

Dear Aspen Environmental Group and California Public Utilities Commission(CPUC):

What follows are some of my comments about the proposed Sunrise Power Link.

- I will list why I think option D is a very bad idea.
- Give you my perspective on the current overall project.
- Make an alternate suggestion for their strategy.

I was the former co-chair of the forest committee for the San Diego Sierra Club. This was not a paid position. It cost me plenty of money. I stepped down from this position to give more time to an area of this county that in my opinion is the most beautiful region in our county. It is not huge by comparison to other regions of public interest. This is the area I am very familiar with and does not indicate my lack of esteem for other regions which of course include the very controversial desert option. Others know that one better than I and will comment more accurately than I could.

At roughly 40 thousand acres a 500kv line would compromise a devastating percentage of it.. This of course is in all versions of alternative option D. I have worn the hats not only as committee co-chair, but as para botanist for the Natural History Museums plant atlas, volunteer patrol for the Forest Service, and the one I'm the most endeared to and proud of is the backward title of "adoptive parent" of the Eagle Peak Proposed Wilderness by the California Wild Heritage Coalition. After over ten years in this mindset, adoptive child would be more accurate. The latter interest is again bill before congress resubmitted for the third or fourth time just to Congress by Senator Boxer just this month. From the perspective of actually being on the ground there, I would humbly submit that I know this area arguably better than anyone, the Forest Service, the fire fighters, and the Native Americans, with two or three exceptions, the local land

owners, and any recreational group that frequents there. There are science groups that would have far better information in their area of expertise than I, say for example, ornithologists, botanists, geologists, or archaeologists. Many of these work for the Natural History Museum or for SDSU. Some of the best local knowledge is probably found in the residents in the hair pin turn overlooking Boulder gorge , right where all of the "option D's" come together, Nathan and David Weflen, "Skip" up on the hill to the south of them, the McCoys, Joanne, Bobby, and David, the Rutherfords, the care taker of Rancho Alegria, Otto Rolin, the former ranch owners at the Marston Ranch above the McCoy Ranch, the tribal leaders at the Inaja Reservation, the Palomar Cleveland ranger, Jose Cervantes with specific personal knowledge of this area and most especially the Viejas spiritually leader, Ron Christman with detailed knowledge of the area, and the former Fire chief at the Pine Hills station , Jim Talbot. The director of the San Diego River Park Foundation, Rob Hutsel has very good knowlegd and resources in the area. It would be imperative that a thorough review of this area would include in depth conversations with these locals and former locals. In my opinion your work is incomplete without their input.

Nevertheless, here are a few reasons why I believe any version of the option D alternative is a very bad idea:

In spite of the described intention the newest alternate to alternative D takes almost as much private land as the first one. Many if not most of the land owners had structures that were lost in the Cedar Fire. That doesn't mean that they haven't been planning to rebuild. This situation is putting a lot of lives on hold.

The line runs the length of a fault line containing high rocky crags in many areas overlooking deep gorges way below; With the presence of numerous natural ponds or rock bottom "punch bowls" in the local streams this is ideal habitat for the locally threatened golden eagle. There are only roughly 55 pairs of golden eagles left in the county.

We saw one pair just last Saturday on the McCoy ranch flying between the two ponds there. This is directly beneath where the option D line would go. I have reason to believe there is another pair in Cedar Gorge due to a feather that I found there close to where the line would go through. There are several rocky outcroppings and ponds in the area that make this habitat ideal and the area is seldom visited by human making the notion very promising for these birds.

There are many other raptures and diverse species of wild life in the area. Arroyo Toads, San Diego's few remaining Steel head trout reintroduced to Boulder Creek again directly below this route. California Pond Turtle, and Two striped garder snake exist in numbers, especially in Boulder and Cedar Creeks. One of the largest populations of California Brown newts occurs in their southern limit in the Conejos valley.

Along the high ridges above the Conejos Valley are rock laden vernal pools and seeps that are very critical to the sensitive environments they serve.

The area is also home to rare species of Cuyamaca Cypress, Tecate Cypress, and very rare California Walnut. Fires notwithstanding, it contains some of the most diverse stands of chaparal and rare fragile border-ecozones into pine , coniferous, and oakland-woodland ecosystems. These are still in fragile condition recovering from the Cedar Fire.

The option D route goes directly over head of several significant Native American sites along Conejos, Boulder, Cedar Creek, and a really large one in the San Diego River gorge. There are morteros, grinding stones still in place, pottery, amazing ancient trails now visible again after the Cedar Fire, and even Shamen sites and stone circles I don't know the purpose of, and a women's rite of passage site near by. Even an ancient Eagle Rock sits directly beneath the alternate option. Please consider talking to the Kumeyaay

archeologist, Louis Guasick, and further expertise from Ron Christman, and perhaps, local Charlie Alto about these before disturbing anything in the region.

This region is absolutely the fundamental cornerstone to all of San Diego's early modern history as well. The Boulder Creek Road/ Boulder Creek junction is the site of an old gold mining village and the region was at that time the corridor for transporting water and lumber to town. Much of this archeology has yet to be fully studied. It is the site of an old school and the oldest Ranch dating back to 1848, the McCoy Ranch. This ranch is still in the hands of the original family owners. Removing this connection is like removing the last of a living legacy. I might point out here that no one bothered to even contact this family of this possibility and give them an opportunity to comment. This with state money being the source of this fact finding, just isn't fair, nor morally right. There are a multitude of recent and ancient artifacts there.

It is the site of Anahuac Spring, yet another significant site to Indians, early history and ecology right below the route.

From there in my opinion this option moves North into what I consider the most critically threatened environment in the county this side of Pauma Creek by Palomar Mountain. That would be the Cedar Creek Valley. Parts of this gorge are breathtakingly rugged and pristine and virtually untouched. The biggest exception is the already existing 69 Kv line that runs there which is anything but compliant with clean water standards for protecting the creek against runoff. The annual "fluffing of the dirt" right before rainy season on this access road is a disgrace. The access mess of dirt roads are a ridiculous sample of SDG&E's current ability to manage land and erosion where it is out of site from anyone monitoring them. We do not need a nearly 10 fold expansion of this debacle.

On the opposite side of Cedar Creek the line goes through the Rutherford Ranch, now owned by the Guiles. I doubt either of these

families have been notified either. The Rutherford family sold most of their land specifically to the US Forest Service so that it would remain preserved in its gorgeous pristine state for generations. Ripping it up with a huge line hissing and whining and raising the hair on every creature out there is such a betrayal of public trust. This line runs the length of much of what they sold to us, also bordering close to Deadmans Flat, an incredible valley full of Engleman Oak and a dizzying view into the San Diego River Gorge.

Then it crosses the River only to block this view provided by the visitor trail at Inaja Memorial Park, a park dedicated to the lives of fire fighters who lost their lives protecting the gorge and a trail that is the only one in San Diego on the National Registry of Trails. What an insult and display of arrogance to our community to consider putting this huge line there after these people lost their lives protecting it.

This region is home of Three Sisters Waterfall, Cedar Creek Falls, the San Diego River Falls, Mildred Falls, and the Big 12 Falls, all 100 feet or better in height. There are dozens of smaller waterfalls, slides and punch bowles. You probably were unaware that huge waterfalls in these numbers existed right here in Southern California so close to the urban world. This is a treasure that should remain wild. In these fragile corridors of lush riparian habitat holds what is left of our diverse plant and animal communities threatened by human encroachment.

This area is a low impact recreational haven. It is home to the Sea to Sea trail, hiking, horseback riding, biking, fishing, swimming, camping, and considerable hunting. Deer and wild turkey abound here. So do mountain lions. The wilderness bill was very carefully designed with the proximity of the multiuse needs urban San Diego in mind. Five units 5-8 thousand acres each are connected by dirt roads providing public and emergency access. These were not intended to be further reduced and compromised by a huge powerline.

During at least half of the year, Boulder Creek Road experiences winds in excess of 60 miles per hour and even over 90 mph. This is 10 miles per hour faster than hurricane force. The terrain is extremely rugged. What would have to be done just to find, create, and access to manage and build such a thing is an unthinkable amount of impact to this fragile treasure. It is also home to rare species of Cuyamaca Cypress, Tecate Cypress, and California Walnut. Fire notwithstanding, it contains some of the most diverse stands of chaparral and rare fragile border ecozones into pine, coniferous, and oakland woodland ecosystems. These are still in fragile condition recovering from the Cedar Fire.

In short option D threatens the integrity of San Diego's most prominent and premier watershed biologically, historically, recreationally, and archaeologically and economically, and security and safety.

There is one more point to be made and by far the most important. This power line isn't needed at all. No one has provided physical and engineering data to demonstrate the need or the feasibility of this line. It can be demonstrated that SDG&E makes money on transmission. Is that why they rejected an option in town? It can be demonstrated that they will use their parent company's plants in Mexico for power at least as much as the green sources they market this with. It can not be demonstrated that the Stirling company is even a viable scalable technology. Considering only this company for this contract, seems like an illegal monopoly at the hands of public money. It can be demonstrated that there are better technologies right around the corner that combine wind and solar into inexpensive private units. There is much at a personal level that can be done to shore up this proposed need for a new line.

It can be demonstrated that often the benefit to the power companies in these situations are the enormous land grabs from the public. Enough is enough.

It can also be demonstrated that the land in its current state is far more valuable to the public good and health and welfare than any benefit that a powerline could provide. Wild places available to the public reduce crime, stress, heart disease, mental illness, drug, gang, and delinquency issues with youth, spur creativity and productivity.

Consider that right now this moment we , you and I , own it. IF SDG&E builds this line, we don't own it, SDG&E does. Should we give away our land and wild heritage for undocumented projects and technology?

SDG&E is like any large company in that they design, manufacture, implement, and market products and services in whatever way that makes them money. They are a business. They are not in the business of looking out for the greater public good. They are in the business of making money like any business is. Nike says I need tennis shoes, Starbucks says I need coffee. Of Course. And SDG&E says I need transmission. Like any guy in a bar, they can ask for anything they want. Asking is one thing.

However, The PUC is in the business of looking out for the public good. And they are hired and appointed with state tax money to provide this service. I need for my watchdog to tell SDG&E that what I really need is to keep wild open spaces just like they are because they are better for me than transmission lines. Like any guy in a bar, we don't have to assume the role of changing them or evaluating their moral standards. We just need to be true to our own standards and say no. It is the task of maintaining these standards that we pay You to maintain.

No offense or disrespted to the Aspen Environmental group who does exactly what the are being paid to do, but in my opinion the state PUC is wasting our state money in that they have conducted this public survey without first presenting data that provides evidence that this line is needed at all. Instead of biologists we need to first be talking to physicists. Anything that is a need so urgent as to push

and force people from their homes or completely reduce the value of property remaining, to wipe out public pristine land for all of time when it has been pristine for the eons up until now; should be of dire emergency proportions. Has such a need been disclosed to the public? Certainly not. But instead the entire county is put in extreme stress and conflict over this line without adequate review.

Back country people are the first to sacrifice and come to the table when their neighbor or their country is in need. Do you see them doing it now? What I saw was hundreds of back country people taking time off on a week night at each of several meetings, not the least of which was all the way out to a packed to overflowing reception at Borrego Springs to tell the brainstormers of this project to go away, because nobody is buying it. Truly the boundaries of decency have been crossed and the public is going to be voicing their furry at the poles if our elected and appointed stewards don't respond with integrity to their commission to the public.

The PUC is being paid to set boundaries with the utilites we collectively do business with. This should be established long long before an environmental group has been brought in with state tax dollars . That process has been swept under the table. That people are already being jerked around on their own land causes me great concern that SDG&E's parent company Sempra Energy is up to its old tricks of just a couple of years ago, again, of deception and greed at our public expense, and the group that we pay to keep them respecting our boundaries is not taking a close enough look at their agenda in my behalf. Did we forget so quickly? The PUC is the group, not SDG&E, that will be held accountable by the public if they fail to do their job in our best interest.

Does that have to the the end of it? Definitely not. The future is bright and exciting. A small solar and alternative energy research facility using existing transmission lines would be an excellent thing. Doing small projects in El Centro and Occitillo might be a good proving ground for the technology. Investing all of the public



resources and then some, into one technology is dangerous. Solar is still a new technology. Remember Beta video? Remember what happened to Apple early on? Both good products. Limiting ourselves to one option at the early stage of an energy revolution would just be foolish both in service to the customer and to the bottom line of any investor.

For example, the success and retreat of IBM corporation. They totally took over the direction and flow of operation of many companies whose information they managed. Throw a dart at the great wall of history and you will never see this sort of power, from dinosaurs to Saddam succeeding long.

What works is when you are the guy that brings independence and enables the customer to run their own creative affairs. SDG&E could be the rare entity in history that takes an enlightened look at history and leads the way to the inevitable future, -and of course to ligament corporate benefit. Strong arming the public with power, and manipulation will only work temporarily every time. It is a sure sign of underlying weakness to force a path and only a matter of time before it will crumble at the hands of someone with sincere innovation. They could show genuine strength and see the playing field for what it is and adapt. I really do believe they are capable but they need to redirect.

We all know what happened next: It was the far thinking of Microsoft that removed the fatal brick from the foundation if IBM and even from Apple. Microsoft enabled individuals to be strong for themselves. They integrated tools available with their own brilliance and out competed a market thought to be unapproachable. Like the computer revolution, do you think the clean energy concerns are on the brink of revolution. You bet they are! Strong arming would only put a company right out of the game. I point out that even now an Intel chip is a toy compared to an IBM 3090 mainframe. Enlightened infrastructure, positive humble innovation won that battle. Yes, develop solar, maybe keeping Sterling around. But get smart about this. Smart means clever, not force. When you generate

solar make universal batteries that create competitive markets with all vendors rather than trying to control the whole field. Create universal solar modules and hydrogen cells in the same way so that they are interchangeable on a wide competitive field. Don't invest all of the public's resources in one basket until we know who the next Microsoft of energy is. This takes a little patience and finesse. Betting it all on the Sterling model would be both technologically and economically risky, a risk we can not afford in the playing field of global warming. We need to move very cautiously. This isn't it. If SDG&E and its regulatory partner thinks like a czar it will receive the fate of every czar in history. But if SDG&E will think like a clever problem solving geek you can be the next Microsoft and Cisco. Then everybody wins. This industry holds the potential to win with huge world wide implications. Rushing the gun, so to speak, could lose a really big opportunity for all of us. I fear the current unmodified course of action has the potential to drive us into a laughing stock of ruin. Reevaluate the future --and define it. Make cells, batteries, panels. Consider paths that are compatible with home needs and transportation needs of the future out a 100 years. Do you think the technology will change? --Look back a 100 years. Maglevs may be a reality.

A 100 years from now our pristine back country should look the same as it does today and will be as valuable and in demand then to humans as it is now. This is one thing that doesn't change.

Sincerely  
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Snake Peak and Boulder Creek



Boulder Gorge from west rim of Sisters. Opt D  
cuts across in the black ground.



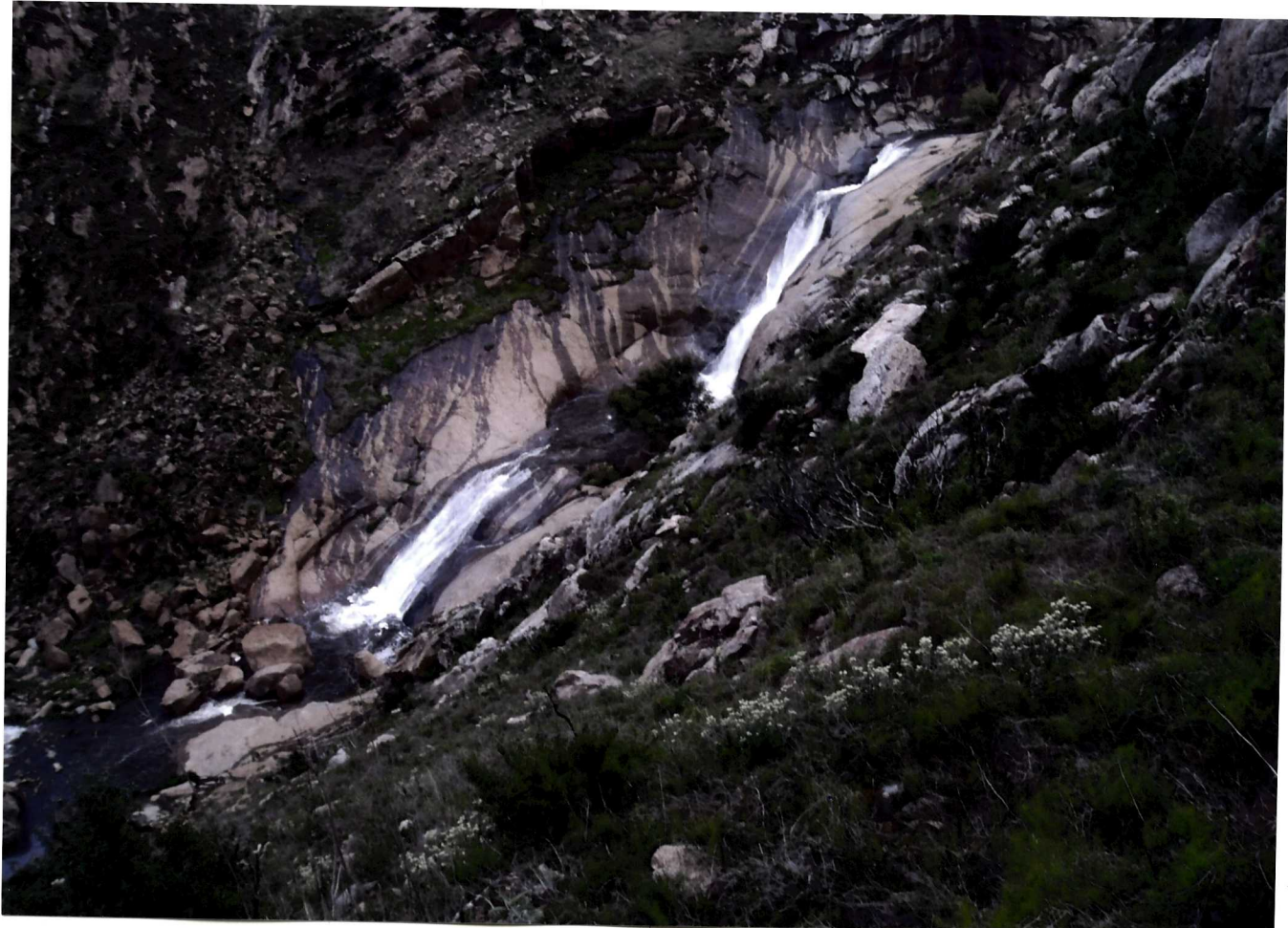
Conejos Valley  
taken just west of current line



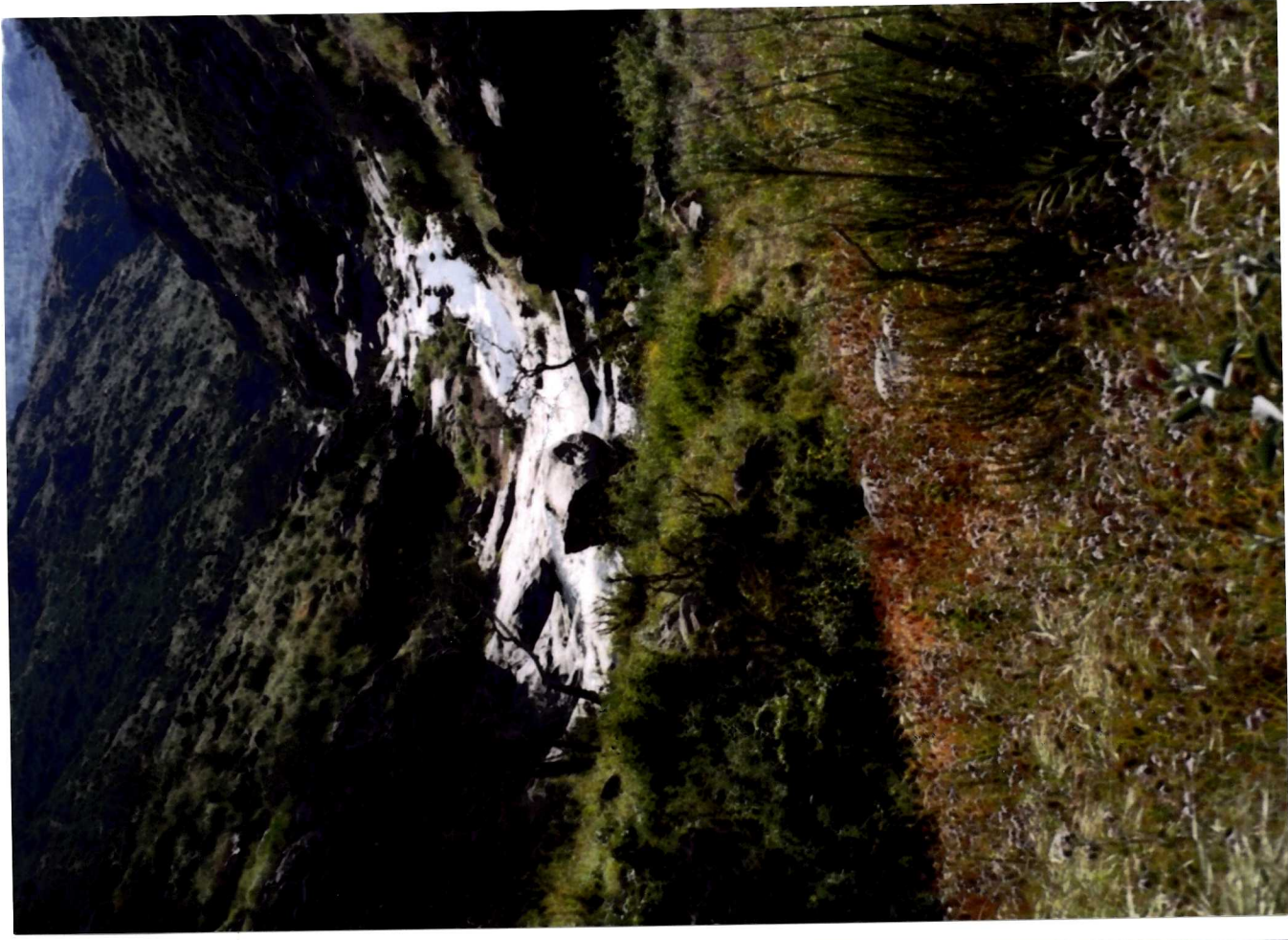
Both Routes of Opt D along  
Boulder Creek Rd  
Conejos Valley



Cedar Gorge from Cat Mt before fire. Oct  
D goes right across



3 Sisters Waterfall - Boulder Creek



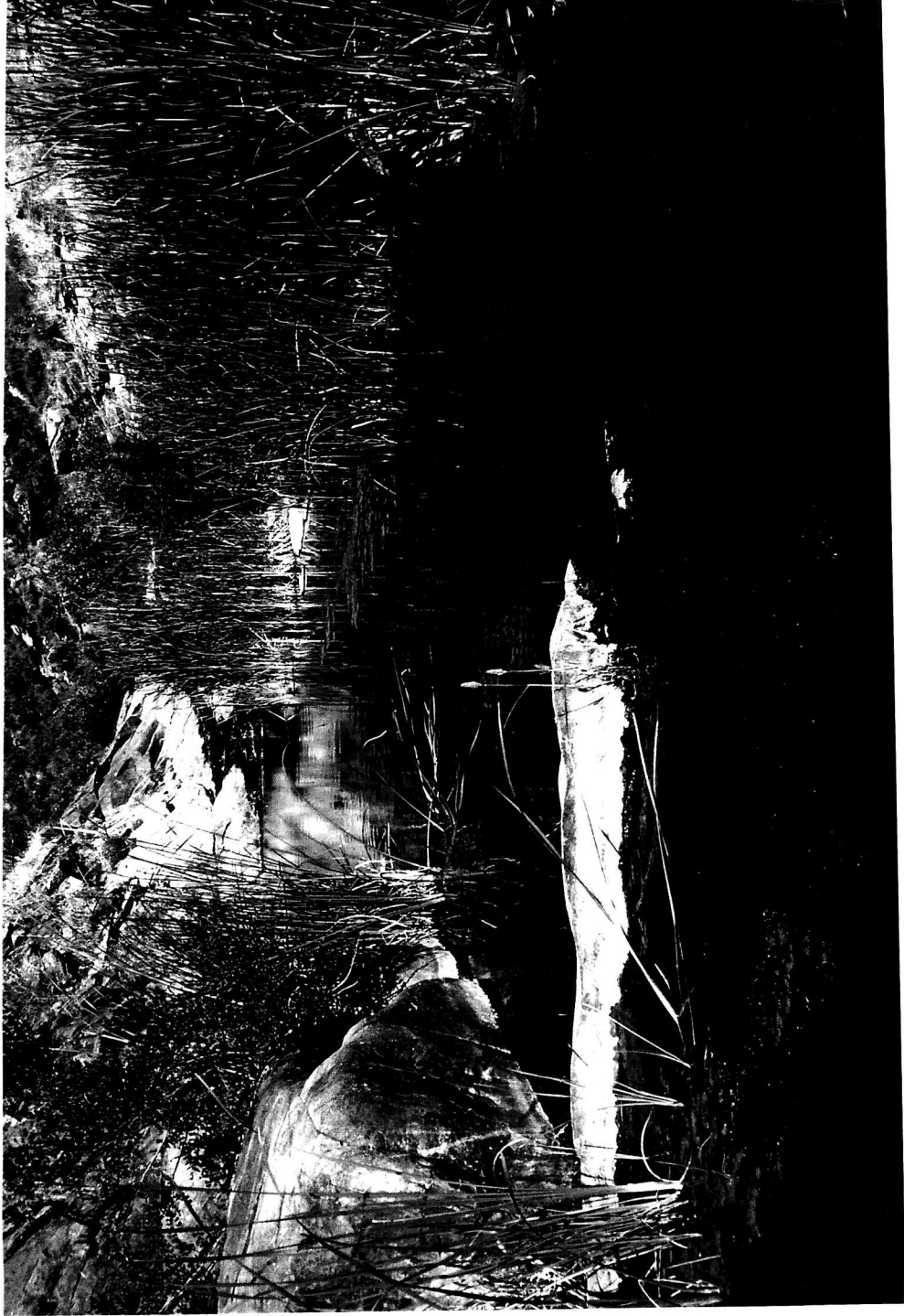
*Cedar Gorge 100 yds upstream  
from opt D*



*Boulder Gorge*

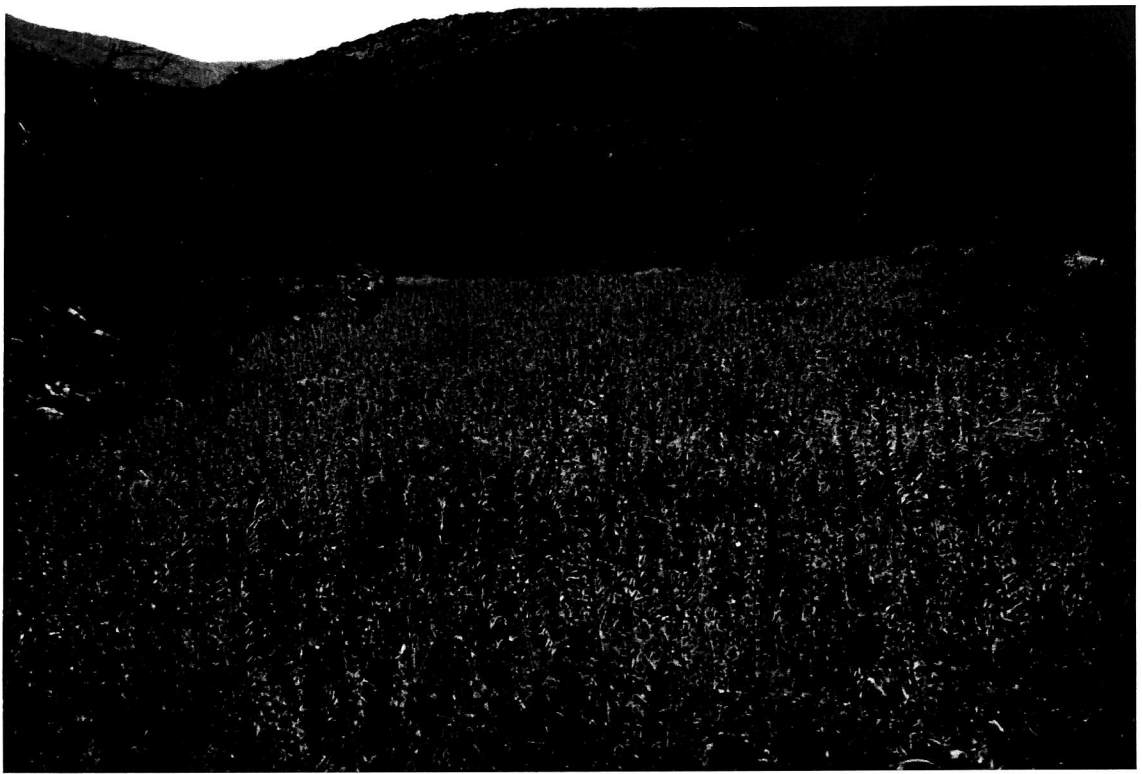


Cedar creek local swim hole (fabulous!)  
opt ① 200 yds up stream.

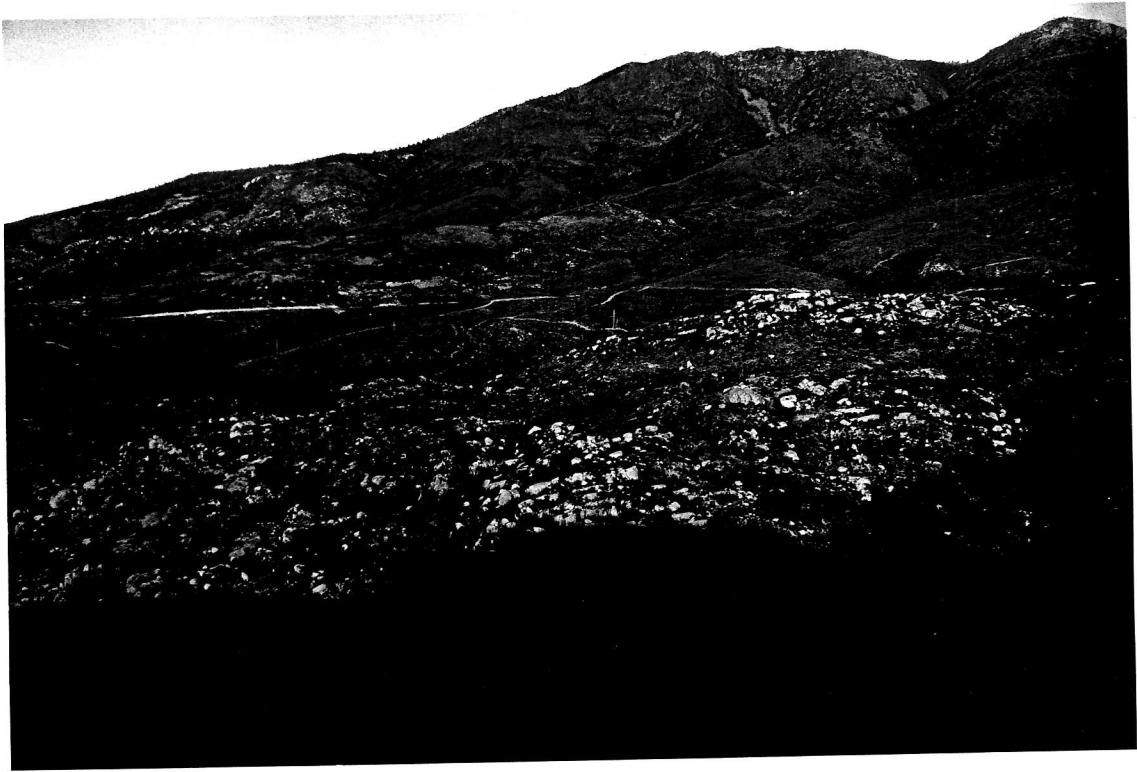


*Cedar Grove night below  
opt D*





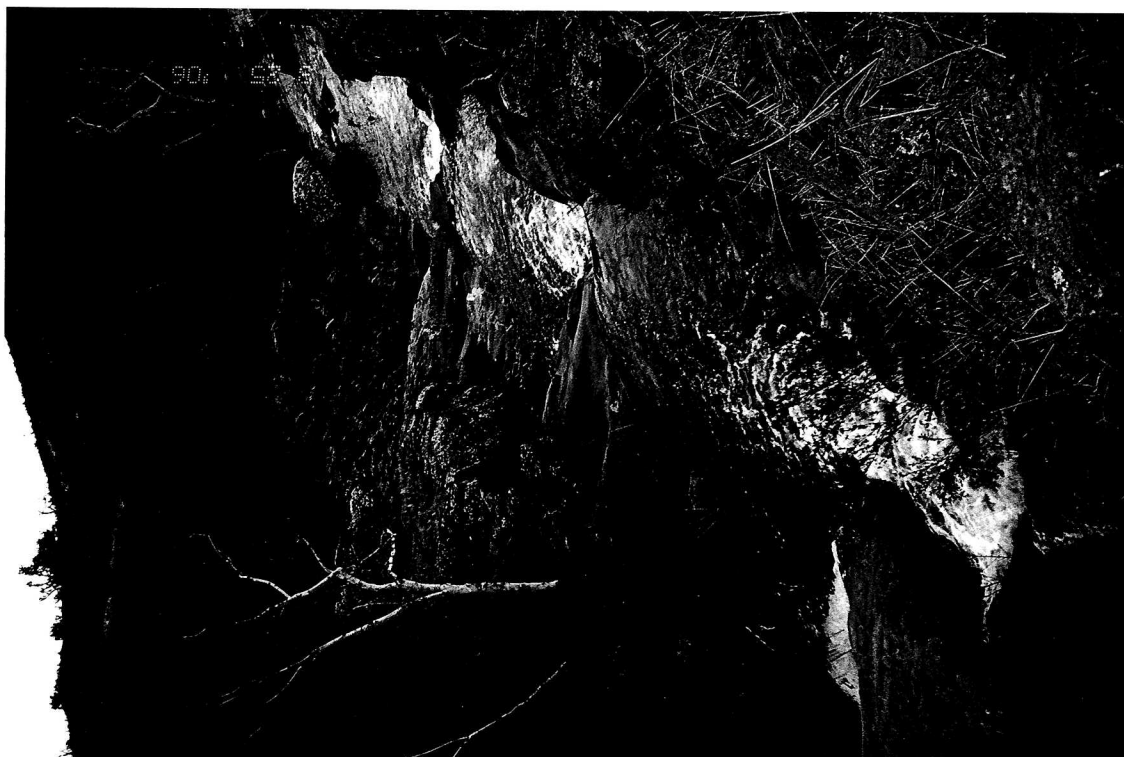
Cedar Grove beside Cedar Creek and the Powerline Road. Oct 10 directly over



Current power line along Boulder Creek Road  
Cuyamaca Peak in background.  
Cedar Grove



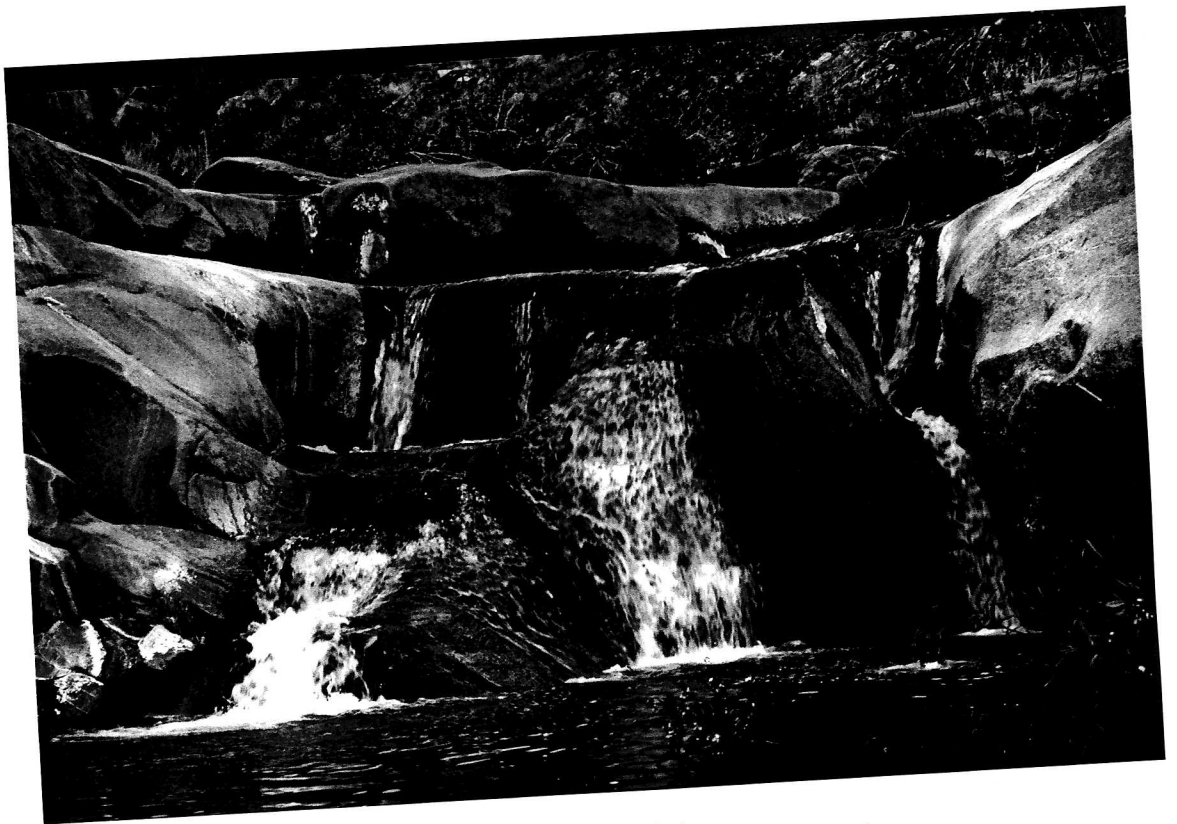
Cedar Creek gorge after the fire. opt D & current power line in  
each ground. Taken from Ant Mt.



Series of pools in Boulder creek  
opt. D directly over head



*Cedar Creek directly under apt D.*



*Pristine, wild, untouched, rugged. Cedar gorge upstream.*