

Hastings Environmental Law Journal

Volume 19
Number 1 *Winter 2013*

Article 3

1-1-2013

Big Basin, California

Michael Bland

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_environmental_law_journal



Part of the [Environmental Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Michael Bland, *Big Basin, California*, 19 *Hastings West Northwest J. of Env'tl. L. & Pol'y* 39 (2013)
Available at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_environmental_law_journal/vol19/iss1/3

This Photography is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UC Hastings Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Hastings Environmental Law Journal* by an authorized editor of UC Hastings Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact wangangela@uchastings.edu.



Big Basin, California

By Michael G. Bland

At length, after attaining an elevation of about 12,800 feet, I found myself at the foot of a sheer drop in the bed of the avalanche channel I was tracing, which seemed absolutely to bar further progress The tried dangers beneath seemed ever greater than that of the cliff in front; therefore, after scanning its face again and again, I began to scale it, picking my holds with intense caution. After gaining a point about halfway to the top, I was suddenly brought to a dead stop, with arms outspread, clinging close to the face of the rock, unable to move hand or foot either up or down. My doom appeared fixed. I *must* fall. There would be a moment of bewilderment, and then a lifeless rumble down the one general precipice to the glacier below.

When this final danger flushed upon me, I became nerve-shaken for the first time since setting foot on the mountains, and my mind seemed to fill with a stifling smoke. But this terrible eclipse lasted only a moment, when life blazed forth again with preternatural clearness. I seemed suddenly to become possessed of a new sense. The other self, bygone experiences, Instinct, or Guardian Angel, – call it what you will, – came forward and assumed control. Then my trembling muscles became firm again, every rift and flaw in the rock was seen as through a microscope, and my limbs moved with a positiveness and precision with which I seemed to have nothing at all to do. Had I been borne aloft upon wings, my deliverance could not have been more complete. Above this memorable spot, the face of the mountain is still more savagely hacked and torn. It is a maze of yawning chasms and gullies, in the angles of which rise beetling crags and piles of detached boulders that seem to have been gotten ready to be launched below. But the strange influx of strength I had received seemed inexhaustible. I found a way without effort, and soon stood upon the topmost crag in the blessed light.

~ John Muir*

* JOHN MUIR, THE MOUNTAINS OF CALIFORNIA (The Century Co., New York, 1894), *available at* <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/10012/pg10012.html>.
