More than 800 MLF supporters sent letters of support for Assembly Member McLeod’s proposed legislation, AB 1599, that would have made commercial poaching a felony. Although the Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee appeared quite sympathetic to the need to increase deterrents to poaching, the bill was set aside until the State’s energy crisis is resolved. It’s probably just as well since we met unexpected opposition from unusual sources.

Some of the very legislators who are strong wildlife supporters are also conscientious opponents of the “three strikes” provision of current criminal law. That provision states that once a person has committed three felonies, they are imprisoned for the rest of their lives. The opponents of that law stated that they had made a pact to vote against all new felony provisions as long as the “three strikes” provision was in place.

One of those legislators apologized for not being able to vote for our bill and stated that she felt poaching was certainly an important crime that needed to be stopped. She even went far beyond the call of duty to help the bill get out of committee once she had the author’s promise to find some other way to increase penalties. She said she simply could not vote against her conscience.

Because the “three strikes” provision, as established by initiative, does not allow any felonies to be exempted, the solution to this dilemma is not clear.

While the bill is on hold, MLF is working with the California District Attorneys Association and the author to address the concerns that could prevent the bill from eventually being passed.

MLF will be using your support letters to keep the pressure on legislators to find creative ways to stop poaching.
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The last three months have been such a roller coaster that it is hard to know where to begin.

The good news is that California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) officials have finally heard our arguments and are re-thinking their original predator control measures relating to Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. The bad news is that they now believe lions are in peril in that ecosystem. The original document governing lion control allowed for the killing of up to 13 lions per year. CDFG officials now admit there may not be 13 lions in the area left to kill. While it is great that CDFG is finally admitting we may be right, this is definitely one case where we would rather not have been right.

The good news is that Tom Mangelson and Cara Blessley’s gorgeous new book, Spirit of the Rockies, is being used as a tool in the battle to help cougars in Wyoming. Weaving moving prose among the magical photos, they make us fall in love with a cougar and her three cubs. The bad news is that Wyoming officials increased the number of lions that can be hunted and killed this year, putting the beloved lion family featured in the book at serious risk of being shot.

The good news is that we won our Natomas Basin lawsuit. The judge invalidated the Habitat Conservation Plan, (HCP) and set a precedent that will require better assurances for future HCPs. The bad news is that developers keep trying to destroy habitat and asking if we cannot work something out. As my grandmother used to say, "You give them an inch and they think they're a ruler.”

The good news is that California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) officials have finally heard our arguments and are re-thinking their original predator control measures relating to Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. The bad news is that MFL has hired long-time cougar and habitat protection advocate, Michelle Cullens, to head up the Last Great Predator Campaign as our new Director of Conservation Programs. Michelle began her activism as a Central Valley volunteer on Proposition 117 and for the past ten-years worked as the Western Regional Director for The Archeological Conservancy. The bad news is that MFL is losing Keith Wagner, our California Legal Advocate for Wildlife Program Director. Keith, who has been a major asset in protecting the legal rights of grassroots conservation organizations, is entering private practice. With his departure, we are restructuring our legal program.

The good news is that long-time lion hunting proponent, Terry Mansfield, left his position as CDFG Deputy Director over wildlife management. The bad news is that Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Coordinator Troy Kelly has left state service. Troy was an excellent coordinator and the program will miss him.

The good news is that, after much initial discord, we are working well with bighorn scientist John Wehausen. He is taking the time to learn our concerns and treat them with respect and care. He recently stated that he is now as concerned about the bighorn as he is about the bighorn and is working with us to insure their viability. The bad news is that Sierra Magazine recently published old quotes from John, disparaging our efforts on behalf of the bighorn, opening old wounds and leaving the public with the impression that conservationists are not united in their efforts.

And so we keep taking the good with the bad, and with your help keep rising to the challenge in defense of California’s Last Great Predator.
When the Mountain Lion Foundation was founded in 1986, we thought only of forever stopping the trophy hunting of mountain lions in California. After that victory, the tasks have continued to change and MLF adapts to meet new challenges. Now we are working to stop the killing of mountain lions on CDFG issued depredation permits, combat commercial poaching, and protect wildlife habitat.

As the challenges become more difficult, your continued support becomes more important. One of the ways MLF can stretch every single dollar as far as it can possibly go to protect wildlife, is to be able to predict how much money will be available at any given time.

Your memberships are our “bottom line,” the base upon which we build all our programs. As a fiscally responsible organization, we cannot expand our infrastructure beyond what we can count on coming in from our supporters. All contributions above and beyond your memberships are defined by that baseline.

By renewing your membership you are doing your part to help us better predict what we can and cannot do on behalf of wildlife. A membership base that provides the organization with consistent and predictable donations accomplishes three goals:

First, it allows us to make better long-term plans and take on projects, such as our new Living with Lions project. It would waste money to start a large multi-year project and then have to drop it unfinished. We start projects when we have an assurance of funding them.

Second, prompt membership renewal will eventually reduce the organization’s solicitation costs. We don’t have to keep sending you letters, begging. This means that more money can be spent on protecting mountain lions.

Third, a large membership base will increase our clout when lobbying for wildlife reform. One of the main reasons MLF is an effective advocacy organization is the power of our membership. It is important to be able to count every single one of you when we are asked how many current (paid-up) members we have.

When you get your renewal notice, please renew your membership at whatever level you can afford. You will help us do our job better and be able to spend more time protecting mountain lions.

A Death in the Family

The Mountain Lion Foundation extends its deepest sympathies to the family of Mr. Carroll O’Connor. Best known as Archie Bunker of “All in the Family” fame, Mr. O’Connor is firmly established as an icon in American life.

Through his talent, his humor and his activism, Mr. O’Connor left this world a much more delightful place for humans to live. We have also been a recipient of his generosity. MLF and mountain lions will always remain the better for his life as well.
“Managing” Mountain Lions in California

Although mountain lions are now listed as “protected,” they—as well as California’s other large predators—are being systematically destroyed for preying on domesticated livestock and pets that have been introduced into their hunting territories. Since 1972, when Governor Ronald Reagan stopped the trophy hunting of mountain lions, more than 1,400 lions have been killed under depredation permits, with the vast majority of these deaths occurring since 1990.

CDFG’s current large predator control measure of issuing depredation permits—permission to kill a predator because of the loss of a domestic animal—does little to protect a rancher’s livestock or a homeowner’s pet. Instead, since CDFG policy requires that offending animals “must” be killed, the practice merely provides a form of retribution at the expense of native wildlife and at substantial cost to taxpayers. CDFG officials report that game wardens spend at least 10 percent of their valuable time responding to depredation calls. Worse, the best scientific evidence indicates killing depredating lions may be exacerbating depredation.

While most permits are issued for losses incurred by traditional open range livestock operations (sheep and cattle), permits issued for pet losses have tripled. These pet losses can be directly linked to expanding residential development into the State’s wilderness areas.

The number of depredation permits issued for mountain lions varies on a county-by-county basis with the greatest number occurring in two north coast counties. According to statistics provided by CDFG, Mendocino and Humboldt counties have an exceptionally high number of mountain lions killed under depredation permits. These two counties alone account for almost 23 percent of all mountain lions killed by permit within California.

MLF is taking bold steps to stop this counter-productive practice. With a generous start-up gift from the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, MLF has committed to changing the State’s policies that call for the constant issuance of predator depredation permits. MLF’s multi-year project, called Living with Lions, is designed to reduce the annual number of lion deaths.

This project is an important part of MLF’s Protecting California’s Last Great Predator campaign and will work with conservationists, livestock operators, government agencies and others to change depredation policies. MLF will also highlight demonstration projects to evaluate non-lethal predator aversion methods.

MLF
We need your help to tell a story. It’s no fairy tale.

Wild cougars are an incredibly important contributor to the North American wilderness. Californians’ understanding of the mountain lion’s biological significance may make the difference between endurance of the species, or extinction.

Chances are you’ve noticed that media coverage of mountain lion events and issues tends to be sensational, parochial and anecdotal. The stories we see portrayed in newspapers, on radio, and on television news exploit people’s instinctual fear of attack by wild animals. Reports tend to focus on single incidents, in small geographical areas, as though cougars set off deliberately from some mythical wild place to picnic in suburban backyards. Reporters collect sound bites from local residents, and treat their comments as expert.

Unfortunately, the topic of mountain lions has become a media formula designed to bring in readers and ratings. The formula itself is so predictable that it works with no story at all. On a slow news day, just the possibility of a lion sighting is enough for TV to hype an upcoming “story” (tune in at 11!) in hour after hour of 10 second teasers. If you wait it out ‘till the end of the news cast, it’s often a thirty second shot of a hiker who “thought” he saw a lion disappearing over the hill.

In a recent public meeting attended by MLF staff, a California Department of Fish and Game warden indicated that the number of calls received reporting lion sightings soar each time cougars are mentioned in the media. One of the local residents commented that “In this neck of the woods, everyone has a mountain lion tale, and the stories get embellished. When you have a chance to be on TV, the lions get bigger and faster and closer and fiercer.”

And because it is this essential wildness of the lion that is so fascinating, lions are cast as villains in the news drama. Like sharks, they are portrayed as intentionally vicious killing machines, not as an essential part of the web of life in California. Otters are cute and cuddly. Orcas are wild and free. Eagles are soaring national symbols. All of these carnivores escape the broad red brush strokes of danger with which the media paint the puma as predator.

Here’s How You Can Help

Letters from local residents are far better than from MLF staff. Your thoughts and feeling carry much more weight with both the newspaper staff and their readers.

When you read an unbalanced story, write a letter to the editor asking them to focus on the bigger picture and the long range view: the role predators play in sustaining our natural environment. When you see a slanted television story, call the station and ask them to consider compiling a feature story to more thoroughly explore the threats facing mountain lions today in California. We want the media decision-makers to receive enough calls and letters that they pause to consider their responsibility to inform, not inflame.

Here are the salient points that the media can no longer ignore:

• A healthy and stable mountain lion population is essential to California’s rich balance of nature.
• Mountain lions are “indicator” species, their loss indicating habitat degradation and loss of diversity.
• Mountain lion populations are dropping statewide, according to Fish and Game. Too many lions are dying already from depredation kills.
• The cougar is California’s Last Great Predator. Their survival is a moral obligation.

The Basics of Writing a Letter to the Editor

Familiarize yourself with the letters section of your local papers on a regular basis.

When a story about cougars appears, ask yourself whether the story is balanced and factually correct. Notice whether the reporter talked to the Mountain Lion Foundation, scientists, and local environmental organizations as well as government agencies.

Pick the main point you wish to emphasize and make it your only point. Keep it simple, polite and direct. Mention the Mountain Lion Foundation and our phone number (916)442-2666 ext 101 as a source of additional information. If you need help, give us a call. Check our web page for facts and sample letters.

Carefully follow the published guidelines for letters to the editor. Print your full name, address and phone number at the top of the letter. Sign the letter at the bottom. Whenever possible, fax or email or deliver your letter by hand. Timely letters are much more likely to be printed.

Send MLF a copy of your letter, as well as the original story. When your letter is published, send that as well.
Few issues have created as much controversy around lions as the issues surrounding recovery of the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (SNBS).

In 1999, the SNBS was listed as endangered. Only 117 animals, spread amongst five sub-populations, clung to survival on the planet.

While the historic causes of declines are unknown, biologists blamed diseases from domestic sheep and excess hunting as the main culprits.

Ironically, however, the government “fix” for this tragedy was a plan to kill up to 13 lions and a quarter of the area’s coyote population per year. The media touted false claims that the mountain lion population was “exploding” and blamed Prop 117 for the loss of bighorn. In the late 1990s, MLF was the lone conservation organization standing up for the value of predators and fighting to limit the number of lions killed.

Fortunately, the hard work is beginning to pay off. Many conservation groups are reconsidering their rush to interfere with natural predator-prey systems. Others, such as wildlife biologist, Chris Papouchis of the Animal Protection Institute, have joined the fray, working to protect the entire ecosystem rather than one species at the expense of another.

“Actually, I think we are all pretty much on the same page,” says Dr. Dave Zezulak, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), Chief of Wildlife Programs. “We’d prefer not to kill any lions at all.”

Mountain Lion Foundation Executive Director Lynn Sadler, who sits on the recovery team for SNBS, says the new relationship is a double-edged sword.

“Obviously I’m thrilled that officials are now showing concern about lions as well,” Sadler says. “I’m just worried that it’s because lions are in worse shape than we originally feared.”

Her fears may be well founded.

CDFG Coordinator for Lions and Bighorn Sheep, Steve Torres, states that the mountain lion population has been dropping statewide since 1996. CDFG biologist and mountain lion researcher Vern Bleich estimates the lion population in Round Valley (above Bishop) at 1/6 what it was in the mid '90s.

“Right now, we are as concerned about mountain lions along the eastern Sierra as we are about bighorn sheep,” said John Wehausen, 27-year veteran SNBS research scientist now with the U.C. White Mountain Research Station and primary author of the SNBS Recovery Plan. “Mountain lion numbers along the eastern bas of the southern Sierra appear to have declined considerably in the past decade and three of the five herd units of SNBS are now showing

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MLF's Legal Efforts Have Been Highly Successful These Past Few Months, Thanks in Part to a Generous Grant from the Mennen Foundation.

Wildlife Winning In Sacramento County (Maybe)
MLF and its co-plaintiffs have won a major victory for giant garter snakes, Swainson's hawks, and other species of "special concern" in Sacramento County's Natomas Basin. According to a recent settlement agreement, key areas of the Basin's remaining habitat must be protected for threatened and endangered species.

The Natomas Basin is a large section of agricultural land with "seasonal wetlands" that have been the home to the giant garter snake and the Swainson hawk.

Since 1998, MLF has been challenging a decision of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that allowed the destruction of important habitat in exchange for a money from developers. Last August, a Federal judge required the City to analyze the effects of habitat destruction on giant garter snakes and Swainson hawks in the Basin. Following that ruling, City officials sat down with MLF and the other environmental organizations to discuss how limited development might be allowed to proceed.

A May settlement agreement will allow a limited amount of development in exchange for the transfer of 640 acres of high-grade, giant garter snake and Swainson hawk habitat to the Natomas Basin Conservancy.

In addition to the land transfers, developers must pay "catch-up" fees to compensate for habitat already lost, and to implement ditch and canal maintenance practices that are compatible with species needs.

However, with the ink not quite dry on the agreement, a new set of potential developers popped up wanting to bypass it with their own version of a Habitat Conservation Plan allowing the creation of a large industrial/commercial park on an old abandoned airport. This new project would destroy nearly 2,000-acres of prime giant garter snake and Swainson hawk habitat and negate benefits of the settlement agreement.

If this site is developed with such callous disregard for wildlife, it will destroy the delicately balanced ecosystem by blocking interconnecting wildlife corridors (waterways).

Bunnies In Trouble In Orange County
On behalf of two national humane organizations, Animal Protection Institute (API), and In Defense of Animals (IDA), MLF recently filed a lawsuit to halt the illegal poisoning of cottontail rabbits in Orange County.

Unbeknownst to many, several Orange County gated-communities and golf courses have been poisoning cottontail rabbits, because the rabbits eat ornamental shrubbery. The lawsuit alleges that CDFA's actions are an unlawful abdication of their public trust duty to enforce laws and regulations protecting California's wildlife.

MLF Works To Stop Unnecessary Pesticide Spraying
MLF has been working with a wide range of public interest organizations opposing the "forced" use of pesticides to control Pierce's Disease statewide. Pierce's Disease, a bacteria that damages grape vines, is spread by an insect, the glassywing sharpshooter. This non-native leaf-hopper has slowly spread north into California from Mexico and South America.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has adopted emergency regulations that called for mandatory pesticide spraying programs. Napa County developed a glassywing Sharpshooter Rapid Response Plan that forced the use of pesticides to kill the insects wherever they are found, including sensitive wildlife habitats, riparian areas, and residential neighborhoods located miles away from the nearest vineyard.

People Opposed to Insecticide Spraying on Neighborhoods (POISON), a grassroots neighborhood group, challenged the County's plan and needed MLF's help to safeguard their rights. MLF consulted with CDFA officials, appeared before County Supervisors, spoke out at public hearings, and prepared official comment letters opposing CDFA's and the County's actions.

As a result of our direct actions, CDFA is requesting additional public comments on the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed pesticides used for glassywing sharpshooter control, and is asking the U.S. Department of Commerce National Marine Fisheries Service, to comment on how the use of pesticides in and near riparian areas will impact anadromous fish and other aquatic species.

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Remember Us In Your Will

Everyone likes to be remembered for something—to gain a little slice of immortality. That's just human nature.

Here's a way that you can be remembered forever.

As part of your will, make a gift to the Mountain Lion Foundation to assist in protecting these magnificent creatures. We will, in turn, put the funds to work creating policies that preserve the lives of mountain lions and other wildlife.

In writing or updating your will, you can designate the foundation as a beneficiary and may stipulate that the amount be used to support the organization's general operations or earmarked for a specific project or program.

Here is some suggested language.

“The Mountain Lion Foundation is a tax exempt organization under the federal and California tax code and is located at 926 J Street, Suite 803, Sacramento, California 95814 (mailing address, Box 1896, Sacramento, CA 95812).” “I give and bequeath to the Mountain Lion Foundation (an amount or percentage of the estate).”

For more information on wills or other ways to provide support, contact Tim Dunbar, (916-442-2666, ext. 105) or send an email message to tdunbar@mountainlion.org

MLF Wish List

Here is another way that you can contribute to the protection of California's Last Great Predator. MLF staff is beginning to travel more and is learning how to work more efficiently while on the road. Additionally, we are starting to need a better ability to document some of our field work. If any of you high-techies could take pity on some overworked wildlife advocates, we could save ourselves as well as mountain lions! Listed below are some items we have identified as helpful. All contributions are tax-deductible.

- Three Palm Pilots with hardware and software
- Three cell phones
- Digital Camera
- Video Camera (Digital)
- Small (portable) digital voice recorder

Please call Stephanie at (916) 442-2666 ext. 106 before donating an item to ensure it is still appropriate.

Only You Can Prevent “Problem” Bears

DON'T FEED THE BEARS!

Pet food on the porch, garbage left on the curb, open windows to a kitchen are all invitations to the death penalty for bears. If you feed bears, deliberately or not, you might as well shoot them. So don't feed them.

KEEP YOUR CAMP CLEAN!

Another variation on “Don't Feed the Bears!” Bears, like any animal, are attracted to smells. So, keep food, toothpaste, scented deodorants or lotions out of your tent, store it high off the ground and away from camp. Clean up after your meals—both yourselves as well as your dishes and cooking implements.

TAKE YOUR TRASH HOME WITH YOU!

Yes, this is another version of “Don’t Feed the Bears!” We know that garbage is dirty and smelly to humans. But a soiled baby diaper can be fine dining to a bear. If where you are staying doesn't have bear-proof garbage containers, then the chances are, that after you leave, bears and other wildlife will get into it. Not only are many of the things we throw out harmful to wildlife, but behavior patterns learned by bears will put them in conflict with humans and sets them up to be killed.
Keeping Cougars and You Out of Trouble

As the summer season brings out hikers and campers, it’s time for a quick review of the basics of cougar safety.

Know where lions live. Watch for signs and trail postings. When possible, avoid lion habitat when deer are active, often dawn and dusk. Travel in pairs. Keep your children and pets within arms reach.

If you do see a cougar, no matter how thrilled you are to be one of the very few who gets such an opportunity, don’t approach the cougar. The cougar will not care that you have worked to save it. Most cougars want to avoid humans. Give a cougar the time and space to steer clear of you.

Never run past or from a cougar. This may trigger their instinct to chase. Never bend over or crouch down. This may make you look too much like a four-legged prey animal. The sole idea here is to look as little like lunch as possible.

Predators, like the cougar, cannot afford injury. If they are injured they cannot go into the office in the morning and earn a living. When that happens, they starve. So they are less interested in anything that looks like it will fight back. You need to explain this to the cougar in a language it understands.

So, act like a predator yourself. Stand your ground. Maintain eye contact. Aggressively wave your raised arms, throw stones, branches, without turning away. Speak loudly and firmly. Move slowly to a spot that gives the cougar room to get away.

Make yourself appear larger by picking up your children or standing next to other adults. Open your jacket.

People have utilized rocks, jackets, garden tools, tree branches, walking sticks, fanny packs and even bare hands to turn away cougars.

In one case a 9 year old boy in El Dorado County frightened a Mountain Lion away by playing his trumpet. When asked why he did that he said, “...my parents taught me to make noise, look big, do not run...”

While in Bishop recently, MLF Executive Director Lynn Sadler treated herself to a breathtaking new gallery of world-renowned nature photographer Galen Rowell. In addition to viewing his gorgeous new photographs from the Eastern Sierra, Sadler wanted to find out if Rowell had managed yet to capture a cougar on film.

“No, but I had my best ever sighting,” Rowell exclaimed.

After shooting a Bristlecone sunset in the White Mountains above Bishop, Rowell was driving home down a narrow mountain road.

As he rounded a corner, a large male mountain lion stood right in the middle of the road and stared at him. When Rowell began to inch the car forward, the lion stepped into a break in the willows along the side of the road.

As Rowell drove by he noticed that the lion was still in the break with his head pulled around over its shoulder to glare back at Rowell.

Then in a blink, he was gone.

Immediately, Rowell rushed to document the moment.

“Since it was too low light to photograph the lion,” Rowell said, “I thought I should at least document his tracks and his path.”

So he grabbed his camera and opened the car door to jump out onto the road.

“Then I thought, wait a minute, maybe this is not such a good idea!” Rowell laughed.

Yet another lion lost to film, but captured forever as a favorite memory.

Fortunately, many of Rowell’s other views of the Sierra Nevada have been beautifully captured and are on display at his Mountain Light galleries in Bishop and Emeryville or on his wonderful web site at www.mountainlight.com.
New Director of Conservation Programs

Michelle Cullens is accurately pictured here as outstanding in her field! She comes to us after 10 years with The Archaeological Conservancy where she was Western Regional Director and Vice President. Michelle started her conservation work as a volunteer for Prop 117, later worked as campaign coordinator for Big Green, and eventually staffed a statewide park bond act.

Michelle has research, survey and training experience in the corporate world. She worked as a technical communications instructor at Purdue University, as well as been an editor, writer and conference coordinator at CSU-Stanislaus. She has considerable grant writing expertise and has worked with all levels of government. MLF expects to take advantage of her considerable artistic skills as well.

Coming from a cattle ranching family, Michelle has been able to work well with ranchers and other landowners upon whose land the mountain lion depends for its very survival. Her skills and background make her the ideal person for managing MLF’s Last Great Predator campaign.

Tim Dunbar Now Developing MLF Programs

Born and raised in Carmichael, California, Tim Dunbar worked in both the financial and home construction fields throughout the Central Valley before becoming involved with environmental politics and working as a volunteer on the Proposition 117 campaign.

After moving back to the Sacramento area, Tim worked on several political campaigns including Forests Forever, and Californians For Parks and Wildlife (CalPAW), before going to work for American Farmland Trust. In his six-year tenure there, he earned extensive program experience, working as AFT’s Outreach and Development Coordinator in California.

An author of several agricultural land protection reports, Tim came to work for MLF last August to help develop the organization’s expanded direction as its Director of Organizational Planning and Development.

As MLF grows bigger programs to meet the long-term needs of California’s Mountain Lion and other wildlife, the challenge is to maintain personal contact with supporters.

The new logo reminds us and the world that — no matter how big we get — we will cling to our core values and goals.

This logo proudly broadcasts our intent to continue our scrappy advocacy and unyielding ethic.

The new slogan conveys the value of the mountain lion, the urgency of the threat and our commitment to the planet.
MLF agrees that actions must be taken to protect the State’s vineyards from infestation. However, we believe that common sense responses must take precedence over knee-jerk reaction plans that protect one interest at the expense of all other concerns.

MLF Helps Placerville Residents

El Dorado County straddles the Sierra Nevada Mountains just east of Sacramento. As a result of being within commute distance to a major job center, this rural county—especially in the foothills next to the county line—has become a Mecca to land speculators and developers that want to build homes without constraints or concerns over “smart-growth” issues.

Last year, in another case of “business as usual,” developers proposed the annexation and conversion of 120-acres of prime agricultural land and wildlife habitat in El Dorado County into a 180-home subdivision for the City of Placerville. City officials saw no problem with the project and proposed adoption of a negative declaration. The City’s negative declaration claimed that the project’s numerous potentially significant impacts to wildlife, aesthetics, agricultural land uses, and other environmental resources would be “less than significant” because the City would formulate mitigation measures, where feasible, if impacts did become significant.

At the request of Rural Residents for Responsible Planning, and El Dorado Taxpayers for Better Government, two local neighborhood groups, MLF, challenged the City’s actions.

The project has been significantly scaled back to a 20 home infill project.

Lions in the Park Going Strong

MLF’s highly successful Lions in the Park project continues to expand and will be available to the general public for the first time this July 13th. Big Basin State Park will host the public debut as part of the campfire program.

The educational program, funded in part with generous grants from the State Parks Foundation and Gabilan Foundation, trains docents and rangers how to interpret mountain lions to the public.

As the park personnel teach park visitors about the habits and needs of lions, thousands can learn how to keep themselves and mountain lions protected. Thus far, nine workshops have made it possible for up to 5.6 million park visitors per year to take advantage of the information provided by Lions in the Park trainer Bruce Elliott.

In addition to the workshops, State Parks offers beautiful interpretive panels, created in cooperation with MLF, to help the public learn about lions.

If any readers work in state, regional or local parks and would like to purchase one or all of these panels, please contact State Parks. Visitors can encourage their parks to sponsor a Lions in the Park presentation as well as to purchase the panels.
Looking For A Few Good Volunteers

BOARD INVOLVEMENT
MLF is changing. In addition to excelling as a wildlife protection organization, MLF is also seen as a leading authority on mountain lions and their habitat. To maintain this level of public expectation and to assist the organization in meeting new challenges and responsibilities MLF keeps a list of potential candidates that could step into an organizational leadership role as needed. Potential candidates would include current MLF members that are active in their communities and have reached a level of experience and stature that would be considered an organizational asset by foundation and corporate funders. If you are interested in being included on the candidate list please send a resume to Stephanie Ernster.

EXPERT REFERRAL LIST
MLF is constantly receiving calls or letters from individuals or organizations that want to talk to other experts about mountain lions, wildlife habitat and other conservation issues. Rather than just giving out people’s phone numbers, we are putting together a list of experts that do not mind us referring such inquiries to them. If you wish to be included on our Expert Referral List send your contact information along with your specialties or credentials. Please include how you prefer to be contacted (e-mail vs. phone, etc.) and your availability.

VOLUNTEERS (PUMA PATROL)
This highly prized group of volunteers is the MLF wildlife “SWAT team.” In times of great urgency, Puma Patrol folks are selectively called upon to write letters, make phone calls, or personally visit opinion leaders who are poised to take action that affects the welfare of wildlife.

INTERNS
One of the best “real life” experiences a person can have is working for an important environmental cause such as protecting mountain lions. Not only do you get to do a job worth doing, but also it often opens doors to future careers in the environmental field that would otherwise be closed. College students are often hired, usually without pay, as temporary employees to work on various research, analysis and writing projects. This is an excellent opportunity for students to add to their resume, make valuable contacts, gain real life work experience and make a difference all at the same time.

Two of MLF’s current staff, Cullens and Dunbar, began their lion protection careers as Prop 117 volunteers. Attorney Keith Wagner was first an intern. Several Board Members began as Prop 117 volunteers as well. Rewarding opportunities available.

Contact: stephanie@mountainlion.org; fax: 916/442-2871

MLF