

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

27 February 1974

Bill Collins, Chairman  
NCRCC Wildlife Committee  
2933 Yorba Street  
San Francisco, CA 94116

Dear Bill:

Thanks for your note of 23 February requesting input on your ~~draft~~ draft wildlife policy.

I am enclosing a copy of a comment I just sent to Bob Hughes of the National Wildlife Committee regarding their draft policy. Some of the main points I have made in that letter are also applicable to your draft.

I cannot meet with your group on March 3 as I must be at an NCRCC Federal Lands Meeting in Davis on that date. Have you considered trying to get people together Saturday evening in the Woodside area?

A few specific comments on your draft follow:

1. Use "preservation" in place of "acquisition," in the second sentence. "Acquisition" has bad connotations. It sounds expensive, implies taking land off the tax rolls, involves keeping people out, etc.

2. What does this statement accomplish? Doesn't it go without saying?

3. Make it positive. "NCRCC favors selective, discriminate and humane methods of controlling depredating animals." Etc.

4. What does "humane and sporting" mean? Why should we favor "stringent controls" on the issuance of licenses? This seems to place pointless emphasis on ~~the~~ harassment of the hunter, when what we should be concerning ourselves with are ecological problems of habitat preservation, population and species viability, etc. To be quite frank, it strikes me as being somewhat akin to the "idea" that we can stop crime by outlawing firearms. I just cannot see that "stringent controls" on the issuance of licenses directs ~~itself~~ itself toward the solution of any meaningful problems. Regarding "eating" the animal, I suggest that this warrants further thought before taking a position on it; in particular, I think the definition of "sport-taking" needs further refinement--perhaps I should have said that it needs a definition, since one seems to be lacking.

5. No comment.

6. This section seems to put us in opposition to the concept of biological controls, which the Club has previously made friendly noises toward, as far as I am aware. Eg. in the San Joaquin Valley puncturevine was formerly a real problem. It was discovered that some bug liked to eat it, the bug was imported, and we no longer have a puncturevine problem. And I am not aware that anybody has yet figured out that the bug has caused any problems. ~~the~~ Do we really want to oppose this type of effort?

6.(cont) What is a "non-domesticated wild animal"? I have puzzled over that every time I have read this, and am still wondering.

7. No comment. (I recall that at least one director does not want to say anything favorable about zoos.)

8. No comment.

9. No comment, although I feel that this warrants very close scrutiny.

Sorry these comments are rushed. That is the main reason I am enclosing my comments to Bob Hughes--there are some ideas therein which I did not have time to re-phrase for this letter.

I urge your close attention to the enclosed copy of the Audubon Society statement on hunting. I cannot for the life of me understand why Sierra Club people who are interested in wildlife cannot bring themselves to make a similar statement. As I discuss in my letter to Bob Hughes, the obsession that some of our members have over the welfare of individual animals is damaging our efforts to secure the preservation of habitat which would benefit entire populations, and perhaps even species.

If we would come out with a statement similar to that which Audubon has for a policy, it would certainly make it 100% easier to retain and increase the cooperation of other organizations in securing the preservation of habitat, which you mention as being the "keystone of wildlife conservation."

We are not strong enough to win those battles for habitat just on our own. And every one of those battles we lose means that ~~much~~ much more damage to the wildlife which resides in the place we lost.

I strongly urge that you make every effort you can to get the Sierra Club back on the right track.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

1 March 1978

Pam Deuel

Dear Pam:

Re. your request for names and addresses of local media which I feel are important enough to be on your list. I am enclosing the yellow card with several entries I have made on it.

Were you aware that much of the information you are seeking is available from a computer print-out from the Sierra Club?

I refer to "NNR reference group 5", which is "Press Club gratis", distribution of which is at the discretion of the Executive Director and the NNR editor.

I would think that Susan Miller could, in due course, have the computer tapped to get a print-out of that particular information, for whatever area you are concerned with.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

6 March 1974

Robert C. Hughes, Chairman  
National Wildlife Committee  
Sierra Club  
P. O. Box 2471  
Trenton, N.J. 08607

Dear Bob:

In addition to my letter of February 26, I would like to provide further information which I hope your committee will take into account.

On March 2 the NCRCC passed the following resolution:

"The NCRCC would like to call attention to the fact that Sierra Club policy has never been opposed to the hunting of game species--provided such hunting is done ethically and in accordance with laws and regulations designed to prevent depletion of the resource."

This is in the same vein, but is somewhat more explicit, than an earlier resolution on the same subject. The earlier resolution was passed on March 31, 1973, and was in response to a resolution from the National Wilderness Committee. The earlier NCRCC resolution was:

"The NCRCC requests that the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club be requested to publicize its policy on hunting in order to allay the fears of sportsmen regarding their use of public lands."

The National Wilderness Committee had met on March 23-25, 1973, and had passed a resolution which resulted in the following being proposed to the Board of Directors by the National Wilderness Committee chairman, Holway Jones:

"With the exception of National Parks and Monuments, the Sierra Club is not opposed to hunting on public lands, including Wilderness. To allay the fears of sportsmen in this regard, the Board of Directors reiterates its position and recommends appropriate publicity of this policy."

This proposed resolution was considered by the Board at their meeting of May 5-6, 1973. After discussion, it was tabled on the basis that the Board had not yet received input from the National Wildlife Committee.

I am also enclosing a copy of an article on hunting which appeared in the Loma Prieta Chapter's newsletter of September 1973. It clearly discusses the risk to the wilderness movement if the Sierra Club should adopt an anti-hunting policy, or a statement which could be construed as such. As I discussed in my letter of February 26, some of the draft wildlife policies have fallen in the latter category.

Robert C. Hughes, 6 March 1974

You will note that the March 2 NCRCC resolution uses wording identical to that contained in the policy of the National Audubon Society. I sent you a copy of the NAS policy earlier. This phrasing is succinct and to the point without giving offense to the multitudes of sportsmen who would like to work with us in achieving our common conservation goals.

The National Wildlife Committee might well consider adopting the same phrasing when making its own recommendation to the Board.

Sincerely,

cc. Bill Collins,  
NCRCC delegate to  
Nat'l Wildlife Committee

George W. Whitmore

Bcc:

a. Chastain

E. Gerstung

M. Coulton

J. Barnes

H. Bosey

} with copy of Loma Prieta article  
(which was by Gerstung)

TO: Jake Miller  
Ramona Wascher

Pam Deuel  
Chuck Clusen

Shelley McIntyre

FROM: George Whitmore

RE: NCRCC committee changes (again)

DATE: 12 March 1974

At the last NCRCC meeting (March 2) June Dailey submitted her resignation as co-chairman of the NCRCC Federal Lands Committee.

This means you should drop her name from FLC distribution, unless you want to send something to interested people in general. June indicated a desire to continue to participate, but just did not wish to have to worry about being a co-chairman, at least of FLC.

She apparently does intend to continue as chairman of the NCRCC task force or committee (I forget which it is) on Off-road vehicles, so please don't get carried away when you start scratching out her name.

Also, at the Federal Lands Committee meeting on March 3, it was decided that the NCRCC body on Forest Practices did not have to be a sub-group of the FLC, and that it probably would facilitate matters if it was set up as an NCRCC task force. (For the benefit of the uninitiated, a "committee" chairman has voting privileges on the NCRCC, whereas a "task force" chairman does not.)

It appears that Luis Ireland is more or less in charge of this new entity (Forest Practices Task Force). However, to my knowledge this has not yet been formalized, so don't accept this letter as being the Gospel. My purpose in writing is simply to tip you off to the fact that something is happening. You are now on your own.

30 April 1974

Pam Deuel,  
TO: Tom Price, Rudd Crawford, Jud Vandevere, Roy Anderson, Corky  
Matthews  
FROM: George Whitmore  
RE: Pinnacles N. M.

Some of the enclosed material will be familiar to you, some will not. Even though you undoubtedly have copies of the draft master plan and draft EIS, I am enclosing selected maps from those documents. I have emphasized certain points by making notations directly on the maps.

I have not yet had a chance to read the documents, but a quick scanning of them brought the following to my attention:

1. Proposed re-opening of road between Chalone campgrounds and Chalone cave. This would be for a shuttle system only, but I question the wisdom of it even so. It appears to me that the canyon bottom is too confined for it to make sense as a shuttle route. I question whether the visitor would be seeing much along that route if he is in a mechanical conveyance. The scenery is on such a scale (ie. small and close) that walking seems much more appropriate.

As the NPS points out in the DEIS, under their discussion of the trans-monument road idea, riparian habitat in Pinnacles is at a premium and is vital to wildlife which ranges far beyond the actual confines of the riparian area.

Do we want to re-open Chalone Creek to motor vehicles? Even if they are under NPS control? I believe the Sierra Club has no policy on this. We need one. (Please do not feel bound by what I said in Washington--I was unaware of the shuttle system proposal at that time.)

2. NPS proposes new trail construction from the High ~~Peaks~~ Peaks down to Chaparral campground area (west side) and to the Chalone cave area (east side). It is my understanding that the cross-country route to Chaparral campground from the High ~~Peaks~~ Peaks is being used by enough people that erosion problems are becoming evident. Is this sufficient reason to construct a trail? (What about erosion problems in numerous other areas where climbers go cross-country? Should we have trails everywhere that people want to go? Or should cross-country travel be prohibited?) What would be the effect on wildlife which may (or may not) prefer to avoid people?

I have no idea why the NPS is proposing the other new trail. Perhaps the documents go into this.

I believe the Sierra Club has no policy re. the trail system in Pinnacles. We need one. Related to this, should we have a policy re. damage being caused by cross-country travel? If we started talking about the latter it might get the climbers to participate in some of the Club's conservation activities.

The Sierra Nevada Task Force will be meeting at the Bear Gulch picnic area on Saturday a.m. May 11 (0900? 0930? 1000?) You might want

to bring your ideas to that meeting. It would be desirable to see if we could agree on a recommendation to be presented to the NCRCC the following day, thus minimizing the chance of the NCRCC feeling called upon to tinker with it.

Perhaps some Loma Prieta people could be at Bear Gulch on Saturday; this would be ideal, and would presumably mean that the NCRCC would merely have to rubber-stamp the proposal the following day.

Please don't worry about red tape and/or potential jurisdictional problems. Every indication seems to be that people are much more concerned about Pinnacles than they are about bureaucracy, and I anticipate no problems at all in this regard.

Thanks for helping to keep Pinnacles natural!

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

9 May 74

Dear Tony,

You asked a while back whether I could provide any examples of the Forest Service having claimed that logging was beneficial to the deer herds.

The enclosed pages from the Sierra N.F. draft EIS on the North Shore Huntington Lake Timber Sales contain some of this. I have underlined some of the more relevant remarks.

I am sure that you could find similar remarks in many USFS documents--it's just that this is one of the more recent ones which was fresh in my mind and close at hand.

A final of this particular EIS is at the printer now. A draft of the Aspen-Horsethief EIS is also at the printer now. You might ask the Sierra NF for these.

It might be worthwhile to determine what the comments of DFG were on the Huntington Lake DEIS.

I think I have mentioned it before, but have you checked out the report on the North Kings deer herd which was funded by the John Muir Institute?

There have been other studies of the North Kings deer herd situation which would be quite relevant, but I don't know the sources of the studies. DFG could probably provide you with this information.

I think the Sierra N.F. might have done a study, but am not sure. I also think that the Fresno County Sportsmens Club might have been involved in a study, but am not sure. DFG should be able to provide more definitive information regarding such "outside" studies. And perhaps they have done a study of their own.

If you get anything on this within the next week or ten days I would certainly appreciate hearing about it. It could be extremely helpful on the appeal of the Rancheria Creek sales. I am involved in other aspects of the appeal, and just haven't had time to check out the deer herd situation--but I do think it would probably be quite relevant.

Watch the Huntington Lake sales closely. Since a final EIS is due out any day, the USFS could procede with advertising of sales very quickly.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg, CA 93631

Tony Chasteen,

15 May 74

Dear Tony:

A further item re. documentation of USFS statements that timber sales are good for the deer population.

At a meeting on 2 January 1973 Sotero made such remarks. I asked him what about other animals such as mountain lion, bear, wolverine. He admitted that some animals do not benefit from human intrusion, but we must remember that deer etc. etc. etc. Ie. he, like most USFS people I hear, persist in equating wildlife with deer; in other words, that is their definition of wildlife. This was a meeting of Fresno Audubon. I taped the discussion, and have the tape. (The subject of the discussion was wilderness.)

I trust the enclosures will be of interest. The "Complete Deer Management" article is from Outdoor California, a publication of DFG. It outlines the study of the North Kings deer herd which is being conducted jointly by

Nov-Dec 1973  
DFG  
Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment  
Station  
Sierra NF  
Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP  
Fresno County Sportsmens Club.

I talked with Bob Gale at the Sierra NF since I sent my last packet of info to you. He is their wildlife specialist. He thinks that timber sales benefit the deer. I asked him whether new roads and resultant increased human activity, especially from hunters, might not result in a net detriment, even though logging might result in more food supply. He said they have not yet got into a study of the effect of roads and increased human activity, but will do this during the course of the ten-year study. Specifically, I asked him whether some attempt had been made to assess the role of the new road up Rogers Ridge as it relates to the tremendous decline in deer in that area; this has not been done. (The North Kings herd has declined to only 25% of what it was ten years earlier!) (The road was constructed in the early or middle ~~xxx~~ sixties, and the Rough timber sale conducted starting about 1970.)

It is possible that by the end of the study, eight or nine years hence, they will ~~xxxxxxx~~ have concluded that roads and increased human access are undesirable for the deer. But the conclusion will be purely academic, because by that time they will have put roads into practically all remaining unprotected forest land.

April 1974  
I am enclosing the item from Natural History magazine because it appears to be an example of a professional (BSFW) person having swallowed the USFS line about "maturing forests" causing the decline in deer. No telling how many deer are crushed by all those decadent trees crashing to the ground in their old age!

George