

The Environmental Bi-Weekly



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Battle over Teton jetport still rages

by Bruce Hamilton

Two years after public hearings, the National Park Service is still embroiled in a national controversy over whether or not to allow the establishment of a commercial jetport in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming.

Jackson Hole Airport is the only airport within a national park. It is presently serviced by Frontier Airlines with Convair 580 aircraft. Frontier, and the Jackson Hole Airport Board, would like to bring Boeing 737 jet aircraft into this scenic high mountain valley, but to do so they would need a longer runway.

Runway extension is being opposed by the country's major conservation organizations because of anticipated increases in

"Developments now underway at the airport will undermine the transportation study."

noise levels and air pollution in the park. This month, conservationists were joined by the Secretary of Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, which passed a resolution recommending against any

expansion of the airport to make it into a regional facility.

In addition, some conservationists have called for removing the existing airport from within the park. The Secretary of Interior has ordered a regional transportation study of the Grand Teton-Yellowstone area to look into alternative sites for the airport. At the same time, the Jackson Hole Airport Board has undertaken an airport master plan study, and Frontier Airlines has flown a Boeing 737 into the existing airport to conduct noise and aircraft performance tests.

In 1971, Congress appropriated \$2.2 million for Jackson Hole airport "planning, development, or improvement." The appropriation was followed in 1973 by a draft environmental impact statement issued by the Park Service to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. The statement reviewed possible impacts from various "improvements" proposed for the existing airport.

In May, 1974, following issuance of a final environmental impact statement, then-Secretary of Interior Rogers C.B. Morton ordered that all requested improvements be installed, with the exception of the runway extension to accommodate commercial jets. Morton called for the

(Continued on page 6)



TETON JETPORT? A Boeing 737 jet takes off from Jackson Hole Airport in Grand Teton National Park on a test flight. Photo by Roger LaVake.

Save-the-range lawsuit riles ranchers, BLM

by Joan Nice



BACKFIRE? The Natural Resources Defense Council grazing suit was filed to prevent further abuse of publicly owned range lands in the West. The national environmental group won. Now critics say the suit may be having an opposite effect. Above, wild horses on public land in Montana.

An environmental suit aimed at stopping grazing abuses on public lands is causing management problems, according to a Bureau of Land Management spokesman in Wyoming.

"There is a hold on all range improvements on public lands including fencing and construction of water holes," the spokesman told *High Country News* last week. He indicated that for some areas in the country, that "hold" could last until 1988, until environmental impact statements are completed.

"We don't like it any better than anyone else," said John Burnett, public affairs director for the BLM in Cheyenne, Wyo. He said the agency was taking the action in response to a court ruling that the BLM must file environmental impact statements (EIS's) on groups of grazing allotments before future management plans can be implemented.

In both Nevada and Oregon, however, BLM officials are in the process of imple-

menting range improvements. Burnett explained that these were special cases. He said that before an EIS is completed on a given piece of range, improvements can only be added in "emergency situations." "And we don't foresee any emergencies (in Wyoming)," Burnett said. He added that if an emergency did arise, an environmental assessment report would be filed to determine whether the action was significant enough to require a formal EIS.

Some ranchers affected by this decision are not pleased. "If all improvements are stopped, our public lands are going to be a mess," says Jessie Baker, executive director of the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association. "Everything has to be managed or improved."

NOT A FREEZE

The national environmental group which brought the suit against the BLM says that the agency may be missing the point. The group, the Natural Resources

(Continued on page 4)

2-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

HIGH COUNTRY

By Jane Bell

"The independent grower, living on the land with his whole livelihood at stake, tends to be much more careful and much more efficient. After all, the economics of scale run out at some point, and they run out quickly in agriculture. There is something personal in farming, the experience which man acquires only by being on his land for many seasons, a touch he develops by feeling his earth, by knowing his trees, his vines, his water. I am not trying to romanticize, I am being deadly serious."

from Farm Profits

The above words were not spoken by some organic farming nut. They are quoted from the president of a Tenneco subsidiary, Howard P. Marguleas. Tenneco has large corporate investments in agriculture.

Corporate farming is only one of the latest developments in American farming. Since World War II the use of chemical pesticides has become one of the mainstays in crop production. (Ironically, it was poisons developed to kill people during World War II and tested on insects that became the efficient bug killers in the fields.)

Man has known for centuries of the importance of fertilizers for increased crop yields, or even for maintenance of yields. But through the ages, man depended upon his own crop residues, animal manures, by-products, his own wastes, and other natural constituents to keep up fertility.

Productive soil is not a sterile lifeless medium. It is a richly complex mix of inorganic materials derived originally from rock and organic materials, alive and dead. The dead material comes from decomposing plant and animal tissue. The living organisms are a wide variety of minute to large plants and animals. They range from bacteria, molds, and other fungi to the roots of higher plants and the earthworms, insects, and rodents that live or dig deep beneath the surface. Once you seriously disturb that total soil organism, you are affecting the soil's health and its long-range productivity.

Only now is research getting underway to determine why chemical farming methods are damaging the soil, polluting the water, and causing more weed and insect problems than farmers had before.

Meanwhile, back on the land more and more farmers are returning to the more traditional organic farming methods. Large farmers throughout the farming areas of the country are kicking the chemical habit. And the statistics are now proving that they are as successful and efficient as their neighbors at far less cost to the environment and in terms of energy used. Of even more importance is the fact that organic farmers are in a far better position to continue to produce quality foods as the energy crisis deepens. And as costs of manufacturing fertilizers and pesticides continue to escalate, the farmer not dependent upon chemicals will have a decided economic advantage.

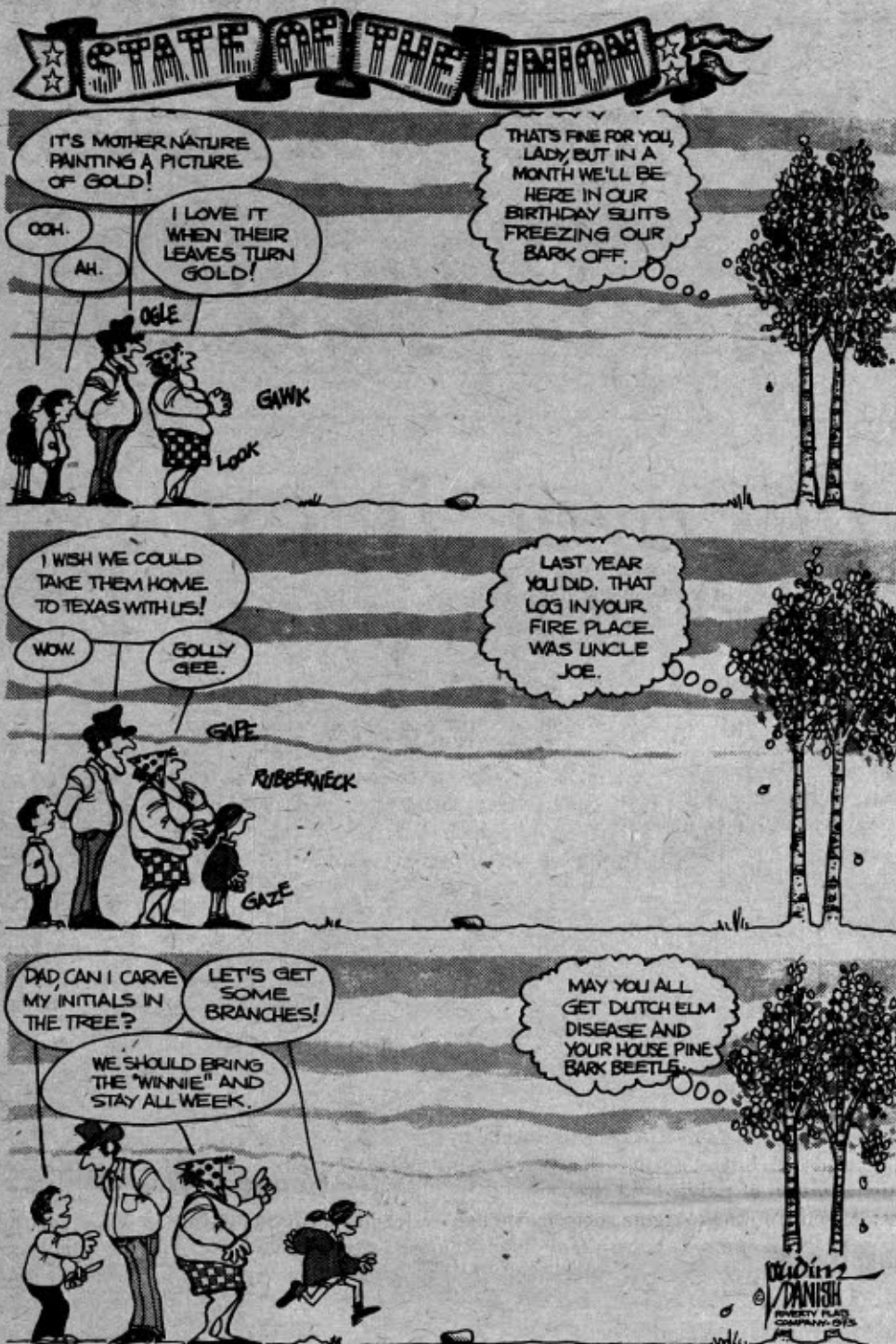
Additional benefits from organic farming are realized from the lesser effects of drought conditions. During recent near-drought periods in the Midwest, organic farming yields held up far better than those from chemically-dosed farms.

Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz was once quoted as saying that if we returned to organic agriculture, someone would have to choose which 50 million Americans would be allowed to die from starvation. He may live to regret those words as he already has some of the others he has spoken.

Nevertheless, a sudden return to an organic agricultural economy would have far-reaching economic consequences for the country. Thousands of people are employed in manufacturing, distributing, and applying chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It is a whole new industry within an industry that has grown up in the last 30 years. It could not be abandoned quickly nor easily.

Experts the world over predict that there will be tragic famine on a wide scale in the years just ahead. Our country is the leading food producer in the world. Yet we are not immune from the consequences of severe food shortages. (Police in the larger cities are already taking food-riot training.) We are most vulnerable because we are the most dependent upon energy to work the fields, transport the food, produce the chemicals, and keep the food chain going.

It would seem most prudent to begin now to deemphasize a chemically-oriented agricultural system for one which could survive a serious energy shortage, droughts, or other possible disruptions. The lives of our people and the continued existence of our society are at stake.



HCN Letters

OBJECTS TO AEP ADS

Dear HCN,

In your September 26th issue, you presented an editorial concerning electrical utilities, and how consumers have been footing the bill for political and promotional advertising. I feel this is most timely as just recently, Sen. Lee Metcalf of Montana publicly accused the majority of utility companies of such practice, as well as pointing out that the same companies do not pay a penny in federal taxes.

For the last 18 months I have been most concerned with a series of ads in *Newsweek Magazine* by the American Electric Power Company Inc., a large consortium of utility companies in the eastern U. S. These ads have been undermining environmentalists and calling for relaxing the Clean Air Act so that they can get on with strip mining the West. They say, "We have plenty of coal, let's use it, fully."

In the September 22nd issue of *Newsweek*, another two page ad appeared, asking the public if they agree with their stand of a national commitment to coal (instead of oil). I am taking this opportunity to tell them how I feel

about paying to promote strip mining in the West, and I hope your readers will also. I am sending copies of my letter to my congressmen. The address to write is: American Electric Power Company, Inc., Dept 5C, 2 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004. This company is claiming that the majority of people agree with their stand, I hope we can turn it around. Perhaps they haven't heard how many westerners feel about their land, so let's tell them loud and clear.

Sincerely,
L. S. Comola
Noxon, Mont.

OFFENSIVE ODORS

Dear HCN,

I am enclosing a newsletter from the Council on Economic Priorities showing the small cost to the consumer of cleaning up the air and water pollution in the refineries for oil and gas established throughout the United States. As we travel across Wyoming from Colorado to Montana, we are greeted at Cheyenne, Wyo.; Midwest, Wyo.; Casper, Wyo.; and Billings, Mont., with the very offensive odors of the refineries located there, and the resulting air pollution caused by them in Billings.

Why must we be subjected to this poisonous air when there are solutions available for this offensive problem?

These aforementioned cities would be livable and enjoyable if these refineries would clean up the processing of oil and gas.

Sincerely,
Esther K. Epling
Lavina, Mont.

HCN Editorial

Aspinall proposes public land giveaway

Wayne N. Aspinall, a former 12-term U.S. Representative from Colorado and the man who topped Environmental Action's "Dirty Dozen" list of anti-environment candidates in the 1972 election, is touring Wyoming advocating the disposal of public lands in the West. Aspinall holds the Milward L. Simpson chair for political science at the University of Wyoming and is delivering public addresses at the state's community colleges as well as teaching an advanced course in political science at the university in Laramie.

In his speech Oct. 13 at Northwest Community College in Powell entitled "Wyoming's Stake in Our Natural Resources," Aspinall called for the transfer of public lands from federal to state control, according to the **Powell Tribune**. He would allow retention of national parks, monuments, and historical sites, but require transfer of



public lands where the federal government presently acts as a "husbandman." This is his polite way of saying let's give away all the national forests, wilderness areas, and national resource lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Aspinall's reasoning is that in the 13 original states only 3.7% of the land is federally controlled, while in the 12 western states the total is over 52%. He told his Powell audience that the best government is that which is closest to the people — state government. He said, according to the **Tribune**, that federal control is bad because there is a danger of nationalization of public land resources.

Looking past Aspinall's states'-rights rhetoric, we see danger in the path he recommends. Aspinall lived in Washington, D.C., for a quarter of a century, but the plight of public on the East Coast apparently didn't have much impact on him. In the East, when you walk or drive

to the edge of a forest there is no friendly Woodsy Owl sign there to greet you saying, "Welcome, help conserve and enjoy the national forests." More likely there is a red and white sign saying, "NO TRESPASSING. KEEP OUT. VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED." There is a very good reason why millions of Americans flee the pressure-cooked 13 original states every year for a vacation in the public lands of the West. Aspinall seemingly ignores this national need for open space.

Aspinall leaves the mistaken impression that the federal bureaucracy owns over half of the West. In fact, these public lands are owned by over 220 million Americans.

Giving this national heritage over to the states could effectively lock the public out of its last frontier of open space and usher in a new age of accelerated resource exploitation in the West.

The states are typically under the mandate to dispose of state lands for the greatest possible financial return. More often than not, this has meant leasing and selling off state lands with little thought given to the long-term public interest.

For instance, in Wyoming the State Land Board has leased almost every acre with any potential for coal development. A similar leasing extravaganza was planned for the state's oil shale bearing lands, but there was not enough industry interest in the low-grade reserves.

Similarly, state lands in Wyoming have been overly fenced to the detriment of wildlife, sold off to speculators, and subdivided. The state has been preoccupied with how to dam rivers rather than preserve them in a free-flowing state.

This specter of total resource exploitation in the West is probably just what Aspinall has in mind. He believes lands should be used, opened up, fully developed. But in the process, conservationists believe, these lands could be destroyed. While serving as chairman of the House Interior Committee, Aspinall pushed for damming the Grand Canyon, opening up wilderness areas to mining, and giving away the nation's public lands. His latest actions are an extension of that philosophy.

Since the voters of Colorado rejected his anti-conservation platform in 1972 he has been hired as a

lobbyist for the mining industry, and worked successfully to convince his former colleagues in Congress not to pass a strip mine regulation bill earlier this year. Now he is out lobbying the public, again espousing total exploitation and preaching against preservation.

Aspinall is like the old trader with the Indians — offering beads and destroying a culture in the process. We may end up with a handful of coins, and lose the priceless heritage of our public lands. —BH



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SKEPTICAL OF BEAR REPORT

Dear Editors,

We were interested in reading the letter "Where are the bears?" in your Oct. 10 issue. My husband and I, along



with two friends, drove through the east entrance six weeks ago, spending the night in Cooke City, Mont. We had seen no wildlife of any kind and mentioned the fact to a store owner in Cooke City. She told us bears had been over-tranquilized and many had died in the process of

moving them to other areas. Therefore, we are skeptical about Park Biologist Glen Cole's information on why more bears aren't to be seen.

In 1951, driving through the park we counted 51 bears. We are all grateful for that experience. I guess those days are over, but we have movies to remember it by. We are very concerned about the increasing scarcity of our wildlife and hope something can be done about it.

Sincerely,
Margo and Herb Stratford
Cody, Wyo.

STICKY FLOCK

Dear HCN,

Just received the Oct. 10 issue of **High Country News** and noted with great interest the article on the Oahe irrigation project.

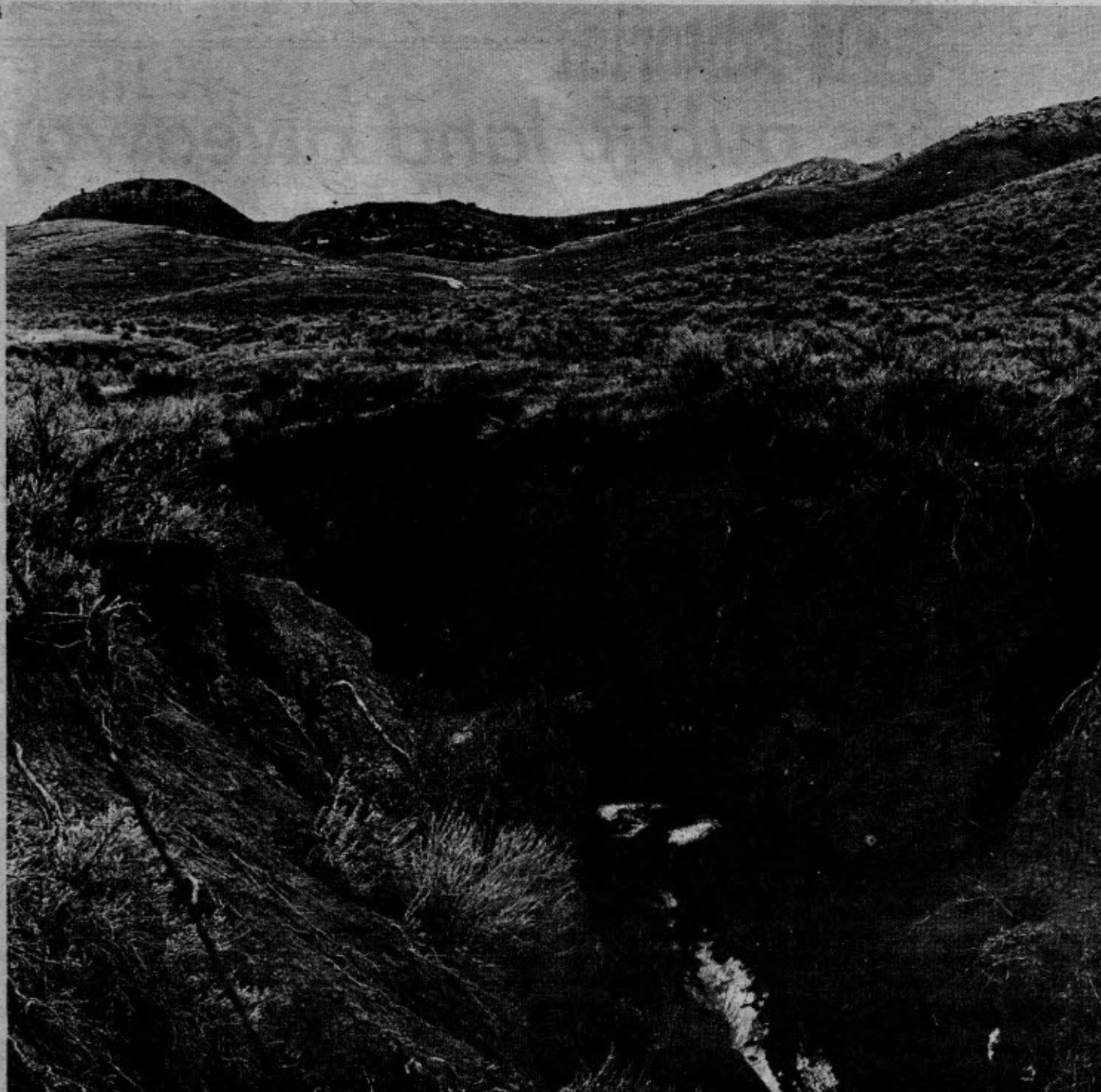
I am enclosing a flyer by the Friends of Oahe, a project booster organization. It was sent to me by Kearns Machinery Co., the dealers for Caterpillar Tractor Co., makers of earth-moving road construction equipment, who as you can guess, has a service to sell. Kearns Machinery Co. has outlets in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, and Rapid City. Also Kearns has lavishly contributed to the Gov. Richard Kneip election campaign last fall. So birds of a feather flock together. As far as I can detect, it's the almighty dollar at work as usual.

Yours truly,
A.W. Redlin
Summit, S.D.



4

Photo by Lynne Bama



OVERGRAZING AND EROSION. Overgrazed lands are vulnerable to erosion. Above, a serious example.

Range lawsuit. . .

(Continued from page 1)

Defense Council, claims that the official court agreement did not dictate a freeze on activities on public lands. Allotment management plans (grazing plans) which existed before the court dispute was settled may be implemented. And in other areas, "only those major activities which would have a significant impact on the human environment" are prohibited until impact statements are complete, says NRDC attorney Johanna Wald.

The issue hinges on a court agreement signed by both BLM and NRDC in April. The passage in question states: "It is agreed that . . . the Federal Defendants recognize that action(s) which are supportive of grazing as described in subparagraph (f) above may have significant impact on the human environment and in such cases, no such action(s) will be undertaken."

Subparagraph (f) defines "actions supportive of grazing" as "those substantial activities which are supportive of and related to livestock grazing administered by the BLM, such as fencing, livestock water development, spraying, chaining, seeding, and brush removal."

BLM VULNERABLE

One BLM official believes that adopting the NRDC interpretation of this passage would make the BLM very vulnerable to lawsuits. The official says that if the agency decided to allow a fence or a watering hole on an allotment before the impact statement was completed, NRDC or any other affected party could sue the BLM,

claiming that the court agreement had clearly stated that such actions "may have a significant impact on the human environment."

NRDC says that vulnerability is nothing new. "Our lawsuit asks nothing of the BLM that they weren't obligated to do under the National Environmental Policy Act before," says NRDC's Wald. Federal agencies are required to file environmental assessment reports to determine whether or not an action is significant enough to require a formal impact statement. "That's true of any activity before or after our lawsuit," she says.

Since the BLM ordered a halt to range improvements, ranchers are concerned about how long they must wait until things are back to normal. According to the court agreement, the last of the required 212 statements ordered by the court will be completed in 1988. A few ranchers will be at a standstill until then. But on more than two-thirds (69%) of the acreage involved, impact statements are scheduled to be complete within the next five years.

Ranchers are also concerned because they have been told by the BLM that until an impact statement on their allotment is completed, their grazing permits will be renewed on a year-to-year basis.

In most cases grazing permits are already issued on a one-year basis. Only on the 12% of public grazing lands where allotment management plans have been completed have any longer-term — usually 10-year — permits been issued. On 88% of the lands, where plans have not been completed, permits have always been issued annually.

The suit will mean a few ranchers who

now have 10-year permits will have to renew each year until the EIS on their allotment is complete. But it appears that for most ranchers, the suit may speed up progress toward longer-term permits. Allotment management plans were not scheduled to be complete nationwide until the year 2000, while with the stimulus

provided by the suit, BLM will theoretically complete the EIS's by 1988.

The suit was originally filed in federal district court in Washington, D.C., by NRDC and others concerned about overgrazing and other abuses of public lands. Plaintiffs included the Ada Fish and Game League of Boise, Idaho; the Oregon Environmental Council; the National Council of Public Land Users of Grand Junction, Colo.; the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association in Carson City, Nev.; and James Morgan, a Montana wildlife biologist.

The plaintiffs asked that EIS's be prepared to assess the localized effects of issuing federal grazing permits. They alleged that public lands were widely abused by accelerating erosion, deterioration of water quality and quantity, and impairment of recreational uses.

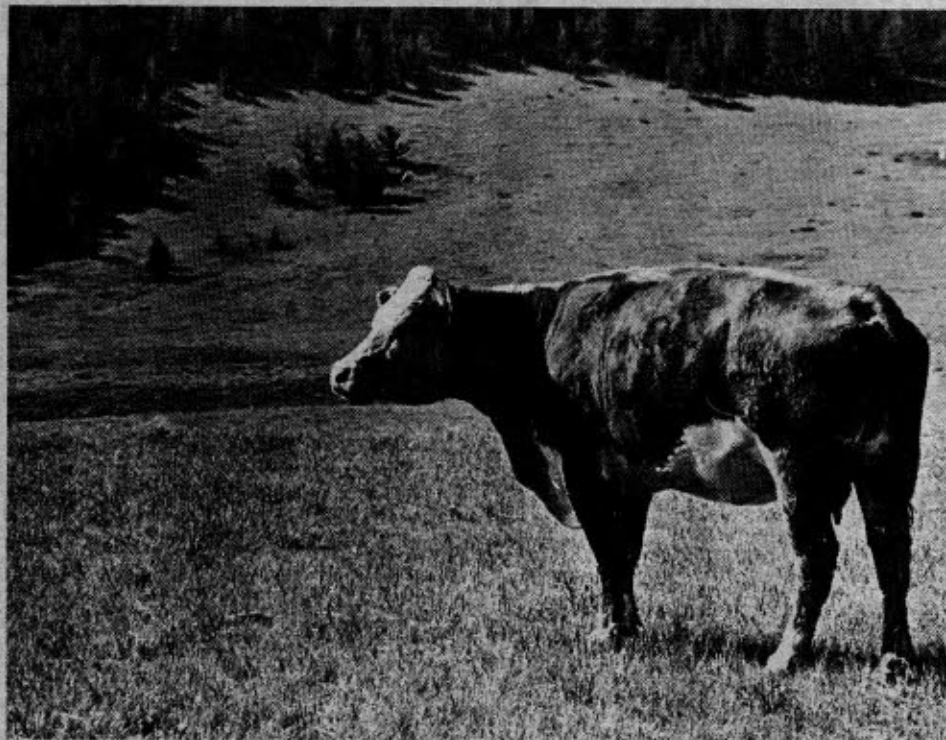
Judge Thomas A. Flannery ruled in favor of NRDC Dec. 30, 1974. In his decision he stated that "grazing clearly may have a severe impact on local environments" and that without localized assessments of such grazing, "there is a serious threat of injury to the public lands."

The court said, "Over the past four years the BLM has shown relatively slow progress in implementing a thorough management planning system which would assist in protecting the environment." This fact, the court said "lends urgency to the plaintiffs' claims."

The court decision also summarized the evidence of serious grazing abuses on public lands. "The BLM Budget Justification for fiscal year 1973 estimated that only 16% of the BLM managed grazing lands was in good or excellent condition while 84% was in fair, poor, or bad condition," the judge wrote. An April 1974 BLM report on grazing in the state of Nevada revealed "Uncontrolled, unregulated, or unplanned livestock use is occurring in approximately 85% of the State and damage to wildlife habitat can be expressed only as extreme destruction," the court noted.

ADRENALIN FROM COURT

"The court is aware that, like many agencies, the BLM has been given large scale tasks to be accomplished with limited manpower," the judge said. But he ruled that was not a valid reason for the agency to ignore National Environmental Policy Act requirements. To support that conclusion, he quoted an opinion in another case:



PAPERWORK SCHEDULED. On 69% of the public's grazing acreage, environmental impact statements required to comply with a recent court order will be completed within five years. Statements on the remaining acreage will all be completed by 1988, according to the schedule set by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Bureau of Land Management. The statements will assess the impacts of grazing and related activities on public lands.

Photo by Tom Bell

Oct. 24, 1975 — High Country News-5

"Although these steps may be cumbersome, even awesome, they may well be within the agency's grasp, at least generally. The court's injunction should serve like adrenalin, to heighten the response and to stimulate the fullest use of resources."

Since the ruling, the plaintiffs and BLM have completed an agreement which sets guidelines for implementing the court's decision. The agreement was signed April 11 and a final judgement was issued by the

court on June 18. The first impact statement, a model for the others to follow, is underway on the Challis Unit in Idaho. A draft version of the statement is due before the end of this year.

Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger denied a request by livestock owners to delay preparation of impact statements until the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington has considered their appeal of the case. The BLM is not participating in the appeal.



RISKY TO IGNORE HIM. Ground squirrels are important, conservationists point out, in assessing the effects of a proposed desert land entry in Idaho. Conservationists fear that converting the desert shrub lands to farm lands would drastically reduce the squirrel population, and, consequently, the food supply for falcons, eagles, and hawks at the adjacent Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area.

Photo by Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife

Idaho desert entry threatens squirrels, birds of prey area

The opening of a large tract of public land in Idaho to farmers is proving controversial because of the acreage's abundant ground squirrels.

The Bureau of Land Management and the Soil Conservation Service are planning to develop 20,000 acres south of Kuna, Idaho, for Desert Land Entry farming. This will allow people to apply for a patent to 320 acres of approved land. The individuals will have five years to develop the land and bring it into agricultural production. If they succeed, they've earned a patent and the land is theirs.

The Townsend's ground squirrels that thrive on the approved desert shrub land pose a problem, however. The squirrels are an important source of food for hawks and eagles in the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area to the south. Preliminary work by researchers at the University of Idaho indicates that ground squirrel populations are drastically reduced when a Desert Land Entry is developed. The development will be next to the five mile wide buffer zone on the north rim of the natural area.

Conservationists have proposed that the BLM leave islands of natural habitat

which would be beneficial to wildlife, instead of creating a solid 20,000 acres of farm land.

The Snake River Bird of Prey area shelters over 230 nesting pairs of golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, and other birds of prey.

To contact the BLM, write William Mathews, state director, Federal Building, 550 W. Fort, Boise, Idaho 83702.

Dollars for range

Sen. Floyd K. Haskell (D-Colo.) has introduced a bill which would pour \$171 million over a 20-year period into the Bureau of Land Management for restoration of public range lands.

Haskell said that according to BLM figures, 33% of all federally owned range land is in poor condition.

He predicted that the program would actually bring in \$125 million annually from increased grazing fees because more cattle could be placed on restored range. "If we don't do something, the cost to us in the West is going to be a lot higher," Haskell said at a press conference in Denver.

Planning system utilizes 'blindness'

BLM tackles mammoth planning responsibilities

Dale Brubaker and a staff of eight are responsible for about 2.5 million acres of public land near Lander, Wyo. Brubaker, an area manager for the Bureau of Land Management, finds the number of acres "unsettling."

"I wouldn't mind making tradeoffs (choosing to favor one resource at the expense of another) if I really knew all of the area," he says. "But there are some places I haven't been yet and that gives me an uneasy feeling."

Other area managers across the country have equally vast responsibilities. Although short of both staff and money, they are aided by a standard planning system.

The bureau planning system sets up a long-range framework for day-to-day decision making. Its main elements are inventory, analysis, and public input. Unfortunately, the agency has a difficult time applying this system to all of its acreage. Some areas are allowed to drift without planning, because of financial and legal limitations.

Brubaker has chosen to place special emphasis on 400,000 acres of public lands near the uranium boom town of Jeffrey City, Wyo. — the Green Mountain Planning Unit. Why here? Probably because so many people have their eyes on Green Mountain. Five major companies are interested in mining uranium, ranchers graze both cattle and sheep, two timber companies log, wild horses roam, hunters pursue herds of elk and deer, and people snowmobile, hike, ski, and camp here.

FIRST STEP — WHAT IS THERE?

For Brubaker and other area managers, the first step toward orchestrating the users and protecting the land is called a Unit Resource Analysis. The URA is an assessment of what is there and its potential — including livestock forage, wildlife habitat, watersheds, minerals, timber, recreation sites, roads, and rights-of-way. BLM relies on knowledgeable people outside the agency as well as its own experts' field studies to amass information. During this stage, BLM resource specialists also report on what could be done to make the most of each resource. This means on the same tract of land a BLM range man may dream of spraying sage, a wildlife man of setting controlled fires to improve habitat, a recreation man of a ski resort, and a minerals man of a uranium boom.

Brubaker calls this free-for-all, where specialists are allowed to ignore every resource but their own, "putting on blinders." He says the exercise is no end in itself, but is helpful later when he must weigh resource values and balance uses.

Next, BLM staff members move to what they call Management Framework Planning. The activity specialists, still with their blinders on, make recommendations about how their plans could be implemented. At this point, the BLM seeks out public opinion.

PUBLIC NEEDED

"We don't have the wisdom of Solomon. We need public involvement," Brubaker says. Two problems usually arise: how to reach the public and, once you have reached them, how to familiarize them with the implications of such diverse activities as uranium mining, sage grouse

strutting, and motorcycling.

One technique Brubaker likes is to identify user groups, mix them up into workshops, and let them collectively grapple with whatever decision faces the BLM. The result is an informed group of people. They learn about the issue, about other users' biases, and about the ticklish nature of public decision-making. The recommendations which come out of these huddles are merely advice, of course. Ultimately the area manager shoulders responsibility for weighing various resource potentials and coming up with a balanced plan.

The agency's newly formed multiple use advisory boards will play a similar role in assimilating and helping shape BLM policy, Brubaker hopes. A sign of the BLM's new broader mission, multiple use boards are replacing the bureau's grazing advisory boards across the country. In Wyoming the state group includes people with expertise in all the activities on public lands: range and livestock, mining, oil and gas, water resources, state government, environmental protection, recreation, and wildlife. Similar boards are now forming at the district level.

THE PLAN

When the area manager is satisfied that he has contacted as many people as he practically can, he distills his thinking into a Multiple Use Recommendation.

The written MUR then goes to the district manager, who either approves or modifies it, before declaring it a District Management Plan. Some controversial plans must also go to the state director of BLM for approval. In Wyoming the state director oversees four districts. There are a total of 60 districts nationwide.

While the system is meant to build decisions from the bottom up, with management's advice coming from the field staff, many decisions still come from the top down, Brubaker admits. The agency's judgments are subordinate to current laws, to Congress, and to the Administration.

BLM national director Curt Berklund recently declared energy to be the agency's first priority and grazing its second. That policy is affecting Multiple Use Recommendations around the country. The primary stimulus for choosing to study Green Mountain, for instance, was the interest in uranium mining there, Brubaker says.

The bureau planning system is useful as far as it goes, but not quite complete. Brubaker says problems arise in putting the district management plan into operation. "The matter of setting priorities, of deciding which opportunities for improvement you push first, is not yet settled," Brubaker says.

But he feels that partially due to increasing public concern over the lands entrusted to the agency, "the BLM is becoming a truly multiple use agency with a long range mission."

But it will take more money, new laws, more staff, and probably even greater doses of public concern to bring them closer to that goal.



6-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

Teton jetport. . .

(Continued from page 1)

completion of a regional transportation study before a final decision would be made on the runway length.

Since that time, the existing 6,300-foot runway has been widened and strengthened. Other improvements which are completed or are nearing completion include: installation of an Instrument Landing System (ILS), expansion of the airport parking lot, construction of a parallel taxiway, and a new sewage treatment plant.

In addition, the Airport Board is seeking approval of a \$500,000 air terminal improvement program financed by state and local sources. This proposal, separate from the improvements allowed by Secretary Morton, would involve installing a curio shop, a restaurant, new luggage facilities, a VIP room, and a medical aid facility. The Airport Board has prepared an environmental assessment of the impact of the terminal expansion. However, the Park Service returned the report to the board for "additional work." Public hearings will be required on the project, and the Park Service has yet to determine if a formal environmental impact statement will be required on the terminal improvements.

Laney Hicks, Northern Plains Regional Representative for the Sierra Club, writing in the October 1975 *Sierra Club Bulletin* says, "A lot of dollars are being invested in the present site, and steps are being taken to encourage additional investment, with

attempt to forecast the demand for transportation and social services over the next 20 years — through approximately 1995. That is also the year that the Jackson Hole Airport Board's lease with the Park Service expires.

Chairing the transportation study steering committee is Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler. Also on the committee are representatives of the governors of Idaho and Montana, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service. It now appears that the study will not be completed for at least two years, and so any decision on runway extension would likely be delayed that long.

Conservationists are worried, however, that the Secretary of Interior might jump the gun. The Airport Master Plan, a study influenced strongly by the pro-jetport Airport Board, is scheduled for completion a year ahead of the regional study. The master plan study will include an alternative site examination.

The Airport Board stresses that its master plan will become a "study document" for the regional transportation study, but Sierra Club representative Hicks is apprehensive. "The Club supports the regional study as the more objective one and the one which has the mandate to analyze broader goals of alternative airport sites, transportation modes, and park planning," she writes in the *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

Another problem conservationists have with the master plan's alternative site

(which is sometimes closed in the winter by heavy snows), and 110 miles by way of Snake River Canyon.

NOISE

A primary objection to the introduction of jets in Grand Teton National Park is the increased potential for noise pollution: destroying the park experience for visitors and disturbing wildlife. The runway flight path for the Jackson Hole Airport is directly over park headquarters at Moose, Wyo., and the Snake River, which is a popular float trip area.

Last month, Frontier Airlines conducted a test flight of a Boeing 737 into Jackson

The Park Service can't control private planes flying around the Grand Teton and can't limit jets buzzing the Snake River.

Hole Airport to measure noise levels. The plane used was a one-of-a-kind 737 equipped with "quiet engine nacelles" (engine enclosures) to muffle the roar. Raw data from the test showed a maximum reading of 85 decibels, which is about equal to the Convair 580 presently servicing the airport. Airport Manager Bob LaLonde told the *Jackson Hole Guide* that a maximum of 101 decibels was recorded at the same spot in 1973 on a test of a 737 without the new nacelles.

LaLonde says that although the test was conducted on a 737 model that is the

Hakes says background noise in the park is "abnormally low" — about 25-26 decibels compared to the average 55 decibels in a residential neighborhood. "It's like locking yourself in a closet at 2 a.m.," Hakes said of the park to the *Jackson Hole News*.

Hakes says the most common noise intrusion comes from private airplanes. Preliminary data indicate that private planes now result in roughly three times as many intrusions as commercial air carriers, he told the *News*. The most significant noise intrusion in the park is private jets. "Private jet aircraft up here in September is a disaster," he said.

Grand Teton National Park Assistant Superintendent Jack Neckels says the Park Service has no control over the decibel levels of planes flying over the park. All air space control is the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration, he said. This means the Park Service can't control private planes flying around the Grand Teton, can't limit jets buzzing the Snake River, and can't require Frontier to retrofit with nacelles all 737s flying into the park. Neckels said it would probably take Congressional action to give the parks such authority.

PERFORMANCE QUESTION

Even if the 737 noise was considered acceptable and the runway was lengthened to 8,000 feet as requested by the Airport Board, there is still a question of the feasibility of 737 service in Jackson Hole. Local Frontier Airlines Manager Fred Elliott told Jackson radio station KSGT in an interview last month that the length of the runway was not the decisive factor in whether or not 737s would be used. Altitude, temperature, and obstructions are equally critical factors in this remote steep-sided mountain valley, he said.

Under Federal Aviation Administration requirements, a 737 must be able to take off, turn around, and land again if one of its two engines is out — a maneuver known as a "stage two climb-out."

Elliott told KSGT that given the restrictions of a stage two climb-out "even if we had an 11,500-foot runway, at a temperature of 49 degrees, we could only take 54 passengers." This would not constitute a "payload" on the 97-passenger 737, he said. The runway extension being requested would bring the total length to 8,000 feet.

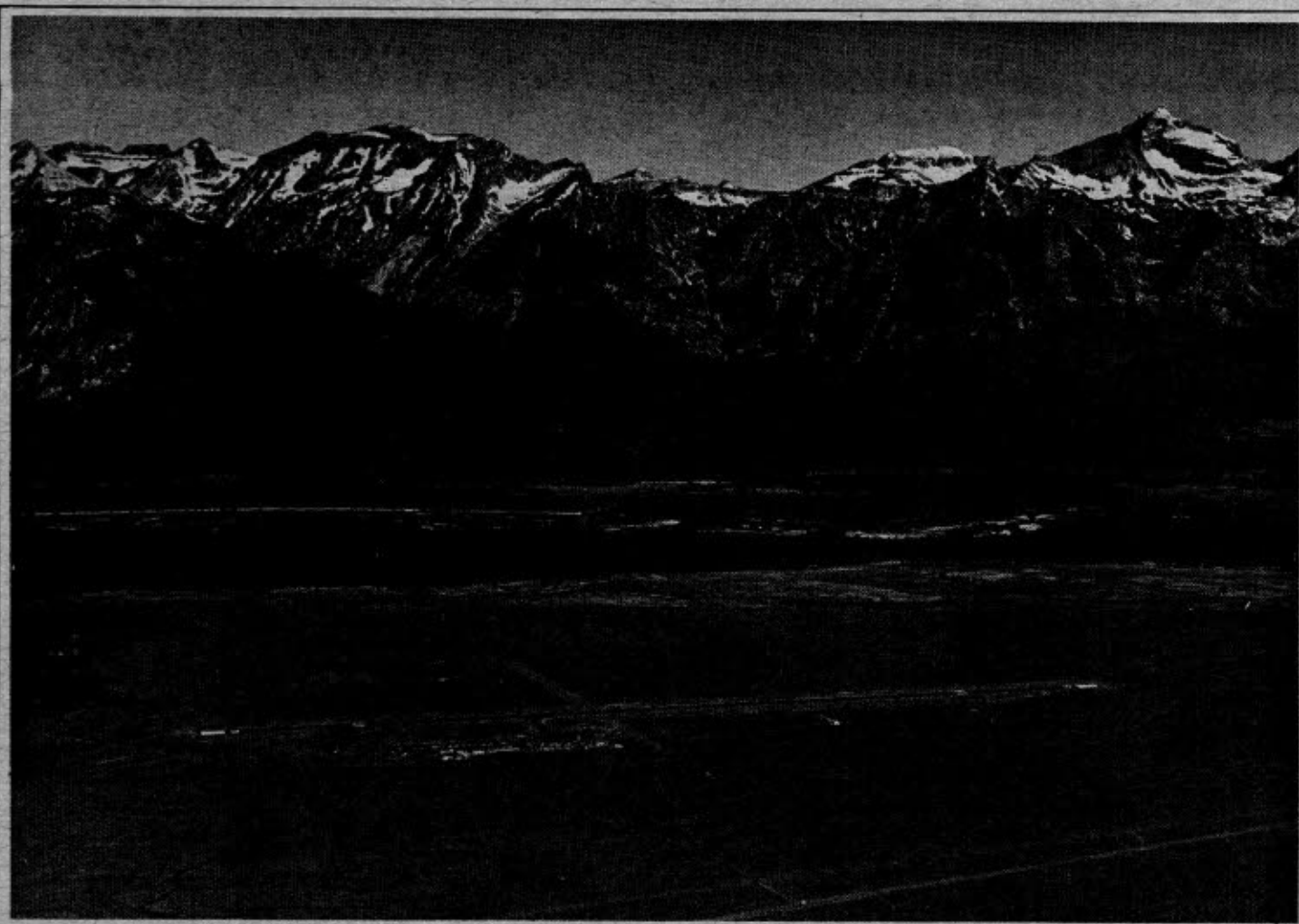
In other words, Elliott questions whether or not the 737 can meet FAA performance standards at the Jackson Hole Airport and still carry enough passengers to turn a profit. Computer testing and the results of future 737 test flights into Jackson Hole will answer this crucial question in the near future.

LEGAL QUESTION

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) office in Denver believes that if the Secretary of Interior orders enlargement of the Jackson Hole airport without showing a clear necessity for the expansion he may be in violation of the law. SCLDF points out that the Act of March 8, 1950 (64 Stat. 27, 16 U.S.C. 7 a through e) allows the enlargement or improvement of airports in or near national parks only "when such airports are determined by . . . (the Secretary of Interior) to be necessary to the proper performance of the functions of the Department of the Interior."

Since fewer than one per cent of the visitors to Jackson Hole use air transportation, the necessity of a jetport in the Tetons can be seriously questioned. SCLDF has requested an opinion from the Park Service as to whether or not a "finding of necessity" will be required of the Secretary of Interior.

Meanwhile, the studies go on, as the specter of the jet age hangs over the Tetons and Jackson Hole.



UNIQUE SITUATION. Jackson Hole Airport is the only airport within a national park. A small airport existed at the same site before the park was established. Now the airport board wants to expand the facility to accommodate jets.

Photo by Roger LaVake.

little recognition being given to the study (regional transportation study), which will supposedly determine the future site."

"Developments now underway at the airport will undermine the transportation study by effectively piecemealing the park out of objective analyses and consideration of alternatives to a Jackson-Teton Jetport," says Hicks.

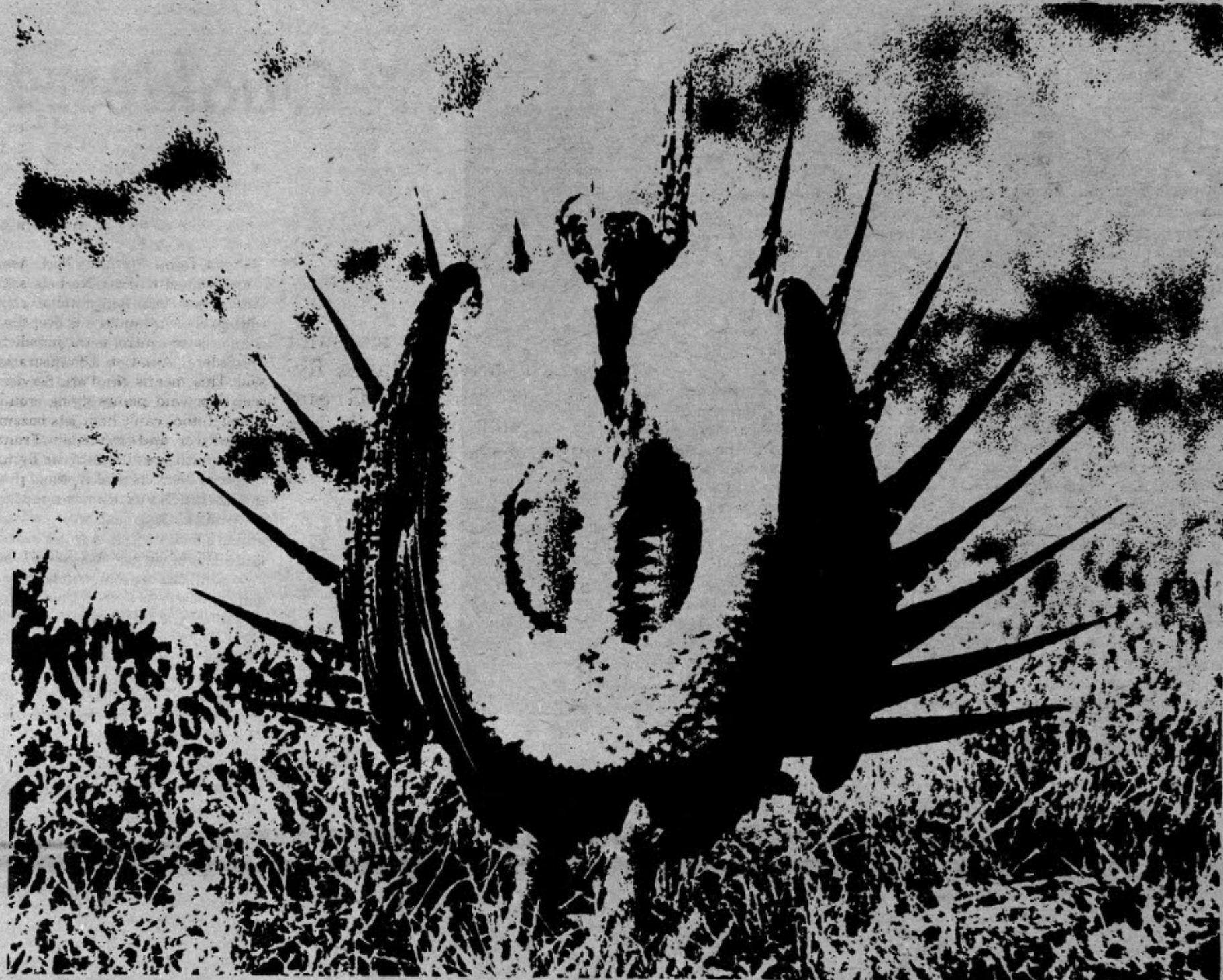
The regional transportation study is a joint federal-state investigation that will

study is that it is limited in scope. Federal Aviation Administration guidelines limit a new airport site to within 35 miles of the area it serves. This effectively limits the choice to the present site in Jackson Hole, or a site just over the Teton Range at Driggs, Idaho. Some conservationists have expressed an interest in using the existing jetport at Idaho Falls, Idaho, as a regional airport. But Idaho Falls is 90 miles from Jackson, Wyo., by way of Teton Pass

newest and quietest in the fleet, all aircraft would have to be similarly retrofitted by the end of 1977.

Dr. Sam Hakes, head of a University of Wyoming team monitoring noise levels in the park, emphasizes that no conclusions can be drawn until all the noise data are collected and interpreted. Hakes told the *Guide* he was very impressed with the plane, calling it "the greatest environmental breakthrough we've seen in awhile."

Oct. 24, 1975 — High Country News-7



Strutting sage grouse. Photo by Charles W. Smith

A matter between you and the strutting grouse

by Jim Posewitz
Director of Environment
and Information Division
Montana Department of Fish and Game

From time to time individuals working within government face problems that seemingly have no rational solution. The writers of government job descriptions ask that they be solved through the application of "good judgment" and other such bureaucratic virtue. In reality these situations torture the minds of conscientious public servants. Participation in regulating strip miners is now presenting some difficult and perplexing situations.

Montana reclamation law has a provision in its section 9 for denying a strip mine in any given area when the area is, among other things, "ecologically important" or "ecologically fragile." Administrators of the law and other agencies like the Department of Fish and Game working with them now struggle with the reality of making the law work as intended.

Montana is a land blessed with quiet, obscure corners, a land twice-blessed for in this obscurity still beats the natural rhythm of life in our varied wildlife populations.

In a broad swale east of Tongue River (east of Colstrip) the annual ritual of mating sage grouse is fulfilled each spring. In 1975, as it has been back into time, time measured in seasons, in generations of wildlife, in dry cycles and wet, in the passing of tribes and perhaps yet in the passing of man, the annual ritual continued. In the gray dawn the strutting males, vying for a few passive females,

puffed and boomed and stamped with wisps of dust stirring beneath their shuffling feet. When the dust sifted back to earth, it settled on, among other things, tons and

Quiet sounds cannot be heard in places where men talk of energy crises, tradeoffs, balance of payments, national commitment, and the needs of a nation.

tons of strippable coal. The settling dust and the birds that stirred it are in essence "overburden." While applications for coal mines are pending, the grouse assemble and perform their ritual, not for us but for one another and the perpetuation of their species.

The place they use was selected by their ancestors, it was to be passed on to their descendants. It is "their" place, it may be without option, it is related to the land and its condition, it is related to the past and to the future, it is now related to the coal lying beneath it.

What to do? We can study the birds "to see what happens." Yet I suspect we know what will happen. There is the hope that they will somehow relocate and be accommodated in reclamation and we cling to that thread. We will study, keeping occupied while it occurs, report it with scientific precision but for the grouse, it may well be finished.

We can talk hopefully of relocation, talk of reclaimed land, talk of compensation, talk . . . but for the grouse it

may well be silent. No more excitement of the strutting ground, no cautious seclusion of incubation, no scolding, alarm and assembly call of brooding females. No patient endurance of winter, no anticipation of spring.

Write them off. It seems the rational thing to do. The coal reserves are millions of tons, perhaps a billion, and the grouse an obscure handful. Surely we will be forgiven and perhaps the sportsmen will understand but then it is not a matter you share with other men; the matter is between you and the strutting grouse. Their voices do not carry, the sound does not travel far, perhaps to the section line, perhaps to the mine boundary but, even if carried on the wind, surely not to Helena. It also is well to remember there is no sound unless there is an ear to hear it.

Quiet sounds cannot be heard in places where men talk of energy crises, tradeoffs, balance of payments, national commitment, and needs of a nation. Men who talk and write and plan, reaching out with written words and detailed plans and doing what surely must be done. Reaching out and cutting the fragile bond between grouse and land. A bond reaching into the past for generation upon generation until it dims in our imagination. A bond from today to yesterday, to the homestead to Custer to the Indian alone and perhaps beyond. Now it is to be severed with a mark of approval, a signature and nodding agreement that it was the only reasonable thing to do and now it is finished.

Another strand in our woven web of wildlife is severed and there may be no way to mend it.

The burden of all this is too much for public servants to bear alone; now you share it.

8-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975



Photo by Marge Higley

Quakies: harbinger

by Sarah Doll

The cycle of the seasons holds significance for people everywhere. Mountain dwellers, however, have an advantage over flatlanders: in the high country, the seasons seem to move up and down, and can be enjoyed in several phases by hiking up a hillside. In his book *Autumn Across America*, Edwin Way Teale writes, "The tide of spring and the tide of fall have, in many ways, reverse characteristics. Spring moves north; autumn south. Spring races ahead down the valleys, creeps slowly up the mountainsides; autumn comes first to the highlands, runs fastest into the south along the high ridges and the mountain chains and then sweeps southward more gradually down the valleys and over the lowlands. In spring, to ascend a mountain is to go backward in time, back to the latter days of winter. To ascend a mountain in fall is to go forward in the seasons, to advance into later autumn or early winter."

Much of the fall dazzle in the Rockies is provided by aspen trees, *populus tremuloides*, or "quakies." The change from green to gold is a response to shortening days and cooler weather, as the tree prepares for winter by ceasing food production and becoming dormant. A corky layer, called the abscission layer, is formed between the

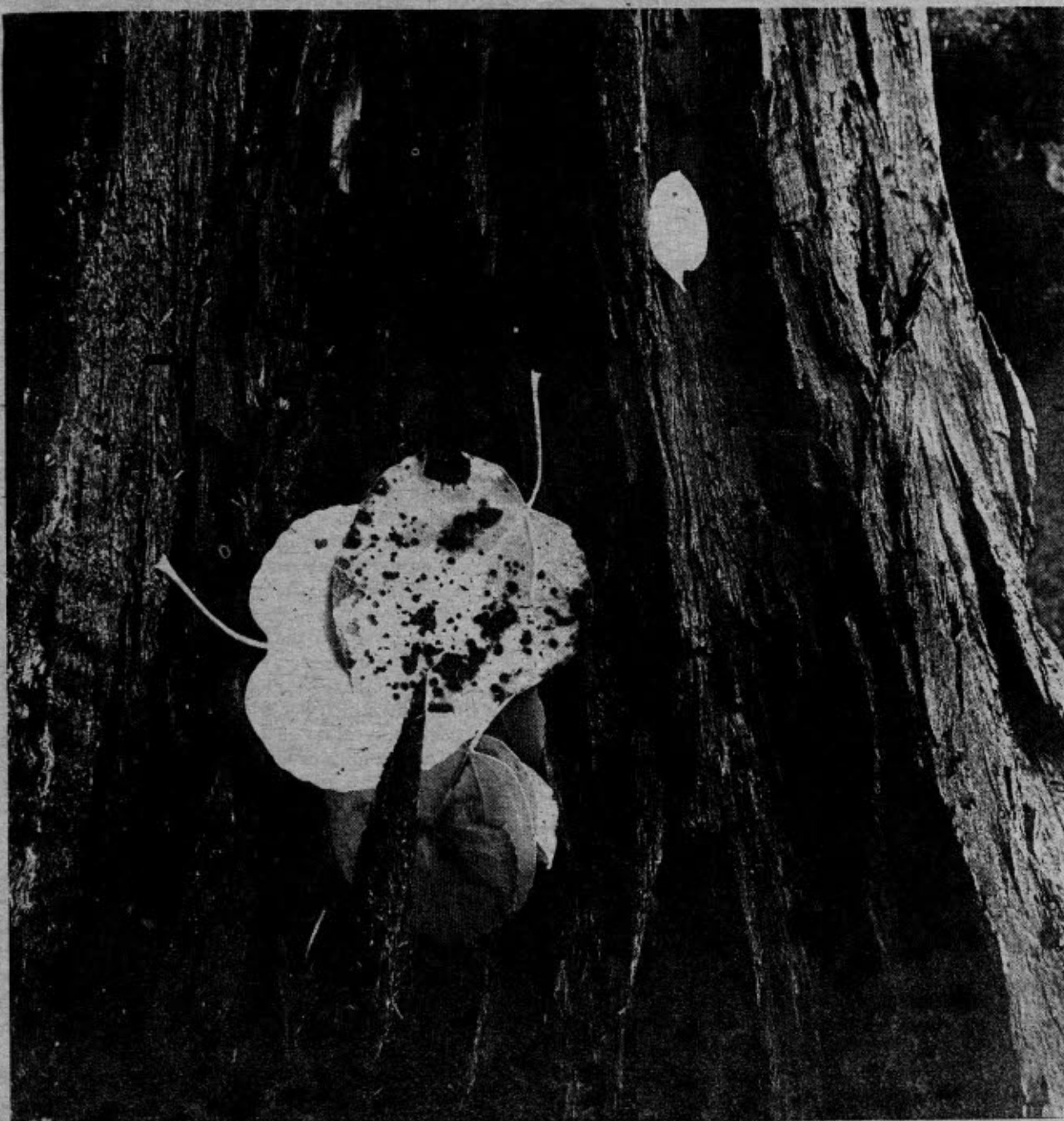


Photo by Lynne Bama



harbingers of winter

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leaf stem and the branch, and the flow of nutrients to the leaf is gradually cut off. Yellow pigments, called carotene and xanthophyll, are present in the leaves all summer, but are hidden by the green chlorophyll. Less sunlight and fewer nutrients result in less production of chlorophyll, and the yellows start to show.

The reds of fall are caused by anthocyanins, pigments carried in the sap. The variations from yellow to red found from grove to grove of aspen trees is probably caused by differences in the genes governing the balance of the pigments. Usually, the trees within a grove are genetically the same, since 90% of aspen trees reproduce asexually through rhizomes, or underground roots.

After the leaves fall, and sometimes before, the red and yellow pigments oxidize, leaving them a dull brown that fades into winter's landscape. The leaves eventually decay and become part of the soil, providing nutrients for another summer's leaves.

The promise of autumn has always provided inspiration for poets and philosophers. One was Ernest Hemingway, who wrote in *A Movable Feast*, "You expected to be sad in the fall. Part of you died each year when the leaves fell from the trees and their branches were bare against the wind and the cold, wintry light. But you knew there would always be the spring, as you knew the river would flow again after it was frozen."



Photo by Marge Higley

Westerners have a special feeling about aspen. . . . Conifers have a majestic monotony, like someone who is always right. They are too timeless to mark the seasons. But aspen has *éclat*, a glorious brashness in defiance of the rules, the flapper who does the Charleston in the midst of a grand waltz. The landscape would be dull indeed without them.

Ann Zwinger, *Beyond the Aspen Grove*



Photo by Bruce Hamilton

10-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

Reckoning from Washington

by Lee Catterall

The fight over coal slurry pipeline legislation is escalating quickly — and enormously — as the final showdown approaches on Capitol Hill.

The bill before Congress would allow the sponsor of such a pipeline to condemn private land that stands in its way, once the Interior Department decides the pipeline is in the national interest.

Chief combatants are Energy Transportation Systems, Inc. (ETSI), which plans a thousand-mile slurry pipeline from Wyoming to Arkansas, and the railroad companies, which look upon transportation of western coal as a major — even crucial — source of potential revenue.

The House Interior Committee is expected to complete hearings on the bill next month, and it could go to the House floor soon after that. The bill is fairly short and simple, so would not require the lengthy amending process that many bills receive in committee.

If a snag should develop, sponsors of the bill could try to offer it as an amendment to another bill revising the nation's coal leasing laws. Bechtel Corporation was making inquiries on Capitol Hill this month about the status of that coal leasing bill.

Bechtel, a construction and engineering company, and Lehman Brothers, an investment house, are the chief stockholders of ETSI. Top officials in the two companies include such Washington heavies as former Treasury Sec. George Schultz; former Health, Education and Welfare Sec. Caspar Weinberger; and former Commerce Sec. Pete Peterson.

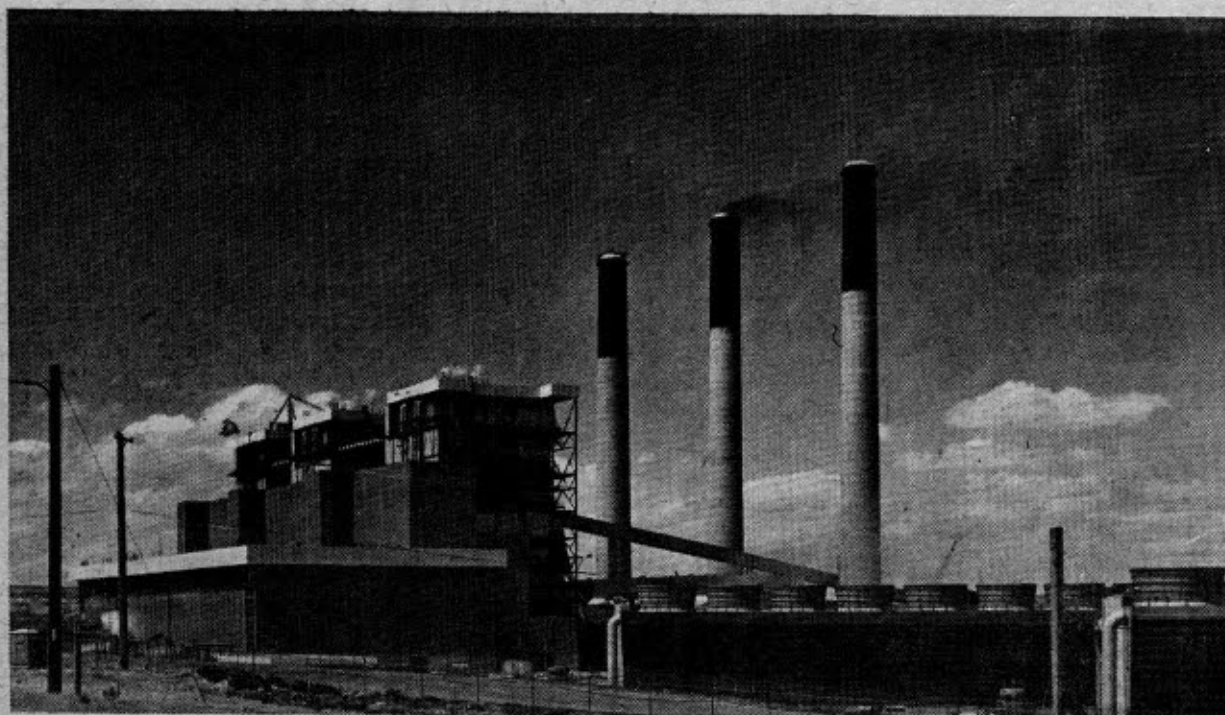
ETSI reportedly plans to hire W. Pat Jennings, clerk of the House and former six-term congressman from Virginia, as its chief lobbyist. Jennings' contacts and reputation would make him perhaps the most powerful lobbyist in Washington.

Last month, 131 companies formed the Slurry Transportation Association at a meeting in Dallas, Tex. As its first priority, the association decided to "concentrate on informing government officials about the importance of slurry transportation and the need for eminent domain authority." The new group set aside \$300,000 for the initial lobby effort.

Arguments revolve around cost efficiency and water supply. Slurry sponsors say the pipeline would use only a seventh of the water needed for cooling power plants that would burn the same amount of coal as the pipelines would haul.

Railroad officials point to a study done for the National Science Foundation that says hauling coal by rail would be half as expensive as shipping by pipeline.

(Editors' note: The Oct. 9, 1975, *Washington Star* revealed that Bechtel is under contract with the federal government to study the relative economics of slurry lines v. railroads for transporting coal. "Not surprisingly," the *Washington Star* said, the preliminary results of the study indicate that slurry lines are more economical. The more than \$400,000 contract was granted by the Interior Department's Office of Coal Research in May 1974. A lawyer for the Office of Coal Research told the *Star* that the government did not solicit the research; it was offered by Bechtel. He said the government didn't know about the company's self-interest and apparently never asked about such a possibility.)



BRIDGER UNIT FOUR. Two power companies have taken the third step toward gaining permission to build a fourth unit at the Jim Bridger Plant near Rock Springs, Wyo. The companies, Pacific Power and Light Co. and Idaho Power Co., have already obtained the Wyoming Public Service Commission's Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and have filed with the Department of Environmental Quality for an air quality permit. The third step is filing an application with the Industrial Siting Council. Power from the 500 megawatt facility would go to Wyoming, Idaho, and the Pacific Northwest, say company officials. As shown above, one unit is in operation at Jim Bridger, and two are still under construction. Photo by Jack McLellan

Insulation: start off at the top

(Fourth in a series
on home insulation)

So you want to insulate your home to save money and energy. Now, where do you start?

"Attic insulation is the most economical way to significantly reduce the amount of energy used for heating," says Jack H. Reed, vice-president for administration of Public Service Company of Colorado.

It makes sense. Heat rises, and without an effective barrier, it will pass right through your roof.

The Office of Economic Opportunity suggests looking at your roof on a cold fall morning to see if you can observe heat waves rippling up from your house. This means heat is escaping through the roof. A more accurate way is to measure the insulation in your ceiling and compare it with minimum energy conservation standards.

If you live in an older home, it's also good to start with the ceiling because it may be the only surface you can insulate properly without tearing out the walls.

"It's almost impossible to blow insulation down into the walls from the attic crawl space," says one instructor of construction technology. "You'd really have to punch holes in the walls themselves to make it work. You may be paying for a pig-in-a-poke."

The most common insulating materials are fiberglass, rock wool, and foam. These materials are used because they require very little space to achieve a high insulating value. For instance, one inch of rock wool equals 46 inches of concrete in stopping heat loss.

Foam has the highest insulating ability per inch, but it can be a dangerous building material. Many types of foam insulation burn in a fire and emit noxious fumes. If you

use a foam, make sure it is a "self-extinguishing" type.

Often the cheapest way to insulate is by blowing loose rock wool fill into the space with a rented machine. If you use this method, be sure to use goggles and a mask or respirator.

Blowing in insulation has its disadvantages, too. First of all, it is hard to get the layer even and measuring sticks are needed to tell how deep the material is. Secondly, the loose fill tends to settle over time and lose part of its insulating quality.

Using blankets or batts of fiberglass or rock wool is the easiest method. The sheets of insulation can be rolled out between the joists (support beams) in your attic. Use a rake or stick to push the material into hard-to-get-at places. When handling fiberglass, wear gloves and long-sleeve shirts to avoid skin irritation.

Vapor barriers are usually provided on blanket and batt insulation. Vapor barriers should be placed on the warm side of the wall, ceiling, or floor. Where no vapor barrier is provided, separate barriers should be purchased and installed. In order for insulation to perform at its best, moisture vapor must be removed through ventilation.

To order insulation, tell your building supply dealer the square footage to be insulated, the type of insulation desired, the distance between joists, and the R factor desired (insulation value). A minimum of R-19 is recommended for the Rockies and Northern Great Plains.

Pacific Power and Light Company has prepared a booklet, *Do-it-yourself Home Insulation Guide*, which is sold for one dollar at most of their offices. The publication details how to insulate ceilings, walls, and floors. Many home building guides found in your local library also provide insulation instructions.



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains



SEEDING COUNTERACTS SHALE. Although oil shale development on the western slope of Colorado may make the region water short, conservation and extensive cloud-seeding could solve the problem, says the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The bureau's 85-page report on "Critical Water Problems Facing the 11 Western States" says that cloud-seeding could boost the Upper Colorado's annual output by six to nine per cent. By eliminating water wasted in the irrigation of crops, nearly a million acre feet of water could be saved, the bureau says.

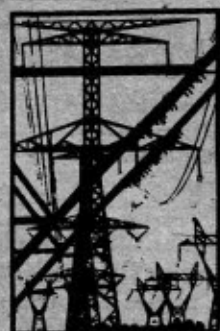
COLORADO WEAKEST. Revision of Colorado's strip mine reclamation law is imperative, says the governor's top environmental aide, Jim Monaghan. Colorado has the weakest reclamation law and the lowest severance tax on minerals of all the western states. Monaghan says, "If that isn't a temptation for an imbalanced and inequitable extraction situation in the West, I don't know what is."

PENNY A DAY FOR MONTANA. Montana's new coal tax will cost consumers of a Detroit electric utility just over a cent a day, says Lt. Gov. Bill Christiansen. Christiansen made the calculation in response to the Detroit Edison Company complaint that the new Montana tax was outrageous, exorbitant, unwarranted, and unreasonable. The tax is 30% on the sale price of coal at the mine.

SOLAR SCHOOLS. The largest solar heated and cooled building in the world was recently completed at New Mexico State University. The one-story, 25,535 square-foot agriculture department building will serve as a solar energy research model for the Energy Research and Development Institute at the school. The sun will supply 80% of the building's heating and cooling needs. A solar heated building at Community College in Denver is scheduled for completion in 1977.

Roncalio predicts moratorium won't be lifted Melcher offers coal policy

Oct. 24, 1975 — High Country News-11



The **HCN**
Hot Line

Persistent members of the House Interior Committee, led by Rep. John Melcher (D-Mont.), are attempting once more to get the federal strip mining bill made into law. The committee will vote this week on combining the bill with the federal coal leasing bill into H.R. 10085.

Melcher and Rep. Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.), one of the co-sponsors, told HCN they thought they were right in combining the two bills even before the June Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in favor of the Sierra Club suit. The ruling confirmed their decision. It encouraged the Interior Department to prepare a regional environmental impact statement on coal development.

"I don't think that suit will be settled until we have a national coal policy," Melcher said. "We can't expect a national coal policy unless Congress acts," he added since the administration isn't likely to come up with one. He sees the combined coal leasing bill and the strip mining bill as "the only way to go" for a national coal policy. "We need the strongest energy plan we can to satisfy both the courts and to get the two thirds we need in Congress," he said.

Melcher was referring to the two thirds majority needed to override the expected Presidential veto of the combined bills. Neither Melcher nor Roncalio believe

without a strip mining bill, and with the lawsuit pending. That would be courting the objections of Congress and... close to contempt of court," he said.

However, he admitted he couldn't necessarily predict what the Interior Department would do or that it would be "reasonable." "The Department of Interior is getting to be extremely slippery — I can't predict anything in this town anymore," he told HCN.

LEASING BILL CHANGES

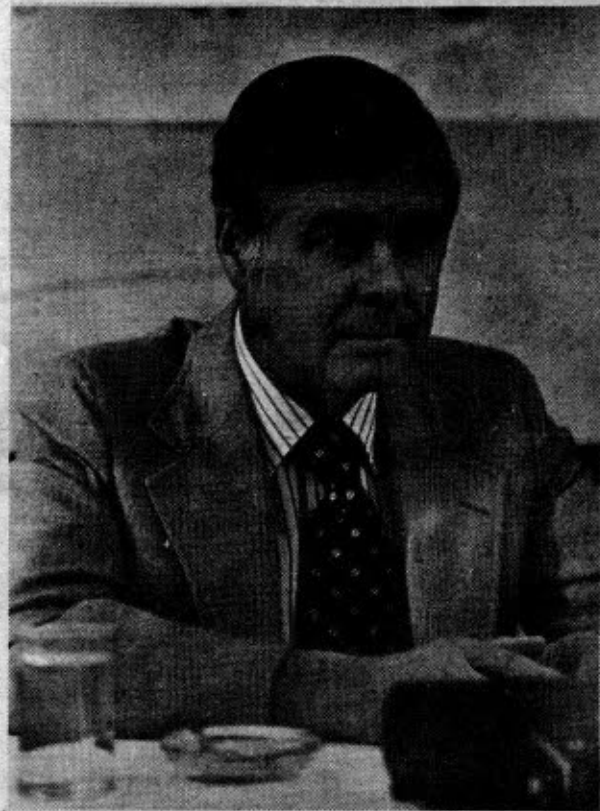
The leasing bill which the strip mining bill is being added to makes several changes in leasing which the Council of Economic Priorities (CEP) recommended in its scathing report in 1974, *Leased and Lost*. CEP says the House bill, introduced by Rep. Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii), is more extensive than the Senate bill.

The House bill provides for public hearings prior to leasing, land use planning, competitive leasing rather than preferential rights, and 12½% royalties to the federal government, half of which are returned to the states. It also includes provisions to discourage speculative holding of leasing.

Melcher said the strongest guarantee in the leasing bill — the "real knucklehold" — is the requirement for an approved mining plan. However, he says it is essential that the Interior Department have the strength to enforce this provision.

A section providing for confidentiality has been criticized by Ed Dobson, Friends of the Earth Northern Plains representative, in a letter to Melcher. Melcher told HCN that the confidentiality provision is the same as that provided on oil and gas leases and that it is "a vast improvement" over the present leasing situation in that regard. He said enough information will be available for the Interior Department to determine if bids are for fair market value of the coal, which is a serious problem under the present leasing act. Melcher also led the push in committee for public hearings with full public notice prior to leasing.

Dobson pointed out that preparation of comprehensive environmental impact statements is "extremely difficult" when coal information is confidential.



Despite charges of a "do nothing" Congress, Rep. John Melcher (above) believes the House Interior Committee is coming up with a national coal policy while the Administration is not.

they will have difficulty getting the combined bills through the committee, through floor action, and through the conference committee with Senate conferees. The Senate leasing bill also includes strip mining regulations, but in that bill they apply only to federal land.

The major hurdle, they believe, will once again be getting enough votes to override the expected veto. The House came only three votes short of overriding the veto last June, and the difficulty may be increasing as Congressmen get closer and closer to election time.

The strip mining bill which Melcher wants to add to the leasing bill is basically unchanged from that passed by Congress and subsequently vetoed. The only changes are minor updates. The Coalition Against Strip Mining is supporting Melcher's idea to combine the bills.

MORATORIUM WON'T BE LIFTED

Critics have questioned the advisability of combining the two bills and risking losing the coal leasing bill, which makes several changes they consider necessary in the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. Roncalio says there is a "calculated risk" either way but that he supports Melcher's decision.

Roncalio said he did not believe the Interior Department would lift the moratorium on coal leasing under present conditions. "It's not reasonable to believe that Interior would lift the moratorium without a leasing bill,



Rep. Teno Roncalio (above) agreed to co-sponsor Melcher's bill combining the strip mining bill with the federal coal leasing bill for a national coal policy package. Roncalio does not believe the Interior Department would lift the moratorium on coal leasing with the two bills and the Sierra Club suit still pending. Mountain States News Service photo.

energy news from across the country

PAPERS ATTACK AUTHORITY. Two major Western newspapers, known as promoters of energy development, have attacked President Gerald R. Ford's plan to create a \$100 billion U.S. Energy Independence Authority. Both the *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City, Utah, and the *Casper Star-Tribune* of Casper, Wyo., said the project would involve too much government intervention with free enterprise. The *Deseret News*, which previously supported the proposal, quoted the *Wall Street Journal*, saying, "The result would be to soak up \$100 billion in scarce capital just as if the federal government increased its deficit by that amount and spent the money directly." The *Casper* paper said, "It is difficult to think of an area where the government has been more efficient than private enterprise in increasing supplies of anything besides bureaucrats."

FAULTY SITE SELECTION. Virginia Electric and Power Company has been fined \$60,000 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for making false statements about the safety of a nuclear power plant site near Charlottesville, Va. The NRC found that the power company knew about a suspected geological fault under its proposed North Anna nuclear plant, but made 12 false statements concerning the fault before the NRC. Despite this false testimony, the NRC refused to block construction of the plant.

PROGRAMMATIC HAS PROBLEMS. A lawsuit on the Interior Department's recently issued final coal programmatic environmental statement is "likely," according to a lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council as quoted in *Coal Week*. NRDC feels Interior should have issued a second draft of the EIS rather than a final. The draft EIS was strongly criticized when it came out, and conservationists then asked for another draft.

SIERRA SUIT TO SUPREME COURT. The Interior Department has petitioned the Supreme Court to hear the case of the Secretary of Interior v. Sierra Club. An answer is expected from the court by the end of November as to whether or not it will hear the case. The Sierra Club demanded that the Interior Department file a comprehensive impact statement on coal development for the entire Northern Plains region and has received a favorable ruling from the Circuit Court of Appeals. In case the appeal fails, the Interior Department is now discussing options on how to establish boundaries when preparing regional environmental statements, according to *Coal Week*.

SITING STRATEGY SOUGHT. New regulations issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development encourage state, local, and regional land use agencies using federal assistance to project future energy facilities siting needs in their plans, according to *Land Use Planning Reports*. The siting provision is included in final regulations governing Comprehensive Planning Grants (HUD 701 funds).

INTERIOR SHOWS COLORS. Two assistant secretaries with the Interior Department revealed their positions on energy development at a recent energy conference in Billings, Mont. Asst. Sec. Jack Horton came out in favor of the slurry pipeline for transporting Wyoming coal to Arkansas, much to the consternation of a Burlington Northern official who was attending and didn't know the Interior Department's position on the question. Asst. Sec. Jack Carlson said he was "shocked to learn recently how much federal land has been closed to exploration and development of minerals by environmental decisions," according to the *Billings Gazette*.

STANDARD TO FEED US, TOO. Standard Oil of Indiana has developed the first successful food product derived from petroleum, according to *Straight Creek Journal*. The yeast produced lives on ethyl alcohol, a petrochemical. The yeast is a nutty-tasting powder which contains twice as much protein as cooked beef.

12-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

\$6 billion boost

Bill would guarantee 75% loans for synthetic fuels

by Kevin Markey
Colorado Field Representative
Friends of the Earth

It's Christmastime in Congress. Especially if you should have a coal gasification or an oil shale plant on your wish list. The U.S. Congress is considering a brief amendment to the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) appropriations bill (S. 598). The section, which authorizes \$6 billion in loan guarantees for firms building synthetic fuel plants, was quietly guided through the Senate by Sen. Henry (Scoop) Jackson (D.-Wash.). Many conservation organizations, long opposed to subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, are urging the defeat of the guaranteed loan program.

The subsidies are "non-recourse" loan guarantees from the U.S. Treasury for up to 75% of project costs. In case of plant failure or default on loans, the government is prevented from foreclosing and collecting on any assets of the company except the defaulting plant itself. The guarantees would apply to plants converting fossil fuels or waste biomass to synthetic liquid or gas fuels.

Also eligible for loan guarantees are commercial power or heat production facilities utilizing solar or other renewable energy sources. However, the main emphasis of the bill is on the fossil fuels. ERDA seems reluctant to engage in solar energy or biomass commercialization. They even testified earlier that the subsidy for solar should be dropped from S. 598, but reversed that position because of Congressional hostility. The fossil fuel developers are certain to be in line first with their massively capital intensive projects. Just a few fossil fuel plants would use up the entire \$6 billion authorization.

Currently S. 598 is before a House-Senate conference committee to resolve differences between their respective versions. The House version doesn't include a loan guarantee provision. Indeed, the provision never received hearings nor adequate debate in the Senate. On these grounds, the conference committee could simply delete the entire provision. Yet, Washington sources report Jackson as "holding on for dear life." House Science and Technology Chairman Olin Teague does not wish to jeopardize the ERDA authorization over a fight on the loan guarantees and is willing to accede to Jackson's wishes.

In a last minute effort to correct the lack of Congressional study of the subsidy, the House Science and Technology Committee has scheduled hearings on the proposal, including some in Colorado. The conference committee work has been delayed until those hearings have been completed. It now offers the public an opportunity to comment on the implications of the measure. However, some feel that the hearings only serve as a vehicle to ease passage of the subsidy (section 103) by meeting the objections of its opponents that no hearings had been held.

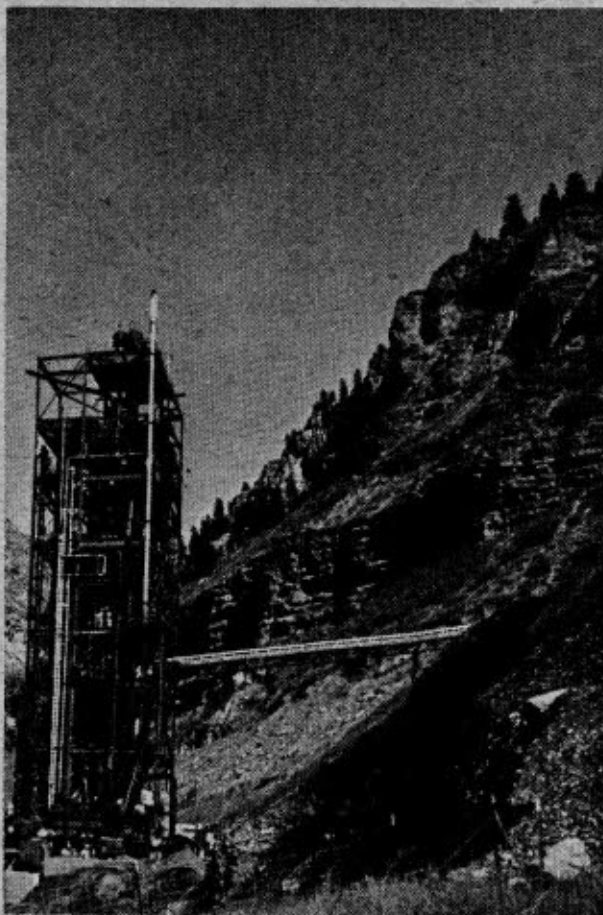
ANALYSIS

Section 103 may guarantee the commitment of billions of dollars in public collateral for the energy companies, but it does not guarantee the production of a single gallon of fuel. The cost of the synthetic fuel is expected to be greater than the market price, so even if the plants do not fail technically, loan default is certain without federal fuel price supports, in addition to federally guaranteed loans. Several energy firms have testified to that effect before Teague's committee.

An Exxon representative admits that "loans or loan guarantees will not induce investment in synthetic fuel projects unless energy prices for the prospective life of the project are perceived to be sufficiently high to make the project commercially attractive. When this happens, the loans and guarantees will not be needed to induce investments."

Even TOSCO (The Oil Shale Corp.), the most vocal supporter of the program, admits privately that guarantees are only a first step, which provides a fat foot in the door of future price supports. The guarantees may get the plants built. But if they default, the government will have few options. It could shut down the facility, sell or lease what it could, and pay off the remaining debts. It could operate the facility at a loss. Or, most likely, and favored by the energy companies, is the establishment of guaranteed price supports.

One argument for the subsidies is that the guarantees will open up opportunities in the synthetics field to more



SUBSIDY NEEDED? Industry and government have tested oil shale development on a prototype plant level. To make the big step to full-scale production of synthetic fuel, industry may need guaranteed government loans and price supports. Some conservationists are opposing the subsidy. Pictured above is the Colony Development Operation prototype reactor.

Photo courtesy of Colony Development Operation.

competition and innovation. Yet the smallest operators — Superior and Occidental — currently engaged in oil shale development have traditionally resisted any federal subsidies. Exxon warns that the assistance program would only "invite arbitrary and anti-competitive procedures."

Even if the plants operate — with massive cost of service subsidies — any anticipated level of commercialization will have a negligible impact on energy supplies in the near term, and a questionable contribution to the energy supply of the more distant future. A recent report by the Synfuels Interagency Task Force to the President's Energy Resources Council demonstrates that a synfuels commercialization program would not strengthen U.S. negotiating strength with the OPEC nations, and protection from potential political embargoes would be negligible. It found that the reduction of the U.S. balance of payments deficit would be insignificant.

The only hope the Interagency Task Force provided was that the construction of commercial scale facilities today would place us at a better advantage for rapid synfuels development in the future. Yet even this is questionable. A program spurred by loan guarantees would result in very few massive synthetics plants, each using a single technology. It would prevent the investigation of economic and technical feasibility and environmental impact of a range of technical alternatives.

Small prototype experimentation in synfuels has al-

Guarantees are only a first step which provides a fat foot in the door of future price supports.

ready been done so the loan guarantees are needed now to subsidize full-scale production.

Conservationists especially object to a commercialization program if it is blind to environmental values. A slower approach, testing a wider range of alternative technologies, might result in the development of an environmentally sound process. If development were to proceed with existing technology, massive detrimental im-

pacts could result. These include air pollution destructive of agriculture and human health, and water pollution (especially increased salinity in the Colorado from oil shale). In order to reduce operating costs to a bare-bones minimum, gasification plants must use strip mined coal. Oil shale (because of massive surface disposal of wastes) will result in strip mined landscapes whether it is mined on the surface or underground. The most significant concern in the West is the demand for water, and its diversion from agriculture.

Despite the doubtful benefits (and guaranteed costs) of the program, the attitude of regional leaders and Congressional opponents indicates an unwillingness to attempt stopping the guarantees. Although privately indicating their displeasure with the possible implications of synfuels commercialization, publicly they have only demanded that section 103 be accommodated to their needs, writing into the legislation some additional provisions to safeguard the public interest and to mitigate the effects of development. Assuming that the program will pass Congress, they wish to make it more palatable.

The states have largely refused to address the main premise of the proposal: the effectiveness and desirability of the guarantees. The Western Governors' Regional Energy Policy Office met hurriedly on Oct. 16 to consider a joint policy statement on section 103. The statement which resulted discusses the necessity of the federal government recognizing state sovereignty in several policy matters. But, as one state alternate representative privately asked, "Are we ever going to vote on whether we want this loan guarantee program at all?" Other governors' representatives told this reporter that in individual state testimony, opposition to the guarantees may be made more explicit, but emphasis in the state positions will assume some sort of program and deal with how best to mitigate its effects.

What is most hopeful about the Western Governors' Energy Office statement is its insistence on concurrent mandatory energy conservation programs and the assurance of state prerogatives. While conditionally accepting a loan guarantee program today, "the cooperation of the Western States in the synthetic fuels program could be determined in the future in large part on a national mandatory commitment to energy conservation." Furthermore, the states made their support for section 103 contingent upon language assuring their participation in decision making. For example, state regulatory processes could exercise a veto over federal loan guarantee proposals.

Also, the states demanded the creation of a Synfuels Assessment Committee, with "effective" state representation, which will supervise the development of synthetic fuels. They insist that it determine policy with ERDA being able to veto its recommendations only when an overriding national interest can be "demonstrated."

Several groups, including the Colorado Open Space Council Mining Workshop, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Policy Center, Canyon Country Coalition, Trout Unlimited, and others, are opposing the \$6 billion loan guarantee program proposed in S. 598. The Mining Workshop is directing efforts to stop the program. They are urging concerned citizens to write letters to or make visits to Congresspersons soon. The legislation is due to be considered by the conference committee in early November. They are urging people to:

—Write members of their delegation to Congress (House: Washington, D.C. 20515, Senate: Washington, D.C. 20510), opposing the guaranteed loan program.

—Send a copy to Chairman Olin Teague, House Science and Technology Committee (Washington, D.C. 20515). Request that their letter be made a part of the hearing record on the "\$6 billion synthetic fuels guaranteed loan program." Also, send a copy to Senator Henry Jackson, (Washington, D.C. 20510).

—Write their state governor. People may wish to point out that the states most affected have had little say in the program. Also urge their governor, should he oppose the program, not to hesitate to make that opposition explicit and vocal.

—Groups or individuals wishing more information or wishing to be kept informed on Synfuels developments are invited to write Kevin Markey, Friends of the Earth, 2239 East Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo. 80206.



Western Roundup

HCN

Oct. 24, 1975 — 13

Missouri River bill loses BLM chief

"I feel the concept of multiple use cannot be adequately practiced with management responsibility divided between a single-use agency and a multiple-use agency. I base this on the 38 years of bitter experience my agency has had in the joint management of the C. M. Russell National Wildlife Range," says Edwin Zaidlicz, Montana director of the Bureau of Land Management. The administrative problems he foresees have caused Zaidlicz to withdraw his support for Sen. Lee Metcalf's (D-Mont.) bill to protect the Upper Missouri River. The bill would place the river under the dual administration of the National Park Service and BLM.

Rocky Flats phase-out recommended

The Rocky Flats nuclear weapons facility near Denver, Colo., poses a significant threat to the safety of the metropolitan area and should be phased out, a task force says. At a press conference last week, the Lamm-Wirth Task Force emphasized that it did not advocate shutting down the facility, however. It recommended replacing Rocky Flats' nuclear operations with less hazardous activities such as solar research. The group urged that Congress and the President review the need for nuclear operations at the site. A spokesman for Rockwell International, the firm which operates the plant, said the task force did a "very credible job" of reviewing Rocky Flats' problems. Robert O. Williams, vice-president and general manager of Rocky Flats, said that Rockwell could convert to non-nuclear energy research activities without much trouble, according to the *Rocky Mountain News*. Since the task force concedes that such a conversion is not likely soon, 58 other suggestions in the report were aimed at making existing operations as safe as possible. Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm and Rep. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.) appointed the task force last year.

Power company won't pay for fish

The Idaho Fish and Game Department is considering asking the Federal Power Commission to order Idaho Power Co. to replace 17,000 salmon and 5,000 steelhead lost when the Hells Canyon dams were built, according to the *Idaho Statesman*. The numbers of fish dropped so low last year that no fishing was allowed. Idaho Power says it already has invested \$15 million in facilities to transfer the fish runs. The company claims that further efforts could raise electric bills for Idahoans and might not produce any meaningful results.

Birmingham leaves land commission

John Birmingham has resigned as chairman of the Colorado Land Use Commission. The former Republican state senator said he was stepping down because of Gov. Dick Lamm's "lack of interest" in the commission's work. Birmingham said Lamm had cancelled two appointments with him and in general failed to communicate with his office. Lamm, a Democrat, accused Birmingham of moving out for political reasons. "I sort of thought I detected the blaring of an elephant," he said.

ROMCOE names new board members

Two Westerners, Pauline Utter of Casper, Wyo., and John VanDerwalker of Denver, Colo., have joined the board of directors of the Rocky Mountain Center on Environment (ROMCOE). Utter is active in the League of Women Voters on the state, regional and national level. VanDerwalker is program manager for the Northern Great Plains Resource Program, a joint federal-state effort to analyze the effects of coal development.

BLM rejects sodium lease application

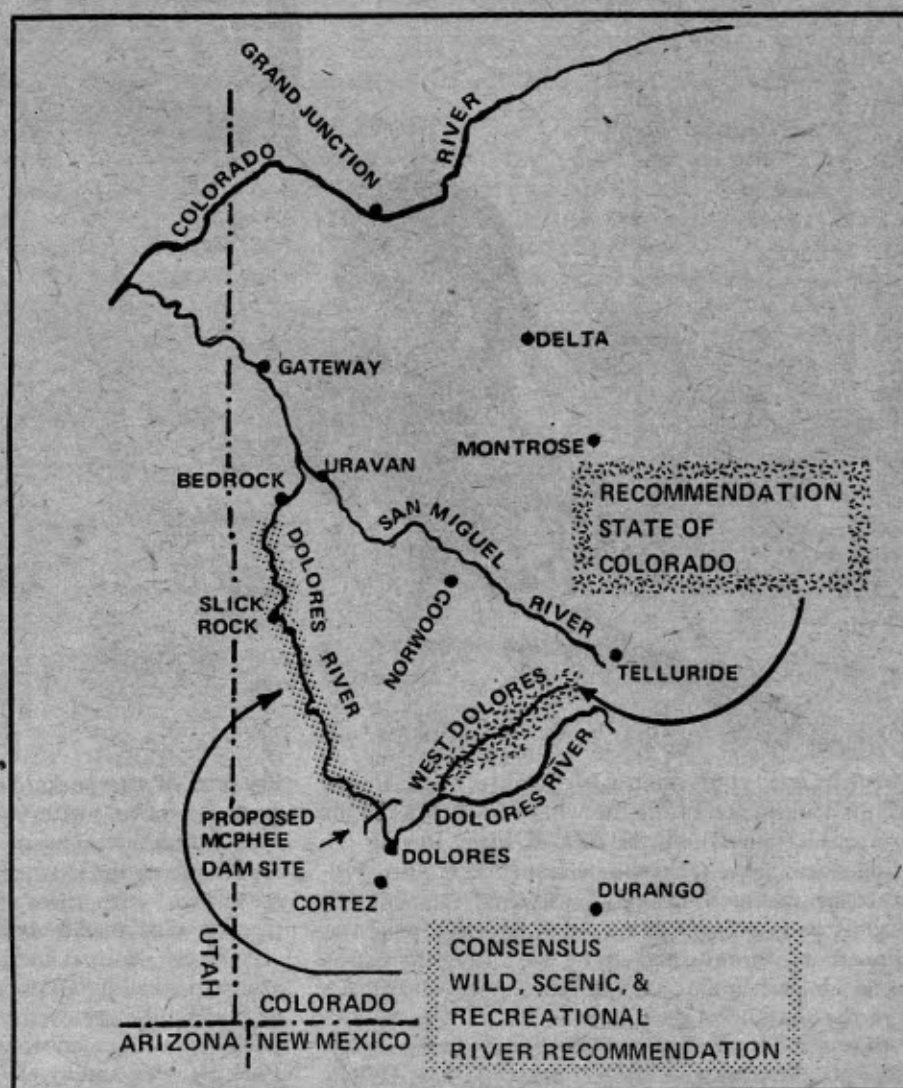
An application to lease sodium minerals in the area between the two upper arms of Flaming Gorge Reservoir in southwest Wyoming was rejected by the Bureau of Land Management in October. "Due to the close proximity of the lands to the Flaming Gorge Reservoir and National Recreation Area, the threat of water pollution and the damage to recreational and aesthetic values are particularly of concern," the BLM told the applicant in a letter of rejection. "Those lands that you seek to lease for trona mining and the surrounding environment would be more severely damaged by such activity than most other sites within the known sodium leasing areas."

NEW INTERIOR SECRETARY

The Senate Interior Committee voted Oct. 7 to recommend confirmation of Thomas S. Kleppe as Interior Secretary. The nomination was approved without dissent. Kleppe, administrator of the Small Business Administration since 1971, served two terms as a Congressman from North Dakota in the late 1960s. Kleppe succeeds former Wyoming Gov. Stanley K. Hathaway, who resigned last July after slightly more than a month on the job. Hathaway has since set up a law practice in Cheyenne, Wyo.



Mountain States News Service



ACTION ON DOLORES PROTECTION

An official study team has recommended that 105 miles of the Dolores River in Colorado be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Federal and state representatives on the team chose a stretch from about one mile below the proposed McPhee dam site near the town of Dolores to one mile above the Colorado Highway 90 bridge near Bedrock. The choice includes scenic Dolores and Slick Rock Canyons.

In addition, representatives of the state of Colorado are recommending the 35-mile-long West Dolores for inclusion in the national system. Federal representatives did not choose the segment, because they said private land along its banks would make it costly and difficult to administrate.

Both recommendations will have limited impact on private lands, however, and are compatible with the Dolores Irrigation Project and McPhee Dam, the team says. A draft environmental impact statement will be released for public review in December. The team's final report, plus public comments on the draft, will go to Congress sometime in January for a final decision.

The study team recommendations came after a tumultuous round of hearings this summer in Grand Junction, Denver, Norwood, and Cortez, Colo. Environmental groups recommended protection for all but a half mile of the 294 miles of the river. Chambers of commerce, county commissioners, and city councils in Western Colorado adopted resolutions opposing any protection at all.

Johns-Manville mine draws criticism

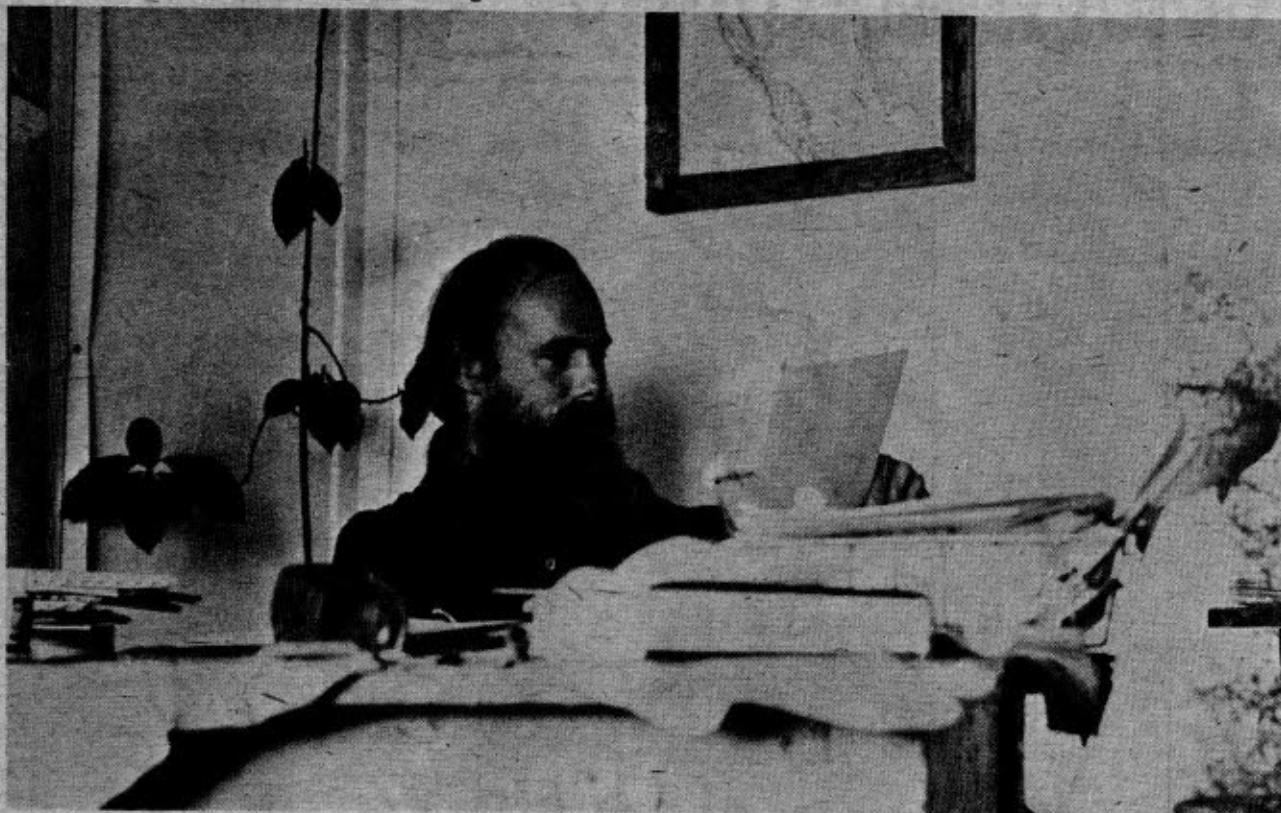
A proposed mining and smelting operation near the Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness in Montana has caused concern among state officials and a Stillwater County citizens group. The state Department of Fish and Game says that the platinum-palladium mine, which is still only in the planning stages, will be in direct conflict with the winter range for a herd of 50-75 elk. The development has been proposed by Johns-Manville, an international mining firm with offices in Denver. A citizens group, the Stillwater Protective Association, is gathering data on the social and environmental problems the operation may bring. The mineral deposits are in Sweet Grass County, which would receive tax revenues from the project. Neighboring Stillwater County residents would bear the economic and social burdens, says SPA president Mary Donohoe.

'Wilderness would hurt SLC watershed'

Opponents of a new wilderness area in Utah argue that because of the intense use wilderness now gets, wilderness classification would endanger the Salt Lake City watershed. Salt Lake City commissioners argued for Scenic Area designation of the Lone Peak area southeast of the city instead so that adequate sanitary facilities could be installed. A Forest Service representative said that vault toilets would probably be allowed in the area even under wilderness designation since it is a critical watershed. The toilets would have to be emptied by helicopter since roads are not allowed in wilderness areas.

14-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

Parks proponent, Chuck Williams, sells hope



Sitting quietly at his camp at Isle Royale, Mich., Chuck Williams looked across the fire where he saw a red fox sitting quietly, yawning, looking at him. During the evening, three foxes each took their turn at the fire. Williams was surprised — delighted — at their company, but he had already recognized that this national park was unique among those he had visited. He had been treed by a moose previously that day and later heard the call of a wolf in the distance.

Williams knows the national parks and what each has to offer possibly better than any other person. He has lived in the parks for the last five years. Communing with the red fox, the wolf, and the moose is all part of a day's work for him as the national parks field representative for Friends of the Earth (FOE), a national conservation organization.

When new acquaintances voice their envy of his job, Williams is quick to point out, however, that it is not always so idyllic. It often means long hours spent in bars trying to get memos out of rangers, tedious days spent in meetings in superintendents' offices, and, only occasionally, sneaking hikes in between meetings. It also means lots of traveling, alone, across the country. After visiting Isle Royale, for example, he was planning to travel east until he got an urgent phone call sending him back to Wyoming for hearings at Grand Teton National Park. After arriving, he stayed up much of the night in his van studying for the hearings. He says he can barely roll over once he goes to bed because his files have grown so large they crowd his sleeping space in the van.

Still, he loves his FOE work, a job he created himself and began in August of this year. Five years ago he and a friend started on a six month trip, and "it's never ended," he says. He was working on a guidebook to the parks designed for "freaks," young people who wouldn't have the money nor the inclination to follow the tips of more traditional guidebooks to the national parks. The book was to include a section on the political aspects of the parks, but Williams soon realized that should be the whole book.

As he travels, he continues work on the book, which FOE will publish. It will be filled with photographs by Williams as well as constructive criticism of the National Park Service and an alternate long-term plan for the future of the parks. He hopes it will stimulate public interest and involvement in Park Service affairs.

When he first began living in the parks, his work was much less structured than it is now. He would hike for days taking pictures. "I got real spacey. . . I didn't know what hour, what month, or what year it was when I was taking pictures," he says. He tells of one time following a mountain goat in Glacier National Park until he suddenly realized he was at the top of a 2,000 foot cliff with no idea of where he was nor how he had gotten there. He reduced his needs to food and film, admitting to being an "Ectachrome junkie."

Now his involvement with the parks is political. He explains that he has always been a political person, but "I've had all the ghettoes I can take." Prior to beginning

his tour of the parks, he was in El Paso as a VISTA worker, working with friends who were members of the city's largest street gang. He says he was finally run out of town because the local police, the John Birch Society, and other local authorities were so upset with him. Before that, he was an executive instrumentation engineer.

Now, in addition to his book, he works with citizen groups and with FOE representatives across the country on national parks issues. "Too many decisions about parks are being made from offices — both decisions by the Park Service and by environmentalists. With my job, I spend a lot of my time talking with people on all sides of the issue. I get a different perspective than I would reading books," he says. He offers as an example the three-sided shelters at Isle Royale. He opposed them until he had been at the park for one day and realized how serious the insect problem was, how much it rained, and how dangerous the eastern moose in rut could be.

Williams met other park visitors in the shelter he stayed in at Isle Royale. He talked with them around the fire about parks, what they're meant for, and how they should be managed. At first his fuzzy beard might make some people hesitant to talk with him. However, his easy

manner and the national park atmosphere itself usually break through the barriers as he and other campers share their parks together.

The people he talks to generally believe the parks are designed exclusively for their recreation, he says, and usually do not understand the distinctions among national forests, national monuments, national parks, and other public lands. Williams tries to share with them his ideas of why there are parks and why the country needs more.

He is personally campaigning to get National Recreation Areas adjacent to parks to get some of the pressure off of the parks. He believes parks are more important for protecting representative ecosystems. For example, he would like to see the proposed Tall Grass Prairie National Park established in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Although he says the ranchers haven't done too badly at preserving the prairie ecosystems there, the prairies are now endangered by power lines and subdivisions. Only national park designation could protect them, he believes.

In the existing parks, Williams would like to see both artificial attractions and unneeded concessions removed from the parks. He says that attractions such as golf courses and swimming pools could be enjoyed elsewhere instead. In three parks (Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain), the Park Service is formally considering eliminating all restaurants and motels since these parks are small enough that outside facilities could serve park visitors adequately.

Williams says the concession problem dates back to the days when Yosemite and Yellowstone were first created and transportation was so slow that visitors would take more than a day to get from a town into the parks. Now it can take two hours, he says.

He cites one extreme present day example in Yosemite. In one square mile, which he considers the most scenic spot in the parks system, there are 1,200 permanent buildings, not including tent buildings and outhouses.

These situations upset Williams deeply and he dedicates his life to changing them. He sees the parks as "islands of hope," where we will always be able to go back and have the plants and the animals left almost as they would be naturally. The job he has created as national parks advocate is seen by some as that of a "hope salesman" who travels from town to town selling the idea of more national parks.

He asks that others concerned with parks contact him as issues arise, and he will also try to meet with them when he's in their area. Write: Chuck Williams, c/o Friends of the Earth, 529 Commercial, San Francisco, Calif. 94111.

—MJA

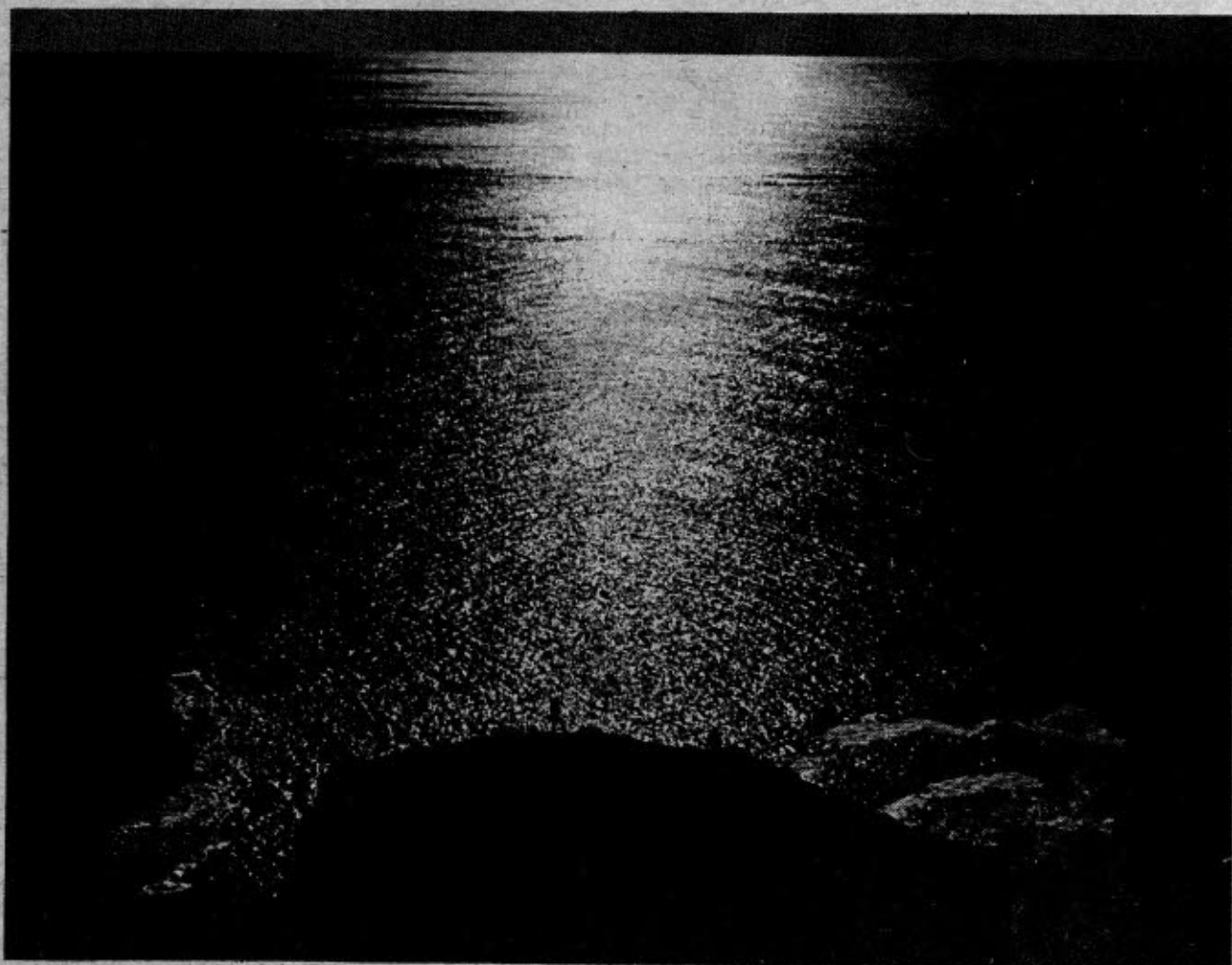


Photo by Chuck Williams



HCN Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world

Oct. 24, 1975 — High Country News-15



LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

There once was a cow with nothing to do.
They stopped her from eating. They said, "Do not chew."
She endured constipation
For the good of the nation,
For nothing could change 'til studies were through.

FORESTS ENDANGERED BY COOKING. With more than a third of the world's population dependent on firewood for cooking, many forest lands in developing countries are being denuded, according to Erik Eckholm of the World Watch Institute. In an article by Gannett News Service, he said this situation seems unavoidable but is also suicidal. Governments in these countries have so many pressing concerns that they can't put money aside for reforestation, and there is little hope that the affluent countries will engage in crash energy-conservation programs to divert the surplus fuel to poorer nations to relieve the run on firewood.



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CLEAN AIR MARKUP. The House Subcommittee on Public Health and Environment has completed its revision of Clean Air Act amendments. An amendment which previously was expected to affect the proposed Kaiparowits power plant in Utah has been changed. The amendment now limits mandatory Class I designations for non-deterioration to national parks and wilderness areas over 10,000 acres and prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from imposing uniform buffer zones. Another provision gives EPA emergency enforcement powers when states fail to act. Under the current draft, EPA is required to investigate purported employment impacts of control regulations. A proposed amendment was defeated which would have given the President authority to suspend portions of the act in times of an energy crisis. The full House Committee on Commerce is expected to start taking action on the amendments following the Thanksgiving recess. The Senate Public Works Subcommittee, also working on Clean Air amendments, has set no date for reporting the bill out to the full committee, according to **Conservation Report**.

WATER POLLUTION FIGHT PROGRESSING. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train says that 97% of all water dischargers are either now in compliance with pollution control standards or on definite water cleanup schedules. He says this means we are "ending the first round in the fight to end water pollution," according to **Air-Water Pollution Report**. He says the next round will be more difficult and more costly since it will deal with pollution from sources which are not easy to identify and which include toxic substances.

HIGH COURT ON ZONING. The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear arguments this term on an Ohio community's limits to growth plan. It will rule on the constitutionality of an Eastlake, Ohio, ordinance requiring 55% voter approval for zoning changes. Growth-limiting ordinances in San Diego and San Jose have also been taken to the high court but no decisions have been reached. The Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a New Jersey Supreme Court ruling banning exclusionary zoning by developing communities, according to **Land Use Planning Reports**.

BUDGET CUTS CURTAIL PARKS. Low funding for National Parks has led to reductions in available services and a more "do-it-yourself" atmosphere in the parks, according to the **Christian Science Monitor**. Reductions include: closing half the picnic areas in Yellowstone, reducing interpretive walks in Carlsbad Caverns by half, and cutting boat service to Isle Royale from three times a week to twice a week.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS ASKED FOR HELP. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train has called upon environmentalists to fight efforts in the House to weaken EPA authority in the field of pesticide regulation. He said charges blaming the ban on DDT for outbreaks of encephalitis are false. DDT had been largely abandoned for mosquito control prior to the ban because mosquitoes had become DDT-resistant.

BULLETIN BOARD

COLORADO LAND USE

The Colorado Land Use Commission has a set of publications available. One is **Colorado Land Use Laws** by John R. Birmingham, a discussion of state land use laws and an index of relevant sections of the Colorado Revised Statutes, 1973. The second is **Colorado Land Use Laws: Regional and Local** by Michael D. White. It covers regional, county, and municipal planning and land use laws and controls. The set costs \$7.50 and can be ordered from the Colorado Land Use Commission, 1845 Sherman, Room 600, Denver, Colo. 80203.

WEST TETONS PLAN OUT

The Forest Service is accepting comments on its proposed land use plan and draft environmental statement for the West Slope of the Grand Tetons in northwest Wyoming until November 11, 1975. The unit has five roadless areas, but the Forest Service recommends managing only one of the five for its wilderness values — and not giving that one formal wilderness designation. For a copy of the proposed plan contact: U.S. Forest Service, Targhee National Forest, St. Anthony, Idaho 83445.

WYO. PLANNING CONFERENCE

"Why Wyoming — Because We Care" is the theme for the Second Wyoming Planning Conference which will be held in Casper November 14-15, 1975. The planning conference is jointly sponsored by the Wyoming Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Wyoming Planning Association. The conference will look closely at the process and problems of development in Wyoming's counties and communities. Sessions are open to the public.

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Student Conservation Association is offering high school and college age people volunteer jobs in national parks or forests. Work in both visitor services and conservation available, mainly in the summer, but some off-season jobs are also available. The earlier the application is sent in, the better the applicant's chances. None will be accepted after March 1. Contact the Student Conservation Association, Olympic View Drive, Route 1, Box 573A, Vashon, Wash. 98070.

DANCE AND MEETING

The Powder River Basin Resource Council's annual meeting will be Nov. 15 in Gillette, Wyo. The meeting, which begins at 3 p.m., will feature Montana rancher Wally McRae as guest speaker. Discussion groups, elections, a pot luck supper, and a dance will follow. Before the meeting the group will take a tour of Gillette. For more information contact the Resource Council at 150 West Brundage, Box 6221, Sheridan, Wyo. 82801.

UDALL TO SPEAK IN POWELL

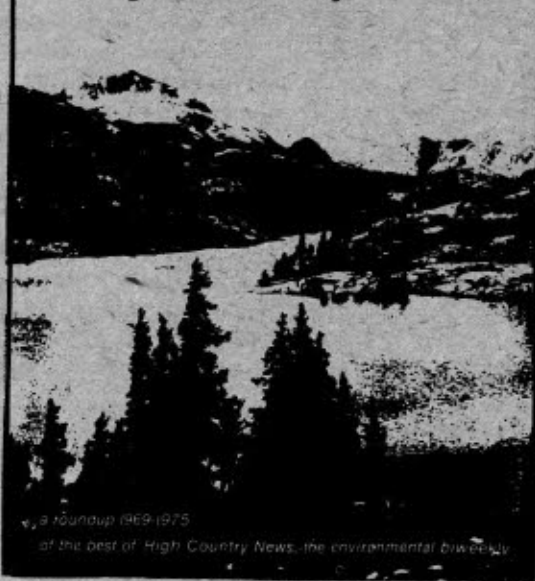
Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall will speak on the campus of Northwest Community College in Powell, Wyo., Nov. 3 at 8 p.m. The lecture, entitled "Who Owns the Land," will be in the NWCC liberal arts auditorium. Admission is free. Udall was secretary during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Since, he has formed "Overview," an international consulting firm devoted to creating a better environment.

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16-High Country News — Oct. 24, 1975

HCN**Books****THE
LANDS
NO ONE
KNOWS***America and the Public Domain*

by T. H. Watkins and Charles S. Watson, Jr., Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1975. \$9.95, hard cover, 256 pages. Photographs.

Review by Peter Wild

With their combination of concise prose, accuracy, and rich photography, Sierra Club Books have set a sensitive standard for publications on camping, hiking, and the embattled environment. A recent release, *The Land No One Knows*, traces the history of America's public domain, the vast lands owned by the federal government but not yet set aside as parks, national forests, or military reservations.

As holds true of so many of our resources, the story of the public domain is dominated by the plunder of special interests. Because of this, the book is timely. As the bicentennial approaches, it might be well to remember that more than one mighty nation in the past has collapsed from within due to abuse of its land. This, as the book documents, we have been doing to our public domain at an increasing rate for 200 years.

In 1783, at the end of the Revolutionary War, the new nation was politically free. It was nearly bankrupt as well, in desperate need of cash. On the credit side, however, the government owned 300 million acres, consisting mostly of unsettled lands in the Appalachian Mountains and beyond. Their sale would accomplish two urgent goals. It would help fill the bare government coffers. It would provide relief to the landless of the young republic, thus fulfilling the American dream of the independent yeoman farmer carving his future out of the wilderness.

With all good intention, then, Congress passed the Ordinance of 1785, which announced the orderly disposal of the public domain for the benefit of all. From the outset the disposition was neither orderly nor for the public good. Powerful speculators and connivers, often backed by foreign money, elbowed private citizens aside. Appropriating huge chunks of territory for themselves, they established a pattern of robbery and ruin that continues to this day. In fact, practically every major land law passed until this century was born either of ignorance or greed.

As for ignorance, the Homestead Act of 1862 stands as an infamous example. Intended as a liberal law with the Western pioneer farmer in mind, it granted title to 160 acres per head of household, requiring only a modest payment and that the settler live on and farm the land. Unfortunately, Congress had not learned to adjust its thinking to conditions on the frontier. A family with 160

acres might have a splendid farm in the well-watered East. A farm of the same size was entirely insufficient in the arid West. Beyond the 100th meridian, 30 to 40 acres might be necessary to support a single cow; in many places only expensive irrigation projects could supply sufficient water for agriculture. Under these conditions, while the honest settler broke himself in a futile effort to provide for his family, the huge farming and ranching corporations moved in and made a farce of the law.

As one requirement for the granting of title, the act stipulated that the homesteader construct a dwelling of at least "twelve by fourteen." Exploiters built bird-house sized cabins of twelve by fourteen inches, mounted them on wagons, and hauled them around to prospective sites. There, gangs of men hired as fraudulent homesteaders cynically swore to the presence of a dwelling and turned the deeds over to their bosses. The crooked businessmen paid the men for their brief services with a few dollars or bottles of whiskey, then sat back and gloated. Since the government's General Land Office was hopelessly understaffed, the plunder became a happy game for any with sufficient money to play.

"The Great Barbeque," as the authors call it, continued through the 1860s and into the following decades. Under the banner of free enterprise, which instead amounted to socialism for the rich, a handful of eastern railroad men luxuriated in the largesse of Congress. They saw to it that the transcontinental railroad was built; in return they pocketed millions of dollars beyond a fair profit. Besides grants of taxpayers' dollars, in one stroke 90 million acres of the public's western land was gone in outright gifts to them. Their method of treating the land reflected their greed in acquiring it. The modus operandi of such men was to squeeze as much profit from their holdings as quickly as possible. They overgrazed for a few years, then walked off with bulging wallets, leaving the ranges eroding and worthless, often beyond repair. And so we have in southeastern Arizona a dry trench 40 feet deep, 200 feet wide, and 60 miles long, where a slow stream once flowed. When it rains, for hundreds of square miles around the denuded land melts like sugar. The West is full of such examples, and the permanently shifting sands of Algeria and the Middle East bear testimony to the long-term results of similar abuse.

At this point, midway through the book, the reasonable

man might throw up his hands in despair. However, the second half discusses the present state of the public domain and offers hope for the future, if the nation will come to its good senses. The Bureau of Land Management controls the 471 million acres that remain of the public domain. Despite the sordid history, a large portion of the lands survived the wreckage. The problem is that although the BLM is the steward of more territory than all other federal agencies combined, it is an emasculated

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agency, deliberately kept in a crippled state by a clique of politicians for the corporate interests they represent. Formed in 1946, when the General Land Office combined with the Grazing Service, the BLM continues to operate decades later in an administrative limbo, its goals largely undefined, its enforcement powers nil on the very lands it administers, and its meager staff overworked and underpaid.

The BLM averages one employee per 96,000 acres. In the case of the Mojave-Colorado River region, eight men in the field must oversee 16 million acres. In other words, the BLM functions just about the way exploiters want — hardly at all. It exists in a state of fear, knowing that if it offends the powerful trail bike, mining, or cattle lobbies by moving to protect the public's lands for the future, its budget likely will suffer in Congress.

Recent years have seen a flurry of proposed bills that would help rectify the situation. They have been beaten back repeatedly by such friends of the pillagers as Rep. Sam Steiger of Arizona. For the past two centuries we have mortgaged the future by plundering our land assets. If we are to survive the next 100 years, it will be up to the conservationists to mount a major campaign to save and restore the greatest resource that a nation can possess.

Dear Friends

We're always trying to find new outlets for *High Country News*. On a recent trip, Marjane talked with a distributor who said he'd try to peddle our product for a while, because he always liked to take on a few fledgling publications. When Marjane told the man we'd been publishing HCN for six years, he was amazed. How did we do it? The failure rate on new publications is about 98%.

This confrontation brought to mind again the fact that HCN is an anomaly — a freak in the publishing world. Common sense says we couldn't exist, but here we are. One of the reasons we are still here, of course, is our readers' generous contributions to help us get by. Each day as we open the mail we are renewed with hope to see another reader felt HCN was worthwhile enough to send an extra five or ten dollars and become a "Friend of High Country News."

When the paper was on the brink of collapse, these contributions enabled us to put out one more issue. Now, with our readers help, HCN is a little more stable. We can look beyond the next issue and plan on continuance over the next year.

With this new sense of fragile but hopeful stability we have taken the first steps toward setting up a tax-deductible arm of the paper. We have drawn up articles of incorporation for the High Country Foundation with the generous aide of Jackson, Wyo., attorney Hank Phibbs. The foundation will conduct non-political research on environmental issues and supply the information to HCN and other news outlets and organizations. The paper will continue to research issues regardless of their political nature

and will continue to attempt to influence legislation when necessary, but the foundation will complement such stands with non-political research and writing.

While we wait for the state and the Internal Revenue Service to rule on the foundation, we have set up a temporary tax-deductible conduit to start receiving funds and accomplish the same ends. Beginning today, readers can funnel non-taxable contributions to HCN for non-political research through the Wyoming Environmental Institute. HCN will use these funds to conduct research we feel will be of value to the region, but we welcome suggestions from our readers as well on how best to use this money. We hope this arrangement will improve the responsiveness of HCN to our readers, and make the paper a little more financially stable.

We are indebted to the efforts of the Wyoming Environmental Institute and its executive director, Leslie Petersen, for helping put this program together.

So, if you want to be a "Friend of HCN" and to be able to write your contribution off on your next income tax statement, send your donations to the Wyoming Environmental Institute, Box 2497, Jackson, Wyo. 83301. Checks should be made out to "Wyoming Environmental Institute — HCN Research Fund."

We're very excited about this new arrangement. We hope you will be, too. We'll keep you informed on the progress of the High Country Foundation and look forward to hearing from you on how we can improve this program. —the editors.

**In
The News****Teton jetport**

airport v. park values

1

Grouse or strip mining?

servant struggles with decision

7

Subsidy for synfuels

\$6 billion in loan guarantees

12

BLM reacts to suit

no new fences, waterholes

1

The seasons change

special treat for mountain people

8

Lands No One Knows

plundering the public domain

16