

The Environmental Bi-Weekly



High Country News

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Lander, Wyoming

Friday, June 18, 1976



Wyoming's Red Desert needs defenders

An invitation to a very strange place



Red Desert dunes.

Photo by Dick Randall.

by Dick Randall
Field Representative, Defenders of
Wildlife

The sun had just seared past its zenith in a cloudless Wyoming sky. The temperature must have been over 100 degrees. Sweat soaked my shirt, and my eyes had developed a permanent squint fighting the glare from the sand dunes. My horse lunged the last few feet, topped out on the vantage point we had been aiming for, and stood with his sides heaving. I dismounted, loosened the cinch, and began scanning the area with my binoculars. The "big sage" that grew along the edges of the dune field danced crazily in the heat waves. A lone magpie flapped past, going somewhere.

About a mile down country I saw my quarry, heads drooping from the heat and tails swishing at flies. Five wayward

horses had escaped from a pasture at the Chilton Ranch; I had been tracking them for two days.

By now my horse had caught his wind. I jerked the cinch tight, mounted up, and we started a sliding descent of the steep, lee side of the huge dune, ready to begin the round up.

Suddenly the front legs went out from under my mount. I barely had time to kick out of the stirrups and dive from the saddle before the whole scene dissolved into a mass of sand and flying hooves. Both of us ate a lot of sand as we rolled to the bottom of the dune, shook up, but not injured. I glanced up at the face of the dune and just before the sliding sands filled the trench cut by my horse I caught a glimpse of something white. While I spat sand and wiped sand out of my eyes and ears, I kept watching the slide cover whatever had

caused our tumble. Finally, curiosity won and I hands-and-kneed it back up the dune and began to dig. Sand slid into the trench faster than I could pull it away with my hands. I turned around, blocked the slide with my rear-end, and kicked a hole in the sand with my boots. About the third kick my boot heel connected with something that jarred my whole leg.

I felt around in the sand and came up with two big chunks of what appeared to be ice and snow. For a minute I thought the heat had gotten to me. This was late August on Wyoming's Red Desert. Hot winds had burned the grass, dried up waterholes, and here I sat on a pile of hot sand digging out ice. A few more kicks and a lot of pawing uncovered a mass of ice about two feet

thick, and three feet wide. I lacked the strength to locate either end of this absurdity.

It didn't take long to lope down country, gather up the strays, and yahoo them back to the ranch. I could hardly wait to tell somebody about the iceberg in the sand dune, which I was sure nobody would believe.

The alkali dust boiled up by my little cavvy caught the attention of Speed Martinez, Chilton's top segundo, who opened the corral gate. The horses had barely cleared the fence when I hit the ground and began telling him about the ice in the sand. Speed cut me off. "Oh, you find the summertime ice. I find that stuff many times

(continued on page 4)



White-footed mouse.

Photo by Dick Randall.

Ice buried in hot sand is only a small part of the miracles contained in Wyoming's Great Divide Basin.

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HIGH COUNTRY

By Tom Bell

The Teton Dam tragedy is now history. Some of the dead are not yet found. Sorrow lingers, the mop up goes on, and a final assessment of damages still continues. When the final chapter in this man-made catastrophe is someday written, it will be a damning indictment of some men's arrogance and other men's error.

But it is more than that. Teton Dam should stand as a monument to the demise of a time-worn, outmoded philosophy. That philosophy is one of damn-the-environment, progress-at-any-price. Such a philosophy rode rough-shod over every opposition to the Teton Dam project. It rejected rational, reasonable argument of the longterm worth of such a project in comparison to natural values that were there at no cost to society. And finally it rejected sound scientific evidence that the site was no place to put such a dam. It was wrong — and all who backed it were told so.

The project had its basis in selfish interest. It is the old familiar story of promoters out for personal gain in alliance with unscrupulous politicians. A relatively few landowners would get taxpayer subsidized water for their lands. The Chambers of Commerce would get millions of dollars spent in their area. (The total cost of the project: \$55 million). The politicians would get all the political mileage of "porkbarrell" spent in their state and their district. And finally the Bureau of Reclamation would get a new lease on life with a new project on which to spend money.

The "frontier ethic" was in full force from the very inception of the Teton Dam project. That ethic holds that there will always be new frontiers to conquer and subdue. The trouble is that consequences are never adequately assessed in relation to all the so-called benefits. And a project such as

Teton Dam is seldom if ever viewed within the context of a region or a state. It is just normally assumed that what is good for a handful of farmers in eastern Idaho is going to benefit everyone in the Columbia River Basin. That is no longer necessarily so, and it should be recognized.

The effects of the damages inflicted by Teton Dam go far beyond that small area. Once in place, the benefits of supplemental irrigation to a few people in an area of short growing seasons (100 days) would never even have paid the cost of construction of the dam. Now, the economic costs alone (of the break) are at least 20 times the cost of the dam. There can be no adequate assessment of social and environmental costs.

The Teton Dam catastrophe should once again call into question the integrity of the Bureau of Reclamation. Even without the warning from geologists of the U.S. Geological Survey, the competence of engineers within the bureau is brought into doubt. But it is the supreme arrogance of this politically powerful government bureau that is almost beyond belief. It is typical of the Bureau to tell the U.S. Geological Survey that it was "being paid to map geology and not to meddle in the construction of dams."

It can only be hoped that Gov. Jimmy Carter will become president, and that he will reorganize the Bureau of Reclamation out of existence.

In the meantime, the tragedy of Teton Dam should be a warning in other areas of serious question. The Bureau of Reclamation could most assuredly have found engineers who would categorically state that the chances of Teton Dam breaking would be one in so many million odds.

And the Bureau could point to a perfect record of no serious dam breaks in years of dam building. Just so, there are nuclear engineers who point to the perfect record of no serious accidents in nuclear plants. With Teton Dam, we have been forewarned.



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Red Desert

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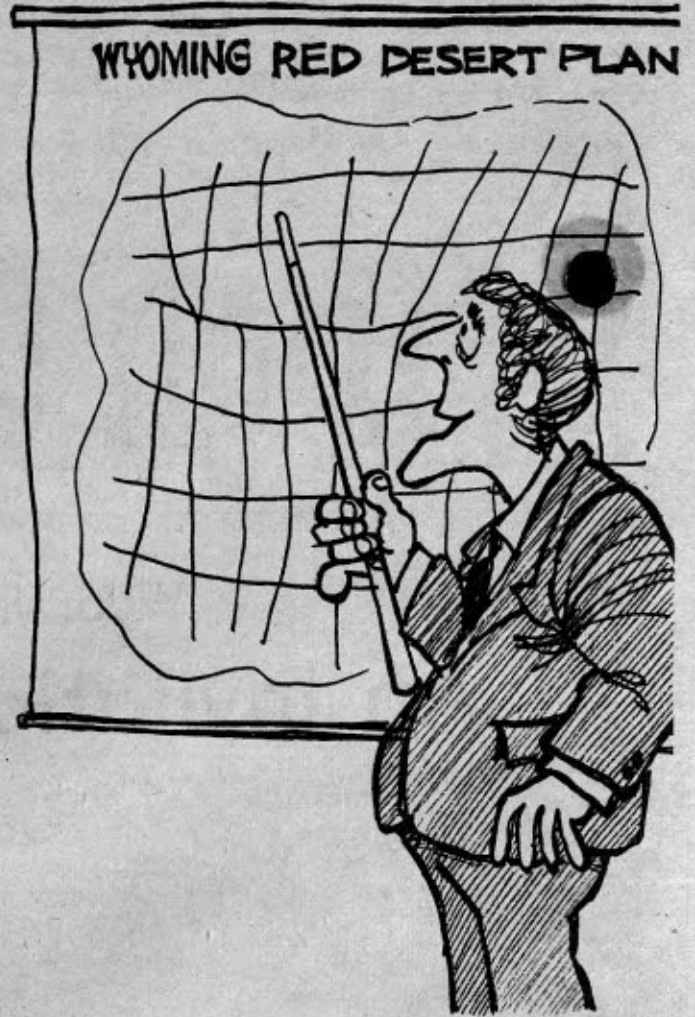
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HCN-1976



"NOTICE, HOWEVER, HOW THE FENCES ARE NOT JUST A CHECKERBOARD BUT CONFORM TO THE TOPOLOGY AND ARE RHOMBUSOID, RECTANGULAR, TRIANGULAR..."



HCN Letters

ENTHUSIASM LAGGING

High Country News:

I am one of the organizers of the Kaiparowits Awareness Group here in Salt Lake. Our group has greatly fluctuated in size ranging from just a few of us to about a few hundred at the "death" (?) of Kaiparowits — and now back to a few of us. I don't think Utah is altogether unique in the problem of making people aware and GETTING PEOPLE TO MOVE! But the political (and religious I suppose) situation in this state is very backward, ignorant and close-minded.

Well, since the announcement of the power companies' withdrawal from the Kaiparowits project and the general feeling in Salt Lake is that everything is rosy, it is MOST difficult regenerating enthusiasm.

Our primary concern now is with the clean air act amendments — and Moss' efforts to weaken them. We have petitions state-wide as well as out-of-state.

Barbara Ilgren
446 S. 12th E.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102

NO NEW CUSTOMERS

Dear HCN,

I would like to call your attention to the news item in the May 21 issue of **High Country News** (p. 11, Column 2, "Power on the Loose").

Contrary to the report in **HCN**, Platte

River is not seeking new customers. For a short period of time we will have surplus electric energy to dispose of, until we "grow into" our new power facilities, but this surplus will be absorbed by existing utilities until our own municipal customers need it. No member of our board or management has suggested that any new cities be added to our service responsibilities.

I hope that the issue of "surplus sales" will be understood for what it is — merely a necessary step to keep down the net costs to our cities and their retail customers.

Albert J. Hamilton
General Manager
Platte River Power Authority

POSITION CLARIFICATION

Dear HCN,

It is somewhat of an anomaly to see oneself blasted in the very paper he has worked hard to save (see **HCN** editorial, 4-23-76).

Enclosed is a copy of the 16 point resume we (Idaho Consumer Affairs) made of our testimony and exhibits. You will note that the building of an additional thermal unit at Rock Springs was only one of several alternatives. In addition to better air quality laws, the savings in oil and the more feasible disposal of the bottom ash in the already excavated mined-out area, basically is what was in mind.

Harold C. Miles
Nampa, Idaho

We're sorry we singled out only one small part of your testimony. You made many constructive suggestions, but we still remain opposed to the idea of siting power plants for Idaho in Wyoming. Similarly, we wouldn't expect Idaho to house Wyoming's pollution problems.

—the editors

Red Desert

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High Country News

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Editorial

HCN

June 18, 1976 — High Country News-3

Teton Dam: a sorry lesson

It's a crime that it took a disaster to make the country realize the folly in constructing Teton Dam in eastern Idaho.

Seven people dead and over \$500 million in damage from the ruptured dam, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation engineers are converging on the site to determine how the failure occurred and if the structure can be rebuilt. Idaho officials say they will seriously question any proposal to rebuild the dam at the same site. Three years ago, Idaho officials had nothing but words of praise for the dam.

President Gerald R. Ford was told that the builders took extra precautions in sealing the dam's foundation and that the collapse "couldn't happen, but it did."

From its inception, environmentalists fought Teton Dam. In a court suit against the dam, a former Bureau of Reclamation geologist, Shirley Pytlak, testified for conservationists that the dam wouldn't hold water. In 1973 Pytlak told the court that test drilling at the dam site revealed "a lot" of seepage in the area. One test hole drained water at a rate of 300 gallons per minute. "It just soaked it up," she said. "If this much water can be absorbed by drill holes, how much would leak from a whole reservoir?" she asked.

BuRec never gave her an answer. The answer was provided on June 5 when 130,000 acre-feet of water roared down the Teton River demolishing whole cities in its path.

The study of the dam by BuRec can be described as cursory at best. BuRec filed a 17-page environmental impact statement on the \$100 million project. In the statement there was no mention of leakage and seepage from the reservoir — a point brought out by conservationists in their court suit.

Plaintiffs — the Sierra Club, the

Idaho Environmental Council, and Trout Unlimited — had hoped to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, but they ran out of money.

Conservationists also argued that BuRec's economic analysis of the dam was full of holes. They held that the costs of the project exceeded the expected benefits. Even the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which also builds dams, held that BuRec's estimates of flood control benefits were overstated. Ironically, flood control benefits were transformed this spring into devastating flood costs.

But this is not a time to say, "We told you so." This is a time for grief — and reflection on where we went wrong. How can similar disasters be prevented in the future?

Already BuRec has put up its defenses — proclaiming that Teton Dam is the first earthen dam to fail since the agency started building them in 1902.

And already people are worried about the stability of new proposed dams. Tyler Dodge, the chairman of the Laramie River Conservation Council in Wheatland, Wyo., says the proposed Grayrocks Reservoir on the Laramie River may not hold since it would be sited on sand and gravel deposits. Laney Hicks, Northern Plains Regional Representative for the Sierra Club, says the proposed Savery-Pothook Reservoir near the Colorado-Wyoming line is in a geologically unstable area.

Existing dams are also a cause for concern. Wyomingites remember when Fontenelle Reservoir in southwestern Wyoming was drained while the dam was patched to prevent failure. In 1972 Congress passed the Dam Safety Act after two disastrous dam failures. However, in the four years since its passage, not one of the thousands of dams that Congress thought would be checked by the Corps of Engineers has been inspected, according to Ben Franklin of the New York Times. Lack of funds is the official reason for this negligence.

The death and destruction left in the aftermath of a dam failure point to an overlooked truth — engineers, even BuRec engineers, can be wrong. Where we've been content to rely on experts and their technology, we must be more vigilant and skeptical. Independent analyses by impartial third parties are needed to counter the boosterism of self-perpetuating agencies. No dam is infallible, no agency is infallible, and all major projects deserve close scrutiny — before they hurt. —BH



TETON DAM under construction on the Teton River in eastern Idaho. When the dam broke, there were millions of dollars of damage and seven human lives were lost. Photo by David Sumner.

Only ghostly guidelines remain

It wasn't the future of Wyoming that seemed to be at stake when the Wyoming Land Use Commission met in Casper on June 5. What seemed to be at stake for a majority of commission members was the perpetuation of the land use commission itself.

The argument was over using a permissive or a mandatory framework for local land use plans. The majority of the commissioners feared that if they made it mandatory, the next legislature would retaliate by disbanding the commission.

Is the Land Use Planning Act going to work?

The answer to that is, "Sure... as long as every town, city, and county government in Wyoming is serious about land use planning." Up until their last two meetings, the guidelines looked good. They offered local governments a valuable checklist of factors to consider in the complex business of land use planning. The checklist is still there.

But if a local government wishes to merely create the illusion of compliance, they can probably get it done some Sunday afternoon at the kitchen table and still meet the guidelines as they now stand. The goals, policies, and guidelines as adopted

by the commission are almost entirely permissive. And permissive guidelines will not work.

Why do guidelines have to be mandatory to be effective?

1) To give the land use commission itself a means of fairly evaluating a local plan. As it is, the commission has handed itself a rubber yardstick. How do you measure with a yardstick that stretches?

2) To back up responsible local officials. Commission members are right in assuming that many local governments will take planning seriously.

But local officials sometimes need a little backing for doing the right thing. They're elected; land use commissioners are not. And the reason the commissioners aren't is so they can exercise some positive leadership. Not so they can indulge in worrying about the commission's future.

3) Most importantly, to tell citizens what to expect from the planning process.

If the commission handed itself a rubber yardstick, it'll get what it deserves: the frustration and possible involvement in litigation sure to come with evaluating diverse local planning products in an essentially arbitrary context.

But the citizens didn't ask for voluntary guidelines. The Wyoming Farm Bureau, the Wyoming Outdoor Council, the Association of County Commissioners, and most importantly, the commission's own advisory group asked for mandatory guidelines.

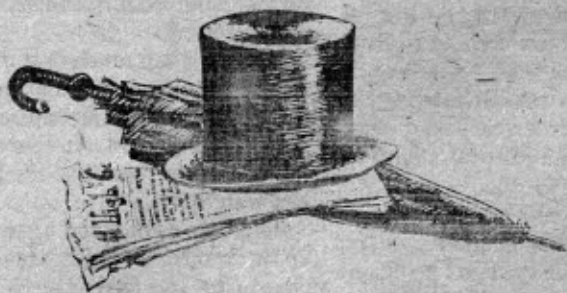
Commission member Hank Phibbs of Jackson repeatedly tried to make the commission aware of its leadership role. Phibbs, along with Nellie Powers of Kemmerer and Doug Bryant of Wheatland, deserve a real vote of thanks for sticking staunchly behind the mandatory language.

Land use planning is one way Wyoming citizens have to protect the lifestyle they love during the rapid changes of the next few years.

However, when forward-looking people of Wyoming reach out eagerly for this new planning tool, their hands may come back empty. For the permissive guidelines are only a ghost of the good sturdy framework they could have been.

HCN AD CAMPAIGN REACHES TWO STATES

In the May 7, 1976, issue of HCN we printed some ads and asked our readers to place one of them in their local papers. So far, we've had ads printed in the *Ravalli Republic*, Hamilton, Mont., sponsored by E. and F. Peirce (they suggested the idea) and *Minnesota Daily*, Minneapolis, Minn., sponsored by D. W. Fuller. Thank you. We've got only 48 more states to go!



If you like our style, maybe you would like to work with us.

High Country News needs good writers and photographers. We have lots to do here and many good news stories that sometimes go by the wayside simply because we can't cover them. We need artists and illustrators, too. If you would like to work with us, write to High Country News, Box K, Lander, WY 82520. Send along samples of your work. We'll respond with information about pay scales and story ideas.

High Country News

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Red Desert. . .

(continued from page 1)

when I run horses. Is a very strange place, no?"

That was 25 years ago, and I have been in love with that "very strange place" ever since.

ROMANTICIST'S TOUCH

Ice buried in hot sand is only a small part of the miracles contained in Wyoming's Great Divide Basin. We desert rats know it simply as the Red Desert. An eroded, empty land, sand blasted by the winds and dyed red from the decomposition of tertiary sediments, it is filled with grotesque geologic structures. Thousands of acres of greasewood-studded lake beds brim with water in spring and dry to great expanses of red crust in the fall.

On the Red Desert you need only a touch of the romanticist to retreat through the years and see ghostly buffalo grazing and listen to the mournful song of their constant companions, the wolves. The little camps of the Utes and Shoshones are easy to spot: White smoke drifts up from their teepees. It's not really long ago. When you roll out your sleeping bag on the desert floor and watch the shadows spread until the dobie hills are only dim shapes, you realize the Indians and the buffalo were only yesterday and the desert has been there forever. The Red Desert is indescribable, a unique treasure.

Water flows here only during the spring snow-melt or after a rare rainstorm; then it rushes down the gullies, out onto the flats, and goes nowhere. It reaches neither ocean because the Continental Divide splits near a place called Pacific Springs on the Lander-Farson highway and comes together again near Bridger Pass, south of Rawlins, bounding the desert on all sides.

Tourists rushing through southern Wyoming between Rawlins and Rock Springs glimpse the desert from Interstate 80. They refer to the area as "that God-forsaken place" and hurry on toward Yellowstone or the Black Hills.

I would like you to see the Red Desert, this summer. I want you to feel what I feel, see the things I have seen, unroll your sleeping bag and drift into sleep listening to the wild song of the coyotes. But the desert is fragile. When broken by a tire track or bruised by too many campers, it takes a long time to heal. Right now the Red Desert needs you badly, but please treat it gently.

FAR FROM EMPTY

The desert's current need arises from a court decision. In 1974, U.S. District Judge Thomas A. Flannery, ruling on a suit brought against the Bureau of Land Management by the Natural Resources Defense Council, ordered BLM to evaluate the local environmental effects of livestock grazing on over 150 million acres of public domain lands in 11 Western states. BLM has begun work on the first of the many environmental impact statements (EIS's) that will cover all national resource land in Wyoming. The Red Desert is a part of this first study.

Late this year the EIS will be completed; in January 1977, you and I can read BLM's

management proposals for this area and make written comments. In February, we can attend three public meetings in southern Wyoming where BLM will explain its objectives, answer questions, and record our comments. Since the Red Desert is a most inhospitable place in the winter, that leaves only this summer for you to become well enough acquainted with it to speak up for this part of our heritage.

BLM is charged with managing the surface, or habitat, of much of our national resource lands, supposedly under a multiple-use concept. Throughout the study, BLM range managers will view the Red Desert through eyes that would take pleasure in seeing hundreds of miles of fence, rest-rotation plans to provide private pastures for livestock operators, and sagebrush destroyed to give ground to

The fine grains record the wingtips of an owl that brushed the sand as it pounced, the touch of a kangaroo rat's tail, even the tiny footprints of the dune beetles.

Far from being empty, the desert may be too rich for its own good. It holds vast coal reserves, hundreds of square miles of deep trona beds, some two billion tons of leucite (rich in potash), oil and gas. Even the dunes are rich in silica.

Spokesmen for livestock and mineral interests are many, vocal, and politically powerful. The voices speaking for wildlife and beauty are often drowned by the din and lost in the smoke screen thrown up by the people whose faith is in development at

tagged other herds on the move.

Last September, I spent a pleasant day on the desert with the nine-member National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. BLM sponsored the tour to acquaint board members with horse management problems. I was heartened by the dedication and expertise shown by this board. They, and the land managers, have some thorny problems to grapple with: How many free-roaming horses and burros are enough? What acceptable methods can be used to capture horses and cull the herds? How many units of public land forage should be set aside for these animals?

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET

In the fall of 1969, I made the most exciting wildlife discovery of my lifetime. I was then employed by the Fish and Wildlife Service and had spent the day looking for coyote sign on the desert. I had arranged my travels so as to arrive at one of my favorite waterholes about supper time. I set camp well back from the water so I could watch, but not disturb, antelope that trailed across the desert for a drink. A hundred yards off, a town of white-tailed prairie dogs were telling me they knew I was there and didn't much like it.

After putting away a steak, fried potatoes, and a pot of coffee, I decided it was late enough to find out if the coyotes were talkative. I had barely finished my first howl when three or four opened up from a sagebrush patch about a half mile away. As I reached in my camper for my binoculars I heard warning barks from the prairie dogs, and something that didn't quite belong caught my eye. It was only a flash, but it was no prairie dog.

I began to scan the dog town. One old dog was standing on his mound, telling the whole desert that he was upset. I swung my glasses in the direction he was chattering. My heart began to race and I had to clasp my elbows against my body to steady the binoculars. There it was in all its glory, a black-footed ferret!

It sat on its haunches on a prairie dog mound, looking back at me. The black mask, the black legs. . . I have never had the slightest doubt that I was watching the rarest mammal in our country. The ferret ducked its head as if to enter the burrow, changed mind, and bounded toward another mound about 30 feet away. It hesitated for an instant, looked in my direction, and disappeared into the hole. I watched and waited until the moon was high and the coyotes began talking again from further down country, but the ferret stayed underground.

I didn't sleep much that night. Several times I got out of my sleeping bag, stood on the tailgate of my pickup, and looked toward the dog town. An overcast had muffled the moonlight, but I kept getting up and watching.

Before sun-up I had brewed my coffee, and at first light I began examining tracks, measuring the ferret's stride. I kept looking over my shoulder, hoping for another glimpse. During the night I had been mentally listing all the people that I would tell about my discovery. Sometime in the early morning I realized I didn't want to broadcast this news. I didn't want an awestruck crowd in the newspaper. I didn't want a crowd of people out here looking for ferrets, and I didn't know any biologists who might be interested in camping on this dog town for a month or so. So I told my wife, and my son, and later, a BLM biologist who was



Kangaroo rat tracks.

Photo by Dick Randall.

grass for the stockmen. Don't blame these people for their viewpoints; they spent a lot of years earning degrees in how to manage a range to benefit livestock.

BLM also has wildlife biologists, although they are underfunded (less than one per cent of BLM's budget is spent for wildlife studies and habitat development) and heavily outnumbered by other interests. But they will be saying: fencing will block antelope migration; vegetative change will damage many wild species; the size, geologic structure, vegetative types, and remoteness of this area mesh today to provide living space for threatened or endangered creatures such as the peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, black-footed ferret, kit fox, and a myriad other species,

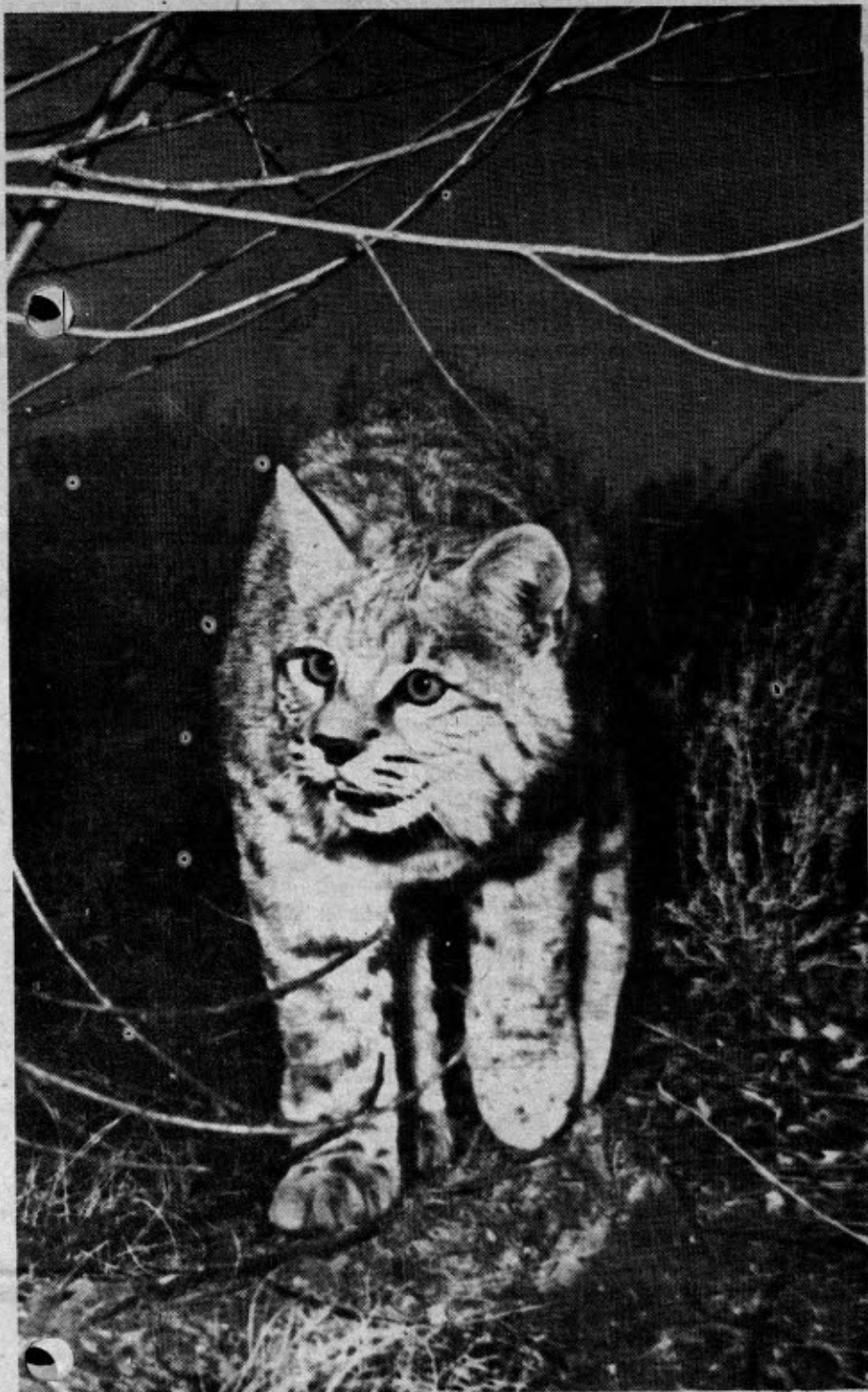
any cost. Your voice might tip the scales so that 100 years from now, a visitor to the desert could say "they cared enough to fight for this."

There are no highways in the Red Desert, but there are a few county roads on which a passenger car can penetrate the desert. Usually, the first comment from a visitor who turns off Interstate 80 is "there are sure a lot of horses and antelope around here."

There are indeed. Last year, 2,000 horses roamed the desert; this spring's colt crop will increase the herds to about 2,400 animals. Wyoming is blessed with the largest pronghorn population in the world. Between 6,000-7,000 of these beautiful speedsters live on the desert.

Last spring, Maurice Faler and I were lounging in his Blazer, enjoying a sandwich, when an old mare appeared at the end of a dobie bluff and led 175 horses past our vehicle. We followed a sheep wagon road to a nearby hill and counted seven more herds, without the aid of binoculars. Far out on the desert, puffs of alkali dust

During rare years when the rains come, vegetation helps to stabilize the shifting sands. . . At least, that is the way nature had arranged things before the dune-buggy crowd arrived.



Bobcat.

Photo by Dick Randall.

transferred to Oregon before he could spend any time in the area.

Three months after my ferret sighting I received a letter and a map from the Forest Service in Utah. In part, it read "Jim Brannan has indicated an area near his old family homestead where his father shot a ferret in 1946. Ferrets were often observed in this area as well as another near Aluminum Reservoir." The cross-hatches on the map covered the area where my ferret lived.

I have been back several times, but never with enough spare days to sit and wait out a ferret. Several times, in various areas of the desert, I have seen ferret sign: the distinctive trench made when the ferret backs out of a prairie dog hole, pulling dirt between his front legs; weasel-like tracks that are too large for a weasel, and weasel-like droppings. I am absolutely convinced we have a small population of black-footed ferrets living on the Red Desert.

If we can prove that ferrets still live on the desert, the EIS will have to include protection for these endangered mammals. Mineral development and livestock use that might endanger them would be curtailed or halted. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 is explicit.

"I wildlife biologists Jim Dunder and Lon Souy, who are putting together the wildlife part of the EIS, are aware of my ferret sighting. Both of these dedicated men have spent a few hours looking for ferrets, but they are swamped with paper work and hamstrung by lack of funds. BLM

budget directors allow only a pittance for wildlife studies.

Dr. Tim W. Clark, who is conducting a marten study near Jackson Hole, is probably the most knowledgeable person on the status of the black-footed ferret in Wyoming. Defenders of Wildlife helped fund Dr. Clark's 1973-75 ferret research in Wyoming. If arrangements can be made to quarter Dr. Clark and one or two graduate students on the Red Desert this summer, and they prove the existence of one of these rare little mammals, the future of at least part of the desert will be secure.

NIGHT PEOPLE OF THE DUNES

From a distance the dunes of the Red Desert resemble white topping streaked across a dish of strawberry ice cream. The 55 miles of dunes are perhaps the longest

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The night people of the dunes include grasshopper mice, voles, shrews, wood rats, and the more common deer mice and white-footed mice. Daytime inhabitants include ground squirrels, chipmunks, cotton tail and jackrabbits, prairie dogs, badgers, and if you watch closely, an occasional weasel.

The dunes area is blessed with a high water table that creates ponds ringed with salt-grass and other vegetation. These little oases draw thirsty wildlife from miles away. The sand acts as a bulletin board that reads: two coyotes came here to drink; a fox made a dash for a kangaroo rat, but missed; a bobcat stood here for sometime, watching and listening. Some of the larger,

In the fall of 1969, I made the most exciting wildlife discovery of my lifetime.

continuous stretch of moving sand dunes in North America. The main dune belt begins a few miles east of Eden, Wyoming, crosses the Continental Divide through a gap south of Steamboat Mountain and sprawls into the Red Desert. When the wind rushes across the desert, the dunes move, flow, ripple, even whisper and hum.

The masses of buried ice are a result of winter winds that cornice the snow atop the huge dunes. During the spring thaw, massive chunks of crusted snow slide down the lee side of the dunes and are covered and insulated by wind-blown sand.

At first glance, the dunes appear to be sterile, devoid of life. Just the opposite is true. The dunes provide a home for rodent populations that stagger the imagination. These, in turn, attract predatory mammals and birds. In the early morning, before the wind rises to shift the sand, tracks and trails left by the nocturnal rodents lace the dunes. The fine grains record the wingtips of an owl that brushed the sand as it pounced, the touch of a kangaroo rat's tail, even the tiny footprints of the dune beetles.

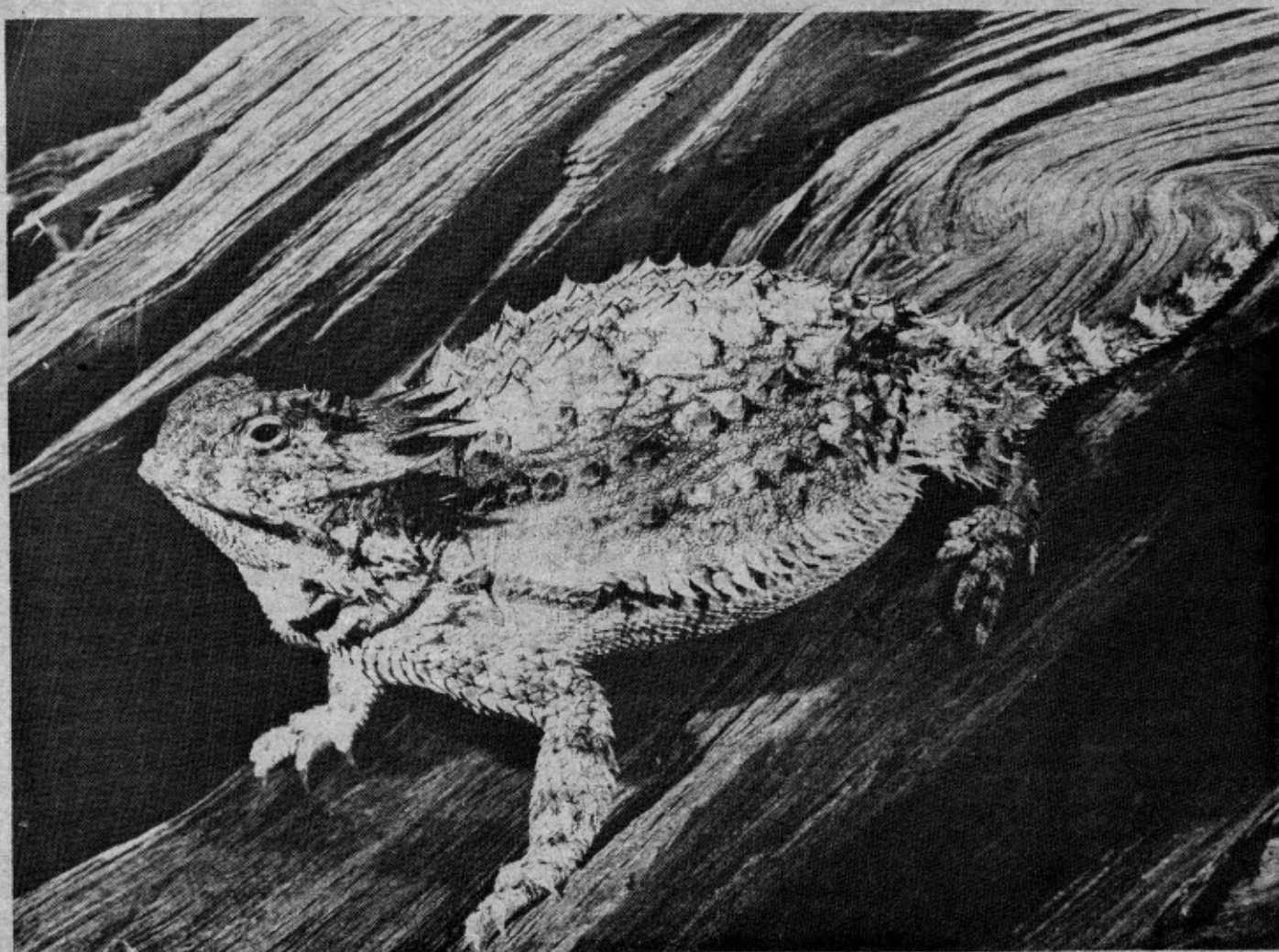
spring-fed ponds provide nesting habitat for waterfowl.

When the spring runoff fills the potholes and dry lakes with snow water, hundreds of waterfowl flock to the desert to set up housekeeping. Most ponds that are large enough to insure a water supply until fall will have a few teal or gadwalls nesting nearby. Pintails and mallards often nest in the sage brush, miles from water. Last summer I watched a hen mallard lead seven little ducklings, toy-train fashion, through the sagebrush, around the cactus, across gullies, aiming toward a pot-hole about two miles away. I am sure they made it.

REINTRODUCED ELK

Twenty years before, I had seen a larger "train" moving across the desert. Jerry Simmons and I set up a weekend camp near the dunes in a clearing surrounded by eight-foot high big sage. Several times we had startled mule deer from their beds in

(continued on page 6)



Horned toad.

Photo by Dick Randall.

6-High Country News



Red Desert. . .

The Boar's Tusk and ORV tracks.

Photo by Dick Randall.

Right now would be a good time for ORV organizations to push hard for legislation that would curb abuses and still permit responsible users to enjoy their pastime.

(continued from page 5)

the sagebrush, and once a great buck with gleaming antlers had stood on the crest of a dune, watching us.

On Sunday, we were trudging through the sand on our way back to camp for lunch and a siesta when we were privileged to watch a beautiful and unusual sight. On a huge dune, only a short distance ahead, a cow elk appeared. We froze. The cow began a walking, sliding, descent of the dune and behind her came another cow, and another! Twenty-five beautiful wapiti single-filed through the sand; just as the lead cow disappeared into the sagebrush, the ivory tips of a huge bull came rising over the dune. Eleven bulls with antlers ranging from spikes to royals came trailing past, so close we could smell them.

We returned to camp and lay there talking about the elk. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department had reintroduced elk into the sands area in 1946, and in the 1960s, had supplemented them with elk from Yellowstone Park. Before the settlers and fences drove them to the high country, elk were a plains animal, and the sands elk herd was traveling trails their ancestors had known long ago.

Suddenly, our reverie was interrupted by a loud snort! A cow elk had poked her head through the big sage and was clearly disturbed by our presence. Soon, two more cows became spectators, and before long, seven elk had ringed our clearing, snorting and stamping their feet. We were camped on their bedding ground. We broke camp and went back to town, a little wiser in the ways of wildlife.

Through the years the sands elk herd grew and prospered. People traveled hundreds of miles to watch these great animals who seemed so out of place in the sand and sagebrush.

All this has now changed. The elk don't calve in the dunes anymore. Rarely do they even enter the area. Mule deer seldom bed down by the little ponds. Many animals have left the dunes and those that remain are apprehensive, they keep looking over their shoulders for roaring monsters: dune buggies and trail bikes have descended on the dunes like a plague.

The whole area has become a playground for these mechanical disasters. Last fall,

Dave Lockman, a biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish, watched two trail bikers chase 12 elk through the sands. Since Dave's vehicle was not equipped with the wide tires needed to keep a vehicle afloat on the sand, he was unable to apprehend these kooks.

The desert has an average rainfall of less than eight inches and an average temperature of about 37 degrees. Winter sends the mercury plunging to more than 20 below, and summer temperatures are often above 100 degrees. In drought years the dunes grow and spread. During rare years when the rains come, vegetation helps to stabilize the shifting sands and even reduce the size of the dunes. At least, that is the way nature had arranged things before the dune-buggy crowd arrived. Now, the churning tires and screaming engines harass hikers, crush rodent burrows, tear up what little greenery there is, and intimidate all wildlife.

Last fall, on a Sunday, my son and I followed roads that parallel the length of the dune fields. We stopped perhaps 20 times to take pictures, watch raptors hunting, chatter at the prairie dogs, and watch the antelope. At every stop we heard dune buggies and trail bikes roaring through the sand.

BLM has set aside several thousand acres on the west end of the dunes for sand rallies and dune buggy use. If the drivers would restrict their destructive play to this area, I doubt there would be many complaints. But they don't.

Now, millions of people are about fed up with those off-road-vehicle drivers who show complete disregard for the rights of other people and of wildlife. If this public forces action, it will penalize the responsible ORV owners as well as the destroyers. Right now would be a good time for ORV organizations to push hard for legislation that would curb abuses and still permit responsible users to enjoy their pastime.

This is another of the problems the EIS will have to address.

NO GREATER GIFT

Last summer on the desert near a place called Bastard Butte, I watched a peregrine falcon pick a green-winged teal out of

the air. I know of a peregrine eyrie (nest) near the desert, but this bird took his teal in a different direction. There must be an eyrie I don't know about. Maybe several. The peregrine is on the endangered list with the black-footed ferret. If an eyrie can be located on the desert, the EIS will have to be adjusted accordingly.

The Red Desert EIS will not be complete without an accurate census of wildlife species that BLM must consider in its habitat proposals. So BLM biologists are faced with the impossible task of trying to determine wildlife species and numbers on the two million acres of public land this EIS will cover. Further, a valid EIS cannot be written until it is known what wild species livestock grazing may impact, whether falcons, ferrets, or spotted bats.

Private contractors funded by BLM will conduct a prairie dog and raptor survey this spring. However, the limited time available almost guarantees that the studies will be superficial. There will not be time to search for threatened or endangered wildlife. The BLM proposals for wildlife habitat management are still very much in the formative stage. However, from what I can gather, unless political pressures from livestock interests gut this EIS, multiple use and especially wildlife use will receive equal consideration with livestock grazing.

A great variety of raptors summer, and often winter, on the desert. The golden eagle is common and can be seen the year around. The eagles and the wind are inseparable. Winds that make us shiver enable the eagle to zoom from sagebrush level to a thousand feet in the air in one great swoop, and, with wings at half-cock, dive back to the desert floor. Wind seems to mean playtime for the eagles. With binoculars you may watch these magnificent birds pursue and capture prey.

Prairie falcons, while listed as a rare species, are common on the desert. Red-tailed hawks, ferruginous hawks, Swainson's hawks, rough-legged hawks, and the tiny sparrow hawks are only some of the desert's birds of prey.

Can you think of any other place in our

country where you can sit in one place near something that resembles the Sahara Desert, watch antelope mingling with free-roaming horses, listen to a coyote, admire an eagle, hope for a ferret, laugh at the antics of the prairie dogs. . . I can't make the sentence long enough to scratch the surface of what you might see.

All of the Red Desert will not be included in the EIS to be written by the Rock Springs BLM District. A great part of the desert lies in the Rawlins district and it will be several years before that EIS is completed. A long fence line divides the two districts. However, you cannot successfully manage wildlife one way on one side of a fence, and another way on the other. Therefore, the EIS proposals submitted by the Rock Springs District will certainly affect the Rawlins EIS. Your comments now could have a far reaching effect.

In this, our bicentennial year, I can think of no greater gift we can give our children, and their children, than a small piece of their own land, preserved undamaged.



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For more information on the Red Desert and the Sandy Grazing Environmental Impact Statement contact the Bureau of Land Management, Rock Springs District Office, Box 1869, Rock Springs, Wyo. 82901.

Gov. Rampton wants resources used in Utah — not exported

Utah Gov. Calvin Rampton told Wyoming Democrats recently that Great Britain's colonies only gained their independence when they began using their own natural resources instead of shipping them out. Rampton used the analogy to illustrate his energy policy in Utah, implying that Wyoming should adopt it, too.

Rampton told reporters after the speech that the policy he advocates is the converse of an export policy. "I don't favor extraction for shipment and processing elsewhere. I favor using the resources locally," he said.

The Wyoming Democratic convention participants, to whom Rampton was speaking, had passed a weak export policy resolution. It said, "We support the policy of exportation of our state's coal and fissionable fuels, but if environmentally sound conversion plants are demanded, we support policies and legislation which will require the taxation of minerals to pay the full costs of the additional community services required by that growth."

Rampton explained that his reverse export policy is his own energy policy and has never been adopted by the legislature nor put before the public. The state is now in the process of forming an energy policy by working with state graduate schools which will organize seminars to involve the pub-

lic. Following the seminars, the resultant policy will be put before the next legislature, Rampton said.

Asked to explain the rationale for his policy, Rampton said that under Utah's present form of taxation, the tax base from a mine would not begin to meet the needs of the miners, for example. Only when a smelter or a power plant is built does the tax base expand enough to meet the needs, he said.

The policy is working well for Utah, he said. "Until two years ago, Utah's unemployment rate was higher than the nation's as a whole. Now the nation's is 1.3% higher than Utah's," he said. He said that this is because the state has brought in industries — industries which he considers "clean industries."

Some of the other Western states are now in the process of forming energy policies. Rampton was asked whether he thought it likely that the Western Governors Regional Energy Policy Office (WGREPO) could form a regional energy policy. He said that it would never be anything but a "very general energy policy." He added that the value of the organization is that it provides "a good place to meet and talk." Rampton is considered the most outspoken growth advocate in the organization, which includes 10 Western governors.

Anachronism for growth-worshipping nation

June 18, 1976 — High Country News-7

America (somehow) produced Wilderness Act

by Jennifer Lee

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is one of the most significant and one of the strangest pieces of legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in the 20th century. Significant because it marks a definite stage in our country's development. Strange because, for a legal document, it speaks in almost romantic terms of mythic qualities: wilderness and civilization.

The controversies over wilderness classification provoked by the act are highly emotional. This is due in large part to the dual role wilderness has played in our history and tradition. Discussions of the "values" of wilderness lands are freighted with strongly held but ill-defined feelings and beliefs rooted in the long history of wilderness versus civilization. A look at this history reveals the conflicting complex of meanings embodied in the term "wilderness" which we must deal with today.

CHANGE IN SOCIETY

Historically speaking, the Wilderness Act marks a sharp change in the development of American society. It seems anachronistic for the government of a country whose way of life is based on technological advancement to declare: "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the U.S. and its possessions, leaving no lands designated

for preservation and protection in their natural condition," this government shall legislate protection for "wilderness areas" and their "wilderness character."

The history of the U.S. has been one of constant battle against wilderness, the dense, tangled forests and arid deserts of the North American continent. But the first explorers and settlers brought with them an already fully developed concept of wilderness which was psychological as well as physical.

Wilderness was where the children of Israel wandered and waited for 40 years until they were allowed into the Promised Land. Before that, existed the wilderness of thorns and thistles into which were cast the fallen Adam and Eve. For medieval Europe, wilderness lay beyond the narrow confines of the cities and manors and was the abode of devils and wild beasts. Wilderness was a hostile and cursed land as well as unknown and bewildering — certainly no place for man.

The first settlers of New England, therefore, easily recognized the harsh coasts and dark woods of North America as a "howling wilderness." And they never emerged from it into a Promised Land. They bewailed the hardships of their "wilderness condition" which separated them from civilized men and God. The frontier became the slowly advancing line of civilization which pushed back and destroyed the natural savagery of the land and its barbaric inhabitants.

More directly, wilderness was an obstacle to travel, human society, and the cultivation of necessary food. It was useless, undeveloped land, and in the Judeo-Christian tradition, immoral waste.

The frontier marched westward to the Pacific annihilating savagery and the already faded dream of a Promised Land. In the last years of the 19th century, America proudly greeted the official closing of the frontier, "the meeting point between savagery and civilization," as the end of "the first period of American history."

Europeans had become Americans in the crucible of the frontier, in the battle between wild and tame. With the disappearance of the frontier and wilderness, the Americanization process was completed, and the country was ready to develop its own life.

SPIRITUAL WILDERNESS

How, then, did we arrive at the Wilderness Act? Why, less than 75 years after the closing of the frontier and the official end of wilderness, are we attempting to preserve

what remnants of modified savagery remain?

Parallel to and underlying the fear and hatred of wilderness was man's awareness of wilderness as a source of food, energy, and raw materials — all necessary for his survival. He had to go into the wilderness even though he might die there. Wilderness also provided for man spiritually. Although the Israelites suffered in the Sinai wilderness, it was there that God spoke to them and prepared them for entry into the land of milk and honey. With hard work and piety, savage lands could be made into "God's garden." Work and suffering in the wilderness could lead to a better land.

Most importantly, perhaps, for the U.S. were the dreams of wealth, new beginnings, and spiritual rebirth which the early explorers and settlers brought with them to the New World. Vast, unknown wilderness was frightening and dangerous, but unexplored lands might contain the

(continued on page 14)



Wyoming land use debate:

What should the state demand from counties?

Speculation over the mood of Wyoming legislators dominated the final two meetings of the state land use commission before it adopted final goals, policies, and guidelines.

Commission Chairman Howard T. Carroll said that if the guidelines were too stringent, the tenuous majority of legislators favoring land use planning would be upset. This would kill land use planning in the state, he and four other members of the commission said. "If we kill it now, it will be dead for 20 years," he said. He thinks the legislature might do away with the act.

Three other commissioners disagreed. "The threat of political suicide is a fantasy," Hank Phibbs said.

The controversy was caused by the question of whether or not mandatory language should be used in the guidelines telling the counties what criteria to consider when preparing their plans. Carroll said, "We've got to let people become used to it gradually rather than forcing it down their throats all at once." He expects the counties to follow the guidelines without making them mandatory.

Gov. Ed Herschler has been saying since the act was passed that it was intended to protect Wyoming but not to dictate to local governments what they would do. After the public hearings on the proposed guidelines, he asked that the mandatory language be taken out.

Phibbs and commissioner Douglas K. Bryant said they think the people of the state are ready for land use planning. Bryant said that in his talks with county planners, they had indicated the mandatory guidelines would not be as much of a problem for the counties as he had first

thought. He added that every poll he had seen had indicated the people of the state want land use planning.

RIGHT TO SET LIMITS

Phibbs made a lengthy plea for the mandatory language, calling on the commissioners to be leaders rather than walking away from their responsibility because they thought it might be politically unpopular. He explained how their responsibility for planning is related, as he sees it, to the economic system of this country.

"This country has been run historically on the notion that the marketplace is a deity — that whatever the marketplace inflicts upon us must be accepted. . . . Our job is to make the people realize they have a right to say what future they want and to set limits. That's not tampering with free enterprise. That's recognizing free enterprise as an economic system that operates within the legitimate political choice of the people," he said.

Phibbs, Bryant, and Nellie Powers voted for the mandatory language. Commissioners voting against it were Carroll, Al Lauber, Ray Saunders, Elaine Barton, and James Willox. Commissioner William D. Bagley was not present.

As passed, mandatory language remains only in the guidelines that say the counties must prepare plans for all land including the public lands; identify agricultural and rural lands; include public participation; consider effects on air, water, and land quality; and analyze the condition of the area's economy to identify what land and facilities are necessary for "desired economic development."

Most of the other guidelines, from which the mandatory language was removed, call for inventories of existing resources, for "consideration" of the effects of certain land use changes, for identification of known hazards and resources, and for coordination with other governmental and public entities.

Because of the general language in these guidelines, Phibbs questions how they are pushing anything down the throats of local people, as Carroll charges.

Phibbs said that if there is no mandatory language, the state should make an effort to inform the counties that they would be liable to legal action if they did not comply with the "natural hazards" guideline. He said that case history in California indicates that a government could be sued if it did not inform building permit applicants that there was a natural hazard, such as the possibility of mudslides or flooding.

Many of the guidelines reflect the concern with boom growth that inspired the 1975 legislature to pass the land use planning act.

One guideline suggests that local governments anticipating or experiencing rapid or large scale development and growth should prepare and maintain plans to accommodate such development with least harmful impacts on local citizens. It asks that the local government consider alternative courses of action available to it.

LOOK AT HOUSING

The guidelines recommend that local governments in areas where rapid or temporary growth is anticipated should identify sites for temporary housing. They sug-

gest minimizing public costs when identifying the potential sites. They also suggest choosing sites that could be converted to other beneficial uses when the need for temporary housing diminishes.

The guidelines also recommend that local governments establish a growth policy.

The guidelines suggest that local governments encourage development of public transportation. The local governments are urged to consider conservation of energy and to encourage the use of renewable sources of energy.

Preservation of agricultural land is encouraged. Local governments are asked to consider the social, economic, and environmental effects of changing from agricultural to non-agricultural uses.

The state goals, policies, and guidelines will be in effect June 30, and local governments will have a year to submit their preliminary land use plans. One of the commissioners, apparently surprised by the number of people attending the last meeting of the commission, said he hoped these people would also carry their interest through to the county level.

The guidelines were the culmination of several months of public meetings around the state where local people were encouraged to discuss what they wanted to see in Wyoming's future. Members of an advisory committee composed of representatives from every county then drew up the proposed guidelines. At that time, the guidelines included the mandatory language.

The state land use commission now will be preparing a state land use plan and inventorying critical areas in the state.

8-High Country News — June 18, 1976

Idaho photographer catches new images of the Old West

Idaho photographer Barbara B. Brown sent **High Country News** these photos with the apology: "I wish I was a poet(ess): I'd write something to go with them." But we feel sometimes excellent photos have their own poetry and words are superfluous.

These photos are all manipulated images of old buildings in the West. To achieve the unusual effects, Brown contact printed the original fairly high contrast negatives onto litho

film — thus getting a positive "negative." In some cases second, third, and fourth generation negatives were made. Usually by the second generation contact negative, the resulting print was pure black and white with no intermediate greys (for example see "Mica Mine Bunkhouse Detail").

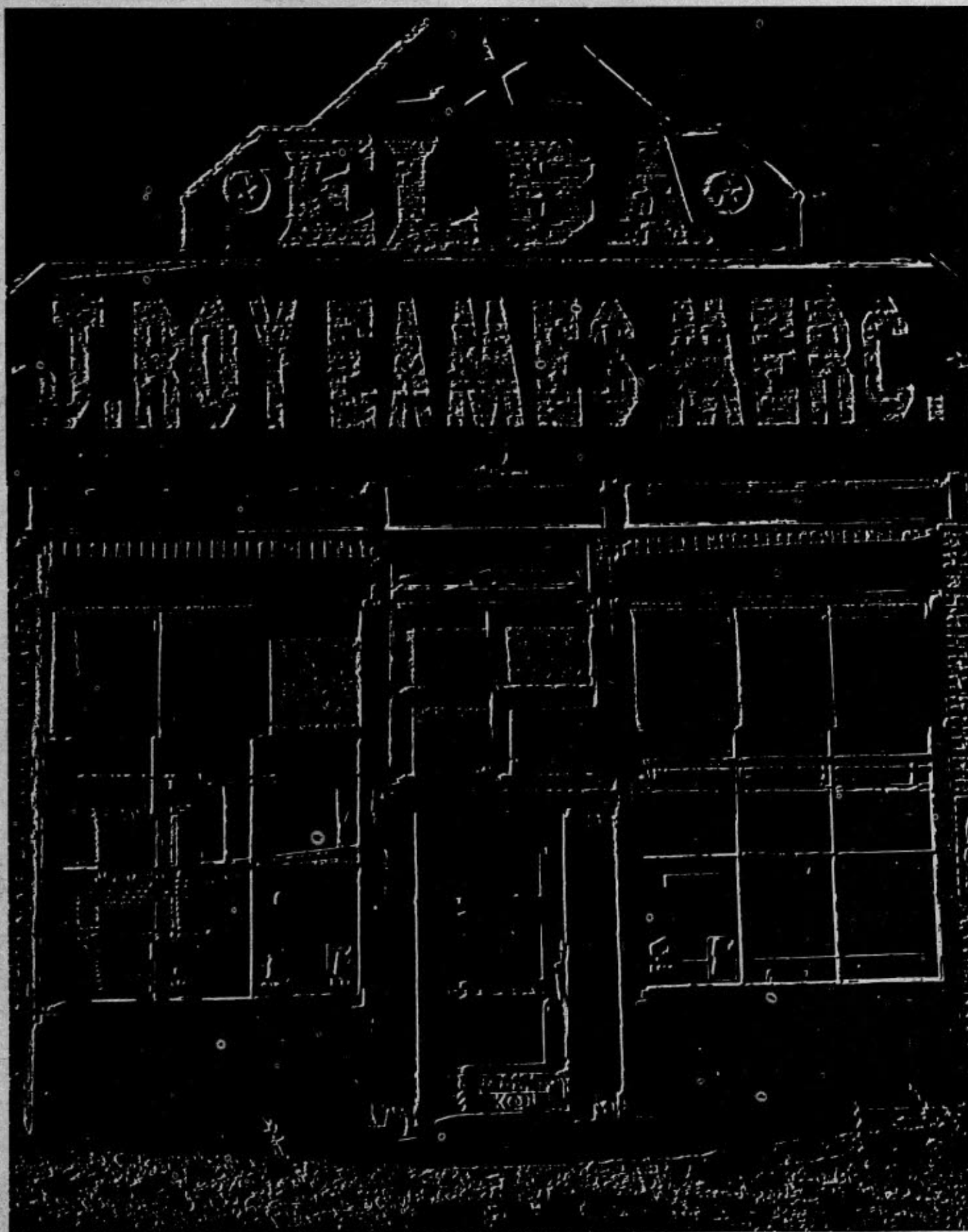
The bas-relief effect of "Atlanta House" and "Elba Store" was achieved by sandwiching the

positive and negative litho film copies slightly off register and exposing a third generation contact negative. The positive or negative effect of the print depends on the relative density of the positive and negative in the sandwich. If the effect isn't as desired, a fourth generation negative is made.

"Uranium Country" and "Hovenweep Castle" are examples of the "spin-out" technique

which also involves positive and negative copies are sandwiched in register and placed in a contact printing frame. Then the whole rig is placed on a turntable and spun while being exposed to a light source at an angle of 45 degrees. Thus the edges of the areas of different density are exposed. The effect is somewhat similar to the solarization process.

All of the original negatives were taken on Panatomic-X film.



"Elba Store" by B. B. Brown. Photo taken in the Mormon pioneer farming region of south central Idaho near the Raft River.



"Atlanta House" by B. B. Brown. Photo taken in the old silver mining town of Atlanta, Idaho.



"Mica Mine Bunkhouse Detail" by B. B. Brown. Photo taken in Mica, Idaho.

June 18, 1976 — High Country News-9



"Uranium Country" by B. B. Brown. Photo taken in San Rafael Swell, Utah.



Photo taken in Silent City of



"Hovenweep Castle" by B. B. Brown. Photo taken in Hovenweep National Monument in Utah.

10-High Country News — June 18, 1976

Interior proud of leasing procedures

Know a spot with rich federal coal deposits that shouldn't be leased for mining?

Through precise steps just outlined by the Interior Department, your voice can be heard along with the voices of industry as the Interior Department resumes leasing of federal coal. While no one is sure how important public input will be, Interior Department officials say that the system favors public interests more than past methods did.

"It's totally open," Asst. Secretary of Interior Jack O. Horton proudly told the national Bureau of Land Management (BLM) advisory board in Casper, Wyo., last month. "It involves the identification of resources across the land. And it involves the public and the Western governors."

The adoption of new leasing procedures marks the lifting of a moratorium on federal coal leasing which has been in effect since 1971. The new procedures are called EMARS, Energy Mineral Activity Recommendation System. They will be administered by BLM.

Horton said that although BLM is calling for lease nominations now, it will be mid-1977 before the secretary of Interior will make any final decisions. Northwest Colorado and the Eastern Powder River Basin in Wyoming are expected to be among the first areas with enough data collected to be ready for sales.

DISGRACEFUL ERA

Speaking of previous national coal leasing policies, Horton told a group of environmentalists in Wyoming that it had been "one of the most disgraceful eras we've ever had in the history of this country."

BLM's assistant director for minerals management, Frank Edwards, told HCN that he knows that environmental groups will complain that they don't have the time or money to match the input that industry will have in the EMARS process. Nevertheless, EMARS is a great improve-

ment over previous leasing procedures, he believes.

"At least environmental groups have been given the opportunity to give us what information they do have. That hasn't been true before," Edwards said.

Horton told Wyoming environmental leaders that they would have access to BLM's analysis of impacts of the leases prior to the final opportunity for public recommendations. "One of the bloodiest battles" within the Interior Department was over letting the public see what areas were nominated and revealing the BLM analysis, Horton said.

Here's how Interior says EMARS is supposed to work:

1. JUNE 1-JULY 31: NOMINATIONS OF COAL TRACTS AND AREAS OF PUBLIC CONCERN. The BLM is asking industry, state governments, and the public to point out what federally owned coal should or shouldn't be leased for mining.

The agency will consider lands underlain by federal coal where the surface is privately owned. It will not consider coal underlying national wildlife refuges, national parks, wilderness areas, and primitive areas—or other parcels of federal land already withdrawn from mining. It will not consider lands where a coal lease, permit, or preference right lease application is now held.

Citizens should rank their areas of concern by degree of environmental hazard or impact, Interior officials say.

As an aid to research, BLM's Management Framework Plans that have been completed will be available for inspection

at BLM offices. The plans provide information about coal and other resources on public lands.

2. AUG. 1-31: BLM MAKES MAPS. At the close of the 60-day nomination period, BLM will spend about 90 days preparing maps of the nominated areas. The maps will be furnished to state agencies and will be available for public review at BLM offices.

3. SEPT. 1-?: BLM ANALYSIS OF NOMINATIONS. BLM will examine nominations in light of other resource information, including socio-economic data, identified through the BLM planning process. States, other federal agencies, and individuals may be contacted to provide additional information.

4. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC ANALYSIS. At meetings the public will be asked to consider and comment on the leasing nominations in light of all resources in the area.

5. TRACTS SELECTED BY BLM. After public meetings, BLM in conjunction with the U.S. Geological Survey and "after consultation with appropriate state officials" will propose certain tracts for leasing.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS, PUBLIC HEARINGS. Several proposed tracts will be considered in each of 10 regional impact statements. The statements will cover not only leasing, but related activities, such as mining plans, rights-of-ways, etc. After the draft statement is published, public hearings will be held. The Interior Department will



JACK HORTON, assistant Interior secretary, is proud of the new leasing recommendation system which he says "ends one of the most disgraceful eras we've ever had in the history of this country."

use information presented at the hearings to complete final environmental impact statements.

7. FINAL PUBLIC RECOMMENDATIONS. For a period of 30 days after publication of the final environmental impact statement, the Interior Department will receive further recommendations on the proposed lease sales.

8. SECRETARY'S DECISION. The director of BLM will recommend specific lease sales to the Interior secretary. Then the secretary will decide whether the sales should be held.

Although the steps listed above may not occur in order, all of them must be completed before leasing can occur, according to the new rules.

Nader calls for ombudsmen

A proposal backed by Ralph Nader to set up state consumer advocacy organizations to oversee utilities is gaining momentum. Ten state legislatures across the country are considering legislation to set up Residential Utility Consumer Action Groups, according to **The Elements**.

Nader's plan calls for setting up a professional staff to represent consumers in telephone, electric, and gas rate proceedings and to engage in utility reform. The staff would be funded by a check-off system on utility bills. Each utility company would include with each monthly bill a check-off card on which consumers would indicate whether or not they wanted to contribute to support the advocacy group. Those wishing to contribute would add their contribution to their monthly utility payment. The utilities would collect the contributions and forward them to the consumer action group.

A board of directors elected by the contributors would run the consumer group. The staff would include lawyers, accountants, economists, engineers, organizers, and writers.

For more information on Residential Utility Consumer Action Groups and a sample of model legislation write Martin Rogel, P.O. Box 19312, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Public asks, 'Who needs EMARS?'

Carolyn Johnson, head of the Colorado Open Space Council's mining workshop, says she is "intensely dissatisfied" with the Interior Department's new system of federal coal leasing. Environmental leaders in other parts of the region are expressing similar complaints.

"The burden of proof is on the public. Interior isn't doing its job," Johnson told HCN. "They are sitting in a chair saying, 'Tell us all about it and we'll make a decision.'"

Many of the problems lie in the Bureau of Land Management's Management Framework Planning (MFP) process, Johnson believes. The MFP process, which plays a central role in the leasing program, is "an absurdity as far as public involvement goes," Johnson says. While the public may comment on the recommendations made by BLM on an MFP, often only one copy of the document is available for inspection at a local BLM office. This limits public input in the decision-making stages to a few local people with spare time during business hours, Johnson says.

"The MFP process should be scrapped or substantially changed," Johnson says.

QUESTION OF NEED

Johnson has even more basic objections to the new leasing program. She believes that no more public lands should be leased unless the Interior Department can prove such leasing is needed. Currently 16 billion tons of federal coal are under lease, 10 billion

tons are under preference right lease applications, and 3 billion tons are under prospecting permits. "Interior has never addressed the need question," Johnson contends.

Frank Edwards, the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) assistant director for minerals management, guesses that about six billion out of the 16 billion tons under federal lease will never be mined, for environmental and economic reasons. He admits, however, that no one really knows exactly how much coal could be produced out of the lands already leased. And he says it is not practical for the department to try to find out.

Private industry is the most efficient judge of the economic feasibility of mining the federal reserves, he says. Edwards thinks that the department's new "diligent development" requirements will keep future leasees from tying up federal lands unproductively.

Despite her misgivings about federal leasing, Johnson says that the mining workshop is researching coal leasing in Colorado and will probably make recommendations to BLM.

Other groups have begun similar research efforts.

"We feel there has to be a coordinated strategy worked out for agricultural groups, environmentalists, and other citizens concerned about Northern Plains coal," says Pat Sweeney of Northern Plains Resource Council in Billings.

Sweeney charges that the Interior

Department has not been straightforward in its public relations campaign promoting the new leasing program.

"The Interior Department has been attempting to convince the public they are being responsible, while they have quietly worked to thwart efforts to pass strong strip mining legislation in Congress," he told HCN.

Sweeney says Interior has "ducked the critical issues in the West."

AT WORK

A number of environmental and agricultural groups around the region have told HCN that they intend to participate in Interior's Energy Minerals Activity Recommendation System (EMARS) by doing research and making recommendations. Among them are: Colorado Open Space Council's Mining Workshop at 2239 East Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo. 80206; Northern Plains Resource Council at 437 Stapleton Building, Billings, Mont. 59101; Powder River Basin Resource Council at 150 W. Brundage St., Sheridan, Wyo.; and Wyoming Outdoor Council, Box 1184, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.

Assistant Secretary of Interior Jack O. Horton told a group of Wyoming environmental leaders that he expects several environmental groups to recommend that none of the coal in the West be leased. However, he indicated that he didn't think this would be the best way for them to use the new process to their advantage.



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

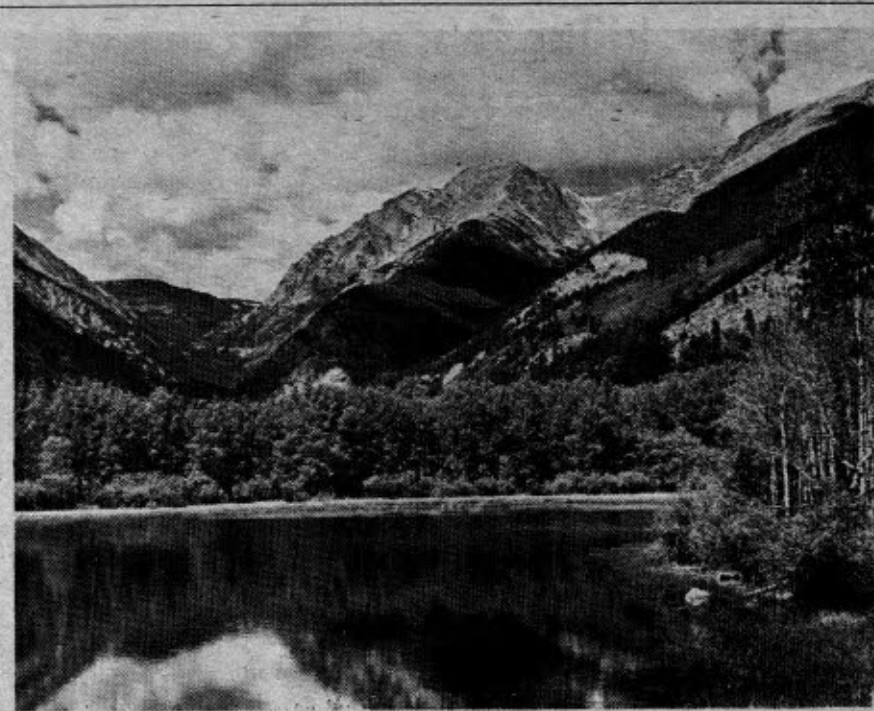
COMMITTEE STUDIES IDAHO VOTE. Now that the ballots are all in, an advisory committee in Ada County, Idaho, is trying to figure out how the county should respond. Voters in the county said they didn't want the Pioneer coal-fired power plant built, and 70% said they want the county to "do everything it can to encourage the public to conserve energy." County officials say they're not sure the voters were asking for regulations and controls or just voluntary conservation. Asked how they would be willing to save energy, 28.4% said they favored installing solar or other supplementary heating or cooling systems, 27.7% said re-insulating or adding storm windows, 16.8% said driving the car less often, 7.5% said recycling garbage, 5.5% said they weren't willing to use less energy, and 6.6% said they didn't know.

ARIZONA LOOKS AT NUCLEAR. Some 56,000 signatures are needed by the end of June to get a Arizona Nuclear Safeguards Act on the ballot in that state for this fall. The measure would require state review and certification of safety and waste control systems for nuclear power stations and full compensation for damages involving the plants or their support systems.

KANE COUNTY WON'T GIVE UP. Although the Kaiparowits power plant is apparently dead for now, a pro-plant Kane County group hasn't given up its efforts to improve the economy of the county. The group, ALIVE (American League Interested in Vital Energy), is interested in several coal mines and in maintaining the local timber industry. Tourism helps Kane County during the summer. But ALIVE organizer Rose Wilcox says, "When October rolls around, the unemployment office is the busiest spot in town. We're getting tired of that."

WYOMING SUES KLEPPE. The state of Wyoming has filed suit in federal district court to challenge the constitutionality of Interior Department coal mining regulations that allow the federal government to override state laws in some cases. Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler said he thought the new strip mining regulations were better than the first draft. However, he said he thinks the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and the U.S. Constitution give states jurisdiction, according to an Associated Press report. The new regulations say the federal government's regulations could supercede the state regulations if it is in the "overriding national interest." Assistant Interior Secretary Jack Horton said these words were inserted to satisfy the lawyers but that he couldn't imagine Interior utilizing the phrase unless it were World War III. Other states have indicated an interest in joining the suit.

N.D. ENCOURAGING URANIUM SEARCH. North Dakota State Geologist E. A. Noble says information being published by the State Geological Survey may help prospectors find uranium and says with prices rising from \$8 to \$40 a pound, there's bound to be more interest. The survey "hopes to encourage prospectors to look for uranium in the streambeds and the prehistoric beaches and sandbars under many parts of western North Dakota," according to an Associated Press report.



NO POWER PLANTS ALLOWED

The Platte River Power Authority is looking for a site between the Wyoming border and the Denver metropolitan area to build a 200 megawatt coal-fired power plant. The plant would use 2,000 to 3,000 acre feet of water from the Windy Gap project. The site selection is limited by "severe environmental constraints" in the Fort Collins to Longmont corridor, according to the manager of the power authority. Its location could also be restricted by the proposed amendment to the Clean Air Act that would classify Rocky Mountain National Park as a Class I air quality area, thus preventing significant deterioration of the air there. Therefore, remote areas of Weld County will be emphasized in the search for a site. The Platte River Power Authority is a cooperative organized by several towns on the Front Range. Photo of Rocky Mountain National Park courtesy of National Park Service.

Nation's nuclear policy forming

Important decisions about the nation's nuclear power policy have been made in recent weeks. Among them:

—INITIATIVE FAILS, BILLS PASS.

California voters rejected by a 2-1 margin a proposition that would have prohibited construction of new nuclear plants in the state and curtailed existing plants unless stringent safety rules were met. (see HCN 6-4-76, p. 11) Shortly before the June 8 vote, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed a milder package of nuclear regulations passed by the legislature. Three existing nuclear plants and four plants under construction in the state are exempt from the legislation.

The new law gives the legislature the power to stop construction of nuclear plants if it decides by a majority vote that fuel recycling and waste storage methods are unsafe. (The unsuccessful initiative would have turned the legislature's responsibility around. Unless they voted by a two-thirds margin that nuclear plants were safe, new plants would automatically be stopped and existing ones phased out.)

The new law would also require a study of the feasibility of building reactors underground and possibly make it a requirement of new construction if it proved to be a useful safeguard.

The law is said to be the toughest in the nation.

—PLUTONIUM BANNED. A U.S. Court of Appeals in New York has ruled that while the country is still considering the safety problems involved in the use of plutonium as a fuel for nuclear power plants, the highly toxic substance should not be used. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission had wanted to allow the use of plutonium temporarily while it considers permanent use. But the court ruled in favor of several environmental groups and the state of New York, saying that interim use could effectively foreclose consideration of

safety issues due to the commitment of resources involved.

—NRC RULED WASTE WATCHER.

The Supreme Court ruled June 1 that only the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and not also the Environmental Protection Agency, is in charge of monitoring waste discharges from nuclear power plants. The NRC's exclusive jurisdiction over such materials had been challenged by the Colorado Public Interest Research Group (COPIRG). The group had argued that the Federal Water Pollution Control Act had created a comprehensive system administered by EPA and state governments to regulate all water pollution. The NRC, formerly a part of the Atomic Energy Commission, is sympathetic to industry, COPIRG charges.

—ENRICHMENT INDUSTRY PROMOTED.

Bills have been introduced in Congress which would transfer uranium enrichment technology to private industry with government loan guarantees of up to \$8 billion. The bills, S. 2035 and H.R. 8401, have been called "a boondoggle of the first magnitude," by Friends of the Earth staffer Jeffrey Knight. "This bill places in the hands of private industry the means to enrich uranium to bomb quality. Despite the assurances which have been given, we feel uneasy with the transfer of this vital technology to the private sphere, especially since the main project contemplated under this bill will be 60% foreign-financed."

—BANNED TO THE BOONIES? A coalition of citizens groups has filed a petition asking the government to ban any nuclear power development within 40 miles of major cities. The petition suggests that the plants should not be built where there are more than 400 people per square mile in a 40-mile radius. The petition was submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The commission's current policy is to allow plant construction in areas with a population density under 500 persons per square mile.

June 18, 1976 — High Country News-11



The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

KICKING AND GROANING. While the federal strip mining bill languishes in the House, Coal Week reports that some backers of the bill have devised a new scheme to get it to the floor. They are discussing hitching the strip bill to the also-stymied coal slurry bill (H.R. 1863), which would grant eminent domain to slurry pipelines. "Some say that's like hitching a dying horse to a donkey," Coal Week reports. "There may be a lot of kicking and groaning, but would there be any forward motion?"

Meanwhile, three federal agencies are working to come up with a method to assess the impact of strip mine regulation. A hastily-drafted Administration assessment was used to justify the presidential veto of federal strip mine legislation in the past. Working on the new study are the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Energy Administration, and the Bureau of Mines. EPA is reportedly suspicious of the Administration's earlier research.

AD BAN. Utility advertising is restricted by regulatory commissions in at least 17 states. Some states have bans on any promotional ads except those related to energy conservation and safety unless they are financed by the stockholders instead of the ratepayers. For a free status report on this trend write Public Information, Edison Electric Institute, 90 Park Ave., N.U., N.Y. 10016.

CARPOOL LANES. Los Angeles transportation officials have set aside special freeway lanes and freeway entrance ramps for vehicles with more than three passengers to encourage carpooling. The Federal Energy Administration says the number of bus riders and carpools immediately jumped by 50% following the action. "Non-carpoolers were not amused by traffic backups on other lanes," reports FEA.

'SORDID INDUSTRIAL DECEPTION.'

The *Deseret News*, which tends to encourage energy development in its own state of Utah, has called for a Congressional probe of the faulty welds in the Alaskan pipeline. The faulty welds were revealed in a *Wall Street Journal* report on an audit by Alyeska, the consortium of oil companies building the pipeline. The *Deseret News* says, "Nothing less than a swift congressional investigation can deal with this sordid example of industrial deception and intrigue. . . . To temporize on repairing this shoddy workmanship is to run the risk of poisoning thousands of acres of tundra and upsetting natural balances which have been evolved over centuries." The faulty welds were being covered up by falsified X-rays.

CONSERVATION TAX BREAK. The Senate Finance Committee has voted to allow homeowners to deduct up to \$225 from their federal taxes if they insulate their homes. The provision, part of a tax-revision bill, would allow a credit up to \$1,000 for installation of an energy-saving heat pump, and up to \$2,000 for geothermal or solar home heating equipment. Similar tax breaks would be allowed for businesses. Energy conservation tax incentive legislation has already passed the House.

12-High Country News — June 18, 1976

New killer fences discovered

Fences can devastate deer, antelope

Wherever civilized society has spread, with its orderly ideas of property and boundary, so has fencing. While good fences may make good neighbors, they can devastate wildlife if improperly designed.

Many cases of such devastation have been documented. One particularly gruesome incident was brought to light this spring by Lonnie Johnson of the Utah Humane Society and Dick Randall of Defenders of Wildlife, along with a news team from KUTV, Salt Lake City. The area was

28 mule deer so far, according to Randall. However, since the fence is on predominantly private land, negotiations to get it modified are at a standstill. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department says the fence should be 38 inches high. But the landowner, J. R. Broadbent, wants a minimum of a 44 inch fence since he is afraid his stock would get onto the highway otherwise and he would be liable.

Broadbent's fence is too high for many deer to jump — 48 to 52 inches — and in

barrier to them, and any fence with a barbed wire on the bottom can be destructive.

The impact of fences on antelope was most graphically illustrated in the winter of 1971-1972 in Wyoming. During severe blizzards one fence line in the Chain Lakes country on the Red Desert killed over 60% of the antelope in the area — about 3,000 animals.

The 1975 BLM fence standards require new fences on public lands in key antelope areas to have a top wire no higher than 38 inches and a 10 inch crawl space underneath. Woven wire fence bottoms are prohibited in antelope areas and a barbless bottom wire is required.

Modification of existing problem fences is slow. "Last year 150 miles of public land fencing in southern Wyoming was modified to meet the new requirements," says Randall. "Mostly due to a shortage of funds, and incentive, I expect it will be many years before all BLM fences will conform to present specifications."

Woody says that if it's a BLM fence the agency can go out and modify it without any problems. However, if it's a dual ownership fence — one where the BLM supplied the materials and the rancher supplied the labor — modification may be more difficult.

Making new fences meet the standards is no problem, says Woody. "If we're going to invest in a new fence we might as well do it right," he says.

WHY BUILD THEM?

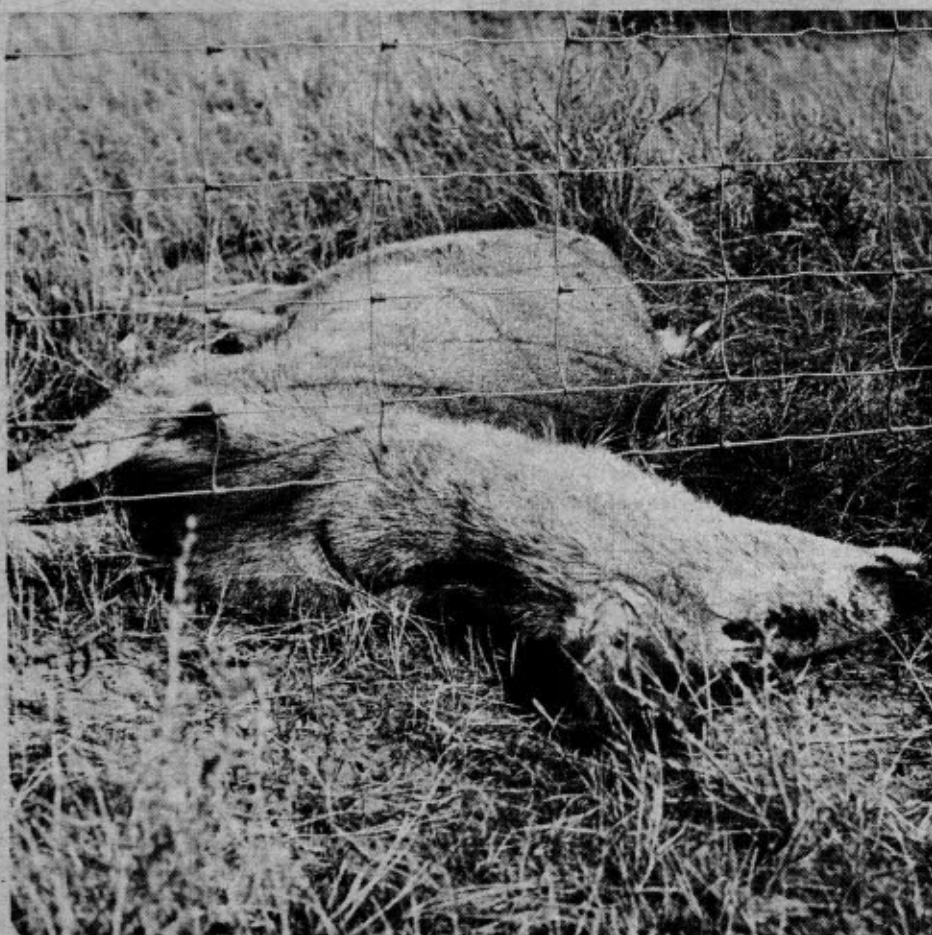
"On our public lands I believe the question should not be what kind of fences, but rather, why any fences at all?" says Randall.

According to Randall, an average of 247 miles of new fencing is built on Wyoming's public lands each year. He questions the justification of this on "multiple-use" lands, which, once fenced, are good only for livestock. Cattle and sheep growers demand fences as a replacement for cowboys and shepherders, and the BLM says they are necessary for "rest-rotation" grazing systems. Under rest rotation the open range is fenced into pastures and the stock are moved from pasture to pasture to avoid overgrazing in one area.

At a recent BLM meeting in the Rock



ILLEGAL FENCE on public land in northwest Colorado. The fence is 45 to 48 inches high — too high for a mule deer to jump without being torn up or trapped. Photo by Dick Randall



THE FENCE was too high to jump and the space underneath was too small to crawl through. The space below the bottom strand is four to six inches. The fence was constructed by J. R. Broadbent on public, state, and private land in Wyoming and does not meet specifications designed to protect wildlife, which he originally agreed to meet. Photo by Dick Randall.

in northwestern Colorado, about 25 miles northeast of the Dinosaur National Monument on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The fence was topped with two strands of barbed wire, 45 to 48 inches in height. The investigators counted the remains of 91 mule deer still entangled in only two miles of the fence, and reported that coyotes had dragged away many more carcasses.

Randall remarked, "During my lifetime I have seen a lot of deer and antelope caught in fences, but never have I seen anything that could compare with this wildlife trap." Under present fence regulations, this fence is illegal, but it was built before the regulations.

Randall claims the BLM knew about the deer trap nine months before it was brought to public attention, but did absolutely nothing to correct the problem. After news coverage aroused the public's attention, BLM employees in the area were reprimanded and part of the fence was modified.

Randall has recently discovered another fence between Kemmerer and Evanston, Wyo., that is killing deer. The fence is on both private and public land bordering a state highway. The fence has killed at least

some areas the bottom wire is just far enough off the ground to catch and choke deer trying to crawl underneath it.

The question is complicated by the fact that the fence is in an area near a railroad that is a checkerboard of private and public land, every other section. The landowner can build any type of fence he wants on his own land. The question has been turned over to the Wyoming attorney general's office, according to James June of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

SLOW CHANGE

In 1975, the BLM set new fencing standards to help protect wildlife on public lands. Monty Woody, wildlife biologist with the Lander Resource Area of the BLM in Wyoming, says in deer areas his agency requires new fences to be no higher than 42 inches. The BLM also requires a 10 to 12 inch space between the top two wires so that big game won't become ensnared. In elk areas, sometimes wooden poles are used instead of a top strand of barbed wire, according to Woody.

Since pronghorn antelope prefer crawling under fences rather than jumping them, special standards are needed in antelope areas. Sheep-tight fences with woven wire on the bottom present a total

Reckoning from Washington

SKI AREA MEASURE by Lee Catterall

Tantalizing fallout from the controversy over Howard (Bo) Callaway's ski resort in Colorado could be in store for communities near ski slopes throughout the West.

Resort owners would be subjected to local zoning standards, and nearby communities would receive double what they get now from the fees those owners pay the government.

Those proposals were made last week by Sen. Floyd Haskell (D-Colo.) after he had completed hearings on the Callaway controversy and tied those hearings to earlier ones on a ski permit bill. Callaway's case may have given Haskell's bill just the lift it needs.

Callaway was removed in March as Pres-

ident Gerald Ford's campaign manager after charges were leveled that he had used his previous office of Secretary of the Army to benefit his ski resort at Crested Butte, Colo. Callaway has acknowledged trying to influence the U.S. Forest Service to allow him to expand his resort, but has insisted he acted properly.

Haskell is not so sure. At any rate, Haskell said whether or not "undue influence was exerted on the Forest Service and whether it had any effect, the testimony showed some gaping holes in Forest Service policies."

One of those holes, he said, is the apparent willingness of the Forest Service to accept without serious question the information supplied by companies applying for permits.

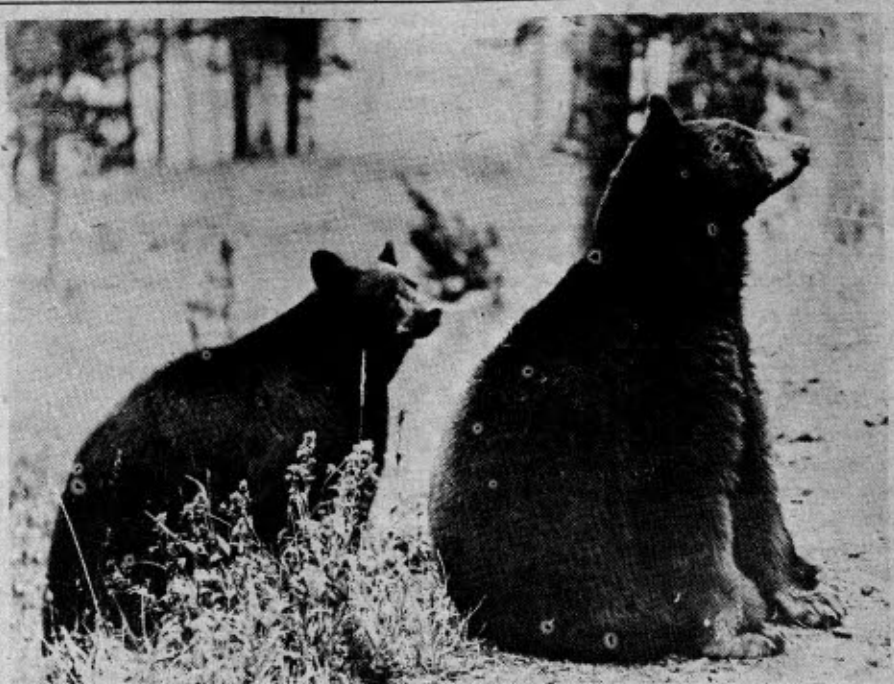
In the Callaway case, the Forest Service first rejected the request for expansion of the resort, "based in large part on ski area capacity figures supplied by the developer and accepted at face value by the Forest

(continued on page 13)



Western Roundup

HCN



FISH AND GAME PLANS BLACK BEAR TRANSPLANT

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is trapping black bear and moving them out of the Clearwater River drainage to find out if elk calves survive at a better rate when some bears are removed. The experiment is a coordinated effort with the U.S. Forest Service. The bears will be trapped and then hauled in trucks to other parts of the Clearwater National Forest and to other forests in the state. Each forest will receive from five to eight bears.

Photo by the Wyoming Travel Commission

Ski county wants mass transit funds

County commissioners would like federal urban mass transit funds to build a million-dollar-a-mile mass transit system at Aspen, Colo., to carry skiers between ski areas. Opponents of the plan claim the funds are intended to upgrade decaying urban transit systems and that Aspen already has a bus system. Proponents say a street car system would reduce auto congestion and air pollution, which sometimes gets serious enough to approach alert levels in the valley, according to a *Denver Post* report. Two of the Pitkin County Commissioners promoting the plan were elected on "slow growth" platforms. After their mass transit proposal, petitions began circulating asking for their recall. County officials say the alternative to the street car plan is improving highways and parking facilities to accommodate more automobiles.

16 whooping crane eggs transplanted

Sixteen whooping crane eggs have been flown into Idaho and will be placed in the nests of sandhill cranes. The cranes, it is hoped, will accept and raise them. Last year 14 eggs were transplanted from the single wild flock now in existence, which summers in northern Alberta. Four survived. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its Canadian counterpart are conducting the experiment. Biologists are removing one egg from whooper nests with two eggs. They claim only one egg would normally survive anyway.

(Continued from page 12)

Service," Haskell said. When the developer then reduced the figures, the Forest Service dutifully changed them in its own report, "accepting again the corporation's figures without verification," Haskell said.

Haskell would force the Forest Service to verify such figures.

However, his bill is much broader than that, addressing "the concern that too often local governments simply can't handle the direct and indirect growth resulting from ski area developments," he said. He wants to make sure local governments "are involved in the decisions, are aware of the impacts, and are equipped to handle them."

Haskell proposes ski area developers "must meet all state and local government requirements — such as planning, licensing, and permit approval." Also, the Forest Service should decide whether there is enough demand for a new ski area, the land can better be used in other ways (presumably including being left alone), and the

local governments can handle the resulting influx of skiers.

Those local governments not only would have more say, under Haskell's proposal, they would have more money. The Forest Service now pays one-fourth of what it gets from fees to the state governments to build roads and schools. Haskell would double that amount and require that it be paid directly to the local governments.

Haskell said his subcommittee will begin working on the bill soon. Meanwhile, as the Haskell bill — or, as it is more likely to be called, the Callaway bill — is pending in Congress, ski developers are not likely to be granted any special favors from the harried officials of the Forest Service. Especially if those developers happen to work for the government.



Pocketbook appeal attacks wilderness

Although some Congressional proponents of the Eagles Nest Wilderness area in Colorado think its passage is "cut-and-dried," a massive ad campaign has been launched to fight it. Full page ads in Denver area newspapers and trade and religious publications criticize the wilderness bill on the basis of the cost to the Denver water users. "They want to stick us with a \$500,000,000 bill... and it's going to come out of your pocket," the ad says. The Committee for Sensible Water Use says the figure comes from the Denver Water Board, which claims that additional pumping costs required by the large wilderness area would boost the cost of the project by \$500 million over a 40 year period. If the wilderness area were smaller, they say, cheaper gravity-feed water systems could be built. Construction of such systems would be prohibited in a wilderness area.

U.S. Rep. Jim Johnson (R-Colo.) disputes the figures, however, and says they weren't presented until just before the vote in the Interior Committee in the House. The ad claims that "a small band of unrealistic 'anti-growth' advocates is using its political clout to prevent orderly progress along our Front Range."

Herschler says growth threatens wildlife

Additional industrial development threatens Wyoming's wildlife, Gov. Ed Herschler told a Safari Club convention in Las Vegas, Nev. Most of the workers coming into the state are hunters and fishermen, Herschler told the sportsmen. "As a consequence, unfortunately, in some areas of the state where there has been a rapid increase in population, the incidence of poaching has skyrocketed and I understand that in some of these areas it is very difficult to spot wildlife where not long ago it might have been rather common," he said.

Boulder considers controls on growth

The city of Boulder, Colo., is considering a growth control plan styled after that of Petaluma, Calif. Councilman Paul Danish says his suggestion for Boulder has support from both conservatives and liberals in the city. In 1971, Boulder voters defeated a plan to limit the city's size to 100,000. It was about 70,000 then and is now closer to 80,000. The voters did, however, approve a resolution asking the city to hold the level of growth down. Danish's plan would restrict the city's growth to about 1.5% to 2% each year. In some years in the 1960s, Boulder grew nearly 10%. Danish's proposal is to limit the number of building permits granted each year. Decisions on which permits would be granted would be based, in part, upon whether the projects were environmentally sound, had solar heating or extra insulation, and were lower-cost. "Of course the developers are not dancing in the streets, but at least a plan like this would let them know what to expect for a five-year period," he told the *Denver Post*.

Wild horses found shot in Nevada

Twenty-three wild horses have now been found dead in Nevada. All had been shot. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) law officials are investigating the shootings of the protected animals. A stockman who runs sheep in the area said stockmen "are not condoning this." "It bothers me real bad. I can't feature any permittee doing it. I'm also concerned because this reflects on the stockmen and my associations," he said. He said that perhaps an employee of another stockman had shot the horses to get his boss in trouble. About 250 mustangs roam in the area, according to an Associated Press report.

Landowners help protect Blackfoot

While the idea of federally designated wild and scenic rivers isn't a popular one in Missoula County, Mont., the idea of preserving rivers, apparently, is. More than a dozen landowners, government agencies, and conservation groups have joined to protect "the natural, scenic, and recreational integrity of the Blackfoot River corridor." They call themselves the Blackfoot River Recreation Management Advisory Council. Landowners along the Blackfoot have been feeling increasing pressure from the public to use their lands recently. While the landowners didn't want to look after the growing crowd of recreationists, they also did not want to close their lands to public use. They steered away from federal designation for the river, fearing that it might attract even more people. Instead, they devised a unique approach to protective river management through formation of the advisory council. According to the *Missoulian*, the group is the first of its kind in the nation.

Savage Run plan protective — for now

Because of strong public support for protection, the U.S. Forest Service has decided not to clearcut the Savage Run drainage of the Medicine Bow Range in southcentral Wyoming. Instead, the Forest Service's land use plan calls for classifications which would ban motor vehicles from over 10,000 acres of Savage Run. The Laramie Wilderness Coalition is proposing that the Forest Service go a step further and study a 15,590 acre area for formal wilderness classification. The Wilderness Society and the Wyoming Wilderness Coalition support the proposal, which includes 950 acres for a research natural area. "On the surface, the Forest Service proposal looks pretty good," says Wilderness Society Representative Bart Koehler. "But there is absolutely no guarantee that these proposed programs will persist during later Administrations. Savage Run will not be protected by law unless it is classified as wilderness." Comments on the Savage Run Land Use Plan should be sent to the Forest Supervisor, Medicine Bow National Forest, Skyline Road, Laramie, Wyo. 82070 by June 29.

14-High Country News — June 18, 1976



by Dean Krakel II, The Lowell Press, Kansas City, Mo., 1976. \$14.95, hard cover, 117 pages. Color photographs by the author.

Review by Sarah Doll

Before white man settled North America, millions of elk inhabited this continent. They were the most numerous of the deer family, and six subspecies ranged over almost the total land area. Many Indian tribes revered the wapiti, and depended on the animal for meat and clothing.

As the land was settled, the elk was

slaughtered in vast numbers and its habitat disappeared. Three of the subspecies became extinct. The only surviving herds are those in the most inaccessible mountain areas.

Forty thousand of these survivors live in northwest Wyoming in the Yellowstone and Teton areas. Their yearly migrations take them in different directions from their mountain summer ranges to more protected valley areas in the winter. More than 9,000 of them winter in the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming, at the National Elk Refuge. This is the herd that Dean Krakel II followed and photographed for a year, gathering material for *Season of the Elk*.

Krakel begins his year in late summer, when the bulls are shedding the velvet from their horns and preparing for the rut. He follows them through the bugling season, and watches as the change of season brings the herd down to lower elevations, where hunters in Grand Teton National Park await their arrival. Krakel provides a good discussion of the park hunt, which was set up for management purposes. It is ironic that the population of elk must be controlled, when it is such a tiny fraction of the numbers that once roamed the West. Wildlife, it seems, has found its place near the bottom of the priorities list in land use.

The author also details an entirely different kind of hunt. Guided by the Turner brothers of the Triangle X Dude Ranch near Jackson, he goes to the high country before the elk come down. In the chapter, "High Country Magic," he tries to capture

the hunting mystique, and presents an excellent portrait of the men who guide other men to elk for a living.

The herd that winters on the National Elk Refuge is the center of a bitter controversy in Jackson. The animals are fed alfalfa pellets when their natural forage becomes scarce, Krakel writes. "Through the winter, although I loved these elk, I grew to resent seeing them on the refuge. They reminded me of domestic cattle being pampered in a feedlot. . . . Man's presence and his subsidy, although necessary, was all too obvious; his purpose too commercially foreboding." If the feeding were stopped, many animals would starve and hunting would be more limited — wasting of a natural resource, some say. However, is it in the public interest to keep a large elk herd that is more like a herd of "domestic cattle" than wildlife? Krakel discusses the controversy, but gives no easy solutions.

Spring brings the "Song of the Cow," as calving takes place after the return to the high country. Having come full circle, the author ends with a plea for the key to wildlife preservation, which is room for them to live. "If we allow the fragile environment of the Jackson Hole elk to be damaged and the elk herds to drift into oblivion, we will have lost something more than the elk. We will have lost a vital part of ourselves."

The photography throughout the book is memorable and the impact of the whole considerable. It is well worth its purchase price.

Wilderness...

(Continued from page 7)

dreams of civilized man — El Dorado, the Fountain of Youth, New Canaan.

As civilization spread and society developed in the U.S., wild lands provided freedom from man's chatter and restraints. The natural world was God's creation, and even the Puritans ventured into the woods to listen and learn.

Wild lands became a romantic, national pride. Thoreau was not alone in the 19th century in deploring the tame "robot" civilization of the U.S., but his "wildness" was essentially spiritual; he wished to become a "wise savage." So the concept of wilderness was finally looked on favorably, but the U.S. still liked its wildness "out West" and its wilderness tamed.

PANDORA'S BOX

From the very beginning, wilderness was Pandora's Box and the Holy Grail. It was both a bewildering attraction and a repulsion to men. It simultaneously provided for and threatened his existence both physically and psychologically. He needed to tame it — but not too much.

While wilderness existed, it was raw material, "the artifact out of which man hammered civilization," to be controlled and used. Now in mid-20th century, wilderness is almost used up, and we feel its imminent disappearance in two ways. First physically in shortages of raw materials, food and energy. Second, and just as important, we feel it psychologically. No more unexplored lands with possibilities of new, perhaps better worlds; no more spontaneous, unexpected adventure; and no more of the energy of uncontrolled wilderness.

We are in a man-made world — controlled, predictable, safe, dull. We seek metaphorical wildernesses of space and the mind. In years past, in our drive to survive, we didn't know what constituted our survival.

And so the Wilderness Act, forcing us in spite of our fear to search out and save every existing scrap of wildness from and for civilization, to preserve our "wilderness character." Hopefully it is not too late.

Jennifer Lee is an instructor at Idaho State University in Pocatello. She recently taught a course in "Wilderness in American Thought and Literature."

Books and articles used in preparing the above essay which give more detailed accounts of the wilderness tradition are Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Henry Nash Smith, *The Virgin Land*; and Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

Classifieds

Build your own Stone House in one summer! Need Pickup, hand tools — no experience! Using Plagg-Nearing forming method "House of Stone" manual shows, tells how. \$3. Guaranteed Stonehouse, Box HCN, Sweet, Idaho 83670.

SOLAR ENERGY. Be a pioneer on this limitless new frontier! Read the mind-expanding monthly newsletter, *Solar Energy Digest*. Year, \$28.50; sample copy, \$2.40. Box 17776HC, San Diego, CA 92117.

For Sale craftwork. Soft leather tanned hides (\$27.50) deer, 1/2 elk, whole elk. Box 20, Centennial, Wyo. 82055.

HCN Bulletin Board

POPULATION MYTHS

Zero Population Growth, Inc., has published a new pamphlet debunking several myths about population. "Population Myths" says that having a child is a social as well as a personal decision — no matter how wealthy parents are. Although the birth rate in 1975 reached a record low, the rate of U.S. population growth actually increased due to the rise in the number of immigrants and a decrease in the number of deaths. Copies are available from ZPG, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Single copies are free; two to nine copies, five cents each; 10-499 copies, four cents each; and 500 or more, 3.5 cents each.

TALLGRASS SHOWS

Save the Tallgrass Prairie, Inc. has a number of public information aides available. A 45 minute movie and a 25 minute slide program depict the plants and animals of the tallgrass prairie. Each rents for \$5. *Tallgrass*, a special magazine featuring articles on the prairie and the proposed Tallgrass Prairie National Park, is available for \$2.10. A photographic exhibition of tallgrass photos by Patricia Duncan will be on display in Kansas City's Crown Center this summer and then will go on tour. For more information on any of these shows and publications contact Save the Tallgrass Prairie, Inc., 4101 W. 54th Terrace, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66205.

GRIZZLY STUDY

A five year summary report on management policies for grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park has been published by park biologist, Glen Cole. Critics of the park, notably the Craighead brothers, have questioned the park's policy of abruptly closing open garbage dumps in 1970 and 1971. However, the policy succeeded in reducing the number of injuries to humans from bears who had been feeding in the

dumps, according to the statistics reported in the study. All of the injuries were by sows with young. The 26-page report is available from Glen Cole, Supervisory Research Biologist, Yellowstone National Park, Wyo. 83020. Ask for Natural Resources Report Number 9.

IMPACT ACTION GUIDE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has issued a report for communities facing rapid growth. "Rapid Growth from Energy Production: Ideas for State and Local Action," is available from HUD, Office of Planning and Management, Room 7220, Washington, D.C. 20410.

REACTOR HISTORIES

To find out the operating history of nuclear reactors — from the federal government's perspective — write to the Energy Research and Development Administration, Division of Reactor Research, 20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20545. This document is free.

CHALLISGRAZING EIS OUT

The first draft environmental impact statement on grazing in the country has been prepared and is available for comment. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has published the draft on the proposed domestic livestock grazing program for the BLM's Challis Planning Unit in Idaho. The statement describes how initiating the grazing program would affect the natural environment of the area northeast of Sun Valley. The report is available from the BLM at 230 Collins Road, Boise, Idaho 83702. Written comments on the statement may be sent until July 22.

CITIZEN PLANNING GUIDE

"The Oregon Environment: A Citizen Guide to Environmental Analysis and Planning Procedures" is a 56-page guide available for \$2. The document covers en-

vironmental and economic impact planning, legal procedures, and planning agencies. Copies are available from the Department of Urban Planning, School of Architecture and Applied Arts, University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore. 97403.

LAND DONATION

Colorado landowners who may be interested in donating land to public or private organizations for preservation or for various forms of outdoor recreation can receive valuable information from a booklet entitled, "How to Donate Land in Colorado," according to *National Resources Newsletter*. The booklet explains possible advantages to the landowner such as: tax advantages, capital gains savings, estate tax benefits, and elimination or reduction of property taxes. The booklet will be helpful to landowners who have a deep desire to assist in the protection and preservation of open space and the beauty of the Colorado landscape. Copies may be obtained from Colorado Open Land Foundation, Incorporated, P.O. Box 925, Denver, Colorado 80201.

WILDERNESS AND CIVILIZATION

A special 18-unit course in "Wilderness and Civilization," including credits in forestry, English, philosophy and humanities, is offered at the University of Montana during the fall quarter of 1976. For more information and application forms write: Wilderness Institute, School of Forestry, University of Montana, Missoula, Mont. 59801.

Grumman & Old Town

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Water permits would double N.D. electrical production

The North Dakota Water Conservation Commission has approved water permits for two more coal-powered generating plants totaling 1,320 megawatts. At the same meeting, the commission disapproved a water permit for a coal gasification plant in Dunn County — the first permit it had turned down since coal development became a major issue in 1972, according to Mike Jacobs, editor of the *Onlooker*.

The addition of the 880 megawatt Basin

Electric Power Cooperative plant and the 440 megawatt Montana Dakota Utilities Co. plant would double the state's electrical production capacity by 1982. By that year, the state will be using about 11% of the energy generated in the state, and the rest will be exported, according to the figures of Dr. Charles Metzger, the governor's energy expert. Both of the new plants would be built near Beulah. Both still need permits from the state public service com-

mission.

Basin's choice of locations was based in part upon the plans of American Natural Resources Company (ANR) which is proposing a gasification plant at the same site. The coal-fired plant would supply electricity and process steam to the gasification plant. The water permit for the ANR gasification plant has been approved.

The coal gasification plant turned down at the commission's May meeting was for Natural Gas Pipe Line Company. The request was turned down by a 4-3 vote.

Gov. Arthur Link, who is chairman of the commission, had proposed disapproving the gasification plant's water permit. Landowners in Dunn County opposed the plant.

In his opposition to the gasification plant, Link said there are still important questions regarding the feasibility of the process generally and of the Lurgi gasification method specifically.

Link questioned whether North Dakota is being asked "to support energy needs that are basic" or energy that is "to be wasted," according to the *Onlooker*. Link also mentioned the local opposition to the plant.

Arlene Wilhelm, another commission member, said that the state's commitment to one gasification plant has fulfilled its

responsibility. American Natural Resources Company has a water permit for a gasification plant near Beulah.

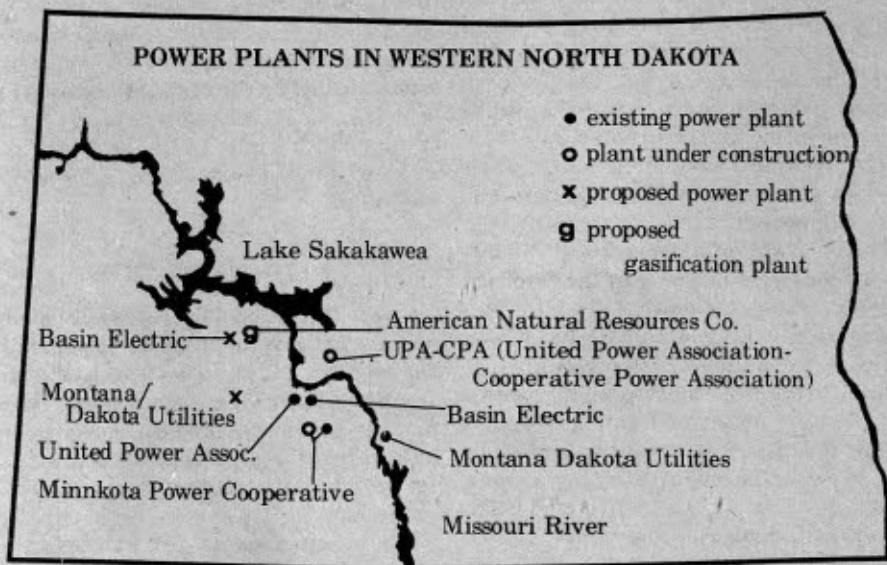
The governor said he would have voted with the majority, however, to approve the two coal-fired plants.

Basin Electric Manager James Grahl told the water commission that his cooperative electricity system would be short of electricity by 1979 or 1980. He said North Dakotans would be at an advantage being so close to the electrical supplies. However, he conceded that it may be hard to get the electricity that is produced locally if the Federal Power Commission ordered it transmitted elsewhere.

"There's no way the state can guarantee a supply of electricity unless the industry is permitted to build to meet peak regional needs," he said.

The *Onlooker* reacted to the decisions in an editorial by saying the coal industry's "siege of North Dakota" has shifted from questions of "whether" and "when" to "where." The N.D. Public Service Commission will hold hearings to answer that question.

If the PSC changes the plant sites, then, according to the state attorney general, the companies would have to file new or amended applications with the water commission.



Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world



LOONEY LIMERICKS by Zane E. Cology

The feds say that EMARS will fix
All previous coal leasers' tricks
Now it may mean that you
Jump in paperwork stew
But you do get your chance to say nix.

PARK MINING BAN. The House Interior Committee has succeeded in drafting a bill to ban strip mining in six national parks and has sent the bill to the House floor, according to Gannett News Service. The bill was approved by a 34-5 vote after being amended to exclude a 100,000 acre portion of Glacier Bay National Monument in Alaska from the ban, pending a four year study. All mining activities in the parks which are now in progress would be allowed to continue. Areas involved include Glacier Bay and Mt. McKinley National Park in Alaska, Organ Pipe Cactus National Park and Coronado National Monument in Arizona, Crater Lake National Park in Oregon, and Death Valley National Monument in California.

KENNECOTT STILL HAS PEABODY. Although ordered some time ago by the Federal Trade Commission to divest itself of Peabody Coal, Kennecott Copper Corp. is having difficulty. The question was discussed at length at the annual meeting in New York recently, but no new plans were announced, according to the Associated Press. Several offers have been considered, including selling it to the Tennessee Valley Authority, but most have been rejected or withdrawn. An offer by several utilities is still being considered, one of which is the Public Service Co. of Colorado.

WETLAND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS ATTACKED. The House Public Works Committee says that the dredge and fill permit system authorized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act is likely to prove impossible to administer effectively. The system, authorized under Section 404 of the act, is criticized in the committee's report accompanying a bill (H.R. 9560) to amend the act. The amendments would sharply limit the Corps of Engineers' authority to regulate wetlands development. Among other things, they would limit the Corps' jurisdiction to waters that are now used or could be used in the future for interstate and foreign commerce.

NAT REED DEFENDS WETLANDS. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel F. Reed has severely criticized the effect of the Breaux amendment on wetlands. The amendment was added to H.R. 9560 amending the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. He said the basic effect of the amendment would be to exempt millions of acres of lakes, swamps, and marshes, and many thousands of miles of streams and rivers from the Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit program. Reed made the comments in a letter to the National Wildlife Federation.

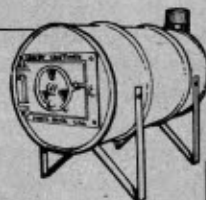
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COURT ORDERS 208 FUNDING. A U.S. District Court has ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to obligate \$136.4 million in 100% grants for areawide waste treatment management planning agencies under Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. EPA had said it could no longer obligate funds appropriated for the program in fiscal 1973-74. However, the court said the local planning units should not be penalized for EPA's delay in implementing the act.

PARK PACKING PERMITS NEEDED. Permits for backcountry camping will be required this year in 39 National Park Service areas. Three areas (Mount Rainier National Park, Wash.; Point Reyes National Seashore, Calif.; and Grand Canyon National Park, Ariz.) require advance reservations for backcountry camping. The 36 other areas issue permits on a first come, first served basis. Both permits and reservations are free. The permits are necessary to protect fragile backcountry areas.

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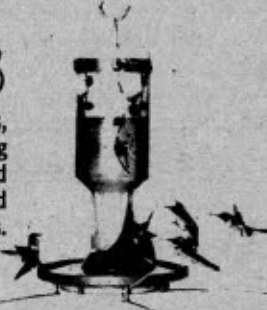
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16-High Country News — June 18, 1976

Desert rat turned Defender

Dick Randall: a life with coyotes

by Bruce Hamilton

"We need to have more facts," says Dick Randall. "We can't fight environmental battles with just emotion. But, my God, sometimes I just can't help but get emotional — like when I see over 100 miles of desert without a fence, or the first antelope fawn of the season."

Randall is a desert rat. He's also the North Central Field Representative for Defenders of Wildlife, a national conservation organization. His home is in Rock Springs, Wyo., but he lives on the Red Desert northeast of the city.

"What I like to do is jump in my pickup, head for the desert, park, sit on the tailgate, and write," he says. "When I sit in my study at home with the electric typewriter humming at me, my mind goes blank."

A LIFE WITH COYOTES

Randall grew up in Wyoming's wide open spaces. He has been a ranch hand, outfitter, and government trapper. He's heard the coyotes' lonesome yodel in the clear desert air. He's shot hundreds of them from a plane in winter "until my fingers were froze and my eye was black from the gun kicking against my face." He's called in coyotes to his camp and taken amazing close-up photos. He's been to Washington,



DICK RANDALL is a professional wildlife photographer and the North Central Field Representative for Defenders of Wildlife. His address is Box 507, Rock Springs, Wyo. 82901.

D.C., to testify on the environmental problems of coyote poisoning and trapping.

"I don't think I can go anywhere in Wyoming and not hear a bunch of coyotes howling in the night," he says. "Most people look at me strange because they can't hear them, but I always do."

CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Randall's career has evolved from controlling predators to controlling predator controls. While employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, he was the principal district field assistant in charge of training and overseeing predator control agents in five southwestern Wyoming counties. He worked closely with other trappers and livestock operators.

Today he works for Defenders of Wildlife — the conservation group in the forefront of the movement to prevent predator control abuses. In his new position he calls on his past experience to offer valuable insight into the problems of trapping, poisoning, denning, and aerial hunting. He is one of the few expert witnesses environmentalists can call upon to testify at Congressional hearings on predator control. His outspoken change of allegiance caused many of his former cohorts to shun him. After he started writing articles for Defenders, copies of them were sent around to trappers and sheepmen and the word was passed — don't give any more information to Randall. Soon after he took the job with Defenders, a poison bait was thrown into his back yard in Rock Springs and his pet dog was killed.

NO ABOLITIONIST

Randall isn't totally against the use of predator poisons — just as he wasn't totally for exterminating the coyote when he was a trapper. He recognizes a need to control coyotes, but he also recognizes their important role in the ecosystem.

He has a healthy respect for coyotes. They are worthy adversaries and intriguing companions. Randall thinks the sheepman needs help, and the coyote needs understanding.

"Sheepmen have so many other problems — but they focus on predators. The other problems (a depressed market, rising costs, competition with synthetic fibers) have whittled down their profits to a point where they can't absorb a single predator loss," he says.

"All coyotes don't kill sheep. If they did, there wouldn't be any sheep on the open range."

Sometimes sheepmen "call wolf" over coyote losses. Randall says one year when he worked as a government trapper he "cut losses by 80% without killing a single coyote." That season he was using a helicopter to control coyotes in the Bridger National Forest. "Whenever a sheepman reported losing 20 sheep, we'd stop and pick him up and have him point out where it happened. They soon learned to report only real losses."

In 1971-72 Randall says he killed 735

coyotes in three months — 42 in one six hour period — "and still there was no drop in trouble calls from the area."

Other aerial hunts were less fruitful for the trappers. Randall recalls one coyote that cost the government \$1,457 to kill when the helicopter time and salary for three trappers' hours were added up.

Sometimes killing sheer numbers of coyotes wasn't the solution, even when coyotes were the problem. Randall explains: "I like to autopsy everything. One time we killed 14 coyotes in among a sheep herd. Not one of the coyotes had any lamb in its stomach contents. On the third day, we killed a big old coyote and the problem was solved."

NO ONE SOLUTION

Coyote predation on sheep is a localized problem, but our approach in the past to it has been to "plant poison like wheat all over the public range," says Randall. "One rancher may have a problem, and over the hill there's no problem. We wage war against whole populations instead of problem situations."

"The problem is that we try to apply one system of control everywhere. Cyanide guns might have been a good tool for certain concentrated problem areas. But we spread thousands of them everywhere. The coyote adapted to them, and they became useless. Now they're more of a problem than a solution."

Randall says coyotes also adapted to aerial hunting. "They're hiding in holes more now when they hear planes. I believe some coyotes can read the numbers on the side of the control planes."

Aerial hunting finally led to Randall's downfall in government service — literally. "Twice I shot the propeller of the plane, and, boy, did we have to find a landing field — quickly." Randall earned so many broken bones that he retired early and took the job with Defenders.

SO MUCH TO LOSE

Today, Randall sees great challenges for himself, for Defenders, and for other conservation groups in the West. "We're losing so much of the beautiful things in the West. Sometimes to bad development, sometimes to good development. I'm worried. I've got a boy, and I hope he can see and enjoy some of the beauty I've seen," he says.

"We have some of the greatest wildlife populations in Wyoming, and some of the greatest mineral deposits. We have so much to offer, so much to save, so much to lose."



Dear Friends,

We have a delightful task for our readers this summer. We want to ask all of you to become intimately familiar with a small part of America's wild lands. We want you to hike in the mountains, camp on the desert, or run a wild river. Look at the birds, smell the wildflowers, listen to the coyotes — and imprint the memory of that place in your mind.

Wild areas are often lost because conservationists are not familiar enough with them to judge the impact of proposed developments. Every day the High Country News office receives new mining, timber, fencing, highway, second home, power plant, reservoir, or other development plans for wild areas around the region. Most of the time we have no idea if the proposed development is well planned or an environmental disaster. We don't know the wild place to judge what its value is and how it may be altered.

That's why we'd like you all to familiarize yourselves with at least one spot. We'd like you to become its guardian and keep an eye out for unacceptable developments. When a management plan or an environmental impact statement is released for your area, we'd like you to review it. Then, if your adopted piece of the

earth is endangered, we'd like you to contact HCN and urge us to help you preserve the area.

This issue of HCN is designed to inspire you to become a steward of the land. Dick Randall, the subject of this issue's portrait and the author of the front page article, has adopted the Red Desert of Wyoming as his place to protect. In his article he urges others to become familiar with this complex of sand dunes, mountains, wild horses, antelope, sego lilies, and sagebrush. Then he urges you to help defend it.

Another challenge is offered by the Interior Department through its new coal leasing system. Up until now, conservationists have had little say in where coal will be leased. Now the department is asking for public input to help decide where to lease and where to prohibit leasing. In an article on page 10, we've listed some groups in the region that plan to tackle this task. Why not volunteer to help them out?

We started out suggesting a delightful task and ended up heaping a burden of responsibility on each of you. But hopefully you'll see it as a labor of love.

—the editors

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