



WILDERNESS WATCHER

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Rewilding Wilderness



Wilderness Watch and the Forest Service discuss the future of the Fish Lake Dam in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, MT

We don't often have the opportunity to restore the wild qualities of Wilderness lands. What normally crosses our desks or comes to us by phone or email is the latest threat to a Wilderness, be it a misguided agency plan or action, or some outside influence seeking to use Wilderness for purposes other than allowed by the law.

Wilderness stewardship generally implies a hands-off approach—one that respects the land's self-will, rather than our wishes. But, because very few areas in the country have been spared human influence and are truly pristine, occasionally there is a chance to restore Wilderness lands. This doesn't mean using motors or mechanized equipment to manipulate habitat, but rather traditional hand tools to remove human impacts.

Two recent opportunities include removing structures—a dam in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Montana and a bridge in the Pemigewasset Wilderness in New Hampshire. Wilderness Watch (WW) is advocating for both, a position appreciated by the Forest Service (FS) in the Pemigewasset project and one we hope will be appreciated in the Fish Lake Dam project (a final decision has yet to be made).

Field Trip to Fish Lake Dam, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in MT

It's late July in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (SBW), which, along with the adjacent Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (separated from the SBW by a single dirt road, the Magruder Corridor), is the largest wilderness complex in the lower 48. The beginning of another sunny day in a stretch of bright summer days, we hike four miles along the South Fork of Lost Horse Trail to reach Fish Lake Dam. George Nickas, Bob Oset, and Dawn Serra of WW are on a field trip with Forest Service (FS) personnel. We're hoping a visit to the site will lead the agency to address some of our concerns with their Fish Lake Dam maintenance proposal.

The Fish Lake Dam, a 200-foot long and 20-foot high man-made structure, was built for irrigation in 1927 and abandoned in 1971. Downed logs have accumulated for the last 40 years at the dam's outlet, and there's a boulder in its spillway. Sizable trees are growing on the earth and rock embankment and rocks are sloughing off its sides.

Citing responsibility to comply with federal dam safety rules and to protect national forest lands, the FS is proposing maintenance work on the dam. This includes drilling and removing the boulder in the spillway, and clearing log debris and vegetation in the channel.

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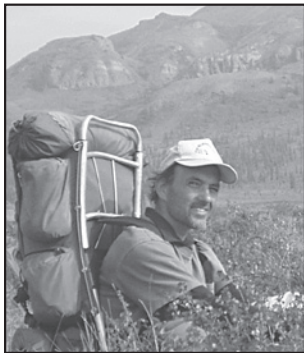
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...and More!

insights from the Executive Director

"We must remember always that the essential quality of the wilderness is wildness"
— Howard Zahniser, Wilderness Act author



I recently participated in the "National Dialogue on Wilderness and Climate Change," in Washington, D.C., a gathering of mostly upper-level wilderness managers and researchers sponsored by the Interagency Wilderness Policy Council.

We listened to story after story of how climate change is affecting the face of Wilderness: coastal salt marshes disappearing due to rising seas and intensifying storms, salt water encroaching into freshwater ecosystems seriously compromising the plant and animal life that lives there, unprecedented

(in our lifetimes) impacts from natural events including windstorms, beetle infestations, heat waves and drought, as a preview of coming attractions. For those who follow climate change issues, these stories will sound all too familiar.

Yet, I left the meeting more convinced than ever that the threat to *Wilderness* isn't so much the changing climate, but rather the response from managers and politicians to that change. Consider the barrage of actions already underway or being discussed: dams, dikes, and diversions to control water, fuels management to control wildfire coupled with more manager-ignited fires, herbicides, pesticides, and piscicides to control invasive species or burgeoning populations of unfavored native species, assisted migration to bring in new species to replace those that can't be sustained, feeding and watering wildlife, planting alien or genetically modified trees to replace those no longer able to survive. The list could be endless. The desire to stave off climate-induced change, while understandable and often well-meaning, will render meaningless any thoughts of saving untrammelled wilderness. Everywhere will need be "managed" to achieve desired outcomes or prevent undesired outcomes. David Western, a world-renowned conservation biologist, describes the results of this approach in a stark way: "Just like the Red Queen, running in place, we are destined to manage ever harder to save any semblance of the natural until [the] paradox emerges in another form; the unmanaged will be more managed than the managed to preserve the illusion of the natural."

Which gets us back to Zahniser's admonition about Wilderness and wildness. Humans' inability to voluntarily leave nature alone is why we have a Wilderness Act. It's a check on our hubris, a recognition that it is both wise and just to leave some areas alone. If we can't honor the essential principle to let nature achieve its own evolutionary potential without our direct, intentional interference, then we can't have authentic Wilderness. We'll have a façade. We'll have scenery. We'll have recreation areas. We'll have biological reserves and outdoor classrooms. But the essence of what makes Wilderness unique and valuable will be gone. Having places where humans aren't in control is what keeps the wilderness dream alive and insures its survival both in our minds and on the land. Zahniser's message was right 50 years ago, and it's still right today, "...the essential quality of the wilderness is wildness." 🌿

—George Nickas



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Wilderness in Congress

All the talk of “change” hasn’t yet reached the halls of the 111th Congress when it comes to Wilderness legislation. One might have hoped with all the talk of change, Wilderness would get a reprieve from being used as a form of currency to be bartered for political favors. Sad to say, but so far old habits still hold sway. Below are some of the bills currently moving through Congress that Wilderness Watch and our allies are working to derail.

1) Stephen Mather Wilderness (WA): In the June *Watcher*, we reported that the National Park Service’s proposal to end fish stocking in naturally fishless lakes in the Stephen Mather Wilderness in North Cascades National Park in Washington was threatened by legislation authorizing the Park to continue the practice. (The Park Service had proposed to end the practice on July 1, 2009, barring Congressional authority to do so.) **The Senate failed to take action following House approval of a bill introduced by Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA), and the good news is fish stocking has ended with a ban in place.** However, the bill is still alive in the Senate.

2) Stephen Mather Wilderness (WA): Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA) has introduced H.R. 2806 that would authorize the Secretary of Interior to **change the boundaries of the Stephen Mather Wilderness in North Cascades National Park to facilitate rebuilding and realigning a dirt road along the Stehekin River.** The road, which begins at Stehekin, a small Lake Chelan village accessible by boat or floatplane, forms a 20-mile-long “cherrystem” into the Park and Wilderness. The road has flooded numerous times over the years and is impassable to vehicles beyond the halfway point with the upper valley section washed out in 2003 and 2006. Since 2004, this section has been maintained as a foot and horse trail.

In 2006, the Park Service prepared an environmental analysis that determined it would be too expensive and environmentally damaging to rebuild the road. The Park Service has testified in opposition to the bill, but the House Natural Resources Committee passed it, and the bill awaits action by the full House.

In dissenting from the committee’s action, Representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) argued that changing Wilderness boundaries “should not be taken lightly,” and that the bill, “departs from [an] historic democratic process, by handing unprecedented authority to the Secretary of Interior” to redraw Wilderness boundaries.

The Senate has taken no action on the bill.

3) Phillip Burton Wilderness (CA): **Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) is trying to force the National Park Service to extend a commercial oyster farm lease in the Philip Burton Wilderness at Point Reyes National Seashore in California by inserting legislation into the 2010 Senate Interior Appropriations Bill.** The provision extends the lease for 10

years, against the wishes of the National Park Service, which intends to follow through on a provision in the Act that designated the area as Wilderness by adding the 1,100-acre estuary to the Philip Burton Wilderness (for more information, see June 2008 *Watcher*: wildernesswatch.org/newsroom/newsletters). Sen. Feinstein’s claim that this is a 70-year old family-run business is very misleading. The current owners purchased the farm in 2005 with full knowledge that the permit would expire in 2012 and would not be renewed.

Wilderness Watch urges its members to ask their representatives and senators to oppose these damaging Wilderness provisions. It is especially important if you live in the state of one of these particular Wildernesses.

Several other anti-Wilderness bills have been introduced in Congress but haven’t as of yet made headway.

4) Wilderness Act: Everybody loves a parade, and H.R. 2809, introduced by Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), would ensure the fun doesn’t stop at the Wilderness boundary. **H.R. 2809 would amend the Wilderness Act to grant “members of a recreation organization acting as an organized unit and regardless of their number...the right to cross wilderness areas on established trails without restriction...” for day use.**

The genesis of the bill is likely related to the “Roundup Riders of the Rockies,” a group of wealthy horsemen who conduct a massive, yearly horse-riding event involving hundreds of horses, catered camps, music, etc. They’ve tried to use Wilderness many times, but have been told no, with the exception of a 2007 ride through the Spanish Peaks Wilderness in Colorado. Despite concerns from the agency’s wilderness staff and Wilderness Watch, the Forest Service Region Two regional forester Rick Cables set aside the “25 heartbeat” group size limit to appease this politically connected group.

There have been no hearings on the bill.

5) Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (ID): **H.R. 3538, a bill introduced by Rep. Michael Simpson (R-ID) would require the Forest Service to issue special use authorizations to any owner of a water storage, transport, or diversion facility existing in one of these Wildernesses at the time of designation.** We’re looking into the bill’s intent and implications. We’re concerned about the precedent it would set for the entire Wilderness system. The bill doesn’t distinguish between lawfully established facilities versus those that weren’t, nor between those with legitimate permits versus those without. There have been no hearings on the bill.

Several other Wilderness designation bills have been introduced with harmful special provisions. In the next issue of the *Watcher*, we’ll highlight some of those along with the provisions that most threaten Wilderness. ☹️

Rewilding Wilderness continued from page 1

After eating lunch at the reservoir's edge, the group discusses the different options for the dam. We emphasize breaching the dam and lowering the reservoir to the lake's natural level. This option would help the Wilderness return to its natural state. We also offer advice on non-mechanized spillway maintenance work, drawing on Bob Oset's extensive traditional skills experience (gained during his long career as a FS wilderness ranger and trail crew leader). We talk logistics of lowering the water to the lake's natural level, which could be done with traditional skills also, since the current spillway is higher than the lake's natural outlet. When the FS expresses concern about the public's expectations for recreation and aesthetics, we point out that restored wetlands, meadows, and a gently sloping shoreline would be every bit as aesthetically pleasing and recreation-friendly.

That the dam and reservoir are non-conforming structures in Wilderness should be the FS's first consideration when deciding the dam's fate. As we stated in our written comments, the FS's responsibility is first and foremost to "protect, preserve and restore the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness." Its own policy states, "National Forest Wilderness shall be managed to promote, perpetuate, and where necessary, restore the wilderness character of the land..." (36 CFR 393. 2) The agency should avoid projects that conflict with its policy—such as maintaining a non-conforming structure that has altered natural conditions and harms wilderness character.

We are hopeful that the trip and discussion might lead the agency to take a different approach than the original proposal since this is an extraordinary opportunity to restore a piece of the SBW to a condition that existed prior to its degradation by humans. Breaching or removing the dam using non-motorized means would restore the lake and its surroundings to their natural condition and improve and protect the wilderness character of this area. It would remove evidence of human activity in this piece of wild country. Taking this type of action is the right thing to do and will re-wild this Wilderness.

Suspension bridge, Pemigewasset Wilderness, NH

Wilderness Watch supports a Forest Service plan to help re-wild a Wilderness in New Hampshire by removing an unnecessary and unsafe bridge in the 45,000-acre Pemigewasset Wilderness. The White Mountain National Forest's (WMNF) Pemigewasset Wilderness bridge removal project is doing the right thing for Wilderness and the public. It will enhance the area's wilderness character while eliminating a public safety problem.

Forest Service managers and engineers determined last year that the deteriorating 180-foot suspension bridge spanning the East Branch of the Pemigewasset River is unsafe for crossing. The nearly 50-year old structure lies within the Pemigewasset Wilderness and existed at the time of the area's designation through the 1984 New Hampshire Wilderness Act.

The FS plan includes closing and rehabilitating a 0.7-mile stretch of the Wilderness Trail that runs between the suspension bridge and a steel I-beam bridge over Black Brook. The I-beam bridge will also be removed. (The WMNF intends to comply with wilderness regulations by using hand tools and stock animals to complete the work.)

Wilderness Watch supported the FS in our written comments stating the proposed action meets the Wilderness Act's statutory requirements to preserve the area's wilderness character. We acknowledged that while the FS administers the area for recreational, educational, or other purposes, it must do so in a way that preserves wilderness character. Removing the bridge meets this test. We applauded the agency for proposing to take the right course of action.



Bridge to be removed in the Pemigewasset Wilderness, NH
Photo courtesy of tdawg88402/webshots.com

The FS faced considerable opposition from local recreation groups and recreationists accustomed to using the bridge as part of a loop hike, and in particular, a loop cross-country ski. WW worked to generate public support for removing the bridge. We alerted our members and supporters through our list serve, e-newsletter, website, and snail mail, and we wrote an Op-Ed, published in the *Citizen of Laconia* on 6/24/09. The FS did not bow to pressure and, although not an easy choice, decided to remove the bridge. The Pemigewasset District Ranger recently thanked WW as "one of the few groups or individuals who supported us."

The Wilderness Act, our country's most visionary land protection law, defines Wilderness as areas "...where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man ... retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation... which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions." Removing these structures will help restore the Selway-Bitterroot and Pemigewasset Wildernesses to their natural condition. ♪

*For additional information on these two proposals, please visit:
<http://wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html>*

One Square Inch of Silence Review Reviewed by Kevin Proescholdt

Gordon Hempton and John Grossman, *One Square Inch of Silence: One Man's Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World*. (New York: Free Press, 2009). Cloth (hardcover), 368 pp. Maps, index, appendices.

I was pretty sure I wouldn't like this book when I first started reading it. Here was this nerdy acoustical recording guy taking sound level measurements everywhere he went, and with a gimmicky idea to



preserve one square inch of silence in Washington state. He even had a pet rock that he took with him on his travels to symbolize his quest. I asked myself, what did this guy know about Wilderness?

As it turns out, Gordon Hempton knows a fair amount about Wilderness, and I ended up enjoying this book far more than I had originally thought I would. True, the book isn't just about Wilderness, but those who appreciate Wilderness will understand Gordon Hempton and his quest for silence.

Gordon Hempton is indeed an acoustic ecologist and an Emmy Award-winning sound recordist. His sound portraits, which record vanishing natural soundscapes, have been utilized by a range of outlets from PBS to *People* magazine, from National Public Radio to the Discovery Channel. With his finely tuned auditory sensitivity, Hempton knows natural soundscapes first-hand and has circled the globe several times recording them.

Hempton also knows that our increasingly noisy world has diminished and even obliterated many of these natural soundscapes with noises of many kinds that destroy the silences of the natural world. And that's where his quest chronicled in *One Square Inch of Silence* comes in.

Hempton believes that perhaps the quietest place in the nation is a spot in the Hoh Rain Forest in Olympic National Park in Washington. He designated it as One Square Inch (or OSI, as he refers to it) on Earth Day 2005 with the idea that if a loud noise, such as the passing of an aircraft, can impact many square miles, then a natural place, if maintained in a 100 percent noise-free condition, will also impact many square miles around it. And yes, he does have a small red rock that he placed on a moss-covered log to mark the exact

spot of OSI. But even OSI is impacted by noise from aircraft flying overhead, both commercial jets as well as small sight-seeing planes.

Hempton's quest, then, is to convince the public and agencies like the National Park Service and Federal Aviation Administration to protect the natural soundscape not only of OSI in Olympic National Park, but of quiet soundscapes in natural areas elsewhere. He embarked on a cross-country journey in his '64 VW van, visiting areas both urban and natural, taking decibel readings all along the way, and talking with all sorts of people and officials about his effort.

His journeys took him from Olympic National Park east to Montana, where he visited with Wilderness Watch's Bill Worf about silence in Wildernesses and on Bill's childhood ranch in eastern Montana. He spent time in Canyonlands National Park in Utah and Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. He continued his journey all the way east to Washington, DC, where he spoke with a number of officials, including the National Park Service Director.

Though he doesn't write exclusively about Wilderness, Gordon Hempton deeply understands the silence one finds in Wilderness. Consider this passage from the prologue:

Silence is not the absence of something but the presence of everything. It lives here, profoundly, at One Square Inch in the Hoh Rain Forest. It is the presence of time, undisturbed. It can be felt within the chest. Silence nurtures our nature, our human nature, and lets us know who we are. Left with a more receptive mind and a more attuned ear, we become better listeners not only to nature but to each other. Silence can be carried like embers from a fire. Silence can be found, and silence can find you. Silence can be lost and also recovered. But silence cannot be imagined, although most people think so. To experience the soul-swelling wonder of silence, you must hear it.

Gordon Hempton's quest for natural silence at OSI continues, even after publication of this book. He has formed a nonprofit organization of the same name to continue these efforts. Readers can find out more about its work at onesquareinch.org. 🌿

Essay: Bailing Out Nature

How to keep nature solvent as global warming drains its reserves

By Anthony D. Barnosky



Nature, like money, is hard to do without, both pragmatically and emotionally. Pragmatically, it supplies ecosystem services valued at tens of trillions of dollars annually, like clean water, food, even wine. Emo-

tionally, nature simply makes us feel good—so much so that people of all continents have protected 12 percent of Earth’s land as nature reserves.

We set those places aside because at some basic level, nature hits that pleasure place in our brain, according to Yale psychologist Paul Bloom. And we want our children to find the same pleasures that we do.

The question nowadays is whether those pieces of nature we have left can survive the ever-growing pressures of humanity. Most recently, those pressures have come to include global warming.

The basic problem is this: we’re making it too hot, too fast, and as global warming causes dramatic local climate changes inside the hard boundaries of our nature reserves, the species within them—many of them already endangered—will have no place to run to.

Global warming has already reduced populations of many kinds of species in crown-jewel nature preserves. In Yellowstone, the world’s oldest national park, three-fourths

of the common amphibian species are suffering dramatic reductions due to extended drought in the Northern Range.

In Yosemite, half of the small mammals have shifted where they live in response to rising temperatures and as a result some mammal species are poised to disappear from the park—which hasn’t happened since it became a park more than a century ago.

It’s a worldwide problem. In South Africa’s Kruger National Park, the animals you expect to see—like

roan antelope, tsessebe, and kudu—are getting scarcer and scarcer, apparently because the dry season is just getting too dry. As these big herbivores go, the big predators tourists flock to see will go too, along with many other species. Computer models suggest that in the next few decades in Africa, many species that have healthy populations now will be moved onto the endangered species list just due to the impacts of changing climate—not even taking into consideration simultaneous land-use changes that are destroying habitat. In the arctic, polar bears are on the brink, to the extent that their mating cycle is so disrupted that they are intermingling with grizzlies to produce the occasional pizzly bear, an evolutionary dead-end. Even Earth’s biggest biodiversity bank, rainforests, seem likely to suffer vast losses of species under new climate regimes.

As a paleoecologist, I have spent my career trying to understand how animals and plants adapt to change, particularly climate change, and on that backdrop it becomes very clear that all these things are out of the ordinary. But you don’t have to be a scientist to see what global warming is doing to nature. Take a drive from Denver to Grand Junction, Colorado. As you cross the Rockies, you’ll see what used to be when I was growing up, verdant pine forests but which now are vast landscapes of dead, dry sticks—a result of pine beetle populations exploding because winter temperatures are no longer cold enough to keep the beetles at bay.

To put it in words we’re used to these days, global warming is driving nature towards bankruptcy. And the traditional way we’ve tried to keep it solvent will

“Ecosystem services, biodiversity, and wilderness form nature’s Holy Trinity. We could exist with the first two without the third. But the geography of hope lies in saving all three.”

no longer work, because the effects of global warming on species distributions and interactions, added to the long-recognized threats of habitat fragmentation, in-

vasive species, and growing human population, already is draining nature’s bank in a new way.

That promises to continue, if not accelerate, over the next few decades. Even if the most optimistic scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change play out, by the year 2040 or so—when my kids are about the age I am now—Earth will

be hotter than it has been since humans evolved as a species.

Bailing out nature under these circumstances is not impossible, but does call for a new perspective on what we are trying to save.

Nature conservation up to now has taken a “one-stop-shopping” approach: save a big enough tract, and you automatically save all the species within it, their ecological interactions, and the feelings of nature and ecosystem services those ecological interactions provide.

In the Age of Global Warming, such one-stop shopping no longer will work. What it will take to save individual species and ecosystem services will be different than what it will take to save that pleasurable feeling that nature gives us.

Saving species is essential, of course, for many reasons, not least among them the moral imperative and to save ecosystem services. But the new problem is this: to save endangered species in a warming world we may be forced to move species trapped in places that are changing too quickly for them to survive—in essence, more and more human management of ecosystems. Already, conservation scientists are discussing plans for “assisted migrations,” in a Noah’s Ark approach that would move endangered species from climatically-unsuitable places to climatically-suitable ones. Prevailing ecological wisdom says introduced species do more harm than good; yet, what is the right choice when moving a species would save it from extinction?

Perhaps an even bigger conundrum is that moving species around is exactly the opposite of what is required to save the “real thing” of nature—places where the species were not put there by people, and where the interactions of species evolve without a heavy human hand.

How to bail out one aspect of nature (its species) without bankrupting another (its wildlands)? The answer may well lie in creating the concept of two separate-but-equal kinds of nature reserves. One kind, so-called “species reserves” will be needed to save certain species, even when the feeling of the wild has to be sacrificed. The other, “wildland reserves” will need to explicitly preserve

natural ecological processes—that wild feeling—even as we watch individual species in such reserves disappear.

“Moving species around is exactly the opposite of what is required to save the “real thing” of nature—places where the species were not put there by people, and where the interactions of species evolve without a heavy human hand.”

In species reserves, our children will see species we’ve saved, that otherwise would have gone extinct—but they will see that in zoos, too. In wild-

land reserves, they will experience that feeling of raw nature, even though the species they see there may not be the same ones we see today.

Other parts of the solution lie in keeping existing reserves intact, adding more where we can, and connecting as many natural areas as possible with migration corridors that allow species to move from one to the next as climate changes. And of course it is critical to slow global warming through methods that Congress is now debating and also through personal choices about how we use energy, such that we end up at the best-case warming scenario rather the worst-case.

But perhaps the most important thing to do at this stage is to recognize the enormity of what we actually lose if nature goes bankrupt. Yes, we lose trillions of dollars in ecosystem services, and we lose individual species. But also at risk are wild places themselves, places that feed the human psyche with a kind of pleasure that we are hard-wired to receive but can get from nothing else. Wallace Stegner maybe said it best: “We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.”

As we strive to save nature in this age of global warming, it will be critical not to lose sight of that important emotional connection to wilderness in the race to make ecosystems produce for us and to save species. Ecosystem services, biodiversity, and wilderness form nature’s Holy Trinity. We could exist with the first two without the third. But the geography of hope lies in saving all three.



Anthony Barnosky is a Professor of Integrative Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of the recent book Heatstroke, Nature in an Age of Global Warming (Island Press, 2009)

On the Watch

Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, ID



Photo courtesy of the Forest Service

In a thinly veiled attempt to expand Idaho's wolf killing orgy—masked as “research”—Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) is proposing as many as 20 helicopter landings in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FCRNRW) to capture and radio

collar wolves. Wilderness Watch helped defeat a similar IDFG plan in 2006, but the state agency landed a helicopter at least once last winter anyway to collar a darted wolf, and believes it has “the legal authority” to land in the FCRNRW even without Forest Service approval. Given the State's attitude towards wolves, there's little doubt many of the collared wolves will be targeted for extermination.

Please voice your opposition to this intrusive plan, which runs counter to the spirit of the Wilderness Act. Comments should be sent to Salmon-Challis National Forest, Attn: William (Bill) Wood, Forest Supervisor, 1206 South Challis Street, Salmon, Idaho 83467. Electronic comments may be e-mailed to: comments-intermtn-salmon-challis@fs.fed.us.

Talking points to consider:

- 1) The Forest Service (FS) should not approve helicopter landings in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness to allow IDFG to inappropriately collar wolves. Because the proposal does nothing to preserve the area's wilderness character, the use of motorized equipment should not be allowed.
- 2) IDFG should obtain its wolf population data by non-invasive techniques such as hair analysis, scat survey, or aerial counts, as it does for other species during its annual winter aerial big game count (during which this project is proposed).
- 3) The FS should not use a categorical exclusion (CE) to approve IDFG's proposal. It must do an environmental analysis (EA) and a minimum requirements analysis.
- 4) Helicopter landings and wolf darting and collaring will undermine the wilderness values and character of the area. The proposal is in direct opposition to idea of Wilderness as a place “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man.”

You can download the USFS Scoping letter and our comments on our website: wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Wolves. 🐾

Bob Marshall Wilderness, MT



Photo courtesy of the Forest Service

The Forest Service is proposing to use a helicopter to remove pieces of an airplane that crashed in 1938 in the Big Prairie area of the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana because the Museum of Mountain Flying would like to display

what remains in its Missoula museum. The proposal is to airlift pieces from the Wilderness and would require the helicopter to be on the ground for up to two days.

This is the second time in 15 years that the FS has proposed removing the Ford Tri-Motor Airplane using a helicopter. Wilderness Watch and a couple of local outfitters successfully defeated an earlier proposal back in 1996.

This plan clearly violates the Wilderness Act's prohibition on the use of motor vehicles in that its stated purpose and need “is to remove these pieces and parts to meet the Museum's goals,” and has nothing to do with the minimum required to preserve the area as Wilderness.

There are dozens upon dozens of Forest Service and commercial pack trains that pass through Big Prairie each year. If the wreckage is to be removed, it could be packed out in a manner consistent with the law and wilderness ethics.

Wilderness Watch submitted comments expressing opposition to this plan and recommending the use of non-mechanized means if the removal is to be done. To view the Forest Service's scoping letter, our comments, and photos of the wreckage, please visit our website: wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Rust. 🐾

Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, MT



Photo by Steve Boutcher

Wilderness Watch has submitted comments on the proposed Montanore copper/silver mine in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness (see the June 2009 *Watcher*: wildernesswatch.org/newsroom/newsletters).

This is the second active proposal to mine in the Cabinets, with the Rock Creek Mine also proposed for the area. Our comments focused on impacts to the Wilderness, although we are also concerned about harm to grizzly bears, bull trout, and other sensitive species.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is legally inadequate as it fails to examine impacts to “wilderness character,” which should have been the

overriding issue analyzed. The DEIS doesn’t consider whether wildlife movement or intangible wilderness qualities (such as a sense of self-reliance and risk) will be affected, or how much wilderness visitors could be affected by activity outside the Wilderness.

Further, the entire analysis is based on the false premise that mining won’t occur within the Wilderness. Nothing in the Wilderness Act supports the mistaken notion that the Wilderness is restricted to the mountain’s surface. The Wilderness extends as deep into the Earth as the territorial boundary of the United States. Thus, all impacts within that boundary are direct impacts to the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness.

The DEIS needs to be redone to comply with the Wilderness Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For more information on the mine and efforts to stop it, please visit www.saveourcabinets.org. To read our comments on the DEIS, please visit our website: wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Cabinets. ☞

Glacier Peak Wilderness, WA



Photo by Steve Boutcher

In the June edition of *Wilderness Watcher*, we reported on a Forest Service plan to use helicopters, a backhoe, and other motorized equipment for bridge and trail construction in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington (see wildernesswatch.org/newsroom/newsletters).

The article listed our major concerns with the Pacific Crest Trail Repair-Suiattle River Crossing plan, including failure to prove motorized equipment is needed to complete the project. **Wilderness Watch filed an “Appeal of Decision,” stating our concerns, along with our feeling that the plan is being rushed through to take advantage of emergency flood repair funds from the Federal Highway Administration, which need to be used by the end of this year.** We stated:

- 1) The decision must be based on preserving wilderness character, and even very small impacts to wilderness character must be avoided.

- 2) Where the Pacific Crest Trail, which passes through the project area, is in Wilderness, it must be managed to protect Wilderness.
- 3) “Beam and deck construction” can be designed so as to be packed and assembled on site.
- 4) Hand tools could be used for trail construction. There is no need for a mini-excavator, rock drills, or chainsaws (the transport of such motorized equipment being part of the justification for helicopter use). Further, the plan fails to provide any credible evidence for its claim that motorized equipment is safer than traditional tools.

Our appeal was followed up with a discussion with Forest Supervisor Rob Iwamoto and his staff, regarding the EA’s failure to consider, develop, and analyze a traditional skills alternative. We think that good wilderness stewardship requires careful analysis of all options before committing to actions that are the antithesis of Wilderness.

We recently learned that our appeal was denied. We’ll be evaluating our options. ☞

Death Valley Wilderness, CA



Photo by Steve Boutcher

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking public comments on a Death Valley National Park draft Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan for 3.1 million acres of designated Wilderness plus 225,000

acres of adjacent backcountry lands. The NPS released a

Wilderness Stewardship Plan earlier this year but decided to expand the plan to include backcountry lands.

We encourage our members and friends to submit comments supporting proper stewardship and protection of the Wilderness. Death Valley NP prefers to receive comments via their electronic public comment form at parkplanning.nps.gov/deva, or by email to DEVApplanning@nps.gov, but they may also be submitted in writing to: Superintendent Death Valley NP -Wilderness Plan, P.O. Box 579, Death Valley, CA 92328. Scoping comments will be accepted at any point during preparation of the draft plan. ♪

New Agency Heads

Each of the four wilderness stewardship agencies has a new leader. Here's a quick synopsis:

Tom Tidwell has been named **Chief of the Forest Service (FS)**. In his 32-year FS career, Tidwell has worked in eight national forests in three regions, holding positions such as District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, and Legislative Affairs Specialist in the Washington Office.

Bob Abbey has been named **Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**. Abbey has worked for the BLM for 25 years, most recently serving as the Nevada State Director until 2005.

Sam Hamilton has been confirmed **Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)**. Hamilton is a career senior biologist and current director of the FWS's 10-state Southeast Region.

Jon Jarvis has been confirmed to head the **National Park Service (NPS)**. Jarvis has been director of the Pacific West region since 2002 and has worked for the NPS for 30 years.

While all four have a long history with their respective agency, none of them come with a strong reputation for wilderness stewardship. We hope that might change with their new roles. ♪

Save the Date: Western Wilderness Conference!

April 8-11, 2010 at University of California, Berkeley

Please join us at the 2010 Western Wilderness Conference in California! Wilderness Watch staff and board members will be attending the conference, which will focus on the role of wilderness in an age of global climate change. Issues and questions to be addressed include:

- How can wild lands mitigate the effects of climate change?
- How will climate change impact wilderness qualities?
- How can we guard the vital concept of wilderness as “untrammeled” land when managers are actively assisting wildlife to help species escape from, or adapt to, the effects of climate change?
- How can we connect with new allies and make wilderness relevant to “non-traditional” supporters, like Native Americans, Hispanic communities, urban dwellers, hunters, and anglers? And how can we engage the next generation?

The conference will include plenary sessions, dynamic speakers, and intensive workshops to address these and other issues. For more information, visit: westernwilderness.org. We hope to see you there! ♪

The Last Quarter is the Best

By Jeff Smith, Membership and Development Director



AN ANONYMOUS DONOR allowed Wilderness Watch to bring historian Roderick Nash to Montana in September to inspire us and provoke new ways of thinking about wilderness (see article on back cover). This generous contribution will also allow us to organize smaller get-to-know-our-members house parties in a handful of locations in coming months. This has been a lean year for many not-for-profits, and we're deeply appreciative of the opportunity to meet members near their hometowns and talk about our work.

Fall is also the time of year for THE COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN. If you work for the federal government or serve in the armed forces, you can pick Wilderness Watch as the recipient of your annual contribution.

Our number is 24968. Close to 200 people have watched the two-minute video we submitted as part of the campaign's "video speakers bureau." The video features our organization's founder, Bill Worf, explaining how we started and our mission. A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and the Forest Service, Bill says our mission is "to keep agencies' feet to the fire." You can view the video on our website's Home page (www.wildernesswatch.org).

As the weather turns crisp, we are hopeful our members will continue their history of strong financial support to carry us forward into the year ahead. As always, we appreciate your generosity. ♪

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!

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Roderick Nash Visits Montana

In September we celebrated the 45th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and our own 20th anniversary by bringing acclaimed author, professor, and Wilderness historian, Roderick Nash, to western Montana.

Author of nine books and more than 150 essays, now retired after 30 years as history and environmental studies professor at the UC Santa Barbara, Nash is the author of *Wilderness and the American Mind*, which is in its 4th edition and 25th printing. It is Yale University Press's all-time best-seller.

Nash spent four days with Wilderness Watch's staff and local board members, bringing them up to date on his scholarship, reinforcing the value of our work, discussing pending wilderness bills, and taking a field trip to the top of Bald Mountain at the edge of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

He also spoke in University of Montana classes and addressed a Saturday night gathering of 200 people in Hamilton, MT.

He began his speech, "The Meaning of Wilderness and the Rights of Nature," by wondering how our ancestors will remember us. He imagined them asking why we didn't do more to avert a dying planet. The audience applauded when he recognized two Wilderness Watch board members, Bill Worf and Stewart Brandborg, whom he said have worked untiringly for a better future.

Nash then launched into an analysis of Americans' attitudes toward wilderness, evolving from the Pilgrims' conception that

unsettled lands were the places of devils, wild men, and beasts, to the first appreciation of wilderness by mid-19th century landscape painters such as Albert Bierstadt and writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, to the great conservationists John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, and Howard Zahniser, whose activism culminated in the Wilderness Act in 1964.

"We always thought of growth as synonymous with progress," Nash said, "but maybe bigger is not better if it creates a civilization that is unsustainable."

Human beings have evolved beyond an ability to become one with the natural world. When we chose long ago to settle into agricultural communities, we separated ourselves from nature itself. Our path, since then, has relentlessly diverged.

If we want to save nature now, he said, we must take several very difficult, but do-able steps. First, we must bring the human population to 1.5 billion people, possible in several generations if our birthrate drops to one child per couple. Next, we must restrict our technology to "islands" of civilization separated by vast stretches of wilderness. In this way, we will recognize the rights of nature to sustain the planet.

Many people asked probing questions after the talk. After the lights came up, small, fiery groups kept Nash justifying his ideas for over an hour. It was a perfect celebration of 45 years of the National Wilderness Preservation System. ♻️