



WILDERNESS WATCHER

The Quarterly Newsletter of Wilderness Watch

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What Is That Cruise Ship Doing in the Middle of My Solitude? Modern Adventures in Alaskan Wilderness

I am camped at the edge of the Ice Age. My tent and sea kayak sit on bare granite etched with the striations of moving ice. Nearby, glaciers shed massive columns into the ocean, their thunder echoing between high granite domes. Below, hundreds of seals nurse their newborn pups atop floating bergs, oblivious to the noise in this primeval landscape.

Welcome to Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness, a wild jewel tucked into the farthest reaches of Alaska's Tongass National Forest. Fifty miles south of Juneau, the Wilderness surrounds two serpentine fiords, each 30 miles long, each cutting a narrow marine passage through a vertical ice and granite landscape. Where these fiords end, tidewater glaciers rise, great blue dams above the ocean.

Last night, after three days of paddling, I climbed inside my tent, exhausted. But now it is early morning. I drink tea and contemplate a receding glacier, climate change, my family, my place in a world losing its ice.

At first I think it's a trick of wind and waterfalls. But the voice gets louder. Then, suddenly, it's very loud, telling me breakfast is being served...on the mezzanine.



Cruise ship in Tracy Arm, Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness

Quarter mile away, the sharp white bow of a giant cruise ship juts into view. Within seconds, 900 feet of steel and glass parks directly in front of me. It's 15 stories, swallowing the scenery. A woman's voice blares through a loudspeaker.

Hundreds of people line the decks, flash bulbs popping. They yell to me, offering food or asking if I've seen any bears. A cloud of blue diesel smog gathers, and soon my nose wrinkles against the smell.

On my national forest map Tracy Arm is ensconced in dark green designated Wilderness. But the appearance of a massive ship carrying 2,000 people extinguishes any perception of remoteness.

That was three years ago. I "experienced" four more cruise ships, each emitting blue smog and loudspeakers that carried for miles. There were medium-size tour boats, too, including one that hosted flightseeing tours. For an entire morning, as I sat atop a bluff watching harbor seals, float-planes landed and took off, each with a deafening roar.

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Wilderness Watch Georgia Chapter Back Cover

insights from the President

Border Wall Impacts on Wilderness

– By Kevin Proescholdt

In April, Wilderness Watch joined a group of environmental, social justice, and faith-based organizations to talk with members of Congress about the Border Wall construction along the U.S.-Mexico border. Wilderness Watch is worried about the impacts of the construction and associated intrusions in designated Wildernesses along the border, especially the Cabeza-Prieta Wilderness (Ariz.), Organ Pipe Cactus Wilderness (Ariz.), and Otay Mountain Wilderness (Calif.). I represented Wilderness Watch in this effort in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is building this barrier from San Diego, Calif., to Brownsville, Tex. In April 2008, Secretary Michael Chertoff sited a provision in the Real ID Act of 2005 (a law passed in the aftermath of 9/11) to waive 36 federal laws in this construction. In essence, without having to consult with anyone, he voided the Wilderness Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Endangered Species Act. Construction of the Border Wall has raced ahead, often with disastrous environmental consequences.



Rep. Raúl Grijalva and Kevin Proescholdt

Stepped-up security at urban border crossings has pushed illegal immigrants into remote areas, resulting in vehicle and foot trespass, massive amounts of litter, and a large number of new, user-created roads and

trails on fragile desert soils. At the Cabeza-Prieta Wilderness, contractors have constructed vehicle barriers that allow wildlife like the desert pronghorn to pass through, at the same time preventing cars and trucks from crossing the border. Organ Pipe Cactus Wilderness utilizes some vehicle barriers along the border, but Homeland Security has also constructed a five-mile, 15-foot-tall Border Wall there, blocking nearly all wildlife passage except for birds. While much of the vehicle barrier fencing at Cabeza and Organ Pipe is built within a 60-ft., non-wilderness right-of-way along the border, some sections intrude directly on the Wilderness. The impacts to wildlife from the tall Border Wall are significant.

Near San Diego, Homeland Security is constructing the Border Wall through the Otay Mountain Wilderness. Despite incredibly steep terrain, federal officials are building an entire network of roads in remote areas. Contractors are using the roads and extensive drilling and blasting on steep slopes to clear 530,000 cubic yards of rock in a Wilderness supposedly “untrammeled” by humankind.

Fortunately, Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), who chairs the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, has introduced legislation that would halt the Border Wall construction without consideration of impacts or alternatives. He recently introduced H.R. 2076, the Border Security and Responsibility Act of 2009, to repeal the provision of the Real ID Act to waive environmental laws, to allow local communities and officials a say in border security, and to mitigate damage to communities and natural resources, such as borderland Wildernesses.

Wilderness along the border has suffered physical impacts in recent years, and Wilderness policy has taken a giant step backwards. Though Rep. Grijalva’s bill will likely face tough sledding, we at Wilderness Watch see an opportunity to strengthen Wilderness protection in the years ahead. 🐾



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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Wilderness in the Courts

Boundary Waters wins one, loses one against snowmobiles

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit refused to overturn a district court ruling requiring the US Forest Service (USFS) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed South Fowl snowmobile trail adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). The district court held that the USFS wrongfully determined that because the snowmobile trail would be outside the BWCAW, the agency did not need to take into account—or protect—the area’s wilderness character from the sound of snowmobiles racing nearby. Wilderness Watch, Sierra Club Northstar Chapter, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, and the Izaak Walton League successfully challenged the USFS decision in district court. Local snowmobile groups and Cook County, Minnesota, had appealed the ruling to the Eighth Circuit.

The earlier district court ruling has implications beyond the Boundary Waters, as agencies rarely take into account the impacts activities outside an area will have on Wilderness.

While pleased that the Eighth Circuit court upheld the district court on our wilderness character claim, we were disappointed the appeals court refused to consider our claim that the trail was illegal because its destination—South Fowl Lake—is within the Wilderness. The 1978 BWCAW Act describes South Fowl as one of several “wilderness lakes” established by the legislation, but the USFS did not consider the lake as part of the Wilderness when issuing the area’s official map and boundary in 1980. The Court opted not to wade into the controversy, instead ruling that our challenge to the USFS’s depiction of the boundary was “time-barred by the six-year statute of limitations,” meaning we should have challenged the map within six years of its initial publication.

We will be monitoring the Forest Service’s plans to prepare an EIS on the trail, and we will continue working to ensure that the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters is preserved.

Attorneys at Faegre & Benson, a Minneapolis-based firm, represent Wilderness Watch and our co-plaintiffs. 

Wilderness in Congress

Wilderness Watch Takes to the Hill

In early May, Wilderness Watch executive director, George Nickas and board member, Gary Macfarlane, were invited to testify before the House Subcommittee National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA). NREPA would, among other things, designate nearly 25 million acres of Wilderness in five western states and establish biological connecting corridors between the five major ecoregions in the Northern Rockies. Wilderness Watch lauded the fact that NREPA holds true to the ideals in the Wilderness Act as it doesn’t contain any special provisions that would weaken Wilderness protection. You can read George’s testimony on our website at <http://wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html>. To learn more about NREPA, visit <http://www.wildrockiesalliance.org/index.html>.

While in Washington, we visited several key congressional staff as part of our efforts to reinvigorate congressional oversight of federal land agencies’ wilderness stewardship programs. Despite Congress’ packed agenda (energy, health care, education, financial regulation, wars, etc.), we were able to plant the seeds for success in the months and years ahead.

In April, Wilderness Watch president, Kevin Proescholdt represented our organization as part of the “Border Wall” lobby

week in Washington, D.C. An interesting mix of environmental, social justice, and faith organizations participated in the effort. These visits focused on raising awareness of the terrible damage caused by the Border Wall’s construction, as well as generating support for legislation introduced by Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Chair of House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, to deal with the problems.

Rep. Grijalva’s bill—H.R. 2076, the Border Security and Responsibility Act—would repeal the provision of the Real ID Act of 2005 that allowed the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive 36 laws, including the Wilderness Act, to speed up construction of the Border Wall, and the bill would begin to mitigate some of the damage already caused by the hasty construction effort. Kevin also made visits to congressional offices to promote the need for more Wilderness oversight, and he met with the wilderness staff in the Forest Service’s Washington Office to discuss a number of important national issues.

Preserving Wilderness requires all three branches of government. With the recent changes in Congress, we’re hopeful that our enhanced outreach to the legislative branch will bear much sweet fruit in the coming years. 

Cruise Ships continued from page 1

“It’s gotten to the point that I don’t even use Tracy Arm anymore,” John Swanson tells me. For over 20 years Swanson has run the Discovery, a small tour boat that plies Southeast Alaska’s most remote seaways. He’s also president of the Southeast Alaska Wilderness Tours Association (SAWTA), formed to curtail cruise ship traffic in these wild places.

“It’s industrial tourism in the middle of federal Wilderness,” fumes Swanson. “It’s ruining the wilderness character and scaring hell out of bears and whales.”

When I call the Forest Service in Juneau, the ranger patiently explains the issue of jurisdiction over marine waters.

National forests are where trees grow, he tells me. Alaska’s national forest boundaries end at the beaches. In Tracy Arm, where a narrow fiord intercepts 30 miles of Wilderness, there are no limits on water-borne motorized traffic.

Think of a highway running through the Bob Marshall Wilderness. With really big cars.

Boat-based tourism has exploded in Alaska during the last decade. Tracy Arm saw just 20 visits by cruise ships in 1998. In 2009, there will be 200, along with a parade of smaller vessels. These visits bring a variety of threats to Alaska’s coastal Wilderness: wildlife harassment, air pollution, noise, and lost solitude.

Tracy Arm is not unique. Alaska’s coastline is a shattered archipelago with hundreds of narrow fiords. Motorized traffic, especially large commercial boats, impacts millions of acres in at least 20 Wildernesses, including Misty Fiords National Monument, Glacier Bay, and the Nelly Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area along Prince William Sound.

The Forest Service is looking to mitigate these impacts through engagement and cooperation. If the agency is successful, we might see a model that will help other coastal Wilderness. If the agency fails, as SAWTA’s John Swanson points out, core wilderness values may be lost in the wilderness system’s best places.

For years, Forest Service rangers have tried to address external threats in Tracy Arm, chronicling vessel pollution and disturbances to seals. For a time, a shipboard education program put rangers aboard tour boats to raise awareness about noise, ethical wildlife viewing, and other wilderness preservation issues. Shrinking budgets and swelling traffic have limited its effectiveness.

Forest Service officials have responded to a rising din of complaints by inviting the public, cruise ship executives, kayak tour operators, and boat captains like John Swanson to the table.

The result is a Wilderness Best Management Practices (WBMP) agreement for the marine waters bordering Tracy Arm-Fords Terror, a voluntary agreement with four goals:

- Preserve quiet
- Protect wildlife
- Maintain clean air
- Preserve solitude

Operators agreed to employ the latest wildlife viewing recommendations from federal biologists. The parties drew a map that leaves most of the fiords free of loudspeaker announcements. They tentatively agreed not to offer flightseeing over Wilderness.

The hardest part relates to preserving solitude. The agreement attempts to concentrate cruise ships in Tracy Arm. Participants hoped that Endicott Arm, historically the quieter of the Wilderness’s two fiords, could be reserved for small vessels and non-motorized use. It’s modeled after rules in Glacier Bay Wilderness, where the Park Service has jurisdiction over marine waters. The cruise lines and over 20 tour companies signed the agreement in 2008.

Voluntary agreements have their limitations. For a variety of reasons, some related to navigational hazards, cruise ships spilled into Endicott Arm in 2008 far more often than the WBMP’s guidelines. This has led to nasty exchanges over the marine radio

waves, letters to the newspapers and to Governor Sarah Palin, and calls for legal action. Some wanted to redraw wilderness boundaries. Others wanted to sue the Forest Service for neglecting its Wilderness Act mandates.

The Forest Service re-convened the parties in early 2009. John Swanson says the meeting was tense, but it produced a revised agreement for the fiords.

“We’ll see if the agreement holds,” says Swanson.

Many small tour operators and local visitors share Swanson’s caution. They remember days of greater solitude in Tracy Arm and other Alaskan wilderness areas, and they’d like to see a measure of that value preserved.

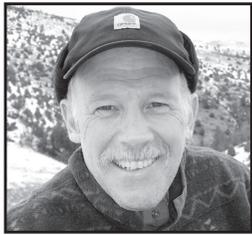
Perhaps the answer lies in designating Wilderness on marine waters. Wilderness Watch commends the Forest Service and other parties for their efforts, which have led to fewer air tours and loudspeaker announcements and greater attention to wildlife, solitude, and hopes for an enduring solution that preserves core wilderness values. 🐾



WW file photo

About Wilderness *By Howie Wolke*

Wilderness is the basic fabric of our living wondrous Earth. It is the timelessness of the ages, and the



only environment in which we know, from experience, that healthy diverse living systems can persist for many millennia. Wilderness

is unspoiled wild nature, with no roads or houses or strip malls, where natural forces rule, often amidst a magnificent physical setting. In the United States, wilderness is the silent magic of a verdant forest, the vastness of an unaltered colorful desert, the golden richness of prairie and wetland, and the magnificence of red alpenglow on a snow-covered peak rising above an icy jewel-like lake, somewhere in the heart of the wild Rockies. It's the wolf's haunting wail. And it's the intangible magic of pulsating, cyclical life.

Most landscapes that are not designated wilderness have been or will be developed and damaged by a plethora of industrial and mechanized uses. This is the reality of the 21st century. With rapid population growth in the United States and increasing demand for increasingly scarce resources, plus mushrooming mechanized and motorized recreation adding further pressure to already stressed wildlands, this reality is unlikely to change in the near future.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is our nation's foremost land protection law, written mainly by the late Howard Zahniser. Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act defines wilderness as "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character." It further defines wilderness as "untrammelled," which means unconfined or unrestricted, and as an area that "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature." An act of the

United States Congress is required to designate an area as wilderness.

The Wilderness Act also instructs managers to administer wilderness areas "unimpaired" and for "the preservation of their wilderness character" (section 2(a)). This means that the law strictly forbids degradation of wilderness. With few exceptions, the Wilderness Act allows no roads, resource extraction, construction, or motorized or mechanical forms of transportation in wilderness. However, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing/photography, hiking, horsepacking, rafting, canoeing, cross country skiing, and scientific studies are all allowed and encouraged, provided wilderness character is not harmed. Additional wilderness values include clean water and air, protection of biological diversity, and reduced need for new endangered species listings. That's because when we protect habitat, most species thrive. Wilderness is also our primary baseline environment. In other words, it's the metaphorical yardstick against which we measure the health of all human-altered landscapes!

Simply stated, wilderness is the proverbial blank spot on the map, yes, but wilderness designation is also a statement that wilderness is a special place,

Wilderness is the silent magic of a verdant forest, the vastness of an unaltered colorful desert, the golden richness of prairie and wetland, and the magnificence of red alpenglow on a snow-covered peak rising above an icy jewel-like lake...And it's the intangible magic of pulsating, cyclical life.

"in contrast with those areas where man [sic] and his own works dominate the landscape" (Wilderness Act, section 2(c)). In fact, because wilderness designation is our highest form of land protection, wilderness areas are our most special wild landscapes.

Wilderness is also an essential antidote for civilization's excesses of technology, pavement, and pop culture, but beyond that wilderness is about humility. It's a statement that we don't know it all and never will. Wilderness is about being a

part of something much greater than our civilization and ourselves. Perhaps above all, it's a statement that non-human life forms and the landscapes that support them have intrinsic value, just because they exist, independent of their multiple values to humanity.

Most emphatically, wilderness is not primarily about recreation; nor is it about the "me first" attitude of those who view nature as a metaphorical pie to be divvied up among competing user groups. It's about selflessness. It's about setting our egos aside and doing what's best for the land. It's about wholeness, not fragments, and it's about keeping at least a few parts of the Earth undeveloped, unpolluted, unfragmented, and undamaged by the unrelenting forces of expanding human biomass and industrial civilization. After all, wilderness areas are our healthiest landscapes with our cleanest waters. They support our most robust wildlife populations, especially for many sensitive rare species. And they provide our most elemental opportunities for challenge, for contemplation, and for us two-legged upright hominids to get in touch with our basic spiritual values, whatever they might be.

Finally, when we fail to protect real wilderness, we miss the chance to pass

along to our children and grandchildren—and to future generations of non-human life—the irreplaceable wonders of a world that is far too quickly becoming merely a dim memory of a far better time. We mustn't let that continue. As Edward Abbey once said, "The idea of wilderness needs no defense, only more defenders." Please help us to defend the remaining American wilderness.

Howie Wolke is a wilderness guide/outfitter and long-time conservationist who is past President of Wilderness Watch and is currently on the Advisory Board. ♪

2008 Annual Report Summary

Wilderness Watch's 19th year was productive and meaningful. As our name suggests, we headed off many threats to individual Wildernesses. We worked to forge better national policies, encouraging Congress and the four federal land management agencies to adopt a greater commitment to our wilderness lands. We played a vital role in launching Voices for Public Lands, a grassroots coalition fighting the proliferation of the so-called *quid pro quo*—weakened—wilderness bills. We

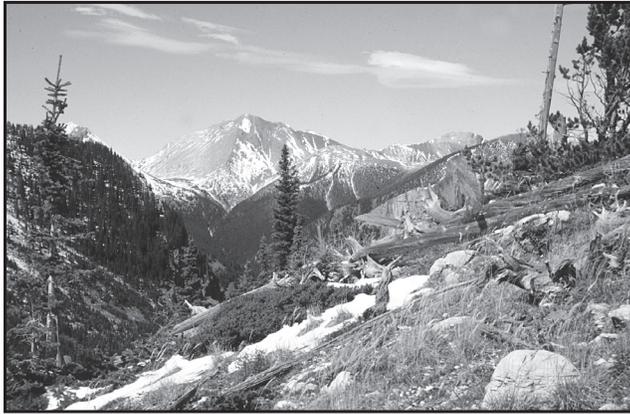


Photo by Bill Cunningham

were proud of the activities of our chapters in 2008, and we gained many new subscribers for our publications, of the snail mail and Internet variety.

We are continuing our role as the leading voice on issues and challenges facing America's National Wilderness Preservation System.

In 2008 our WILDERNESS DEFENSE program addressed a range of challenges: **motorized intrusions, manipulations of wildlife and habitats, unnecessary developments and structures in wilderness, commercial pressures, and national policy directives.** We tackled these challenges on the ground, in Congress, and in the courts. Some highlights:

- 1) We convinced the US Forest Service (USFS) to cancel a **helicopter invasion** of 19 Wildernesses in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, protecting our wildest lands from 1,000-plus helicopter landings, countless hours of low-level hovering, and the installation of more than 3,600 permanent monuments.
- 2) We appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals a judge's ruling on **artificial water developments ("guzzlers")** installed without public comment or environmental assessment in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness in the Arizona desert.
- 3) Another appeal to the Ninth Circuit, we challenged the Grand Canyon National Park's new Colorado River Management Plan allowing **motorboats, helicopters,** and the rank **commercialization** of the river.
- 4) We opposed changes to the USFS Outfitter Policy, which would allow permanent **structures** and **installations** in Wilderness.
- 5) We urged the US Fish & Wildlife Service to restrict motorboats in the Togiak Wilderness in Alaska. We urged the agency to give priority to visitors who don't use motorboats and to develop a more protective **stewardship plan.** We also opposed the Doyon land exchange that would have opened the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and Beaver Creek Wild & Scenic River to oil and gas development.
- 6) We urged the Obama Administration to rescind a mid-night Bush Administration change in **wilderness policy** that weakens protections for more than 20 million acres of national wildlife refuge Wilderness and exempts more than 50 million acres of refuge lands in Alaska from future wilderness reviews.
- 7) We challenged new **USFS Wilderness trail development and management standards** encouraging wider, highly developed trails, more signs, bridges, etc.
- 8) In the South Etolin Wilderness, we urged the USFS regional forester to reject the State of Alaska's proposal to use **helicopters to capture and collar elk,** a non-native game species imported for hunting.
- 9) In the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington, we urged the USFS to reconsider a proposed bridge across the Suiattle River three miles from the nearest trail. The proposal called for the use of **extensive motorized equipment.**
- 10) In California, we supported National Park Service's efforts to remove a **commercial oyster farm** from Drakes Estero, a critically important estuary at Point Reyes. The oyster farm permit will expire in 2012, at which point Drakes Estero will be added to the Philip Burton Wilderness.
- 11) We urged the USFS to keep its 30-plus-year **boating prohibition** on the Wild and Scenic Upper Chattooga River in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness in Georgia. Allowing boating could negatively impact solitude, first-rate fly-fishing, and wilderness character. Public comments overwhelmingly support continued closure.

In addition, we provided technical assistance, advice, referrals, and encouragement on a wide variety of requests from wilderness advocates across the country working to protect many local Wildernesses.

In 2008 our EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT program engaged activists and citizens around the country:

- 1) With nearly 50 other organizations, we launched Voices for Public Lands (VPL), a cohesive grassroots voice on issues affecting public lands and the proliferation of wilderness bills loaded with damaging provisions and land giveaways. Wilderness Watch is on VPL's steering committee.
- 2) We grew the subscriber list for our e-mail listserv, the *Wildnet*, our Internet monthly, the *Guardian*, and our quarterly newsletter, *Wilderness Watcher*.

This past year also brought positive organizational developments. We passed the rigorous standards of the Combined Federal Campaign and anticipate gaining supporters in the years ahead. We added more than 80 new members in 2008 while maintaining a high renewal rate from our existing members. Our endowment continued to grow as our members recognized it as one of the keys to our secure future. Foundation funding supported Wilderness defense and outreach, plus new projects in the northern Rockies and High Sierras. Finally, we brought up to date our strategic plan, our blueprint for the future.

The following foundations generously supported our work in 2008:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Firedoll Foundation | New-Land Foundation |
| Elinor Paterson Baker Foundation | Alaska Conservation Foundation |
| Cinnabar Foundation | Patagonia |
| Weeden Foundation | Winky Foundation |



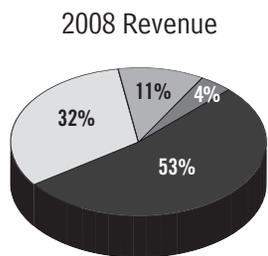
Legal Services were donated by Faegre & Benson, the Western Environmental Law Center, Wild Earth Advocates, and Erik Ryberg.

This generosity from members, volunteers, foundations, and attorneys has kept Wilderness Watch on the frontline, preserving America's wildest and most extraordinary places, ensuring that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of authentic wilderness.

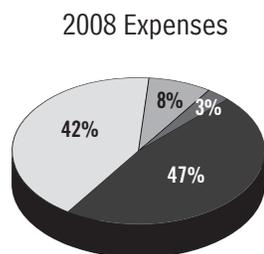
WW file photo

Summary of EXPENDITURES, REVENUES, AND FUNDS

Operating Funds Available Jan. 1, 2008:	\$ 195,590
2008 revenues:	\$ 185,094
2008 expenses:	\$ 170,699
Operating Funds available Dec. 31, 2008:	\$ 209,985
Permanent endowment Dec. 31, 2008:	\$ 35,339



- Donations
- Grants
- Membership dues
- Interest/other income



- Defending Wilderness
- Education & Empowerment
- Fundraising
- Administration



For a copy of our complete Annual Report, please call (406) 542-2048. ☞

On the Watch

Glacier Peak Wilderness, WA

The US Forest Service (USFS) is proposing helicopters, chainsaws, power rock drills, a mini-excavator, and other motorized equipment for bridge and trail construction in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington State. In



Photo by Steve Boutcher

2003, heavy rains washed away the Skyline Bridge crossing the Suiattle River. The bridge was part of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Following flooding in 2006, which left the river channel wider where

the bridge had been, the Forest Service determined a different location for a replacement bridge, requiring 3.5 miles of new trail. The USFS released an environmental assessment and recently solicited public comments.

Wilderness Watch submitted comments on the proposed Pacific Crest Trail Repair, Suiattle River Crossing project, letting the USFS know we oppose the site of the proposed bridge and the steel I-beam design with timber decking.

Our concerns include:

- 1) The USFS hasn't proven that motorized equipment is necessary for completing the project.
- 2) The USFS argues that pack animals can't navigate the damaged trail. We think they should divert helicopter expenses to repair the trail.
- 3) The USFS's argument that hand tools increase accidents is frivolous when chainsaws and power tools are capable of inflicting very serious injuries.
- 4) The Wilderness is part of the Pacific Crest National Trail, and the USFS is willing to degrade wilderness character in the area when all wilderness regulations should be applied.
- 5) The agency must design the bridge so pack animals can carry the I-beams to the site to be bolted together.



Otay Mountain Wilderness, CA

Citing the Real ID Act that allows environmental, health, and safety laws to be waived, the Department of Homeland Security has started construction of a border wall in the Otay Mountain Wilderness in California. The Wilderness is 18,500 acres of rugged



Photo by Roy Toft/
International League of
Conservation Photographers

mountains east of San Diego along the US-Mexico border. Extensive blasting, rock removal, grading and leveling with bulldozers, and road construction are occurring as the wall goes up. A five-mile patrol road and about 1,300 feet of fence pierce the Wilderness. Even the Border Patrol agents have dissented, noting that the challenging terrain in the Wilderness negates the need for the border wall.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior expressed concerns about Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act violations. Homeland Security waived both laws, along with the Wilderness Act and 33 other federal laws. Conservation groups have been waiting for President Obama to keep a campaign promise to review and change a Bush administration border wall policy that facilitated the suspension of these laws.

In late April Arizona Congressman Raúl Grijalva introduced the *Border Security and Responsibility Act of 2009*. The Act would "...correct existing policies and allow flexibility for a local approach...instead of mandating an unrealistic and harmful wall." Wilderness Watch supports this legislation. Wilderness Watch board president, Kevin Proescholdt represented us in D.C. last month talking with members of Congress about the impacts on Wilderness and wildlife caused by the wall. 

Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, MT

A mining company is proposing an underground copper/silver mine, the Montanore Mine, for the Cabinet



Photo by Steve Boutcher

Mountains Wilderness south of Libby, Montana. Similar to another proposed mine, the Rock Creek Mine, this mine would extract ore from beneath the mountains, meadows, and alpine lakes in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. The mine would discharge untreated wastewater, impact three threatened species and their habitat—bull trout, grizzly bears, and lynx—and divert a perennial stream. The proposal also includes a mountain of tailings behind a massive dam, a milling facility, and support structures.

To take action against this mine, please visit <http://www.saveourcabinets.org/>. ♻️

Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, CA

State and federal officials are reviving efforts to poison Silver King Creek in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness in California to establish a population of Paiute cutthroat trout. Wilderness Watch and several other organizations stopped the plan in 2005 because the poison would destroy much of the stream's native biota and because state and federal agencies pushing the plan could not show that:

- 1) The proposed introduction site was once Paiute cutthroat native habitat (existing evidence suggests otherwise), and
- 2) The fish is not already established in enough miles of streams to meet recovery goals.

The California Department of Fish and Game (F&G) considers the Paiute cutthroat a highly desirable sport fish. F&G plans to use rotenone, a broad-spectrum pesticide, to kill the non-native rainbows, Lahontan cutthroats, and other fish in Silver King Creek. Rotenone is much more poisonous to humans than F&G will admit. It has to be neutralized by other chemicals downstream, a process that has failed in the Silver King Creek drainage in past years, causing large unintended fish kills.

Wilderness Watch members voiced their opposition to this plan during the public comment period. For more information about voicing your concerns, please view our action alert at: wildernesswatch.org/issues/pages/silverkingcreek.html



Stephen Mather Wilderness, WA

The National Park Service is proposing to end fish stocking in naturally fishless lakes in the Stephen Mather Wilderness in North Cascades National Park in Washington State. This is the only national park in the country still allowed to stock fish in naturally fishless lakes. The practice runs counter to the NPS mission of preserving natural conditions and to agency policy. The Park Service has said it can no longer stock lakes unless Congress gives it specific authority to do so.



Photo by C. Gudgeon, courtesy National Park Service

And Congress may do just that. On May 14, 2009, Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA) introduced HR 2430, which would authorize the Park Service to continue to stock fish in 41 lakes in the Park and Wilderness. As the *Wilderness Watcher* was going to press, we learned the bill will bypass committee action and will go straight to the House floor for vote.

Wilderness Watch will work to inform members of the House and Senate why the bill is contrary to both the Wilderness Act and long-standing national park policies and will result in continuing harm to the natural systems in North Cascades NP. Wilderness Watch members living in Washington State would do well to contact their representatives and senators asking them to reject the bill. ♻️

Arthur Carhart book review Reviewed by Kevin Proescholdt

Tom Wolf, *Arthur Carhart: Wilderness Prophet*. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008). 294 pp., cloth (hardcover) binding, bibliography, footnotes, index, photographs.

Arthur Hawthorne Carhart had become fairly well known by the mid 20th century as a conservationist, writer, and author. He became an early watershed expert, authored more than 20 books of fiction and nonfiction, and played a major role in the establishment of the Conservation Library in Denver. He also played a role early in the development of the wilderness concept, principally the preservation of Trappers Lake in Colorado and recreation plans for what became Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). But the nature of his role with Wilderness and his legacy remain cloudy to this day, clouded even by this new biography by Tom Wolf.

Carhart was a landscape architect by education and the first recreation planner hired by the U.S. Forest Service shortly after the end of World War I. In one of his first assignments in 1919, Carhart was asked to plan numerous cabin sites, commercial sites, a marina, and a road to encircle Trappers Lake on the White River National Forest in Colorado, now part of the Flat Tops Wilderness. He instead proposed that the area be maintained for primitive recreation.

Carhart's next wilderness-related assignment found him canoeing in Minnesota's Superior National Forest and developing a plan for recreation for the entire National Forest. Again, though there was pressure to build "a road to every lake" in the area that would later be known as the BWCAW, Carhart recommended against the roads and for primitive recreation in his 1922 report. Shortly thereafter, however, Carhart left the Forest Service in frustration and began developing his next career as a landscape architect in Denver, writer, and conservation consultant.

Carhart "revealed in the role of the curmudgeon," according to Wolf (p. 223). He was not a joiner of organizations and causes. He

instead more often "watched and waited" from the sidelines (p. 202). Wolf indicates that Carhart at times displayed his own "pettiness," which did not endear him to friends and opponents alike (p. 75). He supported the extermination of predators and wrote a book entitled *Last Stand of the Pack* that gloried in the killing of some remaining, "renegade" wolves (pp. 176-183). And, as is often needed for success as a freelance writer, Carhart also had an eye for self-promotion and in his later years craved recognition for his early role with Wilderness.

Yet that role with Wilderness is also quite complicated, despite his early support for wildlands recreation. Though he was a friend of the Wilderness Society's Howard Zahniser, for example, Arthur Carhart opposed the 1964 Wilderness Act, Zahniser's crowning lifetime achievement.

Carhart seemed to have been conflicted by the Wilderness Act. In a 1955 book, for example, he expressed support for the concept (p. 230). But in May of 1956, the month before the first version of the Wilderness Act was formally introduced in Congress, Carhart wrote to Sigurd Olson of Minnesota to express his opposition to statutory protection for wilderness: "On my part, I feel strongly that no more mandatory uses should be fixed in the national forests than timber production and watershed protection as they now exist. All others should remain permissive and administratively flexible. I hope you may keep this movement from precipitating the trouble I see may flare if it does result in a bill in Congress" (Olson's biography, p. 267).

Carhart also opposed the definition of Wilderness in the Wilderness Act as overly rigid, and without enough flexibility for managers (p. 257). Carhart's concepts focused mainly on preserving undeveloped scenic qualities for recreation, much less on landscapes unmanipulated by humans, and virtually not at all on ecological values of Wilderness. Carhart's plans for the BWCAW in 1922, for example, while recommending against road building, nonetheless recommended building eight rustic hotels along the main routes of the canoe country, and constructing dozens of wooden chalets throughout the area. Even in his 1961 book, Carhart supported

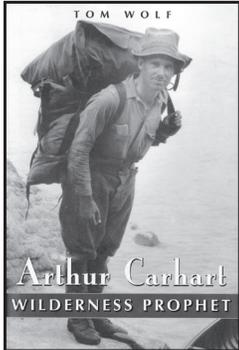
engineered water systems for campsites even in his highest-protected classification of Wilderness, what he called "A-Wilderness," as long as the pipes and developments were hidden from view (1961 book, p. 74).

Carhart wanted the Forest Service to adopt the zoning concepts that arose from his landscape architecture background to zone different parts of the National Forests for different dominant uses, including Wilderness, rather than passing the Wilderness Act.

Carhart was pursuing his goals for Wilderness as scenic recreation areas while Zahniser and others worked to pass the Wilderness Act. Carhart's primarily arms-length approach to the conservation community had left him mostly alone at the end of his dead-end trail. Even Carhart's good friend and fellow Republican conservationist, Joe Penfold of the Izaak Walton League, strongly supported the Wilderness Act.

Still, Carhart made one final effort to advance his wildlands zoning concept in the face of the growing momentum Zahniser and others had mounted for the Wilderness Act. Carhart's last book, *Planning for America's Wildlands*, came out in 1961. As Wolf points out (pp. 250-256), the book was not very well written, suffering from being written by committee and was published by some of the same "extremist purists among the 'sanctified wilderness' people" (p. 251) that Carhart wrote the book to counter. Carhart even grumbled that "I let the Wilderness Bill get into this booklet [in draft]. It has no proper place there" (p. 251). Carhart did make an off-hand reference to the bills before Congress in 1958-59 to establish a wilderness system (p. 78), but Zahniser specifically mentioned the Wilderness Bill in the foreword to Carhart's book.

Though I learned much more about Carhart from Wolf's book, I noticed a number of errors and omissions in the book, and I take issue with some of his interpretations. For example, Carhart did not meet both Sigurd Olson and Izaak Walton League founder Will Dilg on a canoe trip in the Superior National Forest in 1921 (p. 140). Though he did encounter Olson on Saganaga Lake during Olson's first-ever canoe trip in 1921,



Arthur Carhart book review (continued)

it was not until 1923 that Olson guided Dilg to what's now the BWCAW. Wolf indicates that the Wilderness Society had already been founded by 1932 (p. 63), when it did not form until 1935. Olaus Murie was not a founder of the Wilderness Society, as Wolf asserts (p. 35), though he did play a vital role with that organization.

Furthermore, Wolf discusses some important topics in the book about Carhart's work but fails to follow through on final outcomes. Wolf discusses Carhart's role in the road-building controversy on the Superior National Forest, for example (pp. 116-120, 140-145), but fails to note the outcome of that several-year-long fight when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture William Jardine ended the controversy in 1926 by declaring 1,000 square miles of the Superior as the nation's second administratively-designated wilderness. Similarly, Wolf describes Carhart's involvement with graduate student Alice Sheffey (pp. 234-236) and the sniping by the Forest Service's Leon Kneipp over Carhart's role with the Boundary Waters, but doesn't cite Sheffey's final thesis or how Sheffey ultimately assessed Carhart's role. (The answer: she relied heavily on Carhart's files and assessed his role favorably.)

Finally, I also have problems with some of Wolf's interpretations in the Carhart biography. Wolf characterizes the Wilderness Society, for example, as wealthy elitists, while juxtaposing Carhart himself as wanting wilderness for the common man (pp. 197, 265). While Bob Marshall of the Wilderness Society was certainly wealthy, the other founders were men of modest means, most of whom worked for government agencies or universities. Carhart's friends at the Wilderness Society, Olaus Murie and Howard Zahniser, were both men of quite modest financial means.

Similarly, Wolf takes some unnecessary shots at Howard Zahniser. Wolf claims Zahniser, unlike Carhart, opposed people in wilderness (pp. 197, 253), but Zahniser's writings about wilderness are replete with the benefits people derive from visiting wilderness. Zahniser did oppose building homes or cabins within Wilderness. If Wolf is implying that Carhart favored human habitations in Wilderness and there is some evidence of Carhart's early acceptance of rustic habitations in the BWCAW, that doesn't fit with the mature Carhart's definition of "A-Wilderness" in his final book (1961 book, pp. 69-75).

Carhart's main goal with his last book was to offer his more comprehensive zoning approach as an alternative to the Wilderness Act, not to set the stage for it. Again, I think Wolf mis-reads the main current of wilderness advocacy in order to place Carhart within that current, rather than the back-water in which Carhart actually stood. As early as 1928, Earl Tinker, who had been Supervisor of the Superior when Carhart produced his 1922 report, wrote to his successor that "Carhart's idea of hotel chains within wilderness areas and of artificial developments is not in accord with the fundamental idea in back of wilderness use" (Tinker to Forest Supervisor, 4 Apr. 1928).

Arthur Hawthorne Carhart was an important conservationist, author, and planner. He was quite moderate in his approach to conservation, and a maverick and gadfly to agencies and conservation organizations alike. Wolf's biography sheds new light on this important figure, but tries to make Carhart into a more central figure in the preservation of Wilderness than I believe the historical record supports. We should instead appreciate Carhart for who he was and for his contributions to conservation, without trying to make him into something that he was not. 🐾

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GA Chapter

By Will Harlan

Wilderness on the East Coast may not be as expansive, but it's just as important—especially to the 200 million people living within a few hours drive of its 84 Wildernesses. Some of the country's wildest and most biologically diverse Wildernesses are located in Georgia, including the Cohutta Wilderness in the Appalachian Mountains and the coastal plain's Okefenokee Wilderness—one of the East's largest Wildernesses at nearly 354,000 acres. The new Georgia chapter of Wilderness Watch will initially focus on the

Cumberland Island Wilderness, where bald eagles inhabit ancient maritime forests and endangered sea turtles nest on wide, wind-swept beaches. The 8,800-acre Cumberland Island Wilderness is the largest barrier island Wilderness on the East Coast and also one of the most important: in 1984 the United Nations recognized its significance by designating it an international biosphere reserve. Unfortunately, the National Park Service on Cumberland Island has ignored Wilderness laws by promoting commercial driving tours and development within the Wilderness. Wilderness Watch has successfully litigated to protect Cumberland Island in the past, and the newly activated Georgia Chapter will enable Wilderness Watch to continue to address current issues.

Chairman of the Georgia chapter is Dr. V.J. Henry, former director of the University of Georgia Marine Institute on Sapelo Island and the Georgia Southern University Applied Coastal Research Laboratory on Skidaway Island. Other members of the Executive Committee are Will Harlan, Vice Chair, Dale Youngkin, Secretary, and Panos Kanis, Treasurer.

If you're interested in helping to protect wilderness in Georgia, email harlanwill@gmail.com or write the Georgia Chapter at P.O. Box 796, St. Marys, GA 31558.



Cumberland Island Wilderness
Photo by Will Harlan