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His 33-month legacy

What Watt Wrought

Even in defeat, Secretary of Interior James Watt has achieved a certain triumph. He has denied the fruits of victory to those who finally beat him.

Thanks to his 'joke' about the Coal Commission, Watt has created the impression that he shot himself out of the saddle. But those who have worked to defeat Watt say he didn't shoot himself; they say he was already beaten when he made his now famous remark. In fact, they say he made that remark because he recognized that he had been beaten once and for all.

Watt's defeat, they say, came in the United States Senate -- a Republican-dominated body which had been his staunch supporter. But in September, twenty Republicans joined the Democratic minority to cripple Watt's programs.

The Senate voted 63-33 to deny Watt the power to lease coal at his discretion, to forbid the leasing of certain key off-shore oil and gas tracts, to forbid drilling in Wilderness, and so on. Probably as rankling as the prohibitions was the fact that the bill ordered Watt to do something he'd sworn he wouldn't do -- to buy additional National Parks land.

The day after his Senate defeat, Watt went before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and gave a gloomy speech about the state of the nation. "The world is ready to ignite, and your Secretary of Interior has to deal with 535 members of Congress that don't seem to be concerned about the future supply of energy in America."

The one 'light' remark in his pessimistic, angry speech concerned the ethnic makeup and physical attributes of the coal leasing commission Congress had earlier thrust on him.

Watt's stunning defeat in the U.S. Senate (The House had been voting against Watt for several sessions) can be seen as part of a pattern. For example, almost all of the hundreds of changes he has made in the federal strip mining regulations are in court. Many of the changes he's made in the rules governing coal leasing are also in court.

Not only had he run into legal opposition when he changed rules and regulations; he had also been compelled to enforce regulations he tried to ignore. Interior recently

agreed in court to enforce coal mining regulations -- some of them carrying criminal sanctions for operations -- that it had ignored.

The same picture emerges in oil shale. In coal, Watt inherited a coal leasing program from the Carter administration that he had modified. In oil shale, Watt had to create from scratch a leasing program. The one he tried to create would have let the Reagan administration lease billions of barrels of oil shale in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming before the 1984 election.

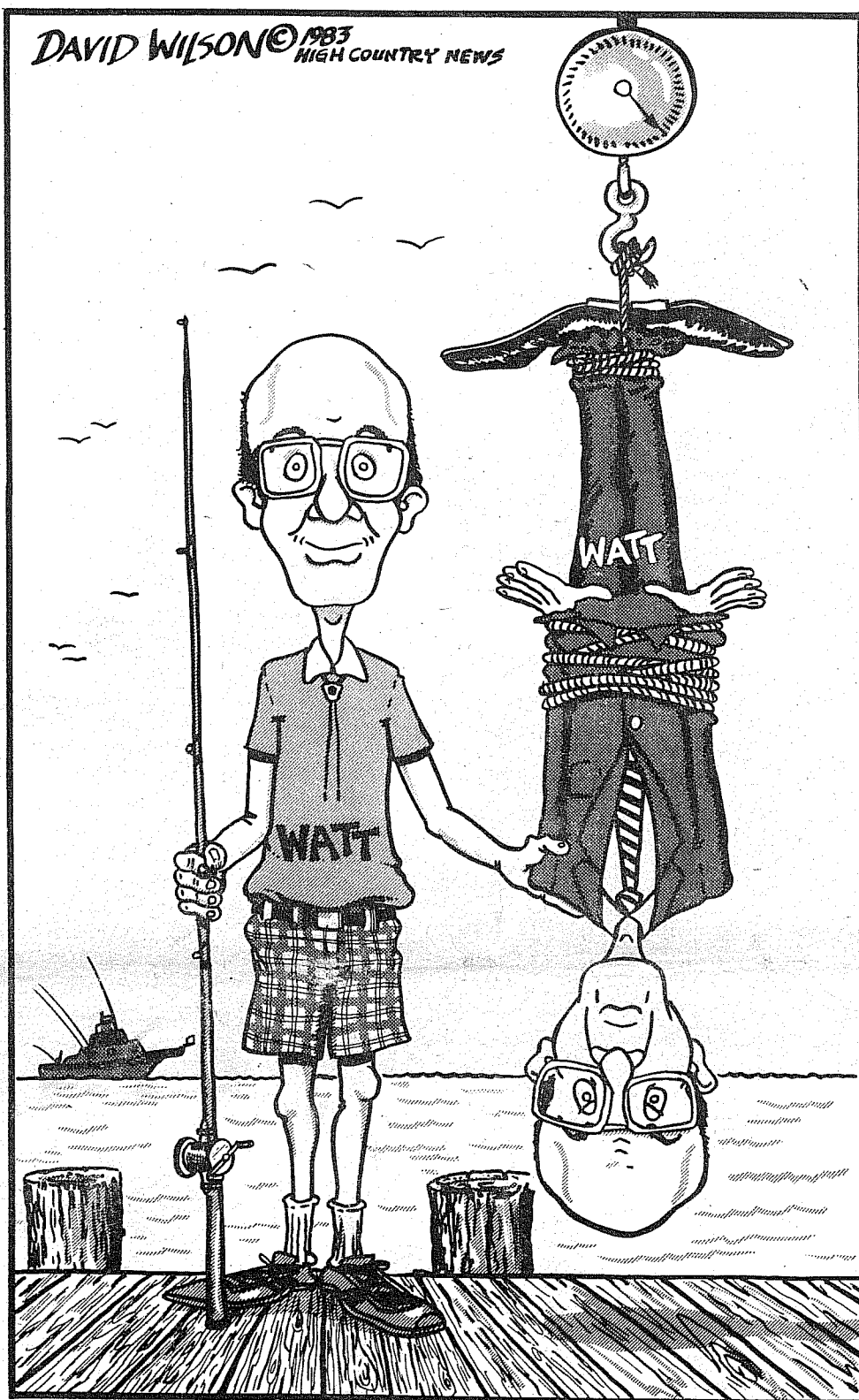
But his leasing program was stopped dead by a unique coalition of industry, the oil shale states, environmentalists, and local Colorado counties and towns. That same coalition is now trying to create a new leasing approach to take the place of Watt's defunct program.

The story on the sale of public lands and drilling for oil and gas in Wilderness is much the same. Either Watt was stopped by Congress, was stopped by the courts, or halted action himself in response to pressure. The story on the leasing court fight in the Palisades area on the Wyoming-Idaho border (HCN, 10/14/83) is one example of the multitude of such fights.

It would be false to imply that Watt lost every battle he fought. In fact, he was consistently successful in changing the internal makeup of his gigantic department. Its 50,000 to 80,000 employees are spread among the BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Parks Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Mines. Watt succeeded in replacing many of the top employees in these agencies with people loyal to himself. Where he didn't replace, he often eliminated jobs, and the people along with them.

The veteran of Washington's bureaucracy also used the budget process in a masterful way to change Interior's direction. He downgraded or eliminated spending on research, collection of data and environmental and resource analysis, and increased spending on leasing of resources.

Watt's strategy, then, was to change people, spending patterns and rules and regulations. On that foundation, he was going to build the



large-scale leasing of coal, oil and gas tracts, oil shale, off shore oil leases, and the like.

In general, he succeeded in building his foundation, although the pending lawsuits could change that. In some cases, he also achieved his goals. He bought no new parklands, he drastically increased oil and gas leasing, he held two large coal sales, he stopped doing resource and environmental research and analysis, and he put many BLM Wilderness Study Areas into non-Wilderness status.

But as of the moment, he appears to have failed on the big things. For the time being, there is a moratorium on coal leasing. Large scale oil shale leasing is certainly dead. The selling of private lands, assuming it was ever a serious effort, is stopped. New oil

and gas drilling in Wilderness areas is stopped.

The questions now all concern the future: to what extent will Watt's policies survive Watt? Has he laid the foundation on which William Clark will build Watt's house?

Or will Clark be the helpless inheritor of Watt's situation, ringed by lawsuits and by a new Congressional and public resolve to guide Interior along a path opposite to the Reagan administration's choosing.

Inside this special public lands issue are stories describing Interior today, and the direction in which the department, and the 700 million acres of land it affects, may move.

[See related stories on pages 10-14.]

Senate vote was key

A Washington lobbyist tells how Watt fell

Geoff Webb was one of five Washington, D.C. lobbyists who conceived and implemented the Congressional policy which brought down James Watt.

The Friends of the Earth representative worked with Carl Gawell and David Alberswerth of the National Wildlife Federation, David Masselli of the Western Organization of Resource Councils, and Brooks Yeager of the Sierra Club. Their aim was to handcuff Watt through the Congressional budget process.

The five conceived the strategy over a year ago, and quickly won in the House of Representatives. That body three times passed Interior Appropriations bills that would have limited Watt's ability to lease coal, drill Wilderness, and sell off-shore oil tracts.

But the five couldn't win in the Senate. And when the opposing bills from the House and Senate went to conference, the Senate version always won.

Webb speculates that the abortive Fort Union coal sale in South Dakota helped change the Senate's mind. The sale of coal for less than a penny a ton to a desultory group of coal bidders caused a number of Republican and Democratic senators to switch votes. So on September 20 the Senate amended Interior's 1984 appropriations bill. The coal leasing moratorium, an amendment offered by Senator Dale Bumpers (D-Arkansas) passed by an overwhelming 63-33 vote.

The loss, Webb said, led the next day to Watt's now famous September 21 speech before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "He was clearly unnerved by the vote. That vote sent him off the deep end."

Webb says the vote was not a personal rebuke to Watt -- it was directed at Interior's policy. "That vote was about coal sales in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico."

In Webb's view, the Senate vote signaled Watt that 30 months of work were going down the drain. "Until now, the main thing Watt did was to uproot his department of professionals and replace them with ideologic fellow travelers. He'd changed people, policies and the rules of coal leasing" in preparation for 1984.

"1984 was to be his big year. He was going to lease up to 17 billion tons of coal, some of it adjacent to Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, some near Chaco Canyon and Bisti Badlands in New Mexico." But the vote, Webb said, told Watt that his big year of leasing was at least delayed, and possibly permanently stopped.

Webb and his allies fought Watt through the budget, or appropriations, process even though Webb says it's an unfortunate approach. Basic policy on issues like coal and off-shore oil leasing is properly made through laws addressed to those questions. "You're not supposed to legislate via appropriations." The appropriations process is only supposed to fund policy decisions Congress has already made.

"But we fought fire with fire." According to Webb, Watt had used Interior's budget to rework policy, directing money to leasing and resource development and away from park acquisition and resource and environmental analysis. "So we used the appropriations process" to try to reverse that.

Why aren't the Congressional policy and budget systems working? Why aren't the relevant Congressional committees exercising oversight on the way Watt implements laws?

"Ideally, that power should be exercised by Mo Udall (D-AZ) and his House Interior Committee. But power has eroded over there through lack of use. And the prospects of things getting better aren't bright."

Webb was generally critical of Congress for letting Watt get so far. And he was admiring of several of the Western Senators who shielded Watt for so long.

"Senator Jim McClure (R-ID) is tough and smart. So is Domenici (R-NM). We don't have many like that on our side. There are a lot of wimpy members of Congress. The Democrats always want to work things out. So they get rolled."

Webb's admiration for the abilities of some of Watt's supporters does not extend to the Secretary. "In dollar terms, Watt gave away far more than Albert Fall (of Teapot Dome fame)." But Watt didn't profit personally. "It wasn't so much criminal behavior as criminal negligence."

Webb disagrees with those who see Watt as an idealist. "He's not a pure conservative. He's a sleazy character who misrepresents and lies. He is at heart an extremist. He has an apocalyptic, paranoid view of the world."

Finally, Webb says it took environmental groups a long time to turn from minor issues to leasing. "For a long time, environmental groups focused only on Wilderness drilling and park sales. It took them a while to realize that the biggest threat Watt posed was the leasing of public resources on long-term contracts at cut-rate prices."

The press was no help in educating the public. "The land sales threat was never proportional to the attention. *Time* and *Newsweek* did cover stories on the land sales. But not on leasing."

-- the staff

'The Democrats always want to work things out. So they get rolled.'

Surrounded by lawsuits

Watt's ignorance of coal proved fatal

The Department of Interior William Clark inherits from James Watt is ringed about by lawsuits, Congressional initiatives, and aroused citizens. That holds for offshore oil drilling, Wilderness and National Parks. But it is most true for coal.

Some of the credit, or blame, for Watt's predicament on coal must go to dozens of citizen and environmental groups from Appalachia to the Rockies who took him on.

But in retrospect, most blame must go to Watt's apparent failure to understand that the major coal issues and the economy had evolved since his earlier stint in Interior in the mid-1970s. Washington attorney and lobbyist David Masselli says it is likely that Watt's coal policies reflected the lessons he learned in the mid-1970s, and that he never modified them in light of the evolution that has occurred since.

According to Patrick Sweeney of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC), coal had been in turmoil all through the 1970s. The turmoil started in 1970, when it was realized that Interior was leasing large amounts of federal coal without regard to the marketplace or to the environment.

From that year on, the battle was joined. Three laws resulted from the decade-long fight: the federal Coal

Leasing Amendment Act, which spoke to leasing and to the timely mining of leased coal; the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), which spoke to land use planning on federal lands; and the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), which spoke to the effect of both underground and surface mines on the land and water affected by mines.

The laws were general, and for several years, in various departments, the federal bureaucracy labored to write regulations to implement them. Nowhere did that go smoothly. Surprisingly, it went easiest in coal leasing. But late in the Carter administration, a comprehensive leasing-land use planning-reclamation program was in place for coal. Surprisingly, the coal leasing approach put in place in 1979 by Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus met least resistance.

Washington attorney and coal specialist Eldon Greenberg says not everyone was pleased. But, "The 1979 program was a compromise and neither the environmentalists nor industry sued."

"But when the administration changed in 1981, Watt sent out a letter asking industry and the public to tell Interior about regulations that were burdensome and cumbersome."

Greenberg says, "The result of Interior's review was the issuance of new regulations which in my view tilted toward coal companies and against surface owners and the environment. We think the regulations made it easier to lease and harder for others to affect the system."

Watt's revisions of the Andrus regulations were issued in July 1982, and by September 1983, Greenberg was in Washington district court on behalf of an array of groups challenging the new leasing. The lawsuit is a throwback to the 1970s -- an overall challenge to the entire leasing program.

It claims Watt didn't do an adequate EIS; that Interior didn't adequately explain and disclose the changes under the Administrative Procedures Act; and it challenges a supposed weakening of due diligence procedures which require companies to either mine a lease within a certain number of years or surrender the lease.

If the lawsuit is successful, it could send the entire leasing process back to the beginning. But the suit poses an alternative. "Our briefs suggest that the court order reestablishment of the Andrus leasing program."

Greenberg continues: "The ironic effect of Watt's program was to result

in a moratorium on leasing. If he had let Andrus in place, leasing would be bumping along now."

The changes Watt made in the leasing program were long and complex. But Sweeney, whose WORC umbrella organization includes rancher-dominated Plains organizations, says: "The heart of the Watt changes was to shift from leasing to meet market demand for coal to leasing to meet industry's demands for reserves."

Why did industry risk the stability the Andrus program offered? *Energy Daily*, which serves the energy industry, says coal didn't go along with Watt. The paper says industry tried to tell Watt that the leasing of 10 billion tons of coal (Andrus called for about 1.5 billion tons in the same period) in a slack market was crazy. Watt supposedly didn't hear or didn't heed coal's views.

But the coal industry is not monolithic. The National Coal Association says it supported and still supports the Watt leasing program. According to spokesman John Wasowicz in Washington, D.C., "The views he took on coal leasing were not dated or inappropriate. He was saying we have to provide an adequate resource base." Wasowicz is optimistic about the future. "With James Watt

[Continued on page 14]

Americans vs Liberals

Conservation is now a partisan issue

Michael Scott of the Wilderness Society sees grim years ahead as a result of the less than three years James Watt served as Secretary of Interior. The Wilderness Society is suing Interior over its treatment of Wildlife Refuges. But Scott's concern is more general:

"Watt's legacy is a more highly politicized Interior Department. Our parks and wilderness areas are the finest in the world and he has for the first time politicized conservation. He has said there are Americans and Liberals, and if you're an American you're for exploiting resources.

"Before Watt, conservation was bipartisan. You could deal with the issues on their merits. As a kid, you went to the National Parks to see

Smokey the Bear and Rangers. The parks said: We're a big enough country to set these things aside for the best interests of everyone.

"But Watt said: uh, uh, Democrats don't care about the best interests of the country."

Scott says this is something new in America. "Eisenhower enclosed Wildlife Refuges. Nixon signed NEPA, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act. Ford increased the Land and Water fund. Carter did Alaska. All the way back to Teddy Roosevelt there was pride in the heritage of the country."

"That pride's been broken or politicized now."

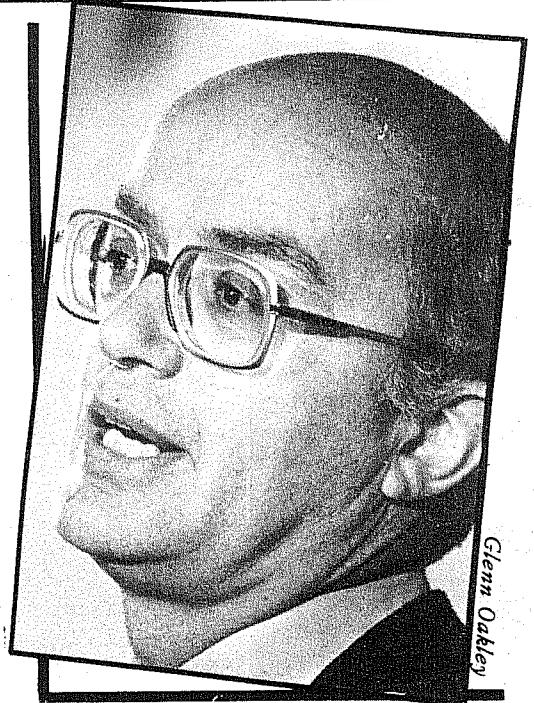
Now that it's been politicized, Scott continued, it will be difficult to return to the old bipartisan approach.

That's especially true because the Democrats may take up Watt's approach. "The Democrats see the advantage" of it being a partisan issue.

"That's truly unfortunate. It will take a lot of time to heal."

Scott also thinks it will take time to reverse other actions Watt has taken. "The blatant stuff like huge coal sales have been stopped. But if you look at Watt's annual report, it says oil and gas leasing has gone up 7,000 percent. And there's a backlog of almost \$2 billion of proposed park acquisitions under the Land and Water Fund.

"Watt wouldn't ask for the funds to buy additions to Yellowstone, inholdings in National Parks, etc." That's three years delay, Scott said,



and in that time prices have gone up, development has occurred, and in some cases land has been lost altogether.

-- the staff

MMS, decentralization cited

Praise for Watt's programs

Marlyn Jones has been a District Manager with the Bureau of Land Management for about a decade, first in the Montrose, Colorado area and now in Phoenix, Arizona. So far as Jones is concerned, Secretary of Interior James Watt's tenure has been a time of progress for his agency.

Jones says the controversy which has embroiled the upper levels of the Department of Interior has not touched him or the 80 people he supervises.

"I don't know that people on the ground have seen anything that resembles the rhetoric you see in the paper.

"The changes we have seen have been positive -- decentralization and the consolidation of MMS (Minerals Management Service) into the BLM.

"In the last two years, we have seen increasing decentralization -- a lot of tasks that used to be done at the state level and in Washington are now done at the District and Resource Area level."

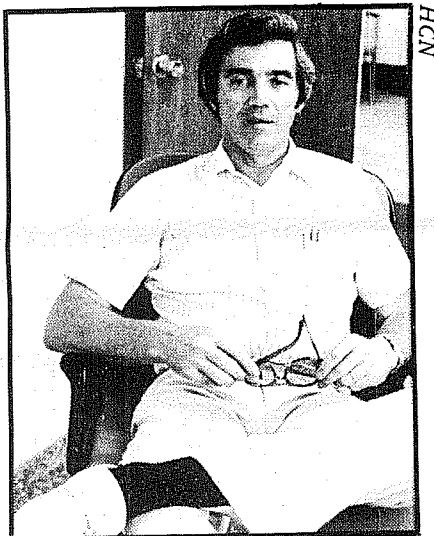
Jones, before his recent move to Phoenix, was District Manager of the Montrose, Colorado BLM area -- a job roughly comparable to being head of a National Forest. In addition to his own central office, he had under him several Resource Area offices, roughly comparable to District offices in the Forest Service.

Altogether, his domain included over 2 million acres, including 300,000 acres of Wilderness Study Areas in 14 Colorado counties and one northern New Mexico county.

The evolution during his ten years, but especially lately under Watt and BLM head Bob Burford, has been to give authority to the land managers on the ground.

"Ten years ago, coal and other mining work was done in the state office and at Washington, D.C. Down here at the District and Area levels, we concentrated on range, wildlife and forestry."

Now, he said, responsibility for all resources are concentrated at the local level. "It eliminates a lot of unnecessary reviews. And it has made the Resource Area job more interesting. He's the guy meeting the



Marlyn Jones

public. He knows the people and the county commissioners.

"We had studies showing he could only be effective if he had authority to make decisions. It was underway before (BLM head Bob) Burford and (state director George) Francis. But it's really come to fruition in the last 2 years."

Jones said he is especially pleased that the 800 or so employees of Minerals Management Service were merged by Watt into the BLM. He said the old split authority, under which BLM gave out oil and gas leases was MMS (the successor to USGS) administered them, was unwieldy.

"But since December 3, 1982, someone wanting an oil and gas permit goes to one agency -- the BLM." And responsibility for issuing and administering that permit, he said, has been put close to the ground, at the Resource Area level.

Jones said his major concern about the Watt years is the derailment of the land sales, or asset management, program. "We have a lot of isolated tracts that should be on the private tax roles. But the program has come to be viewed as mass land disposal and I think the Secretary was wise to get out of it."

But Jones said that was the only example he could think of "where we have felt the extremes on the District." Otherwise, "When you get down to the grassroots level, we don't have much in the way of problems. And that hasn't always been true."

Careers and programs destroyed

The BLM was trashed

When William Clark becomes the 44th Secretary of the Interior, he will inherit a Bureau of Land Management that may well be the prime example of the damage done by James G. Watt in less than three years as Interior Secretary.

The BLM administers 343 million acres of federal lands, mainly in the 11 westernmost states and Alaska. As the custodial agency for subsurface mineral rights on all federal lands, the BLM was the cutting edge in Watt's headlong drive to permit offshore drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf, to open up wilderness areas for petroleum exploration, and to lease massive tonnages of federal coal. In the furor over these very visible programs, subtle abuses at the Bureau escaped notice.

When Watt came to power, his first priority was to bend every Interior Department agency to his will. In March, 1981, Watt bragged, "We fired every person in the Department of the Interior that was a (Carter) Presidential appointee. I mean, we've cleaned every one of them out and then we started appointing good people."

At BLM, the clean-out went very

deep -- all the way to two agency State Directors, Jim Ruch in California and Bob Buffington in Idaho, fired due to differences of opinion and personality with their new boss. Through a "career enhancement" program, other senior civil service officials have been involuntarily transferred, or have nervously watched the knife swing over their heads.

On the appointment side, Watt installed Bob Burford as BLM Director. A rancher and former state legislator back in Colorado, Burford had routinely indulged in Bureau baiting while in private life. And Watt packed the National Public Lands Advisory Council and other panels with clones of himself.

These dismissals and appointments were accompanied by budget changes. Funding moved away from renewable resources and into commodity programs. For example, while funding requests for recreation were cut in half between fiscal years 1982 and 1984, the non-energy minerals management budget almost doubled.

Even if William Clark decides to repudiate the policies of his predecessor, he will need months, even years, to rebuild BLM. In view of the radical staff and budget cuts during the Watt era, qualified persons are not likely to sign up cheerfully or soon to work for the agency. Watt is gone now, but his legacy endures.

A prime example of that legacy is the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which provided the BLM with a statutory "charter." Almost without exception, every program mandated by FLPMA was distorted or undermined during James Watt's tenure at the Interior Department. It now appears doubtful that the BLM can fully implement FLPMA by the Congressional deadline of 1991.

FLPMA directs that the public lands should, in general, be retained in federal ownership. But throughout 1982 and 1983, Watt promoted his Assets Management Plan to sell off "excess" federal property. During just the first round of sales,

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Bob Burford

Colorado Statesman

Avoids coal's mistake

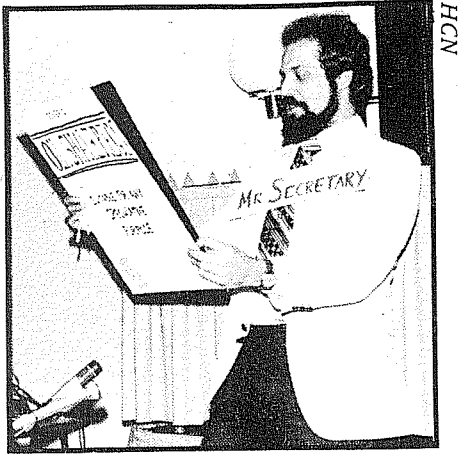
Industry rejected Watt's oil shale giveaway program

The story of oil shale leasing is similar to that of coal leasing. In both cases, the Department of Interior controls enormous reserves of energy in the West. In both cases, Interior Secretary James Watt wanted to lease as much of that energy as possible in this administration. In both cases, Watt was not able to accomplish his goal.

But his oil shale setback was different from his coal defeat. Watt inherited from Carter a coal leasing program which he modified for his own purposes. But Watt did not inherit a general, or programmatic, oil shale leasing program. He had to create one from scratch before he could begin to lease the 600 billion barrels of oil shale underlying 17,000 square miles of buried lake beds in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

This new leasing program was released in early 1983, and was promptly pounced on by the three oil shale states, by local government in Colorado's oil shale region, by the oil shale industry, and by the environmentalists. Each group had its own objections, and the sum total of those objections spelled death for the program.

In July, 1983, BLM director Bob



Kevin Markey, Friends of the Earth, mocked Interior's oil shale leasing plans at a Grand Junction meeting this year.

Burford implicitly acknowledged that death by halting work going on under the proposed regulations. But his announcement was almost irrelevant since those who opposed Interior's program had taken matters into their own hands.

In fact, his announcement came in the midst of continuing secret negotiations among the coalition which had halted Interior's program. Industry, local government, and the environmentalists had formed a so-called Joint Working Group. For the past several months they have been trying to create a leasing program.

It is still not clear whether the coalition will come up with a program. There are splits between industry and local government, and between industry and parts of the environmental community. But a protracted effort is being made. If agreement is reached, the proposed program will be taken to the U.S. Congress rather than to Interior.

Each member of the coalition attempted to influence Interior while it was developing its now deceased leasing regulations. None of the groups got what they wanted. The states and local government were unhappy because they did not believe the program gave them a say in the way leasing occurred. Nor did it provide local government or the states with mechanisms to take care of the impacts they might suffer.

The environmentalists were most threatened by the speed with which leasing was to take place. The BLM's program combined two land use planning steps into one, making it possible for the Reagan administration to do large-scale leasing before the 1984 presidential elections.

Environmental groups, led by Friends of the Earth, also charged that Interior had adopted a very low royalty rate on oil shale -- some said the

effective rate would be zero percent. They charged there was little or no protection against environmental damage done by the cumulative effect of several oil shale projects, and that there was lack of adherence to the comprehensive land use planning required by the Federal Land Planning Management Act (FLPMA).

Interior's proposal presented industry with a no-win situation. On the one hand, the companies had no immediate use for additional oil shale reserves. Enormous amounts of oil shale are already in private hands -- much more than is likely to be developed in the next decade or so.

Industry, of course, had no inhibition against accepting large reserves it could hold onto until need arose. But it faced the possibility that if Interior's program were implemented, lawsuits would tie it up, just as lawsuits have tied up coal leasing. Getting off on the wrong foot could cause immeasurable delays in the future, when the resource might be needed.

The result of this constellation of objections, backed up by lack of market demand, was the death of Watt's oil shale leasing program.

-- the staff

BLM...

(Continued from page 11)

approximately 2.5 million acres of BLM territory were slated to go on the auction block. The sales were stopped when the whole Assets Management idea collapsed in August, 1983.

But Watt's well-publicized halt of the Assets Management Program didn't necessarily end it. For Watt to comply even minimally with FLPMA, any and every sale of BLM acreage land had to be justified within land-use plans. Watt withdrew the Assets Management Program. But he left intact all the land-use plans. As a result, William Clark will be overseeing either massive sales of BLM lands during implementation of the land-use plans, or massive revisions of land-use plans which call for land sales.

Revisions might not hurt much since progress toward the FLPMA goal of comprehensive land-use planning by 1991 has been snail's paced: official agency policy now frowns upon the collection of new data; the budget for land-use planning has been sliced by 25 percent; and time continues to be spent on transitional, stopgap documents rather than the required Resource Management Plans (RMPs). According to Carolyn Johnson, Senior Public Lands Specialist for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the half dozen RMPs to emerge so far have "varied considerably" in quality from barely acceptable to "the pits."

Congress in FLPMA directed the BLM to conduct within its land-use planning process a wilderness review of its entire holdings. Soon after taking office, Watt put the wilderness review on a separate accelerated schedule for completion by 1984. This sped-up schedule, coupled with

budget cuts of 42 percent, has crippled the wilderness program.

The budget cuts and schedule speed-up were aggravated on December 27, 1982, when Watt signed an order which eventually eliminated 1.5 million acres in 289 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) or portions thereof. The order dropped any study units of less than 5,000 acres, any tracts with so-called "split mineral estates," and any acreage contiguous to other federal agencies' wilderness areas or proposals but unable to stand on its own merits. Several conservation organizations immediately sued in federal district court. In September, 1983, they won a temporary restraining order against the former Interior Secretary's action. A final judgment is still pending.

Interim Management Policy (IMP) has been callously neglected. Under this provision in FLPMA, the Bureau must maintain the wilderness values in each WSA until Congress decides whether or not to designate the unit as wilderness. But conservationists across the West have discovered a host of IMP violations inside WSAs: oil wells, new roads, mine diggings. In Idaho and Utah, conservationists are protesting the agency's own plans to install such range improvements as reservoirs and pipelines for watering livestock.

Thanks to Jim Watt, the credibility of the BLM wilderness review may be broken beyond repair. In two cases, Congress has pre-empted the Bureau's final recommendations by introducing wilderness bills for the Bisti Badlands in northwestern New Mexico and for the Arizona Strip (that portion of Arizona north of the Colorado River). The Arizona Strip bill is a compromise between environmentalists and a developer, Energy Fuels Nuclear; the BLM was not a party to their unprecedented negotiations.

Currently, wilderness advocates

Watt resurrected the annual

Barstow-to-Las Vegas motorcycle race

estimate the agency will recommend to Congress fewer than 10 million acres for wilderness out of 172 million acres in the 11 western states.

Another controversial area is grazing. Under FLPMA and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, one central mission of the BLM is the management and improvement of agency grazing lands. Since 1975 under a federal court order won by NRDC, the Bureau has been writing Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for some 144 grazing districts in the West.

Usually, the EISs recommended some reduction in grazing. But in the fall of last year, Director Burford issued a new instruction memorandum ordering that the proposed action for all EISs be made "no action." By May of this year, NRDC was back in court.

This year, in new grazing regulations, the Bureau brought into existence -- without any statutory authority from Congress -- the Co-operative Management Agreement (CMA). Instead of annual leases, ranchers can now sign ironclad 10-year contracts in exchange for paying the costs of various range improvements. As some see it, under these long-term leases, the public domain passes from the federal government into private hands.

On the recreation front, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has filed suit over another Watt initiative: the resurrection of the annual Barstow-to-Las Vegas motorcycle race. BLM put a halt to the cross-country race in 1974, when some 3000 participants roared across the southern California desert.

By the Bureau's reckoning, wildlife populations along the race route declined by 90 percent since the first Barstow-to-Las Vegas, and have not recovered to this day. Nonetheless, Watt reversed the nine-year ban and gave a permit for a Thanksgiving, 1983 edition of up to 1200 racers.

This was the latest in the former Interior Secretary's efforts to open the public lands to off-road vehicles (ORVs). Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 by Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter respectively limited ORV use on federal lands. In 1981 Watt recommended that Ronald Reagan rescind both orders. Reagan has not yet done so.

Finally, Watt's aggressive attempts to lease federal coal were his undoing. But many similar programs did not make headlines. For example, the Bureau has been designating public lands as Areas of Critical Mineral Potential essentially upon demand from industry. The former Interior Secretary came up with the ACMP which has never been enacted by Congress.

It is at least possible that Watt's ultimate legacy will be restoring the BLM's old nickname: The Bureau of Livestock and Mining.

--James Baker

A free-lance writer in Salt Lake City, James Baker chairs the Sierra Club's National BLM Wilderness Subcommittee.

This article was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

He most affected grazing

James Watt left his mark on Idaho

by Glenn Oakley

Lining the snow-banked road that led past the Boise Red Lion Motor Inn where the Interior Secretary was busy raising money for Republicans, Wattophobes stood and waved placards. It was January 1982.

Motel security guards -- young, peach-fuzzed men -- patrolled the perimeter to keep out protestors, who in turn taunted the junior policemen. On the other side of the building the pro-Watt rally group -- a caravan of some 60 jeeps, trucks and a haywagon full of Republican state legislators -- waited to cheer on the man from Wyoming who had brought their kind of balance to resource management.

As Watt wrapped up his luncheon speech, the press was allowed into the banquet room for a scheduled press conference. The Republican audience, which had paid to listen to James Watt, stayed on, outnumbering the press corps by about 20 to one. This gave Watt an unusual advantage not normally enjoyed at a political press conference, a cheering support group which loudly laughed and applauded the quips handed out in lieu of answers.

At one point a question came from a woman who identified herself as representing KBNY, a local radio station. Watt took that to be an acronym for some crazy environmental group. For a moment the confident grin left his face as he demanded, "Are you with the press? This is for the press only."

When Watt visited Idaho less than a year ago, he had already let the axe fall on state BLM Director Robert Buffington, who was seen as not subservient enough to cattlemen. In the months ahead he would further enrage conservation-minded Idahoans by stacking the BLM citizen advisory boards with industry, livestock and mining leaders, by dropping some 20,000 acres of BLM land from wilderness study during Congressional recess, and by proposing to help balance the budget by selling off "surplus lands." But Watt's greatest influence on Idaho was through the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees some 12 million acres in the state.

Buffington was the first casualty in Idaho during Watt's reign of terror. The 25-year career BLM employee somehow got on the hit list of influential ranchers and was summarily offered a new position in Washington, D.C. Buffington ended up declining the offer and departed for private enterprise in southern Africa.

Buffington left saying he was still not sure why he was ousted, but told the press his inquiries and filings for information under the Freedom of Information Act led him to believe Watt was at the end of the fuse which blasted him out of his office. Several ranchers and at least one mining company manager had written to Washington, D.C. complaining about Buffington. Perhaps that was enough; little more was learned.

Although Buffington's replacement, Clair Whitlock, is viewed as a reasonable -- albeit conservative -- manager, the ousting left no doubt

among the state's BLM employees where the power lay, and what would happen to those who were not mindful of it.

Watt's unique concept of balanced management next landed on Idaho with his appointments to the BLM districts' citizen advisory boards. They are panels of people representing all aspects of the community charged with advising the BLM on matters of policy, from wilderness decisions to grazing, wildlife management and the like.

On the Boise BLM District, Watt chose Logan Lanham, an Idaho Power Company vice president, to represent the public-at-large; he selected Boise-Cascade Corporation's Glen Youngblood to represent recreation; he chose rancher-wife Rayola Jacobsen, a vocal opponent of the BLM's Birds of Prey Natural Area, as the environmental representative. On down the list of openings, Watt filled them with people all but guaranteed to rubber-stamp his policies.

On the Shoshone BLM district, his selection for the environmental representative was finally shuffled into representing public-at-large following the outcry. Even the appointee himself, Vern Ravenscroft, was surprised at his original appointment. As founder of Sagebrush Rebellion Unlimited and lobbyist for industry, Ravenscroft did not even try to pretend to be an environmentalist.

On the controversial wilderness question, Watt withdrew from wilderness consideration ten areas in Idaho totalling 21,745 acres during a Congressional recess in December 1982. Nationwide, Watt had axed 1.5 million acres in what critics termed his midnight raid. All these areas have been appealed.

Of all his national policies, only Watt's Asset Management Plan galvanized the Idaho public. As the outcry in Idaho grew over the plan to sell unspecified amounts of "surplus" land, Idaho's Congressional delegation -- staunch Watt supporters every one -- eventually backed away from the plan.

"To some extent," said Idaho Conservation League Director Pat Ford, "he was responsible for a lot of Idahoans spending a lot of time to stop a lousy idea that he had."

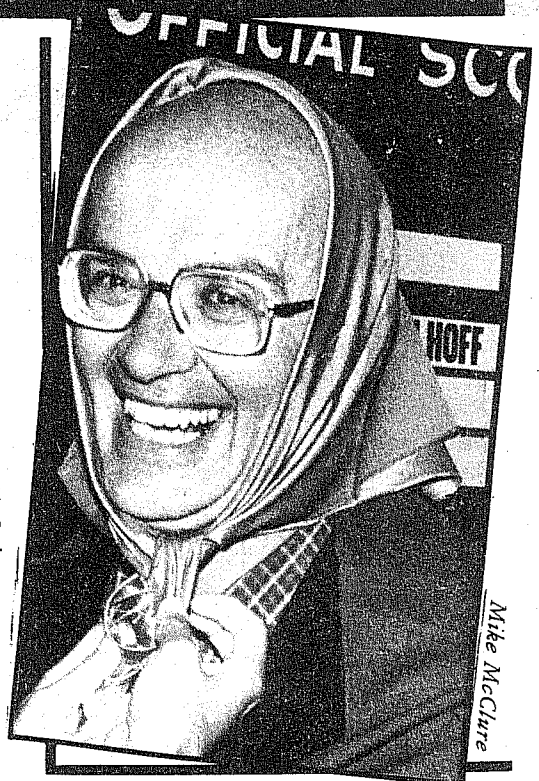
But while Watt's brash and bold programs and politics drew the public's and the media's attention, his greatest impact may well be the

innocuous little regulation changes that filtered down unnoticed. An example is the Cooperative Management Agreement Program, a brainchild of Watt's which grants livestock grazers greater control over how to manage the public land on which their cattle graze.

Under the plan, which was put into effect without public notification or involvement, ranchers may increase the number of livestock on a particular range without BLM approval. Watt's concept behind the program is to recognize the livestock industry's stewardship of the public land. To alarmed environmentalists, the program gives far too much discretion to a group which is responsible for the current poor condition of the range.

Said Tom Robinson, the Wilderness Society's Northern Rockies director: "This (program) overall probably has had a greater effect" than would the derailed lands sale program. "The Cooperative Management Agreement Program, after all, affects a far greater amount of land in Idaho than would ever have been sold."

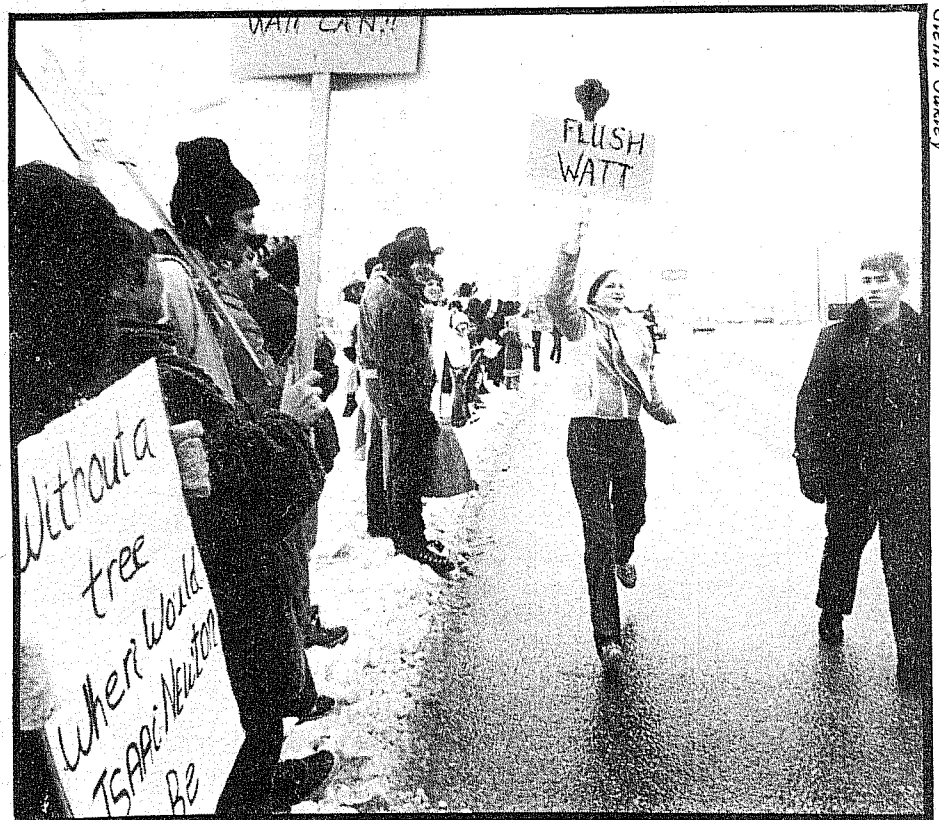
Along with regulation changes, Watt instituted a change in emphasis throughout the BLM. Attention and money was shifted toward livestock



management and siphoned away from range and wildlife enhancement. Although less visible, these moves will likely last longer in Idaho than the rest of Watt's actions.

Idahoan Cecil Andrus, former Secretary of the Interior and former Idaho governor, perhaps summed up the fall of Watt best: "The astonishing thing about it was that his personal insensitive feelings brought about his eviction. It wasn't this administration's plunder of the natural resources that brought him down."

This article was made possible by the High Country News Research Fund.



Watt protestors in Boise, Idaho, 1982



Robert Buffington

BLM state director

Robert Buffington filed

Freedom of Information requests

to find out why Watt fired him

A mixed record

Montana surveys the impact of the Watt years

by Don Snow

With some pride, Northern Rockies conservationists point to a litany of James Watt's failures in their states. Led by Montana Congressman Pat Williams, they stopped the secretary from "Bombing the Bob" -- the popular catch-phrase for Watt's scheme to allow oil and gas seismic testing in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

Watt's plan to sell off 17,000 federal acres in Montana -- including a big hunk of the Crazy Mountains north of Livingston -- triggered howls of outrage from conservationists but just plain indifference from potential land buyers. Sales will reach less than one-fourth of Watt's stated goal next year.

The Fort Union coal lease sale died at the hands of a skeptical Senate, and thousands of roadless acres Watt wanted to drop from Bureau of Land Management wilderness review were reinstated. Two groups even managed to overturn Watt's refusal to add Idaho's Selkirk caribou to the list of threatened and endangered species.

So the secretary's record in the Northern Rockies states appears dismal, but some fear that Watt's management legacy will live on. Take, for example, Watt's national park policies.

In 1981, the General Accounting Office reported that 172 national park facilities failed to meet government safety standards. A year later, Watt's Park Restoration and Improvement Project had solved 80 percent of those problems by shifting funds out of the lands acquisition program and into the new Improvement Project. Watt pumped over \$200 million into park improvements in 1982 while cutting the land acquisition budget from \$282 million to only \$65 million. Total spending on the parks nearly doubled under Watt's direction, but additions to the park system were minimal.

Bill Cunningham, conservation director for the Montana Wilderness Association, says that Watt's park improvement plan worked very well

"for people who value clean restrooms more than the parklands themselves." He adds that Watt's refusal to make boundary additions to some of the parks hurt important wildlife species.

"I can't remember a single instance where Secretary Watt took an ecosystem approach to park management," Cunningham said. "He treated the artificial boundaries we've created for the parks as if they were absolute, and he sold America on the notion that he was protecting the parks like nobody ever had."

According to Cunningham, Watt ignored opportunities to buy important boundary lands around Montana's national preserves, even though some of those lands are critically important to the very species the parks are designed to protect.

Cunningham points to the North Fork of the Flathead River, where landowners were willing to sell to Glacier National Park 1,400 acres of important grizzly habitat. The park's management, acting under policy from the top, refused to buy. The land is now available for subdivision.

Montana's Defenders of Wildlife representative Hank Fischer offered a different version of Watt's record in the Northern Rockies.

"Oil and gas leasing and all of the energy programs under Watt received such high priority, they are potentially the most damaging acts Watt left us," according to Fischer.

Since 1981 the Bureau of Land Management has processed a backlog of 1,600 oil and gas lease applications on 2 million federal acres. While the Montana Petroleum Association insists that Watt's leasing program has had no appreciable effect on Montana, Fischer fears for the future of the C.M. Russell Wildlife Refuge and other important habitat lands experiencing accelerated leasing.

In 1982, the Department sent written instructions to federal wildlife refuge managers to expand virtually all economic uses of refuge lands. According to Fischer, most of the refuge managers failed to respond,

prompting Watt's office to issue a second, more strongly worded directive: Oil and gas leasing was at the top of the list for expanded activities on the C.M. Russell, despite the presence of a 1978 Interior study detailing the serious impacts that such a program would have on the preserve's wildlife.

Fischer said it's still too early to tell what effect the rapid leasing has had on the CMR, but it appears to be a program that could serve as a barometer to measure the effect of Watt's mineral policies on Montana.

Watt's actions -- or lack of them -- as steward of the nation's threatened and endangered species also worry Montana conservationists.

When Ronald Reagan took office, about 2,000 species of plants and animals had been placed on the list -- the first and most obvious step in treating the problem of impending extinction. During Watt's first year in office, no new species were added. Instead, Watt's lieutenants spent their time trying to sell the idea that cost-benefit analyses can be applied to species extinction.

Hank Fischer recounted the difficulties his organization encountered when it tried to place the Selkirk caribou on the list. The caribou exists as an isolated population in northern Idaho's Selkirk Mountains, an area where logging is closing in on the animal's range. Little is known about the relict herd, an anomaly in the lower 48, except that it numbers fewer than 20 and it migrates across its range like its northbound cousins. Poaching has become a major problem for the tiny herd.

Defenders of Wildlife and the National Audubon Society teamed up to lobby the caribou onto the list, but James Watt's office opposed the nomination. The two groups filed court papers and prepared for a protracted battle with Interior, beginning with an administrative hearing.

"At 11:59 in the action, Interior reversed its earlier decision," Fischer

said. "The reversal just came out of the blue. Now if you listen to Watt talk about it, you'd swear he's the acting chairman of the Selkirk caribou anti-defamation league."

Unfortunately for the northern grey wolf, Watt saw no public relations advantage in championing the animal. According to Fischer, recovery plans for the wolf have suffered as the Fish and Wildlife Service, an arm of Interior, changed its preferred method from transplanting to natural recovery through propagation.

Fischer said the approach is doomed. "In many areas in the wolf's central range, there aren't enough of them to propagate. They have to be transplanted."

Fischer believes that unlike the Selkirk caribou, the grey wolf is viewed as politically explosive by Interior officials. He also noted that Watt approached the national wildlife refuge system much as he approached the national parks. While he increased the budget for operation of federal wildlife refuges, he quietly cut back on the number of employees in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and recommended the elimination of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Units. According to Fischer, these units have been the real workhorses of federal wildlife research, and they are among the most cost-effective of all the federal wildlife programs.

While Montana conservationists continue to blast the natural resource protection policies of Watt and Reagan, state officials credit the secretary with at least one good deed. Watt's department managed to break a 50-year bottleneck in the state's claim on 26,000 acres of federal land that were supposed to have been given to Montana when it achieved statehood. Under Watt's direction, 9,000 of those acres have been transferred to the state.

But by the end of 1984, Watt's privatization policies will probably cause the transfer of over 4,000 federal acres to private ownership.

Coal...

(Continued from page 10)

leaving, it may be easier to remove the personality issue and let Congress focus on leasing."

Greenberg agrees that coal probably supported Watt. Although the Andrus approach was acceptable, "When the new Secretary of Interior says we can give you all the things you didn't get in 1979," it's a hard offer to resist.

It was even harder to resist Watt's offer to drastically change the Surface Mining Act regulations because industry was fighting those in the courts. According to Tom Galloway, another Washington attorney who specializes in coal litigation, both industry and environmental groups had challenged the way Andrus implemented SMCRA.

Those industry and environmental challenges, grouped as *In Re Permanent Surface Mining Regulation Litigation I*, were bouncing around the courts when Watt came in and

"rewrote 91 percent of the regulations." An environmental coalition Galloway represents then went back to court to challenge Watt's new regulations. For the most part, industry went to court to defend the Watt changes.

The result is *In Re...II*. Galloway said, "It's a massive lawsuit. We will litigate 60 to 80 issues." The case is a classic lineup. Galloway is representing the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, WORC, several Appalachian groups, an Illinois group, and others. Arrayed on the other side are the American Mining Congress, the National Coal Association, and individual firms.

Among the 60 to 80 issues are revegetation in alluvial valley floors, replacement of water sources damaged by mining, the right of Interior to delegate surface land reclamation to the states, recontouring the land, and the application of SMCRA to coal preparation done away from the mine site.

In Galloway's view, industry "knows Watt wrote extreme regulations. And a component of industry

wants a certain level of regulations to ward off more extreme environmental controls. They want to moderate the extreme swings of the pendulum. These wild political swings" make it difficult for them to plan mines. "But others would just rape and run -- happy days are here again."

In addition to challenging regulatory changes, Galloway says groups have gone to court to force compliance with what regs there are. "In one case, Interior didn't act on 1700 situations in which coal operators walked away without reclaiming land. It failed to assess \$44 million in civil penalties." Galloway says the groups won in the courts, and Congress has "just voted money to implement the court order. The cases are all over the East."

Carolyn Johnson, a coal specialist with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Denver, suggests that Watt's attempt to weaken reclamation regulations doesn't recognize the progress that some western coal companies have been making. "Watt is out of sync; a decade behind the times. He perceived the coal industry as very

much against regulations. That was true in the early 1970s. They'd still like fewer regs today, but they also need" those regulations to impose uniformity and stability on the industry. If one company can mine and run, it puts pressure on others to do that in order to compete.

Johnson, who just returned from a tour of coal mines in Colorado and Utah, said: "I saw some mines that had done a terrific job of cleaning up long-standing problems. Trail Mountain mine in Utah, for example, had done an outstanding job. Two years ago, it was a God-awful mess, with mine water running down the road. Sunnyside Mine in Utah owned by Kaiser also did an outstanding job. We detected at every mine a more cooperative attitude. Before, we'd only found resistance."

In addition to the major Washington, D.C. lawsuits on coal leasing and reclamation, there are scores of "local" suits challenging actions taken under Watt's revised regulations. These include suits against the well-publicized coal sales, as well as suits on individual mines around the nation.

OPINION

James Watt was coal's ideological pied piper

James Watt's reign had very different effects on the coal and oil shale industries.

Oil shale escaped undamaged, while Watt devastated coal. He may have set it back ten years. It is at least possible he fatally wounded it.

To see why takes some history. During the 1970s, Congress, the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations, and the courts painfully worked out compromises on coal leasing, reclamation, and safety. By 1979, the major elements of a national coal policy were in place. There were aspects that needed improvement from both the industry and environmental perspectives. But at a minimum, the program promised a stable framework within which coal and its watchdogs could function.

Watt arrogantly and ignorantly threw this stability away. He radically altered both leasing and reclamation policies.

The result was predictable: coal is now back in the courts and back in the Congress. There is a moratorium on coal leasing, just as there was in 1970, when Rogers C.B. Morton was Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, or in the mid-1970s, when NRDC *vs Hughes* stopped most leasing. There are lawsuits challenging hundreds of reclamation regulations. There are-- as during the 1970s -- emergency approaches to the Congress by companies which need a new lease to keep a mine going.

An enormous amount of blame accrues to Watt. He shrilled that leasing and regulatory reforms were needed to keep the country strong. He acted as if only he knew that the country needed energy. Because he was so noisy, he didn't hear people telling him that everyone knows America needs coal. We all understand that coal is

a bulwark against foreign oil.

But most of us also know we need other things in order to keep free -- productive agricultural land, relatively clean water, relatively clean air, and a leasing system which charges fair prices to those who develop publicly-owned resources.

Among those who didn't tell Watt about the need for balance and fairness was the American coal industry, an industry which relishes its past mistakes and welcomes the opportunity to remake them.

This industry is faced with serious problems: acid rain, barbarous rail rates, an inability to convince the public that coal slurry pipelines are in everyone's interest, and a coal research budget only slightly smaller than the amount spent by Finland on tropical diseases.

Rather than work on its real problems, coal decided to take a high-risk fling with Watt. It decided to have some fun. So it stepped out on the work it had to do and instead pursued lax environmental laws and enough penny-a-ton reserves to last it through the year 3000. Now coal gets to suffer the long hangover brought on by its binge. It gets to endure Congressional hearings and investigations, moratoria, an even lousier public image than it had, and scores of lawsuits.

The tragedy is that it didn't have to happen. Industry doesn't have to follow every ideological pied piper who whistles a 19th century, rip-em-up tune. The oil shale industry proves that.

Unlike coal, oil shale didn't heed Watt's song of rapid, unlimited leasing, easy environmental regulations, and the fun of rolling a helpless public. Instead, oil shale chose to join with the three oil shale states, local government, and the

environmentalists in fighting Watt's leasing approach.

The coalition not only fought, it beat Watt's program this spring, and is now drafting its own program for submission to Congress. It is not clear that government, industry and the environmentalists will be able to reach agreement. The Congress and the courts may yet have to impose a solution. But how much better, how much more far-sighted, an approach oil shale took than coal.

Optimists will say that this latest debacle will pull the coal industry as a whole into the 20th century; that the failure of the National Coal Association approach will put industry moderates in the saddle.

That would be nice. The nation and the coal-rich West could use a progressive, constructive industry. But coal appears to have a death wish. Even now, the National Coal Association continues to support Watt's policies. From another direction, industry's *Energy Daily* is rewriting history, claiming that coal didn't really support Watt. *Energy Daily* wrote on October 12:

"Watt repeatedly asked the coal industry if he was doing the right thing in trying to lease vast tonnages in a slumping market. Watt repeatedly took the industry's thundering silence for approval, when it was really opprobrium."

"Thundering silence" has a nice sound to it, like a wooden nickel. This historic revisionism does show that industry knows it screwed up. But it also shows that coal has no intention of reforming. It's just going to go underground while it waits for another pied piper to follow in search of the good old days.

-- Ed Marston

GUEST EDITORIAL

The West as victim

by Christopher McLeod

We all store the stuff we don't know what to do with under the bed, in the closet or in the garage. We all know the meaning of "out of sight is out of mind." It is a universal principle.

It is no accident, therefore, that the "remote," "sparsely populated" West has been targeted so often in recent years by Eastern policy-makers as the receptacle of deadly technological experiments. It's not just that we get these experiments because there's more room out here. It's more deliberate than that. This is a consciously-evolved policy, a dangerous trend of American history.

Consider the wide array of technologies which have been tested, or soon will be tested, at sites west of the 100th meridian:

- *The bomb.* First tested at Alamogordo, New Mexico, after secret development at Los Alamos. Tested thereafter at the Nevada Test Site (530 announced nuclear test firings to date, 84 of them above ground). Fallout still blankets the Southwest, and though health effects are disputed back East, they're painfully obvious in Utah.

- *Mega-Mining.* In the Rockies, whole mountains are taken down for molybdenum and copper, leaving thousands of acres of toxic waste to contaminate the sources of the West's watersheds. In the desert, the largest machines on earth dig coal from arid lands which many scientists believe may never recover. The National Academy of Sciences, in fact, coined the phrase "National Sacrifice Area" when it warned that stripmining in arid regions might permanently damage the land.

- *Coal-slurry pipelines.* Millions of gallons underground water are pumped to the surface each day to move coal through pipes across hundreds of miles of mountain and desert from Navajo-Hopi country to a power plant in Nevada. Though only one slurry-line exists, seven more are proposed throughout the West. Those most concerned about the impact of slurry-lines in this

water-short region are ranchers and Indians, and their concerns are rarely heard.

- *Uranium mining and milling.* Over two hundred million tons of radioactive mill wastes, called tailings, have accumulated in the West. They blow in the wind, wash into rivers, and contaminate underground water supplies. Though national attention has focused on the toxic chemical waste issue, little mention is made of tailings. You can bet they would never be allowed to remain on the banks of the Hudson River.

- *Plutonium.* Plutonium is the most toxic substance yet created by man. Major fires in 1957 and 1967 at Rocky Flats, a nuclear weapons plant north of Denver, sent 48 pounds of plutonium into the atmosphere. Thousands of leaking 55-gallon drums containing machine oil laced with plutonium were "stored" in an open field adjacent to the plant from 1958-1967 (since paved over with asphalt). Soil samples taken east of the plant show elevated levels of plutonium.

- *Nerve Gas.* During the moratorium on nerve gas production in the United States, the nation's stockpile was stored near the Denver airport. A public outcry in Colorado resulted in shipment of the weapons for storage at Toole Army Depot outside Salt Lake City.

- *High-level nuclear waste.* Since no one knows what to do with it, or whether the soon-to-be-built repositories will be able to contain their ultra-hot contents, federal policy has not surprisingly dictated that four of the five sites under study for America's first nuclear waste dump are in the West -- Nevada, Texas, Washington and Utah. The Department of Energy's "preferred" sight is in Utah, one mile from Canyonlands National Park. For good measure, the military's high level nuclear waste will be buried in New Mexico, near Carlsbad.

- *"Nuclear Parks."* About the only dangerous technology which doesn't predominate in the West is the nuclear power plant. There are two reasons for that: there's barely enough water in the West to cool a reactor's core, and nuclear power plant builders originally believed they were safe, so they

saw no reason to put them in the West. As if to make up for the oversight, the Department of Energy has awarded the State of Utah a \$460,000 grant to study a "Nuclear Energy Center" containing nine reactors near Green River, Utah.

And inevitably, we come back to the bomb. Montana and North Dakota already have enough nuclear missiles to the super-powers in their own right. Wyoming will soon get the MX. "Fratricide" is a recent East-coast strategic concept which conceals the ultimate trade-off: not just the weapons are vaporized, but the West as well. Unlike the European reaction to the presence of nuclear warheads on their soil, there has been little opposition in the West. An exception to that was the MX missiles' infamous "racetrack," which was certainly not welcome in Nevada or Utah.

I suppose one could argue persuasively that the entire United States - or the globe even - is a technological testing ground which is fast becoming a "Sacrifice Area." After all, when Los Alamos' scientists tested their first atom bomb in New Mexico, they couldn't guarantee it wouldn't destroy the earth's atmosphere.

But whatever the global possibilities, the test itself was in New Mexico. There is something sinister about the total amount of destructive technology that is dumped on the West.

But let there be no mistake about it: what is being done to the West is as conscious as it is dangerous. Just as Eastern policymakers allow the export to Third World countries of products which are hazardous and have been banned in the United States, so too they export their dangerous, untested technologies to the "interior" - their Siberia.

The West is a colony, and a change won't come from the outside. Until the people of the West develop a regional awareness of the danger that U.S./corporate policy represents for their fragile environment, the future of that environment is in jeopardy. Until the West develops mechanisms to protect itself and local self-sustaining economies, it will continue to be raped and plundered like any other colony.

□

Christopher "Toby" McLeod directed the film *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?*, which will be broadcast nationally on P.B.S. starting November 15.