
Nevadans should wake up and stop wilderness proposal

BY SUE SILVER
GUEST COLUMNIST,

Somewhere between "Don't litter or you'll pollute the environment" (about the 1960s) and today, where purported non-profit environmental corporations (now financially supported by some of America's most prominent businesses) are robbing Americans of millions of acres of public land on which to recreate, many of us must have been sleeping. More likely, though, we were struggling to make it day to day, month to month or year to year, as we raised our families and served as good citizens in our communities. We believed others were waging battles to protect our freedom, liberties and the overall balance of power.

In light of the controversy in several rural Nevada counties over what some term as a "land grab" on the part of the federal government driven by environmental organizations, it now seems that being good and productive citizens won't be enough to protect or preserve our rights to the use of our "public lands."

The Wilderness Act of 1964 was enacted by Congress to protect areas of the country that were at that time pristine areas of the nation's national forest system. The act is actively being used as a weapon against average Americans and their outdoor pastimes by the environmental elitists who believe they are better than the rest of us. Their "vision," they will have you believe, is that America must be returned to the condition it was before our ancestors ever touched foot on the continent .

Fueled by a manifest penned by former Earth First! member, Dave Foreman, titled, "The Wildlands Project," these activists with the now well-greased environmental corporations are committed to returning no less than 50 percent of the lands of the United States back to wilderness. Mankind will be restricted to pockets of urbanized population blessed only with the right to "pass through" the wilderness areas. (See www.rangemagazine.com/specialreports/05-fall-taking-liberty.pdf.)

Between 1989 and 2006, while we were sleeping the Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the Nevada Wilderness Project and the all-encompassing Nature Conservancy, have locked down over two and a half million more acres of public lands to "Wilderness Area" designation by Congress.

Since February, residents of Mineral, Esmeralda and Lyon counties have been fighting off a new lands bill proposal by Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign that includes a proposal for 1.4 million acres of wilderness.

Residents were told that the lands bill is not tied to a water bill Reid promises he'll get to help save Walker Lake. He then said the bill likely will include the appropriations for Walker Lake water.

Residents were told that a lands bill must include "Wilderness Areas," even though there is no law that requires wilderness be part of these purportedly beneficial land bills.

Residents of Lyon and Mineral counties had less than three months to either thwart that effort or acquiesce to the "hand out" of other aspects of the land bill offered by OUR elected officials - OUR EMPLOYEES. On April 17, Lyon County officially told the delegation "No thanks." Mineral County is headed that way.

The environmentalists have gone from those trying to educate America as to ways it was polluting the earth to being a steamroller hellbent to have it all, and they do not care if they bankrupt entire communities in the process.

Now they are at our back doors and threatening our access to our own "backyards." It is time to wake up!

Don't be lulled with talk of "compromise," as they are quoted as saying. To them compromise means, we ask for WAY MORE than we really want right now and then we negotiate and "compromise" to an area "We, the people" will think is a better deal than that originally sought. Such a deal! They get what they wanted in the first place and we try to convince ourselves that we didn't lose as much as we could have.

This affects all Nevadans and all those who come to our backyards to recreate, hunt or fish. It also happens to those whose livings are tied to the land. It affects the economies of the counties and the state.

Don't be placated by the argument that the land is remote, therefore it must be wilderness. For over 145 years, Nevada's lands have been tramped upon, prospected, towns settled, towns deserted and graveyards left behind.

What part of that activity could possibly have left "wilderness," unaffected by man?

In the end, this really isn't about the loss of millions of acres of land that we all enjoy playing or working in, it is about the loss of LIBERTY, the right to determine our own destinies and the destiny of the land that we love and call home. The citizens of Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda counties, have heard the alarm clock ringing and have awakened.

To the remainder of Nevada not yet affected, this environmental frenzy of creating "Wilderness Areas" where there is none must be stopped and counties must be left in control of what affects the public lands within their boundaries.

Your alarm clock is also ringing. Wake up!

¶ Sue Silver of Hawthorne is the Mineral County Liaison for the Coalition for Public Access.

<http://www.nevadaappeal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080601/OPINION/233254813&template=printart>

Copyright 2008 All Rights Reserved