

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

18 January 1975

Earl E. Foley, Division Manager
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
1401 Fulton Street
Fresno, California 93721

Dear Mr. Foley:

Re. Helms Pumped Storage Project.

Thank you for notifying us of your next meeting, to be held in Fresno on January 28. My wife and I plan to attend.

I thought you might be interested in updating your distribution list, and offer the following comments and information.

Dr. Norman L. Hill
652 E. Manning Avenue, Apt. 15
Reedley, CA 93654

No longer chairman of Tehipite Chapter, but he may wish to continue receiving your notices.

Mr. Eldred Bliss
Fresno Co. Natural Resources
Coordinator
4499 E. Kings Canyon Road
Fresno, CA 93702

Since he does not represent the Sierra Club in any way, he probably would prefer that he be listed only as a representative of Fresno County.

John Konior (you have his name misspelled)
6543 N. Ferger
Fresno, CA 93704

Since he has not attended any of your meetings for a long period, if ever, he may not wish to continue receiving your notices. His name was probably placed on your list because he was Chapter Chairman at the time of your first public meetings.

Dr. Edwin H. Deubs
Sierra Land Use Committee
2711 E. Simpson Avenue
Fresno, CA 93704

Not presently active in the Sierra Club, so perhaps he would prefer to be listed only as a representative of the Sierra Land Use Committee.

New people whose names you may wish to add to your list:

Ms. Ann L. Stanislawsky
4610 N. Howell
Fresno, CA 93703

New Tehipite Chapter Chairman, as of January 1975. She probably would not attend your meetings, but would rely on other Sierra Club members to keep her informed.

Mr. Rich Sextro
Sierra Club
Chairman, Energy Resources Committee
for Northern Calif./Nevada
2661 Virginia
Berkeley, CA 94709

He has expressed an interest
in receiving information on
the Helms Pumped Storage
Project.

I am sending a copy of this letter to each of the above people in order
that each may respond to you as he or she may see fit.

Sincerely,

gw George W. Whitmore

cc. Norman L. Hill
Eldred Bliss
John Konier
Edwin H. Daubs
Ann L. Stanislawsky
Rich Sextro

Bcc. Hal Thomas ✓

I did not include your name on the list
I gave to Earl Foley be cause it is my
under standing that you have no particular
interest in this project. If I have err'd,
you could write Earl Foley and ask
to be placed on distribution. (The project
does have some very profound implications
regarding management of the Sierra N.F.)

TO: Helen Burke, Jerry Meral, Jake Miller, Bob Rutemoeller,
Marge Sill, Ramona Wascher

FROM: George Whitmore

RE: Organization of NCRCC ex comm.

DATE: 28 January 1975

Enclosed is an outline I have prepared. It reflects my understanding of our discussions on 24-25 January at the Thorne Estate.

If I do not hear from you shortly I will assume that my understanding of what we discussed is correct, and I will proceed to excercise the responsibilities which I understand to have been assigned to me. I would like to get started on these matters quickly, and that is why I am taking the initiative of sending you this memorandum.

You will note that I have proposed names for the new "divisions." Since we did not discuss this, I consider these to be proposals only. Perhaps someone else can think of better names.

I have probably erred to some extent in the way I have listed Helen's areas of responsibility. It is unclear to me whether I have used the proper nomenclature for the entities in her division, including whether Land Use is a committee or a task force.

LAND USE DIVISION
(Marjorie Sill)

Bureau of Land Mgmt C.
Land Exchanges T.F.
Off-Road Vehicles C.
Solid Waste T.F.
Lake Tahoe T.F.

STATE LANDS DIVISION
(Helen Burke)

State Parks C.
Land Use C./T.F. (?)
Regional Gov't T.F.

FEDERAL LANDS DIVISION
(George Whitmore)

Forest Practices T.F.
National Forests C.
National Parks C.
Wildlife C.
Yosemite T.F.

Wilderness Council
(Steering Committee: M. Sill, H. Burke, G. Whitmore)
Council is to include chairmen of affected
committees and task forces.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH DIVISION
(Jake Miller)

Environmental Education C.

ENERGY DIVISION
(Bob Rutmeller)

Air Resources C.
Energy Resources C.
Geothermal T.F.
M.T.C. Planning T.F.
P.G. & E. Conversion T.F.
Airport T.F.
Transportation C.

WATER DIVISION
(Gerald Meral)

Creeks and Small Rivers T.F.
Delta-San Joaquin River Basin T.F.
Peripheral Canal T.F.
Pyramid Lake T.F.
Waste Water Reclamation T.F.
Water Resources C.

Notes:

Federal Lands Committee has been abolished.

National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Committees are new entities.
Wilderness Council is a new entity.

"Land use" and "water" elements of Lake Tahoe T.F. have been combined
into a single T.F.

Mining Impact ~~xxxx~~ T.F. has been abolished as such; it is assumed that
Ken Turner will continue to serve in an advisory capacity.
Status of Coastal Resources Committee is unclear to me.

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

8 February 1975

Ann L. Stanislawsky, Chairperson
Tehipite Chapter, Sierra Club
4610 North Rowell
Fresno, CA 93703

Dear Ann,

I concur with the feeling for priorities which you expressed at our monthly meeting last Wednesday (Yosemite, Kaiser Ridge, Mineral King). Issues such as these have always been my highest priorities, and have thus consumed most of my time and energies.

At the same time, I feel we cannot afford totally to ignore all other issues--especially one as basic to human well-being and survival as land-use planning. That is especially true of the preservation of our prime agricultural lands.

We in Fresno County would seem to have a particularly strong responsibility in this regard. It is becoming increasingly clear that our actions (or inactions) are going to have global repercussions.

In that regard, I am enclosing two newspaper articles. You might wish to refer to them at this point.

As I understand these clippings, Fresno County is in the midst of drawing up a new County General Plan. The Planning Commission is attempting to recommend certain policies which would be directed toward the preservation of the food-producing potential of our prime agricultural lands. But the Planning Commission's efforts are being vigorously opposed by individuals who are seeking personal profit and self-interest at the expense of the public good.

Are we (the Tehipite Chapter) going to sit idly by while a few individuals line their pockets, thereby condemning the rest of humanity to slow starvation? If this seems like an overstatement, I suggest that you think about it a while.

The purpose of this letter is to ask what the Tehipite Chapter is going to do about it.

I recognize that it is difficult to get volunteers to do anything, and that it is especially difficult to get them to take an interest in something with a very long time-frame reference, as is the case with this particular issue. Speaking from my own past experience as conservation chairman, I can sympathize with Hal Thomas' problems in this regard. As I understand it, he has concluded that no one is willing to assume responsibility for land-use planning in our Chapter area, and that is why I am writing to you.

As chairperson of the Chapter, perhaps you can deal with the issue in the Executive Committee meeting on February 19. I hope that by the time that meeting is adjourned we will have a plan for getting large numbers of people to attend the March 5th public hearing, and for them to speak out on the issue!

I hope that it will not be said, several years hence, that the Sierra Club lost its effectiveness as a public force because it cared more for ~~far~~ trees than it did for people.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

cc. Eileen Devine
Norman Hill
Krist Jensen
John Konior
Steve Mortimer
Dennis Steffensen
Hal Thomas

bcc. Elizabeth Davis
Don Thuesen

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

Mary Ann Eriksen
Southern California Representative
Sierra Club
2410 Beverly Boulevard, Suite 2
Los Angeles, CA 90057

10 February 1975

Dear Mary Ann,

Re. Weather modification by Southern California Edison Company,
San Joaquin River drainage, your letter of 6 January 75 to F.A. McCrackin
of S.C.E.

Joe Fontaine sent me a copy of the above mentioned letter, in which you expressed concern over the beginning of a weather modification program in the Huntington Lake area.

I am puzzled over what information you might have received which prompted your letter. SCE has been conducting a weather modification program in that area for many years, but apparently there has been some new development which you learned of. Could you please let me know what it is?

I have a strong personal interest in weather/climate modification. Additionally, it has been a subject of intense discussion in the Club's National Wilderness Committee, of which I am a member. It is also a subject which is quite relevant to the management of our national parks, national forests, wildlife, and to forest practices--for all of which I have overall responsibility in the NCRCC area. You are perhaps aware that Bob Curry is to be involved in research of weather/climate modification problems--this at the instigation of the NCRCC following discussions. At the local level I am involved in the Helms Pumped Storage Project, problems of dams on the Kings River, and the question of wilderness status for the Kings River area; these are all interrelated with weather modification issues. This is also true of the wilderness proposals for Yosemite N.P. and Sequoia-Kings Canyon N.P.; we encountered political problems with these in the 93rd Congress because of the weather modification implications. You have probably noted that the Sierra N.F. has raised the weather modification issue in an attack upon our Kaiser Wilderness proposal (which is very directly related to the subject of your letter to F. A. McCrackin.).

For these and other reasons I would appreciate your keeping me informed of any information which you might receive regarding weather/climate modification, particularly in the Sierra Nevada. If you would like details on any of the issues I have mentioned above I would be pleased to try to provide them.

Sincerely,

gw George W. Whitmore

cc. Joe Fontaine

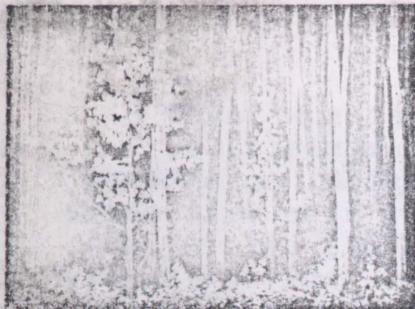
Mike Weege

Hal Thomas (NCRCC Forest Practices; also Tehipite Chapter Cons. Chmn.)

Janice Eckdahl (Yosemite T.F.)

Sonya Thompson (NCRCC National Parks; also Yosemite T.F.)

Bill Collins (NCRCC Wildlife)



by Ansel Adams in *This is the American Earth*

SIERRA CLUB

Mills Tower, San Francisco 94104

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg, CA 93631

11 April 1975

TO: "NCRCC Roster - March 1975", including addenda of 5 April 1975.
FROM: George Whitmore, NCRCC Vice-Chairman (Federal Lands Division).
RE: Agenda of joint SC/NC RCC meeting, 19-20 April 1975.

Attached is background material on two of the agenda items.
These are:

1. Fire policy proposal.

The enclosed background material explains part of the rationale behind the policy proposal.

2. National Forest "timber" management. (Accidentally listed on the CLC agenda. It belongs on the agenda of the joint RCC meeting as a major discussion and action item.)

The enclosure (printed on the reverse of this cover letter) provides some insight into problems of National Forest resource allocation and management. This is directly related to wilderness legislation, National Forest land use planning, and to Sierra Club priorities, all of which appear on the agenda. We would like to discuss these items in conjunction with each other, as they are inextricably related. The total subject area should be considered to be a major discussion item, presumably culminating in one or more resolutions.

Regarding the feral horse and burro agenda item (on which background material has already been mailed), a possible resolution might be:

"We are concerned with the environmental degradation presently taking place due to the unchecked growth of feral horse and burro populations. We support in principle the concept of humane reduction of these feral animals where they are having a significant adverse effect on the indigenous flora and fauna."

I sincerely hope that you will be able to review this material and to do some thinking about it prior to the RCC meeting. See you there!

Bcc. Tony Chasteen
Hal Thomas

(Sierra Club letterhead)

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

11 July 1975

John Zierold, Sacramento Representative
Sierra Club
927 - 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear John,

Re. A.B. 2042 (Herschel Rosenthal, D-Los Angeles), which would reputedly ban sport hunting of all "fur bearing mammals."

I phoned your office this afternoon and left a message. This letter is to provide you with a written record of my message.

Earlier this afternoon I phoned Assemblyman Rosenthal's office in Sacramento. They stated that AB 2042 originally addressed itself only to certain technical details regarding steel-jawed traps and their use. If this was the case, then I can understand how the Sierra Club might have become involved.

The assemblyman's office also said that you had informed them that AB 2042 had been amended into such a form that the Sierra Club could no longer support it. I was very pleased to learn that you had done this.

They also stated that the "fur bearing mammals" to which the bill refers are only those listed as such in Section 4,000 of the Fish and Game Code. These are mink, gray fox, badger, beaver and raccoon; apparently the list also includes muskrat, although the assemblyman's office did not mention this particular animal.

Now, to the point of my letter. This is regarding the disastrous press we received in an editorial in the June 27 issue of Western Outdoor News (copy enclosed).

As you will note, the editorial is captioned "The End of Sport Hunting." It states that AB 2042 would ban "ALL sport hunting of ANY fur bearing mammal," and that includes "deer, antelope, elk, bear, rabbit, squirrel and so forth." And it quotes a Rosenthal spokesman, who was asked why the assemblyman introduced such a measure, "I really don't know why. It was sponsored by the Sierra Club." (!)

As I understand the assemblyman's office, we did support the bill as it was originally introduced, but we withdrew our support when unacceptable amendments started to give the bill an anti-hunting bias.

Unfortunately that does not close the matter. Thanks to the half-truth published in Western Outdoor News, their readers now believe that the Sierra Club is trying to stop sport hunting. Of course the full truth would show quite the opposite.

I am asking that you write the editor of Western Outdoor News (Bill Rice, 3939 Birch Street, Newport Beach, California 92663). Please explain that:

1. AB 2042 originally dealt only with certain technical details regarding steel-jawed traps and their use.
2. The Sierra Club withdrew its support when unacceptable amendments were added to the bill.
3. The Sierra Club "...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."¹ Furthermore, "...the Sierra Club believes that acceptable management techniques include ...regulated periodic hunting and fishing..."² (Although somewhat more explicit, the former quotation is neutral in its stance; the latter quotation, although more limited in scope, has the virtue of being expressed positively. I feel that the two statements complement each other well.)

Please ask Mr. Rice to publish your letter in order that the false impression his readers presently have may be corrected.

I feel that the Sierra Club and most sportsmen's groups have far more in common than is generally realized. Shared environmental goals, including protection of wildlife habitat, tend to be overlooked, obscured or forgotten while the differences are emphasized and remembered.

But it is imperative that citizen groups who are striving to protect the environment work together, since no one group is strong enough to achieve the task alone. I hope that you can help to overcome the needless divisiveness which presently exists, and I hope that Bill Rice will be equally interested in rectifying the present misunderstanding.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore
Vice-chairman (Federal Lands Division)

cc. Mike McCloskey
Murray Rosenthal
Bill Collins

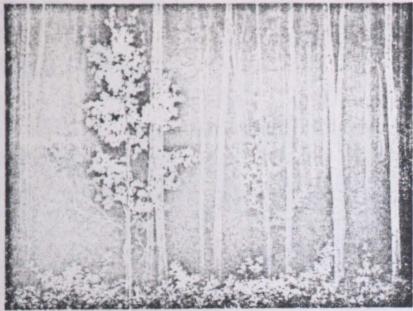
Marlene Testaguzza

Lew Cappenter (Sportsmen's Council of Central California, 815 West Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno, CA 93705)

Bill Rice (Western Outdoor News)

¹ This is quoted from an NCRCC resolution adopted March 2, 1974.

² This is quoted from the Sierra Club's National Wildlife Policy (adopted by the Board May 5, 1974). This section was reaffirmed at a meeting of the NCRCC and SCRCC on April 20, 1975.



by Ansel Adams in *This is the American Earth*

SIERRA CLUB

Mills Tower, San Francisco 94104

9 August 1975

Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Three Rivers
California 93271

Dear Sir,

The following comments on the Development Concept Planning Alternatives for the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area of Sequoia National Park have been prepared by the Sierra Nevada Task Force of the Sierra Club.

Scope of the Study.

We believe the area under consideration for future management alternatives should be expanded to include the Grant Grove area and the entire length of the Generals Highway. We have been suggesting for some time that the United States Forest Service and the National Park Service plan jointly for management of public land in this entire area. We are pleased to see there has been more cooperation recently between Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks and Sequoia National Forest in planning, but we believe an ever closer coordination of planning would serve the public better.

We urge the National Park Service not to take the view that all services for park visitors must be located within the Park. Campgrounds, overnight lodging, stores, restaurants, and other necessary visitor service facilities should be located where there will be a minimum of environmental impact.

We specifically suggest that Stony Creek and Big Meadow be given very strong consideration for development for visitor service facilities. We intend to make the same suggestion to Sequoia National Forest in response to their Hume Planning Unit Alternatives. On page 20 in the Planning Alternatives booklet it was pointed out that the Stony Creek site has "favorable topography, soils, and vegetation for development," lacking only sufficient water and electricity. But water can be piped along the road from its source, and electricity brought in. These are the two necessary factors which can be imported to an area where all other criteria are suitable, and this should be done!

The Alternatives should also address the possibility of private facilities in the Three Rivers area to help serve park visitors. If public transportation were to be provided from Three Rivers into the park, this might be a very practical option.

By confining the area being studied to the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area these options and others would not be apparent and may not be given full consideration. When a specific area is defined for study, there is a tendency to put up a mental barrier that tends to exclude consideration of land use possibilities in adjacent areas, and thereby result in a less-than-optimum plan.

Public Transportation.

We strongly support the provision of public transportation in the area. Elimination of private automobiles from Giant Forest except for through traffic on the Generals Highway would greatly enhance the experience of visitors to the area. It would also make it possible and convenient for those without automobiles to visit the park. The transportation service should be free upon entrance to the park and should be operated at frequent intervals for visitor convenience.

The concept of collecting people should extend beyond the boundaries of the park, and most certainly beyond the immediate Lodgepole/Giant Forest area. Consideration should be given to providing bus service from Three Rivers and the Grant Grove area, serving Big Meadow and Stony Creek along the way. This would help further to eliminate private autos from the park.

Because the Wolverton Corral area is already impacted, and because of its other advantages, we feel it would probably be the most appropriate location for a staging area.

If feasible, bus service should be provided for tours of Crystal Cave to eliminate private autos in that area.

Because there is apparently insufficient knowledge of the effect on the Sequoia trees of extending the road beyond Crescent Meadow (to make a one-way loop), we are opposed to such a plan at this time. It would be highly inappropriate to include this road in the plan prior to adequate studies having been conducted to determine whether it could be done without harm to the Sequoias. Such studies should include, among other things, the effect on the water table, soils, erosion, and the roots of the trees themselves.

It appears that planning could proceed without a decision having been made regarding the loop road, and that the road could easily be planned and provided for at some time in the future if it proves to be desirable and if studies eventually show that it could be done safely.

Alternative I.

We will not comment at length on Alternative I because we find it unacceptable, as we are sure will most of the respondents to the alternatives. As is pointed out under "Impacts" on page 7, there are serious problems with the present arrangement. Many of these will get worse with the passage of time. We are certain the National Park Service will not find the status quo a viable alternative.

Alternatives II, III, and IV.

We prefer to comment on these alternatives collectively to avoid repetition. Many of our comments apply to all three alternatives.

In so far as possible, visitor facilities should be separated according to the type of service provided. Motel/hotel type lodgings could be located in the Wolverton area adjacent to the staging area and near the ski facilities. This area is already impacted by the dump and horse corrals. Any other necessary commercial services would also be more suitably located here. They would be convenient for winter use and for use of the transportation system. This area has an additional advantage in that it is within walking distance of Giant Forest. Employee housing could be made a part of the development.

If there is not sufficient space for all the commercial facilities, the remainder should be located out of the park at Stony Creek or some other acceptable location. In any case the overall pillow count inside the park should not be allowed to increase. The pillow count inside the park may need to be reduced if the Wolverton site cannot accommodate the present pillow count.

The visitor center structure at Lodgepole should be retained. It could serve as an interpretive facility and for other appropriate administrative functions. Eventually the service station should probably be relocated to the Wolverton Corral area in order to be more convenient to the parking area. The Lodgepole campground should be retained, but it may need to be worked over in order to give the camper a more natural type of experience. The area is heavily impacted at the present time.

The idea of placing a campground at Clover Creek or Red Fir should be pursued. The elimination of campgrounds in Giant Forest has reduced the camping opportunities within the park. This problem could be alleviated with an additional campground at Clover Creek and/or Red Fir. Additional campground sites should be considered outside the park at perhaps Stony Creek or Big Meadow on National Forest land.

The desirability of segregating different types of camping should be studied. Motor homes/camper units, tent sites, and walk-in type campsites could be located in different parts of the same campgrounds if there are space and opportunity for separation. Or single-use campgrounds could be developed. This would help avoid obvious conflicts.

The Wolverton ski facilities should not be expanded. They may need to undergo limited upgrading as mentioned for safety purposes.

If feasible, bicycle routes should be provided in the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area.

We believe it would be a serious mistake to locate hotel/motel type accommodations at Lodgepole. The replacement of the campground at Lodgepole by concessioner facilities would discriminate in favor of more affluent park visitors. Furthermore, the dense concentration of developed facilities would tend to urbanize Lodgepole, one of the major attractions for most park visitors.

In any case we believe the cabins, lodge, restaurant, shops, etc., should be removed from Giant Forest. We recognize it would have to be done over a period of time depending upon economics. The negative impacts mentioned under Alternative I in the Planning Alternatives booklet document the need for this action.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in land use planning for Sequoia National Park and commend the National Park Service for making the effort to obtain public input in their planning.

Sincerely,

by George W. Whitmore

Joe Fontaine, Chairman
Sierra Nevada Task Force



Tehipite Dome by W. A. Starr 1896

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

SIERRA CLUB 

P. O. Box 5396
Fresno, California 93755

5 September 1975

Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Three Rivers
California 93271

Sir:

The following comments on the Development Concept Planning Alternatives for the Cedar Grove area of Kings Canyon National Park have been prepared by the Tehipite Chapter on behalf of the Sierra Club.

Alternative 1 (No Action):

We tend to find this alternative undesirable, in part because of the reasons stated in the Planning Alternatives booklet. An additional major reason is that we feel the present concessionaire facilities, and the activities associated with them, disrupt the natural atmosphere which should surround the visitor center/ranger station area. We therefore feel that these facilities should be relocated.

Alternative 2 (Day Use Only):

If the Cedar Grove area were to be considered out of context, this would appear to be a desirable alternative. But, in view of the relationship of Cedar Grove to the surrounding park lands, we feel it would not be practical to convert it to a day use area. It appears that such management would interfere severely with the use of the area as a back-country trailhead; it should be kept in mind that this is a very major use of Cedar Grove-Copper Creek, and that there are no substitute trailheads which could be used in its place.

Additionally, Cedar Grove's isolation (in time and distance) from other existing or potential developments would appear to render it unsuited for conversion to exclusive day use.

Alternative 3 (Upgrade Facilities):

We tend to favor this alternative, but with certain reservations. These are--

(1) Overnight capacity of guest rooms (20 rooms/80 people).

We note that these figures were arrived at on the basis that they are "the maximum that could be maintained by one maid in order to provide the most economical unit" (emphasis added). We feel the figures should perhaps be based on the optimum, and not the maximum. It is apparent that whenever something goes wrong the one maid would not be able to keep up with the work load. This would necessitate the hiring of a second maid. Applying the original rationale, this would then result in pressure to increase the accommodations in order to make the operation more efficient, etc., etc.

Additionally, it is unclear why someone has to work exclusively as a maid, and consequently has to be kept busy by having

enough rooms to care for. Surely the maid could have other duties, thus letting the decision as to the most appropriate level of accommodations be based upon more significant and appropriate criteria.

In view of what is apparently a rather limited demand for the presently available tent-cabins (about five), we feel that a four-fold increase (in number of rooms) is probably unrealistically high. In particular, it seems there is significant risk that having unused capacity would lead to promotion of the area for the purpose of filling the accommodations. We feel this would be in direct conflict with the purpose for which the park was established, and must be avoided.

Summary: For various reasons, 20 rooms/80 people is probably too high.

(2) While we feel that replacement and relocation of existing facilities with new structures is probably appropriate, we have misgivings regarding architectural design. We trust that there would be opportunity for public input in this regard, thus minimizing the possibility of architectural indiscretions such as have occurred elsewhere in the National Park System.

(3) Our greatest concern, alluded to under item (1) above, is that of protection against inappropriate pressure for future expansion. Many people fear that any new construction at all would simply be the opening wedge for future urbanization of the valley. We feel this is a very valid concern, and wish to see some assurance from the Park Service as to how this problem is to be handled. In the absence of reasonable assurance regarding the future, we would withdraw our present provisional support for Alternative 3.

Alternative 4 (Maximum Development):

We generally concur with most of the statements in the Planning Alternatives booklet which indicate that this level of development would be excessive, and therefore we oppose Alternative 4.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in land use planning for Kings Canyon National Park and commend the Park Service for making the effort to obtain public input in their planning.

Sincerely,

by George W. Whitmore

Harold E. Thomas
Conservation Chairman

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg, CA 93631

15 December 1975

Bill Baden, District Ranger
Hume Lake Ranger District
Sequoia National Forest
Miramonte, CA 93641

Dear Bill,

Re. Hume Planning Unit "Management Alternatives."

You indicated an interest in knowing in what ways my thinking might or might not differ from that of the Sierra Club. Because of your expression of interest, I have decided to address my comments on the Hume P.U. "Management Alternatives" directly to you. I am also sending a copy of this letter to Charles Pickering in the Porterville office, and I trust that he will treat this letter just as though I had addressed it to him directly.

I have been gone several days, and returned home late last night. Upon reading the Sierra Club statement, which was sent to Mr. Pickering over the week end, I find that I Agree with it in substance, but I do have some comments which you might find of interest. To facilitate a comparison, I will follow the same format used in the Sierra Club statement, a copy of which is enclosed.

Before starting, I should note that while I concur with most of the Sierra Club thinking I would perhaps have chosen to express it somewhat differently had I written the statement myself. Also, you will note several minor inaccuracies. I do not consider these to be substantive, and therefore I will not comment upon them. I trust that the Forest Service, too, will not become distracted by such minor details but instead will concentrate upon the philosophy which has been expressed.

Introductory.

I concur. I should point out that at the Sequoia N.F. public meeting held in Fresno on June 6, 1974 I stated that I felt that Kings Canyon should be considered as a complete entity and not be artificially split down the middle. Gordon Heebner assured me that this would be done, and that both sides of the canyon would be considered regardless of where the line was drawn. But I now find no evidence that this has been done.

As to the failure to consider the wilderness alternative for all contiguous roadless lands at the same time (ie. now, when only some of the contiguous lands are being considered), I pointed out the same flaw when it occurred in the Kern Plateau P.U. Management Alternatives several months prior to publication of the Hume alternatives. It was suggested both to me and to Joe Fontaine that this had been an oversight. But if that was the case, why was the same "oversight" then repeated in the Hume alternatives?

I am quite disturbed by the Forest Service's failure to do that which they said they would do (ie. treat the entire canyon as a complete entity). I am also disturbed by the seeming inability to correct "oversights" (eg. to consider the wilderness alternative for all contiguous roadless

lands in the canyon instead of only some of them), especially when these oversights involve violation of the Forest Service's own regulations as cited in the Sierra Club statement.

Alternatives.

I concur. The alternatives have generally been structured in such a way as to appeal only to those who have very narrow points of view. There is only one alternative which is even remotely reasonable, which in effect means that we have been presented with a proposed plan, and not with a set of possible alternatives. In other words, the planning process has failed to achieve its stated objective, and there is not a range of options from which a reasonable person could select.

Camping.

I concur.

Backpacking and Horseback Riding.

I concur.

Trailbike and Four-Wheel Drive Riding.

I generally concur.

I strongly concur in support of limiting ORV's to designated routes throughout the Hume Lake Ranger District.

I strongly concur in criticism of the jeep trail from Crabtree to Rancheria, and the proposal to extend it up Verplank Ridge.

I strongly concur in criticism of the proposed jeep trail from Cabin Creek Grove down to the Kings River.

I strongly concur that motorcycles should be prohibited in most if not all of the Jennie Lake Roadless Area.

(Although it was not stated, the Sierra Club is opposed to formal designation of motorcycle routes within the Verplank and Agnew Roadless Areas, and I concur in this.)

I am sure that there are routes which both the Sierra Club and I would find acceptable for ORV use. It is unfortunate that most of the routes suggested by the Forest Service are not acceptable.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing.

I concur.

Snowmobiling.

I concur.

Ski Areas.

Here is one where I differ significantly with the Sierra Club. I feel that it should be possible to come to at least a tentative conclusion as to the environmental acceptability of a Mitchell Peak ski development before a final EIS is completed. It would seem that preliminary studies could form the basis for a preliminary conclusion, with the final studies providing the basis for a final conclusion.

I trust you will note that the Sierra Club is not opposing a ski development, but rather is reserving the right to do so pending the outcome of adequate studies.

I concur that 5,000 to 8,000 skiers per day seems like too many.

Fish and Wildlife.

I concur. It is regretable that so many people (including the agencies) seem to think that "wildlife" means "deer." Even if converting the Sierra Nevada to a deer farm were an acceptable goal, I challenge the simplistic (and therefore widely held) view that more asphalt, dirt, and clearcuts equals more deer.

Livestock Grazing.

I concur in general, but not "unalterably." The Sierra Club statement was perhaps not entirely clear in distinguishing between conversion to reestablish natural conditions as opposed to conversion which destroys natural conditions. We endorse the former, while of course we oppose the latter.

The Sierra Club statement should perhaps have pointed out that we do not oppose grazing in classified wilderness areas.

It should be clear from the above remarks that the Verplank, Oat Mountain, and Rodgers Ridge areas could be used as prime grazing lands even if they were to be classified as wilderness. Would they be equally valuable for grazing if they were overrun by motorcycles and jeeps? Some of the more enlightened cattle ranchers have come to realize that wilderness classification is one of the best ways of preserving grazing lands. In other words, we object to the Forest Service assumption that utilization of the Kings Canyon grasslands for grazing would be incompatible with wilderness classification.

Timber Harvest.

I concur. As an individual, I can go somewhat beyond the Sierra Club in advocating some forms of intensive management in order to increase growth of wood fiber. The main reason the Sierra Club is reluctant to discuss the issue is because nobody seems to be able to provide a reliable definition of "intensive management."

I note that many people (including some within the Forest Service and the industry) feel that it should be possible to increase timber production on the public lands while at the same time also greatly increasing the amount of land in wilderness or other non-commodity classifications.

As an example, the present draft of the USFS Northern California Planning Area Guide alternatives suggests that all roadless areas could be classified as wilderness while at the same time increasing timber production.

Why was such an alternative not presented for the Hume P.U.? (Bill, if you would see to it that I receive a personal response to this question I would greatly appreciate it.)

Road Travel.

I concur. The Sierra Club perhaps meant to say, "For this purpose selective forestry is superior to even-aged forestry." But the Sierra Club tends to equate "intensive forestry" and "clearcutting", and that is why they said what they did.

I personally feel that a forest could be managed on a selective system with extreme intensity, greatly increasing production over what we are getting now even with clearcutting. I realize that it might be less ~~maxim~~ economic, but that is another issue which should be discussed rather than suppressed as it has been so far.

Wilderness.

I concur. Since this is the Sierra Club's primary interest, it seems to me they should have discussed it first and at greater length. I trust that you will not underestimate the depth of their interest in the wilderness resource which lies within the Kings River-Hume P.U. area.

Roadless Areas.

I concur. I would add the same remarks that I have made above under "Wilderness."

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

cc. Charles Pickering, Forest Planner