

URGENT NEWS from Ron Schiller, High Desert Multiple Use Coalition:

The California Wilderness Coalition (CWC) is proposing to close off a large chunk of public land around Trona, Great Falls Basin, and the Slate Range outside of the China Lake Navy Base. A public meeting will be held Tuesday Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> in Trona regarding the CWC proposed wilderness bill that they hope Senator Feinstein will soon introduce in Congress.

Recent reports indicate that a bulletin included with a recent water bill mailed to residents of Trona states, "The California Wilderness Coalition (<http://www.calwild.org>) is proposing Federal legislation that would designate nearly all of those portions of Great Falls Basin and the Slate Range that lie outside of the China Lake Navy Base as Federal Wilderness.

If passed by Congress this legislation would permanently end all methods of mechanized travel across most of this land. It would also prevent this land from being defaced by off-road motorcycle trails running everywhere". The bulletin further states, "The California Wilderness Coalition has agreed to meet with the people of Searles Valley to first present their proposal and then listen to our concerns with the proposal. The intent of the CWC is not to prevent the public from enjoying the land. Rather they want to prevent a small group of people from defacing the land to the point where everyone else's enjoyment is degraded. Please plan to attend and make your concerns known. Examples of how you have used this land in the past would help prove your concerns".

The meeting will be held Tuesday, January 13th at 6:30 p.m. at the Trona Bank Building across the street east of the Old Guest House Museum. If coming from Ridgecrest on Hwy. 178 Turn left on Center Street. Turn right on Main Street (the third street from Hwy 178) and the meeting place will be the second building on the right.

The new CWC wilderness proposal includes about 20 new wilderness areas and National Park expansions within Inyo, San Bernardino, Imperial, and San Diego Counties. New wilderness areas proposed by the California Wilderness Coalition within Inyo County include Slate Range and Great Falls Basin north of Trona, Malpais Mesa in the Inyo Mountains around Cerro Gordo extending to the Saline Valley Road, Wild and Scenic River designation for Surprise Canyon, other areas in the northern Panamint Valley, and areas in north Death Valley National Park.

If enacted by Congress, this proposal would eliminate many traditional uses such as equestrian endurance rides, mountain biking, and vehicle access for such activities as gem and mineral collecting, spring wildflower viewing, and family back county touring and picnic outings. In addition, this proposal would eliminate mineral exploration and new mining in the future.

It's interesting to note that neither the CWC nor anyone from Senator Feinstein's staff had the decency to even respond to Inyo County Supervisor's

invitation for a similar meeting in Lone Pine but they are willing to hold a meeting just outside Inyo County in a remote location with very limited announcement.

We request that anyone attending this meeting to oppose the new wilderness proposal please be polite and courteous. Disrupting their meeting would only serve to discredit wilderness opponents.

I will be driving my Suburban and have a few seats open for anyone who would like to carpool to the meeting. If anyone would like a ride, I will accept requests on a first come basis. Please let me know via e-mail as soon as possible. Please print "CARPOOL" in the e-mail subject line.

This information is provided by Ron Schiller, Chairman of the High Desert Multiple Use Coalition. As usual, please feel free to pass this information on to any other interested parties. Anyone wishing to receive future e-mails with information regarding issues related to the management of public lands in the California Desert should send an e-mail to [schiller@ridgenet.net](mailto:schiller@ridgenet.net) and request to be placed on the distribution list.

Please print "PLEASE ADD TO LIST" in the subject line.