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1042 E. Pico Avenue  
Fresno  
California 93704

1 February 1969

Master Plan Study Team  
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks  
Three Rivers  
California 93271

Gentlemen:

The following is in response to questions raised at the public meeting of January 24. It contains new ideas and opinions, as well as clarification of some of our statements which may possibly have been misconstrued. We request that this be made a part of the official record.

On the question of back country tourist camps, we would not oppose these in principle. The conception and administration, however, would have to be watched very carefully to avoid problems such as those found in the present system of camps in Yosemite. These problems include:

1. Poor location (on or near trails; in ecologically fragile areas; too close to roads, thus encouraging inappropriate usage; on lakeshores, thus aggravating the pollution problem).
2. Over-consumption of firewood supplies in some areas.
3. Encouragement of incompatible activities, as in the case of volleyball courts.
4. Failure to haul out refuse, even though this is (properly) required of back packers. This results not only in esthetic degradation, but also imperils the public safety because of the attraction of bears and the development of aggressive behavior in them.

Regarding installation of water supply systems in back country areas, we feel that this would be unacceptable primarily because there has been very little effort made to remove the cause of the pollution. Toilets should have been installed years ago in some areas. Attempts at public education have been minimal. We are not aware of any significant attempt having been made to minimize pollution by stock; regulation seems to have been conceived almost solely from the point of view of forage problems and meadow damage. We see no reason why stock should not be excluded entirely from some areas if a simple camping prohibition is insufficient to prevent pollution.

If the water is still found to be contaminated, after all possible measures have been taken to remove the cause of the pollution, then it would appear that the point has been reached at which a quota system must be established to limit the numbers of people and/or stock. We think it likely that a quota system must eventually be established,



but would object vigorously to its institution merely for the sake of administrative convenience.

Even if a water system were installed at Rae Lakes, for example, what provision could be made for the many miles of stream and river valley below that point? If the water is polluted at its source, it would appear that pollution would be a problem at any point downstream. The provision of water systems throughout this entire drainage would be an immense undertaking. The effort and money would be far better spent in preventing the cause, rather than in attempting to alleviate the symptoms.

The question of buffer strips around wilderness areas was raised. In view of the fact that there is no statutory provision for classification of land to "buffer" status, the protection that such classification would give is highly questionable. Under present law, the only way in which land can be protected from over-development is by inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System. Much of the land which is excluded from the system now will come under pressure for development in the future. Lacking statutory protection, there is no reason to think that the "buffer" zones will be able to resist this pressure. While the concept of a buffer, threshold, or transition zone is desirable, the failure of the present law to acknowledge it makes it impractical.

We spoke favorably of the recently issued Park Service road policy statement. We specifically mentioned the desirability of roads being designed to provide an enjoyable and informative experience. Of course we were referring to the conversion of existing roads in order more fully to meet these objectives. In general, we would oppose the opening of roads currently closed to the public, or the construction of new ones. We avoided use of the term "motor nature trail" because of the controversy which has surrounded this concept. We feel that much of the criticism stems from the Park Service's misapplication of what is basically a sound idea.

We spoke several times of the damage to back country environment caused by the proliferation of fire scars. We mentioned that one helpful measure would be to encourage the carrying of small gas stoves by visitors. Of course people would still tend to build warming fires. Just as we recommend regulation of cooking fires, we also recommend regulation (and prohibition where necessary) of warming fires. A warming fire is rarely a matter of health or safety in the Sierra Nevada, and the needless scarring of terrain should not be tolerated simply for the sake of visitor convenience.

We recommended that the Park Service discontinue the use of stock in its own operations, and instead use helicopters and mechanical trail vehicles. By the latter we meant the so-called "mechanical mules" which are used to transport equipment and supplies, but not people. We were not advocating the use of four-wheel drive vehicles or "trail bikes".

We spoke of population pressure as being the basis of most of the problems of over use. We should also have mentioned increasing leisure, greater affluence and mobility, and the desire to escape the increasing complexity of our society as being factors which compound the basic problem of increasing numbers of people. Even if our



population were to remain static, these other factors would result in increased pressure on the national parks. Since it would be undesirable or impractical to attack these other factors, it is even more imperative that the birth rate be brought into balance with the death rate. An effective attack upon this problem awaits a greater public awareness of it. Since "the single abiding purpose of the national parks is to bring man and his environment into closer harmony"\*, we believe it to be one of the responsibilities of the interpretive programs to make the public aware of the impact of their own numbers upon the park environment.

Since a solution based on population control will be slow in coming, we feel that the only hope for the parks lies in the development of recreational facilities in the regions surrounding the parks. We were appalled at the almost complete lack of comment upon this by those who spoke at the Study Team's public meeting of January 24th, particularly since it has been repeatedly stated that regional considerations were to be undertaken by the Study Team. Quite to the contrary, many who spoke obviously were thinking only in terms of what should be done within the park boundaries. The narrowness of such thinking is extremely disturbing, for the size alone dictates that Sequoia-Kings is incapable of absorbing everyone who may wish to enter it in the future.

One gentleman repeated an often-heard argument. He cited the example of the Canadian national parks, and spoke in glowing terms of the tramways, hotels, four-lane highways, etc. He was obviously referring primarily to Banff and Jasper National Parks. It was unfortunate that he didn't go on to mention that these two parks have a combined area of 6,800 square miles, compared to 1,300 square miles for Sequoia-Kings. The Canadian parks are so huge that they can have all the "amenities" of civilization and still have large reserves of untrammelled wilderness. Those who espouse comparable developments in Sequoia-Kings should first go to Congress and obtain a five-fold increase in the size of the park. There would then be little objection to the developments they seek.

In the meantime, a much more feasible solution is to develop mass recreation facilities in the region surrounding the park. Most of this development would probably best be done by private enterprise, although certainly agencies such as the U. S. Forest Service could play a much greater role in recreational development than they have in the past.

We feel confident that if such development were diligently encouraged and assisted, the pressures for "developing" the parks and "opening up" the back country would largely disappear.

Very truly yours,

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

\*N.P.S. road policy statement.



P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

25 May 69

Glenn E. Beerline  
Conservation Chairman, Kern-Kaweah Chapter  
2128 Chester Lane  
Bakersfield  
California 93304

Dear Glenn,

Zane Smith, Supervisor of Sierra National Forest, has asked Tehipite Chapter to advise him on a recommended route for the Pacific Crest Trail in the stretch <sup>between</sup> ~~from~~ Yosemite ~~to~~ and Kings Canyon Nat. Park. He is apparently under pressure to submit a recommendation soon, so there is some urgency in the matter.

I bring this to your attention on the chance that John McLaughlin and Jim James may not have contacted you, just as Lawrence Hadley of Yosemite has not contactd us. Possibly there are some BLM lands involved in your area; BLM has become active in planning and building trails in our area.

You may want to contact these people. Remember that, at least in the Sierra Nat. Forest, little time remains.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman, Tehipite Chapter

cc. Jim Clark



P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

15 July 1969

Zane G. Smith, Jr.  
Supervisor, Sierra National Forest  
Federal Building  
1130 "O" Street, Room 3304  
Fresno  
California 93721

Subject: Pacific Crest Trail  
proposed route and  
John Muir Trail relocation

Dear Zane,

Thank you for seeking our advice regarding selection of a route for that portion of the Pacific Crest Trail which will lie between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks. I have consulted with other members of our group, and thus can now give you some ideas arrived at jointly, as opposed to what would otherwise merely have been my own personal opinion.

Unfortunately, we are handicapped by not having a copy of the National Trails System law. Even if we did have this, there would undoubtedly still be a problem of interpretation. Because of uncertainty over all the implications and ramifications of this legislation, we approach the problem of making a recommendation with a certain amount of uneasiness.

In particular, we are uncertain whether there might eventually prove to be some conflict with the terms of the Wilderness Act. It seems possible that designation as a National Scenic Trail might be construed to be authorization for developments or usages which would be in conflict with a wilderness classification; this could result in impairment of existing wilderness, or prevent wilderness classification of new areas which would otherwise be qualified.

Of course, we would not wish unwittingly to become a party to degradation of present or future wilderness areas. Keeping this qualification in mind, you can make what use you wish of the following recommendations.

We feel that the Pacific Crest Trail should follow the route of the John Muir Trail, but with the provision that the John Muir Trail should be re-routed in one or two areas. In other words, we envision the same route for both trails, but this route would



differ from the present route of the John Muir Trail in one or two respects.

One of these concerns the Devils Postpile-Reds Meadow complex. As I indicated to you earlier, we feel very strongly that the trail should be routed completely away from the influences of civilization in this area. Backpackers traveling what is supposedly a wilderness trail should not be needlessly subjected to the sights and sounds of civilization only a stone's throw away, nor to the swarms of casual walkers milling about at the foot of the basalt columns, nor to the complete desecration of the wilderness concept by having a road cross the trail, as is presently the case.

We feel that this portion of the John Muir Trail is an insult to the man and that for which he stood. This is especially true since the offense could so easily have been avoided. It could still be rectified very easily by re-routing the trail to the west side of the river. (Middle Fork of the San Joaquin)

We have indicated this proposed change with a red line on the accompanying maps. Since the exact location of the trail would be determined by the lay of the land, rock formations, etc., our line is intended only to show the general area we propose, and not the precise twists and turns of the trail.

Also, it would be necessary to construct a new bridge, and the location for this could be determined properly only by someone more familiar with trail construction standards and techniques. If a suitable crossing is not available below the mouth of Boundary Creek, we would suggest that the Rainbow Falls spur road be eliminated and a parking area closer to the main road be developed. The purpose of this would be to minimize the influence of automobiles, which would otherwise be very close even to a re-routed trail if it should prove necessary to cross the main river north of the mouth of Boundary Creek.

Because of uncertainty over the crossing site, we have shown a discontinuity in our red line in this area.

Of course, the objection will be raised that new trail construction would cost money. To overcome this objection, we suggest that the route be properly designated, even though construction of it may have to wait for a few years. This in itself would help, because at least the principle would have been established that these trails should not be subjected to the unnecessary influences of civilization. Also, we would like to point out that the Sierra Club has been providing volunteer trail crews in selected areas in recent years. This area would seem to be a prime choice for such attention.

In addition to the problem of the Devils Postpile-Reds Meadow area, we have a further suggestion which does not involve any new



construction at all, but merely involves re-designation of existing trails. We feel that the wisdom of having the designated route go high, past Red Cones, Duck Lake, Purple Lake, and Virginia Lake is questionable. We feel there is something to be said for re-designating the route to go down Crater Creek and around the corner into the lower end of Fish Valley, thence up Fish Creek all the way to the junction with the John Muir Trail at the head of Cascade Valley. We have marked this route in red on the accompanying map. This was the original trail through this area, and we feel that the primary use should revert to this route because it would be better able to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of people who are using this area. From recent experience, we gather that many hikers, and especially stock parties, use this route even though the "official" route is along the slope above the valley. We believe their reasons include more numerous campsites, better grazing, and better fishing.

Particularly in view of our uncertainty over the implications of the Pacific Crest Trail, we would welcome the opportunity to consult further with you on this.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman



P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg, Calif. 93631

9 Oct 69

Robert Hackamack  
Chairman, Tuolumne River Study Committee  
5100 Parker Road  
Route 1, Modesto, Calif. 95350

Dear Bob,

By now you may be under the impression that you, as a person, were attacked at our Executive Committee meeting last night. This was not the case, even though the Yokut representatives interpreted it this way. I wish you could have been there to hear the discussion first hand.

What we did criticize was the breakdown of interchapter communications on what should have been an interchapter matter -- specifically the Tuolumne River study. In addition to criticizing this communications breakdown, we also spoke in praise of the enthusiasm with which you attack conservation problems, and admired your energy. We only wish that some of it could be devoted to building and maintaining a better interchapter relationship. It might take a little longer that way, but I think that a unified voice would be a stronger one.

We had hoped to participate in the development of the Tuolumne River study, but were disappointed to find that you had proceeded independently. In particular, it seems it would have been desirable to schedule regular meetings. This would have given you an easy way of notifying us of the opportunity to participate.

But that is apparently water over the dam, if you will pardon the expression. Our main concern now is that we be permitted to see a copy of your preliminary report. I would like to repeat the request that I made at the NCRCC meeting on September 6th, and ask that you send me one.

We really do not feel that we can vote for approval of this report at the next NCRCC meeting unless we have had an opportunity to study it in detail, and make some contributions to it if we feel that some are called for.

May I reiterate that those of us who know you admire your enthusiasm, and wish that the Sierra Club had more people willing to work as hard as you. I don't feel our problems are insurmountable, it's just that I think all of us (and that includes Tehipite Chapter) need to work a little more at pulling together for the common good.

Sincerely,

*George*

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter

cc. Tony Look  
Hulet Hornbeck  
Mother Lode Chapter Ex. Comm.  
Yokut Wilderness Group Management Comm.  
Tehipite Chapter Ex. Comm.  
Merced Group Ex. Comm.



13 October 1969

TO: JOINT COMMITTEE on OPEN SPACE LANDS of the CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE  
Honorable John T. Knox, Chairman

FROM: TEHIPITE CHAPTER, SIERRA CLUB  
P. O. Box 5396, Fresno, California 93755

SUBJECT: SEMI-FINAL REPORT of the CITIZENS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(dated August 1969)

My name is George Whitmore, and I am speaking for the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. I am the chairman of our chapter's Conservation Committee. Our chapter has approximately six hundred members, and encompasses the counties of Fresno, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, and portions of Tulare and Tuolumne Counties.

My remarks will tend to be somewhat general in nature, and will be based upon local experiences here in the central portion of the San Joaquin Valley. At your final public hearing a spokesman from the Sierra Club's national headquarters will present a more detailed commentary on the Advisory Committee's Semi-Final Report.

Our chapter's territory encompasses a fairly large amount of wild land and open space lands, including several national parks and national forests. Of course most of our attention is directed toward the wise management of these splendid natural areas, and we consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have them so close at hand.

However, we are also concerned with many other environmental problems, and we consider one of the most important of these to be the maintenance of open space lands in the more densely populated portions of our territory. Not only do we, ourselves, spend the bulk of our lives close to home, but we also realize that there are many people who would prefer to find recreational lands closer to where they live.

Aside from the preservation of lands for their recreational and esthetic values, we are also concerned over the loss of prime



agricultural lands, just as we are over the squandering of any other resource essential to the well-being of the human race.

We concur with those portions of the Semi-Final Report which refer to the inadequacies of present zoning law and practice. The weaknesses mentioned are found locally.

We also concur with the references to the failure of local governments to adhere to their own general plans.

We would like to add one additional comment which we did not find in the Semi-Final Report. Not only do our local governments fail to adhere to their general plans, there is sometimes difficulty in getting a plan adopted in the first place. In the case of a tentative plan which was proposed for the Sierra Nevada and Sierra Foothills, the mere suggestion of it brought down the wrath of the local residents not only upon the plan, but also upon the planners, and even upon the validity of planning as a legitimate function of government.

In view of the difficulties encountered at the local level of government, it would appear that some measure of guidance is required from a higher level. To the extent that the Technical Advisory Committee has been seeking means of giving local government guidance from the state and regional levels, we would be inclined to say that we feel they are on the right track.

We especially wish to endorse those portions of the Semi-Final Report which seek means of achieving more intelligent planning on a regional basis. Locally, the construction of the Westside Freeway provides an example of the need for planning on a scale far beyond the scope of any individual county. Running as it will through an immense swath of essentially virgin land, this project provides a unique opportunity to avoid the mistakes of piecemeal development.



And yet the machinery for planning, and for implementing the plans, seems not to exist.

We are concerned over some of the ideas expressed in Recommendation No. 7 (Comprehensive Land-Use Regulation). Our impression is that this particular recommendation warrants closer scrutiny, but we will withhold further comment pending additional study.

Although the Semi-Final Report does not deal directly with the Williamson Act, we will include a comment on that act because of the point it illustrates. We find that, although the purpose of the act is to preserve agricultural lands for their economic and open space values, and to minimize disorderly development, some people think of the act as being a tax reform measure. We have heard criticism of the act on the grounds that it is resulting in a reduction of the tax base; this criticism emanates from people who apparently think that reduction of taxes for the farmer was the purpose of the act, and to this they object. We feel that this misconception is dangerous because it can ultimately result in an attack upon the Williamson Act, and open space reform could suffer. The lesson is that it is not sufficient to pass a good law; public education must be undertaken to make sure that people are aware of the purpose of the law, and thus will support it.

If I may be permitted to interject a personal note into this testimony, I would like to cite the effect upon me during a period in my life when I was deprived of "open space". During two years of military service I was stationed in the southeastern United States. I sought respite from the confinement of my military duties by turning toward the wide open spaces I had been accustomed to in the west. To my chagrin, these free and open vistas were not to be found. This unfortunate discovery, combined with a lack of access resulting from the very high percentage of land in private hands, resulted in an



acute sense of confinement. In those two years I developed a much greater appreciation for the value of open space. Having been deprived of it, I came to realize its necessity.

We urge that the residents of California not be subjected, through any miscarriage of the legislative process, to a similar experience.

We commend this committee, and its Citizens Technical Advisory Committee, for the work you are doing to help achieve a better environment for us and for the generations to follow. We assure you of the full support of the Sierra Club as you strive toward this goal.

-/-/-/-



P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

14 Oct 69

Linda Billings  
Sierra Club

Dear Linda Billings:

Enclosed are four copies of the statement which I presented yesterday at the public hearing held by the state legislature's Joint Committee on Open Space Lands.

You will note that I kept the comments in general terms, and avoided either approving or disapproving of any specific recommendation contained in the Technical Advisory Committee's Semi-Final Report. Overall, however, I put us on record as being in favor of open space lands.

KMJ radio news reported that the "Sierra Club" supported the proposals, while the Calif. Real Estate Association opposed them, so it seems likely that something similar appeared in the Fresno Bee, although I have not yet seen it.

A lot of testimony seemed rather muddled and irrelevant, and most of it tended to ~~xxx~~ oppose the Semi-Final Report. There was very little support for either this specific report or for open space generally.

Consequently, it seems very important that the Sierra Club give an intelligent commentary on the report, and give strong support to those ideas which are acceptable. ~~There~~

There are some things in the report which sound bad to me. I refer specifically to Recommendation No. 7. This portion of the report needs particularly close scrutiny by someone familiar with land use law.

Thank you for pursuing this matter. It is quite apparent that, except for your efforts, the Sierra Club would not be following this as closely as it should.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Committee Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter



To: Michael McCloskey  
Conservation Director, Sierra Club

From: P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg, Calif 93631

16 October 1969

Subject: MODIFICATION OF EMIGRANT WILDERNESS PROPOSAL  
N.B. Public hearing record is open until October 31.

Dear Mike,

The enclosed materials are self-explanatory, so this cover letter can be rather brief.

To date the Sierra Club's statement on the Emigrant Wilderness proposal apparently does not take into account the possibility that San Francisco may wish to raise the level of Cherry Lake at some time in the future. This is most unfortunate. If we wish San Francisco to remove the Lake Eleanor dam, as it appears we do, then we have no business needlessly complicating their alternatives.

As you will recall, I brought this problem to your attention in our telephone conversation of September 19.\* Since I have heard nothing further from you, I can only assume that the matter got overlooked in the press of business. This would be perfectly understandable, and I do not mean to be critical if this is what has happened.

However, if it has been decided that the Sierra Club should say nothing, and simply let the original Forest Service proposal stand, then I must protest vigorously. This would be a horrible blunder and one which, sooner or later, inevitably would come back to haunt the Sierra Club.

Tehipite Chapter feels very strongly that the Sierra Club must go on record as favoring some modification of the Cherry Creek addition. If the enclosed proposal is not satisfactory to you, then consider calling for deletion of everything below the 4,960 foot contour. The amount of acreage this would encompass would be trivial, but the principle involved has enormous implications.

Perhaps there is some reason why you do not wish to put the Sierra Club on record on this matter. In this case, is there any objection to Tehipite Chapter presenting the modification, exactly as written herein, as being the proposal of Tehipite Chapter only? This would be consistent with the idea, which I have heard expressed by club officials, that the chapters can take positions which go beyond those of Mills Tower, so long as they do not conflict with established policy. I consider the present proposal to fall in this category. It is consistent with club policy, and simply consists of an elaboration upon it. Also, even though Cherry Lake is in Mother Lode territory, Lake Eleanor is within Tehipite territory. Since the two developments are very closely related, it is impossible intelligently to comment upon one without also taking the other into account.

If we do not hear from you within one week, we will assume that you have no objection, and proceed accordingly.

Sincerely,

*George*  
George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman, Tehipite Chapter

cc. Mother Lode Chapter  
Yokut Wilderness Group

\*I also brought it to the attention of the Emigrant Wilderness study group, and to Bob Hackamack, in the Colby Library on September 6, at an informal gathering following adjournment of the NCRCC meeting.



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P.O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

24 Oct 69

Lawrence C. Hadley, Superintendent  
Yosemite National Park  
Yosemite  
California 95389

Dear Mr. Hadley:

You may find the enclosed material of some interest, since it relates rather closely to the Lake Eleanor problem.

Apparently several individuals have written to Harry Grace regarding the problem of Cherry Lake being crowded rather closely by the proposed wilderness boundary. As a group, however, the Sierra Club has not commented upon the situation.

I decided to bring it to your attention on the chance that you might want to speak to Harry Grace about it. As you are undoubtedly aware, the public hearing record closes on October 31.

I thought you should have an advance copy of the enclosed article regarding a Glacier Point aerial tramway. This will appear in our chapter newsletter (Tehipite Topics), which will probably come out about November 1st.

You should be receiving the Tehipite Topics. If you are not receiving it, let me know and I will see to it that you do.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman



XXX

XXXX

P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
California 93631

29 October 1969

Harry D. Grace, Supervisor  
Stanislaus National Forest  
175 South Fairview Lane  
Sonora  
California 95370

Dear Mr. Grace:

I have received various indications that you are aware that there has been some discussion regarding the Cherry Creek addition to the Emigrant Wilderness proposal. Since I probably have a more comprehensive knowledge of the situation than any other single individual, I hope that I can clarify the matter for you. I have not written you previously in this regard because I had been awaiting further clarification myself. At this point I feel that the dust has settled enough so that it is now possible for me to write.

A number of people have been concerned over the complications which would ensue if San Francisco wished to raise the level of Cherry Lake at some time in the future. As you are probably aware, this possibility was discussed in a Report on Proposed Additions to the Hetch Hetchy Power Supply System, published by the City and County of San Francisco, April 1968. The problem, of course, lies in the fact that the proposed Emigrant Wilderness boundary comes very close, both in elevation and in horizontal distance, to the present reservoir. It would take a relatively small increase in elevation of the reservoir to back it into the proposed wilderness.

Because San Francisco apparently does not plan, at this time, to raise the Cherry Valley Dam, the Sierra Club decided not to comment upon the situation. The decision was to defer comment, if any, until such time as San Francisco's intentions become more apparent.

As you are aware, neither Tehipite Chapter nor the Sierra Club's national headquarters has submitted to you, either for the record or off the record, any comment or recommendation regarding the situation described above. Tehipite Chapter has decided not to submit any such recommendation, and the Sierra Club's national headquarters made a similar decision. The only boundary adjustments which have been recommended are those contained in the statement submitted by the Sierra Club at the September 30, 1969 public hearing in Sonora.

However, a great many people were involved in the discussion of this problem. Of course most of them were Sierra Club members, but the situation also came to the attention of people who are not Sierra Club members. I know that some of these people wrote you



expressing various opinions. I also know that some of these people made the mistake of assuming that either the Sierra Club or Tehipite Chapter had decided to submit for the hearing record a boundary adjustment recommendation for the Cherry Lake area which differed from that of the Forest Service. Consequently, I am sure that you were confused by some of the letters, and I apologize for the difficulties which this has probably caused you.

At the same time, I urge that you consider those letters in the vein which their writers intended. They reflect the thinking of responsible citizens who were sufficiently concerned about the management of our National Forest lands to let you know their thoughts. Over the years I have seen many letters written by concerned citizens to our public officials, and it is not uncommon for such letters to contain misstatements of fact. I feel that this is inevitable, and that it would be unreasonable to expect perfection of knowledge before a citizen were permitted to express his opinion. At the same time, I must make it clear that these individuals were writing only in their capacities as private citizens. If anyone stated that he was writing in some capacity involving the Sierra Club, this was completely erroneous.

I regret that I was not in a position to write you earlier, and thus prevent the confusion to which you were subjected. Again, my apologies for this. If you have any questions on this, or on any other matter, I would be pleased to try to assist you in whatever way I might.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter  
Sierra Club

(Please include this letter in the Emigrant Wilderness public hearing record.)



TO: Sierra Club leaders (selected)

FROM: George W. Whitmore, Conservation Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter, Sierra Club

SUBJECT: Emigrant Wilderness proposal

10 Nov 69

There has been considerable confusion over Tehipite Chapter's proposal regarding the Cherry Creek addition of the Emigrant Wilderness proposal. This appears to have stemmed from a failure by some people to recognize that every Sierra Club chapter has an obligation to assist the club in seeking the best possible conservation policies, and this includes bringing real and potential errors to the club's attention in the hope that the club will rectify the errors. There also seems to have been a failure to recognize that a Sierra Club member has at least three different means of expressing himself on public issues:

1. Through the Sierra Club's national headquarters.
2. Through his local chapter.
3. By speaking out as a private citizen, taking care not to involve the Sierra Club either directly or by implication.

In the case at hand, Tehipite Chapter made a proposal to the Sierra Club in the hope that it would be adopted. The Sierra Club failed to adopt the proposal, and instructed Tehipite Chapter that "any communication of your recommendation for a change in the boundaries should come from individuals in the Tehipite Chapter, and should not be made in the name of the club or any of its components." In anticipation that this would be the Sierra Club position, this chapter had requested its individual members to do precisely that.

In an attempt to clarify matters further, we request that you carefully read the attached letter, and refer again to the material previously distributed (dated 16 Oct 69). This will reveal several facts to the discerning reader:

1. The attached letter to Harry Grace, 29 Oct 69, is the only communication submitted by Tehipite Chapter to the U. S. Forest Service which states this chapter's position with regard to the Emigrant Wilderness proposal.
2. The attached letter neither advocates nor opposes any changes in the Emigrant Wilderness boundary as proposed by the U. S. Forest Service. There is an implied endorsement by Tehipite Chapter of the boundary changes proposed by the Sierra Club at the 30 Sep 69 public hearing held in Sonora.
3. The material of 16 Oct 69 basically consisted of a five page letter to Mike McCloskey. As such, it was a communication which was internal to the Sierra Club. The last paragraph on page two of that letter makes it entirely clear that Tehipite Chapter was recommending that the Sierra Club adopt a particular position with regard to the Cherry Lake problem. At no point is there any indication that this material was an expression of Tehipite Chapter policy to be disseminated for the public record.

Since there was reason to believe that the Sierra Club's adoption of this position would come too late for inclusion in the Emigrant



wilderness hearing record, if at all, we gave the material of 16 Oct 69 widespread distribution. Since page one dealt primarily with problems internal to the Sierra Club hierarchy, we omitted it from most of the distributed copies. An additional cover letter was included which requested the recipients, "after studying the attached material", to write individual letters for the hearing record.

This distribution was made to everyone who had participated in the discussions, to the involved chapters and groups, and to other selected members of the Sierra Club. In addition, I gave a copy of it to one conservationist who is well known to me, although not yet a club member. One club member (not a member of any committee and not acting in any official capacity) apparently made and distributed additional copies of the material. I learned of this after the fact. The effort was well-intentioned, and it is entirely possible that no harm came from it.

Apparently a copy of the 16 Oct 69 material was given to Stanislaus National Forest personnel. This was by a person or persons unknown to me, and consequently I have no way of trying to assess the person's motives. It is entirely possible that the motivation was unfriendly, or even that the person merely thought he was being helpful. In any event, the material was self-explanatory, and careful reading by the Stanislaus National Forest people would have made clear to them that it had not been intended for public distribution.

In view of the above considerations, we fail to understand the basis for the ill-will, hatred, and vitriol which has been directed toward Tehipite Chapter. For those who will claim that their hostility is directed toward me personally, and not toward the chapter, may I point out that our Conservation Committee has been speaking for the chapter on the basis of a standing authorization from our Executive Committee (an authorization which was reviewed, and renewed, at my request in recent months). This authorization involves no delegation of policy-making authority. Many matters are reviewed in preliminary form by our Executive Committee, even though they ultimately go out over the Conservation Chairman's signature. Our Emigrant proposal was in this category.

For those who will criticize the mistakes made by some of the individuals who received the 16 Oct 69 material, may I comment that this is one of the hazards of democracy. May I also point out that the direct participation of our individual members is the Sierra Club's unique source of strength.

It is the intention of Tehipite Chapter to continue to work, within the framework of club policy, in striving toward club and chapter goals. We intend to do this by involving our members to the fullest extent possible. An oligarchy might be more efficient, but we feel that member participation is worth the imperfections that sometimes accompany it.

*George E. Whitmore*  
George E. Whitmore  
Conservation Chairman  
Tehipite Chapter



P. O. Box 485  
Kingsburg  
Calif 93631

28 Dec 69

Mrs. W. V. Graham Matthews  
Box 381  
Carmel Valley, Calif. 93924

Dear Corky,

Thank you very much for sending the letters to the Stanislaus National Forest and to Yosemite N.P. concerning the situation at Lake Eleanor/Cherry Lake. And thank you for sending me copies of the letters. I find it is of immense help in my role as conservation chairman if people send me copies of letters they send and receive. It is really the only way to know what is going on. Of course the various "news" media are hopeless; and I do not get a balanced view if the only letters I see are those I write ~~my~~ on my own.

I would very much like to see the answer you got from Hadley when you asked him what the Yosemite N.P. policy was re. the Lake Eleanor situation. The answer was probably unsatisfactory, but at least it would help if I could get that confirmed. If ~~you~~ it is not convenient for you to copy the letter, perhaps you could send it to me and let me make a copy; prompt return of the letter is guaranteed.

Regarding the Glacier Point aerial tramway. We have heard again that permission had been requested to build it, even though Hadley told newspaper reporters that this was not correct. ~~The~~ It was Curry co, according to this latest source; and the NPS turned them down. This same source stated that the Yosemite N.P. Master Plan Study Team has decided against the tramway; however, I will believe that when I hear them say it themselves. I am always fearful of letting down our guard prematurely.

I am disturbed over your comments re. tramway discussions with Ventana people, including your conservation chairman. It sounded as though he was not aware that the Sierra Club had already gone on record in opposition to the tramway. Or if he was aware of it, he did not realize that the chapters are required to adhere to policy which the Directors have established, as on this matter. I am enclosing a copy of the relevant Board action, in case you probably wouldn't know exactly where to turn to find it. (Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, 25 June 1969; this ~~xxx~~ action was, to my knowledge, ratified by the full Board at their September meeting--such ratification is apparently practically automatic.) Of course it would be possible for Ventana Chapter to seek to have the policy changed, but in the meantime chapter statements and actions have to be within the context of the established policy. (If there is some attempt made to obtain the Board's reversal on this, of course we would like to know about it as soon as you get wind of it.)

We have been with in-laws at Palm Springs. Now we are headed for Joshua Tree Nat. Monument. Last year we discovered that it is chockfull of what looks like good rockclimbing--somewhat on the order of a granite Pinnacles N.M., except on a much grander scale. We will soon find out--we are loaded for bear with hard hats, bolt kits, etc. We are curious to know whether anything has appeared in print re. routes, etc. If you hear of such be sure to let us know.

Sincerely,

George