The Environmental Bi-Weekly

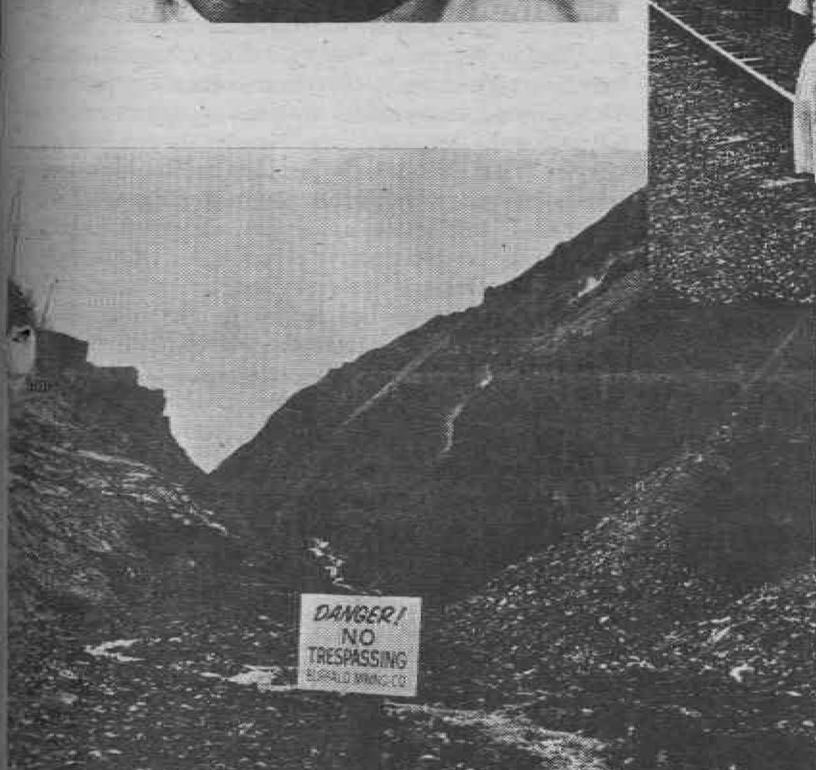
35¢

High Country News

Vol. 7 No. 19 Friday, September 26, 1975

Western uranium, coal dim Eastern hopes

TVA moves West for fuel



Photos from VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS, which is reviewed on page 14. Credits (clockwise from upper left) miner by Phil Primack, woman in white dress by Earl Dotter, fiddler by Kris Mendenhall, profile of woman by Jim Marshall, and strip mine by Don Stillman.

by Marjane Ambler

Forty-two years ago the Tennessee Valley Authority was created as a grand experiment in populist government. It was the first significant attempt at public planning on a regional scale and the only instance when one agency was given the power to develop all the resources of a region. Most of all, it was designed to raise the social and economic well-being of the people of the Tennessee Valley by controlling the river's flooding, creating jobs, and, in addition, providing cheap power.

Today, TVA's power program alone absorbs close to all of its $5.5 billion in assets, according to **Forbes Magazine.** And the economic and social well-being of the people of the Tennessee Valley seems to be threatened as much by TVA itself as by any other force.

The economy of the valley has been largely dependent upon coal mining. Part of the reason the people of the valley now feel threatened is that TVA, the largest coal buyer in the country, is turning its eyes west for both coal and uranium to fuel its generating plants. Nuclear power plant construction will provide 90% of the new generating capacity that TVA is adding. "This is the largest commitment in the nation to nuclear power by a single utility," boasts the TVA "Annual Report." Four nuclear plants are being constructed by TVA in its region, and more are on the drawing board.

TVA's activity in the West involves uranium more than coal at this time. Wyoming and New Mexico hold 85% of the nation's uranium reserves. TVA has interests in uranium exploration and mining in those two states as well as in Utah, South Dakota, Texas, and, in past years, in Montana and Colorado, according to Gary Harmon, administrator of the TVA field office in Casper, Wyo. The Casper office is headquarters for western TVA activity in uranium.

Some coal contracts are also channeled through the Casper office. The agency now has contracts for coal exploration in at least Colorado and Wyoming.

WHY WEST?

To understand why TVA has chosen to move west in its search for resources, one has to look at both the legislative mandate given to the agency at its creation in 1933 and at the current energy situation in 1975, as interpreted by TVA.

The Tennessee Valley Authority Act was enacted to provide flood control of the Tennessee Valley, to provide for reforestation, agricultural and industrial development, and for the proper use of marginal lands in the valley, according to the preface of the act.

As TVA built dams to stop the flooding, the legislators in 1933 knew that cheap hydroelectric power could be another service of the new agency to forward the economic development of the depressed area. So a section of the act authorized TVA to sell the surplus power not used in its own operations. Furthermore, due to the problems of the valley at that time, TVA was instructed to "promote and encourage the fullest possible use of electric light and power." (TVA Act, Section 10)

TVA succeeded in selling power. Today the consumption of electricity in the valley is twice that of the rest of the nation. Four out of every ten homes are "all electric," TVA boasted in its latest annual report.

In addition to the state, county, municipal, and rural cooperatives that TVA was to serve originally, chemical and aluminum plants have come to the area to take advantage of the low rates. Alcoa, for example, was paying .521 cents per kilowatt hour while homeowners paid 1.22 cents, according to a study by the **Mountain Eagle,** a persistent TVA critic in Whitesburg, Ky. The aluminum industry is one of the highest users of electricity.

In the TVA region, 22% of the TVA electricity last year went to industry. Sixty percent went to municipalities and cooperatives, 17% to federal agencies including the

(Continued on page 4)

"The Tennessee Valley Authority is to be a corporation clothed with the power of government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise."
—Franklin D. Roosevelt

HCN Letters

CEQ PRAISE

Dear HCN:

The Council on Environmental Quality appreciates the subscription to **High Country News.** It is an excellent publication and we are pleased to know of your outstanding work in putting environmental issues before the people.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,
Russell W. Peterson, Chairman
Council on Environmental Quality

BEAVERS BOTHERSOME

Dear HCN,

I came back from pulling a beaver dam out of my irrigation headgate to find your article on the beaver. It was a valuable reminder that beavers are useful animals who do other things besides shut off my irrigating water. However I point out to you that dam builders are dam builders whether they be the beaver living on willow and aspen or the Army Corps of Engineers living on the Congressional pork barrel. A dam builder's objective is to build a dam and he rarely pays attention to the consequences of his action. The headgate beaver and the irrigation ditch beaver must have gotten some special training from Washington on dam site selection.

Enough of this; my irrigating water is shut off again this morning and I must go back to work. What is there about a concrete headgate that has such an attraction for our local beavers?

Yours against dam builders,
Charles Scott
Bates Hole, Wyo.

HORSES BELONG

Dear HCN:

Just a short comment, rebuttal, and criticism of some of the letters in the September 12th issue. I, too, love the wilderness, want to see as much of it as possible without the vestiges of civilization and pollution, and with the very best of camping practices.

However, I would take issue with the concept that horses should be banned. Horses to me are a natural part of the outdoors, perhaps being there before man but certainly with the Indians and the later trappers and certainly prior to the advent of the white man's civilization. I would not criticize the backpacker, more power to him; but the horse is also an integral part of it though, in my own view, that is not true of a mechanized machine.

What could give more pleasure than sitting on the back of a good horse in the midst of a wonderful wilderness? I am certain that many of those devoted to wilderness share my views and consider the horse more a part of that wilderness than man who intrudes upon it.

Malvin Cole, M.D.
Casper, Wyo.

SEEKS NONGAME ADVICE

Dear HCN,

I am chairman of the Citizens Nongame Advisory Committee to the California Department of Fish and Game. I believe the formation of this committee by the director of the department is a sincere effort to expand the department's objectives and programs on nongame animals. Although California already has a nongame program, probably further advanced than most states, this committee has an opportunity to move the department's activities even further toward a well balanced program that recognizes the importance of all wildlife species, and that reflects the broader public awareness of ecological values. I would like to invite you and your readers to help us by sending to me suggestions on objectives, programs, and funding for nongame.

Sincerely,
Maxine McCloskey
93 Florida Ave.
Oakland, Calif. 94610

WHEATLAND PLANT DEFENDED

Dear Editors:

As one much involved with the Missouri Basin Power Project, I would like to comment on several of the points in Bruce Hamilton's article in the **HCN** August 1 issue dealing with some of the effects the project is having on the local community.

The story at several points makes reference to the six participants in the project as the "power companies." There is a difference to which I am very sensitive between "power companies" — generally taken to mean investor-owned utility companies which exist to provide service and make a profit — and rural electric cooperative and public power systems, which provide service on a non-profit basis and are consumer-owned and controlled.

The story accurately refers to the six entities which propose to participate in the program. However, the Wyoming Municipal Electric Power Joint Power Board will be an owner-participant along with the other five and not simply a power purchaser as the story indicated.

In this connection, I should note that our engineers indicate approximately one-third of the power produced by the project will be used by Wyoming consumers, the other two-thirds in other states in the region served by the participants. I recognize that there is skepticism as to whether Wyoming consumers will require an additional 500 megawatts of baseload power to meet their 1979-84 growth. (In 1973 demand for electricity in the state of Wyoming was 978 megawatts. — eds.) Our projections — which do not reflect any extraordinary industrial-related growth — indicate that they will. In this connection, one of the participants with important member responsibilities in Wyoming, Tri-State G & T Association, has experienced load growth in recent years of approximately 11% per year; last year its increase in peak demand was 17% over the previous year. Nearly all this growth is related to additional use by existing consumers, many of which are converting their space heating needs from other fuels to electric; many users are also installing additional electric irrigation pumping. Rural electric systems in the Dakotas are experiencing the same kind of growth and, as nearly as I can tell, for similar reasons — the scarcity and dramatically increased price of natural gas and petroleum products.

The story notes the understandable fear of local people that the plant means the end of a way of life they have always known, "the introduction of industrial problems into an agrarian society." The people proposing to build

HIGH COUNTRY

By Tom Bell

(Editors' note: Tom Bell, founder and publisher of the **High Country News,** has written the following column to explain why he chose to leave Wyoming. This completes the story he began telling in the last issue. **HCN** staff members have varying feelings about religion. The column below is a personal story and does not represent a **High Country News** position.)

* * *

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast" is a profound and wise saying. Each of us lives today with the hope that tomorrow will be as good as or better than today. An animal lives by hope instinctively and innately. Thinking man does so by faith.

Each of us must have faith in something if we are to go on living with ourselves and with others. Most of us go through life with a blind faith that no matter what happens, everything will turn out all right. Few of us are really prepared for the testing of that blind faith. When reality begins to force itself into our conscious mind, we keep pushing back until one day we are overcome.

For years I worked as a zealot within the environmental (conservation) movement with absolute faith. There was no question in my mind that what I was doing was right. It was an unselfish effort that asked no reward. I was fulfilled by faith that what I did was in the service of my fellow man. My goal was a better tomorrow — without ripping off or destroying the beautiful world created for our existence.

But over the last few years the gnawing, nagging fears eroded my faith in myself. I could see that no matter how diligently I threw myself into the causes in which I believed, I was just a mere man. And man, any man, is not big enough or consecrated enough to solve the world's problems (or even a fraction of them) on his own. It was then that the reality of my situation, and of every human being, forced itself upon me. The enormity of man's problems, now and in the near future, is too much for my mind to accept with the old, blind faith I once had.

As editor of **High Country News,** I was exposed to a great variety of material. It ranged all the way from **Blueprint for Survival** and **The Limits to Growth** to the daily scanning of a dozen regional and national newspapers. I got a cram course in the environmental crises of the world, all on top of the professional education I received as a conservationist-ecologist. Frankly, it was too much. I had to put my faith in something other than myself and man's world. It was then I found meaning in the Bible.

To my surprise, I find I am not alone. People are turning to the Bible in droves. They range from such national figures as Charles Colson of former President Nixon's staff and former Iowa Sen. Harold Hughes to the lowliest people in all walks of life. Top-flight entertainers such as Pat Boone and Johnny Cash give as much of their time to the Lord as they do to their entertainment schedule. Bible study groups have become a part of the American community scene.

Last fall, **The Christian Science Monitor** ran a series on "Religious Ferment in America." Writer Frederic Hunter wrote, "For American religious thinkers, the predicament of a world confronting runaway material growth presents a basic challenge — the urgent need to reassess traditional religious values to help their country, and the world, cope with one of the great transformations of world history." He cited a Stanford Research Institute study done last year which said, "... we may be experiencing the beginning of an industrial transformation as profound in its consequences as the Industrial Revolution, and simultaneously a conceptual revolution as shaking as the Copernican Revolution." The study explained that the "conceptual revolution" demands that mankind evolve a more spiritual concept of itself if it is to cope with the growth challenge, a self image that "reinstates the transcendental, spiritual side of man, so long ignored. . ."

Dr. Harvey Cox, theologian at Harvard Divinity School, has said, "Since the industrial revolution (began) ..., the real religion of the West hasn't been Christianity at all. It's been growth, the accumulation of wealth, success, competition. The central message of Christianity has been twisted in many ways to support the values of industrial capitalism."

Dr. Jay Forrester, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was one of the pioneers in the study of the challenges of economic growth. He has said, "There is no custodian of (society's) long-term goals unless it be the religious institutions." And explains that "in religion rests the responsibility for maintaining long-term values and preventing the collapse of operating goals."

The storm flags are up. Make no mistake, the society we know is in for some rough times ahead. Faith in ourselves and in our institutions will be deeply shaken. It was this realization that finally shook me. I now find myself with a sense of peace and contentment that I have never known before. When I read Corrie Ten Boom's book, **The Hiding Place** (now made into a movie), I can see the kind of faith I will need in the years ahead. Such faith comes from reading and knowing the Bible and believing it with unquestioning (blind) faith. Once again I have an anchor in the gathering storm.

the project don't believe the plant must necessarily degrade the quality of life in the area. In central North Dakota, where Basin Electric has constructed 650 megawatts of lignite-fired generation, there exists or is under construction approximately 1,500 megawatts of coal-fired generation at three plant sites within a few miles of one another. For the most part, people in the affected communities of Stanton, Hazen and Center have not experienced a diminution of their life style, but really some enhancement of it. Children of local people there have more readily found jobs in the local community and were able to stay in the area, rather than migrate to larger population centers.

The article notes the project's requests for a variance in meeting the state's sulfur air quality regulation. The project is proposing a variance and a schedule for compliance with the state's sulfur emission standard, which is six times more stringent than the national standard. Project participants want to have an air pollution control system they can be proud of, including a sulfur scrubbing system which produces a useful chemical by-product — elemental sulfur — instead of throw-away sludge which would have to be stored in perpetuity in very large quantities. The system we are proposing to use also has the considerable advantage of being a regenerable one — i.e., one which does not require huge quantities of limestone to run it. Scrubber systems of this type are complicated chemical plants which have not been commercially demonstrated or perfected in conjunction with a coal-fired power plant. Because of this, the compliance schedule includes provision for a pilot plant to be tested first on Basin Electric's existing plant in North Dakota. With that pilot project experience, it is the project's intention to order, test and install thereafter the best kind of system we can as rapidly as we can.

I would point out, however, that our plans are for all three units to be in **full** compliance with the state standard by 1986, six years after the first MBPP unit comes into commercial operation in 1980. The "10 year variance" period mentioned in the story could be misleading in that respect.

The article quotes a landowner who sold land for the reservoir site as being told the land would be condemned if they did not sell voluntarily. People involved in the project were always cognizant of the fact that they did not have power of condemnation for lands needed for the plant and reservoir site. Local representatives of the project were always scrupulously aware of this fact and, I am assured, never would themselves have made such a representation. Your article does **not** say that project representatives told the parties involved that their lands could be condemned, but the implication is it was project people who did so. This seems unfair to me.

Sincerely,
Robert O. Marritz
Executive Director and Counsel
Missouri Basin Systems Group

The Environmental Bi-Weekly
High Country News

Published biweekly at 140 N. Seventh St., Lander, Wyo. 82520. Telephone 307-332-4877. Second class postage paid at Lander.

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Circulation Manager	Georgia Nations
Design Consultant	Jeffrey Clack

Subscription rate $10.00
Single copy rate 35¢

HCN Editorial

Utilities offer real public service

It used to be that electric utilities were appreciated for the fact that they supplied all the power anyone could want at a reasonable rate. Those were the days when people hung pictures of power plants and transmission lines on their walls. Being able to flick a switch and get power was a modern miracle.

Today, the fascination with electric power systems is over. Utilities are taken for granted. Electricity is another inalienable right — a part of the American way of life.

Because cheap, plentiful power is a given, we often tend to notice utilities only when some other, less pleasant, order of their business touches our lives. This can be when they ask for a rate increase, when their air pollution becomes a public problem, or when they try to site a power plant in an area many would rather see left undeveloped.

Think about it. When was the last time you heard anyone say something good about an electric utility?

The fact that utilities now wear black hats for most public appearances is not only a problem of perception on the part of a calloused public used to the luxury of electricity. Part of the blame must rightfully be placed on the utilities who have spent their time and the consumers' money promoting greater power usage, trying to sell the public on nuclear power, attempting to undermine the Clean Air Act, and discouraging the passage of strong strip mine reclamation laws.

All this may be changing, though. Recently Connecticut passed a law forbidding utilities from political and promotional advertising with consumers' funds. Advertising different ways to conserve energy would still be allowed, however. In one state at least, utilities are being forced to adopt a new image — that of public servant.

In Colorado we see the change coming on the utility's own initiative. Public Service Company of Colorado is providing a service that will decrease heating bills and conserve natural resources.

This fall, PSC offers to inspect customers' homes to make sure their ceiling insulation is adequate. If a home is not insulated to an optimum level that will save the consumer money and energy, PSC offers to arrange for a contractor to do the job and add the cost on to the monthly utility bill.

In Wyoming, Pacific Power and Light Company has finally eliminated its promotional rate structure. With most utilities, the rule has been that big consumers of power paid less per kilowatt hour than smaller users. This past practice, which discouraged energy conservation, is no longer a part of Pacific Powerland in Wyoming — now everyone pays the same rate. Eventually we'd like to see a rate structure that rewarded the small users to further encourage conservation.

PP&L has also been emphasizing energy conservation in its publication program. A rough rider cartoon figure called Col. Watt's His Name tells PP&L customers how to insulate frame houses and mobile homes and how to save energy around the farm.

These actions are real public services. They're recognizing that the best way to supply adequate power is to make sure that each customer uses his share wisely and efficiently. They're just a start, though. We hope PSC, PP&L, and other utilities will continue along this course and regain their stature as valuable public servants once again.

—BH

TVA moves West. . .

(Continued from page 1)

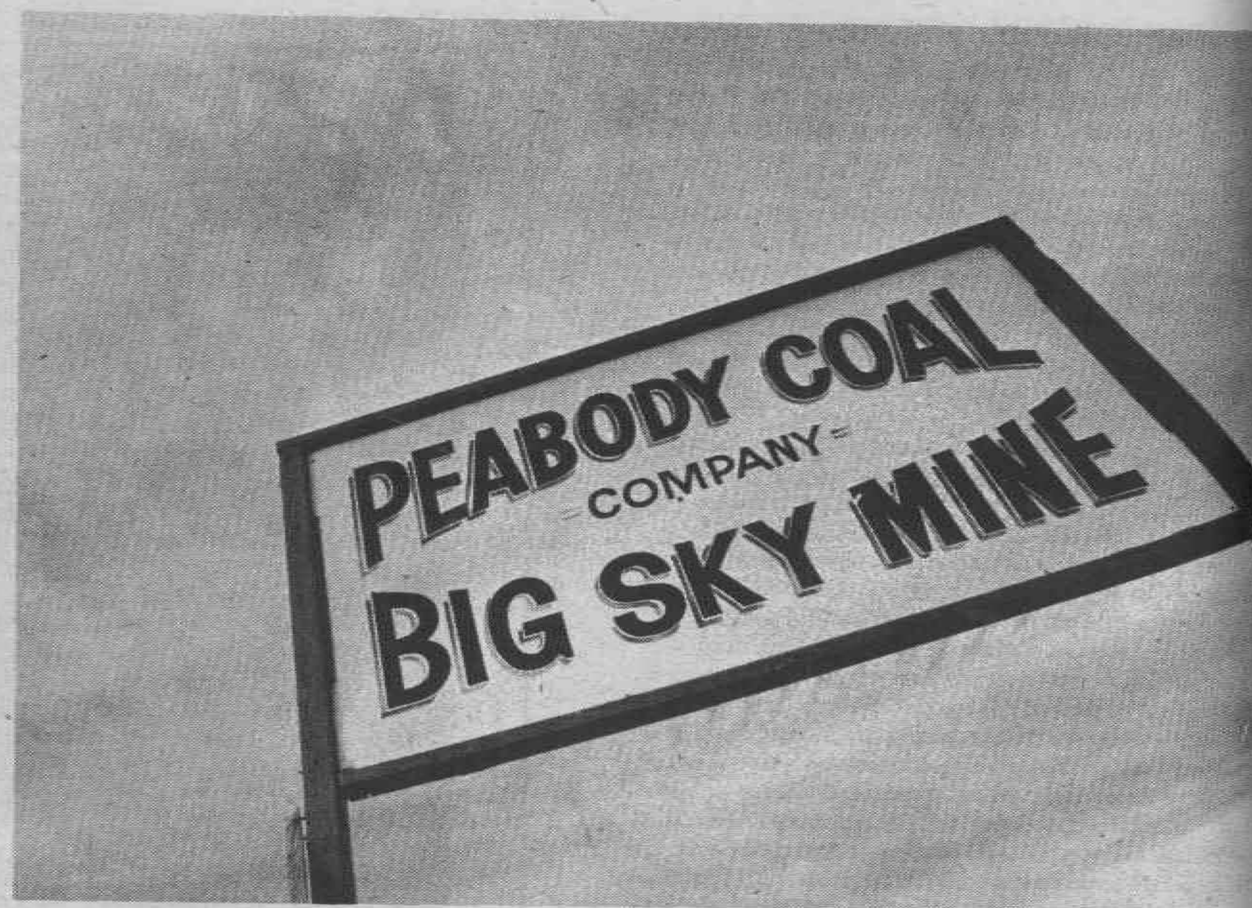
Atomic Energy Commission and TVA use, and .1% went to electric utilities.

Many years ago the demand for power outstripped hydroelectric resources so Congress authorized TVA to begin building coal-fired power plants.

From this point on, the role of TVA as power producer began to dominate its other functions and the implications for the West began.

Now TVA is the nation's largest power producer and also the largest user of coal, consuming nearly 10% of the U.S. total utility coal output, according to **Forbes.** This **could** mean that TVA could take the role as the leader in guaranteeing protection for the people and the resources of the region — encouraging safety in the mines, high pay for the miners, and adequate reclamation to insure the continued quality of the land.

However, when Senate oversight hearings were held this May to look at TVA for the first time in its history, testimony indicated this has not been the role that TVA has chosen. Labor leaders, environmentalists, and other people of the Tennessee Valley, when finally given a public forum, told their stories of how TVA had abused their valley. Some public officials also took the opportunity to praise the work of the agency.



Despite the fact that the agency prefers to keep a low profile, TVA made headlines often during the past months. First a purchase of Western strip mined coal was announced, and then a TVA bid for Peabody Coal, the world's largest coal company. Later fire broke out at TVA's Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. In May, the Senate held the first oversight hearings in the agency's 42 year history to look into TVA's bid for Peabody and its overall operation. The Federal Trade Commission had ordered Kennecott Copper to sell Peabody because of antitrust laws, and some Senators questioned why TVA wouldn't fall into that category, too. No final sale has been made, but TVA is out of the bidding now. Photo of one of Peabody's western mines by Terry Moore.

BIDS TO BLAME

The TVA board members' lack of accountability to the people was blamed for some of the destructive effects the agency has had on the region. But it's the requirement for taking bids that must share the blame.

"By choosing only the lowest bids offered to it, TVA tended to encourage not only strip mining, which is generally lower cost than deep mining, but often the least responsible of the strip miners in the business . . . who stripped the coal and all too often felt no obligation to attempt to reclaim the land," says **Forbes** magazine.

At the same time, TVA low bid contracts discouraged union labor, sometimes blatantly by specifying in the contract that increases in labor costs due to unionization would not be paid for by TVA. In the Senate hearing testimony, Arnold Miller, president of the United Mine Workers, said, "TVA was the prime culprit in the strip mine damage to Eastern Kentucky and the major factor in turning Eastern Kentucky into the capital of non-union coal in the late 1950s and 1960s," according to the **Mountain Eagle.**

TVA brags about its strip mining regulations. However, they are so much weaker than West Virginia's or Pennsylvania's that no coal company in either state can meet the state standards and still be able to offer a competitive bid, according to a legislative aide in the region.

In addition, he says that the agency sets its sulfur standards at four per cent. Since much of the coal in West Virginia, for instance, is one per cent sulfur, the bids are awarded to the cheaper, dirtier coal offered in other states.

TVA ASKS 20% CONSERVATION

Last winter TVA's coal supply dropped to a critically low level, according to the TVA board. TVA asked its customers, including the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, to reduce their consumption of power by 20% or risk a brownout. After advertising didn't get enough bids for enough coal to meet TVA's coal needs, the board, at its own discretion, declared an emergency and stopped requiring bids. Subsequent requests to local suppliers still did not produce offers to sell "sufficient amounts of coal at acceptable prices," according to the board. In November of last year the **Mountain Eagle** revealed that TVA had purchased 450,000 tons of coal from a Western Energy strip mine in Montana.

Sen. Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.), Appalachia's single most powerful politician according to the **Eagle,** telegraphed TVA in protest. He asked if the purchase represented a new policy on the part of TVA to seek coal in the West in preference to eastern supplies. He said, "I am particularly concerned that this acquisition not serve as a precedent for future long-term contracts for western coal for use by the TVA in preference to eastern supplies. Such practices, in my opinion, would be inconsistent with recent national policies to promote energy conservation and foster energy self-sufficiency."

Aubrey Wagner, chairman of the TVA board, defended the agency's decision to Randolph, saying that the board, too, would prefer coal from areas contiguous to the TVA system. "We appreciate and share your concern regarding the development and use of Appalachian coal as a part of the national policy to achieve energy self-sufficiency," Wagner said.

He pointed to the 1933 legislative mandate that TVA charge "rates as low as are feasible." "In carrying out this stated statutory objective, TVA of course endeavors to purchase its coal at the lowest available prices and would not consider purchasing western coal if the coal it needs could be purchased elsewhere at a lower cost," he said.

During the year of this crisis, the TVA board, which makes decisions on rates independent of any review process, raised TVA electricity rates by a greater percentage than any other rates in the nation. TVA says the rates still remained 40% lower than most other rates in the nation.

Whether or not the coal supply crisis was as dramatic as TVA said is a question still being pondered in the valley and in Washington, D.C. The **Mountain Eagle** claimed that TVA's estimates of reserves were unrealistically low.

Some critics went so far as to say that the threat of brownouts was concocted to prove the need for TVA's controversial expansion into nuclear power.

PURSUING CHEAP FUEL

Cost and availability of fuel are two arguments being used to promote TVA's nuclear development. In the 1974 annual report, TVA says, "Construction of nuclear power plants is slower and more expensive than for coal-burning plants. But once in operation nuclear plant production costs are not heavily influenced by fuel costs, compared to

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TVA financial advantages

One of the powers of government which the TVA enjoys is not having to pay federal income taxes. It does make payments to state and local governments in which it has power operations in lieu of taxes. The payment is equal to five per cent of the gross proceeds derived from the sale of power by the corporation. The payments also take into consideration what the property taxes would have been. The act specifies that the minimum annual payment will be $10,000 but only mentions payments to states in which the corporation owns and operates power property. The payment also does not apply to sales to the federal government; 17% of TVA's power last year was used by the federal government, including both the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's use and TVA use.

In 1959 Congress decreed that TVA's power operation would be self-supporting. TVA finances its expansion with bonds which sell roughly on a par with other utility bonds, according to **Forbes.** As of this year, however, TVA can also borrow money from the new Federal Financing Bank, which makes money available to federal agencies like TVA at rates only marginally above that of U.S. government obligations, according to **Forbes.**

The fact that TVA is not a corporation and is not run to make a profit explains some of its actions which seem rather unbusinesslike. For example, a local television station sneaked into a coal yard and filmed a truck being filled with rock, mud, and slate. The high grade coal was only in the middle and on top, where loads are sampled. The truck was bound for TVA's Kingston steam plant. After learning about the layer loading, the TVA lated filed suit but then continued to let contracts to the same firm, according to the **Mountain Eagle.**

"I am particularly concerned that this acquisition not serve as a precedent for future long-term contracts for western coal for use by the TVA in preference to eastern supplies."
—Sen. Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.)

The Tennessee Valley Authority has uranium interests in seven western states: Wyoming, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, South Dakota, and, in the past, Montana and Colorado. Some of the exploration contracts also include coal. The inset shows the Tennessee Valley region, more than 1,300 miles away, which the TVA was originally mandated to serve. Coal-fired TVA generating plants are indicated with a C and nuclear with a N.

What TVA move means for the West

In the midst of a massive nuclear power construction program, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is continuing its march westward in search of western fuels. The initial step of the march was first revealed last November when TVA bought coal from a Montana strip mine. Now TVA's push is for uranium, and it has established a Casper field office to oversee uranium exploration and mining in at least seven western states.

Much of the uranium activity is centered on Wyoming where contracts involving millions of dollars have been signed with three corporations for exploration and mining of uranium and some coal. The corporations involved (American Nuclear Corp., Teton United Nuclear, and Federal American Partners) share interests with TVA in the Gas Hills of central Wyoming, the Powder River Basin, and other portions of northeastern Wyoming.

In addition to Wyoming, TVA is also involved in New Mexico, Utah, Texas, and South Dakota. TVA has in the past looked at Colorado and at Montana and says it may do so again.

Uranium has been discovered on some of the claims in Wyoming, but none are now producing. Gary Harmon, nuclear raw materials specialist and administrator of the Casper office, says TVA isn't expecting production until the late 1970s, although this could change depending upon the market.

Consequently, one can only speculate on the possible implications of the agency's involvement in the West by looking at its history east of the Mississippi.

Studying its past record in terms of environmental regulations, use of its power as a federal agency, and its responsiveness to the public of the Tennessee Valley suggests problems which may occur in Wyoming. The problems encountered by the residents of the Tennessee Valley stem partly from TVA's powers as a federal agency and partly from the attitude of the board members through the years, who seem to view themselves as heads of a private corporation.

These two conflicting roles, which now are seen as the source of a multitude of problems, were thought in 1933 to be advantages to help the fledgling agency serve the people. President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to create "a corporation clothed with the power of government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise."

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Federal regulations over uranium exploration and mining are more than a century old. They are contained in the 1872 "Act to Promote the Development of the Mining Resources of the United States." As indicated by the title of the act, it is designed to assure that the resources will be fully exploited. Thus there are no reclamation requirements for locatable minerals, such as uranium, and anyone filing for a claim on federal land must prove only that the resource is worth recovering and must work on it each year. By paying $25 and applying for a patent, he can acquire full title to the resource and the surface for mining purposes. Much of the uranium resources in Wyoming lie on federal land and consequently are subject to this act.

The state of Wyoming, however, has adopted regulations that do require reclamation of the land to a higher or equal use and payment of a reclamation bond. State regulations also apply to federal land. The state also has a severance tax, and the counties collect property taxes on equipment and buildings for mining claims and for land itself when a patent has been obtained. TVA has interest in some patented claims in Wyoming but most have not yet been patented. TVA interests are in federal land, state land, and private land with mixed surface and mineral rights ownership.

The question is whether or not TVA, as a federal agency, will be required to comply with state and local environmental and taxing regulations. Gary Harmon, administrator of the Casper field office, insists that TVA will comply with all state and federal regulations. Furthermore, he says, since TVA is a federal entity, it is also subject to the National Environmental Policy Act and must file an impact statement on mining, although not on

STATE V. FEDERAL AUTHORITY

The contract between American Nuclear and TVA specifies that "ANC shall comply with all state and federal statutes and regulations applicable either to ANC or TVA relative to the protection of the environment. . . ." This indicated that Wyoming should be able to depend upon its own regulations for protection.

Much of the uranium in Wyoming lies under Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. Calls to BLM offices in Wyoming indicate that questions of federal v. state jurisdiction in the case of TVA have not yet been studied. TVA's contract with ANC says that ANC will be the operating partner, which means that ANC will apply for mining claims and patents and be involved in the actual mining.

A BLM geologist said, "I don't know how it'd work if TVA applied for the patent itself. . . .I hope it doesn't. . . Normally "the federal entity has more power than the state." He said it would be up to the federal agency, in that case, to agree to abide by state regulations."

SHOULD NEW MEXICO WORRY?

Harmon said that TVA is not the operating partner in the majority of contracts. However, in New Mexico, he said there are some areas where TVA is actually doing some exploring work. Therefore, the question of federal v. state jurisdiction may be a problem there.

TVA's record for declaring immunity from state regula-

(Continued on page 6)

TVA moves West. . .

(continued from page 4)

plants burning coal. Fuel expense at TVA's first nuclear plant is running only one-third as much as the fuel cost at coal-burning plants — and is only about 10 to 20% of the cost TVA has had to pay on recent new coal purchases. Present conditions, particularly with respect to the rapidly increasing coal costs, demonstrate more clearly than ever that it is now more economical for TVA to construct and operate nuclear power plants than coal-fired facilities."

This statement seems to ignore the fact that the price of unenriched uranium is also skyrocketing, from about $8 per pound in 1972 to the present $25 per pound. Some experts predict prices of $50 per pound by 1980 and warn that it might be necessary to import half the country's uranium demand by that time. Westinghouse made headlines recently by canceling contracts already signed, saying it would be "commercially impracticable" to deliver the uranium at the prices it had promised.

So the picture looks bleak for investors in nuclear power plants — except those which have some control over their own fuel supplies, such as TVA. (Nevertheless, TVA has also signed contracts already for Canadian uranium, according to **Forbes.**)

TVA's cost comparison between coal-fired and nuclear power plants in its annual report is valid in saying uranium constitutes a low percentage of the cost per kilowatt hour (14% as compared with 72% for oil, according to **Forbes**). However, TVA does not give enough weight to the dollars necessary to build nuclear plants. As of July 1975, TVA's nuclear cost overruns totaled more than $1.5 billion, according to the **Mountain Eagle.**

TVA also fails to mention several other problems familiar to those who have studied nuclear power generation: 1) Down time. At this point in the technology, the plants do not operate at full capacity. 2) Net energy production. As much as half the gross electrical production of a plant would have to be recycled to supply input for fuel processing, according to E. J. Hoffman, a Laramie, Wyo.-based energy consultant. 3) Increased safety risks. A fire in March at the TVA nuclear plant at Browns Ferry almost resulted in the first peacetime nuclear disaster. However, board chairman Wagner still insists that nuclear plants are as safe as highway driving. 4) Nuclear waste disposal. When asked at the Senate oversight hearings where the the board proposed to dispose of wastes, the board members admitted they didn't know, according to the **Mountain Eagle.**

POWER PLANS DIM HOPES

These factors must be considered by anyone planning to invest in a nuclear power plant. TVA, it would seem, must also consider its overall purpose. For if TVA builds nuclear power plants and continues its quest for western coal and uranium, it could dim the future hopes of an entire region, the region it was created to protect. If the nation's largest coal buyer is not buying eastern coal or is buying much less, thousands of miners could be put out of work.

Board chairman Wagner told **Forbes**, "What we wanted to do was to help the people of this region use their resources in ways that would build the region economically and improve the quality of life."

Instead, according to Tom Gish, publisher of the **Mountain Eagle,** "Mountain by mountain, valley by valley, TVA has been turning the Tennessee Valley into an uninhabited and uninhabitable wasteland."

Meaning for West...

(Continued from page 5)

tions in the Tennessee Valley, however, may make other Westerners uneasy, too. In Kentucky, TVA challenged the state's authority to implement clean air standards in the state. What's more, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed and ruled TVA exempt from Kentucky air regulations, forcing the Environmental Protection Agency to implement the standards themselves.

While consistently opposing the use of scrubbers, TVA asked Congress for the tax relief that other utilities are getting for costs of pollution controls. The only difference is that TVA does not pay federal taxes. Instead, the agency asked for discounts on the money that it is paying back to the U.S. Treasury for past debts. The bill allowing the "tax credits" passed but was vetoed by President Gerald Ford.

As James Branscome of the **Mountain Eagle** of Whitesburg, Ky., phrased it, "TVA is asking for tax credits for taxes it doesn't pay to pay for equipment it vows it will not install."

STRIPPING RECORD

In 1965, TVA began including reclamation requirements in its contract awards for coal from strip mines. In its publication "A Quality Environment in the Tennessee Valley," TVA says it is the country's biggest buyer of strip mined coal. However, it says that it has also done much more than any other coal user to try to correct the serious environmental impact of strip mining.

The **Mountain Eagle** and other TVA critics question this claim. The **Eagle** gives the example of Peabody Coal which is frequently cited by the Kentucky Department of Reclamation for violation of state strip mining regulations. TVA and Peabody have close financial ties which include TVA buying 12 million tons of coal, most of it stripped, from Peabody each year, according to the **Eagle.**

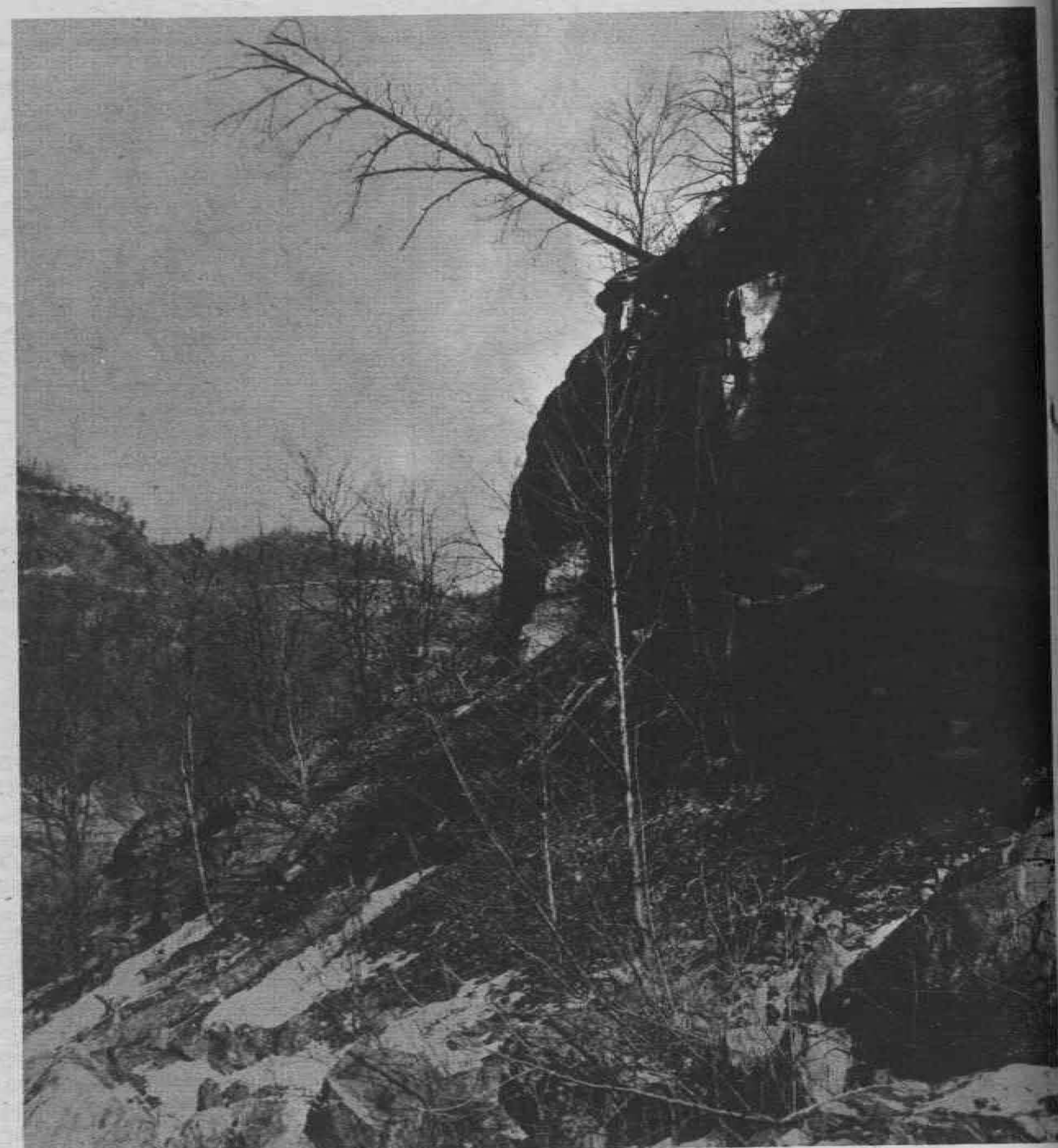
At the same time that Peabody is getting cited for not complying with state regulations, TVA is actively lobbying against the federal strip mining bill saying that state laws are adequate. However, Lee White, a former TVA employee, disagrees. White, who has also been a member of the Federal Power Commission, said, "I know better because we helped write those laws while I was at TVA," according to the **Mountain Eagle.**

TVA board member Don McBride told the **Eagle** he didn't want more regulations on strip mining because they raise the price of coal.

As a federal agency, TVA has the right of eminent domain (Section 4(h), TVA Act). The 1872 Mining Act gives possessory rights to the area of the claim for the purpose of developing and extracting minerals. A mining patent usually gives title to the surface and all other resources as well. Mills can be built on the claims.

Consequently, it would seem that the only reason TVA might exercise eminent domain would be for transportation purposes. It has in the past exercised eminent domain on behalf of Peabody Coal which wanted a 12½ mile overland conveyor belt to connect two mines to a river outlet in the East. TVA forced 12 landowners to allow it. The mines were owned by TVA and operated by Peabody.

The TVA contract with ANC also mentions TVA's power, as a federal agency, to withdraw land. Withdrawal is a power which federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management, can exercise over land within their jurisdiction to exclude some uses if necessary to continue another use. For example, the BLM might withdraw land from mineral entry if it is necessary habitat for an endangered species. A BLM representative said he had no idea why the TVA would need such a power in Wyoming nor how it would apply.



A high wall in West Virginia, ten years after being mined. No reclamation work was done. The high wall keeps breaking off since it was shattered years ago by blasting. The name of the mining company responsible is not known.

NOT RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC

In the Tennessee Valley, the agency has a record of not being open with the public. Although federal agencies across the country had been responding to sunshine laws by opening their doors and public records, the TVA board continued up until last year meeting behind closed doors as it had for 42 years. For six months last year, the **Mountain Eagle** persisted in standing outside the closed meetings, once getting information from notes left in a restroom. Finally other media joined in the crusade and the TVA held its first open meeting on Jan. 16, 1975. The **Eagle** reports that the board's "patience was short and tempers were on edge" at the meetings when they finally had to confront the public.

The **Eagle** still experienced difficulties in obtaining public records or statements from the public officials; the TVA charged the reporter $6.75 per hour for time the employes spent supplying agency files. The **Eagle** has reported that the TVA, with the cooperation of the FBI, also kept files on critics of the agency.

The **High Country News** also found the Casper field office administrator, Gary Harmon, reluctant to talk until after he had met with the public relations officer in Kentucky "to find out what we can tell you." In subsequent interviews and telephone calls, however, Harmon agreed to supply the information that is a matter of public record. He explained that he had been new on the job and not used to dealing with newspapers.

One serious implication of TVA's closed-lips policy in its operations east of the Mississippi was dramatically revealed by the fire last March at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. Nuclear critics said that only "good luck" prevented the world's first peacetime nuclear disaster. The fire, which smoldered for seven hours, prevented operation of the reactor safety systems.

However, local Civil Defense officials there, who would have been responsible for evacuating people in the area near the plant, were not notified by TVA until two days later.

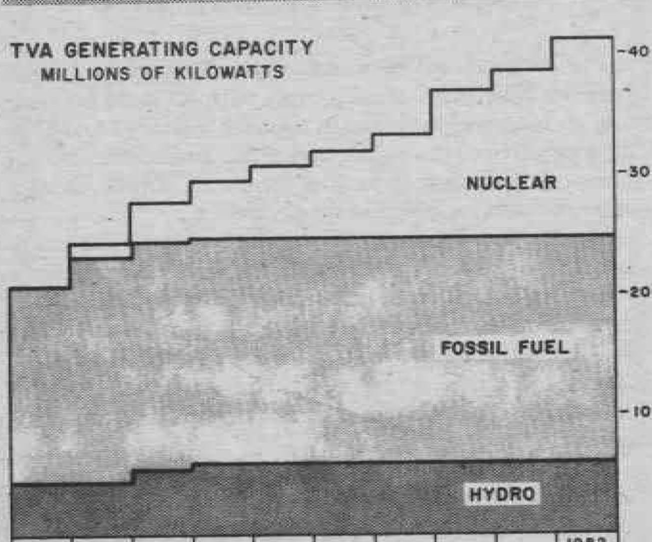
"TVA is asking for tax credits for taxes it doesn't pay to pay for equipment it vows it will not install."

—James Branscome, MOUNTAIN EAGLE

EXPAND THE BOARD

Critics of TVA claim that the organization of the agency precludes accountability to the public. They suggest expanding the board from three to seven members with the four additional members appointed by governors of four of the Tennessee Valley states and confirmed by the Senate. Presently, the three members are appointed by the President. A bill has been introduced to expand the board.

However, the new proposal for the board does little to increase accountability to all the people affected by TVA if it continues its move westward.



As a result of continuing conservation efforts and the higher cost of electricity, TVA says the rate of growth in the use of electricity will be somewhat slower in the region. However, it believes that even to meet this slower growth rate, it must commit itself to the most massive generating plant construction program in its history, expanding present generating capacity of 23.3 million kilowatts to about 47 million. Ninety per cent of that will be nuclear.

Trona ponds deadly to waterfowl

"Today, the old cliche of someone being 'nibbled to death by ducks' might better read 'ducks being nibbled to death by progress,' " says Dick Randall, North Central field representative for Defenders of Wildlife. Progress, in this case, means the mining of soda ash near Green River, Wyo.

Randall is concerned about waterfowl losses on soda ash tailings ponds associated with the trona industry in the area. Most recently he has been protesting a proposed pipeline and associated tailing ponds by Texas Gulf, Inc., and a lease application for a trona operation adjacent to the Flaming Gorge National Recreation area.

"During fall months when waterfowl are migrating south, evaporation ponds have reached the saturation point," says Randall. "Birds that alight on the ponds are immediately encrusted with a crystalline formation known as deka-hydrate. Some chemicals in the ponds are basic detergents which quickly remove the natural oil from the birds' feathers." Without proper oil levels, the birds become water-logged and sink.

Waterfowl loss caused by the soda ash evaporation ponds was first discovered in 1973. "During October and November of 1973, 62 dead birds representing 10 waterfowl species were recovered from the Stauffer Chemical Company pond," recalls Randall. "A search of other ponds in the area ended with a 1973 total of 190 waterfowl dead or injured by chemicals in the ponds."

In 1974, state and federal wildlife authorities recovered 235 birds from the tailing ponds.

"Defenders of Wildlife believes the unnecessary loss of a few hundred ducks here, a few hundred ducks there, can no longer be considered a legitimate part of doing business," Randall told the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM is the federal agency considering applications for new leases and tailings ponds for trona.

ZON GUNS

Of the 127 birds recovered from the Stauffer Chemical ponds in 1974, 87 were recovered alive. These birds were washed in warm water and allowed to dry in boxes filled with straw. Birds believed to be on the road to recovery were released at the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge, a few miles up river from the ponds.

"It is not known if any of the 87 birds treated and released, survived," says Randall. "If they respond to the initial treatment . . . there still remains the problem of loss of oil from the feathers."

Stauffer has installed "Zon Guns" around their 400-acre pond to try to solve this problem. While these propane-fueled noisemakers manage to scare off some birds, grebes and mergansers have been observed swimming near the guns and adapting to the noise.

Flagging stretched across the ponds has also been proposed as a deterent. Randall is skeptical of success. "Most of the waterfowl species recovered from the ponds were grebes, diving ducks, (and) mergansers," he says. "These birds do most of their migrating at night. I doubt that flagging would be effective at night."

HALF-WAY HOUSE

Last April, trona executives met with representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Game and Fish, and Defenders of Wildlife to explore solutions to the problem. It was decided that a half-way house would be constructed to treat, house, and feed afflicted birds. The Fish and Wildlife Service suggested creating a diversionary area by lighting a clean pond at night and playing recorded bird calls to attract night migrating waterfowl.

Randall believes these solutions may save some birds, but "do not relate to the basic cause of the waterfowl losses." He favors finding another means of disposing of the wastes — filtration, aeration, or underground disposal.

"All are technically possible although much more expensive than tailing ponds," he says.

"Economists with sharp pencils and a background in systematic analysis can calculate cost-benefit studies that would prove a few thousand dead ducks are not worth the huge amount of money that would be required to solve this problem once and for all," says Randall. "However, if cost-benefit figures could be used as a criteria for wildlife management, then the black-footed ferret, which is completely worthless to man as far as its monetary value is concerned, would long ago have been written off as a poor investment."

Jim June, a biologist with Wyoming Game and Fish, washes three ducks recovered from trona ponds. The birds are alternated between warm water and dry straw. Because of oil loss from the feathers, if left too long in the water they begin to sink. Photo by Dick Randall

Ruddy duck covered by deka-hydrate crystals from a trona pond. The crystals begin to form as soon as a bird lands on the pond and sometimes build to over a half inch thick. Photo by Dick Randall

Kaiparowits critics, boosters meet at Utah hearings

Hearings on the Interior Department's plan to lease public land for what would be the largest power plant in the U.S. were held in six western cities last week. Kaiparowits, a $3 million project, would produce 3,000 megawatts of electrical power for a consortium of California and Arizona utilities. The controversial proposed site is less than 100 miles from Bryce Canyon, Zion, Grand Canyon, and Capitol Reef National Parks and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Many speakers at the Salt Lake hearings spoke in favor of the plant, including Utah Gov. Calvin L. Rampton, Republican Sen. Jake Garn,and the state's two U.S. representatives. Several local officials who live near the plant site in southern Utah indicated that their rural communities were looking forward to the economic boom the plant could bring.

At hearings held in Kanab, in Kane County where the plant would be located,the **Deseret News** reports, "Opposition to the construction of the plant was in the definite minority here."

"The national economy needs the project and we are prepared to accept it," said a Kane County Commissioner.

In Salt Lake City, two scientists disputed the draft environmental impact statement's claim that the plant would meet federal air quality standards.

Dr. Jack T. Spence, a chemist from Utah State University, said that daily emissions of nitrogen dioxide from the plant would be about equal to the amount of that pollutant emitted daily by all the cars in Los Angeles. Dr. Michael Williams, an air quality researcher, warned that in combination with the existing Navajo power plant a few miles south near Page, Ariz., the Kaiparowits plant would drastically reduce visibility.

The Interior Department is allowing an extra 45 days for the public to comment on the Kaiparowits statement, which contains more than 2,000 pages. That shifts the comment deadline from the end of September to Nov. 15.

While Interior officials deliberate, the Uinta Chapter of the Sierra Club, in cooperation with other groups, is planning a nationwide educational effort. They believe the plant is a threat to air quality in adjacent lands which constitute one-fifth of the acreage managed by the National Park Service.

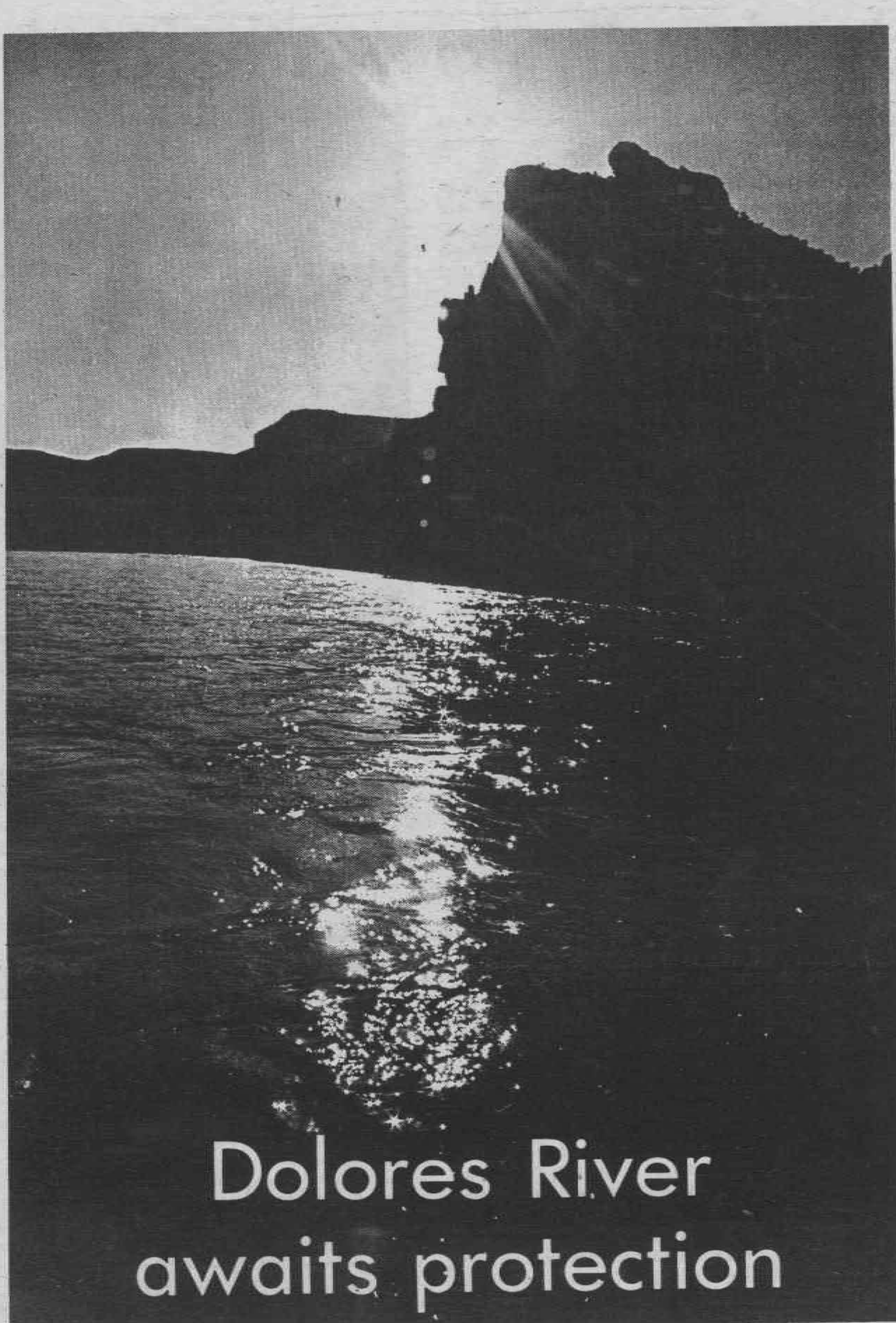
"I'm optimistic," Ruth Frear of the Uinta Chapter of the Sierra Club told **HCN**. "I think we can stop this."

The following exerpts from testimony presented at the recent hearings represent some of the opponents' other major arguments.

—Ron Rudolph, Friends of the Earth. "The primary rationale given by the utilities for building the project is based on projected electrical growth rates in the market area serviced by the utilities. These demand forecasts were supplied solely by the participating utilities. . . .The FEA (Federal Energy Administration) in its energy analysis has called those (demand) assumptions 'predictions which are insufficiently detailed or rest on assumptions too speculative as a basis for future planning.' With such a tremendous commitment of resources at stake it seems irresponsible to have any decisions on grounds deemed 'too speculative' even by the federal agency responsible for evaluating the energy development of this country. We feel that an independent analysis of the demand situation in the market areas should be undertaken before any further progress on the project is made."

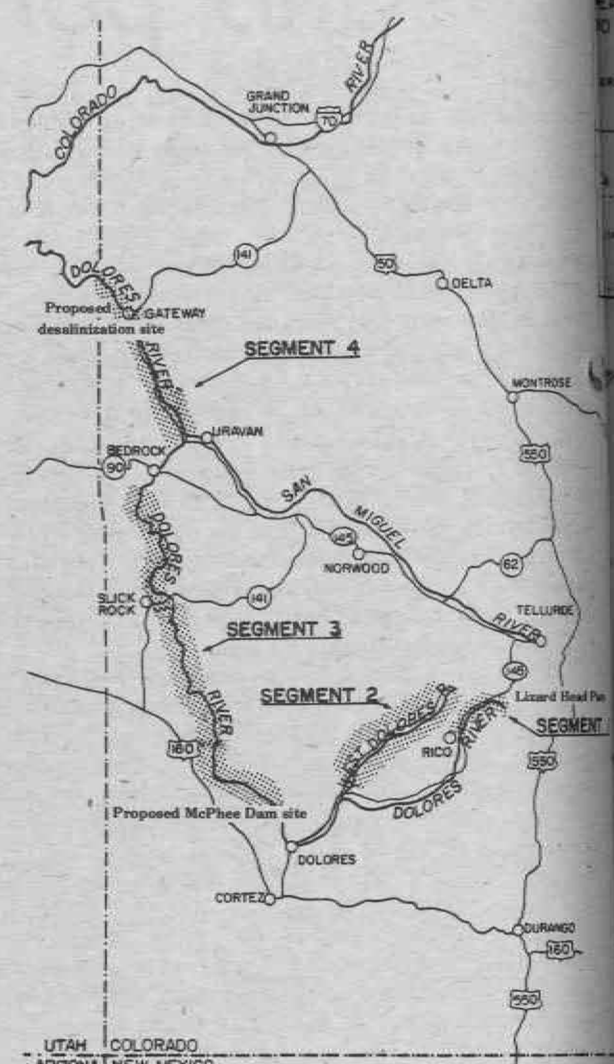
—Jean Widman, Wilderness Society. "Our concern lies, also, with the fact that one governmental agency (the Bureau of Land Management) can promulgate destruction of what another governmental agency (the Park Service) is directed to protect. . . .At least two-thirds of the states among the lower 48 must rely on these last remaining wilderness resource areas in the West for the solitude and re-created spirit that wilderness can provide. Utah is fortunate to have an abundance of wild lands compared with many western states, but the blessing will become meaningless as the air quality diminishes in canyon country."

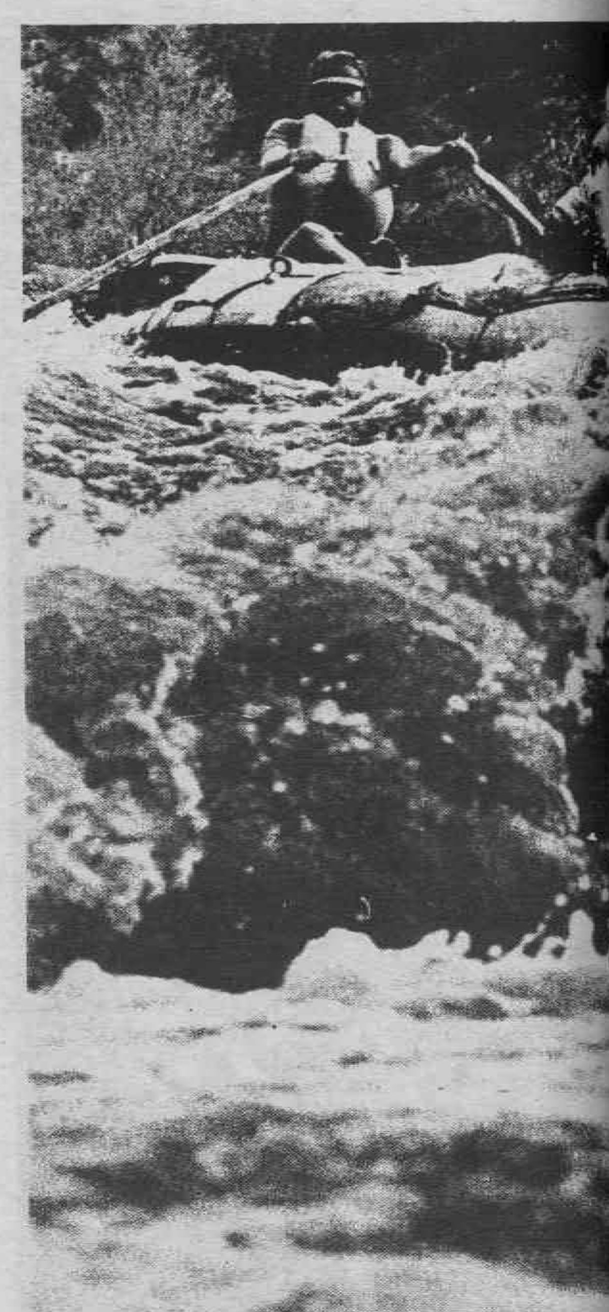
—Robert O. Marston, citizen. A single page in the Environmental Impact Statement is devoted to the combined impacts of Kaiparowits and other projects planned or operating in the region, Marston points out. "Despite the enormous proportions of the Kaiparowits Project, this page in the EIS must suffice for a regional impact statement. With other power plants located at Page, Four Corners, Huntington, San Juan, Emery, Warner Valley, Mohave, Cholla, Garfield, and others, the potential for a considerable cumulative effect is prevalent."



Dolores River awaits protection

The Slickrock Canyon area of the Dolores River has been determined eligible for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.





Of 12 Colorado rivers being studied for Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, only the Dolores week-long raft trip.

by Sarah Doll

The Dolores River flows through a 250-mile display of the extremes of landscape in the West. Its headwaters lie in some of Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks, and it cuts through lush pastureland and barren desert before it joins the Colorado River in Utah. The river itself is as varied as its banks, featuring rapids to challenge white-water experts as well as long, placid stretches. It is one of several rivers which are being studied, under a 1974 act of Congress, for inclusion under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

Spanish traders discovered the river in the 16th century, and named it El Rio de Nuestra Senora de los Dolores, the River of our Lady of Sorrows. Silver mining attracted the first settlers to the river's valleys. Farmers and ranchers followed, but no large towns were ever established. In 1885-86 a two-mile tunnel was dug to divert water from the Dolores to the farms of the Montezuma Valley. Since then, the river has been reduced to a trickle for as much as 10 months of every year, and there is enough water for rafting for only about 35 days.

Mining is still important to the area's economy, but the emphasis has changed from silver to uranium, as our country moves toward the nuclear path to energy independence. As more land is being farmed, more irrigation ditches are being built and the river is being channelized and rip-rapped in areas to increase water production. The Bureau of Reclamation is planning McPhee Dam on the upper Dolores for water-storage purposes. A desalinization project is also planned by BuRec for the lower Dolores because irrigation tends to carry salt back to the river, and the Colorado River receives a large load of salt from the Dolores.

If the Dolores, or any part of it, is included under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, there are three categories which would offer varying degrees of protection: wild, scenic, or recreational. A wild river is, according to the law, "...free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted." Such rivers "represent vestiges of primitive America." Scenic rivers are "free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads." Recreational rivers are those that "... are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or di-

It is an exceptionally rare river in that it is so complete: by turns a mountain river, a foothills river, a desert river. A chance to preserve a totality and not just a limited realm.

—David Sumner
"No Warranty for the Wild Dolores"

version in the past." Once a river, or any part of it, is classified under the law, management policies direct that its wild, scenic, or recreational values be protected.

A study group, consisting of representatives from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service, is working to determine the river's eligibility for inclusion under the act, and to make recommendations concerning inclusion. The Dolores has been divided into four study area segments, which exclude the McPhee Dam site and the desalinization project. A 22-mile stretch of the river that lies in Utah was originally excluded, but a bill recently introduced in the U.S. Senate will include it, if passed.

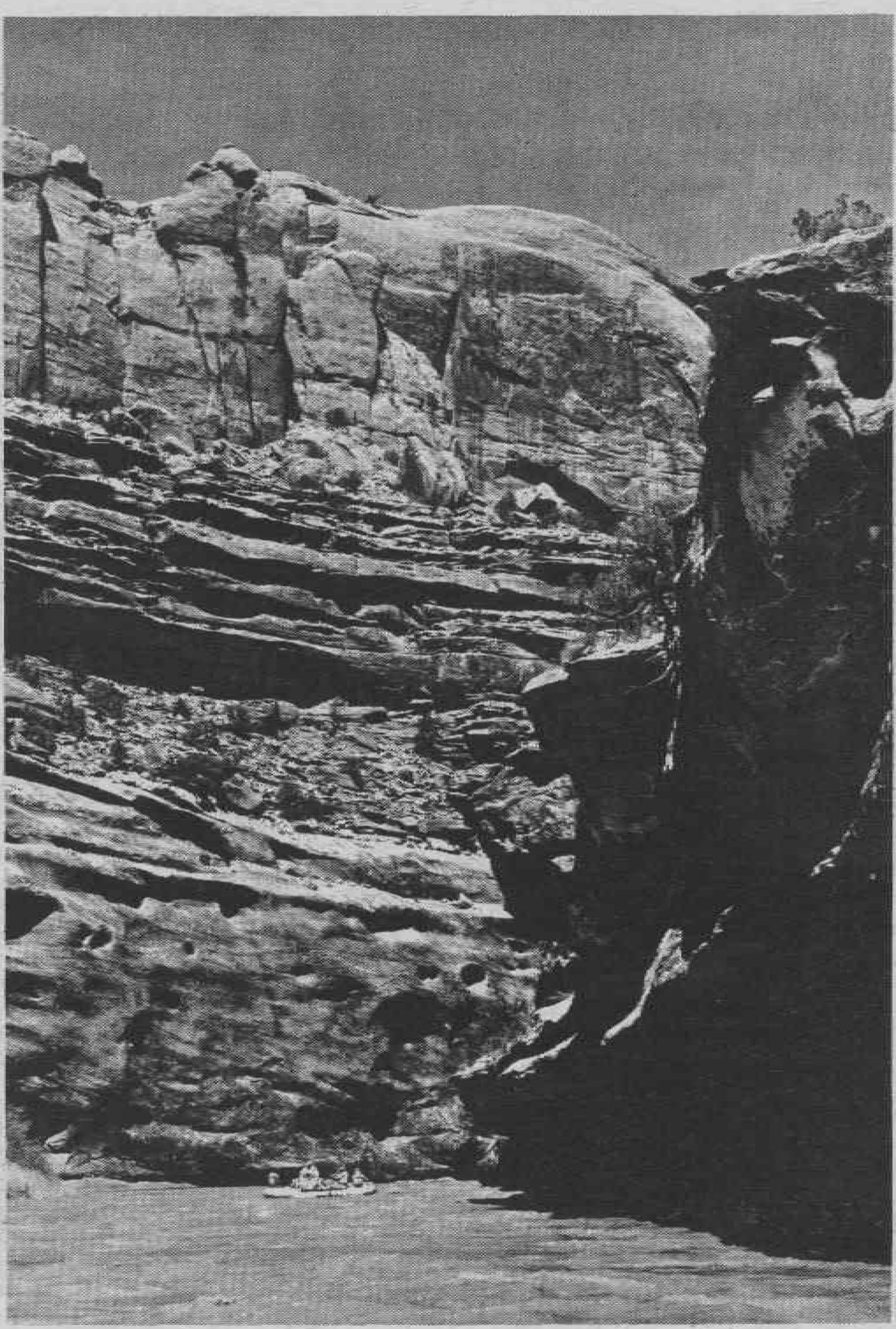
The study group has determined the main stem above Rico to be ineligible (too short, not enough water, and no outstanding features). The West Dolores is eligible, as is the main stem of the river from one mile below McPhee Dam to one mile above Highway 90. This segment includes the spectacular Slick Rock Canyon, the Dolores Canyon, and the Little Glen Canyon (named for its similarities to the canyon presently under Lake Powell). They have found the river from the confluence with the San Miguel to the state line to be ineligible, because of low water quality. This part includes the Narrows, one of the most exciting rapids on the river, and the section of Mesa Canyon that features remnants of the "hanging flume," part of an 1890s placer mining project. The flume can be seen clinging high to the sheer canyon walls for several miles. The law does not spell out at what point in time man's structures stopped being of historical interest and became intrusions.

This segmentation makes it difficult to protect the river, as a dam built upstream affects the whole river, and some of the segments under study are not long enough by themselves to satisfy the length requirement of the law (at least 25 miles). However, pollution, private holdings, and man-made intrusions such as roads might tend to endanger the whole classification if they were included in the study. Congress intended exclusion of the McPhee Dam site and the desalinization project because public support for these projects is very strong in the area, and Colorado's congressional representatives reflect this feeling.

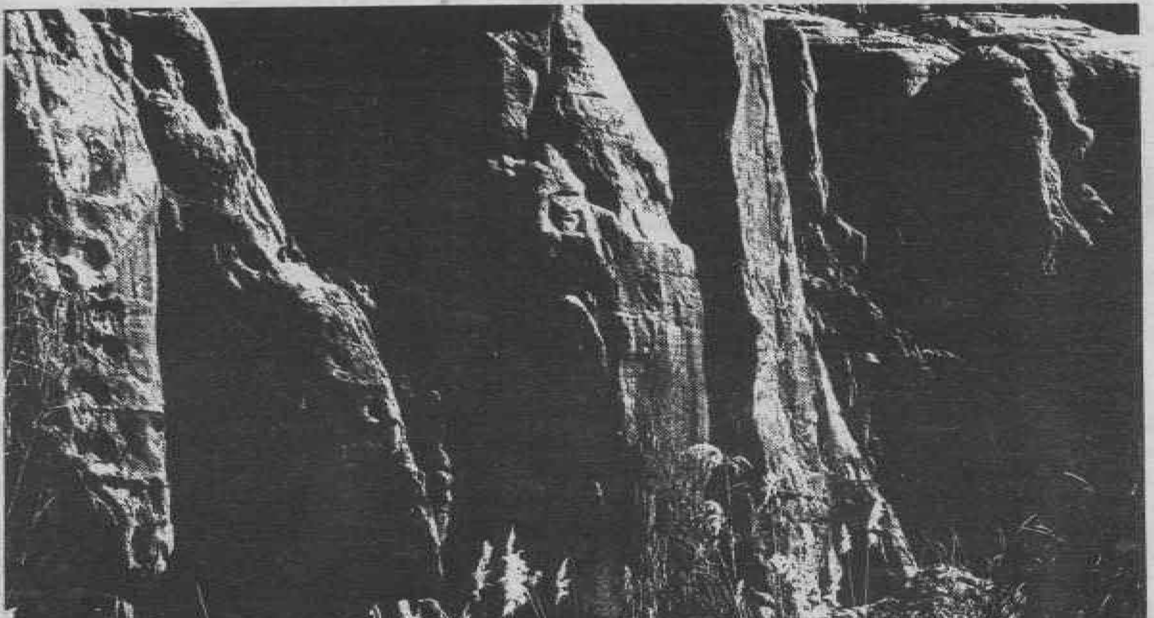
Besides providing irrigation water for 51,000 acres of arid farmland, the dam builders claim benefits to fish and wildlife below the proposed McPhee dam in that the minimum flow of water will stabilize at from 50 to 78 cubic feet per second in at least four years out of five, instead of totally drying up as it now often does. The rafting season will still be short, maybe even shorter, as it will be limited to days of heavy spring run-off, when overflow is let out of the dam.

The study group has found local sentiment to be strongly opposed to inclusion of the river in the national system. According to Don Bock, BOR representative to the study group, much of the opposition is based on misunderstanding. Local residents fear inclusion will endanger the McPhee Dam project, will stop agriculture in the area, and will lead to wholesale condemnation of private lands, none of which will take place. The McPhee Dam area is not even being considered, and although scenic easements may be negotiated on a few acres (probably less than 100), most of the private lands will remain private.

The study group has until Jan. 3, 1976, to make its report to Congress. A draft report on its recommendations will be issued soon.



The river is calm now in Slickrock Canyon, but its turbulent history is reflected by the rock.



Red rock walls, rising 500 feet above the river, characterize the Little Glen Canyon of the Dolores.

Photos by David Sumner

Reckoning from Washington

by Lee Catterall

Three railroad companies are pushing a proposal in Congress that would allow them to dominate the coal industry in the West — not only the hauling of coal, but the mining itself.

Coal companies are concerned about being locked out of massive coal-bearing areas if the railroads get their way. The railroads are the Union Pacific, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe. Together, they own more than 20 billion tons in coal reserves, but a checkerboard pattern of federal and railroad ownership in those areas has kept them from mining the coal.

When the railroads first acquired their rights-of-way more than a century ago, the government also gave them land and mineral ownership in surrounding areas. The government retained ownership of every other square mile, creating a checkerboard pattern of railroad and federal ownership in strips up to 80 miles wide.

It's not economical to mine a square mile of coal without being able to expand. Railroads are not allowed to lease federal coal, so have not been able to mine much of the coal they own. Coal companies have been able to mine the checkerboard by leasing the federal coal and buying squares of coal reserves from the railroads.

The Senate has approved a bill to revise the government's leasing laws that includes allowing railroad companies to lease federal coal. Among other things, the bill also would require a lease-holder to mine the coal or give up its lease.

Those two ingredients, coal industry spokesmen complain, would effectively lock coal companies out of the checkerboard.

If a coal company would lease a federal block in the checkerboard, it would need to get at the adjoining railroad reserves to put together a "logical mining unit." If the railroad would refuse to sell, the coal company couldn't mine. If it couldn't mine, it would lose the lease. The railroad would be able then to bid on the lease under the government's "competitive bidding" system against anybody foolish enough to bid against it.

Defenders of the proposal argue the Interstate Commerce Act forbids railroads from hauling coal they own or mine, so they wouldn't be able to capitalize on mining the coal. However, the courts have interpreted the law to allow them to sell it at the mine mouth and then haul it.

Asked about the proposal and its ramifications, railroad spokesmen and the proposal's sponsor in the House of Representatives — New Mexico Democrat Harold Runnels — run for cover.

In an interview at one of the Capitol press rooms, this column asked Runnels if his proposal would not allow railroads to freeze coal companies out of the checkerboard, and if it would not be economically smart for the railroads to do just that. Runnels became exasperated and bolted from the interview, shouting as he left that we could hear his views when the House Interior Committee considers the proposal.

"We're not a coal company," insisted Lloyd Duxbury of Burlington Northern. "We're a railroad. We don't mine coal." However, Duxbury has lobbied for the proposal because, he said, energy companies shouldn't have a "monopoly" on coal. "They don't want competition," he complained.

Quiet as its advocates have been, the proposal has gathered opposition in the House as it has in past years. If it is defeated in the House, the issue will arise again in a joint conference of Senators and Congressmen who will meet to work out differences in the mineral leasing bill.

MOVING??? Be sure to send us your old address and your new one so we can find you in our files. Second class mail, such as the HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, is destroyed unless you make special arrangements with the Post Office to pay forwarding postage.

Colstrip Unit 1 and the construction workers' housing facilities in Montana. The state is in the midst of hearings to decide whether or not to permit the construction of Units 3 and 4. Will the power complex meet air and water regulations? Is there a need for the power to be produced? These are two of the main questions being asked by the state. Photo by Carol Harlow

ENERGY 1975 HCN

energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

IDAHO TOO ATTRACTIVE. Idaho Gov. Cecil D. Andrus is urging the State Board of Health to adopt an amendment making it tougher to build a coal-fired power plant in the state. In a letter to each member of the board, Andrus said: "Our Western sister states have adopted emission standards that are tighter than EPA's (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's), making Idaho a singularly attractive site for coal burning." The amendment proposed would require coal-fired plants to use the "best currently available control technology" to regulate air pollution if the technology would promote "public health, safety, and welfare."

EXXON COAL MINE DELAYED. Carter Oil Co., an Exxon affiliate, has halted its development of a coal strip mine near Gillette, Wyo., awaiting the resolution of a Sierra Club suit against the Interior Department. The club called for a regional impact statement on coal development in the Northern Plains and has received a favorable judgment at the U.S. appeals court level. Carter President C.E. Smith told the **Casper Star-Tribune** that "in this case, the environmental cause has gone far beyond what is reasonable, objective, or in the best interests of the nation." Laney Hicks, Northern Plains representative of the Sierra Club, said, "I'm a little tired of them (the Carter executives) saying they're going to be 'God's gift to Wyoming.'" Carter's "Rawhide" mine was to open in 1976 and produce 12 million tons of coal per year by 1980.

MONTANA SCRUTINIZES UTILITY PLANS. Six thousand six hundred pages of transcript later, Department of Health hearings on a $1 billion coal-fired power plant in southeastern Montana came to an end Sept. 14. The close of hearings marks only a first step in the state's permit process, however. Now lawyers promoting and protesting the five utilities' request to build Colstrip Units 3 and 4 will prepare "findings of fact" to be presented at a Board of Health meeting on Oct. 3. Next, the board will set a time for hearing final oral arguments from both sides, probably sometime in mid-October. If the board gives a go-ahead, indicating that the new units will meet Montana air and water quality standards, the utilities face a round of Department of Natural Resources hearings.

COAL TRANSPORT PROMOTERS. A Western Coal Transportation Association has been formed in Denver "to promote the orderly and efficient development of new and established transportations systems for western coal." Officers of the group include representatives of Amax Coal Co., Mobil Oil Corp., and Atlantic Richfield Co. For more information write Robert J. Steele, P.O. Box 176, Denver, Co. 80202 or call (303) 534-7524.

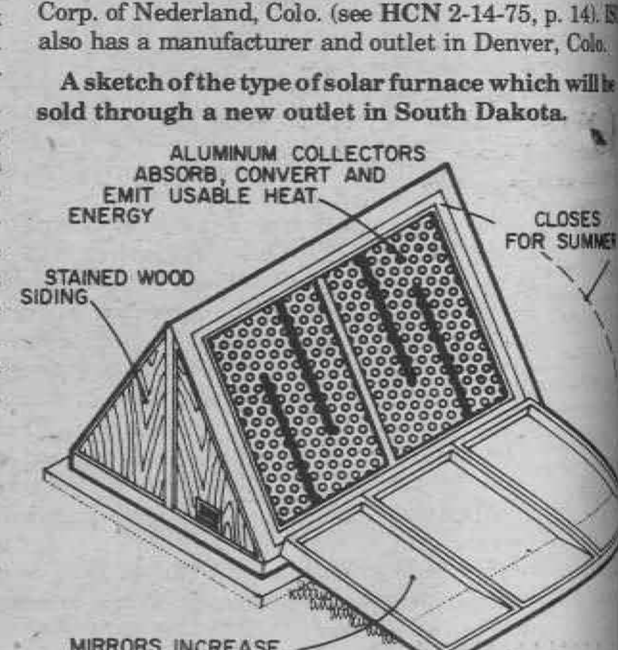
GARBAGE TO THE MOON? Requiring utilities to use the best available pollution control technology is just as ridiculous as asking the U.S. to bundle up its garbage and send it to the moon just because it can be done, says a mining company official in Idaho. The statement was made at a Board of Health and Welfare hearing in July. A proposed regulation drafted by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare would require coal-fired power plants to use "the best currently available control technology" if application of the latest technology would "reasonably" reduce pollution. The board will rule on the regulation at a meeting in September.

CROWS SEEK CONTROL OF COAL. The Crow Tribe has filed suit to void agreements made with all but one of the energy companies interested in coal on their Montana reservation. The suit seeks to void the leases and permits granted to Shell Oil, AMAX Coal, Gulf Oil, and Peabody Coal companies. Defendants are the Secretary of Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, whom the Crows accuse of failing to protect the tribe's interests when the leases were negotiated. Only Westmoreland Resources escaped mention in the suit, apparently because the company recently renegotiated its lease with the Crows for higher royalty payments. The Crow's neighbors, the Northern Cheyenne tribe, took a similar action in 197- when they petitioned then-Secretary of Interior Rogers C.B. Morton to declare all coal contracts on the reservation to be invalid. Morton issued a neutral response, encouraging the tribe to test their claim in court. The tribe has not taken that step yet.

SOLAR LIBRARY, SCHOOL. Two new solar energy projects have begun at institutions in the West. The Idaho State University Library will be heated and cooled by a combination of ground water and solar panels. In Colorado, a new junior high school in Parker will have a series of 120 panels, each three feet wide and eight feet tall to provide solar heating. The architectural engineering firm planning the school, More, Combs, & Burch, says the collectors will reduce the building's energy costs by at least five per cent.

SOUTH DAKOTA SOLAR FURNACES. South Dakota's first solar energy company broke ground Aug. 13. The Solar Stor Corp. will produce sun-powered backyard furnaces for use in new or existing homes. The furnace idea was developed by International Solarthermics Corp. of Nederland, Colo. (see **HCN** 2-14-75, p. 14). IS also has a manufacturer and outlet in Denver, Colo.

A sketch of the type of solar furnace which will be sold through a new outlet in South Dakota.



Interior's coal plans attacked

A final impact statement on federal coal leasing has energy companies grumbling and at least one environmental group ready to sue. The statement, which was published in mid-September by the Interior Department, is a first step toward the resumption of leasing on the remaining half of federal coal lands in the West.

Energy companies are upset because Interior is recommending a tougher leasing policy in the statement. About half of federal coal lands, which still contain 16 billion tons of recoverable reserves, have already been leased. In the future Interior says the department "will discourage excessive reserve holding by requiring diligent development and by charging advance royalties." The department also says it will issue additional leases according to a comprehensive plan only when and where there is a need for the coal.

According to a **New York Times** account, the Natural Resources Defense Council feels a lawsuit over the Interior document is "likely — almost certain." The group claims that Interior has not shown that more federal coal leasing is necessary. According to U.S. Geological Survey estimates, the life of already committed federal coal reserves is 540 years at 1975 rates of production and 118 years at rates projected for the year 2000, NRDC says. The environmental group also accuses Interior of "trying to short-circuit" public participation in a major policy decision.

When the draft statement on coal leasing was issued in May of 1974, it drew harsh criticism from the public. "A revised draft, with another cycle of public comment, was widely expected," according to the **New York Times**. During his brief term as Interior Secretary Stanley K. Hathaway made the decision to ignore suggestions about a second draft and ordered preparation of the final statement, which precludes any more input from the public.

Certain adverse impacts of increased coal mining are outlined in the statement. "Occasional situations occur in which the natural ecological balance is damaged beyond repair by coal mining," the statement points out. It also says that water supplies could be reduced, water quality could be impaired,vegetation could be lost for hundreds of years (particularly in arid regions), and endangered species could be lost to the area.

Colo., Mont. offer home insulation

(Second of a series on home insulation)

Improving the thermal insulation in your home is an easy way to save energy and money. But it's not always easy to come up with the initial investment capital to pay for the job. A utility in Colorado helps consumers finance insulation by adding the cost to their monthly bill. In Montana, the government is financing winterizing homes for low income home owners.

A REAL PUBLIC SERVICE

The Public Service Company of Colorado has initiated an innovative program to encourage its customers to insulate their homes. Interested customers can call PSC for a free attic insulation inspection. PSC inspectors report to the home owner how much insulation is needed to optimize savings and will even arrange for a contractor to install it. When the work is done, PSC will look over the job and make sure it is adequate.

Home owners with a good credit rating can pay for the work in monthly installments added to their utility bills and take up to 30 months to pay at 9.5% interest. PSC says it typically costs from $150 to $300 to adequately insulate a Denver-area home. Energy savings could amount to 15% says PSC.

PSC customers interested in a free inspection or more information on the program should call 571-7721 or 571-7012.

LOW INCOME AID

During the next three months, the government will be insulating the homes of low income families in three counties in Montana.

"If it makes sense for the average taxpayer to insulate their homes in winter, then it makes sense to insulate homes of the people they (taxpayers) are already paying benefits to," says Mike Barton, assistant director of District 11 Human Resources Council and director of the winterizing project.

The program is funded through a $40,000 federal grant which will be used primarily to buy materials. Thirteen CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) employes will do the work.

"We're talking about spending $40,000 to save $30,000 this year," Barton told **The Missoulian.** "But that $40,000 is a permanent thing. It'll save $30,000 again next year."

The District 11 HRC is hoping to insulate 250 homes in Missoula County, 230 in Ravalli County, and 100 in Mineral County. To qualify, a low income person must own his residence and receive income below 125% of the federal poverty level. A family of two with an income of $4,263 a year would qualify, as would a family of four with an annual income of $6,313.

"We've gotten calls asking 'why are you doing this for welfare people — haven't we done enough for them already?' " says Barton. "We tell them fuel is a finite quantity. It's either this or subsidize fuel bills (for persons on welfare)."

Barton says many elderly welfare recipients in rural Montana pay 60% of their income from November to March heating their homes.

belted kingfisher

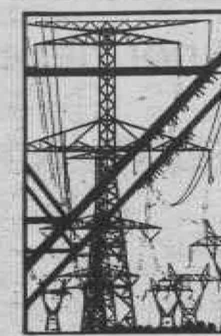
STATEMENT AND OWNERSHIP
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
NOTICE

(Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Date of filing, October 1, 1975.
2. Title of publication, **High Country News.**
3. Frequency of issue, biweekly.
4. Location of known office of publication, 140 No. 7th St., Lander, Wyoming 82520.
5. Location of headquarters of general business offices of the publishers, 140 No. 7th St., Lander, Wyoming 82520.
6. Names and addresses of publisher and managing editor, Thomas A. Bell, RFD Box 80, Richland, Oregon 97870 (publisher), Joan Nice, So. of Lander, Lander, Wyoming 82520 (managing editor).
7. Owner: **High Country News,** Box K, Lander, Wyoming 82520.
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 (one) percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
9. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average No. Each Issue	Actual No. This Issue
A. Total No. copies printed	3,700	4,200
B. Paid circulation, 1. Sales — dealers and counter sales	70	130
2. Mail subscriptions	3,100	3,140
C. Total paid circulation	3,170	3,270
D. 1. Free distribution	160	170
2. Copies not sold	70	100
E. Total distribution (sum C&D)	3,400	3,540
F. Office use, left-over	300	660
G. Total (sum E&F)	3,700	4,200

I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.
October 1, 1975 s Joan Nice



The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

LEASING BILL EMERGING. Interior Committee final action on amendments to the Coal Leasing Act (HR 6721) is expected this week. Three controversial amendments have been offered: 1) Rep. John Melcher's (D-Mont.) plan to add the provisions in the vetoed strip mining bill, 2) Rep. Teno Roncalio's (D-Wyo.) plan to increase the percentage of the lease royalties to be given to states from 37.5% to 60%, and 3) Rep. Harold Runnels' (D-N.M.) plan to allow railroads to compete for federal coal leases (see Reckoning, page 10).

INDEPENDENCE AT ANY COST. President Gerald R. Ford says he will ask Congress for $100 billion to create a new Energy Independence Authority. The EIA, originally proposed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, would "work through — not in place of — American industry" to achieve self-sufficiency by 1985. Goals for the EIA are: electricity from coal, nuclear, and geothermal sources; technological support of nuclear development; technological support of nuclear development; technological support to "produce or transport American energy."

UTILITY ADS RESTRICTED. Connecticut is the first state to pass legislation restricting advertising by utility companies, according to **Just Economics.** The law forbids utilities from charging customers for three sorts of ads: political — influencing public opinion on controversial issues such as nuclear power; institutional — image building or goodwill ads; promotional — encouraging use of a service or a product like air conditioning. Under the law customers will continue to pay for ads of public benefit — conservation tips, emergency notices, and rate schedules.

ARABS AFTER THE SUN, TOO. Saudi Arabia, the richest Middle Eastern oil state, is seriously considering a major program of solar development, according to The World Watch Institute. There is talk of Saudi Arabia becoming the first solar economy and of using solar power to make the desert bloom, as well as to help other Third World countries. Many of these poorer nations lie near the equator, where there is a greater solar potential than in the more industrial countries.

BILLS DON'T MIX WITH PR. A public utilities commission in California ruled in June that political mailings must be excluded from regular bill mailings by utilities. Several California citizens had filed the complaints against the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Southern California Edison when the companies included material opposing an initiative measure to control shoreline development. The commission said that "including political material along with such mailings . . . confers an economic benefit upon the utility and its shareholders . . . It is improper for a utility to charge political activity directly or indirectly to its ratepayers," according to a report in **The Power Line,** a publication of the Environmental Action Foundation.

MIXER MAKERS TO SHAPE UP. Major manufacturers of household appliances have voluntarily agreed to reduce energy consumption of new applicances by an average 20% by 1980, according to the Department of Commerce. The House Commerce Committee has approved an omnibus energy bill that includes a provision which would require applicance manufacturers to improve by an average 25% by 1980 or face mandatory standards.

BREAK UP BIG OIL. Four Senate Democrats have proposed legislation to break up the monopoly power of the largest U.S. oil companies. Sens. Phillip Hart (Mich.), Gaylord Nelson (Wis.), Gary Hart (Colo.), and James Abourezk (S.D.) want to outlaw major oil or gas companies from engaging in more than one stage of processing such as production, refining, transportation, and marketing. They say the present situation is not competitive and is driving up prices. The oil companies say fragmenting their operations would mean higher prices.

Western sacrifice not necessary, expert says

Eastern low sulfur coal supply plentiful

by Norman Kilpatrick

A general theme one gets from reading **High Country News** and from numerous statements by those promoting Western coal, is that since little or no low sulfur coal exists in the eastern United States, the Northern Great Plains, in the national interest, must prepare to become a national sacrifice area for coal, uranium, and gasification development. Otherwise, so the "pitch" goes, the citizens of our great eastern cities must choke on the sulfur of eastern coal or sell our nation's foreign policy out to the fellows in Arabia. Efforts to restrict or control western energy development, therefore, are painted as selfish, unpatriotic, or regional chauvinism.

Together with this approach goes a hard attack on the quality of the coal found in Appalachia. Such coal is either ignored or slighted. For example, the two-volume "Draft Environmental Impact Statement Proposed Federal Coal Leasing Program" mentioned low sulfur eastern coal once: "The supply of low-sulfur coal in the East is limited."

The Mitre Corporation did a study for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which projects huge "deficits" of low sulfur coal in the future in states like Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio, partly by using a companion argument: "Since coking coal used for metallurgical (metal-making) purposes cannot be replaced by other coals, coking coals were excluded from the data."

Now a case surely can be made for energy development in the West and the Northern Great Plains, but it is **not** true that this case can be supported by the claim that large amounts of low sulfur coal are not available to eastern utilities at a reasonable price. If you want to be a sacrifice area, all right, but be sure you understand it is a voluntary sacrifice, not something that Nature or the Arabs forced on you.

The U.S. Bureau of Mines estimated in 1965 that Alabama, Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia, **alone** had around 79 billion (yes billion) tons of high Btu coal with 1% or less sulfur content. The West Virginia Department of Mines estimated, in 1974, that that state had "recoverable reserves" of over 57 billion tons of coal, and the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey states that around 40% of this coal has a sulfur content of 1% or less.

Not only is our high heat value Appalachian coal plentiful; much of it is clean. Clean Air Act regulations tie the sulfur released by burning coal to its heat value. Thus, an Appalachian coal with a sulfur content of 0.7% is equal to a North Dakota lignite with a sulfur content of 0.35%, if the Appalachian coal has a Btu content of 13,000 per pound and the lignite 6,500 Btu per pound.

Well, what then of the claim that most such "good" Appalachian coal is needed to help make our steel? First, you have to look at the sheer size of the Appalachian low sulfur reserves. With America now using only between 500 to 550 million tons of coal per year, Appalachia obviously could supply the nation with even a greatly increased amount of coal, by itself, through the year 2000. This would not be wise, but it could be possible.

> If you want to be a sacrifice area, all right, but be sure you understand it is a voluntary sacrifice, not something nature or the Arabs forced on you.

Second, you must understand that good coking properties are not directly connected with low sulfur-low ash content. (Also, some sulfur and most ash can be removed from eastern coal by common "cleaning" techniques). Thus, coal with sulfur contents above 1% are used in steel making in areas such as Indiana, Illinois, and Pennsylvania.

Third, coal with properties that make it excellent for steel making are found in many parts of the nation. This includes the bituminous fields of Colorado and Utah, New Mexico and Oklahoma, and Arkansas and Alabama, Kentucky and Pennsylvania, as well as in Virginia and West Virginia.

Fourth, and possibly most important, the great steel companies have developed methods for making "coke" out of non-coking coals, including the sub-bituminous coals of the Northern Great Plains. This latter announcement was made in early 1975 by U.S. Steel, Inland Steel, FMC Corporation, and others. Thus, it is clear that the need for certain high quality Appalachian coal for steel making will decline, even if steel production goes up! This could be very serious for West Virginia and its neighbors, if midwestern utilities convert to western coal.

To further support the argument, I cite Howard Blauvelt, of Continental Oil (Consolidation Coal) who said in June that Consol had reserves of metallurgical coal able to, "sustain current rates of production for about 200 years." At the same time Bethlehem Steel recently published a booklet about coal that pointed out it sells a fair amount of its coal production to electric companies, and early in 1974 an announcement was made that U.S. Steel Company would be opening a three million ton a year coal mine in Pennsylvania for exclusive purchase by a Canadian utility. Thus, even when coal in the East is owned by a steel company, it is by no means unavailable to a power plant, under certain conditions and the right sort of contract.

Norman Kilpatrick is director of the Surface Mining Research Library (Box 5024, Charleston, W. Va. 25[illegible]) which was founded in 1971 by a grant from the Conservation Foundation. The library provides information, keeps in contact with coal activities in all parts of the nation and does consulting work. Kilpatrick is also the coal consultant to the West Virginia legislature. In addition to these duties he has promised to write an occasional column for **High Country News.** Next: "How political leaders seem to see the rise of western coal."

BULLETIN BOARD

IMPACT PANEL AT CASPER

A panel discussion on "Preplanning for Social and Economic Impacts of Energy Development" will be held at the Ramada Inn in Casper, Wyo., on Oct. 4 from 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Panelists will include the mayor of Casper, Wyo., State Senator Malcolm Wallop, Brooke Beaird of Atlantic Richfield, and Lynn Dickey of the Powder River Basin Resource Council. The meeting is sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Center on the Environment.

PIPE LINE WATS LINE

Need to know something about the Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Company's proposed coal gasification plant near Douglas, Wyo.? You can call the company's regional headquarters in Casper any time of day, toll free: 1-800-442-6910.

WYOMING WATER LAW

A publication called "Wyoming Water and Irrigation Laws" is available now from the Wyoming State Engineer for $2. The booklet covers surface and ground water and the statutes relating to appropriation and use of water from these sources. To get a copy write the State Engineer's Office, State Office Building East, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82002.

FIND FACTS BY COMPUTER

Energy information served up by computer is available through a joint project of the Old West Regional Commission and Surface Environment and Mining (SEAM). Quarterly Reports will list current offerings of research in the project's data file. Questions such as "What projects deal with Indian lands in relation to energy development?" or "What research is being done on the socioeconomic impact of energy development in North Dakota?" can be answered in a matter of minutes by a computer search, say project spokesmen. For more information contact Beth Givens, Old West Regional Commission, Fratt Building, Suite 306A, Billings, Mont. 59101, or call (406) 245-6711 ext. 6665.

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Two books on the transfer of development rights as a land use planning tool are now available: 1) **Transferable Development Rights,** published by American Society of Planning Officials, Reports No. 304, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637, $6, and 2) **The Puerto Rico Plan, Environmental Protection Through Development Rights Transfer,** published by the Urban Land Institute, 1200 18th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, $6 for members, $8 for nonmembers.

RANGE REPORT

Four Utah scientists say they have developed a method to predict how a depleted range will respond to restoration. They have just published the results of a five-year study on vegetation growth on 21 sites in central Utah. To obtain a copy of the 24-page report, "Site Productivity Classification for Selected Species on Winter Big Game Ranges of Utah," write to the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, 507 25th St., Ogden, Utah 84401.

ENERGY-MINERALS CONFERENCE

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management is holding a "Rocky Mountain Energy-Minerals Conference" Oct. 15-16 in Billings, Mont. Speakers will discuss the problems encountered in developing minerals and energy on public lands. Speakers include: Curt Berklund, director, BLM; Thomas L. Judge, governor of Montana; Carl E. Bagge, president of the National Coal Association; Jack Carlson, assistant secretary of Interior; Dr. Elvis J. Stahr, president of National Audubon Society; and Keith Doig, vice-president of Shell Oil Company. There is no registration fee. If you plan to attend write Edwin Zaidlicz, state director of BLM, P.O. Box 30157, Billings, Mont. 5910[illegible].

COMPOST

Copies of "Proceedings of the 1975 Composting and Waste Recycling Conference" are $1 from **Compost Science,** Emmaus, Pa. 18049.

PHOTO SERVICE

The National Audubon Society and Photo Researchers, Inc., have combined their services for providing natural history photographs for textbooks, encyclopedias, filmstrips, and other educational use. They offer sale of reproduction rights for a selection of close to half a million black-and-white and more than 200,000 color photographs of birds, animals, plants, geology, wildlife habitats, nature activities, and environmental subjects. Headquarters for the combined service is at Photo Researchers, 60 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y.

PLANNING THE HUNT EATING THE BOUNTY

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has published a book entitled **Enjoy Your Game Meat** which contains information on handling game meat and trophies, tanning hides, freezing, smoking, and storage, making pemmican and jerky, and cooking recipes. Big game, small game, upland game, waterfowl, and fish are all included.

Here's what the book recommends for preparing jerky:

"Strip the meat of all fat. Meat can be cut into strips, but must follow the grainline of the meat to avoid becoming too dry and crisp. The best way to follow the grainline is by finding the layers of muscle and pulling it apart with the fingers making strips an inch wide and eight to ten inches long.

"Lay the strips of meat on a cutting board. In a salt or pepper shaker combine one-fourth salt to three-fourths powdered barbecue seasoning and a dash of curry powder. Sprinkle strips of meat on both sides. Use a wooden mallet and pound seasonings into the meat turning it several times during the pounding process. This helps to spread the seasoning for a more uniform flavor.

"Preheat over to 150 degrees F. Lay seasoned strips of meat on an oven rack with a drip pan below to catch the crippings. Leave the meat in the oven for eight hours. Strips of meat should be leather-like, but should not taste like leather."

To buy a copy send $2 to the State of Wyoming, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Special Publications Section, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82002.

Western Roundup

HCN

Cyanide collars, M-44 guns released

The Environmental Protection Agency this month approved the use of sodium cyanide in cartridges (M-44s) and sheep collars to control predators. The poison collar program is a one year experiment in 13 western states designed to test the effectiveness of the device which releases a lethal dose of poison into any predator grabbing a collared sheep by the neck. The M-44 is a spring-loaded cyanide capsule that is placed in the ground and baited. When an animal tugs on the bait, the lethal poison is discharged into its mouth. EPA Administrator Russell Train said he released the previously banned M-44 gun "because of substantial new evidence on the safety and selectivity of the M-44 and restrictions surrounding its use." M-44 use will be restricted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or state agency personnel until private persons have been trained. M-44s may be used where livestock losses to predators are occurring or "may reasonably be expected to occur." Sheepmen call the EPA decision "no big deal" and are seeking release of a stronger poison — 1080. Several conservation organizations have called EPA's decision an "outrage."

Colorado timber plans appealed

Claiming that the Forest Service is only paying lip service to the principles of multiple use and the National Environmental Policy Act, three environmental groups have filed appeals on the timber management plans of four Colorado national forests. The plans project timber cutting and road construction for the next 10 years in the Arapaho, Routt, Rio Grande, and Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre National Forests. "If these plans for increased timber production are implemented, wildlife, fish, water, recreation, and wilderness resources will all be sacrificed," stated Jerry Mallett, coordinator for Wilderness Resources Institute (WRI), one of the appellants. Filing with WRI are Colorado Open Space Council Wilderness Workshop and the University of Colorado Wilderness Study Group. Ted Tomasi, co-director of the Wilderness Workshop of COSC, summed up the problem as one in which "the Forest Service is doing things backwards. Rather than evaluating their land by units for all potential resources, they first make a timber plan and decide their cuts, then they go back and plan other uses around the cuts."

Pryor wild horse range expanded

The Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range will be expanded to include about 3,000 new acres of adjacent lands. The expansion will allow the herd to increase from 125 head to about 140. The original range is a 32,000 acre federal reserve established in 1968 on the Montana-Wyoming border. New additions include 2,360 acres on Crooked Creek in Wyoming, and the 560-acre Mystic area along the top of 8,822-foot East Pryor Mountain in Montana. All new lands are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, as is the original range.

ENERGY FIRST, GRAZING SECOND

The Bureau of Land Management's first priority is energy and second is grazing, national BLM Director Curt Berklund told the national BLM advisory board in Elko, Nev. Kay Wilkes, BLM Division of Range chief, told the board 135 million acres of federal grazing lands are in unsatisfactory condition and current management programs are ineffective, according to an Associated Press release. "In the past 40 years our management and development efforts in cooperation with the livestock industry have slowed the rate of decline in range condition, but have not stabilized or improved it to an acceptable level," Wilkes said. Wilkes said 19% of the lands are improving, 65% are static, and 16% are declining. "Only 27 million acres are reported in satisfactory condition," he said.

McKinley may be renamed Denali

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names is considering changing the name of North America's highest mountain from Mount McKinley back to its original name, Denali. The Alaska State Legislature and the Wilderness Society have urged the name change. President William McKinley had no relevant association with the Alaskan peak. Denali is an Indian word meaning "the great one" or "the most high." Comments on the name change may be sent to U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Reston, Va. 22092.

PARK PLAN ASKS 91% WILDERNESS

Most of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado should be preserved as wilderness and private concessions should be phased out, the National Park Service has concluded in a final environmental impact statement. Under the new plan, 91% of the park's 239,835 acres would be designated wilderness. A key goal is eventually to close down most of the private concessions inside the park and encourage their re-establishment outside on private lands. Plans call for keeping the Hidden Valley ski area inside the park until another ski area is built in that part of the state. No new campgrounds will be built, although there will be added picnic areas to encourage day use. Park officials are also investigating establishing separate trails for horse users and hikers to reduce conflict.

Photo of Rocky Mountain National Park courtesy of the National Park Service.

Subdivision invades grizzly country

A new subdivision will invade grizzly country on the southern edge of Glacier National Park. The 143 acres to be divided into two and three acre lots has already been given preliminary approval by the Flathead County commissioners. **The Missoulian** reports that the state sanitary engineer is expected to give final approval to the project very soon. Dr. Charles Jonkel, an expert on grizzlies, predicts that the subdivision will "be nothing but continual problems if it is approved. "Their development . . . should be acquired, just bought by a state or federal agency as grizzly bear habitat," Jonkel told **The Missoulian.**

More worries over Rocky Arsenal

Nerve gas isn't the only dangerous substance stored at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver, Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) has revealed. Hydrazine — a flammable substance which can cause death if it is breathed, swallowed, or touches the skin — and a family of pesticides called ganophosphates are also of concern.

The danger posed by the deadly substances is aggravated by their proximity to Stapleton International Airport. They are stored in railroad cars a half-mile north of the main runway.

Because of public and political pressure in 1973 the Army began detoxifying nerve gas bombs stored at the arsenal. While attention has been focused on the nerve gas, the Army "has quietly continued to store and handle some of the most toxic and hazardous substances used by man," Hart claims. "If the poison gas is an unacceptable risk at the arsenal, then these other toxic substances are also unacceptable risks."

According to **The Denver Post,** the new commander at the arsenal said he was surprised by Hart's remarks. He said that although hydrazine was used as a rocket fuel, he didn't consider it a dangerous substance. He also said that facts about the pesticides, which are manufactured at the arsenal, "are well known."

Western update. . .

The **SKI YELLOWSTONE** draft environmental impact statement has been delayed and should be released by January 1976. Ski Yellowstone is a planned winter sports resort on Hebgen Lake in Montana grizzly bear habitat (see **HCN,** May 23, 1975, page 1).

GULF OIL CO. has agreed to pay the Bureau of Land Management $7,000 for damage done to the historic South Pass-Point of Rocks stage trail in southwestern Wyoming. The BLM had originally requested $17,500 plus restoration of the three and one-half miles of damaged trail (see **HCN,** Aug. 29, 1975, page 13).

BUNKER HILL CO. says it will spend from $5 million to $10 million to build twin 725-foot smoke stacks for its lead and zinc smelters at Kellogg, Idaho, to meet federal air standards. Environmental groups in Idaho and Montana oppose the plan, saying it will just contaminate a wider area. High levels of lead in Kellogg residents have been a major cause for concern (see **HCN,** Fed. 28, 1975, page 13).

HCN Books

Voices from the Mountains

Collected and recorded by Guy and Candy Carawan. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1975.

Review by Lynne Bama

This is a book about Appalachia, the region that stretches as plateau, Great Valley, and highland from West Virginia and southeast Ohio to northern Georgia. Its authors, Guy and Candy Carawan, have collected and recorded the words, songs, and pictures of both its inhabitants, especially those involved in union and community organizing, and those outsiders who have become involved with them.

Contrary to popular belief, the foreword notes, Appalachia is no longer an area where the Hatfields and McCoys live much as they did 100 years ago, but "a highly industrialized segment of the larger American economy." **Voices** is the story of the course of that industrialization and "the attempt by mountain people to retain the humanistic elements of the old culture and at the same time to adapt to the pressures and demands of a technological society."

The first interview is with Everette Tharp, a mountain man born in 1899, who saw the coming of the railroads change his way of life forever. It is followed by the words of a teacher who came to the region in 1926:

"... the best homes were usually the older log houses, and around these log houses were many pleasant things including much that was beautiful; for those who like open fires, hounds, children, human talk and song instead of TV and radio, the wisdom of the old who had seen all of life from birth to death, none of it hidden behind institutional walls, there was a richness of human life and dignity seldom found in the United States today . . ."

The next chapter, "They Can't Put It Back," deals with the impact of strip mining — the broad-form deed which gave coal companies the right to destroy the owner's surface in pursuit of his minerals:

"In eighteen and eighty my folks were rejoicing
They'd sold the mineral rights on the farm
For twenty-five cents an acre they sold them
My folks didn't know they would do any harm."

The effects of TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) policies to help develop the technique of strip mining as a source of cheap coal (only 10% of its electric power now comes from hydro facilities) and the desperate efforts of the inhabitants to protect themselves against this form of mining are also discussed.

The next theme introduced is that of people leaving the mountains to look for jobs:

"I'm working in a factory and thinking how it feels
To be bringing home good money like my Daddy never seen
But a feeling follows after me like a hound dog at my heels
'Cause I know that I'll never see my mountain home again."

This is followed by a chapter about the War on Poverty, in which the rest of the nation tried to do something for what one spokesman here describes as the "colonial possession of Eastern based industry." Perhaps illustrative of the patronizing national attitude is the following ad that appeared in **The New Republic:**

"An $18-a-day vacation in Mingo County, West Virginia — land of the Hatfields and McCoys. See and learn firsthand the problems of the poor by living with a mountain family. Become involved in Appalachian culture. Ideal for the intellect who wishes to learn."

The second half of the book deals with the coal industry — early days in the mines, child labor, and working conditions:

"Ridin' on a lizard in the thirty-inch coal
See the cable sparklin', watch the little wheels roll
Now Lord have mercy on a miner's soul
Down on your knees in the thirty-inch coal."

As New York Times columnist Ben A. Franklin notes, more than 120,000 men have died violently in coal mines in the past 100 years, and the "natural" death rate for miners aged 60-64 is eight times that of workers in any other industrial occupation.

Then comes the fight for unions, the eventual failure of those unions to protect miners, the Black Lung movement and, finally, United Mine Workers reform.

The cumulative impact of **Voices from the Mountains** is overwhelming — songs, words, and faces reinforcing one another in a counterpoint of human despair and courage.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect, though, for a resident of the Northern Great Plains area, is the feeling you get, reading through this book, that you have heard some of these things before:

"Strip mining, while it is going on, looks like the devil, but ... if you look at what these mountains were doing before this stripping, they were just growing trees that were not even being harvested."

—Chairman of the Board of TVA

Photo by Kris Mendenhall from VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

"Fortunately, the prime mineral areas of the state are not in recreation areas. With few exceptions they are in the arid areas of the state where it does not, in my opinion, create any environmental hazards."

—former Wyoming Governor Stanley K. Hathaway

* * *

"I have seen it in print and I have heard it directly from strip operators that the mountains must be ruined for the benefit of what they call 'the rest of the nation'. . ."

—Warren Wright
Appalachian regional activist

"The investment of tens or hundreds of billions of dollars in resource development will bring many changes, including permanent jobs, factories, homes, and businesses to areas of the Northern Plains which have long been nearly uninhabited. . . .If the changes involved would prove of vast benefit to the entire nation, then the national welfare should be the overriding and primary goal."

—U.S. Department of the Interior

* * *

"The growing power of the federal government combined with the ruthless practices of the coal, textile, and timber industries has, in recent years, raised the specter of a huge industrial park or 'hillbilly' reservation extending throughout Appalachia, peopled only by a few maintenance workers and ruled by federal or corporate managers. . ."

—Foreword of **Voices from the Mountains**

"We are a good deal in the same position as the Sioux Indians, the only difference is, that I hope we will not be relentlessly pushed out of the way and that we will ha[ve] perhaps, a better and more favorable reservation."

—William Holl[ey]
Wyoming state representa[tive]

* * *

It is of course impossible to say how comparable th[e] situation in Appalachia is, or could be, to that in th[e] Northern Plains. Many differences are immediately obv[i]ous. But **Voices from the Mountains** raises, at the ve[ry] least, some major questions.

Will coal development bring prosperity to the Norther[n] Plains? And, even if it does, how long will it last, and wha[t] will happen to our economy here when it is gone?

According to **Voices**, unemployment in Appalachia av[er]ages 30% higher than in the rest of the country. "Lo[cal] wealth is also concentrated in the hands of a few — [...] nine per cent of the population earned more than $1[...] in 1970."

Should the Northern Plains be anxious to "catch u[p]" with the rest of industrial, urban America?

Mike Smathers, a native of Big Lick, Tenn., says:

"I used to think that what was needed was to brin[g] mountain people into the 'economic mainstream.' [I] thought it would be possible to do this and still preserv[e] some of the positive, humanizing qualities of mountai[n] cultures. I no longer think that this is either possible o[r] desirable. Our challenge is not to join mainstrea[m] America. It is to recreate a renewed and authentic form [of] what the mountains have always been . . . the mountain[s] have offered an alternative to mainstream America."

Further, what will the development of a western co[al] industry do to Appalachia — will it benefit one regi[on] while removing yet more jobs from another, already i[n] economic trouble?

If Appalachia is the first "sacrifice area," and we are, a[s] some have thought, to become the second, where will th[e] process stop? Will it be only when the sacrifice are[as] become larger than the "rest of the nation" that we wi[ll] pause to consider the wisdom of our energy policies (o[r] lack of them)?

Many people in the Northern Plains seem to feel tha[t] Appalachia will not be repeated here. After all, haven'[t] we learned from their mistakes? Perhaps, but in th[e] words of Tom Gish, editor of the Whitesburg, Ky. **Mountain Eagle:**

"We need to be skeptical, to be suspicious, to a[sk a] million questions, and to demand answers of all wh[o] would come to save us, no matter what cloak they wea[r]. Had we asked the right questions and insisted upon th[e] right answers at the right time, we might have been save[d] from a TVA that devastates an entire region for its str[ip] coal; from a Corps of Engineers that builds dams simply t[o] build dams . . . We might even have been saved from ou[r] own folly in turning over the greatest wealth in the natio[n] to a few moneymen from the outside who wanted ou[r] minerals.

"We don't need any new ideology forced upon us. W[e] just need help in seeing and understanding all the alter[]natives. Give us all the facts — and I mean all of them — and we will make the right decisions."

Northern Plains people have begun to demand answer[s] to some of the questions about coal development here. Th[e] importance and necessity of their efforts cannot be over[]rated.

Voices from the Mountains should be required rea[d]ing for anyone within 100 miles of the Fort Union coa[l] deposit. The song from which its title is taken could hav[e] been written for us:

"You'd better listen when they talk about strip mining
Gonna turn the rollin' hills to acid clay.
If you're preachin' all about that silver lining,
You'll be talkin' till the hills are stripped away. . .

"You'd better listen to the voices from the mountain[s]
Tryin' to tell you what you just might need to know..."

Lynne Bama is a professional photographer and write[r] — and a frequent contributer to **High Country News**. She lives in Wapiti, Wyo.

The cumulative impact of **Voices from the Mountains** is overwhelming — songs, words, and faces reinforcing one another in a counterpoint of human despair and courage.

Hells Canyon

Roncalio loses Hells Canyon dams appeal

by Lee Catterall

Rep. Teno Roncalio's "one last appeal" for allowing dam construction on a 100-mile stretch of the Snake River between Idaho and Oregon appears doomed, ending a long and bitter fight.

Roncalio has fought the issue with all the tenacity he could muster — arguing, pleading, pounding his fist, even leaving his committee chair to make a more dramatic presentation from the witness table. But not persuading.

The Senate already has unanimously okayed a bill to create a Hells Canyon National Recreation Area where the Snake River forms the boundary of the two states. The House Interior Committee also gave its blessing last week to a similar proposal and sent it to the full House for approval.

The bill would protect more than a 1,000 square mile area, order the Snake River to continue flowing free, and turn the land inside its mile-steep canyons — nearly half the entire area — into a wilderness area.

Hells Canyon is known not only as the deepest gorge in the continent but as a potential source of hydroelectric power and irrigation water.

Roncalio has opposed the bill because it would not allow Pacific Northwest Power Co. to build what Roncalio described as "two relatively small dams" on that stretch of the river. That is a "substantial compromise" from what power companies once sought, he said.

He told fellow Interior Committee members the bill "waives forever" the possibility of providing nearly three million kilowatts of electricity and of irrigating as much as three million acres of surrounding desert farm land.

The two dams, he said, would provide as much electricity annually as would 12 million barrels of oil or four million tons of coal.

However, conservationists vigorously defended what they regard as "one of the most outstanding areas in the whole North American continent."

Rep. Roy Taylor (D-N.C.) said damming it would be "comparable to placing dams in the Grand Canyon."

Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D-Wash.) pounced on Roncalio's contention that it "waives forever" the building of dams.

"If we build two dams on that river, that decision is forever," Meeds said. "If we make the decision he (Roncalio) wants us to make, we can never undo it."

An attempt by Rep. Steven Symms (R-Idaho) to reject the bill failed by a vote of 6 to 24. Roncalio's amendment to allow construction of the dams failed 10 to 26 in the committee. Later, Symms was able to postpone a final committee vote on the bill by noting a quorum of the committee was not present.

Does the environment in this issue win over energy? Conservationists say yes, but Roncalio disagrees. While criticizing the "canoers and kayak boys" for wanting more "white water" than they need, Roncalio argued that power not generated from hydro-electric power plants in that area of the country might logically come instead from Wyoming's strip mined coal.

Most environmentalists disagree. They say damming Hells Canyon or burning Wyoming coal is "not an either-or choice." Not building dams in the canyon, they say, would mean burning coal from an average of 33 acres in Wyoming annually.

(Editors' note: The final House Interior Committee vote to save Hells Canyon was 32-4. Reps. Steve Symms (R-Idaho), Harold Johnson (D-Calif.), Sam Steiger (R-Ariz.), and Virginia Smith (R-Neb.) voted against the bill. Roncalio voted for the bill, but said he might offer his "compromise" amendment, allowing two dams in the area, on the House floor.)

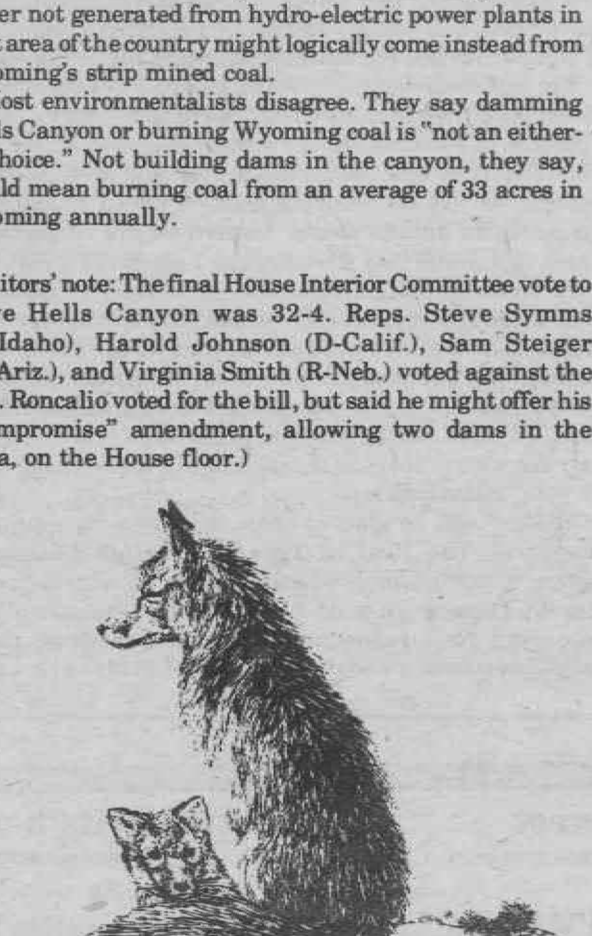
Mothballs ahead ?

Denver conservation library may close

Denver's nationally-known award-winning conservation library may be closed as part of a city-wide budget cutting program. Ed Miller, chairman of the Denver Library Commission said the city would postpone closing the conservation section until Dec. 31 in hopes that concerned groups could be able to raise enough money privately to fund the operation next year.

Denver's conservation library is one of two such special collections, according to the **Denver Post.** The other is in Minneapolis and is smaller than Denver's. The conservation library was founded in 1960 and has grown to be one of the world's best repositories of writings on conservation. In 1968 the library won the American Motors Corporation Conservation Award.

If sufficient money isn't raised, the collection will either be "put into mothballs" or integrated into the library's other departments, library director Henry Shearouse told the Post.



Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world

LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

TVA's haunted by a **Mountain Eagle**
(The paper that exposes all that's evil).
So TVA flees to the West,
Saying coal here is best
Knowing predator control here is legal.

EPA CAN BAN? The Environmental Protection Agency plans to require payment of deposits on soft drink and beer containers sold on federal property, according to **The Washington Post.** EPA calculates the move will cover two to four per cent of the national sales of such beverages. The Commerce Department denies that EPA has the authority to impose such a ban on throwaways.

SIERRA CLUB LIMITS INVESTMENTS. Reacting to the disclosure by the **Los Angeles Times** that environmental groups have been investing in major companies that pollute, the Sierra Club has decided to restrict such investment in the future. The club has ordered the sale of remaining investments in unacceptable corporations "as soon as can be done prudently, keeping loss to a minimum."

LAND USE BILL ALIVE. "Although proposed federal land use legislation has been killed on the House side of Congress, Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) has decided to go ahead in October with Senate Interior Committee consideration of the land use measure he sponsors," says **Land Use Planning Reports.** Jackson's bill contains a lengthy energy facilities planning section.

PESTICIDE PERMITS. Legislation allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to veto any action taken by the Environmental Protection Agency prohibiting the use of certain pesticides was defeated in the House Agriculture Committee. A compromise proposal requiring EPA to obtain and publish the Secretary's views was adopted.

IMPACT STATEMENTS FOR SUBDIVISIONS. A Colorado group has filed suit against the Department of Housing and Urban Development charging that environmental impact statements should be required from developers of subdivisions prior to selling lots. Large developments involving interstate commerce now must file papers designed to prevent fraud. The group, Colorado Public Interest Research Group, Inc. (COPIRG), says those registration papers should also include a full disclosure of the development's impacts. Environmental conditions such as a propensity for mudslides, potential for air pollution, and threats to wildlife would have "a substantial effect on a potential buyer's purchase decision," COPIRG charges.

ORGANIC FARMING SAVES DOLLARS. Preliminary research results indicate that a test group of organic farmers who used no inorganic fertilizers or synthetic pesticides made as much money last year as did a comparable group of conventional farmers who used those chemicals. The study was organized by Dr. Barry Commoner, director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems at Washington University. The organic farms in the study produced crops with an 8% lower market value than the conventional farms. But their costs were only 19% of the value of their production compared to 27% for the others. So the organic farms made as much profit as the conventional, according to the **New York Times** story.

FIRE HAZARD. Vehicles equipped with catalytic converters "constitute a serious fire risk . . . to forest fuels" and to the vehicle and occupants if engines are malfunctioning, according to a new preliminary Forest Service report quoted in the **Missoulian.** Forest Service officials plan no "national-level action or changes in policy as a result of the findings." They say properly functioning catalytic converters "have only slightly higher average exhaust system temperatures."

Mountain-loving lawyer lobbies for Sierrans

Like many conservationists, Brock Evans' convictions were born in the back country. Later when those beliefs led him toward politics, he followed, reluctantly. He left his home near the mountains in Seattle, Wash., to head to Sierra Club's lobbying effort in Washington, D.C. Now to his own surprise, he finds he's fascinated by "the interplay of people and faces and power" there.

"Evans admits, sitting in a tiny book-strewn office with a map of Washington state covering one wall, that politics in the capitol can be almost as engaging as the glacier country at home. His responsibilitics include lobbying on 22 critical conservation issues, including strip mining, oil shale, nuclear power, energy conservation, and wilderness.

He has a staff of four, a budget of about $150,000, and some vital help from other conservation organizations.

Raised in Ohio, Evans decided to make his home in the West after a summer vacation from law school spent working in Glacier National Park. That summer about 14 years ago is still vivid in his mind. He hopped on a train in Minneapolis and rode 1,000 miles across the prairie — farther than he'd ever gone in one direction before. When he first got a glimpse of the Rockies, he thought they must be clouds.

"I just couldn't believe anything was so magnificent. The instant I stepped off the train I knew I couldn't live anywhere else. When it came time to leave law school, it was only a question of where in the West I was going to live," Evans says.

He chose Seattle and he practiced law there for four years.

"But the main thing I was there for was the mountains," he says.

Now considered an expert on forestry issues, Evans says the first time he came upon a large clearcut he thought, "They can't do that. This is a national forest. This is public land."

From the moment he lost his innocence about timbering, Evans says he wanted to fight. But even with his legal background, he didn't know how. Discovering the North Cascade Conservation Council was what eventually set him on fire.

"I thought, if someone else is going to fight, not be afraid of the government, then maybe you can beat them," he says.

That was the beginning of Evans' all-out commitment to conservation. When he wasn't working, he was eating, breathing, and sleeping conservation. Eventually the Sierra Club offered him the position of Northwest representative. "Why not get paid to crusade?" he said. He still can't quite believe that his job so neatly matches his interests.

While in the Northwest, he was able to "bore in" on forestry issues, becoming the environmental community's expert. Although he's not so able to specialize now, he recommends that path to other conservationists.

"It's amazing to me how much one person can do around here if they really want to," Evans says.

He says Louise Dunlap, who heads the Environmental Policy Center's Coalition Against Strip Mining, is a good example of the power of concentration. She's an expert. He also trades information with specialists in Audubon, Friends of the Earth, and the Wilderness Society.

There are two games played in Washington, Evans explains, money and votes. Since the Sierra Club doesn't have any money — their entire budget is equal to a single oil company lobbyist's salary — they try to wield votes. And that kind of power, if properly mobilized, can be every bit as influential as money, Evans believes.

"Mail gets read. Mail from the constituency is very important," he says.

On some issues, letters win conservation battles. Conversely, "That's what killed the land use bill — all the negative mail coming in," Evans says.

One roadblock to the Sierra Club's lobbying success is the composition of the Interior Committee, which does not reflect the composition of Congress, Evans says. Many of its members are from rural western or southern areas.

"We are not strong in those places. We are strong in the urban areas," Evans says. "And 1,000 letters from New York City won't mean as much to Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.) as two letters from Casper (Wyo.). We just have to look at the rural areas and see how we can do better."

Evans says he still has some hope for the passage of good strip mining legislation this year. "But I'm not at all says. "We let that bill (vetoed by the President) get as weak as we could let it become."

Thus, he cannot support the rider which the Senate has attached to their version of the coal leasing bill. The rider, interested in bargaining with the Administration," he makes reclamation rules which would apply to federal lands only.

"We were glad to see strip mining regulations for federal land — but that's the easiest thing to get," Evans says. "The hardest thing is to regulate what they're doing on private lands."

If the bill regulating federal lands passes, he's afraid that will make it harder to get regulations for private lands.

He looks favorably upon a rider attached to the coal leasing bill in the House, which includes rules for both federal and private lands.

Other important issues are coming up in Congress soon, Evans warns westerners. A few are the Arctic gas pipeline, with proposed routes through either Alaska or Canada, the Hells Canyon Preservation Act, and revision of the 1872 mining law. He has given up on passing any land use legislation during this session of Congress.

Evans still marvels that it is his job to explore these and other issues of importance to the West. "It's fantastic," he says, "getting to do something you like."

The politics of natural resource issues have filled his mind and his heart for a couple of years now. While that feeling lasts, he's willing to forgo the mountains and the glaciers for the struggles at the Capitol.

—JN

Conservation portrait

Brock Evans

Dear Friends,

About a year ago a Casper, Wyo., businessman came to **HCN** to ask if we knew why the Tennessee Valley Authority might have an office in Wyoming. He questioned how — and why — a federal agency with the special powers and financial advantages that it enjoys could be coming so far from its mandated jurisdiction to compete with private industry for such a valuable resource as uranium.

His question led to this week's cover story. As we soon learned, the agency he questioned from a private businessman's viewpoint also turns out to be highly questionable from a humanistic as well as an environmental perspective. It also should make us think twice before we glibly advocate nationalizing utilities.

TVA is a story that points clearly to how interrelated the human cause and the environmental cause usually are. For as TVA moves west, it robs jobs from the people of the Appalachian coal mines. The people of Appalachia have never had an easy life, as Lynne Bama's review of **Voices from the Mountains** (see page 14) points out.

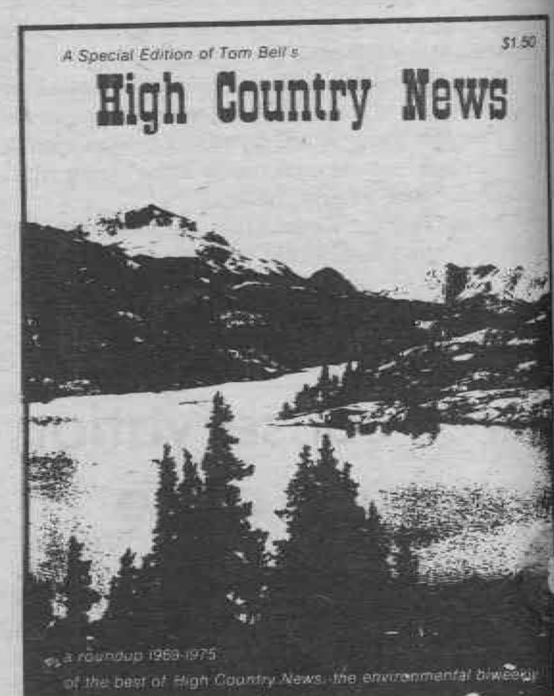
But just because deep mining has in the past meant lives full of hardship, it doesn't have to — if TVA and others in the business accept some of their social responsibilities. Thus when we protest the focus on western strip mining, we are not taking a position which endangers Appalachian miners' safety. Instead, we are supporting them in maintaining the economic base of their region.

As Norm Kilpatrick points out in his story on eastern coal (see page 12), the coal is there in sufficient supply. He insists that we don't have to feel that we are being unrealistically chauvinistic and uncaring about national power needs either. "If you want to be a national sacrifice area, all right, but be sure you understand it is a voluntary sacrifice — not something Nature or the Arabs forced on you," Kilpatrick says.

Readers will be glad to know that the long awaited magazine, **The Best of Tom Bell's High Country News**, is finally completed and is now being trimmed and stapled. Those of you who have ordered months ago will be receiving your copies soon. For new readers, this magazine contains a selection of articles from the past six year history of **HCN** including sections on alternative energy, fossil fuels, land use, wildlife, and people of the high country. There is also a special section on the history of the paper, telling how Tom got involved, about the "miracle" in March, 1973, when the readers saved the paper from going under; and how Tom left the paper to the rest of the staff when he moved on to Oregon.

We would like to supply copies to subscribers but must charge $1.50 each to help cover printing costs. If you want a copy for your own reference or have a friend you would like to introduce to the paper, this might be the way.

—the editors



In The News