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MRS. SIDNEY SHELDON
480 VIA LOLA
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262
TELEPHONE: 1-760-320-2909
FAX: 1-760-327-5169

29 June 2000

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Sidney and I hope this letter finds you in great spirits. Sidney just finished his new novel; the publisher loves it, which means we both are in great spirits. The new novel is called "The Sky is Falling". Sidney will send you a copy when he receives some books from the publisher.
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I am sending you this package of information that concerns a dire situation that exists in the Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley concerning the over-development of the footprint within these mountains. Continued loss of habitat will be devastating to the peninsular bighorn sheep, as well as a number of other fauna and flora that exist only in this area.

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Sidney and I hope this letter finds you in great spirits. Sidney just finished his new novel; the publisher loves it, which means we both are in great spirits. The new novel is called "The Sky is Falling". Sidney will send you a copy when he receives some books from the publisher.

We had the pleasure of seeing Hillary again at her fundraiser in Los Angeles. She absolutely looked radiant, and we are in her corner all the way.

One thing that we have always admired about your platform is that you are so aware of the environmental issues that are of primary concern, not only in the United States, but also abroad. However, if we do not take urgent action, we are about to witness the rapid extinction of a Federally protected endangered species, the peninsular bighorn sheep.

I am sending you this package of information that concerns a dire situation that exists in the Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley concerning the over-development of the footprint within these mountains. Continued loss of habitat will be devastating to the peninsular bighorn sheep, as well as a number of other fauna and flora that exist only in this area.

I realize that you are so very busy, but this is regarding a bill that will be coming to you, Mary Bono's Establishment of Santa Rosa and

San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, California. There are at least three glaring omissions from the proposed bill, which are made even more of an insult to one's sense of logic by the Hansen and Pombo amendments. The press is taking notice; please see the enclosed articles that ran in The Washington Post, The Smithsonian Magazine, and The Desert Sun that has brought an awareness of the plight of the bighorn to the nation and world.

1. Nowhere in the bill does it state anything about the established fact that there are low elevation, Federally protected endangered peninsular bighorn sheep living in the few remaining buffer zones of the Santa Rosa Mountains and San Jacinto Mountains. They forage as low as 250 feet. There are only two undeveloped alluvial fans left in Palm Springs. These buffer zones are mandatory for the survival of the Federally protected endangered peninsular bighorn, as well as a number of other fauna and flora that reside in the last remaining alluvial fans of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains. This is a glaring omission.

2. In the Hansen amendment (enclosed) please see page 6, line 16, (c) NO BUFFER ZONES AROUND THE NATIONAL MONUMENT. Because the areas that were not protected in the past were developed into some of the footprint of the mountains, does not mean it would be all right to let it all be developed now. This is extremely short sighted. We need the remaining footprint even more so because of our past mistakes. As I've stated, the Federally protected endangered bighorn live there. Without this area they are doomed to die off, as well as other species that reside or grow only in these areas. How well is the Federal Government protecting these animals if they allow developers to build in areas where endangered animals and plant life persist? There is a wonderful organization in Palm Desert, The Bighorn Institute, which has a handful of biologists trying to preserve and save these animals. One of our past Presidents, Gerald Ford, is the Honorary Chairman of Fund-raising. When you are next in the Coachella Valley, I am sure you would find a visit to The Bighorn Institute quite an exciting and enlightening experience. The Annenbergs are caring residents and contribute to the Institute, as well as the Hopes, and a number of other people that you know.

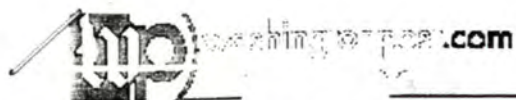
3. In the Hansen amendment, on page 16, is a list of those who should be involved in over-seeing the protection of the Santa Rosa Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountains, there should be either an added (11) A representative from the Bighorn Institute, or instead of such broad wording on "(7) A representative of a local conservation organization" should be changed to specific wording such as (7) A representative from the Bighorn Institute. to ensure that these federally protected endangered animals, would indeed remain protected.

To protect the mountains and not the buffer zones or the footprint, would be as if one were trying to protect their legs without their feet. Neither one can stand alone. Thousands of voters hope that our government can give consideration to living creatures that deserve their right to live on this Earth.

Thank you for your time, your hard work, and your caring about this world,

Alexandra Sheldon

Alexandra Sheldon



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On the Web

In Calif., Birdies vs. Bighorn

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, May 31, 2000; Page A01

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — A tough, divisive question is confronting this old desert resort town as it rushes to shape its future: Golf or sheep?

Backed by city leaders, a local developer is intent on transforming a baked, barren canyon on the edge of a residential neighborhood into 18 holes of plush fairways and sparkling putting greens.



A female California bighorn stands on a rock. The sheep are at the center of a dispute over a proposed Palm Springs golf course.

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It would be the latest course to rise up among more than 100 others across Southern California's rugged Coachella Valley, and yet another salvo in the breakneck competition among rival cities here to improve their economic fortunes by drawing tourists and residents with top-notch "destination golf."

But environmentalists are fighting furiously to stop the elaborate project. They contend that it would radically alter the character of a vital mountain range and spell doom for a beloved and endangered species indigenous to the desert region, the bighorn sheep.

And in that conflict lies a much larger debate about the shifting fate of the shrinking open lands of the West.

No other part of the country is experiencing as much population growth. So many aging baby boomers are either in the West or settling here that Census officials project the number of elderly residents in most western states will double in 20 years. In California, for example, the number is expected to rise from 3.3 million to 6.6 million older residents.

And as much as that trend means new condos and shopping malls, it means golf.

More than 500 golf courses were constructed across the nation last year, a record number, and states such as Arizona, California and Nevada are at the forefront of the boom, which is showing no sign of letting up.

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JUNE 2000



Onstage at a new shrine to rock and roll:

Jimi Hendrix's hat, Janis Joplin's boa, Eric Clapton's guitar

and Big Jay McNeely's sax

[PAGE 68]

\$4.00 US \$5.00 CANADA



Bighorn sheep

have made a comeback in recent years, but some developers out West think they're intruders

B Y S T E V E K E M P E R

JOHN WEHAUSEN'S FAVORITE FIELD HAT IS SO TOUGH that its maker guarantees it for life. Wehausen is now sweating through his fourth, which suggests how much time he has spent in the field over the past 20 years pursuing bighorn sheep. Six foot two and rail thin, with a wispy beard, Wehausen began studying bighorn as an excuse to wander for weeks in the mountains, but then the sheep took over his life. Now he clambers after them in California's majestic Sierra Nevada and in the scorched ranges of the Mojave Desert. Most field biologists devote a few years to researching one animal and then move on. Wehausen, scientifically speaking, has been a monogamist.

When I visited him recently at his home in Bishop, California, on the eastern side of the Sierra, I found sheep horns littering the front porch. Inside, I saw skulls with massive flared horns leaning against a living room wall. On the messy kitchen table, piles of correspondence shared space with a hefty trophy given to Wehausen by the Desert Bighorn Council for his "outstanding contribution" to bighorn science. By title, he is a research scientist at the University of California's White Mountain Research Station in Bishop, but he has no office there and works out of his house.

A Rocky Mountain bighorn ram typically curls its lip as part of mating behavior. Horn ends are damaged from fighting.

The Desert Sun

SERVING THE COACHELLA VALLEY SINCE 1927

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TUESDAY

May 16, 2000

Mountain Falls deal stopped by judge

Environmental review must have more public input

BY LUKAS VELUSH
THE DESERT SUN

PALM SPRINGS — The controversial Mountain Falls Golf Preserve plan suffered a setback in court Monday.

A Superior Court judge in Riverside invalidated the Palm Springs City Council's January approval of the 18-hole golf course and condominium project.

As part of her ruling, Judge Gloria Connor Trask said the environmental review used to approve the project must undergo further review.

The project is planned at the mouth of Tachevah Canyon.

Following more public hearings, the City Council can again discuss and approve the development.

"This is not at a victory for the Sierra Club; this is a victory for the bighorn sheep," said Jeff Morgan, local vice chairman for The Tahquitz Group of the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club filed the lawsuit to stop the development because its members say Mountain Falls threatens a population of 25 endangered bighorn sheep that uses the land for foraging.

Although disappointed by the ruling, supporters are not about to abandon the project, said Fred Grand, development president.

He estimated it would take about six months for the public to review changes made in the environmental review.

"At this point, we're faced with a decision to appeal or to recirculate the (environmental impact report) and seek reapproval," he said.

Members of the Palm Springs City Council who

Please see REVIEW, A8



Review

Continued from A1
approved Mountain Falls in January could not be reached for comment.

Court records state that Trask rejected the city's approval of the project and the environmental review because changes were made to Mountain Falls after all of the public hearings were held.

Grand said that he didn't think further public review was necessary because the changes amounted to lowering the golf course's elevation from near 980 feet to 780 feet.

It was a change made to benefit the sheep at the request of wildlife managers who said there would be less impact at a lower elevation.

"There are still bighorn sheep ranging at that level on a regular basis," the Sierra Club's Morgan said.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, which regulate wildlife at federal and state levels, have determined the maximum elevation for development that won't endanger bighorn sheep is 660 feet.

And Morgan said that's not the only reason Trask wanted the public to have another crack at the environmental review.

Morgan said Trask also wanted the public to have a

chance to comment on December ruling, in which she said the environmental review didn't adequately cope with the needs of endangered sheep.

She ruled that the environmental review, conducted and approved by the city, should have indicated that Mountain Falls would be "significant and direct" impacts to the endangered sheep population.

Although the city said development could have cumulative effect on sheep, Trask stated in December ruling that city didn't address the "significant" and "direct" impacts the sheep would face if Mountain Falls was built.

To get past that standard, state law requires the city must decide the development proposal has a "significant" positive impact warrant accepting the negative environmental impacts.

The city made that "overriding" ruling before approving the plan in January.

The Sierra Club also has a case in federal court in San Diego that also alleges Mountain Falls will harm the bighorn, which is a federally listed species.

That case is in the pretrial stages.

Lukas Velush covers environment and transportation for The Desert Sun. He can be reached at 778-4625.

Local

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For the record B2

B

City editor Matt Fuhs Phone 778-4620 Fax 778-4654 E-mail mfuhs@palmspri.gannett.com

Feinstein presents similar monument bill

Proposal echoes Bono's plan for nearby mountain ranges

BY LUKAS VELUSH
THE DESERT SUN

A bill to create the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument has a new supporter: Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

Feinstein introduced to

the Senate on Monday a near-duplicate of the Rep. Mary Bono, R-Palm Springs, bill that cleared the House Resources Committee last week. The bill would create a 272,000-acre monument running along the

tops of both mountain ranges. About 50,000 acres of private land within the monument would not be affected by the monument status.

'WILDLIFE HOME:' "The Santa Rosa/San Jacinto Mountains are home to magnificent vistas and unique wildlife," Feinstein said Monday in a released statement. "It is my hope

that the Senate will approve this bill and protect these majestic mountains."

Feinstein's bill, however, does not include amendments added to the House bill by fellow California Republican Rep. Richard Pombo, in committee, said Jim Hock, a Feinstein spokesman.

According to Bill Havert, the executive director of the

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, the amendments require federal land managers to provide access to private land within the monument regardless of what use is proposed on the land.

NO PROTECTION: Read literally, allowing all use, rather than "reasonable use" on the private land would open it up to anything, rang-

ing from strip mining to a high-rise apartment complex, Havert said last week. The conservancy has led the effort to create the monument and to get local support.

The amendments also say the federal government can get funding to buy private holdings within the monument only from the Land

Please see BILL, B2

ENDANGERED DESERT ANIMALS



Dave Taylor

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
To H.R. 3676
OFFERED BY MR. HANSEN

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
3 “Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monu-
4 ment Act of 2000”.

5 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
6 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Establishment of Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, California.

Sec. 3. Management of Federal lands in the National Monument.

Sec. 4. Development of management plan.

Sec. 5. Existing and historical uses of Federal lands included in Monument.

Sec. 6. Acquisition of land.

Sec. 7. Local advisory committee.

Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

7 SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF SANTA ROSA AND SAN
8 JACINTO MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT,
9 CALIFORNIA

10 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

11 (1) The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Moun-
12 tains in southern California contain nationally sig-
13 nificant biological, cultural, recreational, geological,
14 educational, and scientific values.

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3676**OFFERED BY MR. POMBO**

(Page & line nos. refer to the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute)

Page 6, line 18, strike “, Congress does not intend”

Page 6, lines 19 and 20, strike “for the establishment of the National Monument to lead” and insert “the establishment of the National Monument shall not lead”.

Page 6, line 23, strike “that”.

Page 6, line 25, strike “shall be precluded” and insert “shall not be precluded”.

Page 7, line 3, strike “that”.

Page 7, line 5, strike “shall be” and insert “shall not be”.

Page 11, line 25, strike “reasonable”.

Page 14, strike lines 20 through 23, and insert the following new subsection:

1 (c) PAYMENT OF FAIR MARKET VALUE.—The Sec-
2 retary shall pay the fair market value for any interests
3 or partial interests in land acquired under this section,
4 which shall be, at the option of the landowner, either—