



WILDERNESS WATCHER

A Voice for Wilderness Since 1989

The Quarterly Newsletter of Wilderness Watch

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Wilderness Returns to the Olympic Mountains Court blocks Park Service pre-fabs in Wilderness

“The Olympic Peninsula is a marvel of the original America...[it]represents a last glorious opportunity to preserve an estate of giants – trees, elk, bear, and all wild things, free to follow their natural course.”

— Michael Frome, *Battle for the Wilderness*

We are pleased to announce that Franklin D. Burgess, United States District Judge for the District of Washington, gets it. Perhaps his understanding arises from visits to the Olympic Wilderness, long days spent exploring wave-shaped shores, traversing glaciated mountains, or staring in wonder at towering fir, spruce and hemlock. It might be that he simply enjoys knowing that Wilderness exists, that there are still places where wild land and wild processes reign supreme. Whatever the catalyst, it is safe to say that Judge Burgess understands both the letter and the underlying *intent* of the Wilderness Act – that the preservation of wilderness character is the key mandate to protecting Wilderness in perpetuity.

Judge Burgess recently put his understanding into action when he ruled that a National Park Service (NPS) plan to helicopter newly constructed shelters into the Olympic



Olympic Wilderness, WA. Photo by Jerome Walker.

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And Much More!

Wilderness violated the Wilderness Act. The case arose in 2001, when the NPS proposed to use a Chinook helicopter to deliver newly constructed shelters into two sub-alpine meadows, Low Divide and Home Sweet Home, deep in the Olympic Wilderness. The two pre-fabs would replace original Forest Service shelters built in the 1930s, both of which collapsed under heavy snows in 1998. Before initiating public review, the NPS went ahead and constructed the shelters – at no small cost to taxpayers – on a site outside the Wilderness. Ironically, though the agency justified its actions on the grounds of historic preservation, the new shelters were sided with milled lumber and fitted with constructed floors, both

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insights

Wilderness Watch bids a Fond Farewell to Jim Curtis

Long-time Wilderness Watch board member and friend James F. Curtis died at age 91 on July 16, 2005. Jim's rich life encompassed many passions – family and teaching, conservation and human health. His deep love and respect for Wilderness was evident throughout his long life - in fact there aren't many who matched Jim's passion for Wilderness and his commitment to saving it. An avid outdoorsman, Jim enjoyed fishing, hunting, and camping with family and friends. We'll always remember Jim regaling us with his stories of family backpacking trips in the "early years" into the Bob Marshall Wilderness and elsewhere, and for the support he and his wife Gail (together for 67 years!) have given to Wilderness Watch. No one understood the importance of our work better than Jim and he will be deeply missed.



May 2005

At our board meeting in May, Wilderness Watch recognized Jim's long-time support and commitment to wild places with a Monte Dolack painting of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Jim and Gail were faithful attendees at our board meetings – in fact, Jim only missed one meeting in 15 years! Jim also gave his time to other conservation groups, holding positions with the local and national Sierra Club and receiving that organization's Distinguished Service Award in 1987 and a special Defender of the Northern Rockies award in 2000. He was well known and loved throughout the conservation community for his extraordinary dedication to conservation.

Jim is survived by his wife Gail and daughter Judy Strom, as well as three grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. We feel honored to have known and worked with Jim and will continue to work for the Wilderness that Jim held so dear.



Jim and Gail Curtis, May 2005.



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, a non-profit organization advocating the protection and responsible stewardship of the nation's designated Wildernesses and Wild & Scenic Rivers.

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We Want Wilderness... Don't We?

The Debate Over the Boulder-White Clouds

— By TinaMarie Ekker

An Inspired Vision

The wild heart of Idaho sprawls across the central part of the state. This rugged region cradles the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and the congressionally protected Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Sawtooth Wilderness. Also shaping this landscape of mountains, forests, meadows, and rivers are the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains (BWC), home to salmon, wolves, bears, marmots, cirque basins and snowy peaks. The headwaters of the Salmon River form here, tumbling down from the craggy high country to wander northward in looping meanders through the wildflower meadows of Stanley Basin that lies between the Sawtooth Mountains and the Boulder-White Clouds.

The heart of Idaho is a landscape of Big Wilderness. The Boulder-White Cloud Mountains run north for 40 miles from Ketchum, Idaho to the Salmon River canyon, forming the largest remaining national forest roadless area outside of Alaska. The BWC's are America's last chance to designate an intact half-million acre national forest wilderness in the lower 48 states. They deserve inclusion in our National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and should receive the fullest protections afforded by the Wilderness Act.

A vision to gain statutory protection for this wild region began taking shape many decades ago and made substantial headway in 1972 when far-sighted Idahoans gained congressional designation for the 750,000 acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). The SNRA includes the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains, the Stanley Basin, and the Sawtooth Wilderness. That legislation directed the USFS to study the BWC for possible future designation as wilderness. Creation of the SNRA remains one of Idaho's proudest achievements.

The purposes of the SNRA are to protect salmon and other fisheries; conserve the scenic, natural, historic, pastoral, wildlife, and other aesthetic values of the area; and utilize natural resources such as timber, grazing, and minerals to the extent their utilization will not impair the conservation purposes for which the SNRA was established.

The SNRA legislation directs that the Sawtooth Wilderness shall be administered in accordance with the SNRA legislation and the Wilderness Act, *whichever is most protective*.

We have inherited this legacy of seeking lasting protection for the wild heart of Idaho. The vision to fully protect the SNRA has been entrusted to us for safekeeping. This legacy is not ours to squander or to compromise to the political expedencies of our own time. Gaining full wilderness protection for the BWC is part of this treasured vision that has yet to become a reality.



The Temple, Sawtooth Wilderness, ID. WW file photo.

Politics vs. Protection

Conservationists have tried a number of times over the years to gain wilderness designation for the B-WC. Unfortunately, Idaho politics have nixed new wilderness proposals in the state for the last twenty-five years. However, that situation may be changing.

In May, Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID) introduced the Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act (CIEDRA) that would designate 300,000 acres of Wilderness in the BWC. The bill is supported by the Idaho Conservation League, The Wilderness Society, and the Pew Campaign for America's Wilderness.

So, why are nearly three dozen regional and national organizations, including Wilderness Watch, Idaho Wildlife Federation, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, the Sierra Club, and a coalition of retired SNRA managers opposing the new legislation? For the answer, one must look to the devil in the details.

Unlike the visionary 1972 legislation that established the SNRA, CIEDRA would un-do many existing protections, undermine the SNRA's conservation and aesthetic purposes, grant troubling statutory rights to certain special interests, and designate wilderness on paper while simultaneously authorizing a number of incompatible activities in wilderness. CIEDRA would also preclude stronger protections for the SNRA in the future.

The SNRA and spectacular Boulder-White Cloud Mountains deserve far better. America can and should do much better than CIEDRA to protect the wild heart of Idaho.

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Olympic Wilderness, continued from page 1

significant departures from the original earth-floored, cedar shake-sided structures they were intended to replicate.

Olympic Park Associates, Wilderness Watch and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) brought suit to halt the project in October 2004. We charged that the NPS' plan was in violation of the Wilderness Act, which specifically prohibits unnecessary "structures or installations" or "mechanized transport" in designated Wilderness. In response, the Park Service argued it was legally bound to preserve the shelters as historic resources and that the structures would both enhance the area's wilderness character and provide for visitor safety.

Judge Burgess disagreed with the NPS on all counts, granting our Motion of for Summary Judgement in July. The Court held that the NPS' project violated the Wilderness Act and National Environmental Policy Act, making special note of the agency's mandate to preserve wilderness character:

"The Home Sweet Home and Low Divide shelters have collapsed under the natural effects of weather and time, and to reconstruct the shelters and place the replicas on the sites of the original shelters by means of a helicopter is in direct contradiction of the mandate to preserve the wilderness character of the Olympic Wilderness."

The Court held that there was no specific provision requiring the agency to maintain the structures in the law that formally designated 95% of Olympic National Park as Wilderness in 1988. Furthermore, using motorized equipment to place permanent structures in the Wilderness did not fall under the Wilderness Act's emergency exception allowing for incompatible uses in instances of human health and safety. Judge Burgess noted that the emergency exception "most logically refers to matters of urgent necessity rather than to conveniences for use in an emergency." He directed the NPS to its own wilderness management policies, which state that the agency does not support the construction of facilities to eliminate risks, urging people instead to "encounter the wilderness on its own terms".

What's wrong with a few shelters?

Shelters are important and popular overnight destinations on many of our public lands. These areas are typically heavily travelled with clear signs of human activity. Though this may be appropriate on national forest or park land, Wilderness lands are afforded a higher level of protection aimed at keeping certain key areas in a primitive, untrammled state. Wilderness challenges visitors to be self-reliant, to submerge themselves in the larger community of life. Though this may entail a certain level of hardship, the challenge afforded by Wilderness is part of what makes the experience so rare and rewarding. Man-made shelters detract from the wilderness experience, making our premier wild areas less wild for the exploration and enjoyment of future generations.

The Court understood the vital distinction between what may be appropriate in Wilderness as compared to our other



Olympic coastline.

public lands. This distinction extends to historic structures, as illustrated by the 11th Circuit Court's 2004 reasoning in *Wilderness Watch and PEER v. Mainella*. The Court in *Mainella* concluded that the preservation of historic structures does not further the goals of the Wilderness Act, and that historical use refers to natural, rather than man-made features.

In the present case, the Judge noted that the structures may have "met the requirement for historic preservation" in the original Olympic National Park, but that "[o]nce the Olympic Wilderness was designated, a different perspective on the land is required."

"The Park Service references the historic pattern of shelter construction and recreational use in concluding that the 'setting, association, and feeling are significant aspects of historic use within the park', but while this may be true, this type of usage is in the past and a new value has been placed on the land by the creation of the Olympic Wilderness. Rather than emphasizing tourism and providing hundreds of miles of trails and approximately 90 shelters, a different 'feeling' of wilderness is sought to be preserved for future generations to enjoy, a place 'where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by man' and which retains 'its primitive character and influence, without permanent improvements.'"

In conclusion, the Court's decision halted an ill-conceived project that would have cheapened the protections and intent of both the Wilderness Act and NHPA. The Home Sweet Home and Low Divide shelters may have had historic value, but the newly constructed buildings failed to even replicate the originals. It seems far more fitting that the shelters have disintegrated back into the landscape, into the heavy snows, rich soils and exuberant vegetation of the Olympic Wilderness. In a place where natural processes reign supreme it is wilderness, rather than man-made structures, that comprises America's ultimate historic resource.

Dancing with the Devil

Undermining Existing SNRA Protections

A primary outcome of CIEDRA is that it would grant certain special interests a statutory right to engage in particular activities:

Motorized recreationists
Equestrian recreationists
Commercial outfitters
State fish & game managers

Turning certain activities into statutory rights severely restricts the ability of land managers to take administrative steps to protect the SNRA, even when the activities are causing resource damage and visitor use conflicts. Modifying or limiting activities that have become statutory rights would require another act of congress.

CIEDRA would classify the eastern half of the SNRA as the "Boulder-White Clouds Management Area" (BWCMA). Although the BWCMA would still be within the SNRA, its statutory purpose would be radically modified. Motorized recreation would become the new priority use on 200,000 acres in the SNRA. CIEDRA mandates 'no net loss' in motorized routes — under CIEDRA, if severe resource damage requires closing an area in the BWCMA to motorized use managers must compensate by opening an equal number of miles to motorized use elsewhere.

The visionary 1972 SNRA legislation places top priority on preserving the scenic, natural, wildlife, and wilderness values of the SNRA; CIEDRA turns it into a motorized playground. USFS data indicate that motorized recreation accounts for 5% of current visitor use in the SNRA; CIEDRA commits nearly a third of the SNRA to ATV's, motorbikes, and snowmobiles.

CIEDRA would also release 86,000 acres of BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) to priority use for motorized recreation. In contrast, BLM is currently obligated to protect the wilderness values of these WSA's from harm.

The visionary 1972 SNRA legislation places emphasis on acquiring adjacent private lands to enhance and protect the scenic, undeveloped qualities of the SNRA. CIEDRA would give away absolutely free of charge approximately 3,000 acres of federal public land to local communities and counties in central Idaho for sale and development. This includes the alarming new precedent of giving away land within the SNRA for trophy home development.

If conservationists do not oppose bills that privatize lands within congressionally protected areas such as the Sawtooth NRA, there will be little moral or political ground on which to defend future privatizing of lands within other protected areas - including within designated Wilderness. The slippery slope could quickly become a mudslide.

Undermining Wilderness Protections

CIEDRA abandons America's last opportunity to designate an intact national forest wilderness of a half-million acres or more in the contiguous U.S. Instead, the bill would designate 300,000 acres of wilderness split into four parcels with three motorized recreation corridors separating the pieces. It would truly be a shame to fragment the BWC to accommodate a motorcycle trail — especially since CIEDRA would dedicate an additional 200,000 acres of the SNRA to permanent priority use for motorized recreation!

CIEDRA would undermine traditional wilderness protections by giving state and local agencies equal authority with federal land managers for fire management activities in wilderness, including decision-making regarding the use of helicopters, bulldozers, and chainsaws in wilderness. CIEDRA also weakens the Wilderness Act's provision governing motorized access to mining claims.

CIEDRA would harm and disrupt wildlife. It would allow state game and fish managers to routinely use motor vehicles and aircraft in wilderness to survey, capture, transplant, monitor, and manage common game species including elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and fish. It would allow lethal predator control, stream poisoning, and introduction of non-native species. With CIEDRA, motors win and wildlife loses.

CIEDRA would guarantee horse use above all other forms of wilderness recreation. While appropriate levels of horse use is a compatible activity under the Wilderness Act, CIEDRA would transform horse use into a statutory *right*, stating that "Nothing shall preclude horseback riding or entry of recreational saddle or packstock into the wilderness...."

No other recreational group has a *statutory right* to use Wilderness, nor should they — such decisions are best made with ongoing public involvement in public land management decisions. CIEDRA would further tie the hands of managers by granting commercial outfitters a statutory right to use packstock in wilderness. If CIEDRA passes it won't be long before outfitters elsewhere will demand similar 'rights.'

CIEDRA's proponents say this bill is our best chance in 25 years to protect the BWC as wilderness. However, with all of its wilderness-weakening provisions, restrictions on management options, and statutory rights for certain user groups, CIEDRA offers only a watered down, motorized and manipulated version of wilderness.

The vision to protect the SNRA was shaped by a desire to preserve the authentic wild character of this sprawling landscape. The wild character of the BWC's should not be sliced up, shrunk down, and molded to fit CIEDRA and the politics of today. We should keep the SNRA vision alive and encourage land managers to hold the line on motorized encroachments so that when the time is right we will have the opportunity to designate a large, authentic BWC Wilderness in the wild heart of Idaho.

Wilderness Stewardship

Concepts & Principles

This is the second installment of a four-part series examining key concepts and principles of wilderness stewardship. The entire series appears in *Wilderness Stewardship - An Activist's Handbook* written and distributed by Wilderness Watch, available this Fall.

Wilderness Character

"The purpose of the Wilderness Act is to preserve the wilderness character of the areas to be included in the wilderness system, not to establish any particular use."

— Howard Zahniser testifying before Congress, 1962.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is positive and proactive legislation. It intends that Wilderness have meaning, that it be protected *for* something. More than simply preserving a place from activities like logging, protecting *wilderness character*—the purpose of the Act—is deemed of paramount importance to the continued existence of Wilderness in America. The interaction between wilderness character and our human character is what makes wilderness unique from any other landscape. If wilderness character is lost, there will be no Wilderness for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act mandates that managing agencies "shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area and shall so administer such area for such other purposes for which it may have been established *also to preserve its wilderness character.*" (Emphasis added)

While setting a clear legal directive to preserve wilderness character, the Act failed to explicitly define the phrase. For decades none of the federal land management agencies attempted to define or explain it. This changed in 2001 when the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service released a draft wilderness stewardship policy containing a lengthy description of wilderness character. The description was grounded on scholarly research into the writings and congressional testimony of the Wilderness Act's chief author, Howard Zahniser, and other wilderness visionaries including Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold whose vision contributed to the Act's passage:

"At its core, wilderness character, like personal character, is much more than a physical condition... The character of wilderness is an unseen presence capable of refocusing our perception of nature and our relationship to it. It is that quality that lifts our connection to a landscape from the utilitarian, commodity orientation that domi-



Bridger Wilderness, WY. Photo by Jerome Walker.

nates the major part of our relationship with nature to the symbolic realm serving other human needs."

Historical records clearly demonstrate that these Wilderness Act visionaries intended that wilderness character consist of both tangible, physical components as well as intangible, psychological and spiritual components. Many tangible components have intangible values as well.

Some tangible components of wilderness character include: the presence of native wildlife at naturally occurring population levels; lack of human structures, roads, motor vehicles or mechanized equipment; lack of crowding; few or no human "improvements" for visitor convenience such as highly engineered and over-developed trails, developed campsites, signs, or bridges; and little or no sign of biophysical damage caused by visitor use, such as trampled or denuded ground, cut tree limbs, or habituated or displaced wildlife.

Some intangible components of wilderness character include outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and the associated experience of freedom, self-reliance, risk, adventure, discovery and mystery. Other intangibles values derived from Wilderness include the knowledge that these places are untrammled, wild, self-willed and commercial free. These are the lands where we protect opportunities to experience our connection to the larger community of life, places that forever remain in contrast to modern civilization, its technologies and contrivances.

Thinking in terms of wilderness character is a beneficial way of viewing management activities in Wilderness. It refocuses our attention away from simply viewing Wilderness as an amalgam of various biophysical resources and visitor experiences, to recognizing the relationship between these things and the overall wilderness character of the area. The concept enables us to view seemingly disparate management issues, proposals,

and potential threats within the singular context of how well they protect or diminish elements of wilderness character. As stated in the 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Draft Wilderness Stewardship Policy:

“We must recognize that the criteria we use in wilderness cannot be limited to whether an action or technology will disturb wildlife, squish plants, or leave a scar. They may be inappropriate here for the same reason they would be inappropriate in the National Cathedral or the Viet Nam Memorial... because they are at variance with the symbolism of a place set apart.”

Nondegradation Principle

“Non-degradation of wilderness fundamentally should guide stewardship activities.”

— Pinchot Panel for Conservation: *Ensuring the Stewardship of the NWPS, 2001*

Not all Wildernesses are “equal”, as there exists a wide array of conditions within the areas that make up the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). For example, the degree of solitude found in a small Wilderness adjacent to a major metropolitan area is not likely to be the same as in a remote corner of Alaska. The “imprint of man’s works” might be more evident in a Wilderness in the eastern U.S. than in an area in the Northern Rockies. Likewise, an area with a history of heavy pack stock use might show more impacts than a similar area visited primarily by backpackers. How do managers establish a meaningful and uniform standard for Wilderness stewardship that recognizes different conditions, yet doesn’t allow more pristine conditions found in one area to degrade to the level found in another or allow all areas to degrade to the lowest common denominator? The answer is found in the *nondegradation principle*.

The nondegradation principle has been the guiding rule for stewardship since the Wilderness Act was passed. It essentially means that the conditions that exist within any area at the time of its designation as Wilderness shall not be allowed to degrade. To employ the principle requires engaging the *cause* of degradation, as well as its effects. The principle applies to all aspects of wilderness character, both its tangible and intangible components. It is the essential key to protecting experiences of a special quality that are at risk of disappearing from our modern world.

The nondegradation principle arises from the mandate in Sec. 4(b) of the Wilderness Act to preserve wilderness character in each area of the NWPS:

“Except as otherwise provided in this Act, each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area and shall so administer such area for such other purposes for which it may have been established *as also to preserve its wilderness character.*” (Emphasis added)

The nondegradation principle does not imply that unacceptable conditions be maintained, but that such conditions will be improved over time. This is described by John Hendee and Chad Dawson:

“The nondegradation concept also provides for the opportunity to upgrade or to restore wilderness quality... This does not automatically imply that wilderness restoration will involve activities such as planting grass and shrubs, fertilizing, and watering (unless that is the minimum necessary approach). Numerous management activities and policies can promote natural restoration by methods such as controlling visitor numbers, timing of use, excluding use in some areas and other measures.”¹

Because the nondegradation principle applies to all activities and conditions in Wilderness, actions taken by managers must adhere to its goals. To this end, *management intent* is critical. When the intent of a management action is to achieve a goal that is unnecessary to protecting an area as Wilderness, then wilderness character is often degraded in the process. Some examples are the manipulation of wildlife to favor game species, use of motorized equipment to construct and clear trails for visitor convenience, scientific research that involves modifying the Wilderness, and restoring or replacing old buildings (often with use of motorized equipment) rather than allowing them to naturally decay.

Monitoring wilderness character is important to effectively implementing the policy of nondegradation. A comprehensive monitoring protocol is critical to ensure that if the conditions that comprise wilderness character are degrading, the cause can be determined and effective management actions taken. Yet monitoring poses a number of difficult challenges as many attributes of wilderness character are not easily quantified or perhaps even defined. In Aldo Leopold’s words, wilderness character is comprised of “values as yet uncaptured by language.”

“This is the challenge of wilderness management, preserving what is unseen and unmeasurable....’ Zahniser’s words suggest that chief among our criteria should be the purpose of the action, the spirit in which it is carried out, and the effect it will have on our way of thinking.... As the criteria we choose shapes the character of wilderness, so it shapes our character as stewards.”
— U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, *Draft Wilderness Stewardship Policy, January 2001*

When implementing the principle of nondegradation, Wilderness stewards and citizens must ensure that the standard not be limited to those components that humans currently know how to measure. The intangible qualities that contribute significantly to an area’s wilderness character must also be considered and protected. These unmeasurable qualities are critical to preserving the very meaning of Wilderness. 🌿

¹ see Hendee, John C. and Chad P. Dawson, *Wilderness Management: Stewardship and Protection of Resources and Values*, Third Edition. 2002.



Borderlands Roundtable Planned... and Postponed. A Round-About Story...

In March wilderness specialists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) contacted Wilderness Watch expressing their concerns about significant Wilderness and border security-related challenges facing the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness in southern Arizona (see May 2004 and May 2005 *Wilderness Watcher*).

FWS proposed to organize an informal Roundtable discussion with key participants from U.S. Border Patrol, FWS, and members of the conservation community possessing Wilderness Act expertise and knowledge of the on-the-ground situation. Wilderness Watch offered to contact former Border Patrol Chief Ron Colburn whom we met when he spoke on borderland issues on a panel organized by Wilderness Watch for the 40th Anniversary National Wilderness Conference last fall. At that time Chief Colburn had expressed strong enthusiasm for establishing an ongoing dialog with the conservation community on borderland concerns. Wilderness Watch also agreed to assist in contacting participants within the conservation community, once FWS set a date and location for the Roundtable.

By late April the Roundtable was ready to roll, with the date set for May 23-24th in Tucson, and with a number of confirmed participants from the national, regional, and local offices of both the FWS and U.S. Border Patrol, along with a Department of Interior (DOI) Solicitor and Deputy Director of Law Enforcement for DOI. Wilderness Watch confirmed the participation of eight national and regional conservation

groups, and had found an experienced facilitator from the University of Vermont Law School who agreed to attend and provide her services.

Indeed, the amount of interest and prompt commitment to attend was breathtaking!!

Work began on drafting an agenda for the meeting, and plane tickets were purchased. However, concerns surfaced within Border Patrol and their contractor, the Army Corps. of Engineers, regarding whether the Roundtable might violate federal meeting laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act or Federal Advisory Committee Act, and whether some of the topics might infringe on sensitive national security information. Wilderness Watch sympathized with the trepidation — discussing environmental issues with the general public is new terrain for the Border Patrol due to the nature of their mission.

However, it was disappointing nonetheless when on May 18th, just five days before the Roundtable was to convene, the Border Patrol announced that it was postponing the meeting. High level officials in the agency emphasized that this was not a cancellation, just a temporary postponement until they resolved their own questions and concerns internally.

Wilderness Watch continues to work with FWS and Border Patrol in regard to possibilities for proceeding with a wilderness and border security Roundtable discussion in the near future.

Moving On - Wilderness Watch's Glenn Marangelo takes new job

This summer Glenn Marangelo, Wilderness Watch's longtime membership and development coordinator, moved on to another position with the local Five Valleys Land Trust. Glenn was a Wilderness Watch fixture for 7 years, the friendly face and voice so familiar to our members and supporters nationwide. During his tenure, Glenn successfully expanded our membership and funding base, as well as working on a daily basis to craft and disseminate our message of Wilderness preservation and stewardship. That the office ran smoothly was in large part due to his work ethic, steadiness, reliability and attention to detail - as illustrated by his uncanny mastery of our infamously fickle fax machine. That Wilderness Watch gained so much success over the past years is due in no small part to Glenn's enthusiasm and dedication to Wilderness and Wilderness Watch.

True lovers of wild places, Glenn and his wife Jenny have explored and birded in many of our most spectacular Wildernesses and plan to stay involved in Wilderness issues. Glenn's constant good humor and trusted insight will be greatly missed, though we are lucky that his new job is right down the street!



On the Watch

South Baranof Wilderness, AK

Forest Service makes right decision for Wilderness - In June, Wilderness Watch was pleased to learn that we won our South Baranof Wilderness appeal. In May, Wilderness Watch and the Sitka Conservation Society jointly appealed a Forest Service decision to authorize five commercial floatplane outfitters to operate in the South Baranof Wilderness in southeast Alaska. The decision represented an unprecedented expansion of motorized airplane access by commercial enterprises, and would have directly affected the island's wilderness character.

The plan was proposed despite a lack of public need, as current use of the lakes is largely unguided hunting and camping. In fact, no one had applied for an outfitter permit, although one entity had expressed some interest. Wilderness Watch commented on the proposal in 2001, stating that allowing an unnecessary surge in commercial aircraft use violated the agency's statutory obligation to protect wilderness character. The Forest Service is not required by law to grant motorized airplane access for commercial use, and is instead charged with regulating any existing use to protect the wilderness resource.

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, MT

Maximum Tool - The Forest Service is proposing to allow over 20 helicopter trips into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to transport pipe, grout, and motorized equipment for repair efforts on the Mill Lake irrigation dam. Wilderness Watch, joined by Friends of the Clearwater, Friends of the Bitterroot, and The Ecology Center, commented on the Environmental Assessment, which fails to adequately consider a non-motorized alternative or the option of breaching the dam.

The Forest Service is bent on using motorized equipment to repair dams in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness despite its mandate to protect wilderness character while sparing the American taxpayer undue expense. In 2003, the Canyon Lake dam was breached using non-motorized means, getting the job done faster and far cheaper than the Forest Service's proposed motorized plan. (The final difference being 7 weeks to 7 years, 1.1 million to \$100,000). Despite this example, the agency is again ignoring clear evidence that the work on the Mill Lake dam, if indeed necessary, can be likewise accomplished with non-motorized tools.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service is again ignoring public input, and has gone on to approve its plan. In fact, the agency



South Baranof Island, AK. Photo by Tim Coleman.

recently flew contractors to the area, claiming the companies didn't have the time to hike or ride to the site. Local personnel would do well to learn from Patricia Wands, the fire program management assistant of Saguaro National Park Wilderness who recently replaced all helicopter activity in the park with pack mules: "A wilderness is not about convenience. Wilderness offers an opportunity that is unique while promoting a sense of self-discovery, of awareness, of self-reliability."

Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, CA

Poisoning gets a Green Light - Despite opposition from every regional water quality board in the state, the California State Water Quality Control Board issued a pollution discharge permit in July to the California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) to poison 11 miles of Silver King Creek and springs within the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. That decision overturned the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board's decision to withhold the pollution permit until CDFG provided more evidence that the project would not significantly harm macroinvertebrates and amphibians. The project is intended to remove native Lahontan Cutthroat trout and hybrid trout below Llewellyn Falls, then restock with Paiute Cutthroat Trout. The Paiute Cutthroat are known to be native to Silver Creek, but there is scientific dispute as to whether they are native below the falls where the poisoning is planned. The CDFG wants to expand fishing opportunities for the Paiute Cutthroat as part of its California Heritage Trout Fishing Challenge. Wilderness Watch has opposed the project until impacts to native fishes and other species are addressed.

Steens Mountain Wilderness , OR

Yet Another Sad Scenario for Steens Mtn. - This May, Wilderness Watch commented on a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to authorize snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) access to two private land inholdings within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. The request came from landowner George Stroemple, a wealthy land speculator, and from a commercial outfitting company, Steens Mountain Packers, who lease an inholding for use as a base camp for guiding trips into the Wilderness. These entities already have motorized access to their inholdings — last year BLM granted permits for unlimited motor vehicle access during dry months through seventeen miles of Wilderness. Wilderness Watch and the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club jointly appealed the decision, and await a ruling.



Steens Mountain, OR. BLM photo.

The inholders, meanwhile, claim they have a 'right' to unlimited year-round motorized access, including snowmobiles and ATV's. Mr. Stroemple wants ATV access on a steep cow trail that has never been used or accessible by motor vehicle. Stroemple illegally took motorized equipment into the Wilderness last summer and cleared, widened, and upgraded the trail, which he freely admits. BLM's responded by sending Mr. Stroemple a letter reminding him that he was not authorized to do so. This spring, BLM solicited public comment on five alternatives analyzing ATV and snowmobile access. Astoundingly, the environmental assessment made no mention of Mr. Stroemple's illegal upgrades, and the alternatives would allow him to use the trail and maintain it in its new, illegally-upgraded condition! Wilderness Watch asserts that four of the five alternatives under consideration are illegal, and therefore BLM must select the No Action alternative — the only legal alternative — and deny these new motorized requests.

tion composition in Wilderness as long as it's conducted in a manner compatible with preserving wilderness character and values. We asked the Regional Forester to postpone helicopter access this year while we work together in the upcoming months to identify possible inventory and access alternatives that do not require helicopters. This would not impede current inventory work at hundreds of foot-accessible plots. He agreed to consider our proposal and get back with us. In early June the Regional Forester notified us that he has decided to proceed with his original decision. This means approximately 100 helicopter landings will take place in Wilderness on the Tongass during June and July this summer. We have asked the Chief of the Forest Service to intervene and halt this helicopter use.

Tongass Nat'l Forest Wildernesses , AK

Justifiable Means? In our last issue we reported on a Forest Service decision to authorize approximately 1100 helicopter landings over a 10-year period in several Tongass National Forest Wildernesses to inventory vegetation at hundreds of selected study plots. The decision affects all 5.7 million acres of national forest Wilderness in Alaska, and represents more than a 1000% increase in annual administrative helicopter use in these areas. This makes national forest wilderness in Alaska the only place in the nation where helicopters are used in Wilderness as part of the agency's routine Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) program.

At Wilderness Watch's request the Alaska Regional Forester arranged a negotiation meeting with Wilderness Watch and the Sitka Conservation Society. Wilderness Watch emphasized that we are not opposed to inventorying vegeta-

Welcome Creek Wilderness , MT

Compounding the Problem - With no public notice, the Lolo National Forest has decided make 4-5 trips into the Welcome Creek Wilderness with a helicopter to sling-load out materials and debris from a squatter's cabin. Wilderness Watch only recently learned of the proposal, although the USFS says it has known about the illegal cabin for 4-5 years. The two-story log cabin was fully equipped for rustic living, with a battery-powered TV, simple water system, and wine-making apparatus. It is in a dense stand of trees on a hillside with no trails leading to it through the brush and tangle of deadfall, just 1/2 mile from a road. Somehow the squatters got all the materials in without a helicopter - one must wonder why the junk can't be removed in a similar manner. Wilderness Watch has asked local wilderness managers to reconsider and have offered to visit the site to review their plans (and haul out the junk while we're there).

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Wilderness Watch is the only conservation organization fighting day in and day out to protect our National Wilderness Preservation System and Wild and Scenic Rivers System - assuring a wild tomorrow for future generations. But we can't do it without you!

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Photo by Jerome Walker.

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If you wish to make a provision in your will, the following general form is suggested:

"I give, devise and bequeath to Wilderness Watch (FEIN 81-0457646), a Montana not-for-profit corporation, located on the date hereof at 208 E. Main St., 3rd Floor, Missoula, MT, 59802, the sum of \$_____ (or specifically described property)."

Yes! I would like to make a contribution and help defend Wilderness!!!

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