

High Country News

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Friday, Aug. 18, 1972



Sutherland Reservoir, some 23 miles west of North Platte, Nebraska, is the site for a proposed coal-fired, steam-generating electric plant. Nebraska Public Power District wants to locate an initial 600-megawatt plant on the productive farm land shown here in a view to the south. Landowners and residents of the area are protesting the site because of loss of land and environmental effects on air quality and the lake. The plant, anticipated to enlarge to 2,100 megawatts by 1988, would be located to the right of the farmstead at left center. Some 2,400 acres of land would be used.

Make Way For Progress!

by Tom Bell

Picture a quiet, peaceful farming area near a tree-lined reservoir with sandy beaches. The air is clear and the flat landscape uncluttered.

Imprint upon that Nebraska landscape a 600 to 800-foot high smokestack spewing out several tons of fine, particulate ash, some 50 tons of sulfur oxides, and about 35 tons of nitrogen oxides per day.

That is the prospect facing the communities around Sutherland Reservoir in southwestern Nebraska. It is another example of proliferating energy demands upon a land unmarked and unsullied by the march of "progress."

Nebraska Public Power District has asked for permission to build an initial 600-megawatt, \$180-million steam-generating plant at the Sutherland Reservoir site. It has raised a storm of protest from farmers and small-town residents who love the land and their way of life. Not unexpectedly, nearby Chambers of Commerce are enthusiastic about the prospects of additional "economic benefits."

Two additional units of generating capacity are projected for the future. Another 600-megawatt plant is scheduled for completion in 1977, and a third 900-megawatt unit would follow. Each will have its own smokestack. The entire plant would be located on a 2,400-acre tract, including one square mile dedicated

to an ash pit.

The 3,000-acre Sutherland Reservoir will be used as a source of water for cooling the plant. The hot water will either be pumped back into the reservoir or into an irrigation canal. Officials of the power district say the hot water wouldn't affect the fisheries in the reservoir.

The 600-megawatt unit is expected to burn 1.5 to 2 million tons of coal a year. Officials of the power district said they would be discussing coal contracts with mines at Hanna, Wyoming, or near Gillette but speculation indicated the coal would come from Hanna. The plant will require a constant flow of some 100 railroad cars a day.

A railroad spur will be built from the main line of the Union Pacific, across the South Platte River and Interstate 80, and around the west side of the reservoir.

The plant site is 23 miles west of North Platte and a few miles south of Sutherland. It had originally been planned for a location near Bridgeport. However, economic considerations and protests from history buffs and the Nebraska Game, Fish and Parks Department brought a change in plans. The historic Oregon, Mormon and Pony Express Trails pass through Bridgeport. In addition, Chimney Rock, Court House Rock and Jail House Rock are all historic landmarks and tourist

attractions.

Many residents of the Platte Valley are concerned at the prospects of having the big, polluting plant in their midst. Not only are they worried about loss of land but by the resulting air pollution. Such a large plant would degrade the air for many miles downwind. In addition, the effects of sulfur and nitrogen oxides on surrounding farm crops could be devastating.

Large crowds have turned out for public meetings and some 80 persons have demonstrated their concern by forming their own branch of the Sierra Club. They have already enlisted the aid of Sierra Club attorney Tony Ruckel of Denver.

Nebraska Public Power District is a state entity. A legal confrontation between the concerned citizens and the citizens who sit on the Power District Board should make for an interesting situation. The proposed plant has already created political overtones.

Because of citizen pressure a scheduled August 10 bond issue decision has been deferred. The Power Review Board set September 1 for a decision.

Officials of the power district say \$36 million of the total \$180 million construction cost will be for air quality controls. In spite of the assurances, people are not convinced.

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HIGH COUNTRY

By Tom Bell

Montana's Governor Forrest Anderson is now displaying some of the foresight and forthright leadership so sorely needed in environmental matters. With Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota facing monumental problems, it is incumbent that strong state leadership be exerted. It is refreshing to see Anderson take the initiative. (For more on Governors' reactions, see letters on pages 4 and 5.)

Every assessment by government officials and industry alike points to development of the vast coal resources in the three states. There may be some disagreement about the time table for development but there is absolutely no disagreement on the fact that it will happen. That leaves the states with only two alternatives — plan their destiny or allow events to take their own course.

The latter should be unacceptable. In fact, it must not and cannot happen. Only last week the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee issued a chilling report. (Problems of Electrical Power Production in the Southwest, single copies available from Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 3106 NSOB, Washington, D. C. 20510.)

One section of the report says, "The prospects for achieving sound regional economic and environmental management conditions in the Four Corners region have been seriously hampered by inadequate planning and coordination among the several parties, governmental and private, involved in the present development."

"Piecemeal decision-making on power plant proposals may have the long range impact of, in effect, 'zoning' the region for a single purpose — power generation — by allocating scarce natural resources and preempting for that purpose the capacity of the region to absorb pollutants."

Although concentrating on the Four Corners region, the report further says, "... Until adequate information is available, irretrievable commitments to resources should be limited to the minimum necessary to meet the regional power requirements."

"Premature commitments should be avoided both in regard to additional development in the Southwest and to major new energy developments involving federal resources in other regions." (Emphasis added.)

Developments involving federal coal in Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota are a case in hand.

The Committee report recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that long range studies be instituted with the Four Corners Regional Commission and other federal agencies on the total impact of the electrical generating complex. The Secretary is urged to develop "... a general, regionwide study of the long range economic and environmental impact of the current federal decisions and activities concerning the Southwest energy complex."

"Despite the inadequacies of information and the uncertainties inherent in such a complex analysis, the best possible projections of future conditions should be developed and updated periodically as better information becomes available."

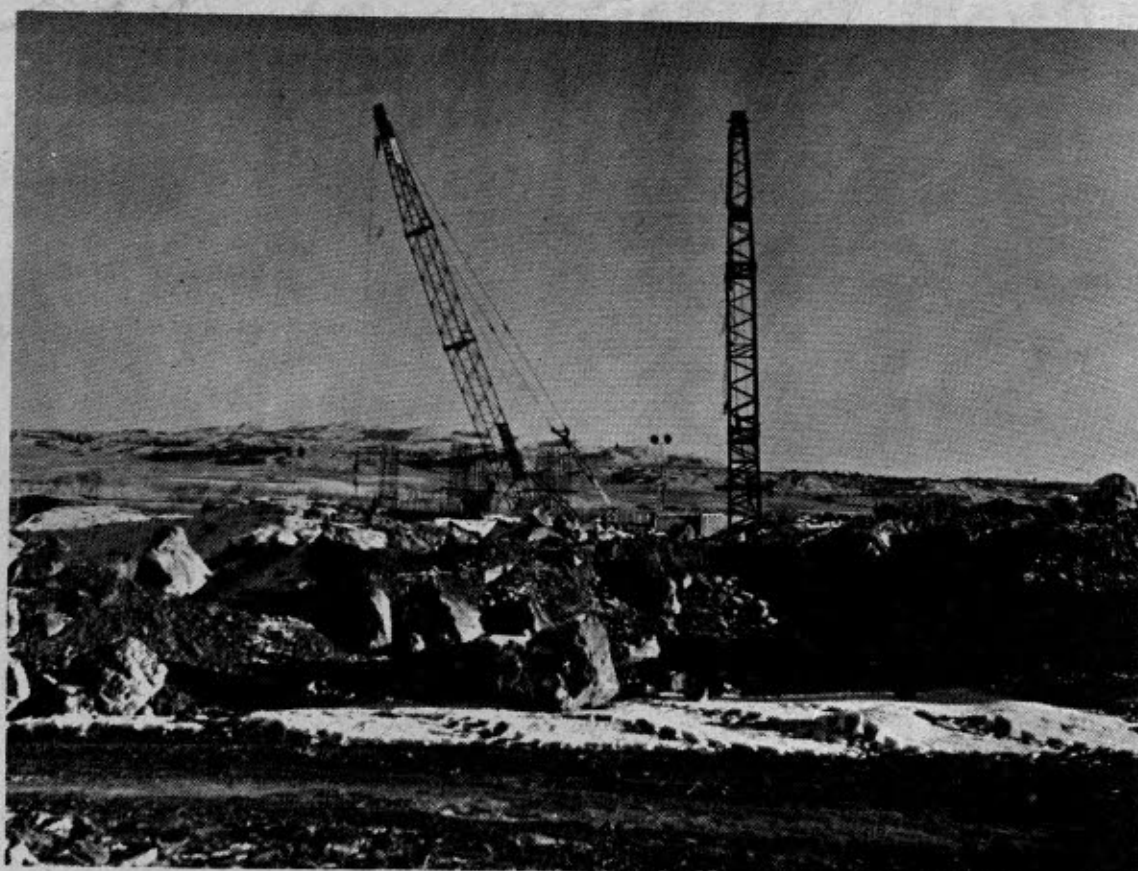
"This study should provide a framework for public considerations of future decisions about individual resource development proposals."

Which brings us back to Montana and the enlightened leadership displayed not only by Governor Anderson but by Senators Lee Metcalf and Mike Mansfield. Metcalf particularly has zeroed in on coal development proposals and what they portend.

Given the present circumstances of demands for more power and an increasing dependence upon foreign imports to supply power needs, coal is daily taking on increasing importance. Development of coal will call for strip mining on a scale unprecedented in this country. Use of coal for steam generation, gasification or liquefaction will make demands on available but scarce water that will squeeze all other present uses. And finally, air pollution over an entire region, to include South Dakota's Black Hills, could become a grim reality.

It may well be that whether we like it or not, eastern Montana, northeastern Wyoming and western North Dakota are already committed to an industrial future of giant complexes. But whatever the future holds, planning now can ameliorate the ill effects sure to ensue.

That is what makes Governor Anderson's designation of a coal task force so important. Knowing that it is coming, he has committed that state's resources to an effort to bring order out of chaos.



Strip mining has already begun here at the Decker Coal Co. operation near Decker, Montana. Peabody Coal Co. and Western Energy Co. (Montana Power Co.) are mining near Colstrip. These are only forerunners of many more developments to come. Governor Forrest Anderson of Montana has now taken steps to provide planning for such developments before they become grim realities.

Letters To The Editor



Editor:

So Mr. Corette of Montana Power sees a big economic boom coming to Montana in the form of coal development. This is a cruel deception to perpetrate on the people of Montana.

Does not the single experience of Conrad tell us something in relation to the new plant going up in Colstrip for example? The work force to build the new plant will be 700 people it is reported. Then upon completion of the plant, a regular staff of 45 people to operate it.

Meanwhile it is up to the people of Montana (Rosebud County in particular) to protect and educate the families of those 700 people. Multiply this sort of boom and let down situation all over eastern Montana and what sort of havoc have you?

Another question, who gets the money from the coal (yes, there is a tiny severance tax) and the electricity (will the electrical bills go down?) Who pays the bills? Puget Sound? Montana Power?

The coal fields of this area, in case some may have forgotten, lie under some of the

High Country...

However, it should not be incumbent upon one state to do what is demanded of all. This newspaper suggested an interstate mining compact in October, 1970. I suppose because it came from an environmental source, it was ignored. But once again, I make the suggestion.

Such a compact could be a logical extension of the Yellowstone River Compact. Since water is such an integral part of the coal development, a united front on comprehensive planning and development on all aspects could be made using the Yellowstone River Compact as a vehicle. The compact might have the added advantage of having to have the consent and the blessing of Congress.

The States of Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming are blessed, or cursed, as you will, with energy resources of vast magnitude. Yet, those resources will be used for the most part by fellow citizens far removed from our beautiful lands. If we are not to be exploited, we must lay our plans carefully, and do it now.

Governor Anderson has taken the first, sure step.

best grass and farmlands in the nation. When the coal fields are developed, if they can get the water from the rest of the state as planned, the state's two major industries, agriculture and tourism, will be virtually destroyed for lack of water, land destruction and water pollution.

It has not been proven (and it is not required to be proven) that the land "reclaimed" from strip mining will again grow the native species essential to grazing of both livestock and game.

The effect of strip mining on surface waters is not known.

The state law requires that 90 per cent of pollutants be cleaned out of the air; is that not license to throw the other 10 per cent into it?

If one is being an "environmental extremist" to ask that these problems be solved before this development destroys what we have beyond retrieving, then the title is accepted.

Several of us have just returned from the Appalachian states and have seen what coal development can do to an area. The major part of the economic advantages are in the hands of a very few people who also control

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Guest Editorials

Reprinted from THE BILLINGS GAZETTE, August 7, 1972.

Do It Right or Not At All

A task force to study the impact of coal development in Eastern Montana is welcome if over due.

Solving of problems ahead of time, before they arise and become holes in the ground and waste land, is imperative to development which will be any lasting benefit to the area.

The task force, named by Gov. Forrest Anderson, has a great amount of work to do and a great many obstacles to overcome.

First, it is short of funds. It would appear the task force will have to rely upon the agencies which comprise it for money to do its work.

They will find it advisable to allocate sufficient funds now to carry on efforts until legislative appropriations are available. And they will be needed.

The six agencies of the state government are involved with resources and conservation, state lands, planning and economic development, fish and game, health and environmental quality.

They are the logical ones to make the study in that some of their cross purposes may serve to keep others on target.

That target is proper development of Eastern Montana's coal fields.

Proper development means far more than scooping out the coal, shipping it to midwest points or burning it here for energy.

Land reclamation and restoration to use-

fulness rank high on the pecking order. So does protection of streams and ground water so that they continue to be usable and plentiful. Clean air is another.

The cost of schools, roads, law enforcement and all other community services required by the influx of workers are a definite part of the impact to be considered.

The days of take-and-run exploitation in Montana are over, or at least should be over. Each development should pay its own economic and social costs. The vast coal fields of Eastern Montana are no exception.

Montana will be far better off safe than sorry. The time to meet the problems is now before they grow beyond comprehension or solution.

Montana's concern is not with the return to stockholders of Peabody, Consolidation, Western Energy or any other extractor.

True, coal must sell at a price. That price is not a ravaged land unfit to live in and a wrecked economy.

Eastern Montana must not become another Appalachia. If the impact studies reveal the cost is too high, that it isn't "economically feasible" to extract the coal and pay the true costs, then forget it until it will pay its way and for the damage, impact if you prefer the word, it causes.

Do it right or not at all.

Reprinted from The IDAHO STATESMAN, Boise, July 9, 1972.

The Pork Barrel Rolls On

by Ken Robison, Editor, Editorial Page

WASHINGTON — The White House today ordered a halt on the Lower Teton project, describing it as a "\$70 million boondoggle." An investigation showed that millions of tax dollars would be wasted if the project proceeds.

That is the kind of news story which should be coming out of Washington. Don't hold your breath waiting for it. Lower Teton is a boondoggle, but it is politically "safe."

It ought to be a national scandal — comparable to a \$70 million case of welfare fraud. There's not much difference except that Lower Teton isn't labeled welfare. It's a dam project.

The news out of Washington recently was that another \$11 million has been appropriated to continue work on Lower Teton.

A proposed plank in the Idaho Democratic platform said Lower Teton should be re-evaluated. That plank was removed on grounds of political expediency — such a plank would cost votes in Eastern Idaho. (Idaho Republicans adopted a resolution supporting Teton.)

It's expedient for politicians to support Lower Teton because people in the Rexburg area think it's a good project. That's what its supporters have been telling them for years.

But if you look at the arithmetic of "costs" and "benefits" the answer is different. A third grader could tell the politicians that Lower Teton isn't worth building.

This project offers a useful lesson in pork barrel politics. It's a bad project. But it isn't stopped because no Idaho congressional office holder and no political party can muster the courage to oppose it.

To their credit, some of this year's candidates are willing to question it — senatorial aspirants Tony Park, Rose Bowman and Byron Johnson and House candidates Wayne Kidwell, Bob Purcell and Steve Symms.

What's wrong with Lower Teton?

It is primarily an irrigation project, to supplement the existing water supply for 111,000 acres of land.

But only 29,000 acres of that land really needs more water. It could be provided by

pumping at a modest cost. The other 80,000 acres was "short" of water only once in the past 30 years, according to Bureau of Reclamation records.

That was 1961. Did the crops dry up? Were yields reduced? Potatoes averaged 212 hundredweight per acre, 30 per cent higher than the year before. The sugar beet yield was up. Grain yields were near normal.

If there is any need for more water on some of that 80,000 acres in years like 1961 it could also be met by pumping, at modest cost.

Of the \$70 million cost of Lower Teton, \$38 million is allocated to irrigation. For the 29,000 acres that really needs more water, that amounts to \$1,300 per acre, or more than the land is worth.

No private investor in his right mind would spend \$1,300 per acre for a supplemental water supply.

The Lower Teton irrigators aren't paying for it either, of course. They pay only \$4 million of the cost over 50 years.

It's a good deal for the irrigators, but a poor one for the taxpayers.

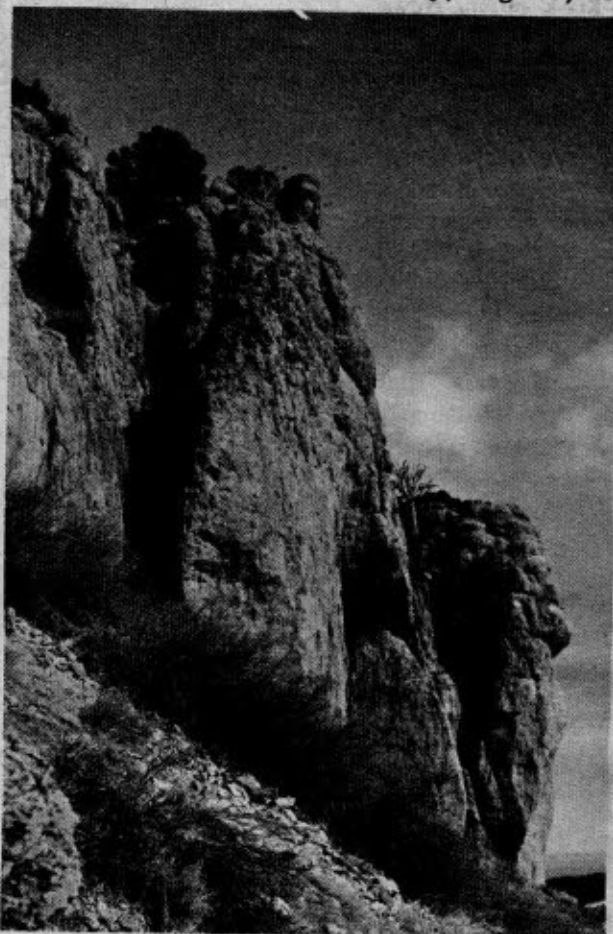
The second major benefit of Teton is flood control. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicates that it will prevent an average of \$94,000 worth of flood damage a year in the Teton area. Downstream benefits bring the total to \$140,000.

Now, \$7 million of the cost is allocated to flood control. At \$140,000 a year, the return on that investment is 2 per cent. That's a bad deal for anyone.

When you consider that most of the alleged irrigation benefits are non-existent, you should assign more of the cost to flood control. When you do that, the annual return on investment is less.

It would be cheaper to insure buildings against floods (the government has just reduced rates on its flood insurance), buy farm land subject to flooding (or reimburse the farmers for actual losses), and build some levees.

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Reprinted from THE BILLINGS GAZETTE,
July 5, 1972.

Maximize!

Now is the time for Montana to maximize its profits from the rich coal fields which have been resting under much of the eastern part of the state for centuries.

And if Montana cannot maximize that profit, to borrow a term from the world of private business, then let the stuff stay where it is until it becomes of top value.

This isn't to say that the coal field of Eastern Montana should not be developed. Not at all.

What we are advocating is that the state of Montana get something out of it besides holes in the ground.

If this area's coal is as badly needed as we are told it is, then there isn't any reason why it should be given away from the standpoint of the public benefit to be derived.

Montana, and Wyoming and North Dakota for that matter, should collect a healthy severance tax on the coal while they can because when it is gone it will be gone forever.

The 1971 Montana Legislature took a few steps towards increasing state income from the strip mining of coal. The next one should go over the matter again and revise the schedule upward.

Tax returns from Montana's rich coal fields should do a lot more than pay to reclaim the land and provide sufficient money to monitor control of pollution which can result from mine-mouth power plants.

All of the citizens of the area should benefit from the underground wealth and not be left with a hollow legacy and social bills to pay when the extraction is over.

The only way Montana can make certain this happens is to be mighty, mighty realistic about its severance tax on coal. That doesn't mean to run for cover when the coal lobbyists converge.

We can learn a lesson from the oil-rich countries of Africa, the Middle East and South America.

They are learning how to maximize their profits by getting a bigger bite of the pie.

That's the free enterprise system, a game that can be played by commonwealths as well as companies.

But why do it the less-expensive way when you can tap the federal Treasury? Or when you can use a 3.25 per cent interest rate and let the taxpayers pick up the actual cost of borrowing the money?

Why does this project have so much political appeal?

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A Difference in Governors...

Early this year, Montana's Environmental Quality Council wrote to Governor Forrest Anderson to apprise him of developments in coal resources and to express concern at the lack of planning in those developments. Governor Anderson and members of his staff then began a series of correspondence and meetings to obtain federal assistance.

Letters went out to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior and to William Ruckelshaus, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Ruckelshaus then responded and asked John A. Green, administrator for Region VIII of EPA at Denver, to seek agreement from the governors of Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota.

Following are the responses of the three governors, Hathaway of Wyoming, Anderson of Montana, and Guy of North Dakota. The three letters provide a study in opposites. Hathaway obviously does not share the concern of the other two governors. And, in fact, he seems to be indicating that far from concern about the environment and social consequences, he is more concerned that energy companies are not getting leases, and, therefore, the breaks. He endorses a feasibility study to pipe vast amounts of water into the Powder River Basin, and then expresses concern that without water there will be no development of the coal which he desires.

In the final paragraph, he is indicating that between energy and environment, he will opt for energy. It could well be that as a Republican governor, he is acutely aware that campaign contributions from energy companies constitute a wealth not similarly forthcoming from little people who own the land, or from environmentalists. Governor Hathaway is not known to be overly sensitive to environmental problems at any rate.

The editor.

Dear Mr. Green:

This will acknowledge your letter and enclosures relative to development of the coal reserves in the States of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. There isn't any question that development of the coal reserves in the northeastern section of Wyoming will have long-range environmental, social, and economic consequences. However, I am not sure that I wish to endorse a short-term comprehensive study of coal development in this region without knowing more about the guidelines for the study.

The Department of Interior has not issued any coal leases in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming for more than a year. This action has forced a slowdown in the planning of the private sector for coal development projects. The development of most of the Powder River Basin coal resources depends upon the availability of water. We have endorsed a feasibility study for an aqueduct system which would bring water into the Powder River Basin. Until the water problems are solved and a plan is developed for water supply, we will not see any extensive use of the coal resources in this area.

The nation faces an energy crisis, and it seems to me that the nation's energy policy and environmental policy are now working at cross purposes. If the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Interior will address themselves to the core issues of this problem, the State Government of Wyoming will be happy to cooperate.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,
Stan K. Hathaway
Governor

Dear Mr. Green:

You are absolutely right that the development of the coal reserves and water supplies in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming is taking place in a fragmented manner and poses some very urgent questions

to each of the states and the nation. I agree with Administrator Ruckelshaus that there is great need for a short-term comprehensive study of coal development in this region. I would support your effort to secure such a study in any way that I can.

I am very disturbed about the possibility of vast strip mining enterprises to support the coal gasification program. This would seem to me to be such a shortsighted way of delaying a carefully planned program for meeting our energy crisis.

I believe we desperately need a national energy board that can inform the general public of the crisis that is already upon us in supplying energy through natural gas, crude oil, and even through electricity from hydro and thermo generation.

We have another study project for which we are urgently seeking funds that has to do with the North Dakota Badlands area from the Missouri River on the north to the South Dakota border. This involves a competition for planning and use of the Badlands and includes such considerations as lignite coal, crude oil, tourism, ranching, farming, wildlife enhancement, archeological preservation, historic preservation, recreational use, as well as the maintenance of esthetic value.

We are all tooled up to conduct a systems analysis study of this vast area in order to develop guidelines for state land use planning legislation.

The need for such a study was precipitated by the admission of the Bureau of Land Management that they could no longer handle the demands on the Custer National Forest under their management. The competing demands were getting out of hand and there was no logical plan of action they could follow. There are also two units of the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park in the area operated by the National Park Service.

Since the wholesale leasing of coal is one of the factors that has initiated the need to carry on the systems analysis study of the Badlands, I mention this to you as a possible auxiliary study to your proposal. I also mention it to emphasize the need to plan the conservation and development of the Fort Union coal region in accord with comprehensive planning and the careful use of all of the resources of the region including, of course, our human resources.

You say you would be glad to work with us to consolidate and give some direction to the many independent efforts being exerted to initiate a regional study. I can say as emphatically as I know how that our main concern is money since we already have

available the expertise in many disciplines ready to go to work in that vast area.

I would be glad to support your efforts to bring about a multistate effort, but I am most interested in what I believe is an equally urgent Badlands study in order to generate the information and plan of procedure for not only the Badlands region but eventually all of North Dakota.

Sincerely yours,
William L. Guy
Governor

Dear Mr. Green:

I was pleased to receive your letter and to know of the concern of Administrator Ruckelshaus concerning the potential for large scale coal development in Montana.

I have attached a copy of my most recent letter to Senators Mansfield and Metcalf and Congressman Melcher, outlining what we are doing in Montana and what remains to be done. Clearly, your willingness of cooperation is most welcome.

I suggest any further plans be held in abeyance until I receive an answer from members of our Congressional Delegation.

Meantime, Mr. Schwinden and Gary Wicks, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation will be coordinating this effort with my office.

Sincerely,
Forrest H. Anderson
Governor

The Honorable Mike Mansfield
United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mike:

I know you are aware of Montana's vast, strippable coal reserves, and the problems and opportunities this resource presents.

As you also know, coal ownership in Montana ranges from small, private landowners, through larger companies, such as railroads, and on to the State and Federal governments. In many cases, surface and sub-surface ownership is divided.

On December 14, 1972, Senator Metcalf chaired a conference in Billings relating to joint state-federal efforts to assure adequate reclamation of surface mined lands. At that meeting, Mr. Gary Fisher, Department of the Interior solicitor, stated "the 1872 (Mining Act) offers no means by which the government can effectively control environ-

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Photo by Marc Gaede

This old strip mine at Four Corners in the Southwest is a reminder of what could happen in Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota. It is essential that planning and legislation protect the environment of these relatively unspoiled states.

...Concerns Vary

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mental impacts and particularly has no provisions which relate to surface restoration."

In a report of the Comptroller General of the United States, dated March 29, 1972, the following conclusion is cited:

"In view of the (Interior) Department's policy that, where Federal standards are lower than State standards, the latter be followed, we believe that the reclamation standards imposed by laws enacted by the States of Colorado, Montana and Wyoming should result in improved reclamation activities of mine operators on Federal lands if the Department requires compliance with these standards."

Mary Jane Due, Staff Counsel, U.S. Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, comments:

"Passage of surface mining legislation now pending before the Congress would be helpful to the situation if the law or laws to be enacted apply to all lands, Federal, State, and private, so that there is uniform application in a geographical area; and provide adequate enforcement and funding therefor, including research funds for reclamation."

It is obvious that the assertion made by Commissioner Schwinden at the Billings meeting was correct; namely, that the basic responsibility for assuring environmental protection as regards surface mining in Montana is going to remain with the state at least until such time as federal legislation is passed.

In the weeks and months that have passed since the Billings meeting, various federal agencies and officials have been in contact with state agencies responsible for mining reclamation. To this point, however, the only substantive federal assistance has been the part-time assignment of one Soil Conservation Service staff person to the Department of State Lands.

On March 24, 1972, Mr. William D. Ruckelshaus, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, wrote Secretaries Butz and Morton as follows:

"The urgency of this matter and the need for a coordinated development strategy between State and Federal agencies was highlighted recently at a meeting in Billings, Montana on January 28, 1972, attended by Senator Metcalf, Montana State officials, and regional representatives from various Federal agencies including the U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Mines, Environmental Protection Agency, Soil Conservation Service, and Forest Service. Mr. Ted Schwinden, Commissioner, Montana Department of State Lands, stated:

"As you probably know, the Consolidated Coal Company has just recently completed a 39,000 ton test shipment out of the Bull Mountain area. Western Energy has announced recently their plans to provide some 2½ million tons of coal to the Wisconsin Steam Generating Plant plus their own plans to build a coal generation plant in company with a west coast energy firm. The Decker Coal Company, operating just north of the Wyoming border, will commence operations near the Tongue River Reservoir this year and will probably be pulling some 3 to 3½ million tons out of that mining operation by the end of 1972."

Both State and Federal representatives agree that existing coal development in this region is creating environmental problems for which solutions have yet to be demonstrated. Increased development can only compound these problems.

Mr. Ruckelshaus quite obviously concurs with our December assessment; but the Nixon administration has demonstrated little or no positive response.

Yet we have no choice except to meet our responsibilities with the resources we have. Accordingly, on Friday, May 19, I

invited several federal officials to my office to discuss a study of the Decker-Birney coal area in southeastern Montana.

This study is a coordinated state-federal effort to acquire inventory data essential to wise resource decisions for the area. It is also an attempt to avoid costly duplication of effort.

Coal reserves in the study area total approximately 12 billion tons. About 49,000 acres in the area are currently under private, State or Federal lease.

I feel that such a prototype study, which is expected to provide answers applicable to the total strip mining picture in Montana, must be initiated if all our resources are to be developed to their fullest potential without

degrading our environment. Hopefully, this study will help point the way to such planning.

However, the Decker-Birney evaluation is not going to provide the answers to the environmental problems detailed in Billings and recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency. Therefore, I would again ask your help in communicating to the Nixon administration the urgency of our problem.

I look forward to your cooperation and assistance in this important matter.

Best personal regards,

Sincerely,
Forrest H. Anderson
Governor

Coal Task Force Appointed

The State of Montana has taken the first steps in dealing with approaching problems in coal development. On August 2, Governor Forrest Anderson sent a letter to the Montana Environmental Quality Council outlining his plans for a planning task force.

He said he was appointing the task force to:

1. Bring coordination to all state agencies' activities with regard to coal and water development in Eastern Montana;
2. Identify problems and research needs;
3. Work with the federal agencies and private sectors to develop a program for solving problems and research needs so identified;
4. Work with the Federal Government and private sector to develop a comprehensive plan which would guarantee wise development of coal and water resources;
5. Attempt to obtain funds sufficient to carry out these programs; and,
6. Review existing laws and recommend the changes necessary for orderly development.



Anderson said six state agencies would be included in the initial task force. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation was designated the coordinating agency. The other agencies are the Department of State Lands, Department of Planning and Economic Development, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, and the Environmental Quality Council.

Anderson said he was concerned about the broad environmental, social and economic impacts that coal development would bring. He said that in the past eight months he had sought federal and private assistance to develop necessary information, but to no avail.

"Instead we have witnessed a proliferation of research proposals by various federal agencies and state groups, each apparently drafted in isolation. This lack of coordination raises doubts about the utility and comprehensiveness of any information, and plan that might be developed. Continuation of a fragmented approach will, in my opinion, result in expenditures of millions of dollars for studies that end up on shelves, leaving most of our questions unanswered," he said in his order establishing the task force.

Gary Wicks, director of the Department of

Natural Resources, said he expected to have a coordinator hired and hold the first meeting by month's end.

The Montana Environmental Quality Council first recommended such a task force in an April 10th letter to the governor. Fletcher Newby, executive director of the Council, in commenting on the governor's action, said, "This kind of cooperation and coordination between the executive and legislative branches is an important first step toward developing the capacity in state government to foresee and modify in a beneficial way the long-term benefit."

The Council is an arm of the legislative branch rather than the executive branch in Montana.

At a recent meeting the EQC adopted a series of resolutions calling for tougher legislation on coal mining and strengthening state authority. The resolutions included:

- A bill to authorize selective denial of permits for open cut or strip mines where there are excessive slopes, overriding scenic or archaeological values, or where for other reasons, adequate reclamation is not possible.
- A bill to specify required aspects of an adequate reclamation plan, including topsoil reclamation and maximum allowable slope.
- A bill to authorize an appropriate state agency, with suitable environmental expertise, to regulate power plant siting, railroad, pipeline, transmission line and aqueduct routing.
- An environmental protection act which would give any legal entity with appropriate standing the right to bring suit and to intervene in administrative proceedings in order to protect environmental quality.
- A disclosure law requiring all operators of commercial processes within the state to file information, including effluent and emission data, and with measures stated for enforcement sanctions.
- The creation of an interagency environmental monitoring committee to standardize and coordinate federal and state environmental monitoring.

"..Noted & Quoted.."

"He suggested as a preliminary to 'assume a low profile' as far as public relations are concerned until your development is actually opened for sales. A lack of public information during this formative period doesn't 'give special interest groups time to organize.' He emphasized the importance of taking the local planning commission and its staff into the developer's confidence. The developer should ask for their suggestions and at the same time take advantage of the opportunity to educate the planning commission to the developer's way of thinking."

Report of a talk entitled The Developer and The Environment by J. William Brosius as published in WASHINGTON DEVELOPMENTS, a publication of the American Land Developers Association.

6-High Country News
Friday, Aug. 18, 1972

National Energy Policy...

The following article on the need for an energy policy comprised the complete issue of the Conservation Foundation Letter for June, 1972. It is reprinted here in the interests of our readers. It will be carried in two parts with the second part to appear in the next issue of HCN. We wish to express our appreciation to the Conservation Foundation for the use of this material.

The editor.

WANTED: A COORDINATED, COHERENT NATIONAL POLICY GEARED TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Take many of the nation's most vexatious environmental problems, stir in the melange of related issues that the recipe requires, and you will come up with a politically unpalatable — and thus far indigestible — stew called the "energy crisis."

The phrase has become a cliché which blurs the outlines of the many pressures generated by the massive production and use of energy. These converging forces involve public health, resource conservation, technology, economic growth, international trade and politics, national security, aesthetics, consumer protection and social equity.

The crisis derives from the interacting, conflicting and cumulative effects of these complex pressures, each associated with its own time scale. Thus the nation needs research, institutional mechanisms and bold political decisions which will orchestrate many forces into a cogent, coordinated, national energy policy.

Volumes can be, and have been, written about each facet of the energy problem. The following discussion can be no more than an overview.

How did we get into an energy mess in the first place? In capsule form, our rapid technological and population growth fed upon what seemed to be unlimited natural resources. The result was cheap energy, which encouraged technologies and practices that are highly energy-consuming. This led to the evolution of an industrial society whose vital functions and economic institutions are premised on an ever-increasing rate of consumption. This consumption has been accompanied by serious and accelerating degradation of the physical environment, as well as a rapidly dwindling supply of low-cost and less-polluting fuels. Hence, escalating prices, localized shortages, more environmental damage — all implying a possible need to slow down growth itself.

In attempting to sort out the current dilemmas, it is useful to think in terms of three time frames: now, the next few decades, and the more distant future. One horn of the short-term dilemma is a demand for energy which exceeds the supply; the other horn is the need to avoid environmental damage from pollution, oil spills, strip mining, irrational land use, and radioactivity. The intermediate and long-term issues — such as developing adequate and clean fuel supplies, and limiting consumption of energy — have broader social, economic and environmental implications.

Dealing with the energy problem may be largely a matter of buying time while we move as rapidly as technologically possible from current energy sources to those that are environmentally benign and abundantly available.

THE HERE AND NOW

Air pollution laws are being used to limit the amount of sulfur in fuels burned for heating and electric power generation. Yet supplies of natural gas (which contains a negligible amount of sulfur) and low-sulfur oil are dwindling rapidly. The result is a major air pollution control dilemma.

Our principal coal fields yield coal with too much sulfur. Large coal reserves in the Rocky Mountain region and in the northern Great Plains are low-sulfur — but also lower in heating value and high in moisture content,

AN OBSTACLE TO CLEAN AIR

Because of the unavailability or high cost of "large additional supplies" of clean fuels, the Environmental Protection Agency recently indicated that it may not require states to meet the national sulfur dioxide standard by 1975. EPA said that implementation of the standard "must take into account the limits on total availability of clean fuels." It also said that government "must address the problem of creating economic and other incentives which ensure that natural or desulfurized clean fuels go to users in areas of greatest environmental need." This could be accomplished, it said, by passage of pending legislation to tax sulfur emissions. In EPA's opinion, such legislation would not only provide a strong incentive for users in highly polluted areas to bid for the fuels; it would also stimulate development of new clean fuel resources and technology.

"Unfortunately," the agency added, "our long overdue concern for air quality comes at a time when the abundance of cleaner energy fuels in the United States is rapidly disappearing and experts are becoming worried about our ability to meet our energy fuel needs even independent of environmental consideration." ("Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans," Federal Register, May 31, 1972.)

and transportation costs to the East are high. Large reserves of high-quality coal can be strip-mined, but the environmental damage would be extreme.

As a result of these shortages, the costs of electric energy, natural gas and heating oil for residential use are rising rapidly. Several areas of the country are so short on gas that distribution companies are refusing to accept new customers. Some factories that use large volumes of natural gas have been forced to curtail production. The shortage of low-sulfur fuel oil has doubled fuel costs in New York.

In addition, reserve generating capacity for electric power is so low in several areas, including Chicago, Miami and New York, that voltage reductions (brownouts) or complete disruptions of service (blackouts) may result this summer. The combination of a long hot spell and a critical equipment failure will do the trick.

The current problems are exacerbated by a number of factors. Research on processes to develop synthetic fuels — principally the making of gas from coal — has lagged. So has development of nuclear power. "Once we talked about making the deserts of the world blossom like the rose with atomic energy," says V.L. Parsegian, a physicist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. (Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, October 1971.) Now, alas, the industry is struggling just for a significant share of the nation's thermal power generation demand, a share which is currently about 2%.

As for the shortage of natural gas, a debate has raged on for years. Are the shortages authentic? Do they stem from marketing policies — or from earlier Federal Power Commission controls over gas prices? Similar disputes involve the effects of the oil depletion allowance and the oil import quota system. Has the depletion allowance really encouraged exploration for oil reserves? Or has it led to wasteful development (for example, leaving harder-to-get oil in the ground), higher prices and restricted supply?

The oil import quota system is an excellent example of the clashing tradeoffs involved in many energy problems. It is generally assumed that the main purpose of the quota is to protect the domestic oil industry from competing with cheaper imports. Official justifications include the need to avoid dependence on foreign oil sources in case of emergency; the serious impact which mass imports would have on the balance of payments; and the theory that higher domestic prices must be maintained to spur commercial development of synthetic fuels made from oil shale and coal.

Many observers are skeptical about the foreign policy risks. The import quota, says Larry M. Svart, of the University of Washington Department of Geography, "has been convincingly scored as a poor method of assuring petroleum reserves for national security. A much better alternative might be a system of government-owned natural reservoirs, strategically located and ready to produce on short notice." (Science, February 18, 1972.) The present Naval Petroleum Reserves have been cited as examples. Opponents of such proposals claim the costs would be too high.

(Continued on page 7)

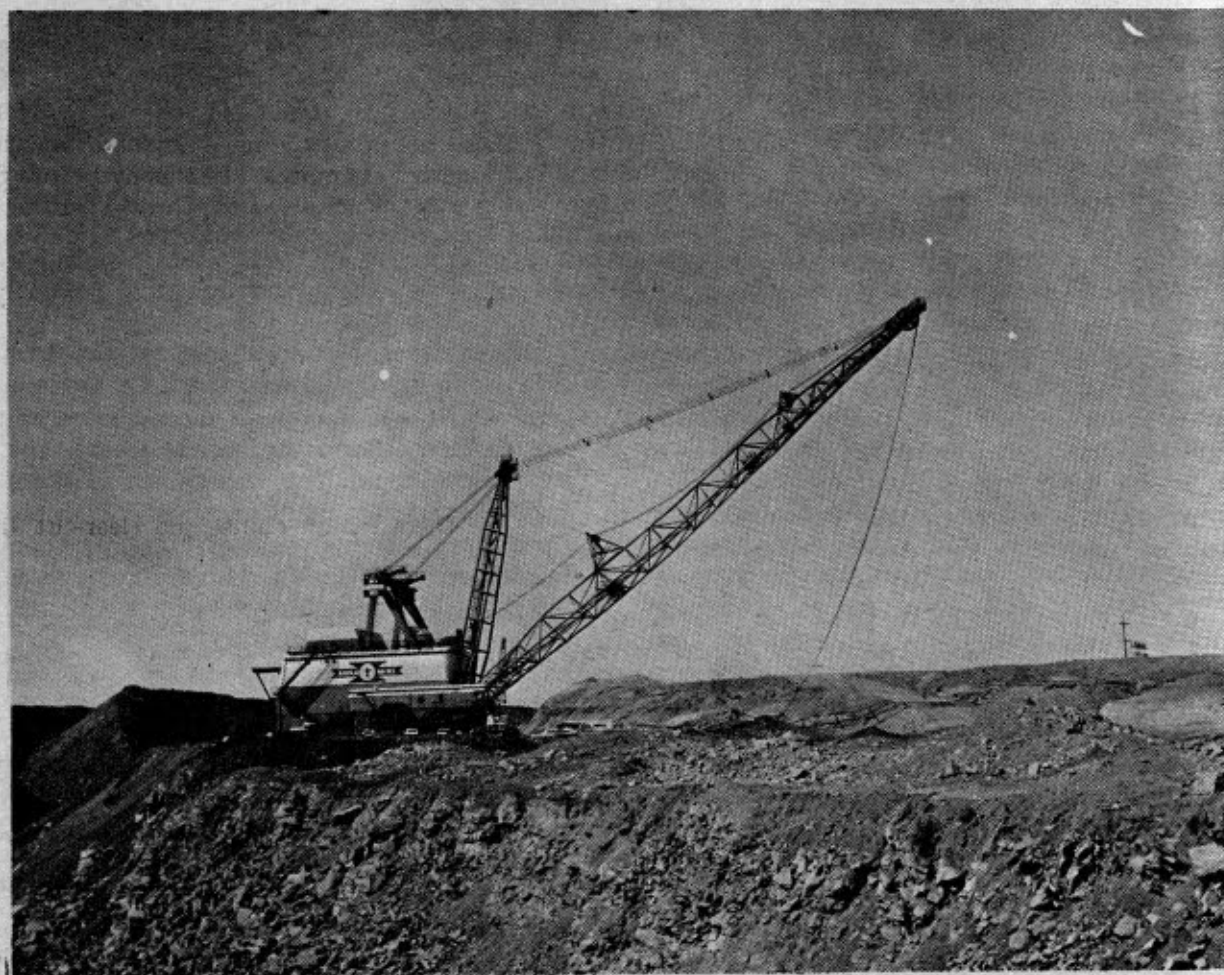


Photo by Marc Gaede

Unplanned developments in anticipation of an "energy crisis" have already caused untold damage to the environment. More unplanned development can only lead to a crisis on the land. The nation desperately needs an energy policy in order to give direction to those developments deemed absolutely necessary, and to promote research on non-polluting energy sources.

... A Must

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SCAPEGOATS

The electric power industry, hampered by a variety of problems in trying to crank its nuclear and other plants into operation, has not been able to resist the temptation to keep blaming environmentalists for blackouts, brownouts and other threats which make up the energy crisis. In a number of cases, to be sure, environmental lawsuits have held up construction or operation of plants. But this is usually because the company or the licensing agency, in considering environmental problems, did not properly adhere to the law or its intent. Also, most of the plants delayed by litigation would not have been ready by this summer anyway.

In any case, most delays — and they sometimes are measured in years — have been due to other factors. Among them: poor industry planning and forecasts of demand, late delivery of reactors and other major components, long construction times (usually due to labor problems such as strikes, shortages of skilled workers and reduced productivity), poor design of equipment, and faulty equipment and construction (resulting in many steam line ruptures, fires and explosions).

These problems have been discussed at length by the Federal Power Commission. (See Chapter 16 of the 1970 National Power Survey, April 16, 1972.) It reports, for example, that in the years 1966-70, out of a total of 114 generating units delayed, 65 units were affected by labor-related problems, 17 by late delivery of equipment, 29 by equipment failure and faulty installation — and 8 by "inability to obtain necessary certifications and other regulatory impediments, including environmental problems." On March 22, 1972, in testimony before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries subcommittee on fisheries and wildlife conservation, Atomic Energy Commission Chairman James R. Schlesinger said: "The thing I should like to express is that the slippage of the schedule (in meeting power demand) has been due in only small measure — repeat, in only small measure — to the activities of environmental groups."

Yet the import quota is now causing U.S. consumers to pay at least an extra \$5 billion per year in higher fuel prices. (So says the 1970 Report of the Cabinet Task Force on Oil Import Control, which found the national security argument weak and recommended that the quota system be phased out.) Also, as Svart points out, larger imports of oil would benefit the economic development of countries that export it. (On the other hand, foreign nations also will be wanting more and more of the world's decreasing reserves.)

The environmental pros and cons are difficult to assess. Raising import levels could reduce the domestic environmental impacts of offshore drilling, and of oil shale and Alaska North Slope development. (There is adamant opposition to proposals for drilling wells off the Atlantic Coast. In a campaign speech in Boston last April, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota charged that the oil import quota system helps U.S. oil companies and the Interior Department "black-mail New England into accepting offshore oil exploration that you neither want nor need.") On the other hand, greater imports mean more of the risks associated with huge tankers crossing the oceans.

Similar trade-offs are associated with imports of expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG), in small quantities now but expected to rise rapidly. (In the Maritime Administration's fiscal 1973 budget request now pending in Congress there is a request for \$72.2 million to provide federal subsidies to build four special LNG tankers, presumably the first of many. In its budget, the Navy seeks \$193 million to design and build the first of a fleet of 50 "patrol frigates" — whose roles would include whatever protection of LNG and oil tankers is needed as the U.S. increases its dependence on foreign supplies.)



THE NUMBERS GAME

It is especially difficult to assess the fuel supply picture because most of the data comes from industry and can be used for self-serving purposes. "It's all suspect," says one observer. "They can tell us there's a fuel crisis any time they want to." For one thing, the interpretation of raw geophysical information is a very sophisticated and complex task. Industry has built up unparalleled expertise in the field. It takes no imagination to deduce that the oil industry, for example, might find it beneficial to report dwindling reserves in order to generate pressure for more offshore leasing and continuation of tax subsidies designed to encourage more exploration. Similarly, there are some who believe the gas industry may be deliberately understating natural gas reserves in order to induce the Federal Power Commission to raise wellhead prices. Industry contends that the FPC held natural gas prices so low, and for so long, that development of new reserves was inhibited.

One wonders why reported discoveries of natural gas reserves plummeted rather suddenly after 1967 — about the time gas producers were confronted with adverse decisions on rates. (In 1968, for example, net additions to reserves totaled 12.1 trillion cubic feet compared to the prior year's 21.3 trillion.) Lee C. White, former FPC chairman, asked the Joint Economic Committee on June 7, 1972: "How do you explain the fact that exploration for oil and discoveries of new oil reserves also declined during the period without any federal or state control over the price of oil?"

Many observers, including FPC officials, are skeptical of industry figures. Bruce C. Netschert, of National Economic Research Associates, Inc., has suggested rather subtly that industry personnel estimating reserves have a "keen awareness of the political impact of the results of their work." Netschert also has noted some mysterious revisions in industry estimates. (Testimony before Senate Interior subcommittee on minerals, materials and fuels, November 13, 1969.) FPC estimates of reserves are confined — in large measure because industry has declined to furnish relevant data sought. But those estimates made by the FPC tend to be significantly higher than the producers' figures.

CURRENT ISSUES

There is, of course, no clear-cut line between short-term and longer-term energy policy choices. But these are some of the more immediate questions facing the nation:

1. What means might be used to reduce

power consumption in critical areas and during peak demand periods. What are the general, readily available methods of conserving energy?

2. Should we sacrifice short-term quality for more power by relaxing our sulfur standards for coal and oil?

3. To what extent should the environment be sacrificed to keep consumer prices down? For example, should we permit large-scale strip mining for coal?

4. Until substitute fuels can replace oil and gas, how shall we choose between — for example — larger oil and LNG imports, more offshore drilling and the trans-Alaska pipeline?

5. To what extent can existing power generating capacity be increased? With better exchange of power through pooling? Through hurried-up nuclear licensing procedures? Are we confident that nuclear plants are safe? (The emergency core cooling system hearings and other evidence raise doubts.)

6. Do our indirect subsidies of the oil industry operate in the national interest? And what is the best way to deal with natural gas prices and supplies?

7. Should we begin allocating or rationing energy? If so, should it be done directly or through pricing and tax policies?

Fraud Charged

Friends of the Earth has charged the First National Bank of Chicago with outright deception over an advertisement run in the New York Times and other major newspapers across the nation designed to convince the public that environmentalists are responsible for the nation's energy crisis.

Robert Rauch, the organization's Assistant Legislative Director, declared that the ad was not only misleading, but inaccurate in many areas.

"We have confronted bank officials with our charges regarding the number of nuclear power plants which environmentalists have actually delayed, and they have been unable to document the figures used in the ad. They claimed that environmentalists have been responsible for delaying 23 of 65 proposed nuclear plants when according to Dr. Schlesinger, head of the AEC, 'the slippage has been due in only small measure — repeat, in only small measure — to the activities of environmental groups.'"

"This ad represents just one small element of a nationwide campaign on the part of the utilities, the oil companies and their allies to convince the American public that the environment is a luxury which we can no longer afford to protect if the nation's energy needs are to be met. And yet it is these very companies which have encouraged this nation's insatiable demand for energy — energy which in many cases has been wasted and has done little or nothing to increase our standard of living.

The energy complex is now caught in a crisis of its own making and they've decided that the environmentalists can be used as a scapegoat to avoid responsibility for past mistakes.

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I want to donate a one-year subscription to High Country News to a school library.

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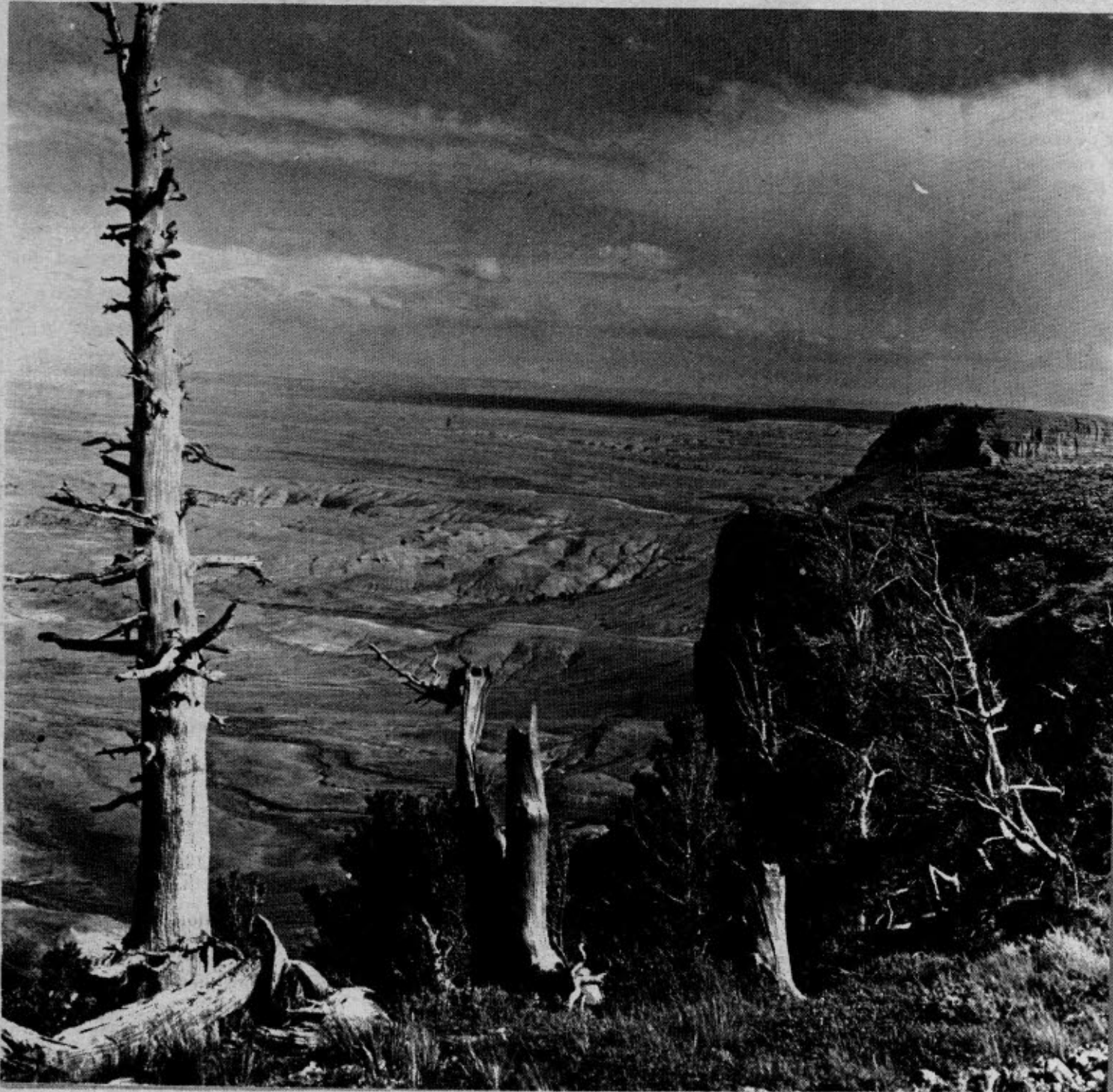
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THE OREGON BUTTES



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Wyoming's Great Divide Basin provides an ever-changing panorama and a different aspect in every direction. The Oregon Buttes, guideposts for emigrants along the old Oregon and Mormon Trails, are only one of the outstanding features. These photos, from a distance and from on top, show the spectacular scenery of this unique area.

Photos by Tom Bell



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Friday, Aug. 18, 1972

Make Way...

At a recent meeting in Sutherland they pointed out what had happened to the clean air of the Southwest.

No controls for sulfur or nitrogen oxides will be built into the plant. Nitrogen oxides cause the yellowish or brownish haze associated with air pollution. A combination of nitrogen and sulfur oxides can cause severe damage to growing plants. And documented evidence is now beginning to accumulate that sulfur dioxide is causing the production of acid rains downwind from sulfur emitting plants.

Opponents of the plant have serious reservations about statements made by power district officials. Dr. Eric Sloth, environmental manager for NPPD, says the Wyoming coal has "a very low ash content." (Bureau of Mines reports show Hanna Coal varies from 5.5% to 7.6%.) And he says that particulate removal equipment will provide "roughly 99% control." The 600 to 800-foot high stack is expected to disperse up to five tons per day of the fine particulate matter over a 50-mile radius.

James Orr, NPPD board member told a public meeting in Sutherland that the only visible result of the power plant would be a vapor in the winter time. He said there would be no smoke and no ash escaping from the stack in the summer time!

Experiences of operating plants in the Southwest demonstrate considerable air quality degradation. Recent reports indicate an operating efficiency for particulate removal to be on the order of 75% in some Southwest power plants.

Many of the official statements on the environmental impact of the large plant have strained the credibility of the power district. However, none have been so incredible as the statement by the assistant general manager of NPPD, Homer Loutzenheiser, who remarked, "Once the plant is in then we can judge the environmental impact of it!"

Barrel...

It was authorized in 1964 when people weren't asking many questions about costs and benefits, or the loss of 17 miles of river and a canyon where a herd of 1,000 deer winter.

Anytime \$70 million is spent, there's money to be made. The Idaho AFL-CIO likes Teton because there are construction jobs. Chambers of commerce in the area like it. The construction industry likes it. Why should a politician oppose it?

So long as office holders don't have the courage to oppose projects like Teton, the national debt will continue to rise.

If you're willing to say yes to a pork barrel project in Idaho, how do you say no to a pork barrel project in New York or California or Texas?

Why should taxpayers in Idaho or any state be contributing to a project like Lower Teton? Should you close your eyes because it has the word "irrigation" written on it?

Another argument for Lower Teton is that it provides upstream storage. But you can provide 75 per cent as much storage for an estimated \$2 million by simply diverting spring runoff water into the ground water system under the Snake River Plain.

And part of Lower Teton's storage is water stolen from American Falls reservoir. Hence the necessity for 27 pumps — to pump water out of the ground and send it down the river below the dam to make up for that theft.

So you're spending \$70 million to build a project to store water that's already being stored, to irrigate 80,000 acres that doesn't need more water, to buy \$140,000 a year worth of flood protection.

The real reason for Lower Teton is a time-honored system of pork barrel politics.



A \$180-million, 600-megawatt power plant will occupy this productive Nebraska farm land if the Public Power Review Board authorizes the project. The ash pit to accommodate some 700 tons of ash per day will occupy one square mile on land centered around the farmstead in the foreground. The plant will be located near the farmstead at right, center. The present air quality is demonstrated in this aerial photo.

Reprinted from the NORTH PLATTE TELEGRAPH, June 9, 1972.

... his farm will disappear

SUTHERLAND — Tom McNeil considers the choice of Sutherland Reservoir as the site for a multi-million dollar electrical generating plant one of the worst blows he and his family have ever suffered.

"They're going to take everything . . . home, buildings, land."

Nebraska Public Power District will need to buy McNeil's 360-acre dairy operation and another 1,240 acres — a total of two and a half square miles — to build the huge, coal-fueled power plant on the south edge of the reservoir. It will wipe out the operation he and his wife have worked to build since about 1958, he says.

McNeil, who grew up and went to school at North Platte, says he has no idea what he is going to do when forced off his land. "All I can hope for is a good settlement (with NPPD) . . . so I can start up somewhere else," he says.

But you can't just go out and buy a dairy operation like his in a few months, he says after noting that a power district representative told him he will probably have to give up his land early next year.

"You don't feel like doing a thing, fixing a fence or painting a barn when you know it's not yours," he says.

But McNeil, convinced that all the facts about the effect of the power plant on the environment are not being told, says his being forced off his land may be a hidden blessing: "I can't help but think that in five or 10 years a lot of people are going to be sorry it was ever built."

He says one of the hardest things facing him since learning that the power plant will take all his land is explaining to his wife and five young children what they are going to do when their farm home is gone.

The blow to McNeil was unexpected, he says. When the NPPD man came to him last week and said the power district would need his land for the plant, McNeil thought he would have to give up a few acres close to the reservoir. Then he was told the district would need all his land, he says, and it was hard to understand and accept.

Now he is thinking about how he can make sure he gets a fair price for his land and the work he has put into it to build it into a Grade A dairy operation of more than 80 cows. He hopes the settlement with NPPD will be enough to make up for the years of work, he says.

Western..... Roundup

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Friday, Aug. 18, 1972

Plan Suggested

Dr. Phillip Lewis, one of the nation's foremost land planners, told a meeting of Montana officials that the state must prepare for the impact of the development of fuel and energy resources, and the impact of tourist and recreational development.

Lewis proposed to state officials, representatives of industry, and educators that they use specialized teams to plan for growth. Such teams would inventory the resources, establish carry capacities for humans in certain areas, investigate optimum environmental conditions required for living, working and playing, weigh environmental factors and draw up plans for development, and communicate all plans to the public.

"It is hard to put a value judgment on how to best utilize the pattern of resources in a state," Lewis told them. For that reason, he advised them to bring together a broad range of officials with specialized knowledge to consider all options for land use.

Mining Discussed

Ernie Preate, Jr., one of the nation's legal authorities on strip mine legislation, spent a week in Montana and Wyoming viewing mining areas. Preate, who is an assistant district attorney at Scranton, Pennsylvania, helped to write that state's new, tough, strip mining legislation. He has since advised both the House and Senate Interior Committees on national strip mining bills. He was also invited to speak to the Republican Platform Committee on a plank on strip mining policy.

While in the western states, Preate talked to mining engineers, mine operators and geologists concerning problems. He also met with Wyoming legislators and environmentalists on possible changes in Wyoming's strip mining act.

Time Needed

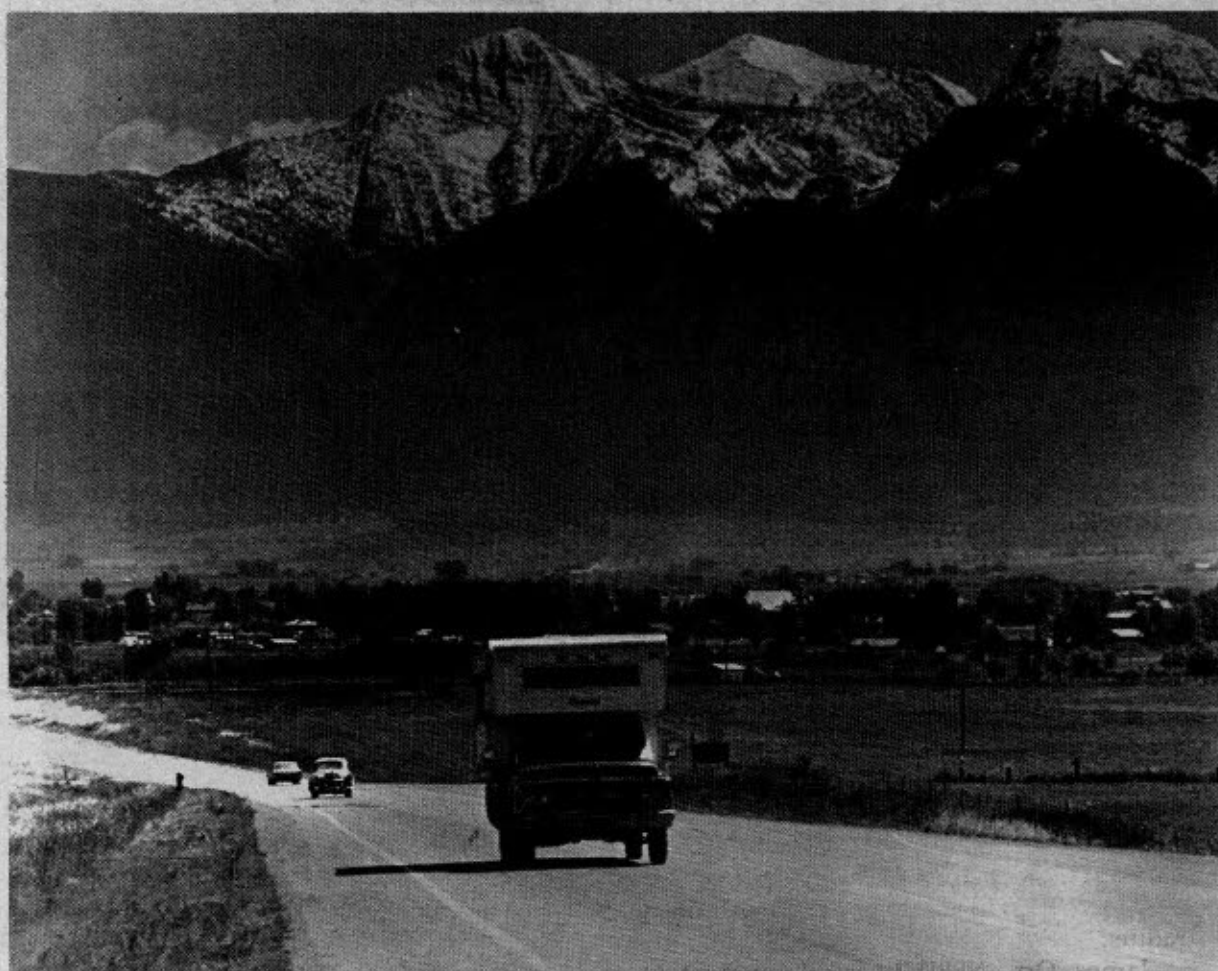
Do you have your mind set on catching a salmon? If you do, be sure you have the patience of Job and lots of spare time on your hands. If you lack these two main ingredients to successful salmon angling, your best bet is to take up gardening instead of salmon fishing.

This is the advice from Reino Koski of the Oregon Game Commission, who said that for each salmon caught, anglers must keep their lures in the water from 10 to 45 hours, depending on the area fished. Of course, some anglers are lucky and may boat a salmon within minutes while others may fish for a week or more before Mr. Salmon decides to bite.

Although more salmon are taken from the Columbia than any other Oregon river, anglers must also spend more time at it if they expect to be successful. The average on this great fishing river from March through September is 45 hours of effort for each salmon brought to creel. The 25-year average on the Willamette is 39 hours per fish although in the past five years anglers have been doing a little better, putting in only 33 hours per salmon caught.

On the lower Rogue the time required to catch a salmon is almost 37 hours of effort for each salmon boated. The average here covers the popular spring chinook sport fishery as well as for the fall races.

If you want to make a quick catch, your best chance is in the offshore salmon fishery where the average over the years is about 10 hours of angling effort for each salmon landed. In the past three or four years this average has dropped to about 6 hours per salmon caught.



A visiting professor at the University of Montana Forestry School told state officials that a planning approach to state development can alleviate problems. Dr. Phillip Lewis, University of Wisconsin at Madison and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, says Montana lies in an exceptionally scenic corridor of the U.S. Montana's beautiful valleys already suffer from smoke and haze problems but further industrialization can only make the situation worse. This scenic drive is U.S. 93, approaching Flathead Lake from the south. The Mission Mountains loom in the background.

Recycling, Planning Recommended

A presidential advisory committee on the environment has recommended a major effort to deal with mounting solid waste problems and to conserve vital natural resources, the Wildlife Management Institute reports.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality, in its annual report to President Nixon, proposed that the country implement a national policy of maximum resource recovery, recycling, and reuse. The report urged consideration of a number of changes in tax laws, freight rates, and government purchasing policies to make recycled or reprocessed materials economically attractive.

In dealing with land-use problems, the report stated, "Of all the factors that determine the quality of our environment, the most fundamental is the use we make of our land." It urged the creation of regional bodies with authority to plan and control those facets of land-use transcending local boundaries, such as transportation, pollution abatement, low-cost housing, and open space.

The Committee stated that a national policy of population control should be developed and adopted now. It suggested that a thorough public debate of population problems be aired.

On cost-benefit analyses, which govern to a large extent whether taxpayer financed projects such as dams and stream channelization are undertaken, the Committee said, "Practical cost benefit procedures would force consideration of the fact that environmental costs will depend upon two vitally important variables: the degree of purity required, and the amount of time that can safely be made available, within which to reach fixed standards . . ."

The Committee urged that federal aid for recreation and environmental education be increased. Unfortunately, instead of recommending that existing urban recreation programs be strengthened, the Committee urged that Land and Water Conservation Fund money be diverted to inner-city recreation programs for which it was never intended. Such action would seriously cripple the already inadequate resource-related re-

creation projects. Copies of the report are available for \$1.25 each from the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

Trial Is Set

A defense attorney for three men accused of killing 62 eagles in Colorado says Congress has no authority to pass a law protecting the big birds. Vasco G. Seavy, Jr., says only the states have authority to pass laws to protect wildlife, and therefore a national law is unconstitutional. The attorney has petitioned the U. S. District Court in Denver to dismiss the case. The case is set for trial on August 28.

State Not Spared

Dr. Peter F. Mason, associate professor of geography at the University of California at Santa Barbara, says Idaho has the potential in the 1970's to become a part of the California-Colorado urbanization progression.

Mason, a visiting professor at the University of Idaho, says that even the severe climate and relative isolation will not spare the state from urban transition.

Birds Killed

LINCOLN, Nebr. — An outbreak of trichomoniasis, an infectious bird disease, has struck mourning doves in the Lincoln area recently, report Game and Parks Commission wildlife biologists.

Caused by a protozoan parasite, the disease is one of nature's population-regulating mechanisms and appears to be linked to high concentrations of birds, according to biologists. It cannot be contracted by humans.

Trichomoniasis infects the upper digestive tract. It causes a growth in the throat which eventually blocks the esophagus, preventing the bird from swallowing. Healthy birds pick up the disease from contaminated food

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Photo by Marc Gaede



Elders of the Hopi Tribe inspect waste coal in a former dry wash on Black Mesa in Arizona. A Senate Interior report says the Southwest represents a classic case of missed opportunities and conflicting priorities.

Hard-hitting Report Issued

The burgeoning development of huge coal-burning power plants in the Four Corners area of the Southwest, one of the last remaining "clean air" regions in the country, represents a classic case of missed opportunities and conflicting priorities, the Senate Interior Committee has reported.

The assertion was made in a report presented to the Senate by Committee Chairman Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash.

The report, which was based on six days of intensive hearings — five in the Southwest and one in Washington — makes several recommendations toward meeting the most pressing Southwestern energy needs while protecting the desert region's fragile environment.

Specifically, the committee calls upon the Federal government, which has been directly connected or an actual participant in much of the plant development, to sharply limit future "irretrievable commitments of resources."

"The existing and proposed power plants are and will be major sources of manmade air pollution in the Southwest," the report says. "Emissions of existing power plants have measurably degraded air quality in the region. Even with employment of the best pollution control technology, development of proposed additional plants probably will result in further degradation."

Two coal-burning plants producing 3,742 megawatts are now generating power for the "Four Corners" region — where Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah meet at a common point. The largest plant, known as Four Corners, is located near Farmington, N. M., and another is located near Mohave, Nev.

Under construction are plants at San Juan, N.M., Navajo, Ariz., and Huntington Canyon, Utah. A sixth massive plant is proposed at Kaiparowits Plateau, Utah. Eventually, the generating stations may provide 12,000 megawatts of power, enough for nine million people.

The detailed report was presented as a "case study" as part of the National Fuels and Energy Policy Study being conducted by the Senate Interior Committee authorized by Senate Resolution 45, which directs the committee to conduct — in cooperation with other committees — a wide-range study of national energy needs and resources.

Environmentalists and citizen groups in the Southwest have been greatly concerned about a wide range of environmental and social problems resulting from power production: substantial air pollution, use of scarce water

supplies, strip mining (including a mine on Black Mesa, considered sacred by Hopi Indian traditionalists), visual pollution resulting from a wide array of service roads, coal-haul railroads, slurry pipelines, and high-voltage transmission lines.

And the larger, underlying issue has been whether a heretofore unspoiled and scenic region should be used as a "utility backyard" for rapidly growing metropolitan areas ranging from Los Angeles to El Paso.

The committee report includes these recommendations:

- "Irretrievable commitments of resources should be limited to the minimum necessary to meet the regional power requirements. Premature commitments should be avoided..."

- Legislation to establish a Federally-assisted land use planning program "on a national basis should be enacted to help make... long term resource management and development decisions."

- Power plant siting legislation should be adopted.

- The Interior Secretary should develop a general, region-wide study of the long-range economic and environmental impact of Federal decisions concerning the Southwest power grid.

- The National Environmental Policy Act, which Jackson authored, should be followed much more vigorously by the Federal agencies involved.

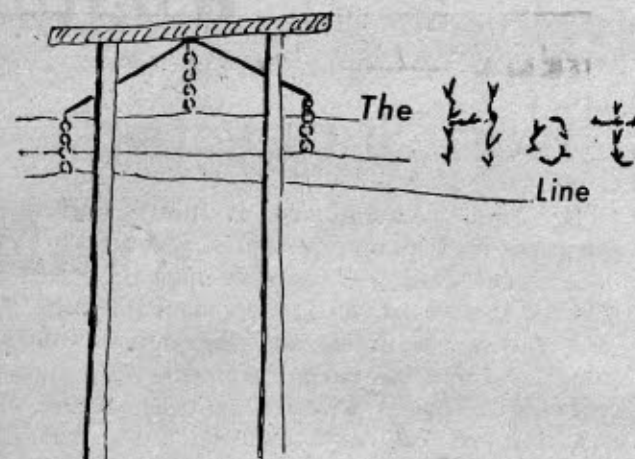
Coal Is Now Going Long Way

ST. PAUL — Burlington Northern Inc. today reported it is making unit train deliveries of low-sulfur Montana coal 1,730 miles to the Tennessee Valley Authority — the longest unit coal train operation in the nation — and will haul 42.5 million tons of Wyoming coal to the first fossil fuel power plant in Texas.

Robert W. Downing, president, said the railroad will operate three unit trains of 110 cars weekly between the AMAX Coal Co. mine near Gillette, Wyo., and a new generating plant the Southwestern Electric Power Company is building at Avinger, Tex. Each train will carry 11,000 tons.

The railroad currently operates 40 unit trains weekly between mines in Montana and Wyoming to power stations in Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana.

The 1,483 mile run to Texas, which will commence in 1976, will be longer than any other unit coal train haul in the nation.



This switch

turns on

POLLUTION



In a power plant
somewhere

*Saving electricity saves our
ENVIRONMENT*

U. MAINE EFFLUENT SOCIETY

Electricity stickers designed to "remind industries & people to cut down on their electricity usage." Available from the Effluent Society, Memorial Union, U. Maine, Orano 04473. (Each one costs them \$.03548 and postage (no profit) so include a contribution!)

General Motors is installing a new system in the Chevrolet manufacturing plant at Parma, Ohio, to control sulfur dioxide and particulate emissions from burning coal. The system, developed by GM, is reported to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by more than 90 per cent.

Core drilling and testing of coal is proceeding on some 70,000 acres of leased land in Damson County, Montana. Some of the companies who hold leases include U. S. Steel and Kerr-McGee. Damson County is north of the Powder River Basin where huge deposits of strippable coal are known to exist.

Glenn T. Seaborg, former chairman of the AEC and a Nobel Peace Prize winning chemist, says the AEC should be renamed the U. S. Energy Agency. Seaborg also says the U. S. must have an energy policy.

Presently, however, Burlington Northern is operating four 51-car special trains 1,732 miles from Colstrip, Mont., to the Tennessee Valley Authority plant at New Johnsonville, Tenn. This is a 20,000-ton test by TVA, for which delivery will be completed within the week.

"The new shipments to Tennessee mark the first time that Montana coal has moved south of the Ohio River. We view this as additional evidence that the market for low-pollutant western coal will be an expanding one for decades," Downing said.

"The SWEPCO decision to build a coal-powered station is an even more important indicator, because Texas power companies traditionally have depended on oil and natural gas," he added. "We believe this is only the first of a number of major long-term contracts for low-sulfur western coal by electric power companies in Texas and many other states that are not currently using this coal."

THE WILD WORLD

by Verne Huser

The objections to the Teton Dam Project are legion. But one I have rarely heard from anyone else is my own major objection: the project will encourage further rape of the land by eastern Idaho farmers who are presently mining the land in the most exploitive manner.

The Tragedy of the Commons once again comes to mind: the Snake River is a common stream that belongs to all of us, but it will be further polluted by silt, fertilizers and pesticides for the profit of those farmers who irrigate through the Teton Dam Project. The land — while it may be in private ownership — is still part of the American land mass, and no landowner should have the right to destroy that land as eastern Idaho farmers are now destroying it.

They farm hilly land without terracing it or making any attempt to contour plow it or strip crop it. The result is two-fold: in the fall when the crops are in or when the land is plowed for winter wheat, vast dust storms blacken the skies and carry top soil all the way to Jackson Hole, Wyoming — right over the Teton Range, and the spring snow melt causes massive erosion of the soil as tons of silt and pesticide residue and fertilizer are washed away to muddy and poison the mighty Snake River.

I have floated the Snake between Swan Valley and Ririe and seen waterfalls of mud cascading into the muddy Snake. And I have driven from Jackson Hole to Idaho Falls and seen field after field gullied and leached of its natural nutrients. The farmers plow up and down hills, encouraging the erosion, and merely lay on the commercial fertilizers in ever-heavier doses each year.

What do they grow? Grain and potatoes, both of which they sell at U.S. Government parity prices. And you no doubt have heard of the great potato burns of the past couple of winters when the farmers have burned tens of tons of potatoes to raise the market price — at our expense.

The Teton Dam Project will only put more hilly land under cultivation and bring about further pollution of the Snake as its usually clear-flowing tributary turns muddy. And as I have pointed out in an earlier discussion, all lakes are in the process of dying, whereas rivers are living, growing, changing features of the land. When we turn rivers into lakes, we are killing the streams that are the life blood of the nation.

You may say "But we need the food that will be produced on these new lands." And I say what of the burned potatoes? We have too many people already; if we grow food for more, we will continue to have more children without realizing that we are destroying the earth.

The Reinows have a chapter in their book *Moment in the Sun* called "Stoking Stomachs" which suggests that the more people we feed, the more people we will have to feed. It's the same way with timber cutting: if we keep cutting timber at an increased rate on the national forests, we will never learn to curb our appetite for wood and paper and turn to alternate sources of building material and use the now-wasted slash. And then someday we'll awake to find our forests gone: worthless for watershed or wildlife, for range or recreation.

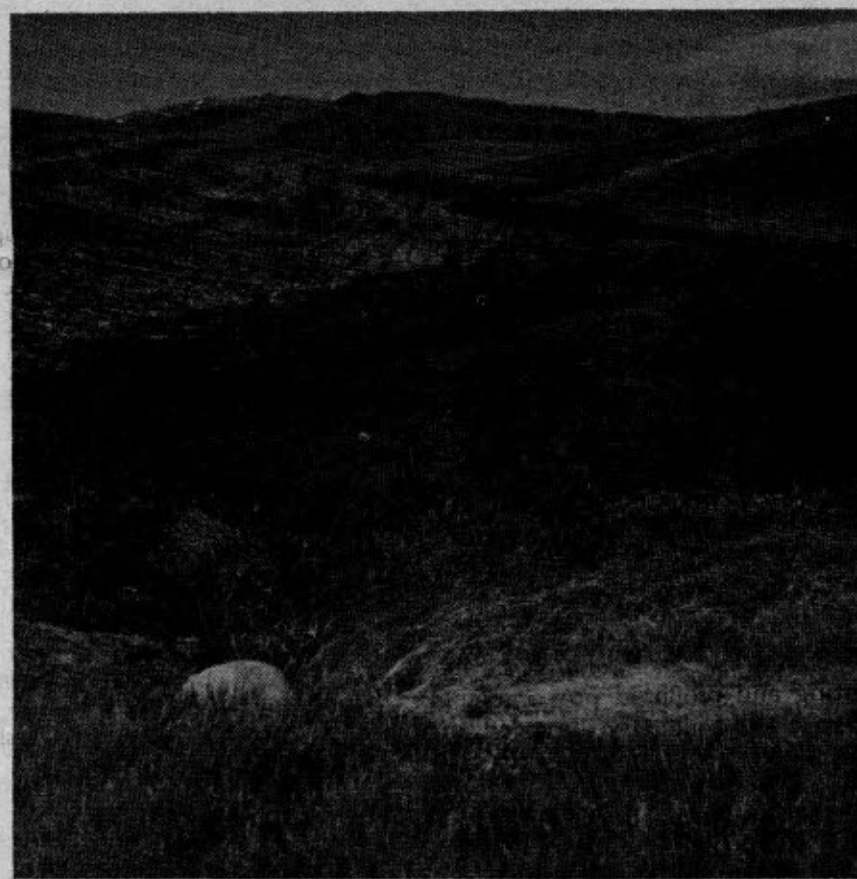
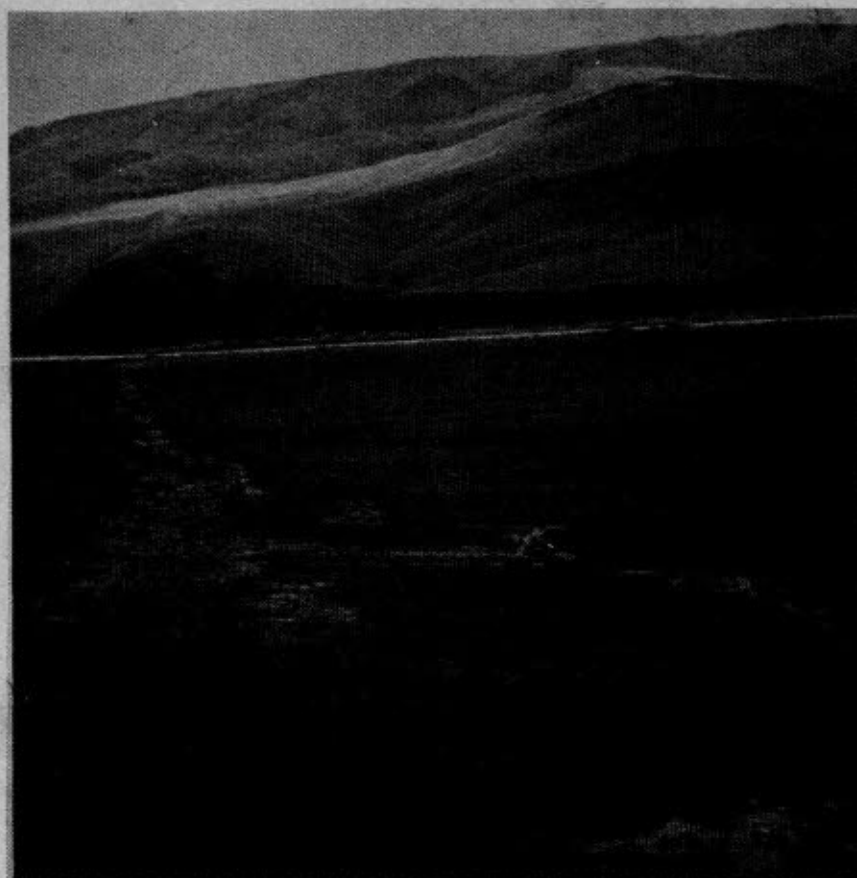
The Teton Dam Project will benefit a few farmers and make a few Republican politicians happy (or at least save them some embarrassment). But it will further destroy the quality of hunting and fishing in eastern Idaho, further pollute the Snake River, further destroy more of the land resources of the nation, and further the dam-building tendencies of the Bureau of Reclamation, who should be busy up-grading the quality of our streams by building sewage-disposal plants to clean up our rivers rather than more irrigation projects that poison and muddy them.

It is indeed a muddy issue, a political pork-barrel and environmental boondoggle that has totally circumvented the National Environmental Policy Act.

Erosion!

High Country News-13
Friday, Aug. 18, 1972

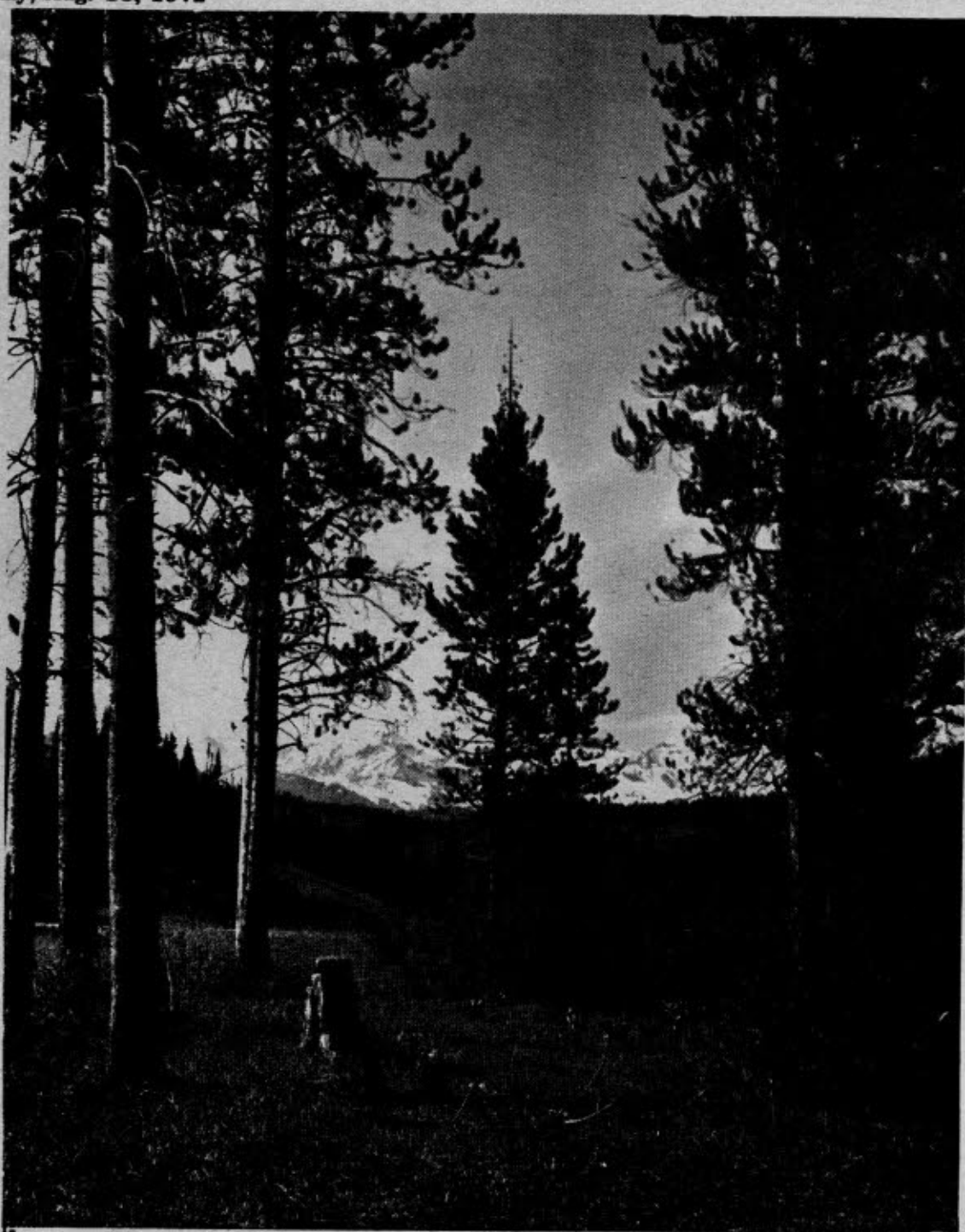
Erosion of silt from the farmed hills of eastern Idaho adds to the sediment load of the Snake River. The Teton Dam project will result in more such erosion and sedimentation.



Photos by Verne Huser



14-High Country News
Friday, Aug. 18, 1972



Here, where all nature seems to rest,
There's beauty in each thing He made
To form a citadel of peace...
This small secluded forest glade.

NADINE BROTHERS LYBARGER: Forest Glade

Reprinted from THE IDAHO STATESMAN, May 28, 1972.

Mama Meets the Energy Crisis

by Betty Penson, Statesman Woman's Editor

WHAT IS the oil story?

"In Treasure Valley, 9.9 million gallons of heating oil are stored by the major oil companies," estimates Brock O'Leary, president of Fuel West, Boise. "In addition area dealers have as much as 2½ million gallons stored."

There have been times when some companies have gone to the Columbia River to haul off the barges into Boise, he said, "But that is the nearest to an oil shortage Boise has ever had."

O'Leary told Pat Wynn of The Statesman he believes that supplies are adequate so Boise should be secure from fuel or power shortage for the next five years.

As a precautionary measure, O'Leary suggested homeowners could use larger storage tanks. Most homes have 280-gallon tanks, but a 1,000-gallon tank filled in the summer could hold a year's supply and offer a margin of safety during winter months when the demand for oil increases.

However, O'Leary warned that, in case of a shortage, if oil dealers were called on now to supply present gas and electric power users in addition to their own customers, they couldn't do it.

While there is no shortage of petroleum at the wellheads of the world, oil is the only commodity on which the U.S. restricts imports for reasons of national security... to prevent dependence on foreign countries.

So far, we import from the Middle East only a small percentage of the oil we consume. But the board chairman of Humble

Oil predicts that by 1985 the U.S. will be dependent on "the always unpredictable Middle East" for more than 60 per cent. Even if large supplies from Alaska filter down to us by 1975, he still predicts a gap.

WHAT ABOUT natural gas?

No shortage, says Albert W. Smith, Intermountain Gas Company vice president. He termed the Pacific Northwest supply of natural gas as one of the best in the nation.

Smith told Statesman reported Sylvia Wood his company has an adequate supply under long term contract "to serve all the customers we can add for the next 10 years... and before then we will enter into other contracts to buy more."

He said natural gas liquefies at a very low temperature (260 degrees below zero) and can be stored and shipped under refrigeration to be available for peak winter demands.

The Jackson Prairie Underground Project near Seattle can store more than 12 billion cubic feet of gas, he said, and Intermountain Gas has contracted for 19 million cubic feet per day... for a maximum of 28 days... through next winter's heating season.

There is plenty of natural gas in North America, he said, to supply the needs of the country for many years to come (the U.S. Geological Survey estimates 2,000 trillion cubic feet "waiting to be discovered") but development has been slowed down because of the "artificially low price ceiling imposed on producers." Exploration for new fields is costly, he pointed out, and producers can't pay bills if they don't make a profit.

Thoughts

from the

Distaff Corner

By Norma R. Hentges

"What did we stop here for?" questioned Peter.

"To sleep, I hope," was my answer. "It's been a long day and we are miles from any forest campground, surely we'll all survive one night."

I must admit as I looked around at the crowded campground I had my doubts. Then, again, I tried to point out that we could enjoy the conveniences; a hot shower and the use of a laundramat.

In the laundramat, I found tired women snarling at youngsters. On the table blared a radio. The water that ran into the machine was luke warm and the dryer took all the dimes I could muster just to dry one batch.

Off to the showers! What a surprise in the ladies' room. It resembled a switch board. Electric cords in all lengths and colors.

A middle-aged gal in a yellow, green and pink halter dress was shaving her legs with a pink electric razor. Next was a grey-haired grandma, washing her face and spurt-ing, "Be careful, honey, don't knock off my coffee pot." There on the edge of the sink was balanced an avocado electric perco-lator, bubbling away.

"Mom said I could use those curlers next!" Miss teen-age in the hot pants stood before the mirror with the electric curlers in her hair while her teeny-bopper sister waited impatiently for her turn.

At last an empty shower stall. Ah-h for a hot shower. To my dismay the water was now less warm than that which I had washed my clothes in.

My daughter and I were trying to un-tangle ourselves from the maze of cords and get to the outside door when a young mother with three little girls rushed in. "Susie, you girls brush your teeth first." You guessed it, all three waited their turn with the electric tooth brush.

Snugly in our sleeping bags, things around the campground had just seemed to settle down when I heard the sounds of a mini lightning storm.

"What's that noise?" asked Ruth.

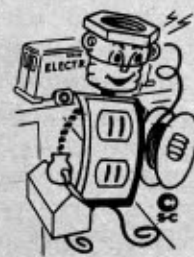
"I don't know."

"Hey, Mom, look over there," said Peter, pointing to the people parked next to us.

Plugged in at the end of an extension cord was an electric bug killer. It gave off a purplish light that must have attracted insects, for it appeared that every moth and mosquito in the area was swarming to the light. The poor unsuspecting insects would fly to the light, only to be electrocuted in the charged fence that surrounded the tubes of light.

"What do you think of that?" asked Peter.

"Son, I think I just saw the whole thing! Let's get some sleep so we can find a nice primitive campground tomorrow, one where electricity is unheard of."



On May 19 the Intermountain Gas Company president, R. D. Grimm, asked Idaho's public utilities commission to grant a rate raise, to pass along to its customers the increased cost of gas which it purchases from El Paso Gas. "Intermountain has no control over the rates it must pay the pipeline," he said.

WHAT ABOUT electric power?

This article will be continued in ensuing issues.

Environmental Eavesdropper

LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

Just think of the landowner's plight —
He's fighting a losing fight
To protect his own lands
Against government plans
To make POWER with all of its might!

* * *

The AEC has plans to bury nuclear wastes in deep holes near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The wastes would be placed in sealed containers, lowered into the holes, and covered with soil containing large amounts of salt. The containers would be retrieved periodically to see how they are holding up. The U.S. Geological Survey is in the Carlsbad area doing preliminary site selection work.

* * *

Dr. David P. Discher, associate professor of preventive medicine at the University of Washington, says, "There is no proof that man is immune from such hard pesticides as DDT, and with adverse effects now documented upon wildlife, this alone is reason enough to phase them out."

* * *

The Federal Highway Administration reports operating expenses for a 1972 standard automobile to be 13.55 cents per mile. A compact's costs are estimated to be 10.81 cents per mile and a sub-compact 9.4 cents per mile. The smaller cars also pollute less.

* * *

The State of Maryland has instituted a \$1,000 fine for the killing, transporting, processing or selling of the coyote, bobcat, porcupine, least weasel, Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel, mountain lion or black bear. The animals have been placed on the state's endangered species list.

* * *

A study by the University of California's International Population and Urban Research Center at Berkeley has linked the steep drop in birth rates to declining welfare rolls. The reduction in numbers of dependent and foster children are in turn linked to California's liberal abortion law. Nationally, the number of live births per 1,000 women declined by six per cent between 1970 and 1971. California recorded a drop of 11.6 per cent in the same period.

* * *

Michigan's House of Representatives has voted to repeal a 37-year-old bounty on coyotes. Figures show about \$2 million has been paid out in bounties without reducing the coyote population. The bounty is \$20 for females and \$15 for males. The State Senate is not expected to go along on the repeal.

* * *

Bicycles may outsell automobiles in 1973. Sales of 10.5 million bikes this year roughly equals auto sales and the boom is expected to continue. Retail sales this year amount to about \$500 million according to the Bicycle Manufacturers Association.

* * *

Fly ash from power plant stacks is being used as an extender in concrete making. American Metal Climax developed the process.



Like John Vogelin's ranch, many more in Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota will be taken for "the good of society." Even though ranchers own the surface rights to their land, they don't own the minerals beneath the surface. Those belong to the federal government, and, when leased, belong to the leasor. At the present time, landowners have no control over the destiny of their lands. State and federal strip mining acts should provide some protection to the landowner.

Book Review

Fire on the Mountain

By Edward Abbey

Review by Myra Connell

Fire on the Mountain is a thought provoking book. It could have been sub-titled *The Case of Vogelin vs. the U.S. Government*.

When the military establishment of the U.S. decided that John Vogelin's ranch was a necessary addition to the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico the question of individual rights as opposed to needs or rights of the whole society came into sharp focus.

Edward Abbey, author of *The Brave Cowboy* and *Desert Solitaire*, tells the story, based on fact, in a vivid and authentic way. One lives and experiences trial by fire along with seventy-year-old John Vogelin, his twelve-year-old grandson, Billy Starr, and their friend Lee Mackie.

In Vogelin's hierarchy of values his own life style and his right to liberty of choice were above duty to a dictatorial government, or even to life itself. He was willing to die in defense of his principles. Though merely angered by the senseless harrassments by agents of the government such as cutting of his ranch fences and killing of a favorite horse by carousing soldiers, he was ready to fight to the death when the government moved to take away his ranch and home.

There are many ways to read *Fire on the Mountain*.

One may read for the relaxation that a good fast-moving story provides. There is excitement and adventure enough for even those who still cherish a love affair with the "Old Wild West."

The book may also please those who read for enjoyment of the style (not for Abbey the shop-worn cliché!). There is stimulation in such originality of expression as "delirious blue sky", "seriously thirsty", "a unanimous saddle-sore", "magpies in academic black and white, squawked and squawled like quarreling theologians", a wren "singing her trickling-water song", "tired as a branded calf", (a rattlesnake) "a rope of poison". To portray with such clarity is sure evidence that the author's reliance is on original sources. He gives us the pictures in minutest detail, from chewing the end of a piece of timothy grass to ripping a hole in a coat climbing through a barbed wire fence. You feel sure that he has been there.

Another reader may ponder the deeper philosophical meanings such as the conflicts (existing ever since humans wondered about the man in the next cave), between the group and its desires on the one hand, and the lib-

erty of the individual, on the other.

The psychologist will note the unique relationship between the boy and his grandfather, compounded of mutual respect and love; also the fragile and nebulous hero-worship of the boy for the typical "western" man, Lee Mackie. Interwoven with the tragic incidents, the careful reader will note and enjoy the unquenchable humor that is as western as sourdough pancakes.

Environmentalists will be aware that Vogelin managed his ranch in harmony with natural forces and operated on a live and let live basis with the native creatures. He was a conservationist though he did not know the word.

Subtle symbolisms abound, the mark of truly artistic work, whether in literature, painting, or other art form. There is the hot weather, symbolic of the government's "putting the heat on" the old man, in order to get possession of the ranch, and the pitchers of ice-water paralleling the icy reception which John Vogelin gave to the ambassadors of the Pentagon. The mirages seen in the distance from the ranch house are mirages of the ideals of justice and humanity. The scream of the lion a foreboding of impending tragedy.

The reader is aware of others, more obscure — the owl, the horse racing; the scorpion; these intrigue the mind but are difficult to relate to the realities, though in the case of the owl, its symbolic meaning is finally spelled out.

This story rings true for one who has ever felt rebellion in his heart as well as for him who "roos for the underdog". Most will agree that it is excellent reading for either recreation or stimulation of thought.

Developers' Heaven

Wyoming, like other western states, has a problem with land developers. They come in, buy up land, subdivide and then offer it for sale. But Wyoming is one of the few states that has no law to regulate such developers.

Wyoming Agriculture Commissioner, who is also Real Estate Commissioner, says the state is "in desperate need" of legislation to regulate development of subdivisions. The only control is now vested in county government through zoning authority. However, most counties in Wyoming still do not have county-wide zoning.

16-High Country News
Friday, Aug. 18, 1972

Independence Personified

Photo by South Dakota Travel Division

Buffalo, South Dakota — Harding County is a big county where they do things in a big way. A couple of ranchers in this northwest corner of the state threw a party and invited everyone. Everyone came.

The occasion was the annual branding bee of the 30,000-acre Hackamore Ranch owned by Guy Doll and Harry Blair.

Located on the banks of the Grand River north of the beautiful Slim Buttes area, the Hackamore's nearest neighbor is five miles away. But on June 16 every rancher from miles around, as well as a lot of city folks, were there for the fun, excitement, good food, and Doll and Blair hospitality.

The fellow who prepared 250 pounds of beef looked as though he'd stepped out of "Gunsmoke" for the occasion. Weatherbeaten Claude Olson in his cowboy boots and well-worn Western clothes is a Hackamore neighbor who owns a 28,000-acre spread himself. No amateur chef, Olson has cooked for thousands of people at barbecues during the past 25 years.

His recipe goes something like this: Take 250 pounds of boned beef, season with five pounds of salt, half a pound of pepper and two ounces of celery salt; wrap in cheese cloth, foil, then place in sacks; lay sacks on coals in a pit three feet wide and 20 feet long; seal the pit as rapidly as possible. Eight hours later, open the cavern and prepare for a melt-in-your-mouth piece of beef.

Olson says there's nothing to it. The secret is in sealing the pit promptly and allowing a minimum of eight hours for cooking. Any cooking time after that doesn't count for the meat stays at the eight-hour peak of tenderness.

If the recipe seems a little overwhelming to the ordinary cook, it may be possible to get Olson to come lend a hand. He has barbecued buffalo, pork, lamb or beef in at least 17 western states. Charges for his services? None. He figures that everyone should do something for the public. This is his "Thing."

"You see," says the 70-year-old Olson, "I'm of the opinion that a person hadn't oughta just prostitute the world while he's here; he oughta do something for the benefit of the public. The world should be better for him having lived in it."

To prove the point, Olson does not take any government payments or subsidies of any kind, including Social Security.

"I'd like to prove that it is possible to live your natural lifetime without being subsidized by the taxpayers," he said.

Olson's parents homesteaded in Harding County and he has lived there all of his life. His mother taught him to read and write.

"When the country settled up and they built sod school houses, I'm getting to be a pretty good sized boy," he said. "I got along pretty well through the third grade; then the teacher took my Bull Durham away from me and I quit school," Olson laughed.

This Harding County rancher's lack of formal education has not been a handicap. He has been president of 19 state and local organizations and has spoken to civic groups in every state in the union except the New England states, trying to sell the public on the idea that the cattle business is a "good and honorable business."

Olson explains that he "sorta fell into this speaking job by shooting my mouth off." He bills himself as Claude E. Olson, DD. E. The "DD. E." stands for Degree of Direct Experience, awarded by the University of Life.

One of the honors this rancher prizes most is the George Washington Medal of Honor received in 1953 at Valley Forge, given in recognition of his efforts in holding to freedom and promoting the American way of life. Part of this resulted from his creation of the Olson Livestock Foundation which helps establish young people in the livestock business, requiring that they earn their own way and in turn help others.

Olson brushes off his barbecuing talents. "If a fellow with a third grade education can do it, anyone can," he says. Then he adds, that one of his neighbors said "There might



Claude E. Olson, 70-year-old South Dakota rancher, at the Hackamore Ranch branding bee. Ranchers of the high plains of North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming are in danger of losing their way of life. The impact of huge, coal-burning, fossil-fuel plants; vast strip mines, and other industrial development will bring changes comparable to those brought about when the buffalo were eliminated and the Indians corralled on reservations. Only careful, comprehensive planning on a regional basis will avert some disastrous developments.

be something Claude Olson can't do, but there ain't nothing he won't tackle."

Olson is typical of Harding County where most things, including scenery, are on a bigger-than-life scale, where ranchers like Doll

and Blair think nothing of inviting "everyone" to a branding bee, and where Guy Doll's wife, Sylvia, thinks nothing of preparing the "trimmings" for the barbecue and serving everyone who shows up.

Letters to the editor...

all of the political power.

Still we are told if this coal development is not allowed to happen that the lights will go out. I wonder.

Carolyn Alderson
Birney, Montana

Editor's note: The foregoing letter appeared in the Billings Gazette and is reprinted here to illustrate the feelings of at least one ranch family in southeastern Montana. Birney is a small ranch community along the Tongue River within the area of great coal deposits.

The following letter also illustrates the sincere and deep feeling of ranch families for their way of life. Project Wagon Wheel by El Paso Natural Gas Co. contemplates the firing of five 100-kiloton nuclear devices deep underground near Boulder. The test shot would be a forerunner to hundreds more within the area. The 13,000 wells referred to by Miss Bousman would be spread over an area encompassing parts of Colorado and Utah as well as Wyoming.

* * *

Editor:

The residents of Sublette County, Wyoming refuse to have a price tag put on their way of life. This beautiful area has been relatively free of pollution and crime. Many residents feel the Wagon Wheel Project and possible field development will unavoidably change this.

El Paso's project director, Dr. Phillip Randolph, has publicly stated that their studies have been inaccurate, premature, and embarrassing but in turn wonders why El Paso cannot win public support and trust, i.e. the Fisser report which was supposedly an ecological study and the Dames & Moore Report on Structural Response. There has been no socio-economic study and according to Dr. Randolph, El Paso does not plan to finance one in the future. There seems to be many environmental risks involved with this pro-

ject. El Paso and the AEC seem to be interested in financing a thorough environmental study only after tremendous pressure has been exerted by concerned citizens across the country. Is this responsible action on the part of El Paso and the AEC?

As a resident of Boulder, which is 10 miles from the test site, it is my view that El Paso and the AEC are trying to panic the public into believing there is an "immediate" energy crisis while at the same time it is evident that vast amounts of natural gas and other energy resources are wasted each day. In short, El Paso plans to come into a small populated area and go ahead with an ominous nuclear experiment, which even if highly successful after total field development of 13,000 wells, will contribute only about 4% to the total known energy reserves of the nation.

I ask if democracy really works anymore. Are our politicians so calloused that they no longer care about the individual and his freedom to live his life as he chooses? Does industry have the right to move into an area just because the population is small, even when the majority of people in Sublette County have signed petitions opposing Project Wagon Wheel? Its time for every person in this nation to realize that the value of life is more important than the "almighty dollar."

El Paso will have more to deal with than "mild" opposition to Project Wagon Wheel. As a resident of our county recently said, in effect, "The emotions on the part of Sublette County residents are a way of expressing a very deep feeling we have that can't be put in scientific terms or objections." Money and natural gas cannot replace our present way of life. El Paso and the AEC will be surprised to find out just how much we do care about our land, our country, and the future safety and happiness of our children.

Sincerely,
Miss Susie Bousman
Boulder, Wyoming