

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

3 July 1974

Cynthia Wayburn  
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc.  
311 California Street, Suite 311  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Cynthia,

RE: Rancheria Creek, Sierra N.F.; North Kings Deer Herd.

Accompanying this letter are two enclosures:

1. Two-page statement by Eileen Devine summarizing her conversation with Ronald C. Bertram of the Fresno office, California Department of Fish and Game. This conversation took place at the DFG office on 24 June 1974.
2. Map showing some migration routes and holding areas of the North Kings deer herd. This is a copy of a map drawn by Ron Bertram for Eileen Devine, and given to her on 28 June 1974.

Re. the two-page statement:

The last sentence of the second paragraph appears to be in conflict with some preceding statements. ~~It~~ Actually it is not in conflict. It refers to the lack of studies from which broadly applicable generalizations could be made re. deer vs. roads or deer vs. human activity.

In the case of the North Kings deer herd, enough has been learned that Ron Bertram felt justified in drawing the conclusions stated in other sentences of the first and second paragraphs.

I questioned Eileen specifically about the second sentence in the first paragraph, as it is quite explicit and to the point. She reiterated that Bertram had said that he had no doubts that the Rancheria timber sales would have a harmful effect on the deer herd.

In the last paragraph there is a reference to a "Rancheria" controlled burn. I believe this refers to one of the many other Rancheria Creeks, and not to the one we are presently concerned with. In the area of immediate concern, the only controlled burn I am aware of is the one in the Three Springs timber sale area.

Re. the map:

This is an exact copy of Ron Bertram's original which he made for Eileen Devine. Every arrow was individually copied exactly as it appeared on the original. The original was a little messy, and that is why the enclosure also is somewhat lacking in neatness.

Note that one of the holding areas is shown as "tentative, not confirmed."

Note also that there is not a holding area shown at Cow Meadow, even though Eileen was under the impression that Bertram had said there might be one there.

Apparently the DFG information is still incomplete. The fact that no holding areas are shown for the deer which come through Crown Valley and down Rogers Ridge is one indication of this. Another indication is the fact that on 10 May 1974 I was told by Bob Gale, biologist with the Sierra N.F., that the existence of holding areas had been learned only recently, and that their locations had not yet been identified. Another indication is that Ron Bertram's information was not yet organized, but apparently ~~exists~~ still consists largely of field notes and other informal files.

The reason I mention this is to emphasize that the state of knowledge regarding this deer herd is such that it would seem grossly irresponsible to proceed with road building and timber sales/ at this time. The North Kings deer herd has declined ~~d~~astically in recent years, coinciding with dam construction, road construction, and timber sales. Further disruption of the habitat could decimate the small remaining deer population.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

cc. Eileen Devine

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

4 July 1974

Cynthia Wayburn  
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc.  
311 California Street, Suite 311  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Cynthia,

Re: Rancheria Creek, Sierra N.F.: endangered species--wolverine.

On 2 July 1974 Dan Smith, an employee of the California Department of Fish and Game in Fresno, told Eileen Devine that tracks of a wolverine had been found on Little Rancheria Creek. This was in section 17 near the end of the paved road, apparently very close to the creek. A plaster cast was made of the tracks. This discovery was apparently quite recent, perhaps only a couple weeks ago.

We have been using Little Rancheria Creek as the boundary for our Wilderness proposal in this area, and it is possible that the wolverine tracks were just outside our Wilderness proposal on the north side of the creek. But they were so close to the creek that it would be the height of the ridiculous to try to disclaim their significance just ~~because~~ because they might have been on the "wrong side" of the line we have drawn.

I don't know whether the wolverine is on any formally designated list of species which are endangered in this area, but would like to quote from Verna R. Johnston's Sierra Nevada (Boston, 1970); this is Volume Two in Houghton Mifflin's "The Naturalist's America" series:

"The wolverine (Gulo luscus), according to early records never plentiful in California, is now an extremely rare high-Sierran mammal, with less than fifteen pairs estimated to be living in the area from Lake Tahoe south to the Kern gap. Here in the southernmost outposts, occasional sightings of animals or tracks represent the sole human contacts of the past three decades with this solitary powerhouse of the far North...What little is known of its Sierran habits comes largely from observations in the early 1900s by trappers and naturalists, especially Walter Fry...Fry rated the wolverine 'king beast of the ~~Sierras~~ Sierras' --a creature that knows no retreat from any animal except man...The wolverine, shunning man, living in the remote high areas, requires only a large enough wilderness ~~to~~ left alone. If the south-central Sierra is ever bisected by the threatened trans-Sierran highway, the resulting patchwork could well write finis to wolverines in the range of light." (From pages 184 - 187.)

Storer and Usinger's Sierra Nevada Natural History (U.C. Press, 1964) states, "never common, it is now rare."

I feel this discovery is extremely significant, and trust you will be able to exploit it. Let me know if we can help in some way.

Sincerely,

cc. Eileen Devine

George W. Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg, CA 93631

4 July 1974

Janice Eckdahl

Dear Janice,

Enclosed are some basic documents which I hope you will find helpful. They are:

Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks

1. Tehipite Chapter comments for master plan public meeting of 24 January ~~197~~ 1969, together with a supplementary statement (attached) dated 1 February 1969. The NPS did not have a master plan proposal, so these comments ~~were~~ were simply our own ideas and were not in response to anything the NPS had proposed. Drafted by GWW in consultation with committees; presented by GWW.
2. Sierra Club comments on legislative hearing for Wilderness proposal, dated 25 March 1974. Drafted and presented by GWW.

Yosemite National Park

1. Tehipite Chapter comments for master plan public meeting of 13 February 1968 (the comments are mis-dated the day before). The NPS did not have a master plan proposal, so these comments were simply our own ideas and were not in response to anything the NPS had proposed. Painfully drafted by committee, presented by Ed Daubs (then Chapter chmn).
2. Sierra Club comments for the same meeting, held 13 Feb 68. Painfully drafted by committee, presented by Dick Pitman.
3. Sierra Club comments for master plan public meeting of 15 September 1971. This was in response to an NPS proposal. Presented by Ed Royce.
4. Sierra Club comments for Wilderness public hearing of 16 September 1971. Written by B. Chasteen, presented by Ray Sherwin (then Club president).
5. Sierra Club comments on legislative hearing for Wilderness proposal, dated 25 March 1974. Written by B. Chasteen, presented by Jim Snyder.

On the last document you will note that I have made a marginal notation concerning conflicts with Club policy. This is an ever-present problem, but one which is usually avoided if a conscious effort is made to do so.

Policy is, and should be, ~~is~~ adaptable to changing conditions and/or more enlightened philosophies. Hopefully we can keep the rate and nature of changes in policy modest enough that our credibility is enhanced rather than damaged by the changes.

When changes are called for, there ~~is~~ are definite procedures for achieving them in an orderly manner which will ensure that they truly reflect the ~~the~~ thinking of the Sierra Club rather than that of one individual, or of a mere handful who happened to be in a position of power.

I hope that I can be of help to you in achieving any improvements which you feel might be called for.

And, above all, let's keep sight of the fact that policy should be merely a means to an end--an implement or tool, if you will. The risk of becoming bogged down in bureaucratic wrangling within our own group is ever-present. We have to have the guidelines, but they must not be allowed to become an end in themselves. This is a trap which we have seen many Sierra Club people fall into.

And at the other extreme is anarchy, in which the Sierra Club would become a mere rabble, talking to itself in 145,000 different voices. That, too, is a trap which we have seen many Sierra Club people fall into.

I hope ~~we~~ we can successfully negotiate that difficult line between too much and too little "organization."

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

(Hope to hear from you soon regarding a Sequoia-Kings meeting.)

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

30 July 1974

TO: Tom & Frances Hogan, Margaret Molarsky, Royce & Perry Neuschatz,  
Dick Avila

FROM: George Whitmore

RE: Huntington Lake timber sales

All of you have expressed an interest in trying to preserve the north slope above Huntington Lake in a more or less natural condition. I have suggested to some of you that the only feasible way of accomplishing this would be to provide for the area's ultimate inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Some of you have indicated that you wanted to know more about this possible course of action. In response to that, I am enclosing several different types of information. These are:

1. A printed booklet which gives the text of the Wilderness Act and the accompanying regulations of the various agencies.
2. A printed sheet which gives an excellent resume of what Wilderness is and what it is not.
3. The suggested text of a bill which would be appropriate for designating the Kaiser Peak area as a Wilderness Study Area.
4. An account of a meeting which took place between some directors and/or members of the Huntington Lake Association and personnel of the Sierra National Forest.
5. Material relating to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the North Shore timber sales.

Regarding Wilderness, the inclusion of land within the Wilderness System requires an act of Congress. From time to time legislation has been introduced which has called for direct incorporation into the Wilderness System of various pieces of land.

However, a less direct approach is to introduce legislation which instructs the administering agency (such as the Forest Service) to study a piece of land and to come up with a recommendation as to whether or not it should be incorporated into the Wilderness System. Congress must still act on the recommendation and can either go along with the agency recommendation, modify the recommendation, or reject it. This means that the area may or may not ultimately be added to the Wilderness System.

The advantage of the latter approach is that it is really a very modest proposal in that it merely calls for study, with a decision to be made at a later date. This makes it more acceptable to some people who would be opposed to instantaneous classification as Wilderness. Of course a moratorium on development (logging, road construction, etc.) must be specified in the bill, because otherwise the study would often become moot before it was concluded and before Congress could act.

The Forest Service often tries to claim that they have studied a particular area to determine whether or not it should be Wilderness, when in fact they have not. For example they might make such a claim regarding the slopes rising above the north shore of Huntington Lake because Wilderness was supposedly considered as one of the alternatives in the draft and final EIS's. Such an argument wouldn't hold water because the review procedures spelled out in the Wilderness Act and in the agency regulations require a completely different approach.

For example in the North Shore Huntington Lake EIS the question was more or less, "Shall we log this area?" If a Wilderness Study were to be done, the question would be, "Should this area be added to the Wilderness System?" In other words, the emphasis would be 180 degrees around from what it was in the timber sale EIS.

Regarding enclosure number two, the printed sheet which gives a resume of the Wilderness Act. I highly recommend your close attention to this sheet. It is very carefully written and contains a wealth of information in few words. It also is well balanced, giving a good sense of what Wilderness is and what it is not--as spelled out in the Wilderness Act itself.

Regarding the contents and intent of the Wilderness Act, it is imperative that you know what the law says, as well as what it does not say! This is because I have repeatedly seen people who are hostile toward Wilderness twist it around and pervert it into something which Congress never intended, simply in order to turn other people against it. Many people do this in ignorance, which I suppose must be forgiven. But others do it knowing fully well what they are doing, and that includes at least one highly placed individual in the present administration of one of our local national forests. It also includes others, some of whom I think you would be quite shocked to learn of. You must know the facts yourself if you are to recognize these deceivers for what they are.

Regarding enclosure number three, the suggested text of a bill which would be appropriate for designating the Kaiser Peak area as a Wilderness Study Area. This would provide a moratorium on logging and road construction, and could ultimately result in the area being incorporated into the Wilderness System.

It would, of course, be possible to phrase a bill differently and still accomplish essentially the same purpose. But I should point out that the text I am enclosing is based upon the advice of people who have worked professionally on wilderness legislation over a period of many years. You certainly could make changes in it, but I would suggest that you seek competent advice before doing so.

Regarding the suggested bill, it still needs three things before it is complete. These are:

1. An acreage figure, to be filled out in the second paragraph (ie. the untitled Section 1.).
2. A map.
3. A time period, to be filled out in Section 2.(c).

Regarding the acreage figure, of course this depends on the boundaries you select on the map which must accompany the bill. The map must be a topographic map on which you have drawn the outline of the area you wish to be studied. As a starting point you should refer to the map which shows the "inventoried roadless area" around Kaiser Peak. This map appears on page xv, on the reverse side of the "Vicinity Map" facing page 1. in the final EIS for the North Shore timber sales.

Since this bill would call only for a study, the most logical course of action would be to study the entire roadless area as shown on that map. This would be approximately twenty-seven thousand acres. Of course, as a consequence of the study, an area less than the maximum might be recommended for Wilderness.

There are various reasons why you might wish to specify some area less than the maximum for the study, in order to minimize potential opposition. One alternative would be to call for the entire area except that encompassed by the Aspen-Horsethief study; this is shown on the map in the North Shore Huntington Lake final EIS.

Another alternative would be to call for study of everything except some of the Home Camp and Billy Creek sale areas.

The purpose of these alternatives would be to avoid tying up any more timber than necessary with the study moratorium, while at the same time achieving at least temporary protection for most of the area--especially Line Creek and Bear Creek. This would probably greatly increase the chances of getting such legislation introduced and passed, although you might feel the price is too high and want to try for study of the whole thing.

Whatever you do, remember that the purpose of a Wilderness study is to determine whether or not an area, or a portion thereof, should be added to the Wilderness System. Its purpose must not be merely to try to stop a timber sale, although that would happily be one of the side-effects. This is why, when drawing your map, you would start by including all the Crest Zone, even though the USFS doesn't presently propose to cut any trees there. (They have cut trees in areas previously classified as Crest Zone in the Courtright-Wishon area, so it is always possible that they might ultimately do it in the ~~Kaiser~~ Kaiser Peak area.)

Regarding the time period, this would be the number of years during which the study is to be conducted. I would suggest two years as being adequate for your purposes. Some studies take as much as ten years, but if you name such a long time period it is likely to arouse opposition, especially for this particular area.

In my estimation, you stand a fair chance of getting Senators Cranston and Tunney to introduce legislation if they continue to hear from people who want them to introduce such a bill. It isn't enough just to let them know that you don't like what the Forest Service is doing. You must tell them that you want them to introduce a wilderness study bill for the area. Ask them whether they will do it. They obviously have been receiving letters, but I doubt that many of those letters actually spelled out what the writer wanted the senator to do about the problem.

Of course a bill in the Senate alone would be useless. You would also need one introduced (and passed!) in the House. That means you must get Bob Mathias on your side. Note that his district representative was at the meeting of the 7 HLA directors and the USFS people (see enclosure) at which there was supposedly a "meeting of minds." That means that you would have to convince Mathias that there is NOT a meeting of minds, that you are very unhappy with what the Forest Service is planning to do, and that you want him to take care of the matter by introducing a wilderness study bill.

I repeat, because of what transpired at the meeting of the HLA directors with Sotero, you would have great difficulty in convincing Mathias that there is any problem which warrants his attention. That is why you must have a resolution from the membership of the HLA stating that they wish a wilderness study to be conducted. I am firmly convinced that if the members are unwilling to ask for this, then you don't stand the slightest chance of getting Mathias to introduce such a bill.

Of course there is always the chance that Mathias will not be re-elected. That is why you should also be contacting John Krebs. Approach him just as though he will be the next congressman, tell him what you want, and ask him whether he would introduce such legislation. After all, if the incumbents are being forced to state their positions, it is only fair that their opponents should be asked the same questions. And Krebs is more likely to listen to you now, when he needs your vote, rather than after he is already elected to office. Don't make the mistake of waiting to see how the election comes out, as you can be much more effective by working on the candidates now.

I would repeat that I don't know of any method by which you can preserve land in a roadless condition without incorporating it into the Wilderness System. It is unfortunate that there is not some middle ground, but the Forest Service has repeatedly presented us with an all or none alternative--either full development, with a permanent road network, or take our case to Congress and get it added to the Wilderness System. Any promises by the Forest Service can be broken a short time later, especially by a new supervisor who might disagree with the actions of his predecessor.

In this vein, you might ask Sotero what ever became of the Cassidy-Junction Bluff Frontier Management Unit, on the Pineridge District. This was an area set aside by former supervisor Zane G. Smith to be managed in a roadless condition, which would provide a semi-wilderness experience without being formally classified as Wilderness by Congress. Zane did this in early 1970. In May 1973 a new Multiple Use Plan was adopted for this portion of the Forest. The new Multiple Use Plan does not show the Cassidy-Junction Bluff Frontier Management Unit. It has simply vanished into thin air, and the area where it used to be is now classified as General Forest Zone! I learned this quite by accident last winter, in spite of the fact that I had corresponded with Sotero about the Frontier Management Unit only two or three months before someone in the Forest Service decided to abolish it.

I cite this as an illustration of the fact that you cannot depend even on formally written statements of policy to protect an area--the Forest

Service can simply abolish the policy without bothering even to tell the public or interested individuals what they have done.

This is precisely why Congress passed the Wilderness Act ten years ago. The public had learned the hard way that administrative actions provide no guarantees--they are too easily abolished or even reversed. The only effective form of protection has proven to be that offered by a law that Congress passes, a statutory action as opposed to an administrative action.

So far we do not have a law providing for areas which are kept roadless, but on which logging is permitted.\* And the Forest Service so far has refused voluntarily to administer any land in this manner. This is why I say, again, that I do not know of any way in which you can keep roads out of the Kaiser area except by adding the land to the Wilderness System. Passage of a Wilderness study bill would be a step in that direction; and, provided it is properly drafted, the bill could provide interim protection in the meantime.

If you wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact me. I expect to be gone until Labor Day week end, so you might wish to contact Harold Thomas in the meantime. Either of us would be more than happy to help in whatever way we might, either by offering suggestions or by providing such technical assistance as we may be qualified to render.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
(209) 897-3692

cc. Harold E. Thomas  
Star Route, Box 18  
Clovis  
CA 93612

(209) 299-6379

\* Regarding the lack of a law which would provide for the statutory designation of certain areas which would be managed in a roadless manner, and from which private motor vehicles would be excluded, but from which timber could be removed. Many people have expressed an interest in having such a law. You might wish to become pioneers in the legislative field by obtaining such a law for the Kaiser area, using it as a prime example of why such a law is needed--because of the absolute refusal of the Forest Service to engage in such management voluntarily.

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

20 August 1974

Henry G. Schmidt, Superintendent  
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks  
Three Rivers  
California 93271

Dear Hank:

Re. Management of bears, fish, and natural fires.

You recently asked me where I thought would be an appropriate place to hold a public meeting on the above subjects. At the time, I mentioned that there might be some public dissatisfaction if the only meeting were to be held in the Park.

In thinking more about it, however, I have come to a different conclusion. I have decided that the reasons for citizen unhappiness, which I observed in connection with a recent meeting at another nearby national park, actually do not apply in the case of the meeting you are contemplating.

I feel that your subject matter, the proximity of Ash Mountain to the San Joaquin Valley, and the character of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks all combine to make Ash Mountain a reasonable place to hold such a meeting.

I think this would be especially true if you held the meeting on a Saturday morning. If this were done, then people would find it easy to combine the meeting with a one or two-day visit to the Park.

On the chance that someone might want to express a contrary view, I am sending copies of this to several other people. If you hear nothing from them, I guess you can assume that the views I have expressed above are not particularly controversial.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

cc. Joe Fontaine  
Mary Ann Eriksen  
Harold Thomas  
Janice Eckdahl

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

20 August 1974

Roger Mitchell  
7692 Millroy Way  
Sacramento, CA 95823

Dear Roger:

RE: BLM matters.

I talked to John Moore on the phone last Wednesday, and John gave me a message which I was to relay to you. The idea was that I would try to catch you on the phone while you were in Fresno last week, but I did not manage to make connections, so here is the message in writing.

Marge Sill apparently talked to John, and asked him to ask you to try to be at the September 7 meeting of the NCRCC Federal Lands Committee at Clair Tappan. Marge wants you to be present in order to discuss BLM matters. End of message.

I should have made a point of talking with you about BLM matters prior to this. My apologies for not having done so. One reason I kept putting it off was that it appeared that other Federal Lands Committee members had established a BLM dialogue with you--but perhaps I was overestimating the extent of this.

I trust that you noticed that I incorporated into the final agenda of the last Federal Lands Committee meeting almost all of the BLM information which you had sent me. Although we did not get to a discussion of any of these items, at least the subject matter was brought to the attention of all those who received and read the final agenda. Thank you for sending me the detailed written report which made this possible.

I don't have my files with me (I am writing this away from home), but I believe you expressed a desire to devote a portion of a future FLC meeting to a presentation and/or discussion with BLM personnel. I think this is a good idea. But, in order to make the best possible use of the time and energies of the BLM people, as well as of our own members, I feel that we need to do some preliminary ground work. I think we have had insufficient discussion of BLM matters in previous FLC meetings, and we need to acquire a better working knowledge of BLM purposes, philosophy, organization, MO, problems, opportunities, etc. I hope we can get a start in some of these areas at the upcoming FLC meeting, and I will be counting on you to show the way.

I think the main thrust of our next FLC meeting should be in the direction of getting some local groups going to work on protection for specific areas. I expect that most of the concern and time undoubtedly will be over National Forest areas, but I hope that there will be some discussion of specific BLM areas which need action. Perhaps you can bring such areas to our attention, along with recommendations as to the type of action needed. Then all we would need would be local people to pursue the problems; but that seems to be the point at which our efforts have been breaking down. This problem--the lack of local people--is one on which I hope you can offer some suggestions at the FLM meeting.

I am sending copies of this letter to people who comprise what is more or less a defacto "steering committee" of the FLC. I hope that you will consider yourself a member of this informal group, and can be our guiding light on BLM matters.

Thanks, Roger.

Sincerely,

*George*  
George W. Whitmore

cc. John Moore  
Luis Ireland  
Marge Sill

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

23 August 1974

Cynthia Wayburn  
Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
S.F., CA 94104

Dear Cynthia,

Re. Rancheria Creek, Sierra Nat. Forest. (F.S. Docket No. 346)

Many thanks ~~for~~ all the material on the above, which you sent last month.

You asked how I wanted to handle the return of my slides, and suggested that I might want to pick them up in person instead of entrusting them to the mail. You are right--I do have an aversion to mailing that type of material.

If you will be at the Board meeting at Clair Tappan perhaps you could bring them with you. We will probably be there at least part of the time.

Almost as important as the slides are the several pages of numbered descriptions which accompanied them. I had handwritten the descriptions the night before, and the copy I gave to Jim Moorman was the only copy in existence. If you make sure that <sup>I get</sup> the listings back, that will save me several hours of work doing it all over again.

If you will not be at the Board meeting, perhaps you could send the slides with someone who would recognize me. Otherwise we can make other arrangements later.

Incidentally, I noticed what appears to be a rather serious error in your personal affidavit. On page two, paragraph five, regarding volume on the ~~SUGAR PINE~~ sales, I think the zeroes should be deleted from all the figures. In other words,

"17,000 million" should be "17 million"

"33,000 million" should be "33 million"

"48,000 million" should be "48 million".

I was very pleased with the appeal, and thought it looked good. It also looked like a tremendous amount of work went into it. We certainly appreciate the interest and effort put into it by you and others. It really motivates us to try to build the political pressure to get Congress to come up with the ultimate solution, and I trust we can achieve this in due course.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

Joe Fontaine

3 Oct 74

Dear Joe,

Re. USFS management of redwood groves.

Hal Thomas has heard that the Sierra N.F. plans to engage in management activities in at least one redwood grove, said management activities to include removal of redwood specimens as well as whitewoods.

The Sierra N.F. is supposedly telling people that they have Sierra Club concurrence for this activity.

Hal wants to check this out, but first inquired of me as to ~~the~~ any ~~possible~~ Sierra Club statements which might have been so construed by the Sierra N.F. I could think of none, except perhaps the various resolutions passed by different entities ~~in~~ in June of 1973. I gave Hal the gist of these in a phone conversation, and have prepared the enclosed written summary for him. ~~You might take note of my last paragraph on the enclosed summary to see whether it agrees with your recollection of the SNTF discussion.~~

You might take note of my last paragraph on the enclosed summary to see whether it agrees with your recollection of the SNTF discussion. If it does not, I trust that you will notify both Hal and me very quickly, as I think that Hal wants to broach the matter to the Sierra N.F. people as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

cc. Hal Thomas

at Board meeting 13 Oct 74 Joe Fontaine told me that he agreed with my recollection of the SNTF discussion and intent.

Tehipite Chapter letterhead

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
CA 93631

10 October 1974

James W. Moorman  
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc.  
311 California Street, Suite 311  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Jim,

Re. Rancheria Creek, Sierra N.F.; F.S. Docket No. 346

I recently wrote an article for the Tehipite Topics, and thought you might like to have a copy as it appeared in print. Someone unfortunately edited out the punch line, which would have told people what to say when writing their congressman and senators. Except for that little detail, I was fairly pleased with the results. We hope to be running additional articles, and working at building political support in other ways.

In the course of writing this article I reviewed the appeal once more. As in the past, again I was mightily impressed by the amount of work which you and Cynthia invested in this project, and the care with which you built your case. The logic you have spelled out seems irrefutable--surely McGuire will have no choice but to grant the appeal!

Thank you for your excellent work on this project.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

encl. October issue, Tehipite Topics

cc. Cynthia Wayburn  
Larry E. Moss

bcc. Joe Fontaine  
Hal Thomas

*— copy of original text, together with note asking whether he could run it, or something similar, in the Roadrunner. Commented on urgent need for building political support.*

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

8 November 1974

Chuck Clusen

Dear Chuck,

Here is an interim list of California areas which are threatened within the next two years, and for which we therefore need wilderness legislation now. The legislation could be either instant, study, or a combination; we have discussed the specifics for each area previously.

I was unable to reach either Mary Ann Eriksen or Joe Fontaine today. I trust that we can get southern California information to you by phone sometime prior to your meeting next Tuesday.

I am sorry I cannot give you more specific information for many of the areas. I am giving you more detailed information for the Tehipite Chapter areas simply because those are the areas I know best. I hope the people who receive copies of this letter will let you know some of the details, especially dates. If they send me a copy of their letter to you then I will have the information on file and will be able to do a better job next time.

I am sure there are areas which are threatened, but for which no one has spoken up. I urge anyone who knows of additional threatened areas to let you and me know about them, and especially to let us know the nature of the threat and the approximate date of the threat.

Southern California areas - information to follow.

Golden Trout - The F.S. is moving very quickly with their unit planning. DEIS expected March 1975 for Little Kern Planning Unit. If F.S. decision goes against wilderness (and there are indications that this will be the case), timber sales could easily occur inside of two years.

Kings River - Rancheria Creek portion of this area has planned timber sales which are on appeal before Earl Butz. On 24 October Butz granted a stay of the sales and directed the F.S. to do an EIS. However, the matter at stake here is the "purity" issue, and Butz will surely back up the F.S. on this point. To do otherwise would weaken the F.S. "purity" argument, and it is unconceivable that Butz or the F.S. would ever accept that. There is enough timber in the Rancheria drainage that the F.S. will probably expedite the EIS. The first timber sale was advertised once already (but not awarded), and it could be re-advertised very quickly once the F.S. gets the EIS out of the way. We are close to having exhausted our administrative remedies, and we need legislation now so we can get our people moving on this before it is too late.

Kaiser - One EIS (North Shore Huntington Lake Timber Sales) has been completed, and the other EIS (Aspen-Horsethief Timber Sales) has been issued in draft form. The Aspen-Horsethief timber sales are planned for sale in this fiscal year. The North Shore Huntington Lake Timber sales are being re-marked, and the first one is scheduled for sale early in the next fiscal year (probably summer 1975).

The Save Kaiser Ridge Committee has been doing some very good work, and introduction of a bill would encourage them to redouble their efforts.

They must have a bill now, as time is growing very short. They are asking for a study bill, not an instant bill, as they figured they would have a much better chance of getting a study bill passed. It would buy some time during which an ultimate solution could be sought (like getting rid of the present Forest Supervisor). A study bill would be consistent with Sierra Club policy, as we have never issued a formal policy statement seeking instant classification, whereas we do have policies calling for study of the area.

San Joaquin - The main problem is that the New Study Area boundaries are grossly inadequate, both quantitatively and qualitatively. We need legislation to remedy this defect. The first timber sales on the South Fork are scheduled to be advertised within two years. Although this is not at the crisis stage yet, it certainly will be before the end of the 94th Congress.

Dinkey Lakes - Timber sales are chewing at the edges of this area. There is no clearly definable crisis, but the area gradually is being eroded by a process of attrition. The area needs a wilderness study before it gets to the crisis stage, while there is still an opportunity to plan intelligently instead of waiting to salvage the remnants a few years hence.

An immediate concern is the attempt by the F.S. to force Pacific Gas and Electric Company to construct a "recreational" road around the east side of Courtright Reservoir. This would be in conjunction with PG&E'S Helms Pumped Storage Project. The F.S. wants to develop the area east of Courtright, and they see this as their opportunity to get a free road. This problem exists right now, as PG&E's application is before the Federal Power Commission. The road is opposed by the Sierra Club, California Department of Fish and Game, and PG&E. Introduction of a wilderness study bill would be very timely, as it would tip the scales against the road at this critical juncture.

Granite Chief - Road construction for access to timber sales near south end of area. Southern Pacific Land Company plans timber sales in 1975. Threat of roads from west connecting with Barker Pass road, thus bisecting area.

Carson-Iceberg - Timber sales on east side in non-inventoried portion.

Mokelumme Wilderness additions - Timber sales in non-inventoried portion on east side (?).

Freel Peak - Horsethief (adjacent to Upper Truckee) - Timber sales in Toiyabe N.F. portion.

Plumas (Bucks Lake) - Timber sales in from one to two years.

Yolla Bolly - Middle Eel Wilderness additions - Timber sales. Mendocino N.F. supervisor (Blaine Cornell) and planner (Paul Meischke) are both very hostile toward wilderness. The legislative route offers our only hope.

Siskiyou - Timber sales are planned for entire southern 1/4 to 1/3 of area. Gasquet-Orleans (GO) road; three miles of it are planned for non-inventoried portion of area (being appealed, but probably futile because it is already under contract). Blue Creek-Eight Mile Unit Plan (DEIS due out next week) proposes to connect GO road all the way through,

thus bisecting our wilderness proposal. (Map which was submitted winter 73-74 is apparently no longer current because of intrusions.)

Red Buttes - Thompson timber sale (in non-inventoried portion of area) is on appeal. It was to have been advertised this month. If we lose the appeal this could be sold very quickly. Another sale is planned. We need to get Red Buttes moving through Congress before still more land is lost.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this is an interim list. The only reason it is not longer is because I lack more specific information on the above areas, and I have no information on other areas which I am sure are also threatened. I appeal to those who receive copies of this letter to come up with specific information for their favorite areas. Without it, we cannot expect to get legislation and the areas will be lost--it's really that simple.

Thanks, Chuck, for your work on getting suitable legislation introduced.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

cc. Don Morrill	9 Nov-74
Mary Ann Eriksen	9 Nov-74 (mailed)
Joe Fontaine	9 Nov-74 (mailed)
Mike Weege	9 Nov-74 (mailed)
Luis Ireland	11 Nov-74 (mailed)
Marge Sill	9 Nov-74
Dave Van de Mark	9 Nov-74 (mailed)
Eric Gerstung	9 Nov-74
John Moore	11 Nov-74 (mailed)
Hal Thomas	13 Nov-74
Bill/Diane Meyer	} mailed 13 Nov-74
Bill Ashworth	
John Hart	
Kurt Munchheimer	
Wilbur Vaughan	
Larry E. Moss	

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

29 November 1974

Sotero Muniz, Supervisor  
Sierra National Forest  
Federal Building - 1130 "O" Street  
Fresno, California 93721

Dear Sotero:

Re. Aspen-Horsethief Timber Sales Draft Environmental Statement.

I find that the above document is deficient in numerous respects, so much so that a complete commentary would run to scores of pages. This would have the disadvantage of detracting from the few major points which I wish to make. Rather than run that risk, I will limit my comments to only the more important problem areas.

The gravest problem is that you have not addressed the DES to the most fundamental issue. The action which should have been addressed is your proposal to embark upon a major program of timber management which would take perhaps 200 years fully to implement.

I read the DES closely in an attempt to learn what this program consists of, but I found no discernible or intelligible description of the program. What I did find were various scattered references which suggested that you are planning to convert the present forest to a regimen of even-aged management, and that the conversion period would extend over perhaps as much as 200 years. In other places I found statements suggesting that the conversion period might be no more than sixty years. But few definitive statements were made, and everything seemed very vague and tentative--with a strong implication that you will be making some rather serious decisions at some time in the future.

Scattered throughout the DES are various statements regarding the consequences of the long-term program which is alluded to. But there are practically no definitive statements which describe the long-term actions which themselves would cause these consequences.

I respectfully submit that it is impossible for me to evaluate your proposed course of action if you don't even tell me what it is that you intend to do. I request that this oversight be remedied in the final ES.

Of course you have described the proposed Aspen and Horsethief timber sales. But in the total scheme of things these two sales would probably be inconsequential. They are merely the first step in a long series of contemplated actions, and it is the cumulative effect of the series of individual actions which you should have addressed.

As you know, the law (NEPA and accompanying regulations) requires that you address yourself to the cumulative effect of your actions, and prohibits you from avoiding this through a project-by-project approach. I respectfully request that this aspect of the law be complied with.

Regarding your discussion of the wilderness alternative, I commend you for displaying significant improvement over the way you handled it in the North Shore Huntington Lake Timber Sales ES. You now display an improved grasp of what wilderness is, and there is less evidence of an anti-wilderness bias. But there is still room for improvement, and I must ask that you not rest on your laurels.

One serious flaw in your discussion of the wilderness alternative appears on page 41. You state that fuel accumulation under wilderness management would create a threat of very large and dangerous fires.

Actually, quite the opposite would be the case. Under true wilderness management the present fuels which have accumulated as a result of fire suppression would be eliminated, and new fuels would be prevented from accumulating. This could be accomplished by restoring the area to a natural condition through a carefully devised and implemented program of prescribed burning. Once returned to its natural state, the area could be kept free of excessive accumulations of fuel by a "natural burn" policy similar to that being used in some national parks.

You have assumed (page 42) that "forage and browse conditions would continue to decline" under wilderness management, apparently because you equate natural conditions with decadence. On the other hand, on page 13 you quote Jordan (1967) as stating that "possible current declines (of deer herds) reflect range deterioration resulting from too many deer and lack of fire" (emphasis provided). I would suggest that you reconsider these statements in the light of what I have pointed out above regarding fire, and that you re-think the entire matter of the role of fire in the natural scheme of things.

I think you would find that natural forces, including fire, tend to have a rejuvenating or revitalizing effect, and that nature is not dependent upon man's benevolence to provide this.

I have brought up this specific issue only to illustrate the point that the forest once had a natural system of checks and balances which had evolved over the ages. It was doing quite well until man started meddling with it and disrupted the natural systems. A realization of this is part of what the wilderness concept is all about; and unless you are able to accept this idea, then you cannot hope to understand the wilderness concept.

Putting this another way, I feel that it is highly unlikely that an agency which considers itself to be a manager of tree farms is capable of considering the wilderness alternative in a rational and objective manner. That is why I often feel that the only reasonable course of action is to have the wilderness option reviewed and decided by Congress.

For this reason, I advocate that the Kaiser Roadless Area, including the Aspen-Horsethief portion, be studied for possible inclusion in the Wilderness System. This would be in accordance with the guidelines established by the Wilderness Act of 1964, with the ultimate decision to be made by Congress.

For the record, I will suggest four additional alternatives which should have been considered in the DES, but which were not considered. These are:

1. Construction of a lower standard permanent road which would be open only to administrative and timber management activities, including "harvesting" of timber.
2. Selection cutting only (uneven-aged timber management).
3. A combination of 1. and 2.
4. Removing part or all of the Aspen-Horsethief area from the allowable cut base, while intensifying timber management (ie. growth of wood fiber) in more appropriate areas.

Regarding # 1. Most of the objection to "roads" is not directed at roads per se, but rather toward their side effects of soil erosion, water quality degradation, and the esthetic affront caused by excessive cuts and fills. To these must be added the noise, undesirable social behavior, and general overuse of an area which is facilitated by a proliferation of private motor vehicles.

All of these objections are either minimized or eliminated by constructing a narrower road with shorter curve radius standards, along with limiting its use to only those administrative and timber management functions which are essential.

Of course there would also be considerable economic advantages to such an alternative. A lower standard road would cost less to construct, thus resulting in greater timber sale revenue to the county and federal coffers. Restricted access to the road would eliminate the problem of wet-weather damage; this, along with the general reduction in amount of use, would greatly reduce maintenance costs.

Other road-related problems you have mentioned in the DES would be eliminated or minimized. These include increased fire hazard, depletion of fisheries, increased hunting pressure on the declining deer herd, etc.

Regarding # 2. If selection cutting (uneven-aged timber management) were practiced, there could be a similar minimizing or elimination of most of the objections which usually are raised to the more severe timber management practices and systems.

I realize that selection cutting is not feasible with a cable system, but you have not demonstrated that cutting by any method is really in the public interest when "slopes in excess of 50% are common" (page 2). Perhaps an analysis of the selection cutting alternative would indicate that the steeper slopes should be left alone in any event.

Regarding # 1., 2., and 3. In view of the very substantial number of people who suggested similar alternatives to the North Shore Huntington Lake Timber Sales proposal, I find it very strange that you have neglected to consider such alternatives to the Aspen-Horsethief

4.

timber sale proposal. I trust that this oversight will be remedied in the final ES.

Regarding # 4. My alternative # 2., as well as wilderness and roadless alternatives, may or may not imply a necessary concomitant increase in intensity of timber management somewhere else. This question in itself should be addressed in depth, complete with substantiating figures and documentation. This might be considered to be a fourth alternative, or it might simply be an integral part of the discussion of each of the other alternatives. In any event, it is an issue of profound importance to the future management of our public lands, and it merits a more detailed, open, and honest public discussion than it has so far received. I request that this oversight be remedied in the final ES.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

P.S. It should carefully be noted that I am speaking as an individual private citizen. I am not speaking for any of the two dozen or so different organizations to which I belong.