

# TEHIPITE CHAPTER

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SIERRA CLUB

P. O. Box 5396

Fresno, California 93755

Dear Friend and Member,

Many of the wild places we visit in our National Forests are still free of asphalt, dams, and tree stumps only by the most tenuous of circumstances. Places like Dinkey Lakes, the Upper San Joaquin (including the area around Devil's Postpile), Mount Raymond, Post Corral Creek and Meadow, upper Crown Valley (near Rancheria), Garlic Falls on the Kings River, and Jennie Lake are all still in a natural, undeveloped condition. They remain free of roads and dam construction and logging activity---for the time being.

These, and many other parts of our National Forests, are known as "roadless areas." Unlike our National Parks, or our National Forest Wilderness Areas, these National Forest "roadless areas" are not covered by any law clearly placing them in a protected status to be preserved in perpetuity.

These lands were studied in the Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation processes (RARE I and RARE II), and that gave them a temporary respite from the bulldozers and chainsaws. Following these studies, even the Forest Service agreed that many of these lands should be preserved, and it was recommended that Congress pass a law placing the lands in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In the last Congress, and in the one before that, the House of Representatives passed a good wilderness bill which would have placed these lands in the Wilderness System. But following the 1980 election, when the Republicans gained control of the Senate, Senator Hayakawa was able to prevent any meaningful action on the bill in the Senate, thus killing the legislation.

But Sam Hayakawa is gone, replaced by Pete Wilson. Although he recently upset environmentalists with some of his land development policies while mayor of San Diego, the fact remains that Pete Wilson at one time had a good environmental reputation. There is reason to believe that, if we make a good case for wilderness, Senator Wilson will listen to us. And that is why we are writing you now.

Congressman Phil Burton has introduced a good wilderness bill (H.R. 1437) in the House of Representatives; this bill is expected to move forward quickly, and to pass the House with strong support, just as it did in the previous two Congresses.

Senator Cranston has introduced a similar bill (S. 5) in the Senate; this bill will not move forward unless it has the support of Pete Wilson, since Wilson is a member of the majority party while Cranston is not.

We know that Pete Wilson is already being lobbied by the timber industry to introduce an anti-wilderness bill. We cannot match the timber industry's financial resources, but we do represent a lot more voters than they. That means you and me, for starters. Can we count on you to write Pete Wilson and let him know you want him to support a strong pro-wilderness bill?

Every indication is that the present Congress is going to produce some kind of bill---either anti-wilderness, or pro-wilderness, or something in between---and send it to the White House to be signed into law. What kind of law we end up with, and whether our roadless areas will be bulldozed, logged, ravaged by motorcyclists, and the rivers dammed---or whether these lands will be preserved for the use and enjoyment of future generations---depends on us.

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Please write to Pete Wilson today. Ask him to join with Senator Cranston in supporting passage of a strong pro-wilderness bill. Tell him how you feel about the need for adding the National Forest roadless areas to the Wilderness System so they will be protected for everyone in perpetuity, rather than being ruined for the monetary gain of a few in the short run. Let him know that you have hiked in some of these areas, and mention the ones which you especially want to see added to the Wilderness System.

The area which is most likely to come under attack by the timber industry, and which is therefore most in need of your favorable mention and support for wilderness status, is the Pincushion area on the South Fork of the San Joaquin River. This is the land north of Mono Hot Springs and Edison Lake, along the western boundary of the John Muir Wilderness. It is marvelously diverse in character, with a great range of vegetation and soil types. Lush tule ponds set among dry Jeffrey pine forests provide striking contrasts. And the area is a haven for wildlife because it provides a large tract of middle elevation (6,000 to 7,000 feet) land which is still relatively lightly used by people---thus enabling species such as bear and cougar to find ample food without being disturbed by man.

But enough! It is time to take pen in hand and start your letter to Pete Wilson. The main thing is to ask him to support a strong pro-wilderness bill, and mention the Pincushion area as being especially deserving of protection. His address is

Honorable Pete Wilson  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510.

Thank you for doing your part to help save our endangered wildlands.

Sincerely,

*George W. Whitmore*  
George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman

P.S. If you would like further information, or help in drafting your letter, please call me at 229-5808 (Fresno); in the morning before 10:00 a.m. is the most dependable time to reach me, although feel free to try at any time. I would appreciate receiving a copy of your letter---it helps us to know whether we are explaining the issues effectively. It also helps if you send us a copy of the response you receive from Pete Wilson---we can then plan better on how to approach him in the future. But the important thing is to write---don't worry about the copies if it is not convenient! Thanks again for your help.

P.P.S. This letter was planned by your Conservation Committee and has the support of your Executive Committee. In the interest of expediting it, the other signatures have been omitted.

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