to know where to put our money and effort. Everywhere we look there's someone in need, some critter or place in trouble. What's a kind soul to do? I was thankful this donor thought wilderness was worth his attention.

Second, I sent him a letter to set the record straight. I explained that we try hard not to over-solicit for donations. We send an annual membership renewal request and two "special appeals," one during the summer and the other at year's end.

Third, I told him our mission was different from the other organization. Wilderness Watch is the only national organization working to ensure that Wilderness is protected to live up to the great promise of the Wilderness Act. Our mission is to KEEP IT WILD. I hoped he would continue his support for our work.

Lastly, I made sure he knew Wilderness Watch, in spite of the odds and with great determination, stays true to Wilderness as envisioned by the Act's founders and supporters. These lands must remain "untrammled" in the face of outside pressures, even climate change.

The organization he had confused us with happens to have an annual budget of around \$30 million, and I often wonder what they actually accomplish for that annual expenditure. Our budget is a fraction of that amount—three-quarters of which comes directly from our members' donations.

Membership, in other words, is extremely important to us. It's our life-blood. One of our new members put it best. He considered membership a promise. He'd send us some of his hard-earned cash, and Wilderness Watch would do everything it can to make sure Wilderness stays wild. 

LOVE THE WILDERNESS? Help Us Keep It Wild!
Yes! I would like to make a contribution and help defend Wilderness!

Here is an extra donation to help protect Wilderness!

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$30 \$ _____

I would like to become a member!

\$30 \$50 \$500 \$15 \$ _____

Regular Contributor Lifetime Living Lightly Other

My check or money order is enclosed.

Please charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card # _____

Exp. Date ____ / ____ / ____

Please send information about the **Wilderness Legacy Donor Program.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____
(to receive our monthly e-mail update)

Please make checks payable to: "Wilderness Watch"

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On our Blog

We encourage you to regularly visit Wilderness Watch's blog. You'll find it on our home page. Our commentaries cover all things "Wilderness."

Here's a couple of excerpts from recent blog posts:

A Brief History of Quid Pro Quo Wilderness

*By Janine Blaeloch,
Board member, Wilderness Watch*

Beginning in the late 1990s, a new kind of land deal materialized in Congress that would present a huge challenge to grassroots public land activists and wilderness advocates and create a significant schism in the environmental movement. *Quid pro quo* wilderness, as it came to be called, was carried forth in legislation that combined wilderness designation with exchanges, sales, even outright giveaways of public land designed to "buy" Wilderness.

Wolves and Isle Royale: Manipulated Zoo or Wild Wilderness?

By Kevin Proescholdt

Pressure has been mounting on the National Park Service to "save" the wolves on Michigan's Isle Royale National Park and Wilderness. Wolf numbers on the Lake Superior island have dropped, proponents of manipulation proclaim, and the decades of in-breeding have flattened the population's genetic diversity. We should transplant wolves from the mainland to insure that the wolf population survives, they assert, and to provide a "genetic rescue" to freshen up the wolves' gene pool, much as zookeepers do with certain captive animals.

Visit our website to link to our blog:
www.wildernesswatch.org 

Wilderness Watch's blog: www.wildernesswatch.wordpress.com