PARKS AND WILDLIFE BOND INITIATIVE CLOSING IN ON '94 BALLOT

The California Parks and Wildlife Bond Initiative (nicknamed CALPAW '94) is getting closer to qualifying for the June 1994 ballot. As of the end of October, over 720,000 signatures have been gathered! Literally hundreds of volunteers from the Mountain Lion Foundation, Planning and Conservation League, Sierra Club, and dozens of local park districts and citizens' groups have been combing the state for registered voters.

CALPAW '94, if approved by voters next June, would authorize the sale of state bonds to raise $1.95 billion to purchase parks and wildlife habitat throughout the state of California. Many specific areas would benefit, such as Coal Canyon, a wildlife corridor in Orange County that is threatened by a housing development. Other funds would go to support urban parks, historical resources, and state agencies, such as the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Nearly $1.2 billion of CALPAW '94 will specifically benefit wildlife habitat statewide. Areas such as the Santa Rosa Plateau, a complex oak forest area with mountain lions and several endangered species, will benefit from funding provided by CALPAW '94 to purchase additional habitat and wildlife corridors. Altogether, over 400 specific areas have been designated to receive funding through CALPAW '94. Additionally, more than $475 million will go to the Wildlife Conservation Board to acquire habitat for endangered species, wetlands, and salmon and steelhead streams. These funds can be used to supplement the habitat funds ($21 million annually) that come from Proposition 117, the "Mountain Lion Initiative".

After the initiative qualifies, the long campaign begins to ensure that voters know about and support CALPAW '94. In addition to the many conservation and wildlife groups that support CALPAW '94, the California League of Women Voters has recently endorsed the campaign. Help is needed in getting the word out to local governments, civic groups and other potential supporters.

RESTRICTING ACCESS TO PRIVATE LAND FOR BIOLOGISTS

New legislation signed by Governor Pete Wilson will undercut wildlife protection by restricting access to private land for employees of his own Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Senate Bill 779 by Senator Tim Leslie (R - Carmelian Bay) was strongly opposed by the Mountain Lion Foundation, Planning and Conservation League, and the Sierra Club, but managed to finally pass the state legislature at 4:00 AM on the last day of session. Governor Wilson ignored requests for a veto of the bill.

"The poachers and polluters who hide out on private land have reason to celebrate," Mark J. Palmer, Executive Director of the Mountain Lion Foundation, told the media. "S.B. 779 by Senator Leslie severely restricts the biologists and even wardens from the California DFG from going on private land. The legislation will interfere with virtually every action of the DFG, from oil spill damage assessment, to monitoring of deer herds, to endangered species protections, to wetlands mitigation projects.

"A bald eagle does not know where the private property lines begin, but the poachers and polluters will know." S.B. 779 states that "notwithstanding any other provision of law," DFG officials must get permission from the private landowner or a search warrent in order (continued on page 5)
LAWSUIT FILED TO SAVE MOJAVE SQUIRREL

The Mountain Lion Foundation (MLF), joined by the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Desert Protective Council, has filed a lawsuit against the California Fish and Game Commission to protect the Mojave Ground Squirrel. The squirrel, which has been protected by the California Endangered Species Act since 1971, was removed from the endangered species list by the Commission in response to a "delisting" petition filed by the Kern County Planning Department and development interests. (See story in Summer 1993 Mountain Lion Update.)

MLF and other groups had urged the Commission to reconsider their illegal action. The Commission refused.

"The decision to remove the Mojave Ground Squirrel from the state endangered species list is sabotage of our wildlife laws," contends Mark J. Palmer, MLF Executive Director. "The Commission and Governor Pete Wilson's Administration have repeatedly ignored state environmental laws that they have found to be inconvenient."

"Every scientist who had done extensive field research on this species agrees that it is threatened with extinction," stated Darryl Young, spokesman for the Sierra Club. "Yet, the Commission ignored the scientific arguments and instead pandered to special interest groups looking to make a buck. We cannot let our wildlife heritage be squandered by the Fish and Game Commission."

What You Can Do: Watch for updated information this November from the Mountain Lion Foundation on how you can help fight the California Fish and Game Commission!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

This year, most of the Mountain Lion Foundation's efforts were spent in Sacramento on blocking bad legislation, with a great deal of success. However, several minor bills did pass that increase protection for our wildlife heritage:

Endangered Species Consultations Extended:

A.B. 426 by Assembly Members Dominic Cortese (D-San Jose) and Robert Campbell (D-Richmond), has passed and been signed into law by the Governor. A.B. 426 requires state agencies to consult with biologists at the Department of Fish and Game when actions they propose to take (such as the Dept. of Transportation building a new freeway or the Dept. of Marine birds and mammals, especially the threatened sea otter, are particularly susceptible to death from oil spills through poisoning, shock and hypothermia. Mobile stations will also be maintained to reach wildlife in remote localities. S.B. 775 has been signed into law by the Governor.

What You Can Do:

Letters of thanks to the authors of these bills is always a good idea! Send your letter to: Assembly Member ______ or Senator ______, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. Thank them for their support of California's wildlife heritage.

Please write your Assembly Member and urge them to vote "NO" on any Auburn Dam proposals.

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Auburn Dam Defeated Again!

Last year, with help from MLF, conservationists defeated an attempt to fund the Auburn Dam in Congress. This year, another attempt to take funding out of the pockets of Californians for the dam was defeated in the last days of the state legislature.

The Auburn Dam, if ever completed, would flood up to 48 miles of the scenic American River Canyon, wiping out prime wildlife habitat. The mountain lions of the canyon would, along with other wildlife species, be seriously impacted by this expensive water project.

Legislation to fund building the Auburn Dam through a statewide bond measure (A.B. 184 by the late Assembly Member B.T. Collins - R - Sacramento) was defeated on the state Assembly floor. The Mountain Lion Foundation is a member of the American River Coalition, working to block Auburn dam.

What You Can Do:

Please write your Assembly Member and urge them to vote "NO" on any Auburn Dam proposals that come before them. Write to the address listed above.

(AIf you do not know who your Assembly Member is, call your local Registrar of Voters.)
BOBCATS and BEARS – STILL IN PERIL

The California legislature left town in September without fully resolving the issue of bobcat trapping and bear hunting.

S.B. 380 by Senator Tom Hayden (D - Santa Monica) was narrowly defeated in the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee last May. (See story in the Summer 1993 Mountain Lion Update.) However, the Committee did grant reconsideration to the bill, so it can be heard again, probably early in 1994 when the legislature returns in January. We are discussing possible amendments to S.B. 380 with the author to see if we can get a package that will pass the legislature.

Currently, S.B. 380 bans commercial trapping and sport hunting of bobcats in California. A possible amendment would be to ban commercial trapping but allow sport hunting under more restrictive conditions. For example, currently a sport hunter can kill up to five bobcats for an $8 tag. We have proposed raising this fee to $20 for one bobcat. The bobcat is currently listed in California as a nongame (or “varmint”) species. We have proposed making the bobcat a game specie to increase environmental review of hunting proposals. Commercial trapping continues to be the biggest killer of bobcats in California, so a ban on trapping would be a useful step.

Letters to your own Senator and members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee (especially Chairman Mike Thompson, D - Santa Rosa) would be helpful. Address for all Senators: Senator ________, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

S.B. 67, Senator Nicholas Petris’ (D - Oakland) bill to ban hunting of black bears with dogs, was also defeated last May. While it can be heard in Committee again, its prospects are not good. Conservationists are at a loss as to how to further compromise the legislation without making it meaningless.

There are continuing discussions of alternatives, including the possibility of doing a major initiative for bobcats and bears similar to Proposition 117, the Mountain Lion Initiative of 1990. Such an effort would likely be targeted for the 1996 election, but a final decision has not been made.

Donation Honoring Margaret Owings

We would like to extend appreciation to an anonymous donor for her contribution to the Mountain Lion Foundation in honor of Margaret Owings.

Mrs. Owings started mountain lion protection efforts in the 1960s in California and moved on to become one of the founders of the Mountain Lion Foundation. She is currently President Emeritus of the Mountain Lion Foundation.

Staff Changes at the Mountain Lion Foundation

This fall has seen many changes at the Mountain Lion Foundation office. Kim Klein, our Program Director for many years, has found a new job at the Peninsula Humane Society in San Mateo.

Taking over Kim’s fundraising duties is our new Development Director, Shannon Eddy. Shannon comes to us from the Sierra Club and has a degree in Public Relations.

Carsynn Costa, our Administrative Coordinator, has given birth to a bouncing baby girl and is on maternity leave for six months. In her place, the Mountain Lion Foundation has hired Jennifer Williams, a recent graduate of Sacramento State University and a former intern for the Mountain Lion Foundation.

Also joining the Mountain Lion Foundation staff for a short time is Gabrielle Meindl, who is working with Science Director Kevin Hansen on our Anti-Poaching Campaign, doing research on poaching crimes in California.

Finally, two summer interns, Matt Wacker and Kimi Lee, both from the University of California, Davis, are wrapping up special projects. Matt conducted extensive library searches for our Anti-Poaching Campaign, while Kimi is completing a report on solutions to protecting endangered species in California. We appreciate all their good works for the mountain lions and other wildlife!

Congratulations!

to our staff Administrator, Carsynn Costa, and her husband Randy, on the birth of their first child.

Name: Carlynn Costa
Born: September 10, 1993
COUGAR: THE AMERICAN LION
by Kevin Hansen

Written by staff member Kevin Hansen in association with the Mountain Lion Foundation, Cougar: The American Lion is the most definitive book to date on the mountain lion in North America!

This beautiful and informative book is accented with stunning color photos and a forward by Robert Redford.

$19.95 plus tax (7.75% CA Residents) and shipping ($3).

1994 “WILD CATS OF NORTH AMERICA” CALENDAR

Text by the Mountain Lion Foundation, with quotes from Robert Redford and Michael Blake.
Photographs by Tom Brakefield.

12 brilliant, full-color photographs of mountain lions, jaguars, ocelots, bobcats and lynx.

A Great Gift!
$10.95 plus tax (7.75% CA Residents) and shipping ($2).

Mountain Lion Foundation Winter Wish List

The Mountain Lion Foundation is expanding our library of books on wildlife in California and the West. We now have one of the most complete libraries on the mountain lion anywhere in the world. Your help in providing new books for our library would be greatly appreciated:

• Wildlife of Mexico by A. S. Leopold, University of California Press.
• Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance by Stephen Herrero, Nick Lyons Books/Winchester Press.
• The Furbearers of California by Joseph Grinnell, University of California Press.
• Cougar Killer by Jay C. Bruce, Sr., Comet Press Books, New York, Copyright 1953.

Remember, any donations to the MLF are tax deductible.
June 1990 witnessed the passage of Proposition 117, the California Wildlife Protection Act (or “Mountain Lion Initiative”). Prepared by the Mountain Lion Foundation, Planning and Conservation League, Sierra Club, and other environmental and animal organizations, Prop. 117 banned sport hunting of mountain lions and provided $30 million annually of special funds to purchase and enhance habitat for wildlife, including mountain lions, endangered species, and other important habitats.

In the first two years of Prop. 117, over 72,000 acres of land were protected. The third year has seen the acquisition of an additional 56,000 acres throughout the state of California.

In part, several of the agencies that use Prop. 117 funds were able to get additional matching funds from other sources for purchases, resulting in an additional $9.5 million for acquisitions above the $30 million annually provided by Prop. 117.

Sixty percent of the projects were designed to encourage urban people to use the wildlife areas purchased. One project in southern California, for example, utilized Prop. 117 funds for developing a visitor’s center.

Another innovation this year is the use of funds from Prop. 117 to help farmers protect wildlife habitat on their private lands. For example, funds from Prop. 117 were used to purchase five “rice rollers,” large rollers pulled by tractors across rice fields after harvest. The rollers break down the remaining rice stubble, which is then flooded in the winter. Ducks and other wildlife can then use the artificial wetlands that are created and feed on the left over rice, and farmers avoid burning rice stubble, which causes air pollution. By helping farmers find ways to benefit wildlife, Prop. 117 funds help increase the amount of habitat available for wildlife throughout the state.

Wildlife needs good habitat to survive. Prop. 117 is one citizen’s initiative that is effective in protecting habitat for future generations of mountain lions and people!

For copies of Prop. 117 Annual Reports, contact the Wildlife Conservation Board, 801 K Street, Suite 806, Sacramento, CA 95814, or the Mountain Lion Foundation.

(CALPAW continued from page 1)

With California’s economy at a low ebb, some may question the wisdom of spending money to protect wildlife and parks. In fact, the economy is one of the reasons why CALPAW ‘94 makes sense. Real estate is the subject of inflated prices during boom years; the current sluggish market makes investments in habitat and parks an excellent bargain. And once the land is developed for housing or business or agriculture, the land is lost forever for wildlife. Now is the time to act to purchase land for future generations; a few years from now will be too late for many of the species of plants and animals in California that are on the endangered species list.

For more information on CALPAW ‘94, contact the Mountain Lion Foundation.

(SB 779 continued from page 1)

to go on private land. There are several exceptions, including an exception for wildlife emergencies, for review of timber harvest plans, and for wardens for law enforcement. The Mountain Lion Foundation, working with the California State Wardens Association, managed to get a number of these amendments that lessen the impact of the bill on wildlife protection. But the bill leaves many other duties of the DFG up in the air.

The DFG itself was not allowed by the Governor to testify against the bill in hearings in the state legislature.

S.B. 779 erodes environmental and wildlife laws by giving landowners the power to deny access to wildlife biologists. Our public trust wildlife heritage is threatened. The bill was sponsored by the California Cattlemens Association.

The Mountain Lion Foundation is seeking legislative support to repeal S.B. 779 next year.

THANK YOU!

The Mountain Lion Foundation Board of Directors and Staff wish to extend a warm thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who have taken time to collect signatures for CALPAW ’94. Your support for this landmark wildlife and park funding package will help preserve our mountain lions, our other wildlife, and their homes for years to come!
CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT STARTS TO MOVE!

After much anticipation, Senator Dianne Feinstein's (D-CA) California Desert Protection Act has finally cleared the Senate Energy and Environment Committee on a 13 to 7 vote. This action clears the way for a vote by the full Senate.

The California Desert Protection Act is the most important and biggest wilderness and wildlife habitat bill in the United States outside of Alaska. The bill would (1) establish a new Mojave National Park of 1.46 million acres, (2) expand both Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Monuments substantially and redesignate these areas as National Parks, and (3) protect an additional 71 different areas in the California desert as new Wilderness Areas. Wilderness designation prohibits off-road vehicles, mining and new road building in these important areas to protect the natural habitat and solitude.

Senator Feinstein was forced to compromise the original bill in order to win the support of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee. All told, the bill is almost 400,000 acres smaller than the original California Desert Protection Act introduced by the former Senator Alan Cranston. The most significant loss to conservationists is the South Algodones Dunes area of 61,000 acres, which was removed from Wilderness protection due to opposition from off-road vehicle interests. A smaller, northern part of the dunes complex will still receive protection.

The passage of the bill also represents a victory over the National Rifle Association, who is sponsoring hostile amendments to allow sport hunting in the proposed Mojave National Park, a precedent that would harm other parks and wild places if approved by Congress. An amendment to allow hunting failed in the Senate Energy and Environment Committee on an 11-9 vote. Hunting advocates will likely try to amend the bill on the floor of the Senate or in the House of Representatives.

Passage of the California Desert Protection Act is a top priority for the Mountain Lion Foundation and other environmental groups in California.

What You Can Do:

Please write a letter to your Congressional Representative in the House. Urge them to support the California Desert Protection Act! Urge them to oppose any weakening amendments, especially any amendments to allow sport hunting in National Parks. Parks and shooting don't mix!

Address for All Members: The Hon. ________, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. (If you do not know who your local Congressional Representative is, call your local Registrar of Voters.)