

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

1 June 1975

Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Room 1522
House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Gentlemen:

Last year when I visited your office Mr. Bob Hunt promised to send me twelve copies of a particular report. I never received these, and subsequently I learned that Mr. Hunt had left your staff. I trust that my request for the report was a casualty of the turnover in personnel, and will repeat my request now since I still need the report.

Could you please send me copies (I can still use at least six) of the published report of the hearing which you held in the 93rd Congress on the Emigrant Wilderness proposal.

I do not have the date of the hearing, but it was prior to March of 1974. In late March (1974) Mr. Hunt stated that the report was at the printer, and I later learned that the report became available in April of 1974.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg, CA 93631

3 August 1974

Walter B. Powell, Chairman
Calif. Wildlife Federation, Land Use Committee
772 Morada Place
Altadena, CA 91001

Dear Walt:

As a member of the California Wildlife Federation, I am somewhat concerned by one of the items which appeared in your "Land Use Report" on page six of the August issue of California Wildlife. This is your item 1.c., which deals with the matter of limitation of visitor use in Wilderness areas.

I agree with the idea you stated, but I guess what distresses me is some of the implications which will undoubtedly be drawn from your statement by the reader.

For one thing, you didn't mention the distinction between limitations which are imposed purely for social reasons (eg. to achieve "solitude"), and those limitations which are imposed for ecological reasons (ie. to preserve the physical resource). Because you didn't make this distinction, my guess is that most readers will assume that CWF is opposed to any limitation on Wilderness use, even if it is to avoid destruction or loss of grass and soil by hooves and Vibram soles.

Surely CWF is not demanding that the agencies let the physical resource be irreversibly damaged or destroyed simply because protective measures might inconvenience some individuals.

I do agree with you that the whole idea of restrictions to achieve "solitude" is grossly overdone. More about that later.

Back to your "Land Use Report".... You seem to be saying that the demand for "solitude" is coming from what you refer to as "purist backpackers". I feel this is a very unfortunate implication, as it diverts the reader's concern away from the real issue, which is the tendency of the agencies to try to re-write the Wilderness Act in a way which Congress never intended.

There is absolutely nothing in the Wilderness Act which says that a Wilderness must provide solitude for every visitor. On the other hand, the Act does say that there will be opportunities for solitude. In other words, the Act does not require that the visitor experience solitude on the Mount Whitney trail on Labor Day weekend. It does require that those visitors who prefer solitude will be able to find it somewhere within the John Muir Wilderness.

As you know, the agencies are trying to impose "solitude" on the Mount Whitney trail. In so doing they are grossly abusing the law of the land (the Wilderness Act), and I am not aware that they have any significant citizen support for their misguided efforts. And yet your "Land Use Report" seems to be blaming the agency actions on "purist backpackers." As I said, I feel this is very unfortunate because it

diverts the reader's attention away from the real issue, which is the obstructionist attitude of the agencies toward the Wilderness Act.

Back to your "Land Use Report".... You seem to be saying that "purist backpackers" are attempting to exclude CWF backpackers, stock parties, and fishermen from the Wilderness. Aside from the fact that "purist backpackers" (people who sympathize with the agency attempts to mandate solitude?) are practically non-existent, there is considerable cross-over from one group to another. Attempts to pigeon-hole people are generally fraught with error, are non-productive, and are needlessly divisive. It is the last point which most concerns me, and I will address it in my closing remarks.

As you can see, Walt, I sympathize with your hostility to mandated solitude. But I feel that you have expressed your concern in such a way that the reader will:

1. Fail to realize that the culprits in this scheme are the agencies (especially the Forest Service) and their refusal to abide by the Wilderness Act as it was written by Congress.
2. Think that the fault lies with some unnamed citizen group. You don't say "Sierra Club", but I am sure that is the group the reader will assume you are referring to.

Because ^{of} the first misconception, the reader will not be able to direct his concern in productive channels. Ie. he will be missing the mark, or barking up the wrong tree.

Because of the second misconception, the reader will find it more difficult than ever to join with other citizen-conservationists in working toward environmental goals which are shared in common.

I feel that it is imperative that we avoid ~~the~~ needless confrontations. The necessity of solving our environmental problems is so overwhelming that we cannot afford to dissipate our energies fighting among each other, or even making pointless accusations.

As a fellow from the local DFG office said recently, while the citizen groups continue to fight among themselves, the bulldozers keep winning. I hope we can reverse this unhappy pattern, and start winning more battles by working together.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

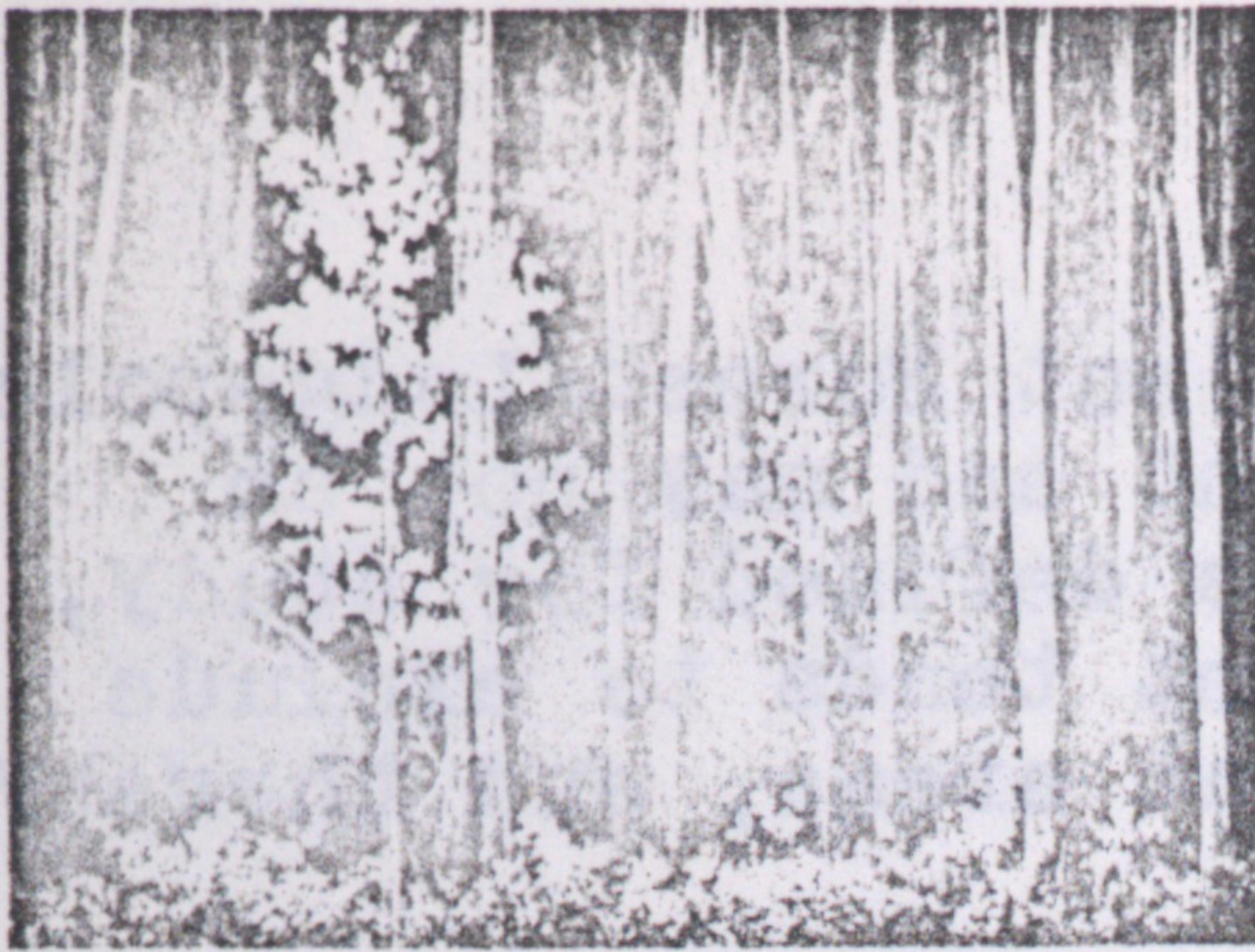
P.S. My comments re. agency misinterpretation of the Wilderness Act can be extended to other aspects of agency (mis)management of Wilderness. That includes various aspects of wildlife management, including Forest Service administrative regulations (which they made up themselves) which verge on criminal malfeasance. But that would have to be the subject of another letter.

The reason I mention this is because of a remark you made to Ted Koskella re. wildlife management activities which are supposedly "proscribed" in Wilderness areas. Most of the problem lies with the

Forest Service regulations (which they themselves wrote, and which they could change if they wanted to), and not with the Wilderness Act as it was written by Congress.

This whole subject of Wilderness management offers fertile ground for cooperative efforts among citizen groups.

Bcc. Lew Carpenter
Dan Smith
Rob Hansen
Hal Thomas
Tony Chastain }
mailed 4 Aug 75



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,

Joe Fontaine

Joe Fontaine, Chairman
Sierra Nevada Task Force

Tehipite letterhead

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg, CA 93631

30 August 1975

Charles M. Clusen, Washington Representative
Sierra Club, 324 "C" Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Chuck,

Re. Kaiser Wilderness Study Area proposal (S. 75, H.R. 3656).

Per your request, I am enclosing a copy of the Sierra N.F. "Periodic Sales Announcement," and also a copy of a letter from Jim Moorman to Russell Mayes dated 20 August 1975.

As Jim's letter points out, the Sierra N.F. seems to be implying that they will hold off on the Kaiser sales "pending outcome of proposed wilderness study legislation," but that their actions cast doubt upon the credibility of their words. Of course Jim says it more tactfully.

Apparently the Sierra N.F. supervisor (Sotero Muniz) stated in a letter to John Krebs that the Sierra N.F. would not postpone the timber sales. We do not have a copy of this letter, but I presume you could talk to the people in Krebs' Washington office about this; I trust that they have a copy.

Perhaps most conclusively, in a personal conversation on August 19 of this year Sotero Muniz told Harold Thomas that if the Senate and House committees have not acted by the end of this year (December), then the Sierra N.F. will proceed with the sales. You will note from the enclosed schedule that the first sale (Home Camp) is slated for January 1976.

I hope that you will talk to Krebs' staff about this, and let them know that the House subcommittee staff is under the impression that the Forest Service has agreed to postpone the sales. Our information is definitely contrary to that. I am sure that Krebs' staff can do something about the problem, but first they have to know that the problem exists.

Thank you for looking after this.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

bcc. Hal Thomas