

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

28 December 1971

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

Your File: 2300

Dear Sotero,

Thank you for your letter of July 28. There are several reasons why I have delayed in responding, one being that I was gone until October, and was confronted with a considerable backlog of mail upon my return. But more important was the fact that I was somewhat uncertain how to respond, and did not want to do so until I was sure of what it was I wanted to say. With the advantage of a few month's perspective, it is now easier to write.

To start, I gather that you have the impression that I am opposed (personally) to what the Forest Service was doing this past summer with the Wilderness Permit System in California. This is not correct. Along with the Sierra Club, I support the stated objectives as they were explained this past summer. But what concerns me and many others is not what was done this past summer, but rather what the future may hold in store.

Within the Sierra Club there has been considerable difference of opinion regarding the implications and ramifications of a restrictive permit system. Some have felt that it would be the answer to all our problems, others have looked upon it as a necessary evil, and others view it as a potential disaster for the wilderness concept.

Because some of the proponents of a restrictive system were beginning to make public statements of support, even though the Sierra Club did not have a policy on the subject, the Board of Directors was compelled to make a policy statement to clarify the Club's position.

To anyone who was familiar with the Club's internal discussions which preceded the Board's resolution, the final statement was significant as much for what it did not say as for what it did say. The statement was intended to be one that everyone within the Club could agree with, regardless of the divergence of personal views. I feel that it was quite successful in this regard. With regard to my own personal views, it reflected them even more fully than

I had hoped for.

The resolution adopted by the Board of Directors was similar to, and based upon, one which had been recommended to them by the Sierra Club's Northern California Regional Conservation Committee. That recommendation had been drafted by people who were attempting to resolve the growing divergence of opinion within the Club, and I think I should let you know that I was the one who moved that the recommendation be adopted by the regional committee.

I feel that I should also let you know that I distributed fairly widely within the Club my letter to you of July 15, along with a copy of the Board's resolution. To this date you are the only person who has questioned my interpretation of the Board's resolution.

To summarize, divergence of opinion within the Club led to considerable discussion. At a regional committee meeting I moved adoption of a resolution which was intended to resolve these differences, and this resolution was transmitted to the Board. The Directors then produced a resolution of their own which I found personally very gratifying, because it actually came closer to my own personal views than had my own resolution. I then sent you a copy of the Board's resolution, together with my comments; I also sent this to many other people within the Club. Of all the people who received this, you are the only one who felt that I had misinterpreted the Board's action. And I can assure you that most of those people would not have hesitated to speak out had they felt, as you did, that I was wrong; the Club's activists have never been noted for their reticence!

Do you really feel, in view of the above, that you are in a better position than I am to interpret the meaning of the Board's action?

And do you really think that I would use the Sierra Club letterhead, and sign the letter as Conservation Chairman of the Chapter, to advance personal views which might be at odds with official Sierra Club policy? Unfortunately, I realize that some people have mis-used their office in this way, but I really had thought that you knew me better than that.

Although I am now concluding a four-year tour of duty as the Chapter's conservation chairman, I will continue to take an active interest in the Sierra National Forest. It is my earnest hope that in due course we will know and understand each other well enough that a mutual confidence will be possible, and I look forward to building toward that ideal.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore
Conservation Chairman

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

31 March 1972

Gordon Robinson
Sierra Club
1050n Mills Tower
220 Bush Street
San Francisco
California 94104

Dear Gordon,

It is my understanding that various people have been complaining about forest practices in the Sierra National Forest. Some apparently go so far as to ~~say~~ claim that this is the worst example of forest practices to be found in all of Northern California (excepting the north coast). Some people are apparently claiming that the Sierra N. F. is the only national forest in northern California which practices clear-cutting, for example (except for the north coast.)

I have been somewhat surprised to learn this, as I had been under the impression that far worse atrocities were to be found in the northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades. I really had been under the impression that the Sierra N. F. was relatively progressive (ie. enlightened).

When I brought this matter up with our Conservation Chairman he asked me to write you for advice. Could you let us know how the Sierra N. F. stacks up against other national forests in northern California? Specifically, are other national forests in the northern part of the state engaged in clear-cutting? (As I understand "clear-cutting", it means anything more than one tree in extent--ie. on an area basis. Thus the question is primarily one of how big the opening is going to be.) Every time I turn around I hear a different figure, but the latest I can recall is that the Sierra N. F. has a limit of 25 acres for any clear-cut patch. (This figure has probably been changed again, since I last heard.)

Any further information you could give us would help us to evaluate our performance at watch dogs. Have we been asleep on the job without realizing it? I realize that the Sierra N. F. is not perfect, but is it really at the bottom of the totem pole?

Luis Ireland was the one who told me that he was hearing adverse comments. Perhaps you could contact him for specifics. Apparently the people who are talking don't want to contact us. Whatever the reason for their reticence, perhaps you could serve as a middleman and evaluator.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

cc. Luis Ireland

4414 San Ramon Drive
Davis, Ca. 95616

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

28 February 1973

George Shipway, Chairman
Council Internal Organization Committee
1327 Toledo Way
Upland
California 91786

Dear George Shipway:

This is in response to your memo of January 25 in which you asked for comment on possible RCC organizational structure in the California-Nevada area. I will try to respond to your questions in the same numbered sequence in which you phrased them.

1.. California and Nevada should have no less than the present number (two) of RCC's. I have often (and prior to the present controversy) considered the desirability of having three RCC's by forming a new one in central California; this would be drawn from the present northern and southern territories.

2. I agree that a coordinating structure is needed. I feel that a reorganized CLC could quite adequately handle this function. Its name should be changed to reflect its role more properly--perhaps simply "California-Nevada Coordinating Committee." Its role would be to assist in developing a unified approach to inter-regional issues, and to attempt to resolve any significant differences. It would not have the ultimate authority in the event of irreconcilable disputes; that authority would continue to rest with the RCC's and the Board of Directors, since they are the more representative bodies answerable to our membership.

3. The duties, limitations and responsibilities of the various RCC's should be similar to those they presently have.

4. The organizational structure of the various RCC's should be left up to the individual RCC's.

5. Frequency, time, etc. of meetings of the various RCC's should be left up to the individual RCC's.

6. and 7. By "CLC" I am assuming you mean a restructured body with a somewhat expanded role, and consequently a new name--such as "California-Nevada Coordinating Committee." See item (2.) above for the role I propose for it.

Any delegation of authority to it by the RCC's would be on an informal basis, and actions of the "CLC" would be subject to continuing review by the RCC's. The "CLC" would make decisions on matters where it is possible to reach a reasonable degree of consensus within the "CLC." If there was a serious difference of opinion, then the matter would have to be thrashed out by the various RCC's in joint session, or else be referred to the Board of Directors for resolution.

Area of responsibility of the "CLC" would be limited to

inter-regional issues. These could be legislative, ballot issues, state parks, state commissions, wildlife issues, etc., etc. The key to it would be limiting the "CLC" role to a concern with inter-regional issues. (It has never been clear to me why the present CLC has concerned itself with legislative issues which are not of state-wide concern; I feel that northern or southern legislative issues should have been referred to the NCRCC or SCRCC respectively. If the problem has been one of the south having insufficient contact with John Zierold, then there are certainly ways to remedy that without tearing the entire organizational structure apart.)

8. Modus operandi of the "CLC" should be determined by the "CLC" itself, with continuing review and approval by the various RCC's.

But it should be clear that the chairman of the "CLC" must not be on the executive committee of any RCC. Failure to observe this elementary principle appears to have been the source of much (most?) of the present controversy.

9. Delegates to the "CLC" should be based on semi-proportional representation. It does not make sense for small chapters to have just as much voice as large chapters; but, in view of the large geographic area encompassed by the small-membership chapters, it would be extremely unwise to have a directly proportional representation. A scheme such as below seems reasonable. (This, as everything else, should be subject to review and change at frequent intervals to assure that objectives are being met.)

delegates	chapter membership
1	under 3,000
2	3,000 to 10,000
3	over 10,000

10. Frequency, time, etc. of "CLC" meetings should be determined by the "CLC" itself, with continuing review and approval by the various RCC's.

Considering the continuing trend toward decentralization of the Sierra Club on a national basis, I find it very strange to find some people advocating that we in the California-Nevada area should be going in exactly the opposite direction.

As I indicated in item (1.) above, I have long felt a need for further decentralization in this area. The reasons have been often stated, and I see nothing to be gained in repeating them again. I only ask that those who are advocating that we centralize our structure in California-Nevada review those oft-stated but now ignored reasons why decentralization can lead to a greater degree of member participation. Is the strength of the Sierra Club in the participation of its members, or isn't it?

Regarding the supposed need for centralization in our area, I would point out that our California-Nevada membership is now greater than that of the entire Sierra Club just a few years ago. If the Club needed decentralization then, why does California-Nevada need just the opposite now? This is not a rhetorical question; it needs an answer.

Apparently one reason that the "centralizers" wish to go in that

direction is that there has been a certain amount of difficulty in coming to an agreement on a few issues. They seek a structure which would be capable of imposing a decision even though opinion might be badly divided on that issue.

I feel very strongly that this approach is fraught with peril. If we cannot agree on something, then we have no business whatsoever in taking a public stand on that issue. Our positions should not be arrived at by flipping a coin. And that is precisely the situation you have if a decision is based upon a 49-51 vote, because the vote could so easily have been 51-49. We should refrain from taking a public position on an issue until we have a clear preponderance of opinion one way or another within the Club.

In essence, I disagree most emphatically with those who claim that we "must" take a position on an issue simply because we ~~may~~ have been asked to do so. To destroy us, our opposition would have merely to start feeding us a series of divisive issues. I have, in fact, seen some indication that this tactic has already been used against us--my fear is not based on mere speculation.

Regarding the Shipway/Ives discussion draft of 27 Jan 73, I am at a loss to understand how the proposed "Regional Subcommittees" would be able legally to adopt policies of their own.

I have been under the impression that Sierra Club policy can be made at only three levels--chapter ex comms, RCC's, and the Board of Directors. To permit policy adoption at a fourth level would appear to require major Board action. Is it intended that such Board action would be sought? What would be the consequence of a failure of the Board to take such action? Would we then be stuck with a single RCC through which all policy would have to be routed?

To route all policy action through a single RCC would mean a monstrous burden upon that RCC, particularly if it met only twice a year as suggested. Even if a single RCC met as frequently as necessary (probably at least six or eight times a year), it would be faced with the old familiar problem of being asked to make intelligent decisions on matters of which it has little or no knowledge or understanding. Could we realistically expect a single monstrous RCC to act in a more rational manner than does the Board of Directors?

We get back to my first point. If decentralization is good for the Club, why should the opposite be good for California-Nevada?

I ask those who may not have had the pleasure of working at the chapter or group conservation committee level to consider the many echelons through which policy proposals presently must pass:

Group cons. comm. → Group Management Comm. → Chapter Ex. Comm.

→ Chapter Cons. Comm.

→ Regional Cons. Comm. → Board of Directors

I have personally shepherded several measures through this "chain of command", and found it to be somewhat of a burden. Thus I do not look kindly upon proposals to add a fifth or sixth level of bureaucratic burden to the conservation effort.

I do not propose anarchy any more than I propose bureaucracy. In either direction lies the destruction of the Sierra Club as a viable force in the conservation effort. There are elements which continually attempt to steer us toward either of those extremes, and I strongly feel that our only hope is to strike a balanced course between Scylla and Charybdis. The Shipway-Ives draft discussion proposal is NOT NOT a balanced course.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

George W. Whitmore
NCRCC delegate, past chapter conservation chairman, etc.

P.O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

27 April 1973

Barry Fisher
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund
311 California Street, Suite 311
San Francisco
California 94104

Re. Timber sales, Sierra N.F.
Rancheria Creek.

Dear Barry

Someone from the Club office sent me a "Timber Sales Warning", dated April 24.

The only sale listed for the Sierra N.F. was Nutmeg in the Kings River Ranger District. The question was raised as to whether this area should have been included in the roadless inventory.

The answer is no, it is definitely in a developed portion of the Sierra N.F.

Of much greater interest is the fact that the Smith sale is about to be advertised, or possibly already has been. It had been planned for the end of April.

The Smith sale is partially within the Rancheria Creek drainage, although it is entirely outside the boundaries of the Rancheria Management Unit.

As you correctly noted in your letter of February 13, 1973 to John McGuire, the Smith Meadow area (which is in the heart of the proposed Smith sale) should have been included in the roadless inventory. It actually was included in the initial Sierra N.F. inventory, but was deleted from the final inventory; you noted this fact in your letter to McGuire.

As I read your letter to McGuire, it is quite clear that you were appealing any sales in the Rancheria Management Unit area. It is perhaps somewhat less clear that you were appealing any sales outside of that area, such as the Smith Sale. However, it appears from the Affidavit of J. C. Dozier which accompanied the Statement of Reasons of Intervenor (dated 29 Mar 73 and 2 Apr 73, respectively) that the timber industry certainly anticipated an appeal of the Smith sale.

A record of opposition to the Smith sale was established in the High Sierra Primitive Area (Monarch) hearing record. This was mostly indirect, it being in the form of a call for study of all contiguous roadless lands. The Tehipite Chapter has never singled the Smith sale out for special attention, but they have definitely called for the study of all roadless lands in the Sierra N.F. In written statements submitted for the H.S. Primitive Area hearing record, I and at least one other party did specifically name the Kings Cavern

Geological Area (which involves the Smith sale area) for inclusion in the Wilderness--not merely study. (Besides myself, I know that this request was made by the Dinuba Union High School Hiking Club and Earth National Park Ecological Consultants.)

In addition to these more recent recommendations for study and/or Wilderness classification of the Smith area, I have learned that there was considerable demand for Wilderness classification of this area back in the early sixties. I will be sending you more information in this regard when I give you my comments on the "Statement of Reasons of Intervenors."

In essence, what I am saying is that if we want to appeal the Smith sale we do have a fairly good background to justify such action. But it is not as strong as our case for those sales which would be within the Rancheria Management Unit.

Another factor is that the Smith sale is big (32 million board feet), and it contains a large percentage of high-valued species. Also, our "ecological" arguments against the Rancheria Management Unit sales could not be extended into the Smith area. This is because the Smith sale is at lower elevations which (presumably) are better suited for timber production. Also, extension of roads into the Smith area would have little, if any, effect on access to existing Wilderness areas; the effect would be limited more to the immediately surrounding area. Similarly, because the Smith sale is not on the main transportation corridor through which most wilderness users pass, esthetic damage there would not affect users of the other areas.

I realize that the necessity of avoiding adverse legal precedents might make it necessary that we oppose the Smith sale. In that case I presume we would be hearing from you.

But my personal inclination is to avoid fighting the Smith sale, primarily for three reasons:

1. Our case is not as strong as on the main Rancheria sales.
2. Environmentally, there is not as much at stake.
3. Our limited resources should be reserved for bigger issues, such as the main Rancheria sales.

Is there perhaps a middle ground? Could we get the USFS to do an EIS? This would uphold a vital principle that roadless areas, whether inventoried or not, are not to be invaded without an EIS having been done. And it might provide us with a tool to negotiate the best possible terms for the Smith sale, at the same time avoiding a major confrontation which would be damaging to all parties involved.

You might want to call me about this. At present, I am usually home during the day--although in and out. My phone is (209) 897-3692.

Sincerely,

cc. Larry Moss
Duff LaBoyteaux (mailer of
George W. Whitmore
the "Timber Sales Warning"?)

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

1 June 73

Scott Kruse
335 Laurel, #6A
Arcata
California 95521

Dear Scott,

Thank you very much for sending the legal notice of the advertising of the Smith sale. It was really quite important that we learn of this, and your letter was the first word of it that I received.

I have already sent copies of the legal notice to Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Sierra Club Southern California Representative (Larry Moss), and the Western Regional Office of the Wilderness Society.

All of these entities, plus the Natural Resources Defense Council, are parties to an administrative appeal of the proposed timber sales in the Rancheria area. The timber industry has intervened, and Sotero has recommended denial of the appeal. It is rapidly blowing up into a major issue, and I fully expect a full-dress legal battle over it.

So you see, you are not alone in your views that "there is something definitely wrong here."

It will help if you keep us informed of timber sale plans, road plans, awarding of contracts (and more importantly, the advertising for bids), etc. There is so much going on within the Sierra N.F. that it is really difficult to keep track of it all. We could be so engrossed in some issue elsewhere on the Forest that we might miss some important development in the Rancheria area. Or vice versa.

Re. linking up the road from Wishon dam with the one which comes up Rogers Ridge, in April current F.S. thinking was that the Smith sale would not accomplish this. That is because of one section where it would be very costly to carry the road around the crest of a ridge. As I understand it, the two road ends would be separated by no more than one mile. It seems inevitable that, if this is the case, then motorcycles and perhaps even jeeps will start carving their own route across the intervening land, possibly resulting in much damage.

I note your question regarding the value of red fir. I have long questioned this myself. I just don't see what they do with all of it, since they certainly can't build houses with it. (Except perhaps for some studs.) It was formerly considered a trash species, yet look at the minimum acceptable bid prices for the different species on the Smith sale--white fir and red fir are valued practically as high as sugar pine. And they are all valued at almost 75% of the value of Ponderosa & Jeffrey.

If you can ~~am~~ make any sense out of this matter of lumber values and uses I wish you would let me know. It is rather important, because

we have been using low value as one of the arguments against logging places like Rancheria Creek. But if they are going to get practically as much for white and red fir as for ~~pine~~ Ponderosa and Jeffrey, then that would seem to challenge the validity of that particular argument. And we certainly can't afford to be using arguments that won't stand up.

I note that you will be a Wilderness ranger again~~x~~ this summer. Be sure to drop a note as soon as ~~w~~ you know your schedule, mail address, phone if any, etc. We will be around more this summer than usual, primarily in order to be working with field study trips in the Sierra N.F. area. I am supposed to be coordinating this for the Club.

You probably would be able to help us quite a bit with this by providing information, directing us to sources of information, and suggesting things that need to be checked out in the field.

So be sure to let us know how to contact you when you get established for the summer!

And thanks again for sending the information on the Smith sale, especially for doing it so promptly.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P.S. I'm sorry I have not responded to your last couple letters. That certainly doesn't mean that I didn't appreciate the information, because I did. I guess one problem is that I have been so busy following through on various problems like that, that I haven't taken the time to keep up with my correspondence.

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

1 June 1973

Jerry Mallett
The Wilderness Society
4260 East Evans Avenue
Denver
Colorado 80222

Re: Smith timber sale, Sierra N.F.

Dear Jerry:

Thanks for your letter of May 29, including the copy of Al West's letter notifying you of the advertisement of the Smith timber sale.

The Smith sale poses some sticky problems, some of which are mentioned or alluded to in my enclosed letter of April 27. Additionally, our past dereliction in failing to insist upon rational planning processes by the Forest Service left them free to pursue a piecemeal approach, which is precisely what they did. It is now difficult to bring any order out of the resulting chaos which has encroached upon the Smith area.

My personal feeling is that we don't have a strong enough case to warrant taking our final stand at Smith Meadow. I think we would be wiser to play a delaying game with it, in the meantime strengthening our case for the remaining sales on Rancheria Creek (Three Springs, Ran-Span, and Garlic).

I do, very definitely, feel that we should make an all-out defense of the main Rancheria Creek area. Aside from the merits of saving that particular piece of land, I am interested in reaffirming the principle that Wilderness may have trees. Yes, even trees of "commercial" quality.

The timber interests in this area are vehemently opposed to that concept, and determined that such a subversive precedent shall not be established.

A battle royal appears to be shaping up, and I am sure we will all be hearing much more of Rancheria Creek during the next year or two.

If you have ideas for ways of delaying (or even stopping!) the Smith sale, I am sure Barry Fisher would like to hear them. But Three Springs and the other sales are more important, and we must guard against a premature commitment of our main effort.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

P.O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

1 June 1973

Barry Fisher
Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund
311 California Street, Suite 311
San Francisco
California 94104

Re: Smith Timber Sale -- Rancheria Creek

Dear Barry:

One of our alert members spotted the enclosed legal notice in which the Smith timber sale was advertised on May 23.

I am enclosing a copy of my letter of April 27 to you regarding the Smith sale. You may wish to review it, now that the sale has actually been advertised. I am also sending a copy of my April 27 letter to Jerry Mallett, since he has indicated that he has discussed the Smith sale with you.

After I wrote the April 27 letter, we discussed the issue at a Tehipite Chapter conservation Committee meeting. The consensus was more or less along the lines of the thinking expressed in that letter. It was decided to make no recommendation to the Chapter executive committee on the issue of the Smith sale.

This "non-action" essentially reaffirmed existing Chapter and Club policy, which is that we have a history of Chapter and Club actions calling for study of all roadless areas for possible inclusion in the Wilderness System. We have not previously singled out the Smith sale for specific comment, although Wilderness protection for the area in which it lies was sought by the ~~the~~ Chapter, the Club, and by others more than ten years ago.

Because we had been overlooking our earlier strong policy statements, more recently the Chapter and Club have been calling only for study of the area involved. However, as mentioned in my April 27 letter, the High Sierra Primitive Area hearing record contains statements from some individuals and organizations calling for Wilderness designation, not merely study, for the area of the Kings Cavern Geological Area--and the Smith sale takes in the Kings Cavern G.A.

If you feel it would be of value, I think it might be possible to have the Tehipite Chapter take a more explicit position on the Smith sale. If you have any suggestions along this line, please either write me immediately or else phone, as we will be holding our last meetings of the season very shortly.

Sincerely,

enclosures:
 legal notice
 my letter of April 27
cc. Jerry Mallett, Larry Moss (western)

George W. Whitmore

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

10 June 1973

Gordon Robinson
Sierra Club
1050 Mills Tower
220 Bush Street
San Francisco
California 94104

Dear Gordon:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the prospectus for the Smith timber sale on the Kings River District of the Sierra National Forest.

The sale has already been advertised, but bids have not yet been opened.

This particular sale is in a "sensitive" area. Most of it is in the Rancheria Creek drainage. The entire Smith sale area is roadless and undeveloped, although the Forest Service failed to inventory it as such last year. For this, and other reasons, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has filed an administrative appeal asking that timber sales in this area not be consummated. (Further sales are planned; Smith is merely the first.)

Barry Fisher has done considerable work on this appeal, and has been in close touch with me and others. We have discussed the Smith sale in particular. Barry asked me to send you a copy of the prospectus, and to have you contact him after you have looked it over.

The consensus of all involved Club members (including the Tehipite Chapter) is that the Smith sale is probably not worth fighting on the basis of its wilderness potential. But we are wondering whether it perhaps should be contested on the basis that it may involve poor timber management or forest practices. This latter question occurred to me when I was going through the appraisal material in the Forest Service offices. In particular, it seemed to me that the number of cutting units was rather high (ie. too close together); almost 25% of the sale area is devoted to cutting units. More than 50 per cent of the cutting unit area is to be clear cut. On a scale where erosion hazard rating of "moderate" is numbered 6-8, and "high" is numbered 9-12, all the cutting units were rated either 7 or 8, with the exception of two which were rated 6; the lack of variation in these ratings in itself seemed suspect. There will be 1,364 snags felled; this sounds to me like an awful lot of snags; I thought current good practice called for leaving some for wildlife and other values. The bulk of this sale is at around 6,400 to 7,500 feet elevation; but red and white fir is estimated at 83 per cent, while ponderosa and Jeffrey pine are estimated at only 3 per cent; these figures simply do not make sense to me for a sale at that elevation range.

To sum it up, I had sufficient doubt about the way in which this

sale has been planned that Barry Fisher wanted you to take a look at the prospectus and see what you thought. And then for you to convey your thinking to him.

Thanks for your help, Gordon.

Sincerely,

cc. Barry Fisher

George W. Whitmore
(209) 897-3692

P.S. In the event that either you or Barry wishes to phone me, I will be out of town all this coming week. I expect to be around at least the first part of the following week, starting Monday June 18.

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

22 June 1973

St. Regis Paper Company
150 East 42nd Street
New York
N.Y. 10017

Gentlemen:

Your recent ad in Time magazine (June 18) regarding roads and forest fires concerns me.

Apparently there is no problem in most areas, but I notice that you mention that you are unable to bulldoze fire lines in some forests. I did not realize there were any legal restrictions on putting out forest fires.

Where does this happen, and why? What can be done about it?

Thank you for your help.

Yours truly,

George W. Whitmore

TO: Lowell Smith
Marge Sill

June Dailey
Luis Ireland

FROM: George Whitmore

SUBJECT: USFS DRAFT EIS on "Forest Reestablishment".

DATE: 27 November 1973

Luis mentioned this to me last night, before I had received my copy of the USFS press release which Lowell distributed.

As I understand it, Luis has asked Nick Van Pelt to look after it, and to get Phil Farrell involved in it.

Luis had already received a copy of the EIS, apparently directly from the USFS RO. It is not clear to me whether he still has this, or whether he forwarded it to Nick.

It appears to me that Luis has the situation well in hand for now, provided he follows through fairly soon to make certain that Nick and Phil are actually proceeding with the project.

I will notify Mike Weege on the chance that no one else has done so. This is, of course, because of the relationship to the brushland management problems which Mike is apparently coordinating.

In the meantime, the EIS needs somewhat wider distribution so that interested parties can get their hands on it. It is apparently a case of every man for himself, and I suggest that people request a copy from the RO before they run out.

Summary: I am assuming that Luis will see to it that Nick and Phil carry the ball, but that others should be preparing themselves to provide some input to Nick and Phil.

Done 2 Dec 73
✓

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

2 December 1973

Mike W. Weege
3838 First Ave., Apt. 4
San Diego
California 92103

Dear Mike,

Perhaps you are already aware of this, but to be certain I wanted to inform you of the availability of the Forest Service's Draft EIS on "Forest Reestablishment on National Forests in California". The news release stated that copies were available for public review at any NF office in California.

You probably would want to review one of these in order to comment on it.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

Text of news release: November 20, 1973

SAN FRANCISCO....The U. S. Forest Service today announced that its Draft Environmental Statement on "Forest Reestablishment on National Forests in California" is completed and is available for review and comments. Regional Forester for California's National Forests, Doug R. Leisz said, "the draft statement covers our proposed treatment and reestablishment of evergreen stands on certain commercial forest lands in the National Forests presently covered by brush species. The Draft Environmental Statement also covers the reforestation treatment of forest lands following timber harvesting and after wild-land fires." He noted that the draft statement proposes that bursh-covered lands as well as brush that hinders existing young tree growth be treated by mechanical methods and herbicides.

Copies of the Draft Environmental Statement are available for public review at any one of the 17 National Forest offices in California or the California Regional Office for the Forest Service in Room 531 at 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco. Comments on the draft statement should be received within 60 days in order to be considered in preparation of the final environmental statement. Comments should be addressed to the Regional Forester at the above address.

Winter 73-74

to Eileen Devine —

By the time I finished making all the notes I wanted to, I found that I had practically written the letter. So I went ahead and typed a rough draft in letter form.

There may be things you would like to add. Or perhaps you feel that something should be changed. Or you may find ways of improving upon the syntax, etc. That is why I double-spaced this draft; that makes it easier to insert alterations.

The final draft should be single-spaced in the text of each paragraph in order to conserve space and paper. Of course double-spacing would still be used between paragraphs and in other appropriate places.

After seeing what I had written, I decided it would be better if you did not sign your name to it. Sotero already hates my guts, so I can say anything I want and have nothing to lose. It will not take too long before you become a member of Sotero's fan club, and when that time comes then you, too, will be more free to say what you really think. But in the meantime you are of more value to the cause if you maintain as low a profile as possible.

To make the point clear, I should point out that membership in Sotero's fan club is open to all who differ with him philosophically, and who he finds are effective in implementing their philosophy to the detriment of his. This includes the Sierra Club as an organization, and those members within it who are effective in implementing its goals.

The only way to get along with Sotero is either to agree with him, or to be a weak and ~~ineffectual~~ ineffectual person. I don't think you are willing to pay either of those prices, and that is why your eventual membership in the fan club is inevitable.

I don't think Harold Thomas would hesitate to sign this letter, although you could phone him to discuss it if you want. His number is 299-6379. It is a local call for you, but long-distance for me.

Since we are planning on putting it in the mail next Wednesday night, please make sure that you have Xeroxed several sets of it before bringing it to the meeting. I would like a copy, and I would like to send copies of it to several other people. Of course you can be reimbursed for such costs, so do not skimp on the copying for reasons of money.

I would like perhaps a ~~do~~ half dozen sets; others wanting a set will be Norman Hill, Harold Thomas, yourself, Bert Woodruff (so it can be filed with the chapter minutes), and possibly others. So I would suggest a full dozen copies anyway.

Since I have gone ahead and more or less written a full letter to Sotero, you might feel that you have not accomplished what you set out to do. I hasten to assure you that you have. Starting with your review of the maps, followed by your review of the previous correspondence, and then by your very meticulous compilation of the information into the three-page document you distributed at the last ex comm meeting, you laid the groundwork which made it possible for me then to dash off the enclosed comments. I referred to your compilation repeatedly while I was writing my comments. It saved me an immense amount of time--and consequently it provided the incentive which I had been lacking (since last April) to sit down and write the comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore