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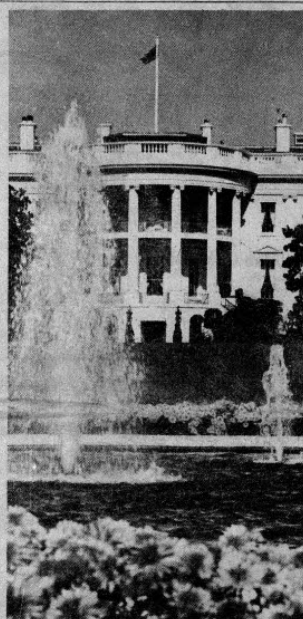
The Environmental Biweekly of the Rockies and Great Plains

High Country News

Volume 10, no. 20

Lander, Wyoming

Friday, October 20, 1978



White House photo
courtesy of the National Park Service



Canyon de Chelly photo
copyright 1978 Ann & Myron Sutton

A sprawling agency with a two-part mission

National Park Service chases squirrels of political popularity

by Bernard Shanks

Scene:
Washington, D.C., congressional hearing room, March 7, 1978.

Present:

Members, House Appropriations Committee, National Park Service director and other high ranking park officials.

Subject:

National Park Service budget and operations for 1979.

Sidney Yates (chairman of the committee): "Did you ever get rid of the mouse in the wall of the White House?"

Manus Fish (regional director, National Park Service):

"We took care of that and I think that is under control."

Yates:

"Why did the president have so much trouble trying to get a mouse out of the wall? Was it your fault?"

Fish:

"It may have been the Park Service... we used the tried and true method. We put a mouse trap in there."

that park officials would be concerned with White House mice is bizarre. But the scene is authentic; the quotations are taken verbatim from a recent congressional hearing.

It is also symbolic of the modern National Park Service for two reasons. First, the small agency has expanded from Yellowstone and other Western parks to many new and unusual places. Second, it has grown increasingly controversial. The Park Service manages Glacier and Rocky Mountain national parks, but also Cape Cod Seashore, Ford's Theater and the White House. Park rangers are found at Custer Battlefield, Statue of Liberty National Monument and Sanguis Iron Works National Historic Site—nearly 300 vastly different areas. As its role has expanded, the Park Service has been subject to new critics. It has been chided for its inability to catch mice in the White House, for the leaking roof in the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center, starving elk in Yellowstone and squirrel management in LaFayette Park.

As a federal land management agency, the Park Service is less professional than the Forest Service in that its decisionmakers lack a common educational background, an agency research facility and, in most cases, a commitment to continuing education on natural resources issues. It is less dedicated to management principle than the Fish and Wildlife Service and more set in its ways than the Bureau of Land Management.

Nevertheless, the most idealistic mandate of any federal agency is assigned to the Park Service. Congress declared its "purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment... in such manner... as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This mix of ambitious purpose and expedient politics has tarnished both the Park Service and the parks.

FIRST IN WYOMING

In general, U.S. land policies have not been original. But there are two exceptions. One was the comprehensive land and water development mandate given to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The other (continued on page 4)

THE PARK SERVICE'S RESPONSIBILITIES include everything from the White House lawn to Canyon de Chelly. As the agency has moved away from its original focus on natural areas, its management problems have compounded.

The National Park Service is an unusual agency. Viewed by the public as the protector of national parks, the agency's mission has grown complex. For many, the idea

Gravel's threats kill Alaska bill

Environmentalists optimistic about 1979

by Bruce Hamilton

It was to be a high point in Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler's term of office. Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus was scheduled to join him in Wyoming for a ceremonial transfer of regulatory authority over surface mining in the state.

But Andrus never showed up. At the last minute, he learned that the Carter administration's top conservation priority—Alaska—was at stake in Congress. Republican Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska, who had held up the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act for

months, was reportedly ready to compromise.

As things worked out, Andrus probably should have kept his appointment in Wyoming. While Stevens was willing to try to get out a bill acceptable to all parties, his Senate colleague, Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) was not. Gravel's inflexibility led to the bill's demise.

The word of Stevens' willingness to negotiate brought brief hope that a bill could be passed this year. At the negotiating session Stevens, his ally Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), and the bill's supporters tried to hammer out a workable compromise. Gravel reportedly refused to give in.

When Gravel pronounced the compromise unacceptable, Stevens reportedly stormed from the negotiating room complaining, "It's all over. No bill." Gravel's (continued on page 6)



Osprey



HCN Letters

DUNOIR

Dear HCN,

The only remaining uncut area in the DuNoir ecosystem (in northwest Wyoming), should remain as it is—a living bench mark reference testifying to the effects of selective cutting against the devastation wrought by clearcutting in lands which are extremely slow to regenerate.

The importance of the area as an elk calving ground in the spring and as a buffer to the largely "wilderness on the rock" of the higher Absaroka Mountains is inseparable as an indispensable element in the ecological integrity of the Washakie Wilderness. If the area is clearcut, a special asset will be missing from the DuNoir, which cannot be measured profitably by the temporary value of the timber extracted by clearcutting.

The future of such public lands and the citizens who own them is much better served with the preservation of the area as wilderness than by the devastation of its natural advantages as a watershed, wildlife habitat and recreational area for generations of future Americans. Any other usage authorized by the Forest Service should be considered ecological rape. The entire 30,000 or so acres of the DuNoir Special Management area should be added to the Washakie Wilderness as an invaluable part of every American's wilderness heritage.

Van Shipp
Versailles, Ky.

(Ed. Note: DuNoir legislation died in Congress this session. The bill introduced by Rep. Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.) and passed by the House would have designated 34,500 acres of the area as wilderness. The version passed by the Senate included only 11,000 acres, which Roncalio said reduced the area to a "rock enclave." When this butchered remnant returns to the House I will see that it receives merciful last rites," Roncalio told the House Oct. 5. Existing law protects 28,800 acres of the DuNoir from development until Congress decides the area's fate.)

SPECIAL TREATMENT

Dear HCN,

I just finished reading Dan Whipple's recent article on water policy ("Congress, Carter Lock Horns on Water Projects," Aug. 25).

I wanted to compliment you on a most thorough and fair representation of this issue. Too often the issue is presented in an unfair light (depending on the writer's bias), and those of us involved have suffered as a result. Your article, however, told the story accurately and fairly, giving both sides equal treatment. This is unusual in the water field, and I wanted to compliment you for a job well done.

Dan Beard
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Land and Water Resources
Interior Department
Washington, D.C.

FIRM PROPOSAL

Dear HCN,

I was happy to see in the Oct. 6 issue Bart Koehler's letter clarifying certain points concerning RARE II and the Overthrust Belt in Wyoming. However, one part of Dave Crosson's response to Mr. Koehler is inaccurate and leaves readers with an erroneous impression of the status of Alternative W.

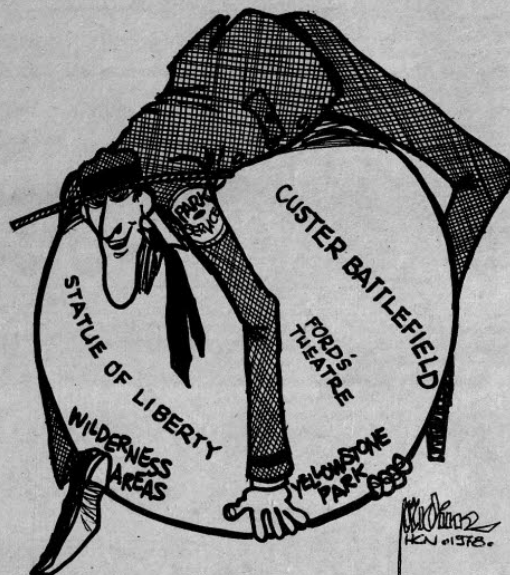
The problem stems from the statement: "Indeed, Alternative W itself, even though it represents the collective thinking of the Wyoming Wilderness Coalition, is no more or less official in the eyes of the Forest Service than the thinking of citizen Hocker."

This is entirely incorrect.

Alternative W has been finalized, formalized, and formally submitted to the Forest Service as firm proposal. Although Phil Hocker has spent a great deal of his own time in searching for a solution to the Overthrust Belt controversy, the "Hocker Compromise" is not a firm proposal. It is simply an idea that has been tossed up for discussion. Though proposals are built on ideas, there is a very real difference.

Furthermore, Alternative W is the result of literally years of intensive research and field studies conducted not only by people such as Bart Koehler, Phil Hocker, and myself, but also by numerous volunteers and organizations throughout the state. The Wyoming Wilderness Coalition consists of some 14 member groups and many individuals—a broad-based coalition by anyone's definition.

Despite Alternative W's compromises in the Overthrust Belt, conservationists will continue to fight for the enactment of Alternative W. When the energy industry and the Forest Service begin to make some concessions in return, and when it becomes apparent that the Wyoming Wilderness Coalition can go no further in reaching its



"I CATCH RATS IN THE WHITE HOUSE, TOO."

goals for the Overthrust Belt, then and only then will Friends of the Earth in Wyoming begin to look at the "Hocker Compromise" in terms of a firm proposal.

Howie Wolke
Wyoming representative,
Friends of the Earth
Jackson, Wyo.

Dear Friends

About the time you receive this paper the presses will be rolling in Missoula, Mont., to produce Peter Wild's latest book, *Pioneer Conservationists of Western America*. We are filled with pride, for the book's 15 biographies first appeared in *High Country News*. If you enjoyed Wild's history of conservation thought enough to want to have the book, let us know. We'll order a copy (\$12.95) from Mountain Press for you. Part of the profits will go to HCN.

Our promotion program includes mailing samples to lists of people we think might be interested in subscribing to *High Country News*. Sometimes we buy an appropriate list. Sometimes we exchange the one-time use of our list for the chance to use someone else's. If you would prefer not to receive promotional mail of any kind, let us know. We'll mark your address plate with a "Q," to remind us not to use it for any list exchanges. We try to limit such exchanges to groups that we think might interest most of our readers, and we never exchange more than four times a year. If you want to share lists of members or friends, please send them along.

We continue to receive good wishes and money for the medical fund for members of the *High Country News* staff who were injured in an automobile accident in late August. Two weeks ago we reported that over \$20,000 had been donated, more than enough to cover Marjane Ambler and Dan Whipple's approximately \$12,000 in medical bills. We expressed our amazement and thanks to a remarkable readership.

But that's not the end of the story. Donations to the fund continue to arrive. The total is now almost \$32,000, which has come from about 1,400 individuals and groups. That's powerful medicine.

We've taken the first, obvious steps. Marjane and Dan are paying their bills, and everyone on the staff is now covered by health insurance. That still leaves a substantial sum, which we plan to use to find more readers and advertisers to help make a solid financial base for the paper.

In a world full of jobs that make people feel bored and worthless, we are blessed with evidence that our work is useful to others. Your fierce determination to keep *High Country News* alive has reminded us of that. Thanks again.

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Alaska bill's demise—only part of the story of the 95th Congress

We paid a lot of attention to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act this year. So did most national conservation groups. So did the administration; Jimmy Carter called the bill his highest conservation priority.

When the bill died in the final hours of the 95th session of Congress, after a sizable investment of time and energy on all sides, we were angry. We were ready to write an editorial that you've probably seen before—a "do-nothing Congress" tirade.

After more careful thought, while we are still deeply disappointed about Alaska, we feel differently about Congress's overall achievements. All in all, it was a pretty good session for people concerned about the environment.

We haven't made a comprehensive list of the good environmental bills passed in the last two years. But we can't forget that this is the Congress that passed the \$1.2 billion Park and Recreation Act and the Endangered American Wilderness Act. It also set aside the Indian Peaks and the Great

Bear wildernesses, expanded Redwoods National Park and strengthened protection for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

It is the Congress that passed a bill to clean up radioactive mine wastes, to improve the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act and to strengthen the Clean Air Act. It passed a solid strip mining bill, a somewhat helpful energy bill, and went along with President Carter's veto of a

wasteful, destructive public works bill.

We cannot, of course, forget the damage done to the Endangered Species Act and the neglect shown for Alaska and Jackson Hole and the DuNoir in Wyoming. But it appears that at least Alaska and the DuNoir will be protected from development until the next Congress makes a decision about them. We are thankful for that.

There was speculation that this was the session backlash forces would destroy previous environmental gains and the Office

of Management and Budget would quash any measure that cost money. But there was also evidence of a growing interest in protecting the land.

After thinking it over, we feel there's reason to be hopeful about the chances of a strong Alaska bill and other good conservation legislation next year—if we are willing to remind Congress and the president of our concerns and to thank them for the good legislation they passed this session.

JN



Workers, town are victims of utility's arrogance

Ever since a federal judge issued an injunction against a Basin Electric power plant and dam in Wheatland, Wyo., the utility officials have adopted the pose of innocent victims, entangled in red tape and henpecked by whooping cranes.

However, the Nebraska attorney handling the case sees this pose as part of a script the utility had figured out long ago. We tend to agree. The utility had known about

water problems since 1974 when the utility's own environmental advisory committee recommended a smaller power plant, saying the plant as planned would use 60 percent of the Laramie River's annual flow.

"There's no question in my mind that Basin went ahead feeling that, once under way, no one would stop them," says Bill Hoppner, legal counsel to Nebraska Gov.

the Wheatland mayor and the wives of construction workers. All have good reasons for outrage.

The workers and the people of Wheatland are the true innocents in this case, victimized by Basin Electric's political ploys and by the two federal agencies' compliance. While the utility made laudable efforts to prevent major impacts on Wheatland schools, housing and social services, the town may now be in for the unexpected turmoil of "de-booming," as one Wheatland person called it.

Rather than trying to reverse the court decision, Basin and the federal agencies who allowed them to go ahead should be trying to help the people of Wheatland endure the impacts of de-booming. They are as culpable for today's turmoil as they were for the initial influx of workers.

The appeals judge will be facing enormous pressures. We hope that he will see that Basin and the agencies are in the wrong here — not a lower court judge. We hope that when he reminds the utility of its legal responsibility to the cranes and to agricultural water users along the river, he will also remind it of its moral responsibility to the workers and people of Wheatland.

MJA



James Exon. He contends that Basin felt it had enough clout in Washington, D.C., to obtain permits and proceed with the project. "They looked at this strictly from a political standpoint," he says, according to the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

Wyoming Attorney General John J. Rooney was critical of the utility for not resolving problems before starting construction. Both states criticized Basin for rejecting compromises that had been proposed by the state of Nebraska earlier. Nebraska, the National Wildlife Federation, Nebraska Wildlife Federation and the National Audubon Society brought the suit that resulted in the judge's action.

Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler also criticized the Rural Electrification Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers. In a telegram to President Carter, Herschler said the project "was terminated due to the ineptitude of federal agencies in meeting federal environmental standards."

Basin's expectations of how the play will unfold are being fulfilled to some extent. The permits were issued, the workers streamed into the Wheatland area and their dollars into the local businesses' coffers. The resulting momentum is making it very difficult for U.S. District Court Judge Warren Urbom's order to stick.

Since his decision to shut down construction, the headlines have screamed with protests from congressional candidates, the Chamber of Commerce in Cheyenne,



Stories, photos, expenses.

Responsible spenders, the HCN staff and stringers collect travel expenses at five cents per mile (sleeping bag space and nourishment included) from the fund.

Fact-gathering phone calls are also supported by the fund. An effort is made to call after five at the lower rate. Many photos in HCN are paid for with

fund dollars, too.

Donations are tax-deductible. Contribute to the fund today, won't you? You'll be helping us do our best for the Rocky Mountain region.

Make out checks to Wyoming Environmental Institute—HCN Research Fund, and send to: WEI, P.O. Box 2497, Jackson, Wyoming 83001. Thank you.

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4-High Country News — Oct. 20, 1978

Park Service seeks popularity...

(continued from page 1)

was our national park policy, which started with Yellowstone — the world's first national park. The idea originating in Wyoming wilderness spawned over 1,200 national parks and reserves around the world. It is a legacy that the Park Service has justifiably held up to the public with pride. The system may undergo its greatest expansion in Alaska. If a bill like the House's Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act passes, the largest national parks in the world would be created and the present system would double in size.

National parks are established by an act of Congress. Unlike recent urban parks, early parks were inexpensive because they were carved out of the public domain — not private lands. With a surplus of public land, parks were also fairly non-controversial. While some national parks

Conservation-minded presidents have used the authority to protect threatened areas. Often the Antiquities Act proved to be an interim step between open public land and eventual classification by Congress as a national park. It has been one key to the growth and expansion of the National Park System and remains a powerful conservation tool today.

Yellowstone was established in 1872. Mt. Rainier, Kings Canyon, Glacier, and several monuments such as Grand Canyon followed.

SLIPSHOD ADMINISTRATION

Early administration of the national parks was slipshod. Some national monuments were administered by the Forest Service, others by the toothless General

Land Office. Several large parks, including Yellowstone, were protected by the U.S. Cavalry during their early years. (Yellowstone's headquarters at Mammoth still retains the unmistakable signs of a frontier army base.)

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GRAND TETON CONTROVERSY

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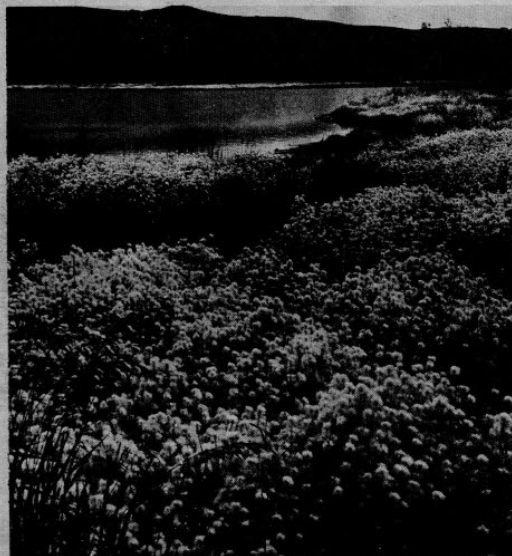
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STRIKING CONTRASTS

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(See next page)



Copyright 1978 by Ann & Myron Sutton
ARCTIC COTTON GRASS in Mt. McKinley National Park. The National Park Service is responsible for protecting the best scenes in a remarkable land.

hand, lacks uniform professional training and experience. One result of this is more politicization.

A study of the decisionmakers of four federal land management agencies at Utah State University illustrates part of the problem. Some striking contrasts were found between the Park Service and other agencies. For example, virtually all Forest Service managers hold degrees in natural resource management, usually forestry. Only a small percentage of Park Service administrators do. More Park Service administrators were trained in liberal arts, education or even police science than were trained in natural resources or park or recreation management.

Another contrast revealed by the survey was the isolation of the Park Service from professional natural resource organizations, such as The Wildlife Society or the Society of American Foresters. Such involvement is one indication of commitment to new developments and technical information. It is a device for continuing education. Approximately 95 percent of the Forest Service managers and 75 percent of the Fish and Wildlife Service managers belong to a professional organization. Less than 20 percent of Park Service managers belong.

Another problem is the isolation of the Park Service from conservation groups. While 75 percent of Fish and Wildlife Service decisionmakers belong to some conservation organization, only 40 percent of the Park Service decisionmakers claimed membership. Most Forest Service managers belong to such organizations as well. Only the Bureau of Land Management had a smaller percentage of membership than the Park Service.

Isolation has always been a problem because of Park Service communities. Unlike the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, most Park Service employees live in small government communities within the parks. Moose and Mammoth, Wyo., are essentially company towns with a unique social life tied almost completely to the Park Service. Interaction with outsiders is minimized, and a fortress mentality has often resulted.

In the early 1960s Assistant Interior Secretary John Carver, Jr., accused Park Service employees of "being wrapped up in their own mysticism." Carver's remarks stirred a storm of controversy, in part because they hit close to the truth. In a short time the Park Service had expanded from a single use to multiple use type of agency. At the same time it had grown increasingly isolated from conservation organizations and the natural resource profession. A clear and concise park policy has become a confusing hodgepodge of national recreation areas and multiple use areas. The Park Service became involved in frequent controversies.

With the rise in historic areas, urban parks and national recreation areas, the policies have grown complex and conflicting. One park may have an active program of shooting exotic animals to remove them from the park. A recreation area may tolerate them. One park may permit grazing, even raise livestock — another park may confiscate any domestic animal within its boundaries. Some parks focus their attention on policing drug traffic, other do not.

The National Park Service remains aloof from other organizations. In many parks the rangers share more with the Federal Bureau of Investigation than the Forest Service and are more comfortable with border patrolmen than the Bureau of Land Management. Park rangers now receive a minimum of 200 hours of law enforcement training. In Big Bend and other border parks rangers pursue dope smugglers, in Cape Cod, nude bathers. In case of riot a



Photo by Ed Riddell

PARK SERVICE EMPLOYEES who are attracted to the agency for the outdoors work often turn down a promotion to an urban park or to Washington, D.C. This means that many talented rangers remain low in the ranks throughout their careers, while ambitious but sometimes unskilled rangers rise to supervisory levels.

park can call the Park Service SWAT team into action.

Other federal agencies concerned with land management and conservation have pursued alternatives to law enforcement training and arming their entire untrained staff. The Forest Service contracts for patrols of its campgrounds; other agencies use law enforcement specialists.

The public views the park ranger as a skilled outdoorsman capable of wilderness rescues and outdoor activities. In the Western parks many rangers are trained scuba divers, mountain climbers and fire fighters. Those who are attracted to the agency for the outdoors work often elect to stay at lower grades rather than accept a promotion to an urban park or to Washington, D.C. As a result, many of the most talented rangers work out their careers at lower grades, while ambitious but unskilled rangers rise to supervisory levels in Washington.

AGENCY SCHIZOPHRENIA

As a result of the contrast between outstanding field areas and mundane positions in regional offices and Washington, a sort of agency schizophrenia exists. Top bureaucrats often have little if any field experience.

Present director William Whalen has more experience than previous appointees such as Ron Walker, a Nixon advance man. However, most park directors and their top

A something-for-everyone national playground syndrome has emerged that has detracted from the unique mission of the Park Service.

assistants lack professional resource management training and grassroots experience. In contrast, the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service director have professional training and field experience.

A recent congressional staff report blasted the Park Service administration.

"The investigation staff believes any program resulting from a process as disrespected, as untrustworthy as the NPS planning process obviously lacks reliability for congressional use in the appropriation process," the report said. "The NPS should take immediate steps to improve the quality of its management at all levels."

The management of the Park Service is viewed by many agencies as disruptive. In part, this is the result of the purist mission of the Park Service in its larger natural areas. A bark beetle infestation in Glacier Park infests the adjacent Flathead National Forest. Spraying and logging are not management possibilities, so the timber is "wasted" in the eyes of the Forest Service and adversely impacts its lands. Surplus elk migrate out of parks and complicate state management of wildlife. Other problems crop up over different fire control, wildlife management and grazing policies. Artificial boundaries are imposed on natural communities.

Proposed parks are viewed as a threat to many interest groups. However, the conflict over new parks goes beyond the miners, landowners and cattlemen who might fear the establishment of a park for economic reasons. National parks shift land and responsibility from other agencies, usually the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management, but often state conservation agencies as well.

State fish and game agencies see their responsibilities diminished by the Park Service. The result is that the Park Service is mistrusted by other agencies. True to bureaucratic tradition, no agency voluntarily surrenders land, budgets or responsibility. Inter-agency competition is fierce although usually buried from public view.

Some members of Congress have grown increasingly upset with the Park Service politicization. After hearings on the companies that provide lodging and other services in the parks, Congressman Henry Reuss (D-Mich.) stated, "Our investigations thus far suggest that the concessions, not the National Park Service, are running the National Parks." A recent article in *Natural History* magazine entitled "Who Runs Grand Canyon" criticized the Park

Oct. 20, 1978 — High Country News-5

Service for giving outfitters too much power over the future of Grand Canyon.

Park Service political ties include a set of VIP houses. President Carter recently stayed at one, the Brinkerhoff Cabin in the Tetons. Shenandoah National Park has Camp Hoover. Cape Hatteras has the Pink House, and Rocky Mountain National Park has the Hofmeister House. The VIP houses are regarded as a useful means of attracting influential visitors. A peaceful park setting becomes a useful place to present the Park Service viewpoint on budgets, policies and issues.

Rep. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.) calls Mar-A-Lago National Historic Site "one of the most lavish private estates in the world." While the service has no use for the site and has closed it to the public, maintenance costs alone come to \$391,000 per year. The Park Service has considered opening the site for VIP use, but Congress is beginning to balk at paying the cost of maintaining such facilities.

The current goals of the Park Service are complex. Its management of historic and cultural areas, primarily in the East, sets a high standard. The Park Service's living history and interpretive programs are a popular, highly professional service. The agency's preservation of historic and cultural sites has long been the model for others. The Park Service has initiated innovative mass transit systems. Some parks

The Park Service has been chided for everything from its inability to catch mice in the White House to starving elk in Yellowstone.

have bicycle paths, recycling facilities and other creative environmental programs.

However, its management of large natural areas suffers from a lack of professional management and research data, and from politically imposed solutions to biological problems. Park Service recreation areas and urban parks are indistinguishable from city and state park management. A something-for-everyone national playground syndrome has emerged that has detracted from the unique mission of the Park Service.

Despite its problems, the National Park System has a vast reservoir of public support. The concept of maintaining some wild land and some historic areas for future generations remains a noble democratic experiment. As such it has shown the best instincts of our government and protected the best scenes of a remarkable land. Problems of a sprawling and diverse federal agency chasing the squirrels of political popularity can be overcome. If people believe that some land should be above the laws of economics and beyond the consumptive reach of this generation, the National Park System will survive.

Bernard Shanks knows the National Park Service from inside and out. He has worked as a park ranger in Grand Canyon and Grand Teton national parks and as a seasonal park employee in Yellowstone and Petrified Forest national parks and Saguaro and Organ Pipe Cactus national monuments.

He is currently an associate professor in the department of forestry and outdoor recreation at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He has a doctorate in resource development from Michigan State University and is active in several professional and conservation groups, including the governing council of the Wilderness Society.

6-High Country News — Oct. 20, 1978

Sen. Gravel kills Alaska bill. . .

(continued from page 1)

threat of a filibuster made it impossible for either the Senate committee-passed bill or the House-Senate negotiated bill to be considered by the full Senate.

Stevens and Young spent all year inserting weakening amendments and striking compromises. When they were through and seated around the negotiating table, they reportedly felt they had the best bill they could hope to get from a Congress intent on protecting vast parcels of federal land in Alaska as new national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national wild and scenic rivers.

"It's an outrage that we didn't have time to bring the bill to a Senate floor vote," says Charles Clusen of the Alaska Coalition. The Alaska Coalition is an organization composed primarily of conservation groups formed to secure passage of a strong bill.

Clusen claims that the coalition had lined up over 50 votes in the Senate in support of strengthening amendments. Many of the amendments were designed to put the language of the House-passed bill into the weaker bill passed by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. But the bill never made it to the Senate floor.

"I think Stevens and Young had a joint strategy to delay the bill so long that they'd be in a strong negotiating position," says Peter Scholes of the Alaska Coalition.

"But at least Stevens and Young wanted to see a bill in the end," says Clusen. "Gravel, by comparison, was an outright obstructionist."

"I would have liked to have gotten a good bill out this year, but I'm not too disappointed," says Scholes. "I'm relieved that we didn't have to accept a bad bill. I think we have a very good chance to get a much stronger bill next year."

Scholes says the compromise "split the difference" between the House bill and the weaker Senate committee version. "However, in Southeast Alaska the compromise was weaker than either version."

The negotiating committee failed to agree on the compromise bill on the last

day of the session, when Gravel insisted on a section to allow transportation corridors through some of the conservation system units. The other congressional negotiators refused to give in to Gravel's demand.

Several days before the meeting Gravel told reporters, "I'm doing everything to guarantee it (the bill) will fail."

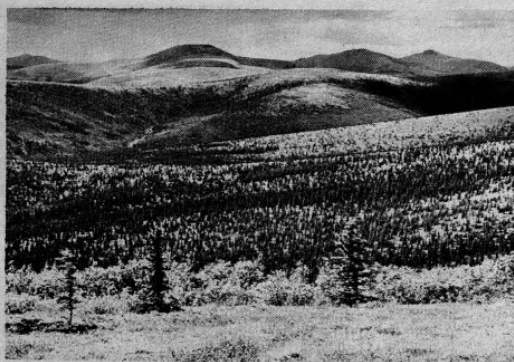
Stevens finally gave up trying to convince Gravel of the need for a bill this year. Stevens told the Associated Press it was up to Alaskans, not him, to get Gravel to change his mind.

Prior to the bill's demise, Stevens told AP that if the bill failed Gravel would have to carry the load of opposing it exclusively when it was reintroduced next year.

Part of the sense of urgency surrounding the bill is due to a Dec. 18 expiration date on the protective withdrawals on the lands under consideration. The withdrawals prevented the areas from being developed while conservationists sought legislative protection for them.

The expiration date also put pressure on Stevens and Young. They were concerned that if Congress didn't act before Dec. 18, the Carter Administration would use its powers to protect all the lands under consideration through executive order. They preferred to see congressional action, where some lands were released for development, to a federally-imposed ban on development of all lands. Also, the two were eager to enact a provision of the bill that expedited transfer to the state of federal lands that were guaranteed to Alaska under its statehood act.

When the compromise negotiations broke down, an attempt was made to extend the deadline on the termination of the withdrawals for one year. The House bill for a one-year extension—sponsored by Morris Udall (D-Ariz.), John Seiberling (D-Ohio) and Young—passed unanimously. The Senate version—sponsored by Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), John Dirkin (D-N.H.) and Stevens—was filibustered by Gravel. Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) finally withdrew the prop-



THE UPLANDS OF THE YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS area in eastern Alaska were slated for protection in the Alaska bill passed by the House this session. Sen. Mike Gravel blocked passage of the legislation in the Senate, however. The administration hopes to provide some kind of short-term protection for federal lands in Alaska while they await congressional attention next year.

osal to cut off the filibuster. The measure was dead for the session.

The Carter administration has announced that it will not leave the Alaska lands unprotected once the withdrawals expire, but the method it will use to protect the areas is uncertain.

The president could use his power under the Antiquities Act and designate some or all of the areas as national monuments.

The administration could also move to designate some of the areas as wildlife refuges, or it could withdraw the areas from mineral entry under Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The type of administrative protection may be of small consequence if Congress moves quickly in the next session to pass Alaska legislation, however. Seiberling, one of the chief House sponsors of the bill, is reportedly "hot to move again," according to a congressional source. "Seiberling thinks he can get the bill out of the House by the end of February," the source said.

Clusen believes Stevens and Young were willing to negotiate at the last minute be-

cause "they knew they'd get clobbered by us if the bill was brought up again next year."

Clusen says there is "overwhelming support for strong Alaska legislation" in both the House and the Senate. He cites the House vote for final passage—277 to 31—as evidence and says, "while we started out slow in the Senate, we finished up extremely strong. We have diverse support in both houses. We should be able to get a strong bill next year without any difficulty—one at least as strong as this year's House-passed bill."

Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands was the principal group lobbying against federal protection for Alaska lands. David Freer of CMAL says his group thought that through Stevens' efforts, Congress had worked out the best bill CMAL could get this session. Freer says he can't predict what Congress might do with the legislation next year.

Bruce Hamilton is the Northern Plains representative for the Sierra Club.



Bulletin Board



WHOOOPER ALERT

If you are in Nebraska this time of year and spot a very large white bird, with a seven-foot wingspan, black-tipped wings and a dark red face, you have probably seen a whooper crane. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission urges you to stay calm and report your sighting immediately to either Ross Lock in Lincoln at (402) 464-0641 or Jim Hurt, Kearney, at (308) 236-4433. The commission also urges you not to confuse the whooper with either pelicans or snow geese, for this will alter the census of the nearly-extinct whooper.

BIG GAME BOOKLETS

Three free publications on cooking and field care of big game are available. Single copies of the three publications can be ordered from the Jefferson County Extension Service, 15200 W. 6th Ave., Golden, Colo. 80401 or call (303) 279-4511. Ask for "Wild Game Cookery — Here's How," "Field Care of Big Game" and "Cutting Up a Big Game Carcass."

TRAIL HEARINGS

The feasibility of a Desert National Scenic Trail will be discussed at upcoming National Park Service meetings in five Western states. The proposed trail would provide a hiking and horseback route from Canada to Mexico, primarily through desert regions. The meetings will be Oct. 31 in Phoenix, Ariz.; Nov. 1 in Lake Havasu City, Ariz.; Nov. 2 in Yuma, Ariz.; Nov. 7 in Reno, Nev.; Nov. 9 in Las Vegas, Nev.; Nov. 13 in Idaho Falls, Idaho; Nov. 14 in Twin Falls, Idaho; Nov. 15 in Boise, Idaho; Nov. 17 in Burns, Ore.; Nov. 21 in Riverside, Calif.; and Nov. 28 in Portland, Ore. For more information write the regional director, Western Regional Office, Attn: Desert Trail Study, National Park Service, P.O. Box 36063, San Francisco, Calif. 94102. Comments on the project are due Dec. 30.

WOMEN, MINORITIES & RESOURCES

"Resource Development in the Intermountain West: its Impact on Women and

Minorities" will be discussed at a meeting in Denver Nov. 2-3. Participants will include industry and union representatives; state, local and federal government officials; academicians; and members of minority and women's organizations. For more information contact the conference sponsors: the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Executive Tower, Suite 1700, 1405 Curtis St., Denver, Colo. 80202.

NATIONAL FOREST PLANNING COMMENT EXTENSION

The U.S. Forest Service has extended the comment period for the proposed National Forest System land and resource planning rules until Nov. 29. The rules are an attempt to provide integrated planning for all national forests regarding timber, wilderness, and other forest values. Copies of the proposals can be obtained from: Director of Land Management Planning, Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 2417, Washington, D.C. 20013.

IPP WILDERNESS

The Bureau of Land Management has conducted a survey to determine the wilderness potential of lands that would potentially be affected by the proposed Intermountain Power Project near Lynndyl, Utah. Sixty-one roadless areas covering 2.1 million BLM acres are being inventoried in the area. Comments should be directed to Tom Jensen, Area Manager, House Range Resource Area, Box 778, Fillmore, Utah 84631. Detailed maps and inventory findings are also available at the Fillmore office for review.

FOR SOLAR INSTRUCTORS

A handbook for organizing energy conservation and passive solar energy workshops is available from the Colorado Solar Energy Association. The 60-page manual covers planning, publicity, instructors, funding, materials, resources and course content. It costs \$3.95 plus 75 cents for postage and handling. To order it, write CSEA, P.O. Box 3608, Estes Park, Colo. 80517.

Oct. 20, 1978 — High Country News-7

Congress passes 'fantastic' park and recreation bill

by Bruce Hamilton

While many conservationists around the country spent the day after Congress adjourned bemoaning the loss of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, few noticed that the other major environmental bill of the year had passed.

In its final hours, Congress passed a \$1.2 billion National Park and Recreation Act of 1978. Drafted and guided through the Congress by Rep. Phillip Burton (D-Calif.), the bill settles several of the nation's leading environmental controversies, including the fights over Mineral King in California, Tocks Island Dam in Pennsylvania and the Island Dam in Pennsylvania and the Pine Barrens in New Jersey.

Charles Clusen of the Sierra Club hailed the passage of the parks omnibus bill as "simply fantastic." He called it "one of the most significant pieces of conservation legislation in years."

The bill establishes 12 new national park system units, eight new wild and scenic rivers, 17 new rivers to be studied for wild and scenic designation, eight new wilderness areas in national parks and five new national trails.

The bill adds the Mineral King Valley to

Sequoia National Park. Disney Enterprises had wanted to build a ski resort in the valley, but had been opposed by the Sierra Club in the courts and in Congress.

The bill declares the middle stretch of the Delaware River a national wild and scenic river, which would preclude the proposed Tocks Island Dam.

The bill creates a new national recreation area in the Santa Monica Mountains near Los Angeles and protects the Pine Barrens in New Jersey. Both are important wild lands next to the nation's largest cities.

In the Northern Rockies and Northern Great Plains the bill:

- protects the St. Joe River in Idaho and the Missouri River on the South Dakota-Nebraska border as wild and scenic rivers;

- creates a Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a Mormon Pioneer Historic Trail, and an Oregon Historic Trail;

- expands the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Idaho, the Great Sand Dunes National Monument in Colorado, and Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming;

- allows the National Park Service to

acquire the Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone National Park.

Several areas in this region were dropped from the bill passed by the House. A wild and scenic river study for the Yellowstone and Madison rivers in Montana, the Sweetwater and Yellowstone rivers in

Wyoming, and the Niobrara River in Nebraska all were dropped. Wilderness designation for parts of Grand Teton, Yellowstone and Glacier national parks also were eliminated. In addition, the Jackson Hole Scenic Area was deleted (see separate story on this page).

Jackson Hole Scenic Area bill killed

Backers of Jackson Hole Scenic Area legislation are going to have to try again next Congress. The proposal, which was deleted from the successful \$1.2 billion park bill, involved preserving the rural character of the private lands around Grand Teton National Park in Teton County, Wyo. The original House-passed bill provided \$5.25 million for a one-year study and emergency acquisition of land and easements.

The Carter administration had publicly opposed the scenic area proposal (see HCN, Aug. 25, page 12), but unspoken opposition by Sen. Cliff Hansen (R-Wyo.) also may have led to its demise. A second version of the park bill was sent from the House to the Senate without the scenic area amendment. A House Interior Committee staff

member says the scenic area was dropped "because House sponsors of the park bill were second-guessing Sen. Hansen's opposition to the provision."

Hansen had said that because he owns a ranch in Teton County he would not take a position on the scenic area proposal.

Rep. Phillip Burton (D-Calif.) attempted to save the scenic area bill by tacking it onto the Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment Act—a bill to rehabilitate the street that runs from the White House to the Capitol. The Senate refused to accept the amendment, however.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), chief sponsor of the proposal, says he will reintroduce it next year if it still has county support after the November county commissioner election.



GREAT SAND DUNES National Monument in Colorado.

Forest swaps need congressional nod

Congressional approval will be required for any Forest Service land trade of more than 6400 acres if the president signs the National Park and Recreation Act passed by Congress. Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) made the last-minute amendment which will have its greatest effect in western Montana, where alternate sections of railroad grant land and national forest are located.

The Burlington Northern Railroad has proposed exchanging 177,000 acres in the Gallatin and Beaverhead forests for land in the Flathead Lake-Swan Valley area. Such an exchange would clear the way for consideration of several wilderness areas including Spanish Peaks, Taylor-Hilgard and Hylite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn. Each area now has interspersed railroad land.

Rick Applegate, director of the Center for Balanced Transportation in Bozeman, Mont., is upset with Melcher's amendment because it "precludes the Forest Service from processing the exchange" and "imposes inflexibility on federal land management."

Melcher says he proposed the amend-

ment to bring Congress into any transaction of the magnitude of the proposed BN swap, according to the Associated Press. The Forest Service has been preparing an environmental impact statement on the exchange.

Melcher says of the Forest Service statement: "I doubt that Congress would ever approve it."

"The biggest problem with the amendment is the way it was handled. Conservationists, the railroads and the Forest Service weren't consulted," says Applegate. The abruptness of the proposal also was disturbing to the rest of the Montana congressional delegation, according to the Associated Press.

Bill Cunningham, Montana representative for the Wilderness Society, calls Melcher's amendment "a ramrod job" and says it will create an unnecessary obstacle to wilderness in the Madison Range. "We see it as seriously undercutting the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture. Some congressional oversight is appropriate, but the Congress shouldn't have to take affirmative action," Cunningham says.

The white-breasted nuthatch

Unorthodox woodland traveler

The white-breasted nuthatch, a "droll earnest little bird," according to ornithologist A. C. Bent, is perhaps best known for its unorthodox methods of going up and down trees. It travels head downwards along the trunk with a quick hitching motion, a right-angled creak in its neck as it looks directly outward from the tree. For the nuthatch this is not the awkward position it appears. It shares with squirrels the ability to stretch a foot out backwards and cling to the bark with its claws as it descends. Its bill and neck have a distinct upturning so that even in a horizontal position it appears to be looking up.



"I suspect," says ornithologist Francis H. Allen, "that by approaching his prey from above he detects insects and insect eggs in the crevices of the bark which would be hidden from another point of view. The woodpeckers and creepers can take care of the rest." Woodpeckers and creepers have their own food-finding methods but generally stay right side up using their spiny tails as props. The nuthatch by looking at things from a new angle has made a niche for himself among the other bark-gleaning woodland birds.

The adaptable white-breasted nuthatch, of the order Passeriformes, or perching birds, and of the family Sittidae, does not limit itself to insect food but eats also nuts, seeds, and suet. It is a frequent visitor at bird feeders. If food is abundant it will cache morsels in crevices or under shingles, returning to eat them later or use them as courtship offerings during mating season.

In the Rockies the white-breasted nuthatch sings from late April through the

nesting season in June. It nests from forested river bottoms to timberline but seems to be most abundant in the subalpine conifer forests. It is a cavity nester, building up a nest of small twigs and bark, characteristically lining it with fur from a dead animal. While the female incubates her large clutch of pink and brown eggs, the male feeds her. Fledgling nuthatches look like their parents with blue-grey plumage on the back and wings, a black head, white underparts, and a tinge of reddish brown along the sides.

The nuthatch is most easily spotted in autumn and winter but it is a permanent resident of the Rocky Mountain region, setting up a winter feeding territory that it patrols generally in the company of its mate. It also can be found in most other parts of the United States.

Drifting through the winter woods a pair of nuthatches communicates with each other by uttering a soft note that sounds like "hit." "It is both a soliloquizing and a conversational note and is associated as a rule with a calm mood," says ornithologist W.M. Tyler. An excited nuthatch is likely to make a sound that can be described as "quank," while its true song is a series of notes that "has been variously rendered into syllables as hah-hah-hah; tway tway; what what; too too; and whoot whoot," according to Bent.

All the utterances of the nuthatch have a nasal quality that distinguishes them from the calls of other birds and makes them one of the most familiar forest voices.

(All quotations in this article were drawn from Arthur Cleveland Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds*.)

The centerfold drawing of the white-breasted nuthatch by artist Laney Hicks is for sale as a limited signed edition print through High Country News. To order one for yourself or a gift send \$10 and the name and address of the person who is to receive it to HCN, Box K, Lander, Wyo. 82520.





White-breasted nuthatch
by Lancy Hicks

Lancy 1-1978

Miners, Alaskans, conservatives want Udall out

by Steve Auslander

TUCSON—Democrat Morris Udall has been forced to play a different game in this, his 10th and admittedly toughest, race for Congress.

Udall, the former basketball player, seems to find the game of hardball being played by his opponent irritating.

Udall is being accused of being a socialist and a big spender. Bolstered by contributions from the Republican National Committee, Arizona conservatives and a few Alaskans, his opponent, Tom Richey, is pulling no punches.

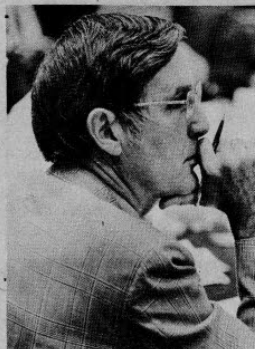
Udall's problems began about a year ago when he upset a group of small mine operators by proposing reform of the 1872 Mining Law.

The Arizona congressman proposed that instead of an automatic claim-patent system that allows miners de facto title to federal land, an extensive lease system be adopted. The small miners saw this as a threat to their operations because, they said, only big corporations would be able to afford the lease price. They began gathering signatures for a recall movement against Udall.

Udall responded by backing off. He advocated a modified claim-patent system. But the miners were mad. They said Udall was already responsible for withdrawing millions of acres of federal land from mining and that he deserved to be kicked out.

The recall election never materialized, most likely because the miners didn't get the needed signatures.

Another reason the recall didn't happen



Mountain States News Service photo

MORRIS UDALL, usually a friend of environmentalists, is facing a tough re-election bid in Arizona.

may have been that Tucson just had been through a discouraging recall election. Four Democratic city council members were bounced out of office after raising water rates by more than 30 percent. The new slate of council members raised the water rates, too, which disillusioned voters.

Not long after the small miners announced their failure to get enough signatures, the county Republican Party chairman said he would scour the political landscape to find an opponent worthy of defeat-

ing the previously unbeatable Udall.

Some political observers were surprised when it was announced that it would be Richey, a placid former state legislator and career military man. Richey had an undistinguished career in the Arizona Legislature. He headed the banking and commerce committees and had a reputation as a nice guy with an easygoing disposition.

In 1976 a colorful, personable candidate named Laird Gutterson opposed Udall. Without Republican Party support, he drew 40 percent of the vote. In the 1974 congressional election, the Republican candidate received only 38 percent—with party support.

Richey plans a trip to Alaska and has already collected some campaign cash from foes of Udall's Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. For his part, Udall is asking voters whether they want Alaska to elect their next representative.

Udall is also extolling the virtues of the seniority system, pointing out that repeatedly sending a congressman to Washington means influence for the home district. Udall's chairmanship of the House Interior Committee gives him strong sway in Congress. And while there still seems to be some leftover coolness between Udall and his former presidential opponent Jimmy Carter, the administration sometimes calls on him for support.

Udall has spent more in this campaign than in any other. He seems to be running scared.

Steve Auslander is editorial page editor of the Arizona Daily Star.



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

SECOND URANIUM MINE PROTEST. For the second time, the Wyoming Outdoor Council has protested the uranium mining permit requested by Minerals Exploration Co. The company wants to open a mine in Wyoming's Red Desert. WOC contends that the mining operation will drain the Chain of Lakes area in the desert, which is habitat for waterfowl and antelope. The state Environmental Quality Council had previously rejected the company's permit application because of a change in the radioactive mill tailings disposal plan. The most recent application and protest will now be considered at a hearing of the EQC before Oct. 31.

MONTANA NUKE INITIATIVE ALLOWED. The Montana Supreme Court has ruled that Montanans should be allowed to vote Nov. 7 on a ballot initiative setting stringent standards for the siting of nuclear power plants in the state. William Wenzel, a private citizen and member of a group opposing the initiative, had requested that the referendum — known as Initiative 80 — not be permitted on the ballot. Wenzel claimed that the state had no jurisdiction over nuclear issues and that the initiative was actually a ban on nuclear power in Montana. The court did not rule on the constitutionality of the initiative, saying only that "Initiative 80 is validly proposed for adoption or rejection by the electors."

NORTHWEST ENERGY BILL DIES. A controversial measure to expand the influence of the Bonneville Power Administration in the Northwest failed to pass the Congress this session. Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), a supporter of the bill in the Senate, said that the Senate could have passed the legislation, but that it would have died in the House, where it has failed to be reported out of two committees that are considering it. A spokesman for Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D-Wash.), House sponsor of the bill, said that the House was "bogged down in how much the bill should emphasize conserving power or developing power." Jackson says the bill will be introduced again in January.



URANIUM EXPLORATION DELAY ASKED. The Colorado Water Quality Control Board is asking the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Land Use Commission to halt uranium exploration in Park County, Colo. The board is concerned about the effect of the exploration on groundwater in the county, which supplies drinking water for about half of the state's population. The board is asking both agencies to conduct environmental studies before exploration can continue. About 10,000 claims have been staked in Park County during the past year, according to the Rocky Mountain News.



The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

JAPANESE SCRUBBER PERFORMANCE LAUDED. Hard on the heels of his proposal to tighten sulfur dioxide emission standards, Environmental Protection Agency administrator Douglas Costle has thrown down the gauntlet to the nation's utilities. Costle says that the companies should emulate Japan's utilities in their application of scrubber technology to the SO₂ emissions problem. Representatives of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Electric Power Research Institute as well as EPA recently returned from a tour of Japanese power plants equipped with scrubbers. The average rate of SO₂ removal at the Japanese facilities was 93 percent with the average reliability of the units registering at 98 percent. These levels are substantially higher than those achieved by U.S. scrubbers. No "appreciable" difference was noted between the performance of oil- and coal-fired plants equipped with scrubbers.

URANIUM CLEANUP BILL PASSES. Legislation to pay for the cleanup of radioactive tailings from uranium mills passed in the closing hours of Congress. The bill calls for the federal government to pay 90 percent of the cleanup cost of mills that produced uranium ore for the federal government. States would pay the remaining 10 percent. The estimated cost is \$200 million. Environmental impact statements

would be prepared for each cleanup operation. The most probable disposal method is to haul the tailings to remote areas where they will be buried in pits and capped with concrete.

Abandoned tailings sites eligible for the cleanup funds are Cannonsburg, Pa.; Grand Junction, Durango, Rifle, Gunnison, Naturita, Maybell and Slick Rock, Colo.; Shiprock and Ambrosia, N.M.; Riverton and Glenrock, Wyo.; Tuba City and Monument Valley, Ariz.; Lakeview, Ore.; Falls City, Texas; Lowman, Idaho; and Salt Lake City, Green River and Mexican Hat, Utah.

Two New Mexico mill sites still in operation — Bluewater and Milan — would be studied to determine if the companies should be required to pay cleanup costs.

SAVE SUMMER HEAT FOR WINTER. A Johns Hopkins University researcher claims to have developed a system for storing the heat of summer in underground water aquifers for use in the winter. W. Richard Powell, a senior scientist at the university's applied physics laboratory, says that energy consumed for heating and cooling could be reduced by as much as 80%

using his system. An underground water well would store 60 degree Fahrenheit water, which had been pumped in during the summer when warm water was plentiful. The heat from that water could be gradually extracted by heat pumps, producing heat and cooling the stored water. The cooler water would then be put in another storage system for use as air conditioning in the summer months, according to the Washington Star.

NUKES TOPPLE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT. Sweden's first non-socialist government in nearly 50 years resigned after it was unable to reach agreement on a nuclear power policy. The coalition of Liberals, conservatives, and Centrists was forced to resign when agreement could not be reached on the construction of two new nuclear power plants to join the six already in operation. The head of the Centrist Party had promised to end Sweden's nuclear power program while the two other coalition members supported reliance on nuclear power. A new government will emerge through formation of a new ruling coalition or through new parliamentary elections.

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Oct. 20, 1978 — High Country News-11

Indians oppose uranium mining in New Mexico

by Dede Feldman

BERNALILLO, N.M.—Speaking in Keres, a language used by several Indian tribes in New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley, leaders of the Southwest's largest Indian Pueblo recently opposed uranium mining here.

"We are not opposed to all development," Ernest Lovato, executive director of Santa Domingo Pueblo, told a late-September meeting of residents of the small mountain communities that dot the valley. "We are not opposed to working with the non-Indian society, but we are opposed to the mindless destruction of our mother earth. Our people lived here for thousands of years in harmony with the earth. In less than 150 years, the vested, wealthy mining corporations of non-Indian society have destroyed and polluted the earth in a way that is hard to imagine. Many times this

land use ordinance that would prohibit mining activity.

What worries SEAC members most is the effect of the Union Carbide mine may have on the arid valley's most precious commodity—water.

Residents of Placitas and nearby towns, all of whom rely on wells, are afraid that the level of the groundwater will drop as mining companies remove water from the area to be mined. They also fear losing large quantities of water to settling ponds and other ore processing facilities in the mill.

Another fear expressed by members of Santa Domingo and nearby San Felipe pueblo concerns radiological contamination of surface water running into and through the Rio Grande.

The Rio Grande has special significance to the pueblos that line its valley.

"From time immemorial there was the sky, the earth and the flow of water from north to south in the Rio Grande," Lupe Pena, a Santa Domingo councilman, said at the meeting. "It was beautiful and the Indians drank from it—but now times have changed and we're cautious about drinking from it."

Lovato, also a Santa Domingo councilman, said that the tribe feared for its livestock and crops, which could be affected by contaminated water from mining and milling operations.

At present, Union Carbide has no groundwater discharge plan, no radioactive materials license and no surface water discharge permit. According to the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division, the state agency charged with regulating the uranium industry, too little water is being discharged from the exploratory holes to warrant a discharge permit. However, Union Carbide will be required to submit a discharge plan before the mine goes into full operation sometime in 1985, the spokesperson said.

"We have real doubts about the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division and its ability to regulate a mining operation," Jim Mackenzie of SEAC says. "We feel the best way to control the operation is not to have it at all."

The Environmental Improvement Division has never refused to license a uranium operation, according to Bennett. But it re-

cently sent the plans of one company back for revision. Bennett also says that the division is proposing strengthening additions to state radiation protection laws.

"Our regulatory authority is not really adequate," Bennett says. "It's simply a matter of money and resources. We don't have sufficient funds or staff."

Other concerns of citizens in the area go beyond the Union Carbide mine itself. Leary of repeating the experience of New Mexico boomtowns like Grants, members of SEAC wonder whether the mill that Union Carbide proposes near Placitas will stimulate development of a uranium field running down the valley from Santa Fe to Albuquerque. The discovery six months ago that Lone Star Mining Corp. was planning to reopen its La Bajada mine south of Santa Fe has convinced many residents of the area that the mining industry has big plans for the area.

"Fears of a boom in the valley are unwarranted," Bennett says, however. "The

uranium field just won't support it." Officials of the Santa Domingo Pueblo say all the new mining developments came as a total surprise to them.

"No one consulted with us—no one from the corporations, no one from the BIA (the Bureau of Indian Affairs), no one from the state or county," said Pena, his voice shaking with anger. "They assume they can go on digging, and we won't find out."

Pena said his people have additional concerns—the desecration of Indian graves in the area by mining prospectors and the sale of Indian artifacts.

"We need a partnership," Ramos Pacheco, another Santa Domingo leader, told the group at the community meeting. "You have a great philosophy, don't back off; together we can offset the mining interests that threaten to destroy our land."

Union Carbide's Kacey says he can understand the concern of those living in the area.

"They live in the country and do not want to see it destroyed," he says. But he thinks Union Carbide could run the mine and mill without disturbing them.

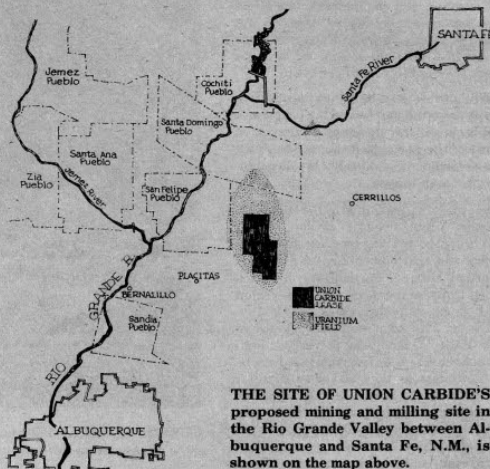
William Bennett from the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division (EID) says that he does not envision a significant impact from the mine's operation either ground or surface water.

"But," Bennett says "whether the Rio Grande will be affected all depends on the outcome of adjudication of two important company challenges to both state and federal water quality standards."

Seven companies are challenging the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission's existing groundwater regulations. These regulations set limits on water pollution and require companies to prove that their discharges do not damage water quality beyond a standard set by the state.

The companies are also challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Element System. These regulations require a permit for water coming from a "point" source and set specific limits on the amount of radium, selenium and other radioactive substances coming out of a discharge pipe.

Bennett says that the existing groundwater regulations will remain in effect during the court challenge, however.



THE SITE OF UNION CARBIDE'S proposed mining and milling site in the Rio Grande Valley between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, N.M., is shown on the map above.

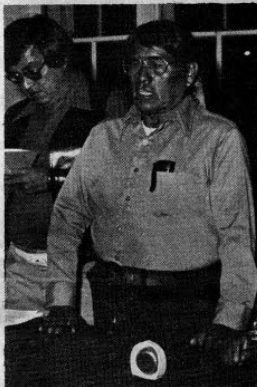


Photo by Jim Mackenzie

LUPE PENA of the Santa Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico: "No one consulted with us — no one from the corporations, no one from the BIA, no one from the state or county. They assume they can go on digging, and we won't find out."

destruction of the earth has occurred here in the state. This is continuing even today."

Lovato was referring to plans for a new uranium mine and mill to be operated by Union Carbide on state land 25 miles northeast of Albuquerque, N.M. The mine would be one of several mines that could affect the Rio Grande Valley's irrigated agriculture, grazing, archaeological sites and numerous Indian pueblos.

Although Union Carbide says that it does not yet know whether the mining will be by means of shaft, open pit or in-situ leaching, it has already spent between \$1.5 and \$2 million for exploratory work on the project, including drilling 800 exploratory holes near Placitas, N.M.

Residents of Placitas and other nearby communities have banded together to form the Sandoval Environmental Action Community (SEAC), an organization that now includes Santa Domingo Pueblo as well as local white artists, writers and crafts people. The group is circulating a petition calling for a moratorium on mining and milling in the Rio Grande Valley between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. It is also pressuring candidates for state and local office to take a stand on uranium mining in the area and pushing for a county

Aboriginals' fate also tied to uranium

"We've got to ask—is the brief flash of atomic electricity worth cultural genocide?" Peter Hayes, an Australian, asked New Mexicans gathered here to oppose a local uranium mine.

What he was talking about was not just the life and land of American Indians facing uranium mining here. Instead he was also referring to the remaining aboriginal peoples of Australia who are sitting on 80 percent of the "free" world's uncommitted uranium.

Hayes said there were many parallels between the American Indian situation and that of the aboriginals, including a deep concern felt by each for the land and the graves of their ancestors. But unlike American Indians, Hayes said the aboriginals have few legal rights. They were not granted Au-

stralian citizenship until 1967 and are not considered a sovereign people.

In addition, Hayes said there are strict laws forbidding criticism of Australia's uranium policy under the Atomic Energy Act. Under the act, people could be imprisoned without trial for opposing nuclear energy development, and the army can be used to smash anti-nuclear demonstrations. In spite of these restrictions, Hayes said the fight against uranium mining is continuing in Australia. He called for the crossing of cultural barriers to defeat multinational energy corporations.

"This struggle is not just about scientific facts and the environment," he said. "It's about people and their right to decide."

"If you don't fight, you lose," he said.

"This struggle is not just about scientific facts and the environment. It's about people and their right to decide."

12-High Country News — Oct. 20, 1978

Woolgrowers, environmentalists find common ideas

Sheepmen and environmentalists often find themselves on different sides of the fence. However, a group of them met together last month in Idaho to try to make peace among their warring factions.

While there were some complaints from environmentalists about the conference's emphasis on the sheepmen's perspective, many of the participants seemed to think the conference could lead to broader support for both groups.

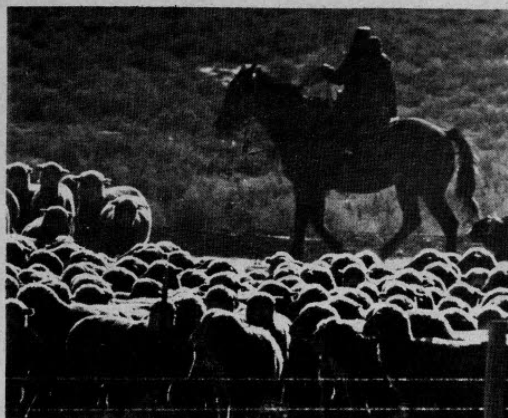
The meeting, sponsored by the Northern Rockies Action Group of Helena, Mont., was designed to bring together sheep producers and environmentalists in a relaxed informal setting. Participants visited a sheep camp and enjoyed charcoal-broiled lamb chops, sourdough bread and California wine. The lodge where they stayed in Sun Valley, Idaho, was formerly a bed-ground where sheep had rested by the tens of thousands as they trailed to summer pastures in the Sawtooth Mountains. In the 1930s, a nearby town, Ketchum, was the largest shipping point for lambs outside of Sydney, Australia, according to Laird Noh, an Idaho sheepman and chairman of the environmental committee of the National Woolgrowers Association.

During the two and a half day conference, the participants agreed upon 10 common goals. While the goals are very general, several of the participants said they represent a significant achievement. To arrive at the goals, the participants first outlined their areas of mutual interest.

According to Noh, everyone agreed there were too many sheep on the Western ranges in the early days when the Sun Valley area sheep production was at its peak and that the land suffered as a result.

Both environmentalists and sheep producers also agreed that their utmost concern was the future productivity of the land. "Each has the same long range vision for the region: a high quality environment with a prosperous economy dependent upon a properly managed renewable resource base," Noh says. The participants went on to say that protection of wild lands and conservation of natural resources served this common objective.

According to several participants, the understanding reached on wild lands was the most significant achievement of the conference. Environmentalists agreed to support the continuation of grazing in clas-



SHEEP GRAZING, a legitimate use of public lands, according to a conference of environmentalists and sheep producers.

sified wilderness areas, as provided for in the Wilderness Act. Sheep producers agreed to support the "satisfactory conclusion" of the U.S. Forest Service's RARE II (second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) and to eliminate excessive roading and uncontrolled use of off-road vehicles on public lands.

Noh says that if more woolgrowers trusted that wilderness advocates would support grazing in wilderness areas, then the woolgrowers could support wilderness designations.

"If more woolgrowers trusted that wilderness advocates would support grazing in wilderness areas, then the woolgrowers could support wilderness designations."

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Noh says that if more woolgrowers trusted that wilderness advocates would support grazing in wilderness areas, then the woolgrowers could go farther and support wilderness designations.

One participant, Toby Cooper of Defenders of Wildlife, was unhappy with the progress the group made toward resolving the predator control question. The group agreed to support selective controls of pre-

dators (methods that affect only the target species).

Cooper agrees sheep producers need to control predation. But he wanted the group to state that methods of control should not be lethal to wildlife, including predators. Several such methods are now being tested, including a way to give coyotes an aversion to the taste of sheep, Cooper says.

Many ranchers at the meeting support use of 1080, a poison that has been banned from use on public lands and from interstate shipment since 1972. Noh says, "If there were more trust by wildlife advocates that woolgrowers really wouldn't broadcast poison over the landscape if 1080 were approved on a limited basis for coyote control, the 1080 research would move quickly ahead."

Cooper also wants federal predator control funds limited to those sheep producers who meet certain standards for sheep management—such as a certain number of herders per herd, lambing sheds to protect newborns, etc. He said this met with some resistance from ranchers at the conference who didn't want the government telling them what to do.

"We've got more work to do on the predator issue," he says.

added that environmentalists may sometimes aggravate the problem, and he asked that it be reported to him if they do.

As agreed upon at the conference, the committee will be working to support:

—"Efforts to ensure agriculture's crucial role as a renewable resource industry in the region's economy;

—"Ecologically sound range management policies to enhance range rehabilitation, productivity, and ecosystem diversity;

—"Protection of water resources to ensure sufficient quality and quantity for agricultural, fish and wildlife, and domestic needs;

—"Grazing of sheep on public lands, consistent with the maintenance and integrity of range ecosystems;

—"Public policies that ensure that the family farm and ranch will continue to be an economic reality;

—"Only those urban and industrial

growth policies which protect agricultural land;

—"Identification and rapid implementation of selective controls of depredation upon domestic livestock by predators, as well as sheep management methods. Both are necessary, should be economically feasible, and have the least possible impact upon ecological systems;

—"Energy conservation, the development of renewable energy sources and other energy resource policies which promote a healthy environment and a viable agricultural economy;

—"The continuation of livestock grazing in classified wilderness areas as provided by law;

—"Elimination of excessive roading and uncontrolled use of offroad vehicles on public lands."

The Northern Rockies Action Group started bringing environmentalists together with sheep producers in 1976, but this is its first meeting involving representatives of several national groups.

Cooper says this conference had a lot of potential and lived up to some of it.

"Whenever you have differences of opinion, it's good to get together and get to know each other's problems. The worst thing you can do is have faceless people you're fighting," he says.

Those present included representatives of the Montana Woolgrowers Association, American Sheep Producers Council, Powder River Basin Resource Council, Idaho Woolgrowers Association, Sierra Club, Public Lands Institute, Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Trout Unlimited, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oregon Environmental Council, Friends of the Earth, National Woolgrowers Association, Wyoming Woolgrowers Association, Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Woolgrowers Association, Idaho Conservation League, Montana Environmental Information Center, Idaho Wildlife Federation, Wyoming Outdoor Council, National Wildlife Federation, Montana Land Reliance, National Audubon Society and The Wilderness Society.



Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world



LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

The fellows who run the Park Service
Make me increasingly nervous.
They keep the grass groomed
And tourists rest roomed
But what do they do for the purist?

LEAD HAZARDS. The Environmental Protection Agency says that lead in the atmosphere may be more harmful than originally believed. The agency is instituting more stringent standards on lead emissions by cars and industries. The new rule says that lead concentrations may not exceed 1.5 micrograms per cubic meter. According to EPA, most cities will be able to meet the standard because lead is already being phased out of gasoline. The agency expects that some industries, such as lead smelters in populated areas, may find it

impossible economically to comply, however. The rule was developed in response to a 1975 lawsuit brought by the Natural Resources Defense Council. States will determine their own timetables for compliance, subject to EPA review.

"BIOLOGICAL HOLOCAUST." Worldwide crowding of species with attendant increases in disease, predation and starvation may eliminate 10 percent to 20 percent of the earth's fauna by the year 2000, according to Michael Soule, a University of California professor who recently addressed the first international congress of research in conservation biology. Speciation, the process by which genetic diversity is engendered, will halt with the crowding of many of the earth's remaining species on isolated preserves, according to Soule. Soule's thesis was reiterated at the congress by a number of experts, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.



Western Roundup



Oct. 20, 1978
13

Compromise reached on wild horses in range improvement bill

Congress has passed and sent to the president a range improvement bill that the director of the Bureau of Land Management, Frank Gregg, considers "the most important piece of legislation for BLM land since the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934."

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.), includes a controversial wild horse and burro section. It also contains a grazing fee formula that the Carter administration had opposed, but the president is expected to sign it.

To improve the condition of the range by encouraging people to participate in the Adopt-a-Horse program, the bill provides for the title to be transferred from federal government to individuals who adopt wild

horses or burros after a one-year probationary period. A maximum of four titles can be transferred to any individual.

Horse protection and humane groups that oppose the section say there has not been enough research to determine how many horses or burros are "excess." Under the new legislation, the secretary of Interior is required to pay independent researchers to study the population dynamics of the wild herds, their dietary and habitat overlaps with livestock and wildlife, and how best to manage herds in the future. The National Academy of Sciences is to appoint a panel including representatives of horse protection groups, wildlife groups, BLM, the Forest Service

and others. The panel will design the research program.

Other sections of the bill provide a \$365 million increase in range improvement funds over the next 20 years and set guidelines for what range projects may proceed under existing court orders.

The new grazing fee formula would allow the charge for grazing on public lands to rise or fall depending upon economic conditions facing the livestock industry. Some environmental groups had opposed this formula, saying the fee should reflect the going rate for grazing on private land.

Because of the fee formula, the National Wildlife Federation has asked the president to veto the bill. June Van Dersal of NWF says the government should get fair

market value for all its resources—timber, minerals and forage.

The Idaho Statesman says, however, that the formula is a fair way to resolve the problem of raising fees. "While the grazing industry legislation would indeed continue subsidization of Western range management and therefore the livestock industry, it would reduce that subsidy whenever possible without inflicting undue economic hardship on the industry."

In announcing passage of the bill, Roncalio paid tribute to a coalition of seven major environmental and agricultural groups in Wyoming that had supported the bill. "It was their strong endorsement of my bill that helped win broad bipartisan, urban-rural backing for the measure," he said.



THE GREAT BEAR WILDERNESS will provide a link between the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park.

Great Bear — conservationists grumble

Legislation to create a Great Bear Wilderness in Montana has passed Congress. But in the rush to secure approval before the Congress adjourned, the bill was weakened in ways that have left Montana environmentalists grumbling.

Wilderness advocates have fought for many years to preserve the Great Bear, which includes the wild lands between the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park. The region's most respected inhabitant — the grizzly — gives the wilderness its name.

Montana conservationists had originally proposed a 387,000 acre Great Bear Wilderness. The Carter administration recommended 360,000 acres — 294,000 acres for the Great Bear Wilderness and 66,000 acres for additions to the east side of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The House deleted 8,500 acres from Carter's proposal and the Senate slashed an additional 4,800 acres. The cuts were for snowmobile routes, potential power line corridors, and exploration for hard rock minerals and oil and gas.

Bob Kiesling of the Environmental Information Center in Helena, Mont., calls the Senate's deletions "very significant" and unnecessary. He says the House had already made major concessions and that there was no need for Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) to propose further cuts.

Bill Cunningham, Montana representative for the Wilderness Society, calls the House's deletions "fair and reasonable." However, he is completely opposed to the Senate's Morrison Creek-Crescent Creek

cut, which he says Melcher "steamrollered through with no consultation."

Cunningham says the cut, which Melcher said was made for snowmobile use, means an intrusion on the Middle Fork of the Flathead drainage, which he regards as the heart of the Great Bear. "It was unnecessary and undesirable but we were forced to accept it because of the late hour that it was brought up by Sen. Melcher," Cunningham says. "We hope that eventually Congress will reconsider its hasty action and put the area back in the wilderness where it belongs."

Ida and her cousins flew safely south

A whooping crane named Ida flew into the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico early in October. She made the journey from the Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho with a group of sandhill cranes. The Fish and Wildlife Service hopes that eight other whoopers in its experimental flock will complete the same journey. The agency started the flock three years ago with eggs from Canada taken from the only established flock in the wild. The eggs were placed in the nests of sandhill cranes, which raised them for the first year.

When the whoopers are five years old, officials in charge of the program hope the birds will mate and add to the wild population of whoopers.

CUP unwise, according to Audubon study

A group called Citizens for a Responsible Central Utah Project claims the water project for which it is named will cost more than the project is worth.

The group bases its claim on a study funded by the National Audubon Society and carried out by economist Thomas M. Power of the University of Montana. Power cited 11 areas of "errors and padding" that resulted in the Bureau of Reclamation's cost-benefit ratio of 1:1. The actual ratio, according to Power, is 1:32. Among the costs identified in the study are diversion of Indian water away from Indian lands and harm done to small family farms.

Lynn S. Ludlow of the Central Utah Water Conservation District calls the study an "inaccurate and inadequate analysis." Power's information, according to Ludlow, was obtained from environmental groups which "have set out to destroy the CUP." Neither the Bureau of Reclamation nor the Utah Water Conservancy District were consulted, he said.

In its response, the citizens group stated that Ludlow's statements were not surprising, since "attempts have been made in the

past to discredit anything which disagrees with the Bureau of Reclamation on the CUP." Fred Reimherr, co-chairman of the group criticized the water district for refusing to discuss alternatives to CUP. The district, according to Reimherr, is using scare tactics by saying that modifying the CUP will cause a water shortage.



Citizens Against Toxic Herbicides Defense Fund



CITIZENS AGAINST TOXIC HERBICIDES is offering a "Lunatic Fringe" certificate for sale. Included with the certificate are a brochure with facts about the phenoxy herbicides and reference lists. The certificate was inspired by Roger Sandquist of the U.S. Forest Service, who said that most opposition to herbicides is coming from "a lunatic fringe." Donations may be sent to CATH at 2737 25A St., Clarkston, Wash. 99403. Proceeds will support a lawsuit against Forest Service herbicide practices.

14-High Country News — Oct. 20, 1978



by Myra Connell

As we nine sisters and brothers grew up on the Wyoming homestead, there was little conventional beauty in our lives. A two-room house sheltering so many has space for only dire necessities. But we had the outdoors and somehow came to love and appreciate everything that it had to offer—wild flowers, birds, sunset and sunrise, rainbows, moonlight on snow.

Now as I rest in my rocking chair by the front window of my very ordinary house, there is little immediately apparent that could be considered beautiful. My view is limited by a paved street and an ordinary house on the other side. Huge willow trees half-smother the house, leaving a mere glimpse of sky. Obviously, such surround-



ings would be considered drab and unattractive by usual standards.

However, the same willow trees that shut off the view filter the golden sunrise into amazing patterns. When the full moon rises, its light leaps and dances among the branches like flames of mysterious bonfires. The willows themselves are beautiful the year around—first to show green, then flashing silvery undersides in summer and dusty yellow in autumn. In winter they take on an unnamable color that is almost apricot when the bare branches stand out against a clear, blue sky. The large trunks form an interesting shadow pattern on the house when the sun is low in the west.

My neighbor has tall, crimson hollyhocks that catch the morning sun and glow like rubies. Once in a while I spy a hummingbird feeding on them. Although I cannot distinguish the bird's colors from this distance, I enjoy the swift movements.

My neighbor has apple trees, too. I enjoy both the blossoms and the fruit, even

though it is too wormy to be edible. The apples are colorful, and I can't see the worms from here.

Numerous other sights delight my eyes as the year's changes come and go.

From my front porch I see a rare rainbow, arching across the east—one end resting on the butte to the south, the other on the hills to the north. (I wonder which end harbors the pot of gold.)

With rain, the pavement changes from gray to shining purple and at night reflects

street lights and a sign board in a many-hued spectrum. Slender twigs of a white weeping birch near the street light form a spiderweb of reflected light when wet by a shower.

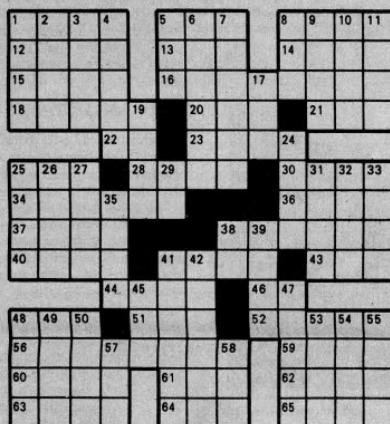
Forty-nine Brewer's blackbirds strut about on the lawn picking up something—impossible to tell what it is.

The sights that crown all the others come in the dead of winter when a full moon reflects on fresh snow. It evokes a multitude of feelings—nostalgia, homesickness, joy, sorrow, awe, and vague thoughts of half-recollected romance. Fantastic icicles shimmer and gleam from the eaves—fairy castles hanging upside down.

Another type of fairyland appears when a rare fog clothes every tiny branch and twig with frost crystals.

Beauty, like gold, is where you find it.

CONSERVATION CROSSWORDS



American Deserts

by Philip White

ACROSS

1. Only tree of its type native to U.S.: California fan --
5. Adaptation for flight: w---
8. Marshy depression or meadow: ---e
12. "Lay on, Macduff. And damn'd be him who first cries, 'Hold, ----gh!'"
13. Conifer found high in desert mountains
14. Rique
15. Presently
16. Oldest known terrestrial arthropod; a desert hazard
18. Materials sculpted into desert hills by wind's saltation
20. --- and cry
21. Long-eared desert rodent predator: kit --
22. Middle two letters of 40-across family
23. Being (L)
25. HCN profit-makers
28. Poisonous element: ---nic
30. High school event
34. Subject of Mary Austin's "The Land of Little Rain"
36. Coyote's trot
37. Shape of killdeer eggs
38. "Century" plants of amaryllis family
40. Utah state flower
41. Vase-shaped pitcher
43. Naval officer: ---ign
44. Bangkok resident
46. Initials of "The Big Sky" author
48. Initials of "the buck stops here" president
51. Leer: ---e
52. Joshua tree is one
56. Scarlet-flowered, usually leafless stick plant of Sonoran Desert
59. Breakfast in bed item.
60. Arizona state tree (with 63 across)
61. A long time
62. A nodule of stone having cavity lined with crystals: f---
63. V--- (with 60 across)
64. "But --- months dead" —Hamlet
65. In debt

DOWN

1. Mesquite, catclaw, acacia, lysiloma are leguminosae, or ---
2. Lady in "The King and I"
3. Arctic-nester
4. Last name of the coati
5. ---, and/or but
6. Positions in an ecosystem
7. Sagebrush strutter
8. Orme Dam is proposed for this Arizona water project (abbr.)
9. Orphan
10. Song of 26 down (2 words)
11. Bobcat is one
17. The thing (law)
19. Goat, Serb or Pole
24. Black, crested Arizona mistletoe eater: phainop---
25. --- and Andy
26. Mourning, white-winged or Inca
27. ---bark, a hickory
29. Musical syllable
31. Wander
32. "I take to the --- road" —Whitman
33. Esau sold birthright for this much pottage
35. Quite a few (2 wds.)
38. Initials of poet Housman
39. --- joy, or hawk or flycatcher
41. Young of *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, our national symbol
42. Beaver food
45. The manse: --- polloi (Gk.)
47. Large hawk
48. "All ---- abandon, ye who enter here" —Dante
49. Dung beetle: ---ab
50. "The half was not ---- me"
53. Smaller than raven
54. A bum lamb
55. "the ---- have it"
57. Pedal digit
58. John Lennon's friend: Yoko --



Myra Connell

Ghost-like designs of the lovely artist, Myra, swirling onto the pages of this book. They are drawings of animals and birds, and they tell the story of the desert. When the sun is low in the west, the desert is a land of magic and mystery. Myra's drawings are a treasure to have.

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Oct. 20, 1978 — High Country News-15

Weakened Endangered Species Act passes

In the last hour of the 95th Congress, Congress reauthorized the Endangered Species Act. The legislation, which extends protection to endangered species for 18 months, contains several amendments opposed by environmentalists.

According to Liz Kaplan of Friends of the Earth, the most serious weakening amendment to the act is the mechanism by which proposed projects may be exempted from the act. Under the new law, a seven-member exemption committee has been set up to review conflicts and determine whether the project can go ahead, even if the species will be exterminated. Five of the seven committee members must vote in favor of the exemption. The committee members are: the secretaries of Interior, Agriculture and the Army; the administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors; and the governor of the state affected by the project.

In addition, any individual or company that is denied a permit for construction of a project primarily on the basis of the Endangered Species Act may apply to this seven-member committee for an exemption. Kaplan says, "Allowing private party access to the exemption process is a serious weakening of the act."

The new act also made several changes that relate to critical habitat designations, that is, the setting aside of the land, air and water necessary for a species' existence. In designating new critical habitat, the Secretary of Interior may consider the economic impacts of the designation. If he determines that the economic benefits of not designating an area as critical habitat outweigh the benefits, he may exclude all or part of the area from the designation.

In addition, critical habitat may only be designated if a species is endangered in the "essential" portion of its range. In the past, designation was allowed if the area constituted a "significant" portion of the range of an endangered species.

Kaplan says that this could present problems for a number of species, including the grizzly bear. "This may mean that, if the grizzly bear expands its range from the current area around Yellowstone Park, it couldn't be protected in the area that it has re-established itself because it is not an essential part of its range," Kaplan says.

In other portions of the act, two controversial dams — Grayrocks in Wyoming and Tellico in Tennessee — were given special "partial exemptions" (see adjacent story on Grayrocks.) Also, invertebrate species are now extended less protection than vertebrates, in that independent populations of invertebrates would no

longer be regarded as separate species.

Although environmentalists say the act has been weakened, they have applauded new provisions that require the secretary of Interior to devise recovery plans for endangered species and federal agencies to carry them out. In addition, before construction contracts are issued for new federal projects, an assessment must be completed to determine if any endangered species would be affected by the project.

Many congress members and lobbyists

thought the amendments wouldn't be passed and, consequently, that the extension wouldn't be given because so little time was left for action. The full House didn't begin consideration of the act until 1 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 14. The conference committee of House and Senate members met most of the night Saturday, and House conferees threatened many times to abandon the effort unless an exemption were granted for both Tellico and Grayrocks dams, according to a Senate staff member. The final bill was passed Sunday by both houses.



Hawaiian Stilt

Congress passes bill to help Grayrocks Dam

Prompted by Wyoming Congressman Teno Roncalio, Congress has agreed to an amendment to the Endangered Species Act that may lead to an exemption for Grayrocks Dam in Wyoming.

While endangered species were only one of several concerns expressed by U.S. District Court Judge Warren Urbom when he said earlier this month that work should be stopped on the dam, the amendment may have a crucial impact on the project.

Grayrocks is part of a 1,500 megawatt power project being built near Wheatland, Wyo., by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and other utilities.

As passed by Congress, the amendment provides for an arbitration committee to weigh the benefits of the project against its effect on the endangered whooping crane within 30 days. The dam will affect the flow of the Platte River, which may destroy critical habitat for the cranes.

According to Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has promised to complete its biological study on whooping crane habitat along the Platte within 60 days instead of three years, which it previously said would be

necessary for the study. Wallop, who was a member of the conference committee, opposed Roncalio's amendment.

To avoid further delays, Wallop and other conference committee members require the arbitration committee to act within 30 days on both Grayrocks and the Tellico Dam in Tennessee, which was included in the same amendment. If no action is taken within 90 days, the dam would be automatically exempted from the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

The arbitration committee, as provided for in another amendment, will be composed of the secretaries of Interior, Agriculture and the Army; the administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors; and the governor of the state affected by the project.

This committee must decide whether the benefits of the dam clearly outweigh the benefits of alternative courses of action that would protect the whooping crane and its critical habitat. The amendment also says the Army Corps of Engineers, the In-

terior Department and the Rural Electrification Administration "shall require modification" of the project if it is necessary to protect the whooping cranes and their habitat.

Roncalio introduced the amendment partly because of his concern for the more than 2000 workers who will be affected if work stops on the project. Judge Urbom has issued a stay, which postpones his order halting construction, to give parties to the lawsuit time to file briefs. The stay expires Oct. 24.

Roncalio also is concerned that the state of Nebraska and environmental groups are using the Endangered Species Act to "disrupt long-settled adjudication of Platte River water rights." He says an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation admitted he wasn't as concerned about the species act as he was about getting water for Nebraska agriculture.

STATE FILES AS FRIEND

The state of Wyoming has asked the judge not to require a "mass shutdown" while the case is being considered in appeals court. Wyoming would prefer to have construction continue on the dam and the power plant, arguing that only the filling of the reservoir would cause irreparable harm to the environment, according to the *Casper Star-Tribune*. Urbom had said construction work on the dam should stop and had blocked the REA from guaranteeing the utility's loans, an action which might stop construction of the power plant.

The state filed the legal motion primarily because of concern for the construction workers and the other people of the Wheatland area. It said, "This court should balance the equities involved in granting injunctive relief against the injury stemming from the granting of that relief, not only to the defendants but to innocent third parties, which (Wyoming) represents."

Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler says the unemployment rate in Platte County could rise from 2.8 percent to a minimum of 23.3 percent. He points out that many social services would be affected if all the construction stopped. He noted that the utility, whose REA loans are in jeopardy, had in turn guaranteed loans for the schools. Herschler also said Wyoming consumers and others will suffer a shortage of energy due to the delays.

Construction has been completed on 50 percent of the first 500 megawatt unit of the power plant, 30 percent of the second unit and five percent of the third. The dam and reservoir are about 25 percent complete.

Theoretically, the judge could require the utility to modify the design of the plant to use less water.



Rocky Flats Truth Force faces trial

Nov. 13 is the trial date for 60 of the 165 protesters who have been blocking access to the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Colorado. The Rocky Flats Truth Force, the group responsible for the protest, hopes to build a successful defense around Colorado's "choice of evils" statute, which allows acquittal for crimes committed to protect others from danger.

The Truth Force, based in Boulder, plans to introduce radiation experts as witnesses

to support its contention that the weapons plant presents a health hazard to Denver-area residents.

The protesters are to be represented by a dozen lawyers, headed by Ed Sherman. All are donating their time. Meanwhile, the Truth Force plans to continue its activities, including maintaining the teepees that line the railroad line to the plant.

Carter wins project cuts in public works bill

In the rush before recess Congress and President Carter reached a compromise agreement on the public works funding bill that Carter had vetoed. The legislation did not contain funding for the six water projects to which Carter had objected. Construction money was deleted for 11 other projects, although planning money was retained.

Three projects that will not receive funding are in the West — Narrows and Fruitland Mesa in Colorado and the Savery-Pot Hook project on the Wyoming-Colorado border. Of the 11 projects for which only

planning money was retained four are located in Western states — Burlington Dam in North Dakota, the Animas-LaPlata project in Colorado, and the Uintah and Upalco units of the Central Utah Project.

One argument that Carter apparently did not win was his proposal that Congress provide one-shot funding for future water projects. It has been congressional practice to provide construction funds as needed on a yearly basis, rather than providing all the money needed to complete the project.

Carter contends that this year-to-year funding hides the true cost of the projects.

However, retiring Rep. Frank Evans (D-Colo.) says that the full funding proposal would be "damn poor policy," according to the *Denver Post*. Evans says "Thereafter, the funds for public works would be totally under the control of the president. It would provide an unacceptable amount of leverage to any president who might want to use the funding of public works as a political weapon."

Congress has agreed to hold hearings on the full funding proposal next year, however observers have little hope that the concept will be approved.

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Hot-spring tomatoes boost 'non-profit' cattle ranch

by Elise Dirlam

Give Betty Countryman 1,000 acres, and she'll turn them into a wildlife sanctuary. Give her an artesian hot spring, and she'll grow enough tomatoes to supply a supermarket.

The five-foot-tall, energetic, copper-haired woman and her husband, John, share their Lyons Valley, Wyo., ranch not only with the cattle, horses and chickens they raise. They encourage native wildlife to join them, too.

Animals including wild ducks and geese, bald and golden eagles, prairie dogs, coyotes, beavers, badgers, snakes, an occasional mountain lion or scorpion and even an imported alligator have thrived there. The warm water invites them and Countryman welcomes them.

Betty, John and their three children moved into the property's 84-year-old log house in 1963. Betty had grown up in Omaha, Neb., and Buffalo, N.Y. When she married John, she gave up city life to join him on the original Countryman ranch south of Jeffrey City, where the Countryman family had built the first irrigation dam and the first bridge across the Sweetwater River.

On their new land in Lyons Valley, they found an unusual resource. In 1894 a drilling project on what is now the Countryman property aimed at oil. But the 2,700-foot-deep well tapped little but hot, sulfurous water.

The Countrymans are using the 100 degree water, which gushes out at 500 gallons per minute, to supplement their ranching income. Two years ago, they had a 40-by-80-foot greenhouse built. The water from the well, if managed properly, helps heat and nourish the plants. With Betty Countryman as caretaker, they flourish.

"My biggest problem is everything grows too fast," Countryman says. The geraniums, wandering jews, snapdragons, and other house plants have a 99 percent germination rate, while 50 percent is considered acceptable according to Countryman.

Tomato seeds are supposed to take 10 to 14 days to germinate. In the Countryman greenhouse, they take seven days. Countryman attributes her success to the humidity, constant warmth, and the water's sulfates and nitrates—trace minerals that most plants need.

The tomatoes Countryman planted this summer, after two months, had grown to five and six feet in height. The first year her yield was zero. Last year her plants produced 30 to 40 pounds of tomatoes a week. Now she is approaching her aim of producing 60 pounds per day to sell commercially.

The first year's crop was destroyed by the numerous problems Countryman has had to solve to make her venture successful.

After the greenhouse was built, the contractor suggested painting the rafters with a wood preservative, pentachlorophenol. In addition, the mineral water flowing through the greenhouse in an open ditch produced a gas called hydrogen sulfide. The fumes from the free-flowing water and from the preservative both proved lethal to plants, Countryman says.

So she painted over the rafters with "Bin," a lacquer-based sealant, and ran the sulphurous water through plastic tubing, permitting the use of its heat without the deadly fumes.

However, heat from the water has not been enough. Countryman has had to resort to a propane-fueled heater in the



Photo by Mike McClure

BETTY COUNTRYMAN grows flowers in Wyoming winter and summer, thanks to a hot spring on her ranch.

winter. Eventually, she plans to install a generator to run an electric motor to operate heat pumps. The heat pumps will take heat from the well, concentrate it, and blow out hot air, working with the opposite effect of a refrigerator, Countryman says.

Meanwhile, she has had additional problems. She cleared out aphids this spring

Cattle ranching is a struggle, Countryman says. "It's a non-profit occupation anymore."

with insecticide, but this method is no longer acceptable to her.

"I want to keep the greenhouse as organic as possible," she says. On her current pests, white flies, she plans to use a vacuum cleaner.

The greenhouse is a way to help make

the ranch pay. The price of beef is going up, and the prospects for cattle ranchers are improving, according to Countryman. Still, "like all ranching, it's a struggle. It's a non-profit occupation anymore."

Countryman has chosen the greenhouse as an alternative to a public hot pool business because, "I'm not people-oriented."

She prefers to spend her time in the greenhouse, or helping with the cattle or hunting rocks and fossils.

She likes dealing with her land and whatever she encounters on it, which has brought her face-to-face with another problem.

"When we first got here, there was nothing alive," for hunters had wiped out most of the area's wildlife, says Countryman.

Since the Countrymans settled in Lyons Valley, they have attempted to drive off the shooters. Now, "they're pretty cautious about coming on our property," she says.

The biggest problem has been with what Countryman calls "spotlighters." They hunt at night and "shoot everything that

moves," she says. "They blind them with the spotlight and they (the animals) just stand there and let them shoot."

Spotlighting is illegal, except when hunting predators. Even then, when spotlighters wish to hunt on private land, they must gain the owner's permission.

Countryman sees even the spotlighting of predators as a problem, as it upsets the ecological balance of the area. Under Wyoming Game and Fish regulations, jackrabbits, which are part of the coyote's natural food supply, are considered predators. If they are wiped out, the coyotes attack cattle, she says. If the rabbits are allowed to live, the coyotes will keep them in check and leave the cattle alone.

"Coyotes need to be controlled, but they don't need to be eradicated," she says.

The Countryman method of control has been to get rid of sheep, which attract coyotes. "We'd rather have the coyotes than the government trappers," she says.

From their experience, the coyote presents little threat to the cattle rancher. In their 15 years in Lyons Valley, the Countrymans have only lost one calf to a coyote.

Her hope is that the coyotes will remain wary and prosperous. "If they're not bothering anything, they probably do a lot of good. A person gets kind of attached to these darned critters around."

Another threat to wildlife in the area, says Countryman, is careless trapping.

"They're (the trappers) supposed to check the traps every 24 hours, but that law doesn't include traps for coyotes," she says.

"One trap was left for a week, which is too long, even for a coyote," she says. "I know. We had a dog stuck for a week. He disappeared on a Sunday and came back on a Sunday (with a mangled foot). He wasn't a dog that went very far away. He was 14 years old."

The Countryman approach to ranching seeks to preserve the environment. Countryman believes the neighboring ranchers in Lyons Valley share her attitude.

Concerning their interest in conservation, Countryman says, "We're the original environmentalists. Without the grass and open ranges, we wouldn't be here."

Delegation's differences kill DuNoir bill

An irreconcilable disagreement within the Wyoming congressional delegation led to the death of the DuNoir Wilderness bill in the waning hours of the 95th Congress. Rep. Teno Roncalio (D) initiated the legislation and guided a bill through the House to designate 34,500 acres of the Shoshone National Forest near Dubois, Wyo., as wilderness. "There is simply no question about its unique qualities and beauty—ranking it among the very highest wilderness potentials for our state," said Roncalio.

Sen. Cliff Hansen (R) refused to push parallel legislation in the Senate until late in the session, however. At Hansen's urging, the Senate finally approved an 11,000-acre DuNoir Wilderness. "In my opinion, there is no need to designate the whole DuNoir region as a wilderness in order to protect it," Hansen said. "There are many people in Wyoming who feel that just about enough land has been turned into wilderness, and I'm inclined to agree with them."

Roncalio's bill included high cliffs and low forested country. Hansen's bill included only the unforested high country and left the low country open to timbering. The Senate bill stipulated that any roads built in the low country for timber harvest-

ing would have to be closed at the end of the cutting operations.

Roncalio said the Senate had "gutted" his bill by proposing to protect only "a rock enclave." Referring to the likely recipient of any DuNoir timber sale, Roncalio asked his congressional colleagues: "Does Wyoming have to clearcut the slopes of every tributary of its rivers in order to please the insatiable Louisiana-Pacific?"

Upon hearing what the Senate had done to his bill Roncalio announced, "When this butchered remnant returns to the House I will see that it receives merciful last rites." The House never acted on the Senate version, so it died.

In the absence of Congressional action, the 28,800-acre core of the DuNoir will remain a "special management unit" where timbering and road building will not be allowed.

"We're terribly disappointed with Hansen's action," says Bart Koehler, Wyoming representative for the Wilderness Society. "The positive aspect is that, as a result of the congressional deliberation, we achieved a Forest Service Wilderness recommendation for the core area. (Earlier the agency had supported a high peaks proposal similar to Hansen's bill.)

Also, it's possible that the RARE II (second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) process may lead to an administration wilderness recommendation for additional acres in the DuNoir area. That in itself would be a victory."

In The News

Park Service

its mission grows murky. 1

Alaska

bill dies. 1

Landmark

parks, grazing legislation. 7,13

Nuthatch

by Laney Hicks. 8

Endangered Species

pressing projects may wipe some out. 15