Judy Anderson Wins John Muir Award

By Frank Wheat
What a pleasure it is to inform those of you who may not have heard it that the Sierra Club's highest badge of honor, its John Muir Award, has been presented to our own Judy Anderson.

Desert Protection Act heroine plus more!

Judy was one of the heroes of the California Desert Protection Act. However, her work for conservation extended far beyond that campaign. She paid her organizational dues as chair of the Angeles Chapter, the Club's largest. She was in the trenches on the California Coastal Initiative, the California Nuclear Initiative and the Alaska Lands Act. She was apprentice mapmaker in the campaign to pass a wilderness bill for Forest Service lands in California. Forged by a difficult compromise, that bill left on the cutting room floor many fine candidates for wilderness status. Other fine candidates in the desert await our efforts. Now, at last, the Wildlands 2000 campaign will attempt to regain what was lost or set aside, temporarily, it is hoped, in 1984 and 1996.

Neither status nor titles were among Judy Anderson's goals in life. Without hesitation, she frequently took on tasks that could only be deemed essential dirty work. A prime example was the enormous job of mapping well over 100 proposed desert wilderness areas, additions to Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Monuments and the boundaries of a proposed new Mojave National Park. It was largely unsung labor, it took years, and it was done by Judy at night with the varying group of volunteers she gathered. The product of this immense effort was a giant roll of maps, each with a text to support its inclusion, together constituting the heart and soul of the Desert Bill.

This mapping task could not have been successfully undertaken except by a person with remarkable skills in managing people, particularly unpaid volunteers—possibly the hardest group of all to manage. Such were the skills that led to Judy's selection, by common consent, as chair of the California Desert Protection League. It was at League meetings that representatives of the conservation organizations backing the Bill sought and reached agreement on the Bill's specifics. It was the League which enabled these

Please see Judy on page 12

Celebrating CDPA's Fifth Anniversary

By Elden Hughes

Five years ago, October 31, 1994, the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) was signed into law. It raised the protection levels on 9,000,000 acres of the California Desert. The paradox is that it didn't do all we had hoped, while it probably did more than we expected.

Designated Wilderness in Mojave National Preserve

We had hoped that the Mojave would be a National Park. It is a National Preserve for it still retains hunting. Subsequently the citizens of California voted to remove leg hold traps from the state and this has removed most trapping from the Mojave. The Mojave National Preserve is a fine unit of the National Park Service. We celebrate the Mojave with a centerfold in this issue of Desert Report.

Note the designation in green of the Wilderness areas within the Pre-

Please see Celebrating on page 12
Ruminations
While Driving North Along Hwy 14 and 395

By Eldon Hughes

Mile 0. We leave the Los Angeles Basin where Hwy 14 breaks free from I-5 and heads out towards the Owens Valley. On my left is the "Old Road" and if one drives the Old Road and looks just at the appropriate time, one can see "Beale's Cut"—an excavation made more than 100 years ago to shorten the distance between Los Angeles, Santa Clarita, and points north. Edward Beale built the wagon road and charged the toll. It was a success. Thank you, Cal French, for sharing your knowledge and enjoyment of this interesting early bit of California history. Even though I had known about "Beale's Cut" for years, I may never have actually found it without Cal's guidance.

Mile 15. Vasquez Rocks is a county park and the site of many "cut them off at the pass" Westerns. It was also the site of my first interview with Wolfgang Obst who wanted me to be an interpreter of the desert. We stayed in contact for six years it took to get the financing from Audubon and Turner Broadcasting—the hour long Mojave Adventure was the result. Now Wolfgang is working with Joe Fontaine to put together a high definition production of the Sierra Nevada.

Mile 40. I see an inland ocean. An ocean of homes. Here are the affordable homes that require the long commutes. Here are the acres of huge concrete boxes which contain Home Depot, Staples, and all the amenities of the city. This is the ultimate threat to the desert-sprawl.

Mile 68. We drive north through the town of Mojave. Once a million sheep poured over the Tehachapi Mountains each year, ate their way north through the Owens Valley and then traversed their way over the Sierra Nevada to the Central Valley and south into Bakersfield—a one year loop. I think the Sierra Nevada has largely recovered from this massive overgrazing. Neither the desert nor the Central Valley has. Even the 50,000 that still graze the desert each Spring are too many. We've won our share of the battles on sheep grazing, but if the desert tortoise is to survive, we need to win them all.

Mile 90. Red Rock Canyon is a state park and also the site of many movies. The California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) doubled the size of the park. The off-roaders have not forgiven us. It is this wonderful park that makes me so proud to know Jim Dodson, Stan Haye and Jeanie Stillwell. I first drove to Red Rock Canyon in 1947. It seemed remote then. It really wasn't. It seemed self protecting. Now we know that only public ownership and strong protective laws and a constituency that cares and is ready to fight has a chance of providing real protection.

Mile 110. Twenty miles north of Red Rock at the intersection with Hwy 178 is a hill on which grow four large clone rings of creosote. Clone rings form as the plant gets old. Age is estimated by measuring the diameter of the circle within the ring. If the circle is, say, 6 feet across, the plant is about 1000 years old. At least this holds for the Johnson Valley where the carbon 14 dating of roots took place and estimated that there is one clone ring, King Clone, that dates back 11,700 years. On this particular hill the biggest ring is larger than King Clone. Since it is at the very edge of creosote habitat, does this mean the rings grew slower?

The entire hill and the mountain behind form the Owens Peak Wilderness. Thank you CDPA. Thank you Bob Barnes and Joe Fontaine and those who drew the boundaries for these wilderness areas on the Sierra Shoulder. And thank you Judy Anderson who chaired the California Desert Protection League that somehow held this diverse group of activists together for the decade it took to conceive, nurture and become law, the California Desert Protection Act. Mile 117. Highway 14 ends at U S 395. This is the start of Mary Ann Henry Country. As a volunteer, she did the biology and bounty that undergirded two Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Short Canyon and Sand Canyon. The canyon names are on the Auto Club Kern County map and the Death Valley map. In a flower year these canyons truly capture the diversity of desert merging to mountains. Thank you, Mary Ann Henry.

Mile 125. North to Little Lake and then Fossil Falls. This is an extraordinarily rich area for archaeology, but Little Lake is an access problem. I had permission once to enter the property and canoe the lake, but then the property changed hands. I would still like to canoe the lake.

Fossil Falls is another wonderful BLM ACEC. Once all the obsidian used by Southern California Native Americans came through this pass. Then about 1560 AD the Salton Sea (Lake Cahuilla) dried up enough to expose obsidian buttes and the obsidian trade routes changed.

Mile 160. Soon the ridges on both sides of U S 395 are wilderness areas designated in the CDPA. On the Sierra side is Sacatar Trail and on the right the Coso Wilderness. Amazingly there was little opposition to the wilderness areas on the Sierra Shoulder. We had to fight hard for the Cosos. There was a company that thought the steam thermal areas of Coso Hot Springs extended all the way to Owens Lake. We compromised and lost the North Cosos and a piece of Malpais Mesa. For wilderness values, the Coso Wilderness is the gem.

Please see Ruminations on page 12.
Cliffs, Red Rock Canyon, California

photo by Bruce Barnbaum
A New Proposal for the Amargosa River

By Miriam Romero.

Twenty-seven years ago, in 1972, a group of us in the Sierra Club Desert Committee became aware of the increased use by ORV’s in the Amargosa Canyon of the Amargosa River near Dumont Dunes and Tecopa, California. With great enthusiasm and energy, and with the cooperation and help from many persons, a research study was produced and presented to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) detailing the values of this unique desert ecosystem. The end result of the effort could not have been more welcome to all involved. The Canyon from Tecopa down to the Dumont Dunes was closed to off-road vehicle use and was declared an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Degradation of Amargosa Canyon

During the ensuing years, the Canyon was used by the occasional hiker and research scientist. The historical buildings showed the toll that time and lack of care can take. Upstream water diversion, off-route use by ORV’s, unauthorized cattle grazing, and invasion of tamarisk and other exotic plant species all caused degradation of the Canyon. However, those persons who originally had been involved in the Canyon never lost their interest. The Desert Fishes Council continued to monitor the rare pupfish found in the River in the Canyon. Year after year, Jan Tarble took bird and breeding counts in the Canyon and in the Lake Grimshaw ACEC. The Sierra Club sponsored an occasional hike in the canyon. Brian and Bonnie Brown, owners of China Ranch, were instrumental in educating tourists about the presence and values of the Canyon. Ben and I made several trips a year to the area introducing interested people to the area. But, truth be told, not much attention was paid to the Canyon for many years. The lesson to be learned is that those areas which are “protected” areas and ACEC’s should continue to be monitored assiduously.

Restoring Salt Creek Hills Historical Site

Lately, however, the Amargosa Canyon and surrounding areas are finally getting the attention the areas deserve. BLM in Barstow has done a good job of restoring the Salt Creek Hills Historical Site. Salt Creek again flows freely and is a lovely sight.

BLM has the funding to restore and stabilize the historical structures in the Canyon. Personnel at BLM are developing a master plan for the area, and in their words to this author, they want to make the Amargosa River from Shoshone to the Dunes, and including Salt Creek Hills, the “crown jewels” of the Mojave Desert.

Wild and Scenic River designation

Thus, it is time to begin efforts to have the Amargosa River from Shoshone down to the Dumont Dunes designated a “Wild and Scenic River.” (When we casually mentioned this in 1972, all attending had a great laugh.) However, a careful reading of the criteria necessary for a river, or portion of a river, to be so designated has shown that this portion of the Amargosa River does, indeed, qualify for the designation.

The Amargosa River is one of the last free-flowing rivers in southern California and the only such river in the Mojave Desert. The River Canyon is located south of Tecopa and the River at Tecopa is in the Lake Grimshaw ACEC. There are strategic springs for wildlife at Shoshone near the River. There are numerous evidences of prehistoric inhabitants and their cultures. The Old Spanish Trail and the Tonopah and Tidewater RR went through the Canyon.

The River and environs provides habitat for the rare and endangered Amargosa vole, the Amargosa speckled dace and the Amargosa pupfish. The Amargosa niterwort and the Tecopa birdsbeak are rare and endangered. The River, Canyon and the area around the two ACEC’s provide habitat for the federally listed Least Bell’s vireo, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, the State-listed Yellow-billed cuckoo, and the prairie falcon. The River at Tecopa is the point of the northernmost range in California of the crissal thrasher. A total of 260 birds are on the list for the area from Shoshone through the Canyon and on China Ranch.

Desert Committee presentation

At the November meeting of the Desert Committee, Miriam Romero

Please see Amargosa on page 13
Wildlands 2000 Campaign Building Momentum

By Geoffrey Smith

We are currently in the midst of an ambitious campaign to identify and protect the last remaining wild places in California. You are invited to participate in this exciting effort! The history of wilderness protection extends back over generations, and includes such significant milestones as the Wilderness Act of 1964, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, The Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) I & II in 1971 and 1979 respectively, and Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

Which brings us to the present day

In 1997 the California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) initiated the Wildlands 2000 campaign. The core of the campaign is a coalition of environmental organizations including the Sierra Club, the California Wilderness Coalition, the Friends of the River, and the Wilderness Society. Each of these organizations brings to the table a wealth of capabilities and strengths in wilderness and wild and scenic river protection.

Launching a massive campaign to federally protect hundreds of areas throughout the state takes planning, coordination and money.

Identification

The search begins with map research, and agency and advocacy group recommendations. Through this process nearly 400 wilderness, wild and scenic river (WSR) and other designated sensitive land candidates have been identified.

Field research

Next begins the complex and time-consuming process of documenting these areas. To date, hundreds of volunteers throughout the state have worked for more than two years to create narrative descriptions of the areas describing the wilderness attributes, and detailed maps with photographs based on extensive field work involving in some cases many, many weekends on foot exploring the regions.

Organization

A steering committee has been formed consisting of nine voting members representing the key constituent groups and regions of the State. Organizational bylaws, governance rules, staffing plans and a budget are being prepared. The all-important funding sources are being identified – current plans call for an operating budget of over $1 million to fund the campaign.

Staff organization consists of a Campaign Director (Scott Hoffman Black), Outreach Coordinator, Media Coordinator, regional Field Organizers, and a number of other administrative positions. These positions are being filled right now.

Sponsorship

Any federal bill needs sponsorship. We are very fortunate to have the enthusiastic support of Sen. Barbara Boxer who has agreed to sponsor a Senate bill. A House sponsor is still needed. Working closely with the Steering Committee, the Boxer campaign will develop draft legislation for ultimate introduction in Congress.

As the Wildlands 2000 campaign pickups up momentum, numerous initiatives will be launched that present excellent opportunity for involvement:

Data Collection

Much remains to be done in the area of field research and data collection. This is an excellent opportunity to combine recreation with activism – one of the Sierra Club's strong suits.

Regional forums

A series of regional forums, to be held throughout the state, will provide opportunities for direct hands-on involvement in the selection process for wilderness proposals.

Education campaign

As we move along in the process with specific proposals identified, education becomes a critical element in the process. Working with organizations, schools, local government and the media, the message needs to ring loud and clear:

The time is now to protect our special places for the sake of the land, and for future generations.

Sierra Club Volunteers Field Surveying North Algodones Dunes

photo by Geoffrey Smith

Please see Wildlands on page 11
Glamis Mine Opposed by Presidents Advisory Council

October 19, 1999, Washington, DC.
The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation asked the Department of the Interior today to stop the construction of the proposed Imperial Mine Project in California, stating that the project would result in "serious and irreparable degradation" of an area that is sacred and historic to the Quechan Tribe.

In formal comments sent to Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, Council Chairman Cathryn Slater described the negative effects of the proposed development of a 1,500-acre precious metal mine in Imperial County, California, by a private company, Glamis Imperial Corporation. The land on which the mine is proposed to be built is administered by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The proposed project would affect the Indian Pass-Running Man Area of Traditional Cultural Concern, which has been determined archeologically significant and retaining critical religious, cultural, and educational importance to the Colorado River Indian Tribes, Ft. Mojave Indian Tribes, and especially the Quechan Tribe.

"This project would be so damaging to historic resources that the Quechan Tribe's ability to practice their sacred traditions as a living part of their community life and development would be lost," Slater wrote. "The Council concludes that the Glamis Imperial Project would effectively destroy the historic resources in the project area, and recommends that Interior take whatever legal means available to deny approval for the project."

The Council deemed incompatible the mitigation measures proposed by BLM and Glamis Imperial Corporation, the company that would construct the mine. Although, Slater acknowledged as "laudable" Glamis's redesign for the proposed mine to minimize impacts, including moving proposed stockpiles, altering haulage routes, and relinquishing about 800 acres of nearby mining claims, she stated that such efforts "do little to reduce the devastating impacts on the historic properties and their environment and fall short of compensating for the loss of the traditional religious and cultural values of the area of concern."

Slater has requested a meeting with Babbitt to discuss the Council's concerns with the proposed mine before the Department of the Interior makes a final decision on the project.

Council Findings

Among other conclusions on the proposed Imperial Mine project, the Council found: the religious, cultural, and educational values of the Indian Pass-Running Man Area of Traditional Cultural Concern are of premier importance to the Quechan Tribe for sustaining their traditional religion and culture. The area of concern, which contains geoglyphs, petroglyphs, cleared circles, and trails, figures prominently in the Quechans' religious beliefs and functions as a teaching area for their religious and cultural traditions, says the Council. In addition, BLM and the California State Historic Preservation Officer determined that such cultural properties are eligible for the National Register under criteria A, C, and D.

The proposed mine and its operations would unduly degrade the area of concern, introducing activities and intrusions incompatible with the historic area and its unique qualities. The Council determined that the proposed 300-foot high stockpile would obscure Indian Pass viewsheds, and the proposed East Pit—nearly 200 acre and 900-feet deep—would remain a defacement on the landscape. Coupled with proposed power lines, utility corridors, and associated facilities, the proposed mine "would essentially destroy the tribe's ability to practice and transmit to future generations the ceremonies and values that sustain their cultural existence."

The public and tribe have consistently voiced their overwhelming opposition to the proposed mine. In response to views solicited by the Council and public comments solicited by BLM as part of a draft Environmental Impact Statement, the majority of public and tribal members who responded opposed the project. In addition, in 1998 the Quechan Tribal Council passed unanimously a resolution of opposition to the project. According to Slater, "this consistent and overwhelming opposition to the project provides compelling evidence of the importance of this area to the public and the Tribe as a place for spiritual and cultural renewal."

About the Federal review process for historic properties

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertak-
California Desert Managers Group Announces New Web

October 31, 1999 was the 5th anniversary of the signing of the California Desert Protection Act. To mark this landmark desert conservation law, a group of federal and state land management agencies launched a new World Wide Web site: www.californiadesert.gov

The purpose of the Web site is to provide the general public with current information on recreation opportunities for all public lands within the Mojave and Colorado Deserts of southern California and southern Nevada.

www.californiadesert.gov is intended to become the principal site where desert enthusiasts can find information about what to see and do on California desert public lands. The site will also include important safety information for desert travelers as well as a wide variety of information on the natural history of the desert and the stories of its people. The site also offers many links to other Web sites providing information on desert recreation opportunities and places of interest.

“Most people do not understand that the California deserts are managed by several separate federal and state agencies,” said John Hamill, the California Management Coordinator for the Department of the Interior. “This Web site will make it much easier to get information about the desert from one centralized source, independent of who manages the land.”

Desert Managers Group
Another purpose of the Web site is to provide information about the California Desert Managers Group—a forum that was established for various government agencies to work together more efficiently in order to effectively manage the California deserts’ natural and cultural resources.

The Desert Managers Group is involved with coordinating and integrating efforts to manage wild burro population, restore damaged upland and riparian habitats, clean up illegal dumps, provide public information and education, address critical scientific questions, monitor desert tortoise populations, and develop budget requests. Government agencies participating in the Desert Managers Group include the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey, the National Park Service; the State of California’s Department’s of Fish and Game, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation; the Naval Air Weapons Station at China Lakes, Edwards Air Force Base, National Training Center at Fort Irwin, the Marine Corps Air Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, and the Marine Corps Logistical Base at Barstow.

For further information on www.californiadesert.gov, or the Desert Managers Group, contact
John Hamill, at 760-255-8888 or Joe Zarla, Chief of Interpretation, Joshua Tree National Park, at 760-367-5520.
Joan Taylor wins coveted "Old Bottle Award"

Already acknowledged as a leading Sierra Club activist having been awarded a national Sierra Club Special Service Award, Joan Taylor wins the coveted "Old Bottle Award". The "Old Bottle Award" recognizes the special contributions of Desert Activists. Presentation of the "Old Bottle Award" was made at the November Pipes Canyon Desert Committee meeting.

A resident of Palm Springs, Joan Taylor has been a strong advocate for preserving the natural lands surrounding the Coachella Valley.

Joan has served as the plaintiff in numerous suits in behalf of the Peninsula bighorn sheep. Such suits forced the listing of the Peninsula bighorn sheep under the Endangered Species Act. They have fought the locating of golf courses in Peninsula bighorn sheep habitat. In the Coachella Valley with 41 golf courses and 75 sheep, the golf courses are winning. With the listing and Joan’s work, the sheep have a chance.

Joan Taylor is the Vice-Chair of the CNRCC Desert Committee.

Peninsular Bighorn Still Beleaguered

By Joan Taylor

Some good news and some bad news for Peninsular bighorn sheep residing in the canyons and hillsides south of the San Gorgonio Pass down into Baja California. Since the federal government listed this animal as an endangered species last year, protection for bighorn has increased, but so have the threats from development.

The good news is that the Draft Recovery Plan for the sheep will be released by the end of the year, and the map designating critical bighorn habitat by next June. Additionally, momentum has picked up for the designation of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains as a National Monument, with Secretary Babbitt reaching conceptual accord with the Agua Caliente Indians over cooperative management of their vast holdings in these mountains. Currently, the National Monument proposal is in flux, and the Club has not yet taken a position on the proposed designation. However, we recognize that it has great potential as a future funding mechanism to protect this threatened part of Peninsular bighorn habitat.

Now for the bad news. The bad news is that golf course development projects in vital bighorn habitat in the Santa Rosas and San Jacintos are still being proposed and then rubber-stamped by the local cities. The San Gorgonio Chapter has fought a long series of legal battles to stop these projects or keep them at bay. The fight continues.
Owens Lake—To Pump or Not to Pump

By Mike Prather

In September, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) announced that they were not going to begin groundwater pumping this fall from under Owens Lake for their initial dust control effort test. This test was to pump 1600 acre feet of water and shallow flood on the surface. Flooding, as well as managed vegetation (growing salt grass), is considered the quickest and most effective dust control at the lake. The decision not to pump came after the results of a 60 day pump test that showed drawdowns in area wells and water tables under wetlands that exceeded standards that had been set by a local public work group in cooperation with the consultants hired by LADWP to study the groundwater at the lake. LADWP is under order to have 10 square miles of the lake’s surface covered with water or vegetation by 2001 with more coverage totaling 16.5 square miles by 2006.

Impact of pumping on migrating shorebirds

It must be remembered, however, that LADWP does not wish to use any potable aqueduct water for dust control. The city would prefer to pump as much groundwater as possible. Following their announcement to not pump this fall, LADWP made it clear that more study could result in long term pumping at Owens Lake and that the potential of adverse impacts was "unnecessary." Local activists monitoring shorebirds and waterfowl at Owens Lake's remaining wetlands fear that pumping could have severe impacts on migrating shorebirds which use the springs and artesian wells wetlands that surround the lake.

This year the lake was nominated for designation as an Important Bird Area (IBA) due to the high numbers of shorebirds (20,000+) of various species that use the lake during migration. Of special concern is the nesting population of snowy plovers. Local activists are beginning an intensive three year spring and fall census of shorebirds as part of the International Shorebird Survey (ISS). In addition, they will be writing the Owens Lake portion of the Intermountain West Regional Report for the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. Shorebirds are the marathon migrants in the bird world. They travel hundreds and even thousands of miles non-stop and only land at traditional feeding areas to fatten up. These feeding stops are irreplaceable.

Let the dust settle

When Owens Lake dried up due to water diversions by the LADWP between 1913 and 1924, a great wildlife public trust was almost completely wiped out—but not quite. Enough water and brine flies remain to support shorebirds migrating from South America and the Arctic Circle and back again each year. These numbers, however, don't compare with historical populations. The California State Lands Commission is the primary land owner of the lakebed and must sign off on any final dust mitigation solution. The State Lands Commission must be urged to require a good faith effort by LADWP put back some of the wildlife public trust values that were lost. Perhaps a minimum of 10 square miles of shallow flooding on the lake should serve the dual purpose of wildlife enhancement and dust control for all time. Only then will the birds, as well as the dust, settle on Owens Lake.

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Sign up for CNRCC's Desert Forum

By Jim Dodson

If you find Desert Report (DR) interesting, sign up for the CNRCC Desert Committee's e-mail listserv, Desert Forum. Here, you'll find open discussions of items interesting to desert lovers. Many articles in this issue of DR were developed through Forum discussions. Electronic subscribers will continue to receive current news on these issues—plus the opportunity to join in the discussions and contribute their own insights. The Desert Forum runs on a Sierra Club listserv system, costs you nothing, and is easy to join and use. Just send this message:

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SUB CONS-CNRCC-DESERT-FORUM YourFirstName YourLastName
TO LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG
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By return e-mail, you will get a welcome message and some tips on using the system. Please join us! If you have questions about this service, contact Jim Dodson at jim.dodson@sierraclub.org or 661 942-3662.
Walker Lake Heroes and Heroines

By Rose Strickland

On a sunny fall Saturday, hundreds of visitors to the first Walker Lake Arts Festival in Hawthorne, Nevada, raised thousands of dollars to help buy water rights to save Walker Lake. Walker Lake, one of the world’s handful of freshwater, terminal lakes, is threatened by rising salt levels and a declining lake level caused by agricultural diversions upriver. The fragile lake ecosystem supports a Lahontan cutthroat trout fishery and an inland migratory bird flyway for common loons and other waterbirds.

Celebrating Walker Lake

Weavers, painters, sculptors, photographers, basketmakers, storytellers, dramatists, and musicians celebrated Walker Lake and the surrounding Great Basin Desert in fantastic artworks. The artists contributed a portion of artwork sales to the Walker Lake Working Group for purchases of water rights from willing sellers upriver, earning accolades from the community and Walker Lake advocates. Festival goers were enchanted by the variety and quality of art, ranging from pottery, petroglyph artworks, and a female fertility figure to striking photographs and paintings which captured the desert hues and scenes of water, beach, mountain, wildflowers. Artwork featuring critters, both wild and human, was also popular with the Festival visitors. Visitors identified “saving Walker Lake” as their main reason for attending the Festival. A Native American elder opened the Festival with traditional prayers and songs. Tribal artists exhibited beautiful beaded pottery, paintings, and works in leather and stone. At the closing ceremony on the beach, an elder offered a Paiute prayer for the Festival artists, volunteers, and visitors as well as for the survival of Walker Lake and then led a circle dance for the dozens of Lake well-wishers.

Festival success!

Festival organizers, artists, and visitors were thrilled with the success of the first festival. The Walker Lake Working Group is considering a 2-day arts festival which would combine boattrips and fishing at Walker Lake at the annual Loon Day Festival in April with art exhibition and sales and performing arts in Hawthorne and other Walker River Basin communities.

To be a part of the next Walker Lake Arts Festival, contact Lou Thompson of the Walker Lake Working Group at PO Box 867, Hawthorne, NV 89415, or call him at 775-945-8243.

Spinner and Wilderness supporter. Hermi Hiatt of Las Vegas, demonstrates her talent. Photo by Dennis Ghiglieri.

Screaming Jets Saga Continues

By Dick Hingson

According to a revised schedule, screaming jets through Joshua Tree (see story in Summer 1999 Desert Report) will continue along the old route until sometime in the year 2000. On behalf of constituents residing in unincorporated county areas towards Palm Springs and Indio, Congresswoman Mary Bono raised concerns regarding the possible impact of proposed VR-1257 realignment along the southern border portion of the Park. The plan to partially mitigate the route (MTR VR-1257) is still on course. Mary Risser, of the Park’s staff, advises that competing priorities, processes, and inter-agency coordination needs have delayed the two final steps: 1) completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and 2) the (re-drawn) aeronautical map issuance, both of which must precede jets actually flying over the new airspace. The final NEPA step will be the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact); its precise timing relates to the outcome of any (still-uncertain) second field demonstration on the part of the Navy.

When final action takes place, Desert Report readers will be informed.
News Updates

California Desert Land Acquisition

The good news is that Congress appropriated $15 million of the needed $30 million to complete the acquisition of 487,000 acres of Catellus (railroad) lands. The bad news is that the second $15 million to be in next year’s Appropriation is conditioned on resolution of the Ft. Irwin expansion. Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) sought to stop any appropriation and put the restriction on next year’s appropriation.

Interior Appropriation Riders

A New York Times editorial said, “Mr. Clinton wins on Riders.”

Most of the worst were eliminated. A rider to allow mining operations to dump an unlimited amount of waste on public lands was confined to only those mines that had submitted plans of operation before November 1997.

Grazing permits set to expire will be automatically renewed without first conducting environmental review, however, the rider was amended to require a schedule be established for review and $2.5 million was set aside to address the backlog.

South Algodones Dunes

The ORVers call it Glamis and Thanksgiving crowds exceeding 100,000 turned it into a near riot. Certainly the more than 60 BLM rangers and Imperial County sheriffs were unable to control the crowds. Rangers would become surrounded and full beer cans would be lobed at them. In the words of one ranger, “We totally lost it.” Concentration on the “Dunes” meant there was no law enforcement elsewhere on BLM lands. Off roaders invaded the Jacumba Wilderness and did serious damage.

Joshua Tree National Park

Adopted November 12th, the new General Management Plan is the first Interior Department (National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management) plan to fully incorporate the Tortoise Recovery Plan (1994). While not stopping the placement of new climbing bolts in Wilderness, it does restrict them.

Nevada Wilderness

Nevada’s 798,067 acres of Forest Service wilderness represents only 1.1 percent of the state. Georgia, New Hampshire and Hawaii each have more designated wilderness than Nevada. Proposals for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness range from 1.9 million acres which the BLM found “suitable” out of 5.2 million acres studied, to 9 million and growing by Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

Wildlands Continued from page 5

Election campaign

Once legislation has been introduced in Congress, we become a lean, mean, campaign machine. This is when things get really exciting. We’ll need lots of help when that time comes.

Where we are today ...

Approximately 300 wild areas have been documented throughout the State as potential wilderness and wild and scenic river proposals. Much of the research has been done, yet much more remains to be accomplished.

A large number of potential areas are being researched in our California Desert. Here is a list of some of them, and the names of the regional volunteer coordinators for those areas:

Approx. Acreage

Jacumba Mtns 27,520
N. Algodones Dunes addtn 7,040
San Felipe Hills 5,325
San Ysidro Mtns 2,500
Sawtooth Mtns 7,680
S. Algodones Dunes 61,950
Table Mtn 5,760

Contact for above areas: Camille Armstrong and Geoffrey Smith. (358) 566-5676.
gsmith@thecomputersmith.com.

Wildlands 2000 Steering Committee members, San Diego Chapter members.

What you can do

Call one of the contacts listed above and volunteer to: photograph; map; write about; lead press tours; conduct outings; public speaking; organizing – the possibilities are endless, and lots of fun! Save the date! Plan to attend the California Wilderness Convention in Sacramento, May 5 – 7 (details forthcoming)
Celebrating Continued from page 1 serve. Wilderness is an additional protection and 55% of the Mojave National Preserve is designated Wilderness.

Look further at the map. The Mojave National Preserve is surrounded by BLM Wilderness. These wilderness areas are the Dead Mountains, Bigelow Cholla Garden, Piute Mountains, Clipper Mountains, Trilobite, Brisol Mountains, Kelso Dunes, Hollow Hills, and Kingman Mountains. A feast of wilderness!
The centerfold map covers 4,000,000 acres. The California Desert is 25,000,000 acres. The California Desert Protection Act affected all parts of the desert. Even a cursory description of all the parts of the CDPA would take more space than this entire Desert Report. Let’s concentrate on two special areas.

The Mojave National Preserve was the most controversial section of the CDPA. It took the lightening strikes. Because it took the lightening strikes, other portions of the Act were never attacked.

Riparian Recovery in Red Rock Canyon State Park

One of the special areas that never had opposition until after the Act was passed was Red Rock Canyon State Park (see photo page 3). The Act enlarged it three-fold. Riparian areas to the east of the former Park boundaries were being destroyed by ORV activity. Today they are under state park management and the riparian areas are recovering.

ATV Damage Along the Lower Colorado

Another special area usually overlooked is the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) refuges along the lower Colorado River. Before the Act, boaters would travel on the river, stop at a wash and unload “All Terrain Vehicles” (ATVs), and drive up and down the washes. The destruction was enormous. Now these areas are designated Wilderness. ATVs are forbidden. The washes are recovering.

Attacks Continue

Someone once said, “When we pass the Act, our work will be done.” Others, more knowing, knew better. The five years since the signing of the CDPA have been attempts to transfer the Mojave from the National Park Service to the Bureau of Land Management; attempts to defund the managing agencies; attacks on the boundaries and attacks on the management plans. The lesson of these five years is that in order to protect an area it takes good laws, good managing agencies, and the continuing support and support of folks like us who care. This is a powerful combination for protection.

Ruminations Continued from page 2

Mile 170. Owens Lake (Dry) is a lot more than just a dry lake. Mike Prather is our guide in the actions being taken to finally control the dust from the lake and re-watering the lower 65 miles of the Owens River. It makes me very proud to have Mike Prather speaking for the Club. I hope to cancel the lower 65 miles. Mike will tell me when. On the west side of the former lake is the Cottonwood Charcoal Kilns. Cottonwood is the name of the canyon, not the wood that was made into charcoal. To get the precious metals they used oak from the Santa Clarita Valley. Santa Clarita is where we started this trip. But before I end the narrative, I see the huge Inyo Mountain Wilderness on my right all the way to Big Pine. My destination is the John Muir Wilderness, a product of the California Wilderness Act of 1984. The Inyo Mountain Wilderness was a product of the CDPA of 1994. From Big Pine to Bishop the ridge on the right will be the proposed White Mountain Wilderness, part of the Wildlands 2000 campaign. It’s a good tradition!

Postscript: I’ve said thank you to a bunch of folks, but these were just the folks brought to mind by traveling north on Hwy 14 and U.S. 395. Had I been traveling east on I-8 or I-10 or northeast on I-15 it no doubt would have added a lot of others.
Amorgosa Continued from page 4
gave a presentation on the proposal,
and detailed the criteria necessary for
Wild and Scenic Designation. Those
persons who would be interested in
working on this project are encour-
eged to contact Mim Romero at
<MimRomer@LVCM.com>. An
outing sponsored by the Desert
Committee will be held in March
2000.

This designation would give the
River increased protection. BLM
Barstow is doing a good job of resto-
ration in the area. The Wild and Scenic
designation is an idea whose time has
come—and the designation would
only add more luster to the “crown
ejewel of the Mojave”.

Amtrak LA to LV

Amtrak’s Desert Wind from Los
Angeles to Salt Lake and then east to
Chicago runs no more. In 1985 Elden
and Patty Hughes led an outing where the
Desert Wind carried 40 Sierra
Clubbers from Los Angeles to Kelso
Depot in the middle of the, now,
Mojave National Preserve. It was a
fundraiser that barely broke even, but it
celebrated saving Kelso Depot. It
remains the only time Amtrak has
ever stopped a passenger train at
Kelso.

Amtrak is announcing future train
service between Los Angeles and Las
Vegas. It will use a special train de-
gined to take curves faster. Using
the Union Pacific lines requires that
Amtrak must build a double track for
the Cima grade from Kelso to Cima
(all within the Mojave National
Park). Service could start as soon as
the end of 2000.
Outings and Activities
January - 4 July 2000

The CNRCC Desert Committee’s purpose is to work for the protection, preservation, and conservation of the California/Nevada desert; support the same objectives in all desert areas of the Southwest; monitor and work with governments and agencies to promote preservation of our arid lands; sponsor educational and work trips; encourage and support others to work for the same objectives; maintain, share and publish information about the desert.

All Desert Committee activities, unless stated otherwise, are suitable for anyone who enjoys the outdoors. Special physical conditioning is not necessary. The average car or high clearance vehicle will be adequate for most trips; however, many of the roads used are dirt and, as with all desert travel, you should come prepared. For a good guide to desert travel we recommend the Sierra Club book “Adventuring in the California Desert” by Lynn Foster.

We want you to enjoy our study trips and work parties. They are designed to help you see the desert in a way you have not seen it before. We usually have a campfire in the evenings with lots of food (potluck) and camaraderie.

Outings Copy due February 28 for the period of July 5 - October

Jan 14-17
Fri-Mon
CNRCC Desert/Tahquitz Grp
Orocopia Mtts Car Camp, S. CA: Car camp, hike, explore and see wildlife oasis, etc. or just loaf in little known Orocopia Mtts. For more info and reservation send sase to Ldr: KATHY KELLEY (760) 321-5778, c/o Sierra Club, Box 1122 Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. Asst. Ldr: PAULINE GOSS (760) 868-5507

Jan 15-17
Sat-Mon
CNRCC Desert/San Diego Chap
Anza-Borrego Desert Park Sampler: Probably dry car camp in park on Martin Luther King Jr. Long weekend. 2WD OK. Mod dayhikes xc (up to 8 mi) to variety of scenic spots in/out of park. Possibilities include: climb Whale Pk, desert badjes, archaeologically-rich Sawtooth Mtns, palm-studded cyn in Jacumba Mtns, geologic oddities in Fish Creek Mtns, fossil-laden Coyote Mtns. Ldr: GREG MOLL (619) 238-1814 Send SASE with h&w phones & carpool info to Resv: NICK ERVIN, 4781 Mt. St. Helens Dr, San Diego, CA 92117, (619) 565-9582, desertguy1@aol.com.

Jan 22
Sat
CNRCC Desert/Sac Gorgonio Chap
Joshua Tree National Park: Wonderland Diamond Loop: This is a clever hike that was originated and shown to us by Jim Furniss, a JTPN legendary figure. Things get interesting as we stop by a very well preserved little known pictograph site known as the ‘diamond site’. From there on your right brain will take over. People are known to forget things along the trail on this hike and resort to childhood expressions such as ‘neat’ and ‘gosh’. Bring boots and tie them in your best no-rip knot. You’ll also want to have snacks, lunch, layerable clothes, hat and a day pack to put them in. Two liters of water should be enough. Meet in downtown Joshua Tree (known for being it’s lack of proximity to GraceLand). Call for meeting time. Al and Ann Murdy. 760-366-2932

Feb 26
Sat
CNRCC Desert/San Gorgonio Chap
Joshua Tree National Park - Split Rock, Pinto Wye Arrasta Hike: An arrasta is a device miners constructed to break stones into smaller ones and look through the particles for valuable minerals. We start at split rock, go through John’s camp and end at the arrasta where, along the nearest paved road, we’ll have our shuttle cars waiting. We’ll probably go into the park through 29 Palms giving any of you who haven’t been to the JTPN a chance to look around and admire their chic displays after the hike. Bring boots, two liters of water, snacks, lunch, layerable clothing and a day pack. Meeting place: southeast corner of highway 62 and Park blvd in Joshua Tree. Call for time. Ldrs: Al and Ann Murdy, 760-366-2932.
Be A Trip Leader!
Contact Letty French @ 805 239-7338

Feb 26-27
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Sat, Gorgonio Cmp
Salton Sea/Mecca Hills Expl &
Car Camp: On Sat we'll explore the
Salton Sea dilemma; discuss its history,
importance to migratory birds &
environ problems. Visit Bubbling
Mud Pots, Red Hill, Major birding ar-
eas, etc. Sunday, explore the Grotto of
Mecca Hills w/opt hike to palm oas-
ids. All hikes easy-mod. Camping
avail Fri nite. Send 2 SASE w/H & W
phones, carpool infor to Reserv:
JOAN TAYLOR, 1800 S Sunrise
Way, Palm Springs 92264,
760-778-1101. Ldr: Pauline Goss

Mar 4-5
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Com, Angeles Cmp
O: Natural History and Study of
Grazing Impact: Visit the UCR
Granite Mountains Desert Research
Center and learn how this facility
studies many of the impacts upon our
desert environment. Jim Andre, direc-
tor, will share his expertise with our
group during short hikes. Dry
carcamp on the N side of the Granite
Mtns with probable trip to Kelso
Dunes, possible side trip to Vulcan
Mine. For info, send SASE with
name, address, H & W phones,
carpooling possibilities to Ldrs: Cal &
Letty French 14140 Chimney Rock
Rd, Paso Robles, CA 93446-9793
<cefrench@tesn.net>

Feb 26-27
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Nat Science Sec
Afton Cyn Area of Critical En-
virnmental Concern: This cyn near
Barstow is one of the few places along
its length where the Mojave River
flows on the surface. Explore riparian
habitat and ancient Indian trails, fol-
lowed by potluck dinner on Sat.
Spend Sun hiking 7 mi rt, 500' gain
with geomorphologist NORMAN
MEEK and learn how Pleistocene
Lake Mannix helped create this "mini-
Grand Canyon of the Mojave." Dry
camp Fri and Sat nts. Send sase,
H & W phones, $5 per person (Sierra
Club-Natural Science Section) to
Ldrs: BOB & MAUREEN CATES,
140 Healy Trail, Chatsworth 91311,
818-883-2165.

Mar 11-12
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Com, Tehaha Cmp
O: Amagosa River Study Hikes
and Careamp: We will spend two
days learning about & exploring the
Amagosa Cyn ACEC, Lk Grimswh
ACEC, BLM areas near Shoshone,
and Salt Creek Hills Historic Site.
Follow the route of the mountain men,
horse thieves, and pioneers along the
Old Spanish Trail. Hike along the
roadbed of the historic Tonopah and
Tidewater Railroad. BLM Barstow is
doing a good job of restoring these ar-
reas. We will look at restoration
progress and discuss future plans for
these "crown jewels of the Mojave
Desert." Take a look back at the
original study done on the Canyon and
River in 1972 and be brought up to
date on current status re: those condi-
tions which have caused some deterior-
ation in both ACECs. The Shoshone
Motel is nearby for those who do not
careamp. High clearance vehicle

good, 4WD better. A complete trip
plan will be mailed to those who sign
up to attend. For info send SASE
with name, address, H & W phone #s to
Ldr: Mim Romero 9828 Kernville
Dr Las Vegas, NV 89134-7875
<mimromero@lvcm.com>

Mar 19-20
Sat-Mon
CNRCC Desert Com, SF Bay Cmp
O: Old Woman Mountains
Spring Equinox Service Trip: Ser-
vice trips to the Old Woman Mts are
an honored tradition by now — join us
for car camping on the spring equinox
weekend. We'll see what kind of co-
operative effort we can execute with
the Bureau of Land Management staff
this time. Whatever it is — it will be
an enjoyable way to bask in a new
desert wilderness at a beautiful time
of year. Central commissary and full
moon. Send SASE with name, ad-
dress, and phone # to Ldr: Vicky
Hoover, Sierra Club 85 Second St 2nd
Floor, San Francisco 94105-34421.
(415) 928-1038
<vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org>
Outings Continued

Apr 1-2
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Cmp, San Gorgonio Cmp
O: Route 66 Historical Sites and
Points of Interest: Starting in Victorville, we will travel various sections of Route 66, stopping at Daggett, Newberry Springs and Amboy. Other points of interest will be Pisgah Crater (near epicenter of Hector Quake), Granite Mountains, Mitchell Caverns, an Indian cave and a hike to the top of Amboy Crater. Camping will be dry and primitive, so bring lots of water and perhaps a little fire wood if you have some available. Hopefully there will be some wildflowers this time of year also. Send SASE with phone and ride share info to Carol Wiley, 15457 Eto Camino Rd., Victorville, CA 92394. Ldr: Carol Wiley (760) 245-87334, <cwiley@victorcc.ca.us> and Pauline Goss (760) 868-5507, <pgoss@qnet.com>.

Mar 31-Apr 2
Fri-Sun
CNRCC Desert Cmp, San Gorgonio Cmp
O: Calling all Fools: Lose an Hour, Hike a Peak: Camp at either Wildrose, Thorndike, or Mahogany Flats campgrounds in Death Valley, depending on the snow conditions. Start hiking Sat (before 8 AM) up Telescope Peak (11049') and approx. 11331 feet above the low point of DV. Spectacular views of the whole Sierra Crest, the Inyos, the Whites, Charleston Pk, and S Calif peaks of San Gorgonio, Baldy, and San Jacinto. With great rain luck, we'll catch some pretty flowers, including the rare Panamint Daisy. If we camp at Mahogany Flat (preferred unless there is a big snow year), the hike is about 3000' elev gain, about 6-8 m each way. Mahogany Flat is exceptionally quiet campground on a ridge. Spectacular views from the campground, so non-hikers are welcome to enjoy camp. Probable short hike Sun down in Wildrose Cyn if flowers are good, before the long drive home. Weather can be fickle in April: nights may be below freezing. Camp prepared for temps 20 to 120. Hot weather, rain, snow, and wind are possible. High clearance vehicle needed. Camp fees and park fee. Take off half of Fri to drive up, to arrive before 6 PM; should be home by decent hour on Sun if you live in S. CA. Email (preferably) your name, address including zip, phone, type of vehicle to: <bryfam@earthlink.net>. Ldr: Steve Bryant 909-989-5145 after 7 am and before 8 pm

Apr 8-9
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert-Tahquitz Cmp
Wonderland of Rocks Car Camp and Hike: Wonderland of Rocks is the centerpiece of Joshua Tree National Park. It is a twelve square mile maze of monzogranite rock formations - some skyscraper in height. Within it is an assortment of historic and prehistoric sites and geological interests. Call or e-mail ldrs for details. For reservation, send sase. Ldrs: Al and Ann Murdy, 62819 Sunny Sands, Joshua Tree, CA 92252, (760) 366-2932 <aemurdy@cecc.org>.

Apr 8-9
Sat-Sun
CNRCC-Toyabe Cmp
O: Lava Beds National Monument Car Camp, N CA: We had so much fun on this trip last September, that we have decided to do it again! Fun weekend to explore the unique volcanic features of this national monument located near the Oregon border. We'll explore lava tube and ice caves, climb volcanic craters, see petroglyphs, and check out one of the saddest trails commemorating the valiant efforts of the Modoc Indians to save their homeland. We'll also do some birdwatching at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge when spring migration through the Pacific Flyway should be at its best. Camp in beautiful campground in national monument and do some star gazing, taking advantage of the moon's dark phase that weekend. Send SASE, box phones, ride share info to Ldr: Sharon Kiel, 50 Suda Way, Reno, NV 89509, (775) 322-2465, or <tobyandmac@aol.com>.

April 28-30
Fri-Sun
CNRCC Desert Cmp, San Gorgonio Cmp
O: Mojave National Preserve Car Camp: Camp among pinyon pines and junipers at beautiful Mid Hills CG (5600' elev) with views of Kelso Dunes and Cima Dome. Mod. hikes include trail from Mid Hills to Hole in the Wall and climb of Teutonia Peak overlooking Cima Dome. Sierra Club built the Teutonia Peak trail. Campground fee. Limited water supply. Bring water, wood for campfire, and gear, day pack. 2WD OK. Send SASE and phone # to Ldr: Bill Engs, Box 3248, Crestline CA 92325 <ens@juno.com> 909-338-1910.

May 5-7
Fri-Sun
CNRCC Desert Cmp, San Gorgonio Cmp
O: Northern Death Valley Exploratory and Peak Bagging Car Camp: Check out Ubehebe Crater, the Racetrack, and other Death Valley wonders. For those with unbounded energy there will be the opportunity to bag two class 1 peaks in the area. These are on the Desert Peaks Section list. Sandy point (7062')—11 miles rt xc with 2700' elev gain; and Last Chance Mountain (8456')—5 miles rt xc hike with 3000' elev gain. Car camp Fri and Sat nights. High clearance not required except for 3.5 miles to Last Chance trailhead. Park en-
trance fee and campground fee. E-mail or send SASE with H&W phones and rideshare info (and conditioning info if planning to bag the peaks) to Ldr: George Wysup, 9774 Peach Tree Ln, Alta Loma, CA 91737 <g wysup@keyway.net>

May 26-29
Fri-Mon
CNRCC Desert Com, Utah Chap
O: Jarbridge Mtns Wilderness Area
Climbing/Service Trip:
Recently Elko County extremists have promised to enter Nevada's first designated wilderness area in order to reconstruct a 1.5 m vehicle route that the Forest Service obliterated for ecological reasons. Rep. State Senator John Carpenter was quoted, "we feel it's time that, as citizens, we take back our property." Local wilderness opponents have staged a destructive demonstration within this wilderness area to demand unlimited vehicle use on public lands. Here is our chance to show support and something positive in response. For two days of this trip, we will work with the FS to further help rehabilitate this wilderness area. Save time for a day's peak climb in one of the beautiful Great Basin's high, rugged mtn ranges. Expect 100 m views from the summit of the Jarbridge Mtns, wilderness since 1978. Bring food for potluck dinners on Sat & Sun nights. For more info or to sign up, contact Ldr: Jim Catlin (801) 328-3550 <wup@xmission.com>.

May 27-29
Sat-Mon
CNRCC Desert Com, Redwood Chap
O: Smoke Creek Desert Wilderness Complex; Carecamp or Backpack: 6 WSA's comprise this complex of proposed wilderness one hour's drive north of Reno and east of Susanville. Either a carecamp or an easy (2-3m) backpack to basecamp with day hikes on Sat & Sun. Guaranteed wildflowers and wildlife. We can meet on Fri night or Sat am at a campground in the vicinity. For more details, contact Ldr: Stan Weichert, 30646 100 Rd, Shingletown, CA 96038-9651, (530) 474-3180 or fax 530-474-1528.

May 27-29
Sat-Mon
CNRCC Desert Com, Toyabe Chap
O: Cathedral Gorge State Park
Car Camp; SE Nevada: Let's explore the cathedral-like spires and cave-like formations of this scenic canyon carved out of soft bentonite clay located about 170 miles northeast of Las Vegas, near the Utah border. Possibility of also checking out the rainbow canyon of nearby Kershaw-Ryan State Park. Others may wish to drive about an hour and a half to do some birdwatching at Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge known to be an oasis of lakes and marshes. Camp in State Park campground. The dark phase of the moon should enable us to do some serious star gazing! Send SASE, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Sharon Kiel, 50 Suda Way, Reno, NV 89509, (775) 322-2465, <tobyandmae@aol.com>.

June 17 - 18
Sat-Sun
CNRCC Desert Com, Toyabe Chap
O: Annual service trip to the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge:
Enjoy the remote Sheldon Refuge on the Nevada/Oregon border in the spring. We will help the US Fish & Wildlife Service protect pronghorn antelope, deer, and big horn sheep by removing unnecessary barbed wire fences. Call early to sign up for the trip and get directions to the Sheldon NWR. Joint trip with the Audubon Society. Ldrs: Rose Strickland, PO Box 8409, Reno NV 89507 775-329-6118 and Dennis Ghiglieri.

Jun 9-15
Fri-Thu
CNRCC Desert Com, Toyabe Chap
O: Paria River Backpack Utah-AZ: Easy-mod BP mostly down cyn, much wading in ankle-deep water. 40 m total. Main cyn is a narrow, sensously shaped 23 m long red-orange sculptured shape with a side slot tributary. Optional side trips with day pack will be available or relax in camp. In June the normal temps outside cyn at Lee's Ferry are 105 F day and 75 F evening. Can be cool to cold in cyn. Group size limit 10. Send S$35 (David Hardy) non-refundable BLM fee by 3/1, $20 (Sierra Club) refundable deposit (if you go). All SC deposits are required for wait list and are fully refundable if you go or cancel 8 days before trip. Send SASE, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: David Hardy, PO Box 99, Blue Diamond, NV 89004, (702) 875-4549.

Jul 1-4
Sat-Tues
CNRCC Desert Com, Toyabe Chap
O: Mt Jefferson Loop, Central Nevada: Semi-exploratory backpack to cool elevation of the Toquima Range. This typical central NV mtn range is between the Toyabes to the west and the Monitors to the east. Elev 7500' to high plateaus of 1112000'. Creeks, tundra cacti, alpine meadows with abundant wildflowers, quaking aspen, limber pines, and great views. Meet at Pine Creek trailhead. About 14 strenuous miles. Bring day pack to go to the 3 peaks of Mt. Jefferson. Visit the ghost town of Belmont. Better to have a high-clearance vehicle. To participate, send SASE with name, address, and phone #s to Ldr: David Hardy, PO Box 99, Blue Diamond NV 89004, (702) 875-4549.
Getting a Clear View at Lava Beds National Monument

By Marty Kiel

One September 18th and 19th the Sierra Club sponsored a regional, multi-chapter camping trip to Lava Beds National Monument in northern California. Seven participants came from the Reno and San Francisco areas to camp at what is one of the more under-utilized national monuments. Most visitors make just a brief rest stop at the monument to break up their trip from Mt. Shasta to Crater Lake. However, as we discovered, Lava Beds warrants closer attention.

National monuments are one part of the National Park system, designed to preserve at least one particular resource. In the case of Lava Beds, the most outstanding features are those resulting from the considerable amount of volcanic activity which took place about 30,000 years ago. Molten flowing lava solidifies first on its outside. Once the flow stops what remains are lava tubes that can be miles long and fifty feet in diameter. These are caves that can be explored with flashlights, bicycle helmets to protect one’s head from low ceilings, and, of course, common sense to prevent one from getting lost. Visitors can explore the caves without being accompanied by a park ranger. In addition to the lava tube caves are large volcanic craters composed of black porous basalt with quite sharp edges that one should avoid walking over barefoot.

Lava Beds and the adjacent Tule Lake was the site of the Modoc Indian War, 1872-1873. The U.S. Government wanted to relocate the Modocs to a reservation. When this could not be accomplished peacefully, the U.S. military was called in. For six months the two sides fought. The Modocs made their last stand at Captain Jacks Stronghold. Today, what remains is an enlightening, well designed interpretive trail.

Just outside the monument is Tule Lake, part of the Pacific flyway within the Klamath Basin. It was loaded with ducks, grebes, Canadian geese, egrets, and even some mule deer. We were fortunate to have two ornithologists in our group who helped with bird identification. Tule Lake also has a very nice visitor center with quite a few species of stuffed wildlife. For those of you who collect stamps, the visitor center sells duck stamps where ninety-eight percent of the proceeds go to preserving our wildlife areas.

Car camping at Lava Beds is a real treat. The campsites are open, roomy, and quiet—yes that’s right, quiet. One member of our group brought a small computerized telescope for stargazing. Once the telescope is positioned correctly to known stars, one simply enter the name of a planet or “deep sky object” such as a galaxy or star cluster and the little machine whirs into action. How especially enriching it is to look up at the nightsky when it is not obstructed by city lights.
Blue Lakes Ohhs & Ahhs

By Marty Kiel

The Fourth of July weekend is a festive time. Families picnic in the park. Children roll down grassy hills like little logs. At night the fireworks show begins, and colorful exploding rockets fill the dark sky along with many oohs and ahhs.

A diverse group of seventeen men and women from Nevada and northern and southern California elected to spend their Fourth of July weekend in the rural Pine Forest mountain range of northwestern Nevada. Their fireworks would hopefully be sparkling stars and the Milky Way running across the evening sky.

The drive to Blue Lakes was uneventful until the group hit the final eighteen-mile stretch of rutted, rocky, and steeply inclined dirt road. Fortunately, it was dry. A few spots called for low four-wheel drive, but everyone made it to the trailhead either by car or by foot. We then hoisted up our backpacks and set out in search of a campsite near Blue Lake. After an hour of easy hiking, we found a lovely spot on the shore of the lake at an elevation of 8000 feet.

The next day was the big hike to Duffer Peak (9397'), two miles from base camp. We had to hike around the lake, through a forested ravine, over a saddle, and across a meadow before we spied the beginning of the rocky peak. We had to do a little bit of "hand over hand" to make it to the top and when we finally did get up there, seating space was hard to come by. We ate our snacks, patted ourselves on the backs, and enjoyed the 360-degree view—the highest peak in northwestern Nevada.

Back in camp that evening, after we had finished our dinners, we began gazing up at the slowly darkening sky. The first heavenly body appeared low in the East. It was Venus. As the evening grew late, those of us who had to venture out of our tents for "natural" reasons, were treated to a wonderful, unobstructed night sky. The Milky Way was a glittery band and two great birds flew along it, Cygnus the Swan, and Aquila the eagle.

The group broke camp the next day. We drove down from the mountains onto the desert floor. It was hot and a little dusty. Before we completely disbanded and went our separate ways, we gathered for a watermelon farewell—cold, juicy, sweet watermelon that allowed us to spit the seeds out with impunity. We wiped our hands and our chins, said our farewells, and headed home.