

11-79

High Country News

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Lander, Wyoming

Friday, May 4, 1979



by Louisa Willcox

As man has been responsible for its decline, so he hopes to be for its recovery. The first steps, recommended in a recent report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Team, will be completing inventories of its habitat — prairie dog towns — and figuring out new sleuthing schemes.

Since 1851, when John James Audubon described the first ferret, sightings continued fairly regularly for about 100 years. Though we have no way of estimating ferrets' abundance in the past, one thing is certain — despite stepped-up searching efforts, sightings are becoming increasingly rare. Even in South Dakota, considered the last stronghold of the black-footed ferret, there have been no confirmed sightings in three years. Ferrets have been on the federal government's endangered species list since 1964.

RECOVERY TEAM

It is an enormous and costly job. A single town can cover up to 6,000 acres. Ferret signs are subtle and easily misinterpreted. The maps will have to be updated every few years, as prairie dogs abandon old towns and create new ones. According to Conrad Hillman, a wildlife biologist in Rapid City,

(continued on page 4)

spying schemes: stove pipes, trained dogs



Drawing by Margaret Pettie

FIND THE FERRET lurking in this prairie dog town.

U.S. to hide MX missiles in West

by Dede Feldman

Imagine a state the size of Connecticut, cut off from the rest of the United States, devoid of inhabitants and agriculture, but filled with 190,000 pound missiles, each armed with 10 nuclear warheads. In your mind, put those weapons on wheels and truck them around among thousands of holes in which the missiles are housed.

WILDERNESS

President Carter makes RARE II recommendations — see page 13.

BLM seeks comments on initial wilderness inventories — see page 6.

Now add decoys and shuttle them with the real missiles, at night and during the day.

Sound like pure fantasy? That's what the governor of Kansas thought when he heard about the "MX" or "missile experimental," the Air Force's expensive new weapons scheme.

"I find this proposal utterly unbelievable and inconceivable," former Gov. Robert F. Bennett said in an October letter to President Carter. "I would not be concerned if it were a pipe dream of some Washington bureaucrat, but I'm informed that the Air Force is moving into full-scale development and site selection soon."

What Bennett and others in Western states selected as potential sites are worried about is not just the "Star Wars" nature of the new system or the cost, which will exceed \$20 billion. It is the new missile's impact on their states.

For several years, Air Force officials have been concerned that ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) silos in the Western states will be vulnerable to Soviet attack. Under the Strategic Arms Limita-

tion Treaty, missiles can't be hidden, and if the Soviets know where the missiles are, they could, theoretically, destroy them. The Air Force's response has been to push for a mobile missile system, which would be deployed in one or more suitable sites in the Western United States. If the Air Force has its way, missiles will be shuttled from silo to silo in huge trucks or in underground tunnels. The idea, of course, is to fool the Russians on the exact location of a few missiles perpetually in motion among thousands of holes.

The trouble, however, is that the scheme requires from 4,000 to 20,000 square miles of land now used by farmers, recreationists and others in Arizona, New Mexico, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, California, Nevada, Utah or Texas.

Reasons for concern over the MX are detailed in a five volume environmental impact statement, the first ever released on a weapons system. The statement pinpoints seven possible MX deployment areas: the

(continued on page 4)



MORE ON AGRICULTURE

Dear editor,

In response to Michael Muenich's letter in your April 20th issue, I would like to voice my disagreement and support you in your decision to publish the article on mechanical mules.

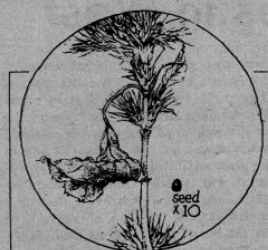
Far from being a "counter-productive" application of technology, the pedal-powered plow could be a great aid to the small farmer or gardener. Evidently Mr. Muenich intended to say that it would be less efficient than rigging up a few human bodies to the plow? This I find hard to believe. (Did he mean to say that a harness for one or two persons would be more labor intensive — or less?)

Innovative tools and machines for use by the small farmer are certainly worth developing. In fact, they can be tremendous conservation measures. Considering the facts, any encouragement of small farmers not only conserves energy but also encourages increased soil fertility and ecological land use.

Food production industries consumed 12 percent of the total U.S. energy budget in 1963. Modern agricultural techniques derive only one calorie of food energy for every eight calories of petrochemical energy put in. Anything we can do to bring about smaller-scale, more decentralized food production will certainly be beneficial.

I, for one, would like to see more articles on developments in small-scale agriculture. Only by bringing food production back into the locality can we cut out the hidden energy costs in agriculture, and tie agriculture back into the natural processes of regeneration and fertility.

Tom Robison



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Dear HCN:

We were glad to see Dan Whipple's cover story about coal slurry pipelines in the April 6 issue. However, the article might leave readers with the erroneous impression that in Wyoming, only the Wilderness Society opposes slurry lines. Friends of the Earth also opposes such an inappropriate use of Wyoming water. The Texas Eastern and Energy Transportation Systems Inc. proposals are only the tip of the iceberg, and the construction of coal slurry lines will only increase the rate of destructive strip mining in the region.

Far too much of Wyoming has already been strip mined in order to perpetuate the irrational and insane energy habits of this nation. The need for further Western coal development has not been demonstrated, and it is especially disturbing to contemplate further development in Wyoming where no strip mine reclamation has been achieved.

If we had a truly rational energy policy, we would be rapidly phasing out strip mining while putting more than just a token effort into the development of renewable energy resources. The drastic reduction of our per capita energy demand is also necessary and would come about as a result of more conservative and rational use of all resources. It's high time we based our use of energy resources on the public interest, instead of on the mad desire for greater profits for the energy industry. The construction of coal slurry lines would represent just one more step in the latter direction.

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

John Wiener
F.O.E. Coal Consultant
Laramie, Wyo.

SLURRY NOT UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Dear HCN,

The April 6 edition of *High Country News* contained an article entitled, "Slurry carries coal, water and controversy." On page five of the newspaper was a small map of existing, planned and "in progress" pipelines throughout the West. Included in the "in progress" category was the slurry line associated with the Allen-Warner Valley Energy System.

"In progress" may connote to many readers, and it did to me, that the Alton coal field slurry is now under construction. I am glad to say that this is not so. The Alton slurry, like the Texas Eastern Pipeline, is now only in the planning stage. Environmental statement requirements and several permits are required before the actual construction will be in progress. The Utah Chapter Sierra Club and Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund are working to insure that the Warner Valley Power Plant, dam on the Virgin River, and Alton strip mine never get past the planning stage. Without the Alton strip mine, there will be no need for the slurry pipeline.

Brian Beard, president,
Utah Chapter Sierra Club
Logan, Utah

(Ed. note: The source of the map used in the article was the congressional Office of Technology Assessment's report on coal slurry pipelines, completed last year.)



Prairie falcons.

Photo by Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife

Big, destructive guys tip the BLM wilderness teeter-totter

"Oh, I love these wild flowers in this dear land of ours,
the curlew I love to hear scream,
And I love the white rocks and the antelope flocks
that graze on the mountaintops green.
Oh, give me a land where the bright diamond sand
flows leisurely down to the stream;
Where a graceful white swan goes gliding along
like a maid in a heavenly dream."

— from "Home on the Range"



When the Bureau of Land Management was beginning its wilderness inventory a couple of years ago, many people hoped that large samples of the deserts and dunes, prairies, steppes and canyons of the West would be added to the wilderness system, giving wildlife some peace from mining, drilling, motorcycles, mills, four-wheel drives, dune buggies, powerlines and roads.

But if the "first cut" in Wyoming is any indication, BLM will finally preserve only a few, mostly small and noncontroversial areas. Because the hand of man has already fallen heavily across the great open spaces of the Northern Rockies, BLM can easily find sufficient "imprints of man" to eliminate most areas from consideration and allow the hand of man and machines to continue what has become the highest form of patriotism: developing domestic fossil fuel supplies to feed the edacious appetite of conservation-mouthing America.

In Utah, for instance, one area was eliminated because "hillsides of the island are dotted with practice bomb craters, large piles of rusting metal bomb casings and scrap metal."

In Wyoming, BLM proposes to eliminate more than 94 percent of the 17.8 million acres it manages in the first step of the process. Still, many miners, drillers, ranchers and politicians are galled that more land wasn't eliminated from wilderness consideration! "Who wants backpacking in the badlands?" they ask, still believing that the wilderness folks are motivated

solely by a desire for huge, private backpacking playgrounds.

And since wilderness advocates do not profit monetarily from wilderness designations, the sophistication of their responses to public comment processes usually does not approach that of industry.

A further problem is that only a handful of wilderness people know much about the needs and values of wildlife, about the scenic attributes and the scientific values of the vast areas being surveyed by BLM. Industry, on the other hand, has seemingly bottomless resources for the public opinion advertising and for detailed studies and documented comments on these lands.

I see a teeter-totter with a fulcrum called BLM, with one scared skinny guy up in the air and several big fellows bouncing the other end on the ground, pointing to their opposite and yelling, "selfish," "look up" and "land grab."

Unfortunately, it will be the voiceless, voteless wildlife that will suffer as we persist in ravaging our earth. Why can't we leave some things alone, for the sake of today's wildlife and tomorrow's human generations? We seem to have decided that wildlife must be disregarded for not learning the human creed. "Not one," Walt Whitman says, "is demented with the mania of owning things."

Except, perhaps, a nest spot on a cliff or in a treetop.

A quiet rental will do.

— Philip White

POPULAR REALITIES

China Syndrome

It's not a bad film for a thriller about a complex environmental topic. But I think "China Syndrome" went overboard in an effort to entertain. It's understandable that filmmakers would try to popularize a serious message and a technical plot — but did they really need bloody shootouts, careening autos and TV flashiness?

The Three Mile Island accident, of course, added a haunting note of reality that the film otherwise might have lacked. That serendipitous timing will insure that "China Syndrome" will do well at the box office and may even stir productive thinking about nuclear power.

But it would have made a much deeper impression on me had the filmmakers not substituted the mediocre theatrics of the concluding scenes for the drama of real life. Before Three Mile Island, remember Brown's Ferry and the Silkwood case? The plain facts about those incidents are thrilling enough — without any help from Hollywood.

Befuddled?

The April 23rd issue of *The New Yorker* is rich with facts and sound thinking about the nation's energy problems.

The magazine's regular "Talk of the Town" feature takes a swipe at the *New York Times* for concluding that Three Mile Island taught the American public that "the universe and the laws of nature, it would seem, are not predictable." *The New Yorker's* argument: What was overturned at Harrisburg was not science...but pseudo-science — the pretense that the ac-

tions of tens of thousands of human beings can be regulated with the precision of scientific theory."

In the same issue is the first of a two-part article by Barry Commoner entitled "The Solar Transition." In the article, Commoner, who is director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems at Washington University, looks at the nation's energy ills from an economic perspective. He prescribes a rapid shift to photovoltaic, wind, biomass and solar heating and cooling devices — spurred by government purchases.

To resolve the energy crisis, the cost of producing energy must be stabilized, and the only way to stabilize it is to switch from nonrenewable energy source to renewable ones," Commoner says. Government action is necessary, not to improve the renewable energy devices but to build a market for them to bring down their cost, he says. Commoner describes solar power as "an old technology struggling to cross the threshold of economic viability," while nuclear power, which has been heavily supported with public and private funds, "seems to have lapsed into economic senility."

The article offers the layman an intelligent overview of the broad and befuddling energy picture and how it affects the economy.

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Urban Abnormalities

A group called the U.S. Labor Party has set up a table in Penn Station in New York City (and elsewhere, we assume) to stump for "More Nukes and Less Kooks." The group claims that actress Jane Fonda has made more people sick than nuclear power.

In what seems like an unlikely double mission, members of the group are striving to stop people from using drugs and start them on the road to nuclear nirvana. The society of the future will be too complex to be run by people on drugs, a pale young woman staring out of large brown eyeglasses and a mottled babushka at the Labor Party's table told an HCN reporter.

No growth societies lead to fascism, she warned; the country needs more people — especially intense, ambitious ones: "Do you trust your abilities? Want to be president right now? We're looking for Prometheans."

— JN



Dear Friends,

There aren't many writers who send us pornography when they're applying for a job with *High Country News*. Genny Dodd is not really an exception to that rule. But that became the standing joke when we awaited the arrival of our new intern whose application had



Photo by Sara Hunter-Wiles
GENNY DODD, intern at *High Country News* for April and May.

included a well written description of the mating dance of the damselfly.

Dodd, who just earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Montana in zoology, didn't have samples of news writing to send us. However, as you'll see in her story on fences in this issue of HCN, she quickly adapted to journalistic style.

Fortunately for us, she is trying her hand at different careers that might use both her scientific background and her writing skills. She is working full-time for two months without pay.

She has pitched in, with a smile, to write "Hot Line" items; file, paste up, stuff sample newspapers and haul mail bags — in short she's sampled most of the chores that go into newspaper-making.

You'll be seeing more of her byline during her stay and later, we hope, as a freelancer.

We'd like to thank Marge Higley for an adding machine, typing table and a grand old Underwood typewriter. Their vintage is unknown, but as Jaz says, they have character.

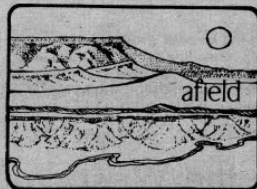
As longtime readers know, Higley was a mainstay of the HCN's three-person staff during the paper's toughest years when she was staff humorist, circulation manager and the writer of the "Distaff Corner" and other features. She's also the originator of "Looney Limericks."

Thanks, Marge.

POPULAR REALITIES

We've initiated a new feature this issue, which will appear as often as the material for it allows: "Popular Realities." Being a specialized publication, most of *High Country News* looks inside the world of natural resources management. In "Popular Realities," we occasionally hope to comment on the environmental messages that are reaching the public outside that world — through bumper stickers, movies, TV and radio shows, public meetings, advertisements and magazine and newspaper articles. We hope some of you will help us keep in touch with popular realities by sending ideas or comments for the column.

— the staff



by Hannah Hinchman

It's the brief season of spring's incandescent green. Pasture lands that will be rank and thistle-thronged later look like manicured fairways now. The slanted foothills of the Wind River Range show a pale velvety green that makes them look like the Irish heaths, especially in stormy evening light.

On top of windblown bluffs the cushion plants are having their season. Phlox and wild peas bloom in snowmelt-saturated gravel: gray-green, white and lavender.

Mary Back tells me a pair of loons are

laughing on Torrey Lake in the Wind River Range. The trumpeter swans she had observed are gone, advancing with the season to higher elevations. People in the Dubois area have seen osprey, both along Wind River and at Torrey Lake. Mary hopes they will decide to nest there. Up until about 10 years ago, a pair had returned perennially to Torrey Lake. But they were shot, the female while she was on the nest.

Snipe are winnowing above John Mioczynski's cabin in Atlantic City. He likes to sit on his porch and listen to them harmonize with his billy goat kid who makes a similar noise (on a lower pitch). Ruby-crowned kinglets are whistling under their breaths in the depths of the evergreens and cassin's finches are singing themselves hoarse from the tops.

Joan Nice rose before dawn the other morning to catch a glimpse of perhaps the most distinguished traveler passing through this country: a whooping crane. It was feeding with a flock of sandhill cranes in a field by the Sweetwater River.



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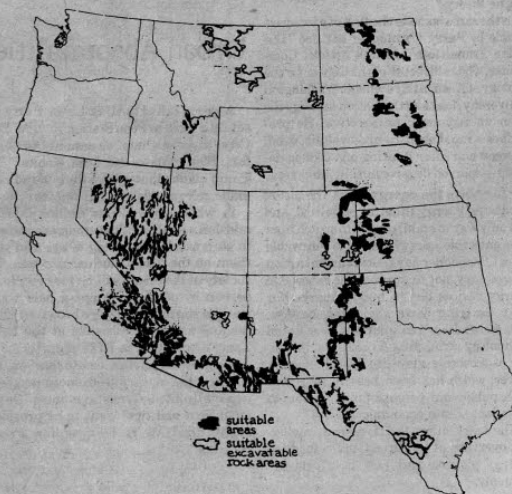
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THE AIR FORCE considers these areas to be both geographically and technically suitable for deployment of MX, according to the environmental impact statement. Outlined areas would require extensive excavation of rock, however. Since the impact statement was published, Idaho and the Dakotas have been eliminated from consideration for anything but the air mobile system.

MX missiles in the West...

(continued from page 1)

central Nevada Great Basin (including portions of the Mojave Desert; the Luke-Yuma area between Arizona and California; the White Sands, N.M., area; west Texas; the high plains between Texas and New Mexico; and the South Platte plains in Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas).

The amount of land to be withdrawn from all other uses in these areas depends on what technique the Air Force decides to use and whether civilians would be kept out of the entire area for security reasons. Recently, White House officials suggested placing the missiles aboard large aircraft, firing them from the air and landing them at small commercial airstrips around the country. However, Air Force officials indicate there is little or no support for this option due largely to the fact that it would cost about twice as much as the land-based options — about \$40 billion.

Air Force officials favor the Multiple Aim Point System (MAP), in which missiles would be shuttled from silo to silo above ground in trucks. That requires 6,000 to 8,000 square miles of land to be withdrawn from other uses, assuming that only five acres around each hole would be fenced off for security. Other uses would be allowed between the holes under this plan, but a total of close to 20,000 square miles would be affected, including roads.

AGRICULTURAL RICHES

Roughly, the proposed MX sites fall into two categories: land owned by the federal government in New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and California; and private land used for farming and ranching in Texas, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico.

The private lands include some of the

most productive agricultural lands in the country. According to the Air Force, the South Platte plains produce \$41,000 worth of agricultural products per square mile per year and the New Mexico-Texas high plains produce \$96,000 worth of crops per square mile per year.

The federal lands are managed by the Bureau of Land Management or the Department of Defense. Potential sites include recreation areas, wildlife refuges, potential wilderness areas and lands leased for oil and minerals.

One of the proposed sites in Nevada coincides with a proposed site for the Great Basin National Park.

But whether an area is publicly or privately owned, the impact of MX would be drastic. According to the impact statement, construction and operation of the defense system will create potential growth rates in or near the areas of over 15 percent a year, outstripping the ability of local governments to supply necessary services, unless careful planning occurs. Local governments near the site would have to pay about \$10 million to upgrade public facilities and services.

In areas where the land is privately owned, the MX would mean population movement out of the area as well as in. Under one of the Air Force's options for the South Platte plains, for example, the environmental impact statement says that 70,000 people living in the affected zone would have to be "relocated," and in the High Plains, \$1.7 billion worth of agricultural production would be "displaced" each year.

Other costs of the MX include increased demand for electricity and water and, on some sites, loss of wildlife habitat or archaeological treasures.

Bennett says energy requirements for the MX in Kansas alone would be equivalent to those of a city of 50,000 people. The

Elusive black-footed ferrets...

(continued from page 1)

S.D., ferrets may appear above ground for only a few minutes every few days, so it takes five to seven days of surveillance to decide whether they occur in an area.

Federal agencies are responsible for funding the ferret recovery efforts on their lands. States may apply for federal aid. If they qualify, the Fish and Wildlife Service will pay for two-thirds to three-fourths of the costs.

Even with federal help, the problem of finding staff and funding could slow the ferret recovery plan considerably. Most states have only one or two non-game mammalogists, who have other endangered species to worry about.

Several states are already far along in their inventories. South Dakota has been the site of intensive ferret research for 15 years. Colorado began last year and hopes to be finished by 1980, according to Steve Bissel of the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The Montana Fish and Game Commission has almost completed maps of its towns of white-tailed prairie dogs, one of several species in the state.

In Wyoming, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made prairie dog town maps in 1971, which need to be updated. In the northeastern part of the state, the BLM has launched a four-year ferret study in the coal leasing areas. A private ferret search led by Tim Clark of Idaho State University over the last five years has resulted in several reliable sightings in Wyoming. Clark feels that the Powder River area is one of the most promising regions for finding ferrets.

In New Mexico, only the Forest Service and BLM have begun mapping their lands.

Utah is doing no census work but will begin when "it can be justified financially," says Bob Hasenager of Utah Division of Wildlife and Resources. Other states, such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and Nebraska, have begun and will step up their mapping as funding becomes available.

PROLIFIC PRAIRIE DOGS

In most areas, prairie dog populations have gradually increased over the past 25 years, according to Bissel. They have been poisoned since 1890 by ranchers and state and federal agents. The most massive campaigns occurred in 1941 and the early '50s, when prairie dog populations reached an all-time low. They were reduced by up to 80 percent in some states and completely eradicated in several areas. Because prairie dogs are adaptable and prolific, they seem to bounce back when poisoning is stopped, however. Now, as a result of protective efforts on federal lands, prairie dog towns in South Dakota are expanding at a rate of 30 percent to 100 percent per year, according to Hillman. But for some reason, the ferrets do not seem to be increasing in response to the prairie dog spread.

To find out for sure, improved techniques for finding ferrets are essential. Nongame mammalogist Hasenager says tracking down ferrets "is like chasing ghosts." Hours spent at night with spotlights on prairie dog towns are often fruitless. Tell-tale signs, such as tracks, scat, digging and trenching marks, are sometimes apparent.

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environmental impact statement mentions that location of the MX in the New Mexico-Texas plains would require a new generating facility.

In addition, the impact statement estimates the MX-spurred development will require a minimum of three billion to a maximum of 12 billion gallons of water per year — a figure large enough to send chills down the spine of many a farmer in the water-short West.

Environmentalists are also concerned because the MX presents a direct threat to the habitat of many wild animals, some of them on the endangered species list. One of the sites in New Mexico, for example, is located near a refuge used by the whooping crane, an endangered species. The site is also home for the peregrine falcon, another endangered species, and contains archaeological remains of early Indian tribes.

The sites would also be prime nuclear targets. Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Lew Allen, Jr., said last year that the idea behind the MX was to "deploy a great sponge of targets in the United States to absorb the Soviet warheads, making a surprise attack look futile to the Kremlin."

If the idea of losing their farms, their water and their livelihoods didn't do it — the idea of becoming a target for a nuclear war was enough to send many residents of potential "sponges" straight to their towns' meeting halls.

JUST A TEST

Public opposition to the Air Force's controversial MX missile first surfaced last summer in Arizona when the federal government started bombarding the north-

western part of the state. The Defense Nuclear Agency was conducting high-explosives tests to see what the impact of the explosives in an enemy hit would be on a buried MX.

Environmentalists and nearby Indian tribes didn't like the idea of the test bombing. Tucson's Animal Defense League feared destruction of wildlife habitat. The Colorado Indian River Indian tribes worried about the effect of the blast on a nearby dam as well as about damage to Indian archaeological resources.

The detonations, which occurred in spite of the protests, involved the equivalent of 600 tons of TNT and left a crater 50 feet wide and 25 deep.

Meanwhile, opponents of the tests in

The idea is to deploy a great sponge of targets to absorb Soviet warheads.

Tucson had enlarged their protest to include the underlying cause of the tests — the development of the MX. Carrying signs saying, "You Can't Eat Missiles," and wearing buttons marked, "Bury the MX," about 20 people marched around the Tucson federal building.

Carmine Cardamone, director of the Animal Defense Council, explains why his group is now focusing on the MX.

"Our concerns include destruction of the habitats of numerous threatened and endangered species, the destruction of cultural and historic relics, threats to protected species and damage to land surfaces

(continued on page 5)

Unfortunately, prairie dogs often destroy all evidence of ferrets a few hours after sunrise. And even the experts can be baffled by similar signs made by other animals, particularly weasels. A recent abundance of weasels in South Dakota has been "enough to drive a ferret biologist nuts," according to Hillman. "When you know there's weasels in a town, you might as well go home and twiddle your thumbs."

Nervous prairie dog behavior and a tendency to plug up burrows used by their potential predator can provide another clue to a ferret's presence.

Even if seen, ferrets still can be hard to identify. To the untrained eye, other members of the weasel family, badgers and pocket gophers can look deceptively like ferrets. As a result, many sightings have to be discounted as UFO's (unconfirmable ferret occurrences).

GUARD HAIR IN THE GOO

Suggested methods of locating ferrets in-

clude everything from scent lures, live trapping, and nighttime photographic stations to trained dogs and baited stove pipes. Hasenyager dreamt up the stove pipe idea a year ago. A section of pipe is coated on the inside with an adhesive and then shoved down a prairie dog hole with bait in the bottom. In going for the bait, the ferret theoretically will leave some of his black dorsal guard hair in the goo. Only two such pipes have been made, and the method has not proven successful yet. "But neither has anything else," Hasenyager says. This summer he hopes to have 200 more stove pipe devices for the BLM to try.

Many ferret biologists agree that one of the most promising techniques is the use of dogs trained to home in on ferret scent. This summer two dogs will be tested in prairie dog towns suspected of harboring ferrets. The dogs are being trained in Texas with the scat and urine from the only remaining black-footed ferret in captivity, which is at

Patuxent (Md.) Wildlife Research Center.

Despite 15 years of field study, many questions remain unanswered about ferrets and their relationship to prairie dogs. At South Dakota's Buffalo Gap National Grasslands, which is being managed for prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets, the Rocky Mountain Forest Range Experiment Station is researching prairie dog colony dynamics and food habits and the ecological role of the prairie dog. Researchers are also studying the extent of competition between livestock and the towns.

Ranchers generally feel that they would like to have prairie dog towns, if they could keep them under control, according to interviews by Linder of South Dakota State. However, they are convinced that large populations erode the soil, deplete grass, and so are incompatible with their business. The studies may show that this is not entirely the case and the large amounts of money spent in exterminating the prairie

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dog may be wasted, says Daniel Uresak of the research team.

As prairie dog towns have grown from 3,200 acres in 1968 to 30,000 acres in 1977 in Buffalo Gap, so has ranchers' hostility increased. Under such pressure, the Nebraska Forest Service, which manages Buffalo Gap, began last year to poison certain areas. In cooperation with the Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Team, the agency is trying to leave enough towns for ferrets, should they be there. But no ferrets have been seen since 1976.

Though private poisoning programs in the area are believed to be small-scale now, Hillman says that they may be expanded if livestock and grain prices remain high. Strychnine oats are still available through many county agents, and the black-footed ferret recovery recommendations do not restrict private landowners. Obtaining cooperation with ranchers and farmers to protect prairie dogs for the ferrets' sake could be a delicate operation.

Lease and easement agreements are possible, where the rancher is reimbursed for the forage lost to prairie dogs. In 1973, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife funded eight 10-year leases in South Dakota. Private conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy could work out ferret habitat easements. But how much time and money can be spent preserving one species is a question that remains unanswered, according to Hillman.

Clark says that if prairie dog poisoning continues in moderation, and populations still increase on federal lands, the future is not lost for the ferret. Hillman says that there are probably remnant isolated populations that have gone unnoticed until now that may be located with new techniques and accelerated efforts.

And so the game of hide and seek continues.



PRAIRIE DOGS are the black-footed ferret's prey.

Photo by Ron Mader

throughout the West," Cardamone says.

In neighboring New Mexico, another group, the Coalition to Stop the MX missile, has asked the state's congressional delegation to oppose siting the mobile missile in any of the three sites proposed in the state. The coalition is concerned about the loss of farm and ranch land, depletion of scarce ground water and the prospect of becoming a prime nuclear strike zone.

The state's largest newspaper, the *Albuquerque Journal*, has editorialized against the missile.

WANTS MISSILES

However, in one small eastern New Mexico town on the periphery of a proposed MX site, there are signs of encouragement for the Air Force. The Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce favors missile sites in the area. With visions of increased jobs, local proponents of the MX talk of "landing" the missile project the same way they "landed" the country's largest wind generator, which now supplies one-fifth of their electricity. According to the *Union Country Leader*, the town's business leaders are getting some support from the state's congressional delegation, all but one of whom favor the MX.

Utah Gov. Scott Matheson is also pushing for the MX. He sent a telegram to President Carter in April saying he thinks there would be no adverse environmental impact on his state if the MX is deployed there.

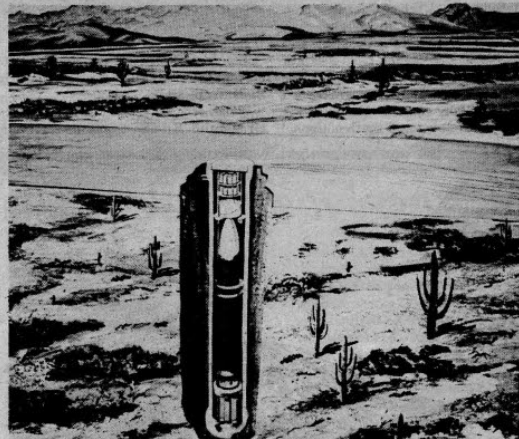
Many Nebraskans and others in the South Platte plains feel differently.

Residents of the flat, wheat and corn growing country that spreads across Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado first heard

about the MX from Nebraskans for Peace, a group in Lincoln that is trying to halt the arms race.

"People around here are a conservative lot — family farmers, sons and daughters of immigrants who have farmed the land for generations. They're in favor of a strong

defense posture, and, for the most part, they trust the government," says Kevin Johnson, editor of the *Benkelman Post and News Chronicle*. "So the initial reaction to the MX — and especially to the fact that the Air Force might take away their farms for the project — was absolute shock.



U.S. Air Force photo

MX VERTICAL SHELTER. The MX missile is depicted in this artist's concept in its passive or alert state. Prior to launch, the missile, which is contained in a protective canister, would be partially elevated out of its vertical shelter. The Air Force is now considering fencing off five acres around each of the missiles for security reasons but allowing other uses between the missile enclosures.

Some people still don't believe it."

But as the initial shock wore off, anger took over. Protest letters and petitions were received from some 2,500 Nebraskans, including school children, members of Women in Farm Economics, Farm Bureau and Wheatgrowers Association chapters and local government officials. It was the heaviest reaction to MX from any state.

Partly as a result of these protests, Air Force officials reportedly are not considering acquiring large tracts of private land for the project. Instead, they are eyeing the public lands in states that might be receptive to the project, such as Nevada, Utah or Texas.

The Air Force is also considering requesting some kind of legislative relief from lengthy environmental impact analysis so the system could be in place by the mid-1980s. That would require withdrawing the lands by about 1983.

As more and more groups learn about the MX schemes, they're finding that nuclear weapons are no longer just a national issue decided by the specialists in Washington, D.C. They are a very real local concern, and everyone, from a Nebraska farmer to an Indian in New Mexico, has a stake in the outcome.

Dede Feldman is a freelance writer in Albuquerque, N.M. She just received a New Mexico Press Women's Award for an article that appeared in *High Country News*, "N.M. researchers debunk insulation myth."

This article was paid for in part by tax-deductible contributions to the HCN Research Fund.

6-High Country News — May 4, 1979

Wilderness reviewers drop 55 million acres

by Philip White

Fifty-five million acres of public lands in the northern and central Rockies, an area larger than the state of Utah, would be dropped from further wilderness consideration under the Bureau of Land Management's proposed first cut in its wilderness inventory process. The proposed excisions were made from "in house information" without field evaluations, BLM says.

The 55 million acres represent 79 percent of the 70 million acres managed by BLM in Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. By its proposal, the agency is saying that those lands "clearly and obviously" lack wilderness characteristics and that no intensive on-site study of their natural values is necessary.

After a 90-day public comment period (see accompanying summary), each BLM state director will issue a final list of areas to be dropped from further consideration, releasing them from development restrictions imposed during the inventory. The remaining lands will undergo intensive study this summer, with a second cut to follow.

The proportion of BLM lands to receive further study varies from less than six percent in Wyoming (1.04 million acres of the 17.8 million BLM acres in the state) to about 33 percent in Montana (2.7 of 8.1 million acres).

As the May 15 deadline for public comment in Wyoming approaches, Wyoming BLM wilderness coordinator Wayne Erickson says anti-wilderness sentiment is running ahead. "About 60 percent of the 700 responses we've received so far express general feelings for or against wilderness. This is not the kind of response we asked for and won't be useful to us at this stage. The majority of the general comments, as well as the comments on specific areas, seem to be anti-wilderness," Erickson says.

Despite the general negative reaction, Erickson already knows of at least one area in Wyoming that will probably be recommended for wilderness designation — Scab Creek near Pinedale. Because it is a BLM "primitive area," Scab Creek received BLM scrutiny earlier than other roadless areas in the state. Erickson says that about 8,000 of its 9,400 acres will probably be recommended.

In Colorado, 1.2 million acres of the 8.5 million acres managed by BLM were found



Photo courtesy of Colorado BLM

NORTH SAND HILLS Natural Area, shown above, was not chosen by the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado as a wilderness study area.

to be roadless and deserving of further study. Included were lands containing 14,000-foot peaks, red-rock canyons, forested mountains and pinyon-juniper plateau country.

According to Sally Collins at BLM's Colorado office, the 79,000-acre Dominguez Canyon units south of Grand Junction were among the largest tracts in the state selected for further review. Other large areas were the Black Ridge Canyons west of Grand Junction (77,000 acres), the alpine Red Cloud Peak area southwest of Gunnison (38,100 acres) and more than 100,000 acres in several units in extreme northwest Colorado near Dinosaur National Monument.

Collins says only one of the instant study areas in Colorado (areas previously designated by BLM as primitive or natural areas) "appears to be really large enough" for a wilderness recommendation: the 47,000-acre Powderhorn high mountain area near Gunnison.

UTAH'S BOOKCLIFFS

About 28 percent of Utah's 23.2 million BLM acres are proposed for further study. Kent Biddulph, Utah wilderness coordinator for BLM, says the largest study areas in Utah will be in the Bookcliffs area north of Moab, the Sevier Lake Bed near Richfield and the Salt Flats west of the Great Salt Lake. Large acreages in the San Rafael Swell in eastern Utah, in the WahWah mountains and south of Capitol

Reef National Park also will be studied.

In addition, nearly two million acres in San Juan County in southeast Utah and most of the coal-rich Kaiparowits Plateau in south-central Utah will be studied for wilderness potential.

Utah BLM announced in mid-April that "proposed minerals activity" had caused an accelerated wilderness inventory of the 356,000-acre Dirty Devil River unit located between Canyonlands and Capitol Reef national parks. The area is high on Utah conservationists' wilderness list.

BLM's inventory proposes that 90,000 acres of the Dirty Devil unit be "designated as a wilderness study area," opening the other 266,000 for development. A public meeting on the Dirty Devil proposal is scheduled for 6 p.m. on May 12 at Hanksville following an 11 a.m. tour of the area. The comment period on the proposal ends June 5.

IDAHO — RIVER SYSTEMS

In Idaho, wilderness coordinator George Weiskircher says three large river canyon systems in southwest Idaho form a large part of the 3.7 million acres selected for study: the Deep Creek-Owyhee Canyon area (183,000 acres), Bruneau River-Sheep Creek (148,000 acres) and Jarbidge River (112,000 acres).

The Idaho proposals would release 69 percent of the 12 million acres managed by BLM in the state.

Weiskircher says 336,000 acres of the Grassland Kipuka-Great Rift instant

study area near Arco would be recommended for continued study. The area is predominately unforested lava flows south of Craters of the Moon National Monument.

MONTANA

Several large Montana areas selected for study are located north of the Missouri River in northcentral Montana and south and west of Butte, according to Gary Leppart, wilderness coordinator. Leppart says the 24,166-acre Centennial Mountain primitive area along the Montana-Idaho border is also being studied for possible wilderness designation.

The Montana office inventoried four areas in northwest South Dakota and two in southwest North Dakota totaling 25,000 acres. All six would be released from further study under the BLM proposals.

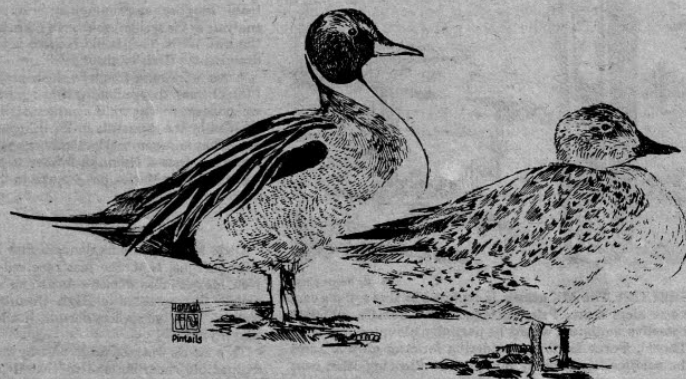
Dates and addresses for public comment on BLM's initial wilderness inventory:

Colorado: May 1 to July 31; Wilderness, BLM State Office, P.O. Box 2266, Denver, Colo. 80201.

Utah: April 1 to June 30; State Director-Wilderness, BLM, University Club Building, 136 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

Wyoming: February 15 to May 15; State Director, BLM, P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.

Idaho: March 15 to June 15, State Director, 398 Federal Building, Boise, Idaho 83724.



North Dakota

by Mike Jacobs

BISMARCK, N.D. — In sharp contrast to other recent sessions, the 1979 meeting of the North Dakota Legislature seemed to forget the environment. Few environmental issues were raised at the session, which adjourned March 29, and those did not fare well.

The legislature did approve a bill that upgrades North Dakota's strip mine reclamation law to federal standards. This was done reluctantly, however, and after a resolution appealing for a two-year exemption from the federal law was rejected.

State Sen. Stella Fritzell of Grand Forks failed in her attempt to repeal a state law requiring approval of county commissioners before private land can be sold to state and federal wildlife agencies. The law, passed in 1977, also says that easements sold

by Genevieve Dodd

The Red Desert in southcentral Wyoming encompasses close to a million acres of unfenced range land — perhaps the largest range in the country still not divided by barbed wire. However, to keep the range healthy for livestock and wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management plans to erect 44 miles of fence in the desert's Seven Lakes area. The plan, first introduced in 1976, has stirred opposition from wildlife supporters, including Wyoming's Game and Fish Department and the National Wildlife Federation. As the bureau gets ready to issue its final management plan for the area, the controversy has intensified.

Driving across the sagebrush country of southcentral Wyoming is not an awe-inspiring experience for most people. The land there looks cracked and dry, ungentled. Yet the Red Desert is the home of the world's largest migrating herd of antelope: 12,000 animals that travel 40 to 50 miles each year. It also provides forage for domestic livestock, both cattle and sheep.

At the core of the fencing dispute lies a well-defined conflict: fences help manage cattle, but they also can endanger antelope. The proposed fence cuts across the

Fences or free range: BLM plans stir disputes

major migration route of the desert's herd.

When combined with severe winter storms, fences become lethal barricades to migrating antelope. In the winter of 1971-72, one-third of the Red Desert's antelope herd died — approximately 3,600 animals. Many were found close to or caught in fences. Again this year, fences combined with an unusually severe winter have taken a high toll on antelope. To those concerned about wildlife, more fences mean more antelope traps.

Only in the last three years has fencing seemed necessary to BLM in the Seven Lakes area. Before 1976 most ranchers in the area ran sheep, confined and managed by sheepherders, not fences. Recent economic trends and a scarcity of sheepherders have made sheep less attrac-

tive than cattle to several operators. Four sheep ranchers have applied to BLM to change from sheep to cattle in the Seven Lakes area. Cattle, whose foraging habits differ from those of sheep, will require fences for proper range management, according to BLM.

In an effort to fulfill its duty as a multiple-use agency, BLM has attempted to find a compromise. The proposed fence is what one official calls a "wildlife fence." The standard livestock fence consists of five strands of barbed wire. The proposed fence uses three strands of wire; the bottom strand has no barbs and is 16 inches above the ground. Antelope, which don't often jump fences, can safely slip under the bottom wire — unless there's too much snow. BLM has used this type of fence since 1976 on public lands. The entire fence can be laid down on the ground for the winter months.

BLM has agreed to lay down 29 miles of the fence for the winter months. The Wyoming Department of Game and Fish and the National Wildlife Federation are concerned that BLM, with high employee turnover, will not continue to take the fence down year after year. BLM spokesman Ron Winker says BLM will fulfill its promise. "For us to maintain credibility, we feel we have to stick to the proposal as worded," he says.

"What we're proposing is an absolute minimum (of fencing) to facilitate proper animal distribution out there," says Winker. He says cattle tend to congregate in and overgraze drainage areas, leaving other range ungrazed. The fence will "promote orderly use of range that will benefit all species," including wildlife and livestock, says Winker.

Most ranchers of the area support BLM's fencing proposal, according to BLM. However some people, including cattle rancher William McIntosh, think that 44 miles of fence is 44 miles too much. "I am opposed to the fences; I have always been opposed to any kind of fencing in that area," says McIntosh. He thinks range management

can best be accomplished when man doesn't interfere. "We have not found anything that works range better than a cow's own instinct."

Some wildlife groups, including the National Wildlife Federation and the Defenders of Wildlife, think the proposed fence will alter the habits of four bands of wild horses living in the area. Defenders of Wildlife suggests that the fencing will "limit natural breeding selection and...ultimately lead to inbreeding." However, BLM's Winker says that the wild horses will not be affected.

Game and Fish district supervisor Bill Crump does not think the 44 miles of fence, as proposed, will endanger antelope. He is concerned, however, that BLM will not stop there. "I'll bet that within five years, more fences will be proposed (in the Seven Lakes area)," he says. He thinks additional fencing would certainly threaten the antelope. Game and Fish is asking BLM to promise not to propose more fencing but to use alternative methods for range management in the area. BLM's Winker says that no other fences will be needed and that Game and Fish's recommendations will be included in the final plan for the area.

BLM national director Frank Gregg is expected to make a final decision on the Seven Lakes fencing proposal by the end of May.

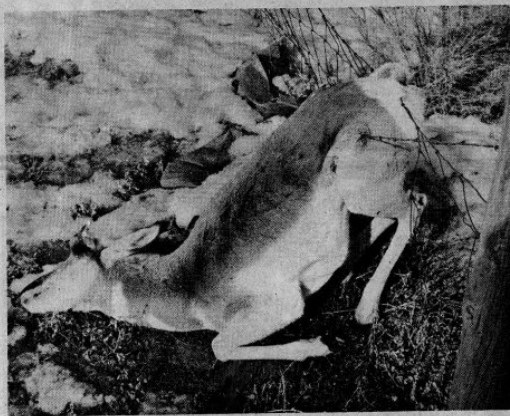


Photo by Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife

WINTER STORMS combined with fences endanger migrating antelope. Woven wire fences are especially bad since they prevent animals from crawling underneath. BLM plans to use three-strand fences and to lay the fences down each winter, which may alleviate the threat.



Nyctea scandiaca

Ghost-like designs of the lovely arctic owl, snowy owl nest upon the treeless ground. They are dependent on lemmings or arctic hare for food. When lemmings or hare are scarce, the snowy owl wanders their arctic homes or often migrates nearly a thousand miles south to survive.

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legislators resist federal environmental regulations

by a landowner for wildlife wetland refuges will end as soon as the landowner dies or sells his property.

Efforts to mandate tighter restrictions on farm drainage were turned aside by the farmer-dominated legislature to the sorrow of communities now enduring record breaking floods. Many flood victims argue that ditches dug to drain potholes destroy the natural holding capacity of the land. The proposed legislation would have required farmers to plug drains in the event of a flood emergency.

In a challenge to the federal government, legislators attempted to relax the state's speed limit laws by reducing the penalty for exceeding 55 miles per hour, but Gov. Arthur A. Link vetoed the bill.

The governor also vetoed a bill that would have permitted the owner of a major

ity of mineral rights under a parcel of land to proceed with development despite the objections of the minority mineral owners. The Legislature was not successful in overriding the veto. The issue stems from a celebrated case in Mercer County, in which a party holding one-sixtyfourth of the minerals under a section of land successfully stopped strip mining the land by appealing to the state courts.

The environment figured indirectly in several hotly contested utility bills. One, vetoed by the governor, would have permitted utilities to add the cost of construction work in progress into rate bases. The other, passed by the state senate but rejected by the house of representatives, would have allowed utilities to increase rates without approval of the state Public

Service Commission if a bond were posted.

Debate over the coal severance tax attracted attention. The Republican Party, which controlled 70 percent of both houses, compromised on a tax of 85 cents per ton which would rise with the wholesale price index, which is calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor. The tax will rise one penny for every four point rise in the index. Democrats, including Link, had supported a tax of 25 percent of the average selling price of coal at the mine mouth. Faced with an overwhelming majority opposing his position, the governor allowed the lower flat rate tax to become law without his signature.

The Garrison Diversion Project, the object of long-term controversy in North Dakota, became an issue at the session. As in the past, the legislature reaffirmed its

support of the \$650 million irrigation project, which would move water from the Missouri River to central and eastern North Dakota.

The vote on resolutions praising Garrison Diversion was closer than at any time in the past because growing concern over lands to be acquired for wildlife has fostered opposition to the project.

Critics of the project mounted a major, but unsuccessful, effort to curb the ability of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District to use tax money to lobby legislators.

The session passed a bill establishing a committee to hear grievances about land acquisition by the Bureau of Reclamation. Most of the current unrest is about wildlife mitigation lands required by the 1965 congressional authorization of Garrison.

8-High Country News — May 4, 1979

The roadrunner looked back over his tail at the car to see it gaining on him. As the automobile bore down on the astonished bird, it cocked its tail suddenly, made a sharp turn to the left, dodged through some cacti and zoomed away.



Photo by C. Allan Morgan

The omnivorous road runner

It races along paths and roads at speeds of up to 25 mph.

as curious and unpredictable as its cartoon counterpart

by Thomas Jenkins

Beep! beep! whoosh! The familiar sounds of that irrepressible film cartoon character are imitated by countless children who have watched its duels with the hapless, born-loser, "Wily Coyote." These staccato toots of arrogance are usually accompanied by the rush and roar of moving air as the fleet-footed road runner disappears in a puff of dust on the horizon.

Although a partial distortion (the coyote is not in reality a dupable buffoon), the cartoon's conceptualization has basis in fact. The road runner, living in the flat, open spaces of the semi-arid regions of the West (Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Southern California, Arizona, parts of Kansas, Louisiana and Texas) rightly deserves its name. It spends much of its time running up, down and across roads at top speed.

The real road runner also is as curious and unpredictable as its cartoon counterpart. It races along trails and roads at speeds of up to 25 mph with head-crest erect and tail straight behind, outpacing horsemen and even cars, flying only when suddenly surprised. Its 16 to 18 inch wing span is short compared to its body length of 22 to 24 inches. Its 12 inch long tail acts as a counterbalance and rudder when it is running at top speed, enabling it to turn sharply and stop quickly.

On one occasion, it was reported that a car was cruising along a country road when, on a turn, a road runner dropped into line ahead of the car. The driver sped up a little. The road runner looked back over his tail at the car to see it gaining on him. As the automobile bore down on the astonished bird, it cocked its tail suddenly, made a sharp turn to the left, dodged through some cacti and zoomed away.

Although omnivorous, feeding on insects, fruits, seeds, frogs, tarantulas, scorpions, small mammals and reptiles, it particularly likes lizards. The lizards are fast-moving, but the road runner is faster. When fed a lizard, a young bird is unable to swallow it all at once. After juggling the victim around in its mouth until the head is foremost, it gulps convulsively until the lizard is down as far as possible. Then the young bird sits, with blinking eyes, with the remainder of the lizard's body and tail dangling and wiggling from its mouth. As

the digestive processes proceed, the lizard gradually slips down the bird's throat.

The road runner also kills and eats snakes but seldom bothers with one that is too large to swallow in stages. When it does eat a snake, the procedure is similar to the lizard-digesting sequence.

When the road runner kills a rattlesnake, it does so with grisly efficiency. By fluffing out its feathers and extending its wings, it presents a large but false target for the rattlesnake. When the snake strikes, the road runner jumps quickly backward again and again. Eventually, the snake tires. Then the road runner darts in and pecks at the snake's eyes, trying to blind it. Often the bird kills the rattlesnake by splitting its skull or by seizing it by the neck and smashing its head against a rock.

The lightning-like movements instrumental in subduing the rattlesnake also enable the road runner to catch flying insects and small birds — sparrows, orioles, mockingbirds and even swifts — by leaping a foot or two in the air.

When chased by humans or animals, the road runner will disappear into a dense bush or cholla cactus. There its variegated dark and light brown feathers render it almost invisible.

Speckled coloring, along with other characteristics, contribute to the road runner's clown-like appearance: its shaggy, mobile dark-brown crest on top of its head; its long bill and legs; its disproportionately long tail; its two toes facing forward and two backward. When the road runner is excited or disturbed, it displays bright orange skin behind its striking light green eyes, raises its crest and clicks its bill.

Because of the arrangement of its toes, the road runner is difficult to track. It can't be determined immediately if the bird is coming or going.

The road runner, the state bird of New Mexico, flies only reluctantly, for short distances to cross arroyos or canyons. Its preference for running over flying makes it an avian anomaly of the Western prairies.

Thomas M. Jenkins is director of the division of communications and arts at the Red Rocks Campus of Community College of Denver.

The lizards are fast-moving, but the road-runner is faster.



10-High Country News — May 4, 1979



Photo by Leonard Lee Rue III

CARIBOU. Canada and the United States are working together to protect a large area for the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

Canada, U.S. to protect caribou

To save the barren ground caribou, U.S. and Canadian wildlife officials agree that both countries must act soon. Speaking at the National Wildlife Federation annual meeting in Toronto in March, J.A. Keith of the Canadian Wildlife Service said Canada temporarily withdrew 15,000 square miles last summer from new mineral leasing. The area is contiguous with the 14,000 square mile Arctic National Wildlife Range in Alaska.

Canada is in the final stages of preparing an agreement to be signed by the two countries that would set up a permanent commission to watch over the caribou.

About 75,000 caribou are in the Porcupine herd. While Keith says they are now maintaining this population level, there are many proposals for future development, and the Dempster Highway is now being completed through the range.

The imminent danger to the herd was pointed out by wildlife author Andy Russell, who also spoke at the meeting. Russell said that when the Alaska Highway was built, there was no thought to the environment. It split the range of the "40-mile" caribou herd, which once numbered close to half a million, according to naturalist Olaus Murie's estimates. Now only about 8,000 to 9,000 caribou are left in that herd. Many were killed by hunters along the new road, and others died when they wouldn't cross the highway to reach their traditional wintering ground.

While it is too late to reroute the Dempster Highway to prevent such problems for the Porcupine herd, the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories governments are trying to figure out ways to protect the caribou, such as conveying cars and limiting hunting. Hunting is no longer allowed within five miles of the Dempster Highway; however, the restriction applies only to nonnatives, and natives do most of the hunting.

Many other hurdles remain for the caribou. The Canadian Parliament will make the final decisions on the protective designation, and the Parliament, like the U.S. Congress, is under pressure from energy companies.

Parliament is also deciding on native claims settlements for Indians and Es-

kimos in that area, which may affect federal withdrawals.

Phillip W. Schneider of the National Wildlife Federation says that Alaska may object to the concept of a migratory mammals agreement, fearing that the federal government would usurp the state's traditional role in wildlife management.

Keith says Canada will present a proposed agreement, known as a convention, to the United States in a few months. The agreement would establish a permanent commission that would make recommendations on harvest levels and ways to conserve the habitat. Like the International Joint Commission, which considers water issues between Canada and the United States, the new commission would have advisory power only.

The agreement would have to be signed by the president and the Canadian minister for the environment.

Meanwhile, Congress is considering legislation that could expand the Arctic National Wildlife Range in Alaska and could provide further protection. However, one of the amendments being considered could also allow oil and gas exploration within the present range.

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The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

DOE ENDORSES GASOHOL. A Department of Energy (DOE) report, scheduled to be released soon, says alcohol fuels "can play an important role in our national energy strategy." The report concludes that alcohol fuels could: reduce gasoline consumption by nine percent; help alleviate shortages in lead-free gasoline; get as good or better mileage than gasoline; be made from any product containing starch and sugar (such as grain, wood, garbage, or paper) and reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil imports. The oil industry considers gasohol to be uneconomic, however.

PPG CEASES SOLAR. Glass manufacturer PPG Industries is withdrawing from the solar collector business. Recession, inflationary prices and interest rates have caused a downturn in the market. The manager of the company's solar products department, Neil Barker, says that profitable production would require raising prices and lowering costs. He says solar energy is not competitive with fossil fuels at current price levels. PPG's announcement follows a similar one by Chamberlain Manufacturing Corp., which sold its solar products division to Solaron Corp. of Denver.

RADIOACTIVE LEAKS. Two nuclear reactor plants recently reported "low level" leaks of radioactive water and steam, according to United Press International. The leaks occurred in mid-March at plants in Maine and Connecticut but weren't made public until a month after they occurred. The incident in Maine was publicized only after the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ordered the plant shut down last week. Fifteen thousand gallons of radioactive water overflowed at the Millstone 11 plant in Connecticut. The following day, 4,000 gallons of radioactive steam and water escaped into the atmosphere and adjoining buildings at Maine's Yankee atomic plant. A spokesman explained that the incident at the Connecticut plant was not classified as high priority when it happened. Neither accident presented danger to plant workers or to the public, according to safety officials in the two states.

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NUCLEAR FOES. Caution about nuclear energy facilities is growing in the wake of the Three Mile Island near-disaster, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. At Detroit Edison Company's annual meeting, a proposal to halt construction and design of nuclear plants received 10 percent of the vote from shareholders. The size of the vote may encourage similar proposals at other utility companies and will most likely insure that the proposal is introduced again next year at Detroit Edison, according to the *Journal*. Top company officials, however, say Detroit Edison remains convinced that nuclear power is the most economical form of power.



THREE MILLION JOBS. A congressional report says that a shift from coal and oil to solar energy by 1990 would create almost three million jobs for Americans. Previous speculations by solar energy critics suggested that if fossil fuel energy consumption decreases, large numbers of people will be out of work. The study, however, concludes that if solar facilities and conservation equipment were set up and replaced fossil fuels on a large scale, 1.1 million jobs would be lost in the fossil fuel industries. However, money freed from the high costs of fuel would generate 1.9 million jobs. Other ramifications of the transfer to solar energy would be increased land values and higher density communities, the report states.

WILDERNESS ADVENTURE with an environmental twist

Friends of the Earth's Wyoming Representative, Howie Wolke, announces a new idea in wilderness travel: backpacking, mountaineering, and cross country ski trips featuring high quality guiding and instruction in the use of safe, low impact wilderness travel techniques. Also, we offer two intensive field courses focusing on public lands and wilderness, designed for the environmental activist, but valuable for anyone who shares our concern about the management of our public lands. We supply food, equipment, and the opportunity for a quality wilderness experience. All in the spectacular, yet threatened mountain wilderness of northwest Wyoming.



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May 4, 1979 — High Country News-11

Oil development threatens grizzlies' last prairie

by Jim Robbins

An exploratory oil well in Montana is threatening the grizzly bear's last known prairie habitat in the continental United States.

The well is located between two lobes of Pine Butte Swamp near Choteau, Mont., an area rich in wildlife and vegetation where the bears come every spring to feed. The bears' lowland haven is in trouble, however, because it overlies part of the Overthrust Belt, a Rocky Mountain geol-

ogic formation that industry says has high oil and gas potential.

Ken Margolis of the Nature Conservancy, which recently purchased 3,000 acres of the 7,000-acre swamp for preservation, says that the well is "in the worst possible place for the bears." He's afraid that the oil operation will displace the bears — at least temporarily.

Activity at the exploratory well, operated by Hunt Energy of Texas, began in mid-March and will end in mid-May. Margolis says that this is a crucial time for the

grizzlies, but if oil is not found, the bears will probably resume normal feeding patterns next year. However, if oil is found, a permanent pumping well could have a serious impact on the wildlife, he says.

The company says that the possibility of striking oil "is very remote. The odds are one in ten."

The Nature Conservancy requested that Hunt Energy delay drilling until after the spring grizzly feeding, but according to Margolis, they refused to do so.

A spokesman for the company, Carl Fields, says that to his knowledge the Nature Conservancy "did not make any request." Besides, "We were under stringent time limitations," Fields says. "We had the equipment available for a specific time."

A bear researcher at the University of Montana, Charles Jonkel, says that oil drilling, coupled with other development activities near Choteau, could squeeze the grizzly out.

"If they hit oil, there could be quite a lot of damage," Jonkel says. "They're already

building a ski resort, a subdivision and more public roads, so there's not much grizzly habitat left in that area." Jonkel estimates that a dozen bears make their home in or near the swamp.

Before the coming of the white settlers in the 1800s grizzly bears lived on the prairie, with their habitat reaching as far east as central North Dakota. Grizzlies are now found exclusively in the mountains, except for those who venture out on the prairie near Choteau in the spring.

Hunt Energy has rights to explore for oil under most of the area, including the portion of the swamp owned by the Conservancy. The leases were purchased before the Conservancy bought the land.

Margolis says, "The whole area is unique. It contains whooping cranes and peregrine falcons." The area is also home to bobcats, deer, merlins and marsh hawks.

Jim Robbins is a free-lance writer living in Missoula, Mont.

New plans submitted for Colstrip 3 & 4

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has tentatively approved new construction plans for the 1,400-megawatt Colstrip power plant units 3 and 4 in Montana. EPA had previously rejected Montana Power Company's plans for pollution control because the agency said the plants could not meet stringent Class I air quality requirements in force on the Northern Cheyenne Indian reservation, about 20 miles south of the construction site.

In the revised plans, Montana Power substituted a different scrubber chemical — dolomitic lime — to capture more pollutants and agreed to install taller stacks to disperse residual pollution more widely.

EPA warns, however, that although the scrubber design would meet current stan-

dards, it would not meet proposed revisions to those standards, which may yet be adopted. A final decision on the EPA approval will be made after public hearings in Helena on May 22, Colstrip on May 23 and Lame Deer on May 24.

Montana Power and its four partners in the Colstrip plant may not be out of the woods even with EPA approval, however. Montana groups protesting the plant — the Northern Plains Resource Council and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe — have requested that the state supreme court rehear their suit to block construction. The groups contend there were a number of errors in the final court decision, which was announced in April (HCN, 4-20-79).

wells. However state officials say that they don't have enough money or manpower to monitor all of the drilling. Ackerman says that uranium drilling in Wyoming will exceed 20 million feet of exploratory holes in 1979 alone.

WILDERNESS OIL AND GAS LEASING. The U.S. Forest Service is planning to allow some oil and gas leasing in designated wilderness areas, according to Region 2 Deputy Regional Forester Sidney Hanks. Hanks says, "In the past, it has been Forest Service policy not to allow leasing if any surface occupancy would be required in a wilderness area. However, in re-reading the Wilderness Act of 1964, it seems clear that the intent of Congress was to lease the areas." Hanks says that leases will now be considered on a case-by-case basis. He says, "We'll consider the impacts on the surface resources on the actual piece of ground that the lease applies to." The policy reversal came about as the result of a 1976 decision by the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The board said that for the agency to make blanket refusals of leases was illegal.

IDAHO FARMERS ENCOURAGE GASOLINE. The Idaho Wheat Commission has pledged a \$10,000 grant to help develop a prototype plant to make fuel alcohol from agricultural products. The Associated Press reports that commissioner Earl Hoopes says that one gasoline plant could utilize up to 15 million bushels of wheat annually, or about 25 percent of Idaho's normal wheat crop. The wheat would be used to make grain alcohol, which is then mixed with gasoline and used as a motor fuel. The Idaho legislature is contemplating a measure that would grant a four cent per gallon decrease in the state motor fuel tax for gasoline. In addition, Hoopes says, Idaho's geothermal energy could be used to power the gasoline distilleries, thus making production of the fuel more efficient.



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

GROUP OPPOSES SOLAR PROJECT. In an odd role reversal, a Utah environmental group is suing the National Park Service to prevent construction of a small solar energy plant in Utah. According to *Engineering News-Record*, the Committee to Protect the Environment has filed in federal court to stop construction of a 100-kilowatt photovoltaic plant at the Natural Bridges National Monument in southeastern Utah. The group contends that construction of the project will result in the "denuding" of two acres of the site and that the geology, native plants and animal life will "suffer injury." The park service had determined that the project was too small to require an environmental impact statement.

URANIUM DRILLING MAY DRY WATER WELLS. According to Wyoming and federal officials, uranium exploration holes may be draining underground water formations in Wyoming. James Marie of the U.S. Geological Survey says that ranchers in the Powder River Basin have reported water levels in their wells dropping 20 to 30 feet. The water wells are near uranium mines owned by Exxon, Kerr-McGee Corp., Rocky Mountain Energy Co. and others. Walter Ackerman of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality says, "There have been wells going dry...It's damned serious." State law requires uranium mining companies to plug the test holes after drilling them, which would prevent long-term effects on water



Photo by Craig Sharpe

GRIZZLIES are now found exclusively in the mountains, except for those who venture out on the prairie near Choteau in the spring.

SOURCES SOUGHT:

Renewable Energy Policy Analysis

The Department of Energy seeks information from organizations with capability to perform innovative planning, research, and analysis for the development of renewable energy resources at the local, state, and regional level. Renewable systems that are efficiently matched to local needs in scale and thermo-dynamic quality, and that can be locally developed and controlled are of primary interest.

Capabilities to perform planning, research, and analysis are sought for a broad range of factors — economic, environmental, administrative, technical, and others — that affect the use of renewable energy resources. Such analyses would account for local variations in resource availability, climate, economic activity, and end-use demands. Analyses would emphasize inexpensive systems that might be locally implemented in the near-term, and frequently would require involvement of state and local governments and public participation.

Organizations are invited to send a brief (not more than about 5 pages) description of their interest, capabilities, and experience in this area of work to:

U.S. Department of Energy
Division of Advanced Energy
Systems Policy
Room 6E-068T
Forrestal Building
Washington, D.C. 20585

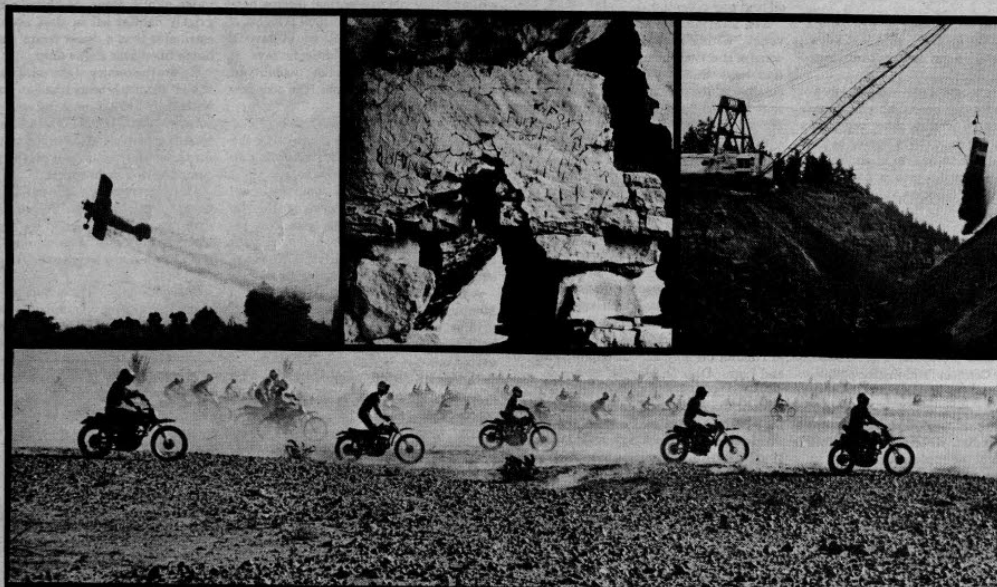
Statements should describe specific areas of interest in local renewable energy systems development, background and experience of principal staff, and organizational resources and capabilities. Statements should be sent by May 30, 1979, or within 30 days of the publication date of this notice, whichever comes later.

This notice invites expressions of interest and capability. Responses will be used to assess program feasibility and to aid design of future programs. DOE will not award contracts or grants on the basis of this notice, or otherwise pay for information solicited.

A summary of the responses to this notice will be available to the public upon request.

12-High Country News — May 4, 1979

What are they doing to your public lands?



Photos from files of EPA, BLM and High Country News

- POISONING THEM
- DESTROYING ARCHEOLOGICAL TREASURES
- TURNING THE LAND UPSIDE DOWN
- TEARING THEM UP WITH WHEELS

The Public Lands Institute (PLI) is working to protect the lands and resources that you own as a citizen. Working for their conservation and good management. Not only the Natural Forests and BLM lands, but also state-owned lands that are among the most neglected and abused.

Some PLI projects and goals —

- Making the strip mine law work
- Ecological management of forests and rangelands
- Control and prevention of damages by off-road vehicles
- Comparative analysis of state land management.
- Protection of archeological and historic sites

"In the years ahead, BLM is going to be very important in land use policy, and it can use all the help it can get. The work of the Public Lands Institute is timely and needed!" — Wallace Stegner

"The public lands have long needed a full-time advocate and defender — and they have found their champion in the Public Lands Institute." — Stewart L. Udall



To focus public opinion on public land problems — and solve them — PLI needs public support. In plainer words, we need your help! Fill out this form and mail with your check to Charles Callison, President, Public Lands Institute, 1740 High Street, Denver, CO 80218.

Membership contributions are tax deductible.

Yes, I want to join PLI and help with its work. Please enroll me and send the PLI Newsletter and other publications. (Check category)

Associate (Subscriber)	\$15 to \$99	_____
Contributor	\$100	_____
Sponsor	\$500	_____

My name _____

Address _____

Zip _____



Western Roundup



Carter would double Forest Service wilderness

The Forest Service would more than double its wilderness acreage, bringing the total up to about 16 percent of its land, if Congress acts favorably on a recent recommendation made by President Carter.

Environmentalists were generally dissatisfied with the recommendation, however. They see it as opening to development 58 percent of the country's remaining pristine forest land.

Of the 62 million roadless acres studied by the Forest Service in its second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II), Carter recommended that 36 million acres be opened to development approved by the Forest Service, including timber cutting, motorized vehicles, and mineral development. He called for 15.4 million acres of wilderness, where only low impact activities would be allowed, such as non-motorized recreation and grazing. He also asked for further Forest Service studies on

10.6 million of the roadless acres.

The president's recommendation differs only slightly from that made in January by the Forest Service. The president added 470,000 acres to the agency's wilderness recommendation.

Disappointed environmentalists hope that Congress, which makes all wilderness designations, will be more generous. "The decision from the White House is a disappointment, but Congress has yet to act," said Doris Milner of the Montana Coalition for Wilderness in a *Missoulian* article. "Congress is the voice of the people."

Wilderness Society director William Turnage called the decision "among the most negative decisions in the history of public land management." He says about one-third of all Forest Service lands should be designated wilderness.

Environmentalists were particularly upset about the lack of wilderness recom-

mendations in areas with oil and gas potential. Ninety-five percent of the roadless forest lands in the Overthrust Belt, a geologic formation said by the oil industry to be rich in oil and gas potential, were excluded from the president's wilderness proposals.

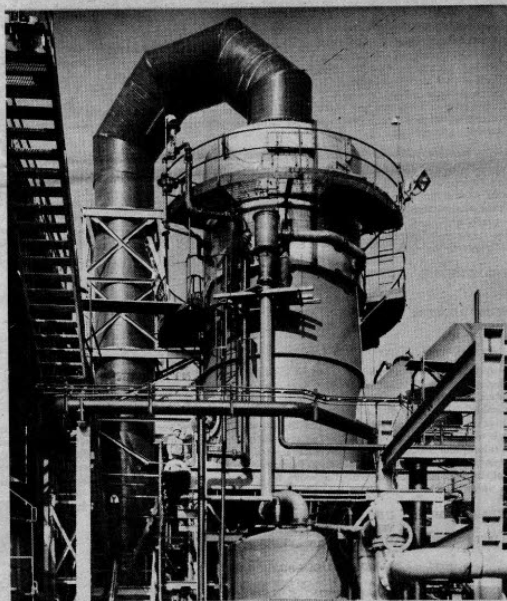
Timber interests, while apparently less upset about the recommendations than environmentalists, nevertheless predicted a

10 percent decline in timber production could result from the wilderness designations.

Bob Baker, forester for the Louisiana Pacific Corp., says that Carter is "caught up in America's wilderness hysteria." He said that the recommendation was "unnecessary and inconsiderate of the working man's needs."

In the Northern Rockies and Plains states, Carter recommended the following acreages:

	non-wilderness	further planning	wilderness
Colorado	4,214,600	235,500	2,043,100
Idaho	4,687,100	730,000	2,268,400
Montana	3,144,300	1,275,400	631,000
North Dakota	185,700	none	9,000
South Dakota	52,400	none	9,400
Wyoming	2,665,700	414,900	713,900
Utah	2,402,500	141,900	458,000



OIL REFINERY. Exxon claims that cleaning up Montana's air will cost more than it will save. Exxon owns a refinery in Billings.

Montana air study flawed, says Exxon

Officials at the Billings, Mont., Exxon oil refinery say that an air pollution study on proposed ambient air quality standards bases its economic conclusions on a state study that contains a "glaring error."

T.N. Schug, coordinator of environmental affairs for Exxon, says that the costs of cleaning up air pollution are understated, while the benefits of the clean-up are overstated.

Exxon commissioned a California consulting firm to review the study, and the firm found "significant weaknesses," according to Exxon plant manager Roy Weiland. The state study said \$17.1 million

would be saved if air pollution from some of Montana's major polluters were cleaned up. Most of the savings would be from reduced health costs. The study also said that the companies could comply with the new clean air standards for only \$4.6 million annually.

The basis for the figures was a study prepared for the state air quality bureau. Exxon says the benefits from decreased air pollution would only amount to about \$3.2 million, while the actual clean-up costs would be two to three times higher than the figures cited in the report.

Forest Service timber sale goals reduced

The U.S. Forest Service has issued its draft 1980 Resources Planning Act program, and it may spell trouble for the timber industry. *Public Lands News* reports that the agency is proposing a timber sale of only 11.5 billion board feet per year from 1981 through 1985. The timber sale proposed for fiscal year 1980 is 11.7 billion board feet, down from the 12.4 billion board foot sale of fiscal 1979.

The RPA program sets short and long term goals and budgets for the Forest Service. The new timber sale goals represent a sharp revision of previous plans. In 1975, the agency had set a RPA goal of timber sales in the range of 14.6 billion to 16.2 billion board feet for the decade of the 1980s.

The Forest Service says there are several reasons for the reduced timber sale goals: the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) and wilderness recommendations have reduced commercial forest lands; better cost-benefit estimates have reduced the acreage that justifies harvesting; and other resource uses have required constraints on timber harvests.

Dave Pavelchek, a private consultant on environmental forestry matters, says that the Forest Service's new goals for timber sales indicate that the agency's 1975 goals were unrealistic. He says, "The 1975 RPA goals were put together very quickly and were really a slapdash affair. These new projections are actually a status quo situation. Eleven point five billion board feet is nearly exactly equal to the average timber sale offering during the 1970s."



In the draft, which was released March 27, the Forest Service is proposing five alternative programs, ranging from minimal management with a small budget to intensive management with a very large budget. A final program will not be selected until public input has been analyzed. Public meetings will be held, and the public comment period ends on June 8. Interested people should contact their local Forest Service offices for a schedule of meetings. For further information, or to send comments, write to the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250.

Idaho gets three million desert acres

A U.S. Court of Appeals has affirmed Idaho's right to three million acres of desert entry land under the Carey Act of 1894. That act granted Idaho the land and said individuals may homestead 160 acres of desert land.

Under the court decision, Idaho is granted "unqualified entitlement" to the land. The Interior Department had contended that the state was only granted a "possible allocation" of the acreage. In addition, the court ruled that a husband and wife could each claim 160 acres and that a house built over the common border of the two properties satisfies the requirement that a house be built on each allotment. About 600,000 acres have already been claimed and patented in southern Idaho, leaving 2.4 million additional acres available for entry.

However, according to an environmental impact statement prepared by the Bureau of Land Management, only 28,000 acres of the land can feasibly be developed. The *Idaho Statesman* reports that a federal official says it would be "impossible" to develop the 2.4 million acres because of the unavailability of water. However, over 1,500 applications have already been filed on the land.

14-High Country News — May 4, 1979

STATE OF WYOMING PUBLIC NOTICE

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE IS TO STATE THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1972 (FWPCA), P.L. 92-500 AND THE WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (35-11-101 et. seq., WYOMING STATUTES 1967, CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT 1978).

IT IS THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS TO (1) ONE WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT AND (1) ONE OIL TREATMENT FACILITY; TO MODIFY (1) ONE INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGE PERMIT; AND TO RENEW (4) FOUR INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGE PERMITS; (1) ONE WATER TREATMENT PLANT PERMIT AND (7) SEVEN U.S. GOVERNMENT DISCHARGE PERMITS WITHIN THE STATE OF WYOMING.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

(1) APPLICANT NAME: TEN MILE INDUSTRIAL PARK
WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 439
CASPER, WYOMING 82602

APPLICATION NUMBER: Wy-0028258

The Ten Mile Industrial Park Water and Sanitation District is located west of the City of Casper and south of the Natrona County Airport. The District intends to build a three cell stabilization pond which will be designed to treat up to 750,000 gallons of domestic wastewater per day. The ponds will discharge to Six Mile Draw (Class IV stream) via an unnamed drainage.

The proposed permit for this facility requires compliance with national secondary treatment standards and Wyoming's in-stream water quality standards effective immediately. Because the receiving stream is a Class IV water there is no need to provide treatment for ammonia removal.

The proposed permit requires periodic self-monitoring of effluent quality with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire May 31, 1984.

(2) APPLICANT NAME: AMOCO PRODUCTION COMPANY

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 569
POWELL, WYOMING 82435

FACILITY LOCATION: LITTLE BUFFALO BASIN
NORTHWEST DOME U.S.A. WELL NO. 7
SW4, SECTION 2, T47N, R100W
PARK COUNTY, WYOMING

APPLICATION NUMBER: Wy-0028266

Facility is a typical oil treater located in Park County, Wyoming. The produced water is separated from the petroleum product through the use of heater treaters and skim ponds. The discharge is to Little Buffalo Creek (Class IV Stream) via an unnamed drainage.

The discharge must meet Wyoming's Produced Water Criteria effective immediately. Chapter VII of the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations infers that as long as the Produced Water Criteria is met, the water is suitable for beneficial use. There is no evidence to indicate that limitations more stringent than the Produced Water Criteria are needed to meet Wyoming's Water Quality Standards. The Department will continue to evaluate this discharge and, if necessary, will modify the permit if evidence indicates that more stringent limitations are needed.

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date is December 31, 1981.

(3) PERMIT NAME: CARTER MINING COMPANY
"RAWHIDE COAL MINE"

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 269
GILLETTE, WYOMING 82716

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0024031

The Carter Company operates an open pit coal mine located north of Gillette, Wyoming, which is known as the Rawhide Mine. The mine has a single large wastewater settling pond (discharge point 001) enters the Dry Fork of the Little Powder River (Class IV Stream) and is located in the SE4, SE4, Section 12, T51N, R72W.

The Company has now requested that two additional discharge points be added to this permit. Discharge point 002 would consist of pit water and runoff from disturbed areas and would be located in the NE4, NW4 of Section 12, T51N, R72W. Discharge point 003 would consist of pit water and runoff from disturbed areas and would be located in the SE4, NE4 of Section 15, T51N, R72W.

The proposed permit incorporates the two additional points of discharge and requires compliance, at all three discharge points, with effluent limitations considered to be best practicable for the coal mining industry. BOD-5, total coliform and total residual chlorine shall be limited and monitored at discharge point 001 only since this is the only point which receives domestic sewage.

Regular self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the reporting of results quarterly. An expiration date of December 31, 1980, is proposed due to the present uncertainties concerning the EPA toxic substances effluent guidelines.

(4) PERMIT NAME: C.F. & I. STEEL CORPORATION

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 609
GUERNSEY, WYOMING 82214

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0020800

The C.F. & I Steel Corporation operates an iron ore and ore upgrading plant at Sunrise, Wyoming. Water which is pumped from the mine is routed to two concrete settling ponds which are operated in series. During weekdays when the mill is in operation water is pumped from the settling ponds for use in the mill. During weekends when the mill is not in operation the settling ponds overflow into a series of 3 small settling ponds which are constructed in the Hartville Canyon Creek drainage (Class IV Stream). The final settling pond has a flow measurement structure and is considered the official point of discharge.

The proposed permit requires compliance with National Best Practicable Standards effective immediately. Because the discharge is to a Class IV Stream, effluent quality better than "best practicable" is not required to meet Wyoming's in-stream water quality standards.

The proposed permit contains standard language requiring the control of runoff from disturbed areas. In addition, the permittee must monitor the effluent quality on a regular basis and report results quarterly.

Because EPA is in the process of developing toxic material effluent limitations for the iron ore mining and processing industry, the State is required to issue a short term permit with an expiration date of December 31, 1980.

(5) PERMIT NAME: MEDICINE BOW COAL COMPANY

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 550
HANNA, WYOMING 82327

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0023604

The Medicine Bow Coal Company operates a large open pit coal mine west of Hanna, Wyoming. Groundwater and natural runoff encountered while mining is routed to two settling ponds, discharge point 001, where under normal circumstances the water evaporates without discharging, however, under high water conditions the final pond may discharge to Big Ditch (Class III Stream), a tributary of Seminoe Reservoir (Class I Water).

Discharge point 002 consists of pit water that is routed to a settling pond and if discharged would flow back into the mine pit (closed system).

Effective immediately the discharge from either point would be required to meet National Best Practicable Treatment Standards for coal mining operations. Self-monitoring is required on a regular basis with submission of

reports quarterly. The proposed permit is being given an expiration date of December 31, 1980, due to the present uncertainties surrounding the EPA toxic substances effluent guidelines.

(6) PERMIT NAME: WYODAK RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MAILING ADDRESS: GARNER LAKE ROUTE
GILLETTE, WYOMING 82716

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0001261

Wyodak Resources Development Corporation operates a large open pit coal mine east of the City of Gillette, Wyoming. Natural runoff and groundwater which enters the pit is pumped to a large sedimentation pond (discharge point 001) which discharges to Donkey Creek (Class IV stream). The Company also operates a domestic sewage lagoon (discharge point 002) which to date has not discharged.

Effluent discharged from point 001 must meet limitations considered best practicable for coal mining facilities effective immediately. Effluent discharged from point 002 must meet secondary sewage treatment standards effective immediately.

The proposed permit also contains a section on controlling runoff from disturbed areas.

Self-monitoring of all parameters is required on a regular basis with submission of reports quarterly. An expiration date of December 30, 1980, was given due to the present uncertainties concerning the EPA toxic substances guidelines.

(7) PERMIT NAME: UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
"CHEYENNE YARDS"

MAILING ADDRESS: 1416 DODGE STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68179

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0000647

The Union Pacific Railroad Company operates a large yard and terminal in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Wastewater produced at the yard originates from several sources including: water softener regenerators, boiler blowdown, cooling water, tank car washing and storm runoff. Water from these various sources is routed to a wastewater treatment facility which consists of the following major units: Concrete settling basin; Baffled oil separation pit; pH adjustment unit; An air floatation vat with the addition of flocculants; A fourteen foot redwood slat bio-filter; A standard clarifier; and, an aerobic digester. The plant has insufficient design capacity so that there is opportunity for recycle of water through both the air floatation vat and the bio-filter.

The discharge from the plant enters Crow Creek (Class IV water). Because the receiving water is designated as Class IV, it is an effluent limited stream and compliance with effluent limitations considered to be "best practicable" is sufficient to meet in-stream water quality standards.

When the existing permit was drafted, Crow Creek had not yet been classified under Wyoming Water Quality Standards, therefore, some of the effluent limitations and self-monitoring requirements are more stringent than necessary now that the stream has been designated as Class IV. Specific proposed changes include the following:

1. A reduction in monitoring frequency for BOD-5 from weekly to monthly. The BOD-5 test is difficult and expensive and BOD-5 levels are not critical in Class IV waters which have no dissolved oxygen standards.
2. An increase in monitoring frequency for total suspended solids from two times per month to weekly. This change is necessary to monitor plant performance with the reduction in BOD-5 monitoring. The total suspended solids test is much more simple than the BOD-5 test.
3. Elimination of limitations and monitoring for the parameter ammonia since there is no water quality standard for this parameter in Class IV waters.
4. Elimination of limitations and monitoring for the parameter dissolved aluminum. Past monitoring data indicates that this parameter does not appear in significant quantities provided pH levels are kept within permit limitations of 6.0-9.0 units.

Because the railroad yard covers a considerable area and thus storm runoff volumes can be quite large, there is a provision in the proposed permit which will allow bypass of excess flows during wet weather periods. The plant intake structure is designed so that when water volumes begin to approach the capacity of the plant, an alarm sounds. At that time the permittee is required to shut down all non-essential water producing activities (such as tank car washing and paint stripping). If the water volume continues to rise due to storm runoff, the excess will eventually spill over the bypass. This bypass water flows through a baffled separator which provides oil removal before discharge to Crow Creek. In the past, the bypass has been used for only an average of a few days each year, usually during the spring.

(8) PERMIT NAME: TOWN OF LOVELL, WYOMING
"WATER TREATMENT PLANT"

MAILING ADDRESS: 336 NEVADA AVENUE
LOVELL, WYOMING 82431

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0003166

The filter backwash water from the Town of Lovell's water treatment plant is routed to a small settling pond which discharges to the Shoshone River (Class II water) via an unnamed drainage. This system has been in operation for several years and has proven to be capable of meeting effluent standards considered to be "best practicable" for this type of operation.

The proposed renewal simply requires the Town to continue to meet these "best practicable" effluent limitations, to monitor the quality of the effluent on a regular basis, and to report monitoring results quarterly. Because alum (aluminum sulfate) is used in the water treatment process the permit contains effluent limitations and self-monitoring requirements for aluminum. Because of the large dilution factor in the receiving stream, effluent limitations more stringent than best practicable are not necessary to meet in-stream water quality standards. The permit is scheduled to expire June 30, 1984.

(9) PERMIT NAME: U.S. FOREST SERVICE
TENSLEEP DISTRICT

MAILING ADDRESS: 11177 WEST 8th AVENUE
P.O. BOX 25127
LAKEWOOD, COLORADO 80225

FACILITY LOCATION: TYRELL RANGER STATION
BIG HORN NATIONAL FOREST

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0021604

The U.S. Forest Service operates a wastewater treatment facility, consisting of a package treatment plant, chlorination unit and a polishing pond, which serves Tyrell Ranger Station in the Big Horn National Forest.

The wastewater discharge permit for the Tyrell Ranger Station will expire June 30, 1979. The U.S. Forest Service indicates that a leach field will be in place and operational for this facility by December, 1979, and the discharge will then be eliminated. The renewal permit simply extends the existing secondary treatment limits and self-monitoring requirements (with the exception of residual chlorine which must be monitored daily instead of weekly) to December 31, 1979, after which a discharge permit will not be needed.

(10) PERMIT NAME: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1630
MILLS, WYOMING 82644

FACILITY LOCATION: FREMONT CANYON POWER PLANT
NATRONA COUNTY, WYOMING

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0020885

FACILITY LOCATION: GLENDO POWER PLANT
PLATTE COUNTY, WYOMING

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0020851

Eavesdropper

YOSEMITE CLEANUP. A proposed plan for Yosemite National Park would impose the most stringent limits on development that exist at any national park in the country. It calls for a drastic reduction in automobiles, removal of swimming pools, banks, beauty parlors and other businesses and a reduced number of overnight facilities. The plan would limit overnight visitors to 7,066 and day-use visitors to 7,000.

FREIGHT DEREGULATION. President Carter recently proposed in a message to Congress to end long-standing governmental regulation of the rail freight industry. The bill, if passed, would allow large rate increases and end legalized price fixing in the industry. Abandonment of unprofitable routes would also be permitted.



(DEQ continued)

FACILITY LOCATION:	GUERNSEY POWER PLANT PLATTE COUNTY, WYOMING
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0020923
FACILITY LOCATION:	SEMINOE POWER PLANT CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0021008
FACILITY LOCATION:	SEMINOE GOVERNMENT CAMP CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0020877
FACILITY LOCATION:	SHOSHONE POWER PLANT PARK COUNTY, WYOMING
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0020893

The Bureau of Reclamation operates small package sewage treatment plants at the above listed power plants. The wastewater discharge permits for these facilities will expire June 30, 1979. The Bureau of Reclamation has been committed to eliminating these discharges during fiscal year 1980, therefore, the renewal permits simply extend the existing secondary treatment limits and self-monitoring requirements (with the exception of residual chlorine which must be monitored daily instead of weekly) through September 30, 1980, after which time there will be no discharges from these facilities.

STATE EPA TENTATIVE DETERMINATIONS

Tentative determinations have been made by the State of Wyoming in cooperation with the EPA staff relative to effluent limitations and conditions to be imposed on the permits. These limitations and conditions will assure that State water quality standards and applicable provisions of the FWPCA will be protected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are invited any time prior to June 4, 1979. Comments may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division, Permit Section, Hathaway Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Enforcement Division, Permit Administration and Compliance Branch, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295. All comments received prior to June 4, 1979, will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling the State of Wyoming, (307) 777-7781, or EPA (303) 327-3574, or by writing to the aforementioned addresses.

The complete applications, draft permits, and related documents are available for review and reproduction at the aforementioned addresses.

Public Notice: Wy-79-006

CRIPPLED WATER PROGRAM. A Department of Housing and Urban Development subcommittee has recommended a one-year funding moratorium for some sections of the Clean Water Act, including grants to local governments for clean water planning. Subcommittee investigators said the Environmental Protection Agency has been too slow in processing state grants. EPA administrator Douglas Costle said that such a cutback would "cripple" the nation's water pollution control effort.

RESOURCE REORGANIZATION

UNVEILED. The White House has announced long-awaited plans to reorganize the Interior Department and some other agencies to create a Department of Natural Resources. The plan calls for the combination of Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, which is now under the Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, now part of the Commerce Department. The plan is designed to save \$100 million while improving the services of the agencies, according to Vice President Walter Mondale. The new department will have 89,800 employees and a budget of \$7.4 billion. Current Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus is expected to head the agency. The administration backed down from its original plans, however, which would have included the major agencies involved in federal water projects — the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers — in the reorganization. Those plans would have stripped the Corps of Engineers of its dam-building authority, but an administration spokesman said that the proposal faced too much opposition for Southern and Western congressmen. A stiff fight is expected in Congress over the compromise reorganization plan.

DIESEL RUSH. American manufacturers are sold out of 1979 model cars with diesel engines. Customers anxious about tight gasoline supplies have paid as much as \$2,000 over the suggested retail price for the diesel engine cars.

BRANCHING OUT

WILD EDIBLES
by Myra Connell

My ancestors began moving westward from the Eastern seaboard over 100 years ago. Along the way wild foods were a big factor in their survival. Numerous wild plants and fruits kept wild meat from becoming too monotonous and helped ward off scurvy.

How they learned to identify edible plants and distinguish them from inedible or poisonous ones is a mystery. No doubt they learned from the Indians. Possibly some information was passed down by previous generations. But it seems certain that someone, somewhere along the line, had to use the trial and error method.

Since the back-to-nature movement became the "in thing," the literature on wild edibles has become abundant. Not long ago a worker at the public library handed me a thick, new paperback by Bradford Angier titled *Feasting Free on Wild Edibles*. I'm sure my pioneer ancestors never had access to anything like it.

Angier has discovered "more than 500 ways to banquet on nature's bounty." Included are recipes for preparation, many of which seem to be a means of disguising the main ingredient.

Each species is pictured and described in minute detail, so the reader can identify it. I have been eating wild foods all my life; even so, I would be loath to try any of those described unless my family had used them.

Identification seems too difficult. Several familiar ones are included — watercress, for instance. About 1900 my grandfather brought a start of watercress from Utah to central Wyoming and established it in a spring a few miles from the

homestead where I grew up. Our family enjoyed luscious greens from there for many springtimes.

When my brother and I were old enough to be trusted with a horse, we rode double to the spring to gather the cress in a gunny sack. Not more than a dozen years ago, both spring and cress were still there; I hope they still are.

Angier suggests that raw watercress gathered from polluted water can be made safe by soaking the well-washed cress in a quart of water to which two halogen tablets have been added. When I first moved to Michigan, polluted water was outside my experience. I learned the hard way not to gather watercress wherever I happened to find it.

We have always used pigweed, also called lamb's quarter; dandelions, both raw and cooked; and dock. These greens are good in combination.

Wild mint that grows along creeks and irrigation ditches makes a refreshing tea, hot or cold. Also, we used to dry it for winter.

In Michigan I have used sassafras bark tea as a spring tonic. An old French-Canadian showed me where it grew.

Angier mentions all these but omits two other important wild foods from this quite comprehensive book, namely, the sego lily bulb, *Calochortus nuttallii*, and the related camas, *Camassia quamash*, both of Western United States. Camas helped keep the Nez Perce Indians and the men of the Lewis and Clark expedition alive.

My mother made a tasty root beer from roots of dandelions, sour dock and nettles, plus dried hops. I'm sorry I failed to preserve her recipe — perhaps Angier would have liked to get it. But then, I never liked the stuff.

service directory

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creating energy
by David A. Wilson

The third in a series of Practical uses of solar energy, this book covers concentrating collectors, solar furnace, electricity, and much more. Complete plans and information.

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16-High Country News — May 4, 1979



HCN Bulletin Board



LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

There once was a black-footed ferret
Advancing in age and in cares. It
Heard dead kin scream
Each night in a dream,
"Brother, hiding from man has some
merit."

PIEDRA RIVER STATEMENT

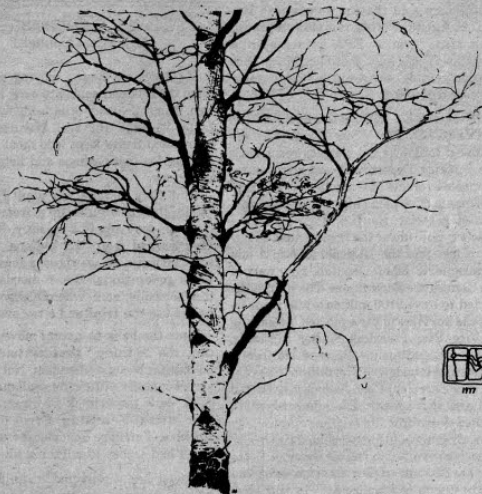
The U.S. Forest Service has released a Draft Environmental Statement on the Piedra Wild and Scenic River Study. Copies of the draft statement are available from the Forest Supervisor's office in Durango, Colo. Written comments will be accepted until June 13 and should be sent to the Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest, 701 Camino Del Rio, Durango, Colo. 81301.

SUBVERTING THE WEATHER

People have stopped talking about the weather and are beginning to do something about it. But weather modification has been credited with continental climatic effects, including flash floods, loss of life and property destruction. An Environmentalist's Primer on Weather Modification is available for \$2 from the Stanford Environmental Law Society, Stanford Law School, Stanford, Calif. 94305.

IDAHO PAPER EXPANDING

The Idaho Citizen, a strong conservation voice in the state, is trying to expand its readership. The paper is offering subscriptions for \$3 per year for 10 issues annually. The paper also needs writers, particularly for "how to" articles on ways to conserve resources and wildlife. Consumer issue-oriented articles are also wanted. Contact the Idaho Citizen, Box 9303, Boise, Idaho 83707.



ROMCOE MEETING

James Stoessinger of the Colorado School of Mines will be the keynote speaker at the ninth annual Rocky Mountain Center on the Environment dinner on May 14 in the Denver Hilton. Stoessinger, who is on a leave of absence from the City University of New York, will focus on the growth problems stemming from energy development. The event is a fundraiser for ROMCOE, a Denver-based group which acts as a neutral party on environmental disputes. Reservations may be made through the ROMCOE office, 1115 Grant St., Denver, Colo. 80203 or by calling (303) 861-1260.

IDAHO LEGISLATIVE RECORDS

Eight Idaho state senators and six members of the House of Representatives received 80 percent or better voting records in the 1979 session for their votes on environmental issues, according to the Idaho Conservation League. Five senators, but no house members, received ratings of less than 20 percent. For complete information about Idaho legislative voting records, contact ICL, Box 844, Boise, Idaho 83701.

ARIZONA BLM WILDERNESS

The Bureau of Land Management in Arizona has completed its initial wilderness inventory of 12.5 million acres of public lands. At a series of nine open house programs, BLM representatives will explain the tentative inventory decisions, answer questions and get public comment. Open houses will be in Yuma, May 29; Lake Havasu City, May 30; Kingman, May 31; Safford, June 4; Tucson, June 5; Phoenix, June 6; Flagstaff, June 7; Page, June 11; and St. George, Utah, June 12. For further information contact BLM, 2400 Valley Bank Center, Phoenix, Ariz. 85073.

PUBLIC OPINION PROJECT

The Northern Rockies Action Group (NRAG) has recently started a Public Opinion Project to help organizations use polling information more effectively. The project will provide groups with several services, including training in designing, conducting, and interpreting polls. It will also make polling data available to citizens' groups. Contact Joe Lamson, NRAG, 9 Placer Street, Helena, Mont. 59601 for more information.

NUCLEAR INFORMATION

The Environmental Action Reprint Service is now offering Nuclear Information Catalog No. 10. The catalog presents a selection of books, articles, reprints, posters, bumper stickers and other materials concerning nuclear power. Topics include general information, economics, terrorism and other related issues. For a copy of the catalog, write EARS, Box 545, La Veta, Colo. 81055 or call (303) 742-3221.

WIND ENERGY CONFERENCE

An overview of the federal wind energy program will be presented during the Wind Energy Innovative Systems Conference May 23-25, 1979, at the Four Seasons Motor Inn, Colorado Springs, Colo. The conference is being coordinated by the Solar Energy Research Institute and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. The program is designed to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information related to wind energy projects. For information concerning registration, fees and hotel accommodations contact Vicky Curry, SERI, 1536 Cole Blvd., Golden, Colo. 80401, (303) 231-1467.

FISH, WILDLIFE GRANTS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published a final environmental impact statement on two federal grant programs. The statement examines the programs authorized by two public laws: the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Copies of the statement are available at regional offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

BIOMASS INSTITUTE

The International Biomass Institute (IBI) is a recently established non-profit organization "dedicated to community self-sufficiency through the use of biomass." The group will send out a bimonthly newsletter to interested persons free of charge. Write them at 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005 for more information.

POWDER RIVER BASIN EIS

The U.S. Department of Interior has released the final environmental impact statement on the proposed development of coal resources in Wyoming's eastern Powder River Basin. The statement analyzes the impacts from individual mines as well as the cumulative impacts of mining in the basin. According to the EIS, coal production in the area will range from a potential high of 330 million tons to a low of 170 million tons annually by 1990. Individual copies can be obtained from the State Director (920), Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, 2515 Warren Ave., P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.



As You Sow

Review by Lee Nellis

Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness, by Walter Goldschmidt. Allanheld, Osmun & Co. Montclair, N.J. 07042. 1978 reissue of 1947 original with a new foreword and additional chapters. \$7.95 paperback. 506 pages.

HCN readers given to careful thinking about what corporate control of basic resources such as food and energy means, should try *As You Sow*.

In this 1947 classic, anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt investigated the differences between two California farming towns — Dinuba, where small family-owned farms prevailed, and Arvin, where large scale industrialized farming was dominant. The differences Goldschmidt found sparked a virulent three-year controversy among agribusiness organizations, the California press, large landow-

ners and California congressmen. Goldschmidt's employers in the U.S. Department of Agriculture suppressed the study. Only the persistence of Montana Congressman Jim Murray, chairman of the Senate's Small Business Committee, brought the study to the public's attention.

In the recent reprint, Goldschmidt has added a chapter detailing the controversy that surrounded his work. The treatment of the study by corporate interests and their bureaucratic counterparts shows us "what this industrial agriculture does to our national life," Goldschmidt says.

As You Sow is not light reading. Documentation of the communities' economic and social environment is exhaustive. But the conclusions are worth the trouble — the contrast in local control of local affairs, in social diversity, and economic stability between Arvin and Dinuba is clear. And it gives readers who see more and more large corporations taking control of local resources something to think about.

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