This grateful tribute was written by MLF Legal Director Bill Yeates, co-founder, counsel and friend.

On January 21, 1999, Margaret Wentworth Owings died at her home, Wild Bird, at the age of 85. It was fitting that she left this earth on her terms, surrounded by family and friends while perched on Grimes Point overlooking the rugged and majestic Big Sur coastline she loved.

Margaret was like no other person that I have ever known. She was an elegant lady of immense determination. When you were in her presence, she commanded your attention. Yet, she never took herself too seriously; always inserting self-deprecating remarks about herself to help ease the tension of a contentious moment.

Because she was so very real and genuine, she was extremely effective in moving people to do the right thing for the environment. As Monterey Congressman Sam Farr noted: “She taught many of us that – for all things natural and beautiful – there is no compromise.”

In addition to being a founder of the Mountain Lion Foundation, Margaret founded Friends of the Sea Otter, and served on the California State Parks Commission. For her countless accomplishments she received many conservation awards, including the National Audubon Society’s Gold Medal, the United Nation’s Environmental Program’s Gold Medal Award, and the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Conservation Service Award.

Her dear friend the late Wallace Stegner wrote this about Margaret: “Nobody can listen to Margaret Owings’ account of her life without becoming acquainted with one of the most effective wildlife conservationists and one of the great spirits.”

During my early years working on the ban on mountain lion hunting, first with the Mountain Lion Coalition and later the Mountain Lion Foundation, I was fortunate to be Margaret’s neighbor. My office was just a few miles up the coast from Big Sur. Whenever Margaret would call me, she would already be in mid-sentence by the time I got the receiver to my ear. She had either read something, heard from a friend, or just knew that something needed to be done to further the protection of something she held dear.

Never one to let things wait, she was always quick to take
devotion to the protection and preservation of what we all know as priceless. Yet, as history has shown, we often have overlooked and ignored the consequences of our industry or societal self-indulgences.

Margaret was sent this earth to remind us to lift our nose above the grindstone and appreciate what we cannot always understand. She served LIS well and her accomplishments and spirit remain with LIS.

Margaret had a penetrating vision for wild places. She embraced the natural world and its wild inhabitants and told us often how privileged we all were to share each cherished moment within these places.

In her words: "May I speak of those moments after sunrise, when the mist is rising from the sea and the fog is fingering canyons of Big Sur?""
Both the State and the Federal governments have listed the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep as endangered. With fewer than 100 of these animals left on the planet, this listing is a long time overdue.

Last November, it became woefully obvious to the Mountain Lion Foundation that state efforts on behalf of this animal were not adequate. The Department of Fish and Game's only public act had been to call for shooting mountain lions that ate bighorn sheep.

Research into the issue revealed that DFG had intended to create a captive breeding program for bighorn but were waiting for "private sector partners" to come up with the funding rather than ask for the public's help.

MLF responded immediately that all citizens had an interest in this endangered animal and that it was inappropriate to keep this problem internal. While we appreciate the notion that the Safari Club and other hunting partners would help fund a captive breeding program, that did not a recovery plan make.

At the next Fish and Game Commission meeting, Executive Director Lynn Sadler and Legal Director Bill Yeates asked the Fish and Game Commission to use its emergency powers to list the sheep. They also asked the Commission to request federal listing and relocation of domestic sheep that threaten the wild populations with disease.

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**BILL TO HUNT LIONS AMENDED**

While efforts to save the bighorn continued, Assembly Member Rico Oller (R-San Andreas) introduced AB 560 which called for a ballot measure to overturn Proposition 117, the Mountain Lion Initiative. The bill was essentially a repeat of the soundly-defeated Prop 197 by Senator Tim Leslie, for whose senate seat Oller is competing.

The battle cries for this bill were the same old false assumptions and myths cougars always face. We were asked to believe the mountain lion population was exploding and that cougars were coming out of the woodwork to attack us all. What attracted the media's attention this time was the claim that this bill would solve the bighorn sheep's problem. Even if the hunting communities' assumptions were true, that would be like saying an atomic bomb would solve the mosquito problem!

AB 560 would have allowed any landowner to trophy hunt mountain lions. Further it would have skimmed funds off the Habitat Conservation Fund to pay for mandated "zonal management" (hunting seasons) of mountain lions.

Thanks to the statesmanship of Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Chair Mike Machado, the bill was amended to say only that cougars that are a perceived imminent threat to the survival of endangered species could be removed or taken.

We appreciate Mr. Oller's willingness to make these changes. He has made it clear that he enjoys hunting cougars in other states and was hoping for the opportunity to do so once again in California. This was a major concession on his part and we acknowledge him for that.

The bill now reflects what the Foundation feels the Department has always been able to do under the Commission's emergency powers provision. Regardless, with the federal listing of the bighorn, this bill is now moot.

While mountain lions may occasionally eat a single endangered species, they are not accused of threatening the survival of any species except the bighorn. Because federal law supercedes state law, and because federal agencies can already remove lions, this bill offers no new tools.

MLF has requested that the bill be used as a vehicle to obtain funding for bighorn recovery. The truth is, we could kill every lion on earth and we would still lose the bighorn without further action. Now that the hunting community can no longer hold bighorn hostage in their efforts to overturn Prop 117, MLF trusts that the recovery efforts will focus more on science and less on emotion.
Additionally, they asked the Commission to request funding for a captive breeding program and to cover the cost of relocating lions. Finally, they asked the Commission to stop the auctioning of trophy hunting tags for all bighorn sheep. The Commission did list the sheep and encouraged the federal government to take action as well. At this writing, we are told the Department will soon submit a Budget Change Proposal, the first step toward getting funding for their captive breeding program.

Fortunately, the Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Parks Service have been much more aggressive and holistic in their approach.

While they are also pushing a captive breeding program, they are moving to relocate the domestic sheep allotments nearest the bighorn. MLF Conservation Director Tom Martens has also been helping to locate appropriate sites and to raise money for environmentally friendly water supplies for the herds.

In a refreshing change of pace, the federal agencies seem quite open to non-lethal methods of removing lions that threaten the bighorn. They plan first to capture and collar lions for the purposes of monitoring and better understanding the whole relationship with bighorn. With that technology, they can also track lions that get too close to the bighorn. MLF has directed them to scientists to assist with that effort.

MLF will also be watching how they choose to deal with coyotes, bobcats and other predators — which the federal listing also cites as a major cause of bighorn mortality. Thus far, the federal agencies seem quite aware of predator-prey relationships and the self-regulating mortality of mountain lions.

All the while, Martens has been working with other conservation groups and the legislative budget committees to force DFG to work faster on its recovery efforts.

**Special Featured Volunteer**

Brooke Sommerdorf, our featured volunteer, is a junior at Natomas High School where she is very involved with photography and the yearbook team. She also dedicates much of her spare time to Mountain Lion Foundation events.

Brooke can no longer keep track of the number of safety sheets handed out, gifts wrapped or children’s faces that she has painted in the last few years. Whether it’s Sacramento’s Creek Week Celebration, Barnes & Noble gift wrapping, or the American River Cleanup, Brooke is always there to promote wildlife preservation.

Brooke’s mother, Jaques, and sister, Jessica, are also active members of the Mountain Lion Foundation. In fact, it was her mother’s involvement with the Proposition 197 campaign that really sparked Brooke’s interest in volunteering. “I would go with my mom to some events and, when I got older, I was able to go to the events myself.”

Asked for advice to those who are thinking about volunteering but don’t know how to begin, Brooke suggested first finding an organization that you like and picking up their business card. You can then contact them to find out a little more about them and see if they are the right organization for you. “Volunteering doesn’t take up that much time — maybe one day every two months — and it makes you feel good.”

So to Brooke and to all of our other volunteers who put so much time and effort into educating the public, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks. It’s people like you who make us feel good.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Please write your state legislator today asking for funding in the budget for bighorn sheep recovery. For assistance, call or contact our web page at www.mountainlion.org where you will find sample letters under “breaking news.” The address for all state legislators is The Honorable ___________, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814
PUMA PATROL IN ACTION
MLF Members Working for Habitat Funding

Mountain Lion Foundation members in specially targeted districts around the state are in shopping malls and other public places talking to their neighbors about saving wildlife. These wildlife heroes are giving up their weekends and evenings to help convince specific legislators about this desperate need.

As you know, next year ends an entire decade since the State of California provided any substantial wildlife funding. That time, we had to do the all work ourselves by writing an initiative, raising the money, gathering signatures and getting voters to pass the Mountain Lion Initiative. Prop 117 provided $30 million per year for habitat and stopped the trophy hunting of mountain lions.

The state has been stretching those funds as far as they can, hoping for a bond act to infuse some new funds to rescue rich habitat from bulldozers and greed. Even so, we lose more than 150 acres per day. Unless your favorite place is publicly owned, it is in danger today.

However, the new Governor, Gray Davis, gives us hope that we can reverse this downward spiral. There is great optimism that he will help persuade the legislature to put a $2 billion Wildlife and Parks Bond on the ballot. (No signature gathering necessary!)

You can help too! PLEASE WRITE YOUR LEGISLATOR TODAY ASKING FOR A BOND ACT WITH SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDING.

One sentence is enough. If you wish, add your personal reasons for wanting to save our fellow creatures. Ask the legislator to get back to you about this matter and sign your name and address. This simple act will serve as a thank-you to your fellow MLF members in the field and help protect wildlife.

Thank you for doing all you can. Your willingness to spend just a few minutes can be the difference between life and extinction for some of our favorite animals!

SPRINGING INTO SUMMER

The summer is upon us and people are beginning to enjoy nature’s beauty through hiking, biking, rafting and many other outdoor activities.

What better way to tote around everything you need for an active day than in our “Walk on the Wild Side” Fanny Pack. Made from heavyweight premium cotton canvas, this fanny pack sells for $17.95 plus shipping and handling (CA residents add 7.75% tax). Its six pockets can carry all of your outdoor needs and, the center pouch is perfect for your water bottle or camera lens. Use the enclosed envelope.
Given a choice, making out a will is always difficult, because no one likes to be reminded of their mortality.

But here's something to provide a certain motivation.

Without a will, the IRS will likely do your estate planning after your death. And be sure that the top priority for the IRS won't be providing support for your favorite charity, such as your church, school or the Mountain Lion Foundation.

In writing or updating your will, remember us with a gift that can either be designated for general support, earmarked for a specific program or our endowment.

Here is some suggested language for identifying us in your will (please do not consider this "legal advice." In drafting your final will, please consult with an attorney):

"The Mountain Lion Foundation, a tax exempt organization under the federal and California tax code, can receive bequests. The Mountain Lion Foundation is a California non-profit corporation, 926 J St., Suite 803 (P.O. Box 1896), Sacramento, CA. 95812.

The amount of the bequest can be "undesignated," which means the foundation's Board of Directors will find the best conservation use for the funds.

For such an unrestricted gift, use this language: "I give and bequeath to the Mountain Lion Foundation ($, or percent of estate or specific property)."

A bequest may be designated for a special purpose, such as program like wildlife education, litigation, anti-poaching work or made as a contribution to the endowment. It may also be earmarked for work in a specific region of the state.

For a restricted bequest, use this language: “I give and bequeath to the Mountain Lion Foundation ($, or percent of estate or specific property) to be used for the following purpose: (add the purposes).” Please consult with the foundation staff before making such a targeted gift to make sure your objectives are feasible and achievable.

Here is some suggested language for a gift to the endowment: “I give and bequeath to the Mountain Lion Foundation ($, or percent of estate or specific property) to be used for the endowment, with the income to be used for the following purpose: (add the purposes).” Again, please check with staff for the rules governing the foundation’s endowment funds.

The foundation can arrange for any number of planned gifts to the organization. A foundation staff member is available to explain the options, then work with our financial advisors and attorneys who specialize in estate planning.

For more information, please contact Tom Martens, Development Director, Mountain Lion Foundation, Box 1896, Sacramento, CA. 95812. 916-442-2666, ext. 106 or fill out the form on the next page and use the envelope enclosed.
Ways to Make a Gift to the Mountain Lion Foundation

There are lots of ways to make a gift to the Mountain Lion Foundation. We'd like to help you find out about them. It is quite possible that some of these gifts can help relieve your tax burdens at the same time they help wildlife. For more information, simply check the appropriate boxes and return the page to the address below. You may use the envelope in this newsletter. If you are not sure which box to check, don’t be embarrassed. Just call for assistance.

Making an Outright Gift

☐ Charitable tax benefits of making a simple gift of cash.

☐ Charitable benefits and options for making a gift of long-term appreciated securities.

☐ Making a gift of tangible personal property.

Estate Planning

☐ Estate planning overview

☐ Making a will

Options for Giving

☐ Overview of options for giving

☐ Retained Life Estate

☐ Donating real estate

☐ Living trusts

For more information send to:

Tom Martens, Director of Development
Mountain Lion Foundation
Box 1896
Sacramento, CA. 95812
916-442-2666, ext. 106

☐ Please call me to discuss giving options at (_______)
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City/State/Zip ________________________________
No more message in a bottle...

Send your messages across the miles with this lovely book of postcards. The book contains 21 different 5x7" photos of mountain lions by wildlife photographer, Denver Bryan. Those of you who have received our last few years' calendars are familiar with the striking images caught by Bryan. Well, this postcard book contains 21 more stunning photos for you to enjoy.

The book sells for $7.95 plus shipping and handling (CA residents add 7.75% tax). To order, please either call 916-442-2666 extension 104, visit our website at www.mountainlion.org, or use the enclosed envelope.