

AB 1328

Cache Creek Wild and Scenic

By Assemblywoman Lois Wolk

Bill Summary

AB 1328 Cache Creek Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR), designates 31 miles of Cache Creek in Yolo and Lake Counties as a State Wild and Scenic River (WSR). Specifically, the designation spans from just below the Clear Lake dam to Camp Haswell at the upper end of the Capay Valley, as well as the creek's north fork downstream from Highway 20. The bill includes language to protect current and future efforts to remove non-native vegetation and mercury contaminants as well as clearly stating the Legislature's intent not to pursue a Federal Wild and Scenic designation for Cache Creek if AB 1328 is chaptered.

AB 1328 ensures that one of California's last undimmed rivers remains in its current, pristine condition.

Background and Analysis

Cache Creek meanders from Clear Lake 80 miles through Lake and Yolo counties to the Cache Creek settling basin just short of the Sacramento River. The Cache Creek watershed is the most biologically diverse region in Yolo County and is home to the largest wintering population of Bald Eagles south of the Klamath Basin. Additionally, Bald Eagles, Tule Elk, Mountain Lion, Black Bear, River Otter, Turtles and the King Snake can be found here year round.

The wilderness run of Cache Creek contains some of the richest Native American archaeological sites in the region, including numerous settlements dating back over 5,000 years. Upper Cache Creek was home to the Western, or Hill Patwin, a Wintun-speaking people. Village sites in the upper reaches included *Tebti*, *Tokti*, *Holokomi*, *Almatinbe*, *Kukui*, and *Lopa*. The native Patwin group occupying the Capay Valley within the watershed were called the *Wilaksel*. The people on the North Fork were called the *Lolsel* (tobacco people), while those along the main stem in the wilderness run were called the *Chenposel* (downstream people). The village in Bear Valley was *Sukui* ("Bear Place").

Cache Creek is a special place faced with an ever increasing variety of pressures threatening to alter its unique character forever. We need to protect Cache Creek from these pressures while its populations continue to expand and industry and agriculture are forced to grow with them, California's rivers are being impacted more than ever before. Because of this, it is important to set some areas aside to preserve the State's environmental heritage. At the same time fully understand and acknowledge, it is important to remember that the safety and security of many in Yolo and Lake Counties depends on a stable water supply and adequate flood control. Recognizing these pressures, Congressman Mike Thompson has introduced legislation to establish much of the Cache Creek watershed as a designated Federal Wilderness Area. The WSR designation proposed by AB 1328 will be consistent with Thompson's wilderness legislation. The two pieces of legislation, while not a coordinated effort, will work hand-in-hand to protect the Cache Creek watershed—as the proposed wilderness area largely encompasses the proposed wild & scenic designation.

The California WSR system does just that.

If added to the state system, Cache Creek will join a prestigious list of California Wild and Scenic rivers, including portions of the Smith, Klamath, Scott, Salmon, Trinity, Eel, Van Duzen, Gualala, Albion and the South Yuba. State Wild and Scenic legislation to protect Cache Creek is important in order to preserve the unique environmental and recreational qualities that set it apart from many other waterways in the state.

Supporters

Adventure Connection, Altacal Audubon Society, American Fly Fishing Company, American Whitewater, B&L Bike Shop, Butte Environmental Council, Cache Creek Wild, California Canoe and Kayak, California Floaters Society, California Oak Foundation, California Outdoors, California Sportfishing Protection, City of Davis, City of West Sacramento, Alliance, California Trout, California Wilderness Coalition, Californians for Western Wilderness, Chico Paddleheads, Coast Action Group, Davis Energy Group, Earth Skills, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, Ecology Center of Southern California, Endangered Habitats League, Environmental Defense, Environmental Commons, Forest Issues Group, Foundation for Children, Friends of Butte Creek, Friends of the River, Friends of the Eel River, Friends of the Navarro Watershed, Friends of the Santa Clara River, Ink Monkey, Lifewave Inc., Love Events, National Wildlife Federation, The Naturalist, Northcoast Environmental Center, Northern California Council Federation of Fly Fishers, Northern California River Watch, Ocean Conservation Society, Patagonia, Planning and Conservation League, Plumas Forest Project, Redbud Audubon Society, River Travel Center, Sacramento River Preservation Trust, Screaming Squeegee, Sierra Club California, Sierra Club Lake Group, Sierra Club Yolo Group, Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, South Yuba River Citizens League, Trout Unlimited, The Bay Institute, TotalEscape.com, Whitewater Voyages, Willits Environmental Center, The Xerces Society, Yolo County, Yuba River Wildlands Campaign,

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