

W R C Annual Report

The Wilderness Research Center expanded its education and outreach activities in 1983 and 1984 on an unprecedented scale. Conducting a National Wilderness Management Workshop, directing a national steering committee to produce a 5-year wilderness management action program, and publishing the book, ISSUES IN WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT, the proceedings of the Workshop, were the major accomplishments.

The continuation of two research projects funded by the National Geographic Society at the Taylor Ranch Field Station and the initiation of a new bighorn sheep winter range behavior study were the major research thrusts.

As reported elsewhere in this report, the National Wilderness Management Workshop drew a crowd from across the nation to focus on the theme, "Taking Care of What We've Got." Keynote addresses were presented by the directors of the four federal agencies which manage wilderness--NPS, USFS, BLM, and USFWS. A hallmark of the Workshop was the series of small working group sessions in which all participants identified and prioritized key issues facing wilderness management. This formed the basis of our next undertaking.

Max Peterson, Chief of the USFS, called on the other Federal agencies to join with representatives of user groups to develop a Five-Year Wilderness Management Action Program based on the wealth of ideas generated at the conference. The WRC chaired the national steering committee which was formed to undertake this task. It sought public input from across the nation and developed a list of 23 priority recommended actions to address major issues confronting wilderness management in the next five years. Published in booklet form, the Five-Year Wilderness Action Program is being distributed nationally by the agencies, conservation groups, and the WRC.

Complimenting and extending the impact of the workshop and the action plan is the recently published book, ISSUES IN WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT. Edited by conservation author Michael Frome, the proceedings of the workshop contains additional material on management issues as well as position statements by agencies and conservation and other user groups. It distills diverse viewpoints and establishes a dialogue in print which should serve as an important contribution to the growing field of wilderness management.

While these new undertakings have challenged the WRC to stretch almost beyond its means, we have endeavored to continue with our traditional programs. The Wilderness Resources Distinguished Lecture was presented by Brock Evans, long-time wilderness proponent and former vice president of the National Audubon Society. Mr. Evans also conducted two seminars on campus for university students. The wilderness skills course was conducted in cooperation with the USFS and attended by approximately 350 members of the public. The Center also obtained additional support for improvements at the Taylor Ranch, most notably, the remodeling of one cabin into a field laboratory. Finally, the Center continued to help support other research efforts and to submit competitive grants for research projects. In summary, the past two years have been ones of activity, outreach, and growth. In the pages that follow we offer more information about the programs and activities of the Center.