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President's Message Early Snow

Dear Volunteers, Contributing Members, and Friends of SGWA

When you've experienced six long years of drought, every snowflake on the San Gorgonio summit looks promising. Early storms in October have dusted the top of Southern California, lifting the forest closures. The SGWA Backcountry Bulletin Board is filled with messages about snow level, crampons, and snowshoes, and all are hoping that forest closures retreat into our past and remain only a part of our history.

Mother Nature has been spending the last six years trying to educate us about forests and forest management. We've learned that 100 years of over aggressive fire suppression has created a forest with more trees than the ecosystem can handle. We've learned that thick, dense tree population in an arid forest results in thick, dense, and weak trees. We've learned that these weakened trees are virtually defenseless

against insects and other infestations.

Mother Nature is a stern teacher and we only hope she is satisfied that we have been attentive students. When the drought is over and winter snows replenish dried springs and the pine trees grow strong, will we remember this harsh lesson?

SGWA's interpretive program had also experienced a drought of sorts in recent times, and the "early snow" of our 2004 summer Ranger talks at the Greyback Amphitheater shows promise that interpretation remains a strong part of our future.

SGWA Volunteers **Teddi Boston, Dee McCoy, Bob Oppermann, Marco Perales, Don Rosene, Walter Roth, Karen Saffle, Dave Turner, Mark Voykovic, and Jarome Wilson** each underwent training to become certified NAI (National Association for Interpretation) Interpretive Guides, the same training provided to the National Parks.

This investment allowed us to put on Ranger talks all summer long, providing the public interesting and important information. And this investment will ensure that SGWA has the tools and ability to make sure the public remembers Mother Nature's harsh lessons in forest management.

The early snow gives us hope. The investment in Interpretation lets us turn hope into a tool to educate. Through education we retain the promise and potential of tomorrow.

Jarome Wilson, President SGWA



Alpine Meadows Camp Honors Volunteers

In appreciation for all the services provided by you volunteers, **Dr. Peter Huber** provided the facilities of their camp and a delicious barbecued chicken dinner for the 60 volunteers and family members who were able to attend our awards ceremonies on October 23. They had also provided us with the use of their camp and two meals at our training day last May as they have done for six years now. We are very thankful for the support of Alpine Meadows Camp staff including **Michael Dennison**, Camp Director, and **Susan Sostman**, Marketing Director.

It is a very good partnership that we have with Peter and his staff as together we all help people have some wonderful experiences in the mountains – experiences that improve mental and physical health and provide wonderful memories for the future. THANK YOU ALPINE MEADOWS CAMP!

Regional Forester Thanks Volunteers

In a September 7, 2004, letter
Subject: 40th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

To: All Pacific Southwest Region personnel

Jack A. Blackwell, Regional Forester, wrote, in part:

In the Pacific Southwest Region, we are stewards of 56 wilderness areas that total over 4.5 million acres of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Considering the population of California is 36 million and projected to reach 45 million by

2020, our role as wilderness stewards will only grow in complexity.

Managing these inspiring landscapes is a privilege and a challenge. We are charged with ensuring that Wilderness is, "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. . ." We must also manage, "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. . ."

Wilderness stewardship on a daily basis is accomplished by trail crews, wilderness rangers, biologists and permit administrators, among others. In addition, the work of our non-profit partners is equally significant. Gratefully, we have over a dozen of these valued partners across the Region, such as the Chief's Award winning Stanislaus Wilderness Volunteers and others including the San Geronio Wilderness Association, High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew, and Backcountry Horsemen of California to name a few. We couldn't accomplish the level of work we do without them. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you and commend you all for your professionalism as stewards of this enduring resource.

Volunteers and Contributors Improve Public Health

Our working volunteers and contributing members/sponsors made the summer of 2004 the best ever. Working volunteers and contributing members/sponsors once again enabled us to care for the forest and help visitors better understand and enjoy the very special and wonderful resources of the San Bernardino National Forest. By providing clean and safe trails and camps, and by providing education in historical and natural resources, the continuing work of

the SGWA ensures a safe, enjoyable source of low cost recreation that helps forest visitors improve their mental and physical health.

Our volunteers' service was amazing and varied, as it has been for the past 20+ years. Of course, it is the people and how well they care for others that makes any program as successful as this volunteer program has been for many years. We've been very lucky to have caring Forest Service personnel and volunteers over the years, from the Forest Service founders of our program, **Dave Hood and Bob Shuker**, and our SGWA founders **Jim Bolson, John Flippin, Dorothy Fotheringham, Dana Klatt, Alice Krueper, Dave Hallet, Linda Roddick, Val Silva, and Dale Silvernail**, to all of the great volunteers and Forest Service personnel we have today. We were lucky again this year to have several excellent new volunteers come on to help our veterans. As a result, volunteer accomplishments were truly unbelievable.

Volunteers donated over 12,600 hours, worth over \$300,000 to the Forest Service and the public. Volunteers protected and cleaned the forest, improved facilities and trails, and helped tens of thousands of visitors including 12,000 with whom they had face-to-face contact. Some of the major volunteer accomplishments in 2004 were:

- Removed thousands of pounds of litter from roads, trails, and campsites.
- Cleaned up 71 illegal fire rings, and prevented many more.
- Presented a couple dozen nature talks to over 1000 visitors.
- Provided lunch and fishing buddies to 80 children at the Forest Service Fish Festival.
- Put on a free forest festival for over 400 visitors.
- Operated and maintained the Barton Flats Visitor Center where volunteers talked with over 4,400 visitors.

- Operated and maintained the Horse Meadows historical site along the South Fork Trail.
- Operated and maintained the visitor information station at the Big Falls picnic area.
- Provided complete patrol of the San Geronio Wilderness and surrounding areas.
- Provided frequent fishing and litter control and education along 10 miles of the Santa Ana River.
- Performed minor trail maintenance along 100 miles of trail in and around the Wilderness.
- Served 800 hours on major trail projects.
- Removed a few miles of brush and several trees from across trails.
- Patrolled and monitored mining operations in the forest.
- Managed educational sales outlets in five locations on the forest.
- Maintained an extensive web site containing forest information, including weather and trail conditions.
- Operated and maintained a permanent work camp for all volunteers.
- Provided current trail/camp conditions reports for Wilderness visitors.
- Provided a dozen public assists to lost, injured, and/or stranded forest visitors.
- Made initial reports of three wild fires.

Well, you get the idea. Volunteer services are amazing in quantity, quality, and variety. And that is why all volunteers were honored by the Forest Service at our awards ceremony on October 23. Our most constant day-to-day Forest Service supporters, Gabe Garcia, District Ranger; **Bob Wood**, Recreation Officer; **Alfredo Zarate**, Wilderness Manager; and **Anne "Raven" Marie** presented very special awards for volunteers **Jarome Wilson**, SGWA President; Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, and Interpretive Programs Leader;

Karen Saffle, Forest Festival Director; **Teddi Boston**, Fish Festival Donations Manager; **Mary Hart**, Adopt-a-trail leader; **Teri Cappuccio and Ann Robinson**, Wilderness Dispatch editors; **Val Silva**, Equestrian Coordinator; **Danny Silva**, Tulake Volunteer Camp Manager; **Ted Schofield**, Funds Development; **Richard Nyerges**, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator; **Janelle Kotzin and Dee McCoy**, Interpretive Site Co-managers; **Larry Fuerstinger and Glenn and Marcia Riddle**, Barton Flats Station Crew; **Phebe Baty and Dee McCoy**, Mill Creek Front Desk Crew; **Jeff Lynn, Amy Wade, and Bob Williams** for outstanding trail maintenance; **Ardis Beckner, Sue Crowell, and Ted Schofield** for completing ten years of volunteer service; **Jan Gudgell, Pat Peters, and Jim Sirick** for fifteen years of service; and **Patt French** for twenty wonderful years of volunteer service. Congratulations to all volunteers for another great year!!

Personal Thanks from Coordinator John

As every year at this time, I cannot help but extend my deepest thanks to the SGWA officers, board members, and volunteers for allowing me to continue coordinating your wonderful services to the public for the past year. I feel very proud and fortunate to be associated with the greatest group of volunteers I have ever known. Everyone has different amounts of time available that they can donate to the forest. However, all the hours you donate, whether 20 or 400 are vitally important to the success of this Forest Service team.

I've now finished my twelfth season as your coordinator and each year seems like the first – they go so fast and it continues to be exciting and inspiring to see all the wonderful service provided by the volunteers. We can all be proud

of helping thousands of visitors maintain and improve their mental, physical, and spiritual health while we've protected the forest resources which will enable thousands more to do the same for many years to come. Working on the mountain this year has been a tremendous pleasure thanks to wonderful Forest Service personnel and all of our great volunteers.

Though there is always the chance of hot dry winds through November, it looks very much like we'll get through this year without any major fires. Volunteers always play a big part in fire education and prevention, but it is to the credit of all our volunteers covering so much of the forest that several SGWA volunteers, **Dee McCoy, Gail Seymour, Val Silva, and Jarome Wilson**, made initial reports of three wild fires this year. All were very quickly knocked down by our outstanding Forest Service fire fighters before they became large.

This coming summer holds great promise and excitement as remaining trees have less competition for scarce water and seem to be doing better and suffering less beetle kill. Forest Service and contractor crews continue to remove dead trees, thereby reducing fire danger and making the forest look better. Our fantastic interpretive volunteers look forward to continuing our partnership with the Forest Service and **Pat Baker** at Alpine Camping Services in providing our second exciting summer of Saturday evening ranger talks at the Greyback Amphitheater. We also look forward to expanding our trail maintenance efforts through an elite SGWA Trailshots program. And so much more coming in the new year – though I'm enjoying the winter slowdown in our volunteer program, I can hardly wait for next summer!

I'll continue to stop by our office at the Mill Creek Ranger Station but will be there much less through the winter. Remember my

home phone, 909-790-2157, and email address, johnpauljp@earthlink.net, are open to you all as usual. I look forward to seeing you next May. Have a wonderful holiday season, a great winter, and take care out there.

Volunteers are a Big Help at Big Falls

A "Big" THANK YOU! to all of you who helped out at Big Falls this season. The station was staffed for 35 out of 39 possible days. Many of those 35 days were only possible because we are fortunate to have many terrific volunteers who responded to a last minute request. Some of the volunteers who work there (you know who you are!) think it's the best job on the mountain. They enjoy a relaxed day under the shade of pines, hiking down to the Falls, 'path' maintenance, selling Adventure Passes, hiking up to the Vivian Creek Trail crossing, and talking with picnickers and Big Falls sight-seers. Other volunteers helped out in response to our request that all try to do at least one day at the Falls. It may not be their first choice for a volunteer activity, but they helped out anyway. (Often those who are "first timers" at the Falls wonder why they hadn't done it sooner!) Our Big Falls Team this season included: **Bill Hedekin, Dave Turner, Sylvia Beasley, Summer Beasley, Dan Kerr, Sue Crowell, Jeff Haggard, Travis Underwood, Bob Villa, Bob Williams, Bob Oppermann, Joe McGregor, Cindy McGregor, Cathy Baldwin, Carl Floyd, Bill Carr, Sandy Messner, Sheila McMahon, Ardis Beckner, Lois Kuss, and Karen Saffle**. Thanks again for all of you who were willing and able to help SGWA out at this important station. We look forward to seeing all of you and many more back at Big Falls next year. Happy Holidays!

Janelle and Dee

SGWA Wish List

To enable us to better serve the public we wish we had the following items. If you know of someone who would like to donate these items, new or used, please let us know. Tax deductions are applicable.

- Folding metal chairs.
- Digital Image Projector for computer slide presentations
- Ten AA battery holders for Bendex/King radios
- Heavy-duty portable electronic equipment boxes for interpretive programs

Wishes Come True

We thank the following very much for their donations. Their generosity will benefit the public greatly.

- Joanne Meier/Mary Ann Schofield
Fish Festival T-Shirts for all children and adults
- Ted Schofield – Fish Festival photo film, bottled water, and other supplies
- Karen I. Smith – 100 radio batteries
- Wiley Wohlf – Slide projector

Thank You For Your Support!!

Many who know the great value of our forest and wilderness areas may not have the time but have the monetary resources to help the SGWA continue to "Serve, Protect, and Educate." Recent contributing members to whom we and forest visitors owe many thanks are:

Student/Senior Members (\$20)

*Edmund Treidler
Barbara Wilson*

Individual (\$25)

*Quyen Baldwin
Michele Gross
Henry Hall
Linda Harris
Theresa Jachtschitz
Roland Kendall*

Individual (\$25) continued

*Debi Kristiansen
Frankie Lee
Taylor Little
Paul Lowes
Anne (Raven) Marie
Leila Muego
Alfonso Otoyra-Vera
Linda Roddick
Kelly Schnick
Mathew Tonkovich
Louvenia Watkins*

Family/Dual (\$35)

*Al & Helen Hull
Ed & Sandy Johnson
Suzie & Walt Kirkwood
Frank & Judy Sprinkle
Diane, Hillary, & Jeff Voge
Frederick Ziel, MD*

Trail Blazers

(\$50 or more annually)
*Jane Greenawalt
Candy & Don Trueblood*

President's Summit Team

(\$100 or more annually)
*Gitty Denver
Patti & Roger Gossett
Harry Krueper
Kevin Lodeen
Anneli & Bill Ostic
Jeanette Stuard*

Wilderness Forever Endowment

*Barbara Wilson (\$30) in Memory of
Andrew Wilson (brother of
volunteer and past board member
Dan Riley)*

SGWA Helps Sponsor "On Fire"

The San Gorgonio Wilderness Association provided a very significant amount of funds in sponsoring the play "On Fire," that tells the story of fire in American forests from the founding of the Forest Service in 1905 to the disastrous fires of 2003. The play was presented six times at no charge to the public in Idyllwild, San Bernardino, and Big Bear by Duende, a drama and literature group from Sonora, California.

"On Fire" dramatized the political wars that have shaped current fire policy. Playwright Rick Foster concentrated on the Great Fire of

1910, which created heroic stories and moved public opinion in support of fire suppression. The play explored the gritty heroics, the tragedies, and the triumphs of America's wildland fire fighters. And it portrayed the equally dramatic battles in the corridors of power — the wars to determine how America's wildlands will be managed. Audiences left with a feeling of how chaotic, terrifying, and tragic a great fire can be. They also left with a better understanding of how our wildlands came to their current conditions — and what that means to all who come in contact with an uncontrollable fire.

Thank you, Ideal Graphics!

Printing of the Wilderness Dispatch contributed in part by Scott Watson, Ideal Graphics, Ontario, CA. A big thanks goes to Scott and his staff for their service and consideration.

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Val Silva
Wiley Wohlf

Staff

Volunteer Coordinator
E. John Flippin
Home: 909-790-2157
E-mail:
johnpauljp@earthlink.net

Foot Patrol Assignments
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Now there's a way to help not just one, but all these things. It's called Earth Share of California – the world's leading environmental and conservation charities working together.

Through Earth Share you can make a payroll deduction donation that helps to preserve and protect the environment – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Or you can choose to help specific organizations such as the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association through your payroll deduction.

Earth Share not part of your employer's workplace giving campaign? The SGWA would like to help you with that. Call **Ted Schofield** at 909-862-1089 or send an e-mail to him at flyer1955@aol.com.