

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

15 July 1968

Michael McCloskey  
Conservation Director, Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco  
California 94104

Dear Mike:

Regarding a memo issued by the Conservation Department on June 17, 1968 and titled "Sequoia National Park Information Relayed to Club June 13, 1968". Item No. 3 states "Master Plan Committee for Sequoia National Park met and discussed a cable car to cliffs above Cedar Grove." (Underlining mine.)

As a result of a very recent conversation with permanent staff ranger personnel at Cedar Grove I am wondering whether there could possibly be some misunderstanding. I was told that there has been no proposal put forth for a cable car in the Cedar Grove portion of the park. On the other hand, there has been discussion regarding routing and nature of a power transmission cable. The proposed route for this would be from Park Ridge in the Wilsonia (General Grant) area across the Big Meadow area to Summit Meadow (these latter areas being in Sequoia National Forest), and thence directly down the south wall of Kings Canyon to Cedar Grove. Apparently the major portion of the discussion is revolving around the issue of whether or not to underground this installation.

On the issue of undergrounding or not, it is interesting to note that the Park Service feels that it would not be economically feasible and that it would result in an objectionably large construction scar. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company, however, seems to be pushing the idea of undergrounding. Apparently it is believed that maintenance costs would be lower. At any rate, PG&E seems to be promoting the development of underground technology, for which they might well be commended.

If I do not hear further from you I will assume that the reference to a cable car was the result of some misunderstanding and that it was erroneous. However, it would be helpful to receive either a correction or a confirmation of the original memo.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter

cc. Ed Daubs, Tehipite  
Bert Woodruff, Tehipite

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg, Calif. 93631

17 August 1968

Mrs. Dale H. Beinhorn  
Chairman, Three Rivers Advisory Group  
Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks Master Plan Sub-committee  
Conservation Committee  
Tehipite Chapter  
Sierra Club  
40454 Cherokee Oak Drive  
Three Rivers, California 93271

Dear Mrs. Beinhorn,

Wow! With a title like that I know you will come through with flying colors. We will show Mills Tower that we can shuffle papers as well as they can!

It was nice to talk to you on the phone. I guess I haven't seen you since the Scicon trip two or three years ago, although my wife, Frances, says she ran into you at a Conservation Committee meeting in Fresno a couple years ago.

I abstracted the enclosed list from the June 1968 issue of National Parks Magazine. I can prepare a more authoritative and detailed memorandum after I receive a reply from a letter I have sent to Superintendent McLaughlin. In the meantime, I thought you might find this helpful. You might also look for a brief notice I have written for the Tehipite Topics which will come out the first of September.

I am sure that much of the testimony which will be presented at the public hearing will deal with the Mineral King situation, and you could be especially helpful to us in that regard. You mentioned that there are strong feelings on both sides of the fence. Perhaps you could make an assessment of the local pros and cons. For example what arguments does each side use, and how much support does each side have? In each case, how much weight does the support carry? Actually, the issue is being thrashed out behind the scenes in Washington, but there are indications that Udall is waging a good fight, and the battle is not yet lost. It is entirely possible that more extensive support for a constructive opposition can be developed via this Master Plan Study procedure.

I will send you more detailed information and suggestions later. In the mean time I hope you are feeling better and experience a reasonably quick recovery.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Chairman, Conservation Committee

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631  
(897-3692)

26 Jan 69

Patricia Wilson  
2944 E. McKenzie, Apt D  
Fresno  
California 93701

Dear Patricia Wilson,

I was exceedingly pleased to receive your letter of inquiry concerning the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Master Plan hearing. Since you expressed doubt that you would be able to attend the hearing, but instead wanted to write, I waited until the hearing had been held so that I could ~~mix~~ advise you more intelligently. It is always easier to comment in a meaningful way once you have found out what other people are saying. (I have tried to contact you by phone a couple times, but without success.)

~~You will know what to write~~ The hearing was held in Visalia on January 24th, and the record will be held open for written comment, such as yours, until February 3rd. Letters should be sent to the Chairman, Master Plan Team, c/o Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers, California 93271. Request that your letter be made a part of the record. (I did not give dates in the last Topics because they had not yet been announced at our press-time.)

I am enclosing a copy of the statement I submitted for the chapter. You might get ideas from it, and it will show you the type of recommendations that can be made; ~~and~~ you will see that no particular format is called for -- they are more interested in ideas than in form.

It is very important to sound like you are speaking as an individual, and not merely repeating "the party line". The easiest way to do this is to pick something that you can speak on from first-hand knowledge. If you back pack, then you could comment ~~on~~ on changes you have observed ~~in~~ a need for in the back country. If you car-camp, then you could comment on campground needs; etc.

There are a couple specific ideas I got as a result of listening to the testimony. One is to push for a ~~new~~ regional approach in order to promote recreational developments in the areas surrounding the parks. This would relieve pressure on the parks by people who merely want recreation per se, and who are not necessarily seeking park-type values. Disney's proposed Mineral King development is a good example of the type of development which can handle the needs of large numbers of people, but of course to put something like this in Mineral King would be an absolute abomination and extremely destructive of park values. We need such developments in the areas surrounding the parks; Mineral King ~~lies within~~ the park! The park service gives lip service to regional planning, but I have yet to see any sign of significant thinking on this line.

The other idea concerns ~~pollution~~ pollution of back country streams and lakes by human wastes, and also (apparently primarily) by pack stock. I was not aware of it, but we were informed that public health people have declared some back country water supplies to be unfit for human use. It would appear that the answer to this would be to install primitive toilet facilities for the people, and to regulate the use of stock in such a way as to prohibit it from certain ~~critical~~ critical areas, and minimize its stay in other areas where the problem exists. But for some reason the park service apparently thinks the answer might be to install water systems, -- meaning faucets, ~~nick~~ pipelines, storage tanks, ~~small~~ small dams for drawing off stream water, etc. This ~~seems~~ seems to me to be putting the cart before the horse, if you will pardon the expression.

I hope this gives you some ideas for how to go about it. You should start off by identifying yourself in some meaningful way; by meaningful I mean something which will make it sound like you should know what you are talking about. For example identify yourself as a ~~very~~ frequent visitor to the parks, a back packer, a hiker, a camper, or whatever. It also usually helps to state your vocation. Most people who go to the ~~trouble~~ trouble to write are intelligent, thinking, concerned, and responsible; it is a little awkward to say so directly, but try to get the point across in some other way by saying you are a teacher, active in civic groups, etc. Do NOT identify yourself as a Sierra Club member, or say that you have been asked to write; this would seem self-evident, but it is apparently ~~so~~ it is common for people to do it, and their letters are given less consideration as a consequence.

Again, I really ~~appreciate~~ appreciate your show of interest. The strength of the Sierra Club has come in great measure from the active participation of its members. It helps for people to pay their dues, but this is as nothing compared to the contribution that people such as yourself can make if a little personal effort is put forth. Thank you.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

25 May 69

Allyn Saroyan  
~~202 E. Mojave, Apt 6~~ 3141 N. Fontana  
Tucson  
Arizona 85705

Dear Allyn,

While Frances went on a backpack trip this week end, I had to stay home and wade through some of the countless stacks of paper which are forcing us out of the house. One shovelful turned up a clip of stuff which had your name on it; I knew it existed, but had been unable to find it for the past few months. My apologies for having let it get buried.

Are you in contact with Sierra Club people in your area? Undoubtedly you get ~~xx~~ a chapter newsletter, but what about real live people? If so, are they doing anything for conservation? Or is it just like Tehipite Chapter? Are you able to play as active a role as you were here? Would you be able to help by spreading the word now and then when we need letters on an issue which is of national concern, such as Mineral King? Do you get the Topics? One chapter member (Ed Steen) lodged a formal protest with the Ex. Comm. over my latest article on Mineral King; in an emotional, vehement, and immoderate manner he protested (what he claimed was) my emotional, vehement, and immoderate writing. I wasn't there, but Frances reported the Ex. Comm. failed to go along with him, and apparently thought the article was ok.

17 Dec 69

Good grief! If it weren't for Christmas not telling how much longer I would have let this wait. Rather than attempting to finish it I will just stuff it in an envelope with some other stuff which you might find of interest. You asked for the Sequoia-Kings statement and also the copy of Daubs's letter; the rest was my idea.

Regarding the second paragraph above--we are interested in trying to get the cooperation of chapters throughout the country on Mineral King, for one. San Joaquin Wilderness for another. Do you have any suggestions re. your chapter as to who we should contact. (Just because somebody is listed as "Conservation Chairman" or "Chapter Chairman" doesn't necessarily mean anything, of course; hand-picked people are always preferable, even if they don't have a title.)

You should have been at our last couple ex. comm. meetings. Tremendous row over what the treasurer (Kehlenbeck) felt was profligate spending by the conservation chairman (me). Kehlenbeck ended up alienating the entire ex. comm, and ~~proceeded~~ proceeded to resign not only as treasurer but also from the ex. comm. I think chapter energies can be devoted to more productive channels, now that the air has been cleared. (Incidentally, there is something like \$1,000 in the bank, so we aren't exactly broke!) Sincerely,

George & Frances

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Congressman B. F. Sisk, House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515

Please vote against suspension of rules on H. R. 12025, Timber Supply. Amendmendt and discussion should be possible on bill of this import.

Charles Ostrander, Chairman  
Merced Group, Sierra Club  
2259 E. Childs Avenue  
Merced  
California

Above sent as a night telegram approx 10:30 pm, 24 Nov 69. from Fresno.

(I discovered it would have been possible to send up to 100 words for the same amount of money.)

Charles,

I had to put down Barbara's address because I forgot to get yours, and hers was the only one I happened to have with me.

Barbara,

I had to put down your address because.....

Presumably Sisk will respond to this. Assuming he does, Charles would probably like to see what Sisk has to say.

Charles and Barbara,

I paid \$1.70 to send this, and will request reimbursement directly from the chapter treasurer. I will notify him at that time that, while I am the one to be reimbursed, it was nevertheless a Merced Group expense and should be so recorded on his books. This will probably make him mad, although don't ask me why; I am at a loss to figure it out myself.

George Whitmore

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Following night letter sent (Western Union) approx. 10:30 pm, 24 Nov 69.

Congressman B. F. Sisk, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

We request that you refuse to support suspension of rules on Timber Supply Bill, H. R. 12025. On a bill which has such profound implications there must be full opportunity for discussion and amendment. It would be unwise to resort to hasty action on H. R. 12025 without first allowing the president's task force on timber supply to make their report.

Mark Massie, Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter, Sierra Club  
P. O. Box 5396  
Fresno  
California 93755

Mark,

(Sisk is on Rules Committee)

This was sent at request of Mills Tower./ Should we have refused to send it because it cost money?

Action and intent was with concurrence of three members of ex. comm. although wording was mine.

Merced Group chairman, with concurrence of his conservation chairman, ~~and~~ sent a similar message, although wording was his own.

Presumably Sisk will respond to this. I would appreciate seeing his response when it arrives.

George Whitmore