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The Environmental Biweekly of the Rockies and Great Plains

High Country News

Vol. 11 No. 18

Lander, Wyoming

Friday, September 21, 1979

Northern Tier oil pipe likely to go if dollars flow

by Geoffrey O'Gara

The clear water of Siegel Creek in western Montana tumbles down from Siegel Mountain, hundreds of gallons of snowmelt rushing north. With a little imagination, you can follow its sinuous journey from the wild, steep confines of Siegel Creek north

and then west to the broad mouth of the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean.

Three years from now, if a Montana energy transport consortium can find its way through the canyons of regulation and finance, there will be more than water rushing through the narrow valley. There will be oil, 344 gallons every second, flow-

ing south in a pipe buried three feet underground beside the creek. Propelled by a pump station five miles back, the pipeline oil will surge up Siegel Creek, cross a pass and follow Ninemile Creek toward Missoula.

If one can respond to oil the way some do to rushing water, it may make the imagi-

nation tingle to think that this crude has come all the way from Alaska's Prudhoe Bay, across Alaska by pipeline to Valdez, south by tanker to Washington, then across the Cascades to the Rockies, where it runs by Siegel Creek. Most of it will go all the way to Minnesota to be distributed in smaller pipelines to Midwest refineries.

For the moment, such a west-to-east pipeline is mere conjecture. This October, Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus must recommend to President Carter whether or not to allow the Northern Tier Pipeline Co. to install 1,500 miles of 42-inch pipe between Port Angeles, Wash., and Clearbrook, Minn.

Most observers, including pipeline opponents, expect the project to get the go-ahead from Interior and the President. Then the Environmental Protection Agency, which has already deemed the project "acceptable," must approve the plan for a West Coast tanker terminal.

Still, the Northern Tier pipeline is not yet a certainty. Andrus has other pipeline proposals to look at. In that case, investors would kiss good-bye about \$20 million the company has already invested in its efforts to gain the administration's acceptance and roughly 450 necessary permits. If it gets federal approval, Northern Tier Pipeline Co. must still gather permits from some straggling local agencies and states. Only in Washington state, which would host tanker traffic for the pipeline, have officials remained skeptical of the plan. Once those regulatory hurdles are passed, the company must find investors willing to put up the \$1.6 billion it will cost to lay the pipe.

With so much at stake, the Northern Tier pipeline has aroused controversy in several areas, among them: the economics of pipelines, the accuracy of national energy forecasts, states' rights in the West, U.S. relations with Canada, and environmental impacts on areas such as Siegel and Ninemile creeks.

OIL FOR THE NORTHERN TIER

Serious interest in the idea of pumping oil from the West Coast to the country's heartland came about by a timely confluence of events: Canada's announcement in 1975 that it was phasing out oil sales to the United States and a glut of Alaskan oil arriving two years later at West Coast ports.

Canada's announcement that no more oil would be exported to the United States after 1981 alarmed oil refiners in the "Northern Tier" — the states running along the northern border from the West Coast to the Great Lakes. For years, they

Howard Zahniser

The gentle, genial man behind the Wilderness Act

by Peter Wild
© 1979

Throughout the Depression, urbane conservationist Robert Marshall was selling the concept of a national wilderness system. He buttonholed Washington's

elite and cajoled the Forest Service into designating lands to be set aside as inviolate.

On the verge of success in the late Thirties, Marshall rallied his followers for the final push. But World War II and Marshall's untimely death from a heart attack in 1939 postponed the victory.

Then, the year after the worldwide conflict ended, the Forest Service experienced a change of heart. Pressured by the timber lobby, it began disassembling the units of wilderness that Marshall and others had hoped would become the seedbed for a series of reserves stretching across the country.

Clearly, if America were to save even tokens of its once pristine land, someone would have to take up Marshall's standard. And, facing the new postwar enthusiasm for economic growth, that person would have to begin well behind where optimistic predecessors had left off.

The task fell to an unlikely candidate. A former high-school English teacher, Howard Zahniser had little of Marshall's chutzpah, and certainly none of his wealth. His delights centered on a private collection of nature books and on writing bits of puckish verse for the entertainment of friends. Bespectacled and heavy set, he hardly looked the part of such forerunners as John Muir and Marshall, men who had captured the public imagination with a combination of intellectual toughness and physical exploits. Once thrust into the complex political struggles for passage of wilderness legislation, however, Zahniser



Photos courtesy of The Wilderness Society

HOWARD ZAHNISER: "We are not fighting progress. We are making it."

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(continued on page 4)



Missile system is MXed up

Elsewhere in this issue, the alert reader will find a brief item on President Carter's decision to go ahead with deployment of the MX missile. Though we don't often comment on military matters, the huge new system will be built in the West, and we have a modest suggestion.

The MX scheme will keep giant missiles shuttling hither and thither on "racetracks" — a Department of Defense euphemism for large highways. The project will cost \$36 billion and will require as much as 22,000 square miles of land in Nevada and Utah. The idea behind the constant shifting is to keep the Russians in the dark about where the missiles are located at any given moment.

The department abandoned an earlier proposal to move the missiles through a series of underground tunnels via railroad tracks. In rejecting the tunnel idea, Defense Secretary Harold Brown said that the "racetrack" approach would do less environmental damage than the tunnels. There was even one Strangelovian suggestion that that the areas enclosed by the racetracks could be made into public parks. Think of it. A merry family on the Utah desert, chomping its Colonel Sander's, basking in the wilderness ambience as 190,000 pound missiles trundle through the picnic area in massive trucks. A real feast for the soul.

We propose that the department resurrect the idea of moving the missiles around in tunnels. This would create few surface indications of the missiles' presence. Next, the government should launch a huge public relations campaign describing the installation of the MX system. Then, we never actually build them!

Think how much trouble the Russians would have locating those missiles then! The Pentagon could erect a few cosmetic improvements to the Western landscape — nothing too serious — so the Russians would think the tunnels were there. Then we could release a congressional study about cost overruns — no defense project is complete without cost overruns. Finally, the Pentagon could announce that the MX will soon be outdated, so Congress could get to work debating some new system. The nation would be secure. The Russians would think we have a great new missile system, and they wouldn't be able to find any of the missiles — which is the whole idea of MX anyway.

None of the critical elements of defense strategy are missing from this scenario. However, the taxpayer has saved a fortune by not building an expensive missile system and the wild West has been spared one more assault. It's a simple, money-saving idea.

— DSW

We can't ignore TVA challenge

The Tennessee Valley Authority has come to Wyoming's door bearing paper flowers and acting neighborly, but it's a thinly-masked challenge to a duel. The state has already been treated to a glimpse of the wagonload of legal artillery TVA can unleash if Wyoming acts too stubborn.

Four years ago, when it first began scouting for uranium and coal properties in the West, TVA assured HCN that the agency would comply with both state and federal laws (HCN, 9-24-75). Now TVA is claiming its Morton Ranch uranium operation is exempt from the Wyoming Industrial Siting Act.

The jousting between TVA and state officials has so far been genial, largely because TVA assumes it will win without a messy shootout. The agency is voluntarily updating its environmental impact statement and assuring everyone that it will be a good neighbor.

Despite the mannerly machinations, Converse County officials aren't fooled or intimidated. They know TVA has a not-so-pretty record of defying Eastern states' environmental laws and disrupting Appalachian lives. The new TVA board would reportedly like to change that record.

Hopefully, TVA will be forced by law to submit to the siting act's requirements. However, if it is not and if TVA's new board seriously wants to change the agency's image, TVA should comply voluntarily with the requirements of the siting act. It should sign contracts similar to those signed by energy developers in nearby Wheatland, which was protected by the siting act. The contracts should stipulate that the agency will help with schools, social service, planning and even housing if local revenues are inadequate.

Such contracts would be much more convincing than pretty promises.

— MJA

Dear Friends,

Every summer, when the letters to the editor start to dwindle, we worry. It's not just that we wonder whether any of you are reading the paper; we also depend upon you to keep us on our toes. If we've missed a local angle on a story or misrepresented one side's point of view on an issue, we expect to hear about it.

We're also scolded for grammatical errors — sometimes even for our odd-ball hyphenation. A reader recently wrote us about a particularly creative word division and said, "That's NOT how I was taught in school."

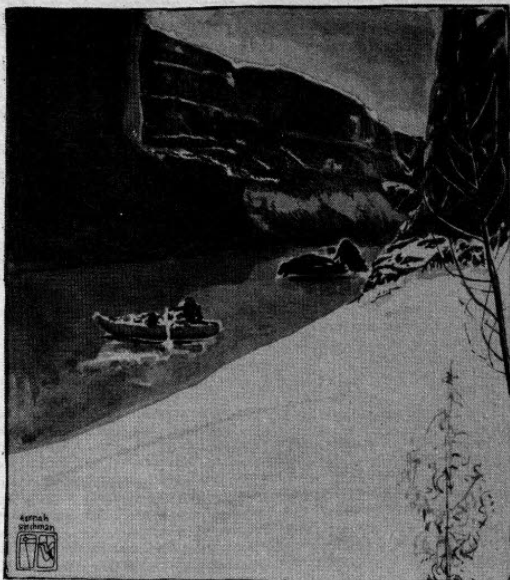
Fortunately, we can blame such snafus on the computer that produces our type. It squeezes and stretches to make each line the same length, but when there aren't enough spaces to jostle, it splits words helter-skelter. More sophisticated models are programmed with proper hyphenations in their memories, but ours skipped class that day.

Knowing that, we hope you can join in the laughs we get at the computer's expense. Sam Reynolds of *The Missoulian*, one of our favorite editorial writers, had great fun with a similarly recalcitrant machine. We have borrowed a few of his lines just to show you how computers are expanding the English lexicon:

"Where else can you read of a middle-eight? Or hark to the rustling of the cornstalk? Or learn about the exploits of a righthander? Or ponder the meaning of glassware? Or encounter those mysteries of deregulation? Or laugh when your smart girlfriend tells you all about her lively pet warthog who cavorts around in a big tub of biomass? Or fear for your life due to nuclear fallout — a fear deep enough to beat one's dead, teeming nuclear swords into plowhares?"

— the staff





A river runner won't go far in a stagnant reservoir

Desolation, on the Green River in Utah, is a cathedral of a canyon. Its only problem in the past has been a few too many human admirers. We used to worry that the thousands of people who float the canyon each year, by sheer numbers and sloppy camping techniques, might eventually transform the wilderness into a messy outdoor amusement park.

Now we can see that, strangely enough, it may be those very crowds that save the canyon. To have floated Desolation is to love it. And nobody with any affection for the place will be able to sit silently in the face of Utah Power and Light's recent proposal to build a 500-foot dam 12 miles north of the town of Green River. The dam would flood an 80-mile stretch most favored by river runners — both Grays and Desolation canyons. In exchange we'd have 1,000 megawatts of electrical power and an enormous reservoir, complete with the bathtub ring and motorized human hullabaloo that always seem to accompany such projects.

The proposal, still in the most tentative planning stages, has already been blasted by the gritty Western River Runners Association, a group of outfitters. The issue reminds them of Glen Canyon, where the West quietly lost a spectacular stretch of wild country in exchange for Lake Powell and Glen Canyon Dam.

But this time the battle will be different. As David Brower put it, Glen Canyon was "the place that no one knew." Desolation Canyon, despite its name, has thousands who know it intimately.

When the battle for federal permits begins, we urge those thousands to let federal officials know that the canyon outshines whatever illumination the Green River dam could provide.

— JN



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DUE PROCESS FOR SOLAR, TOO

Dear editor,

Upon belatedly reading the July 13 issue I was struck by the juxtaposition of the drawing of the proposed solar plant for Natural Bridges National Monument and the expressions of distaste for development of the Clarks Fork.

Surely the mirrors depicted would be as much an eyesore in Natural Bridges as an extension of the road would be in Clarks Fork. Yet for the one we have a conventional article sympathizing with the opposition and for the other an expression of surprise that there is any opposition, followed by dismissal of the opposition because it lacks credentials. John Black, because he objects to trashing two acres of trees when so much of the rest of Utah is barren, may be an environmentalist but not an Environmentalist.

The factual article by Schimpf and Brown would have sufficed without your uncorroborated inference in "Dear Friends" that the Committee to Protect the Environment consists of gun-toting vandals and that opposition to the Sierra Club ipso facto renders it impossible to maintain an environmental position on any given issue.

Indeed, whatever its composition, the committee's attack on the government is a legitimate attempt to affect the environmental due process designed for every

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other project under the sun at the behest of the Sierra Club, et al.

Should the word "solar" obviate due process? Remove "solar" from the questions: Should the power plant be built at all? If so, should it be built at the proposed location? Should the prospective builder alone make these decisions? The answer appropriate for Kaiparowits ought to be appropriate for Natural Bridges.

Doug Long
New Concord, Ohio

P.S. Are you going to change the name of your paper to *Mother Joan News*? Best wishes.

Teachers
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Workshop Leaders
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and Friends!
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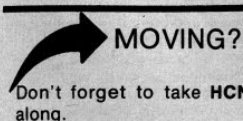
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Published biweekly at 331 Main, Lander, Wyo. 82520. Telephone 307-332-4877. Second class postage paid at Lander. (USPS NO. 087480) All rights to publication of articles herein are reserved.

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Northern Tier pipeline...

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had been on the receiving end of pipelines bringing Canadian crude down across the border.

Then Alaskan oil began arriving in tankers on the West Coast. It could not be shipped abroad because a section in the law authorizing the Alyeska pipeline from Alaska's Prudhoe Bay oilfields to the Valdez shipping port prohibited export. Faced with limited refining capacity on the West Coast, producers found themselves forced to ship the Alaskan oil down through the Panama Canal to East Coast refineries — a slow and expensive process.

To an industry that had already crisscrossed much of the United States with north-south pipelines, an east-west connection seemed an obvious solution to both problems.

A southerly route was proposed by Standard Oil of Ohio (SOHIO), and four companies proposed northern routes. Federal officials decided both latitudes were worth considering — one could feed oil into existing pipelines in Texas and supply the South and Midwest; the other could feed pipelines in Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota, where the Canadian connection was drying up.

Earlier this year, SOHIO dropped its proposed southerly route, after a long, but apparently successful, struggle to get all the necessary permits. SOHIO officials lambasted "red tape" but admitted the decision was also economic: They doubted there would be enough Alaskan oil to make the pipeline worth it. That left the four northern proposals.

Of the four competing companies, only one, the Northern Tier Pipeline Co., would

run its pipe entirely within U.S. borders, and observers on all sides consider it the most likely to get presidential approval. Of the others, two would originate at Canadian ports and link up with existing pipelines that go south to the Northern Tier from central Canada. A third would go north from Port Angeles, Wash., to join Canadian pipelines in Edmonton, Alberta.

The Canadian routes require less new pipeline than Northern Tier's proposal and would cost considerably less to build. They would also shift environmental headaches across the border. But federal officials feel there are numerous advantages to keeping the project within the United States, among them jobs, easier access and freedom from foreign regulators. Reluctance to build a pipeline on foreign soil has made the Northern Tier pipeline the frontrunner.

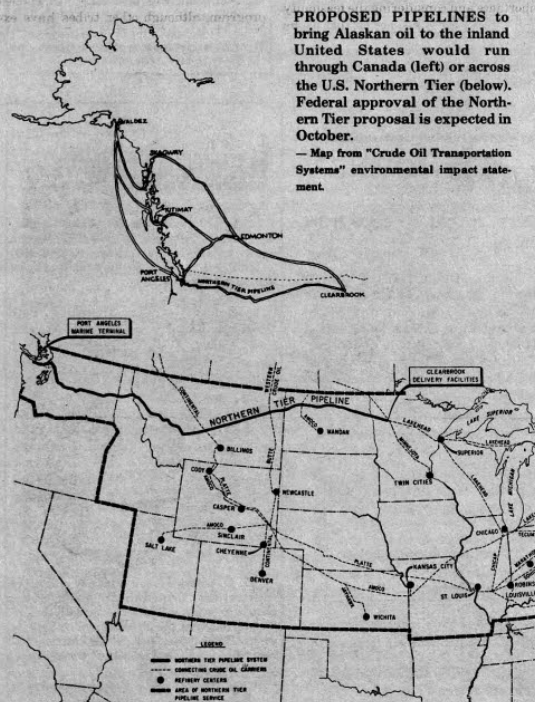
NO CUSTOMERS OR CASH

Northern Tier Pipeline Co. is supported by nine firms: U.S. Steel; MAPCO (formerly Mid-America Pipeline Co.); Burlington Northern Railroad; Butler Associates, a consulting engineering group from Denver; Curran Oil Co. of Great Falls, Mont.; Western Crude Oil Co. of Denver; Milwaukee Lands Co.; Patrick McDonough, an independent Billings, Mont., oil driller; and Farmers Union Central Exchange

"If you look at the whole pipeline picture, we're the gap on the map."

PROPOSED PIPELINES to bring Alaskan oil to the inland United States would run through Canada (left) or across the U.S. Northern Tier (below). Federal approval of the Northern Tier proposal is expected in October.

— Map from "Crude Oil Transportation Systems" environmental impact statement.



(CENEX), a Minnesota farmers' cooperative that owns refineries.

The consortium exists for no other purpose than the pipeline. And despite a long and expensive struggle with no tangible results, its spokesmen exhibit none of SOHIO's defeatism.

"I'm optimistic," said John Etchart, Northern Tier's Montana coordinator. "We think there's a very good chance we'll get approval. Then we'll take the package to Wall Street."

"If you look at the whole pipeline picture," said one consortium official, "we're the gap in the map."

The package will "go to Wall Street" for financial backing because right now it is a head without a body. No refineries have signed up for its pipeline's cargo, and no financing has been lined up to pay the bills for building the pipeline. First, say consortium officials, they must clear the regulatory obstacles.

JIGS AND JAGS

Northern Tier's pipeline is the biggest of the west-east proposals — a 42-inch diameter pipe that would carry 709,000 barrels of oil a day, which could be raised eventually to over 900,000 barrels a day. (For comparison, existing oil pipelines in the Northern Rockies are generally less than 20 inches in diameter; the Alaska pipeline is 48.)

Northern Tier's path is not a straight line from Port Angeles to Clearbrook. To avoid mountains, unstable terrain and hostile communities, the western half of the route jigs and jags. One jig helped the consortium overcome the objections of officials in Spokane, Wash., where the pipeline's original route would have crossed and endangered the aquifers that supply the city's water. And when the Flathead Indians in Montana decided they didn't want a pipeline running through their reservation, the route detoured south — along Siegel Creek.

Detours have not stilled all objections. Port Angeles, a placid tourist, timber and fishing town on the Olympic Peninsula near the mouth of Puget Sound, faces a possible future as a major tanker port, and many of the residents are unhappy. So are environmentalists familiar with Puget Sound, where they say aquatic life is susceptible to permanent damage by a major oil spill. But pipeline officials hope their location in Port Angeles will win them allies by actually reducing tanker traffic within the Sound. Seattle-area refineries, they say, can dock their tankers around the corner at the Northern Tier facility. That possibility appeals to some environmentalists in the region, but the Washington Environmental Council, a coalition of environmental groups, announced recently its opposition to the Port Angeles pipeline facility.

Elected officials in Washington have remained uncommitted, in marked contrast to other states along the route, where the pipeline has strong political support. Gov. Dixie Lee Ray is awaiting a recommendation next spring by the state's Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council.

The only other large contingent of pipeline protesters emerged in western Montana, where over 150 persons showed up at a Missoula hearing on the pipeline's environmental impact. As Northern Tier's Etchart put it: "There's a little different life philosophy in western Montana."

That little difference boiled down to a fairly large objection: For environmental and social reasons, the western Montanans did not want a pipeline in their backyard.

Environmental groups raised questions about the forecasts by government agen-

cies of potential spills along the Northern Tier pipeline. They pointed out that the Alaska pipeline suffered many more spills than officials had predicted and that existing pipelines in Montana spilled 200,000 gallons of crude oil in 1978. Pipeline block

"There's a little different life philosophy in western Montana."

valves, spaced every 20 miles and at river crossings, were not enough, protesters contended, to prevent thousands of gallons of oil from slipping into the ground in remote places along the line.

The Siegel Creek area provides an interesting sampling of the problems the pipeline poses. Not far upstream from where Siegel Creek joins the Clarks Fork on its way to the Flathead River the pipeline crosses a "potentially active" seismic fault. It is an area, according to a federal study, of possible slope instability around the pipeline. In addition, Ninemile Creek is a trout spawning area that would suffer from either an oil spill or the sediment from construction work. Along Ninemile, the pipeline would run through the winter grazing grounds of elk and deer and disturb an "essential" habitat for bald eagles and peregrine falcons. All these conflicts lurk in a single 25-mile stretch.

A massive four-volume environmental study by the federal Bureau of Land Management predicted that during the 20-year lifetime of the pipeline, 61 leaks of over 3,500 gallons can be expected. Such spills could damage soil, pollute stream water and kill fish and waterfowl, but the BLM report said harm would be "temporary" and that a major spill (over 420,000 gallons) is unlikely.

If there should be a leak, a pipeline shutdown would take 12 minutes — enough time, the BLM report said, to dump hundreds of gallons of oil into the ground or water. With numerous river crossings — among them the Columbia and Yakima Rivers in Washington, the St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene in Idaho, and five crossings beneath Clark's Fork in Montana — critics say it could do serious damage.

The BLM report said the oil would clear quickly from streams but that lakes and reservoirs would hold it longer, posing a danger to municipal and irrigation water in places like Montana's Canyon Ferry Lake, Idaho's Lake Coeur d'Alene and Sakakawea Lake in North Dakota.

The Siegel Creek seismic fault is only one of several the pipeline crosses in the Missoula and Helena areas — including the Prickly Pear fault outside of Helena, which has been active in recent years.

And the creatures at Ninemile Creek are not the only wildlife that would be disturbed. Bighorn sheep near Thompson Falls, elk along the Clarks Fork and Blackfoot Rivers, and nesting osprey and great blue herons near the St. Joe River in Idaho would have to learn to live with the pipeline.

But environmental groups in Montana, aware that the state's top political figures are behind the pipeline, have turned from environmental warnings to argue the economic merits of the pipeline. According to Peter Funk of the Environmental Information Center in Missoula: "We are thoroughly unconvinced that the thing will be able to fly on its own economically."

Figuring out the economics of the pipeline is like playing poker with several different decks: For any position you take,

(see next page)

there is a study somewhere, full of firm and serious statistics, to back you up.

For Funk and other opponents, the favorite document is a draft report issued by the Interior Department this summer on west-east oil transport. Using figures supplied by the Energy Department, the report contains charts showing that even without the pipeline, there will be a surplus of oil in the Northern Tier through the year 2000. Only Montana and North Dakota would get slightly less than they need under the present supply set-up.

The same report includes forecasts on Canadian and Alaskan oil production that bode ill for the pipeline. The report indicates that despite the threatened Canadian phase-out, imports from the north continue at over 100,000 barrels a day and probably will hold at that level through the year 2000. Any cut-off, the report says, would hurt the Canadian oil industry. And the report quotes an Alaskan study indicating that production at Prudhoe Bay will begin falling off in 1985, declining from 1.5 million barrels a day to 200,000 barrels a day in 1995. This would slow the pipeline to a drip.

But proponents of the pipeline have their own favorite studies. They cite updated Energy Department projections and a study by a Houston consulting firm that predict a shortfall in the Northern Tier of from 300,000 to 700,000 barrels a day, and North Slope oil production of 2 million barrels a day by 1990. The Interior spokesman said the draft was now being

"We are thoroughly unconvinced that the pipeline will be able to fly on its own economically."

rewritten to reflect "new material." The final report will not be released until after Andrus makes his recommendation.

Northern Tier's pipeline recently got the blessing of departing Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, and the Department of Agriculture has ranked it tops among pipeline proposals. But while Northern Tier has a decided edge in the race for approval, the other companies have not given up.

The Northwest Energy Co., which originally proposed taking the oil by tanker from Valdez to Skagway, Alaska, and piping it from there, switched in early September to an alternate, all-land route direct from the Alyeska Pipeline. The \$1.4 billion project is the most attractive alternative to those environmentalists who feel the danger of tanker spills is greater than land leaks.

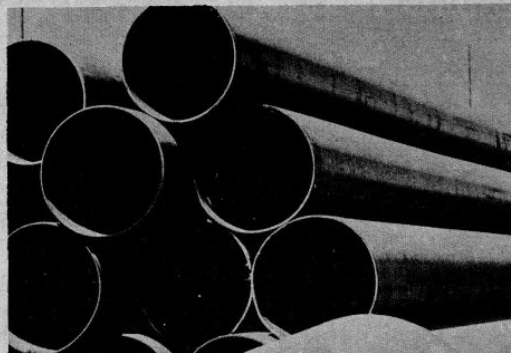
Before Northwest changed its proposal, Douglas M. Costle, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, came out for the Trans-Mountain Pipeline proposal, which would run from Port Angeles to connect with Canadian lines in Edmonton. The Trans-Mountain line would require 800 miles of pipe, but most of it would follow the routes of previous pipelines. Oil from Trans-Mountain would reach the Midwest at a considerably lower price than Northern Tier's, but Northern Tier projects cheaper oil for Montana and North Dakota.

But Andrus and the president will consider more than the environment when they make their decision. Under the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act, they have to weigh national security, net economic benefits, the balance of payments — and more.

There seems to be little doubt in anyone's mind at this point that Andrus will recommend, and the president will

rule, that the Northern Tier Pipeline Co. can go ahead. Presuming Environmental Protection Agency and all state permits are secured by next spring, Northern Tier officials expect to begin constructing their port facility in fall 1980. They expect the crude — a mixture of sulfur-rich Alaskan and cleaner Indonesian and Middle Eastern oil — to be flowing by 1982. But in addition to the regulatory approvals, they must get firm commitments from the oil refineries along the route for the oil they plan to transport. After that, they "go to Wall Street."

Wall Street is a long way from Siegel Creek — a longer distance, in fact, than Alaskan oil would take from Port Angeles to the point where it would move at 344 gallons per second over the pass to Ninemile Creek. Most observers are wondering now if the pipeline in Siegel Creek can make those distant investors' imaginations tingle. It is on Wall Street, and not at the Interior Department or in the White House, that the final decision on the Northern Tier pipeline will probably be made.



42-INCH PIPE proposed for the Northern Tier Pipeline would rival the 48-inch pipe used in the Alaska Pipeline.

Navajo Tribe fights to save wildlife

In a desperate race against energy development, the Navajo Tribe is trying to save endangered species on its reservation. Despite funding problems, wildlife biologists are making endangered species their top priority, according to Edward Olson, chief of the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Navajo Department of Natural Resources.

The Navajo Reservation stretches over 16 million acres in the southwestern United States. Bighorn sheep, bobcats, bald eagles, peregrine falcons and, some believe, black-footed ferrets roam there. However, until the tribal council passed its own endangered species act in November 1977, efforts to protect such species remained outside the reservation boundaries.

Indian tribes were left out of the section of the federal Endangered Species Act that provides for matching state endangered species budgets with federal funds, and jurisdictional disputes between the Bureau

of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have hampered tribal wildlife protection efforts.

Now, Olson says, the tribe is operating its program on limited funds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. Biologists are working in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with wildlife agencies in the three states it borders — Arizona, New Mexico and Utah — to inventory species within the reservation. The list is expected to be complete within one month. In addition, the tribe is developing conservation plans for protecting wildlife, informing the public of species' importance and considering the feasibility of re-introducing some species, such as the peregrine falcon.

Tribal customs and ceremonies have helped some species and hurt others. The bear, for example, is considered sacred and can be taken for food only in times of famine, according to Ken Foster, a Navajo who has worked with the tribe's predator

control program for 20 years. The ferret, on the other hand, has been killed and used by medicine men in ceremonies.

Olson says the wildlife biologists' job is frustrating because more pressure is being put on the reservation by coal and uranium development and roads. Biologists at work on the inventory are often interrupted by companies that are required to consider endangered species in their plans. "They call, hoping we'll do just a through-the-windshield, weekend survey of the site for their pipeline, but we don't let them off that easy."

As far as Olson knows, the Navajo Tribe is the only one with an endangered species program, although other tribes have expressed interest in the Navajo program. He would like to see Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act changed so that tribes with game codes and a coordinated approach to wildlife management could get matching federal money. "However," he says, "we don't have much political muscle."



Photo by Ernest Wilkinson and David Sumner

BOBCAT populations on the Navajo Reservation seem to be dwindling due to trapping pressure, according to Navajo biologists. The biologists believe they will have to limit the number taken to insure the animal's long-term preservation.

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Zahniser...

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soon developed his own vital, if humble, style.

His son recalls, "Even toward the end of the eight-year legislative battle to pass a wilderness bill, when success was in sight, he saw himself as a mere cog in an inexorably turning wheel. He would joke that whoever had designed the wheel — Zahniser means 'gear maker' in German — might have made a better choice of materials."

GENTLE EVANGELISM

"Nature was his God," observed a colleague. The gentle evangelism that marked Zahniser's conservation career had roots in his upbringing. His father was a minister, his mother a minister's daughter.

The future leader of the Wilderness Society grew up in the docile beauty of Pennsylvania's Allegheny River Valley. But young Zahniser's eyes were bad, and the family had no money for optometrists.

Howard saw only blurs when the teacher pointed to birds. In his teens he finally received a pair of eyeglasses, and his reaction is telling. "Putting them on for the first time, he jumped fences and ran through fields," said his son, "marveling at how much there was to see and how distinctly beautiful it was."

At Greenville College in Illinois the minister's son reveled in literature courses — at the expense of fulfilling the standard requirements. "I crammed four years of college into five," he quipped. Despite his literary self-indulgence, Zahniser worked hard, graduated, became a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Press* and later an English teacher in Greenville's high school.

Were park lands, touted as belonging to all the people, truly inviolate?

Beginning in 1930, employment with what is now called the Fish and Wildlife Service provided him a satisfying niche for 15 years. In addition to his editorial and broadcasting work for the government, he had free-lance projects. From 1935 to 1959 Zahniser turned out essays and a regular

book-review column, "Nature in Print," for *Nature Magazine*. True to the gentle Zahniser form, he avoided the thrusting and cutting of many reviewers; instead he emphasized new volumes that would prove useful and enjoyable for his readers.

Meanwhile, he was also cutting "his wilderness teeth," to use his son's phrase, on backpacking trips into New York's Adirondacks and Tennessee's Great Smokies. On the vacation forays Zahniser became friends with wilderness advocates Paul Schaefer and Harvey Broome. Through them he absorbed the ideas of Marshall and Benton MacKaye.

The death of Robert Sterling Yard in 1945 left The Wilderness Society's two major positions vacant: executive secretary and editor of *The Living Wilderness*. By then Zahniser had developed his own visceral "relationships to the primeval." Compelled by the wilderness crisis, fired by Marshall's vision, he quit government employment to become the Society's paid professional staff of one.

WINDMILL TILTING

In the mid-1940s the ambitions of The Wilderness Society had the charming but fey aspects of windmill-tilting. The Society's 2,000 members stood enthusias-



tically behind passage of legislation ordaining a national wilderness system. To accomplish this, they would have to ride over the roadblocks thrown up by the mining and timber industries, among the country's most politically adept and financially well-heeled lobbying groups. Secondly, the band would have to rouse a nation — one traditionally careless of preservation and now drowsy with postwar prosperity — to its diminishing natural heritage.

The Society's hopeful leader, approaching middle age, had exchanged govern-

(see next page)

The neon sign syndrome: is it just a wilderness

by Louisa Willcox

Two backpackers, relaxing over beers after a week-long jaunt in the woods, sat talking about wilderness politics. One said that wilderness designation was the best way to protect a favorite stomping ground.

"No way," said his companion. "That's a good way to ruin the place. I'll fight it."

Why? Not for the usual reasons. The fellow didn't want to dig minerals, cut trees or otherwise develop the land. Both hikers wanted to preserve their wild haunt.

But they differed over the means to that end. One figured that wilderness designation, because it has the clout of federal law, offers the best assurance of long-term protection. The other thought it would only publicize an area that was already in danger of being loved to death by too many people. Better to leave the area in relative obscurity, he said.

They call it the "neon sign syndrome." Sometimes the argument is made by a local rancher who doesn't want his gates left open by careless hikers. He sees wilderness designation as akin to posting the area with a flashing neon sign. Officials from federal land management agencies sometimes express the same concern.

Occasionally the argument carries enough weight to prevent an area from acquiring wilderness status. In 1975 opponents of the Bureau of Land Management's primitive area recommendations for the North Fork of the Powder River flooded the agency with letters of concern about the neon sign syndrome. BLM shelved the proposal. (A primitive area was BLM's equivalent of wilderness at the time.)

But while the neon sign argument is frequently heard, even the experts aren't sure how much truth there is in it. Checking visitation figures at wilderness areas around the region, *High Country News* found spotty evidence to support the theory. Visitor use in the Hunter-Fryingpan area in Colorado and in the Scamare Canyon, Chiricahua and Petrified Forest in Arizona did leap up after acquiring the wilderness stamp. The U.S. Forest Service says that use of its wildernesses has increased by 90 percent since

1965, while use of the rest of its lands has increased by 34 percent.

But figures from some areas belie the theory. UL Bend in Montana is visited less now that it has become an official wilderness. Lostwood in North Dakota and Flat-tops in Colorado maintain their former low levels of use. Jarbridge in Nevada is increasing in popularity, but very slowly.

In Arizona the bulk of Corona National Forest is used more intensely than the Galiuro Wilderness within it. But almost all of the Tonto National Forest's visitors concentrate in the Superstition Wilderness.

"We just don't know if there is any truth to the 'neon sign' argument," said George



Photo by Floyd Wilson
AH, WILDERNESS. Even if there aren't many campers per square mile, the feeling of solitude is lost if they're all camped along the trail.

Stankey, author of a U.S. Forest Service book entitled *Wilderness Management*. "Right now there just isn't enough data to prove it one way or the other. It's an attractive kind of logic: You draw a line around an area, give it an official label, and it starts attracting attention from the public and managing agencies. But the relationship may not be so simple."

"Wilderness use trends just can't be reduced to a simple formula like the 'neon sign,'" said Bernard Shanks, a professor of forestry and outdoor recreation at Utah State University.

So what is influencing visitation in wilderness areas?

"It's the character and the accessibility of the area," said Howie Wolke, Wyoming representative for Friends of the Earth. "It was inevitable that the Bridger Wilderness in Wyoming would be heavily used — the Wind River Range has everything: high granite peaks for climbing, lakes full of fish, all sorts of wildlife. It's the 'in' place to go. Plus it's easy to get to."

"Now look at the North Absaroka Wilderness, designated at the same time. There's hardly anybody in there. Why? The rock's all rotten; there's just a few

Montana, and the rugged Galiuro in New Mexico apparently are far enough from the beaten backpacker track to maintain low use levels.

SUBTLE PRAIRIES

Prairie wilderness areas, such as UL Bend in Montana and Lostwood in North Dakota receive only 100-200 visitors a year. "The public may not yet appreciate the subtle values of the prairie wilderness in comparison to the high country experience," said David Stearns, manager of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, which contains UL Bend. Other little known, lightly used wilderness areas are the sagebrush-covered hills of Red Rocks Lake in Montana and the upland desert environment of New Mexico's Bosque del Apache, which is cut by an interstate. "You can throw a beer can out of a car at 70 miles an hour and hit the wilderness," said Dave Foreman, the Southwest representative for The Wilderness Society.

The amount of controversy stirred up over proposed wilderness designation can also help determine how popular an area will become.

The controversy about the status of the Eagles Nest area in Colorado resulted in a

Some people see wilderness designation as akin to posting an area with a flashing neon sign. They fear the place will be loved to death.

lakes; it's real rugged and remote; and there's grizzlies."

Other high mountain backpacking meccas, especially those near traditional vacation meccas, such as the Maroon Bells-Snowmass and Weminuche wilderness areas in Colorado, share the same high intensity use as the Bridger. Especially hard-hit are those close to urban areas, such as the Lone Peak Wilderness outside Salt Lake City, Pusch Ridge Wilderness in the Santa Catalina Mountains overlooking Tucson, and Eagles Nest, a 1½ hour drive from Denver.

On the other hand, equally spectacular wilderness areas such as the Cabinet Mountains and Gates of the Mountains in

200 percent increase in use between 1970 and 1976. But after it formally assumed the wilderness title, use leveled off.

"Even if it hadn't been designated wilderness, use would have been the same because of the controversy," said Elbert Reed, district ranger of the Arapaho National Forest.

On the other hand, a number of areas received no sudden rush of new visitors when they quietly adopted new titles when the Wilderness Act passed in 1964. The Mt. Zirkel Wilderness in Colorado and the Gila and White Mountain wildernesses in New Mexico have had 10 to 15 percent more visitors each year, which is about the

(see next page)

ment security for a shaky financial future. His new salary was only half his modest government pay, and his wife Alice was expecting their fourth child. Zahniser had stripped himself for battle.

A national furor concerning a park prepared Zahniser for his ultimate accomplishment. To satisfy scientists rejoicing over a treasure trove of fossil bones, in 1915 President Wilson declared 80 acres on the Colorado-Utah border a national monument. For years it lay baking under the Western sun, rarely visited except by an occasional paleontologist. In 1938 Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded the protected area. Few entrepreneurs objected. Dinosaur National Monument's 200,000 sprawling acres consisted of jumbled seemingly useless desert landscape. But by the late 1940s the Bureau of Reclamation was eyeing Dinosaur as a dam site — as well as Glacier and Grand Canyon national parks.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of its new affluence and mobility, the public was driving around the country, visiting national parks in record numbers. It was taken aback by the issue of Dinosaur. Were park lands, touted as belonging to all the people, truly inviolate? Apparently not. Encouraged by conservationists, the public shook itself from years of lethargy

to make Dinosaur's harsh real estate a cause célèbre for park integrity.

Quickly developing his talents through the campaign, Zahniser, along with David Brower of the Sierra Club, argued that the dam was a financial mistake and actually a water-wasting project — an ill-conceived scheme designed to benefit a privileged few, using tax dollars and ruining wild lands. On the floor of the Senate, wilderness allies Richard Neuberger and Hubert Humphrey spoke out against the vast engineering plan.

Finally, after years of interminable hearings and several failures, Congress in 1956 passed a law forbidding dams in national parks and monuments. The prolonged debate had united conservationists for the first time in years; it had shown them that Americans would rally to support wild places.

COUPLETS FOR WILDERNESS

Counting on the momentum, Zahniser drew up plans for a national wilderness system. Characteristically, while struggling over the wording he joked that he'd "much prefer to state all this in iambic rhyming couplets." Sen. Hubert Humphrey and Rep. John P. Saylor introduced the bill — unrhymed but in

Zahniser's exemplary prose — in the 84th Congress. Its uncertain progress proved less dramatic than the sharp debate over Dinosaur, but the eight-year struggle eventually resulted in a far larger gift to the nation.

Zahniser proved just how far the talents of a seemingly ordinary man can be developed carrying out goals on a national scale. Lacking Marshall's originality, he possessed important qualities that foreshadowed a new kind of conservationist who built on the accomplishments of more dashing mentors. For one thing, he could write. When he lectured that we are projecting "into the eternity of the future some of that precious unspoiled ecological inheritance that has come to us out of the eternity of the past," Zahniser was linking citizens with a cause beyond their ordinary, mortal lives.

As to practical affairs, he handled the details of a volunteer organization entering the upheavals of phenomenal membership growth, while loosening the purse strings of wealthy supporters. The man who enjoyed nothing more than to read the *Divine Comedy* or *Walden* aloud with friends campaigned in a kindly, avuncular manner. In the face of granitic opposition, Zahniser persuaded, drawing people into the movement.

Paul Oehser, a retired official of the Smithsonian Institution, capsulizes the method: "Zahniser was famous for getting along with people. He had a way with him. Even his adversaries grew to respect and love him. He was never caustic or vindictive."

Typically, when invited to justify his wilderness views to the assembled Society of American Foresters — a group opposed to preservation — he began his speech, "I do not come here to quarrel..." After the talk the foresters peppered their guest with questions. By the end of the session they couldn't help but respect the gentle man who had entered enemy territory full of goodwill and humor.

Preaching the transcendental view that "We are a part of the wilderness of the universe," Zahniser scurried about lecturing, distributing conservation literature from large pockets sewn inside his suit coat. David Brower, now president of Friends of the Earth, remembers that for Zahniser "the hardest times were those when good friends tired because the battle was so long. Urging these friends back into action was the most anxious part of Zahniser's work."

In many ways, buoyant Zahniser was exactly the man for the job. Like Marshall before him he drove himself until he died in harness, still fighting for what he saw as an essential cause for the nation.

IRRATIONAL FEARS

In all likelihood, anything less would not have been enough. Exploiters of natural resources reacted to the new environmental enthusiasm by launching an anti-wilderness campaign. As far as wilderness was concerned, the lands under question — much of them rocky peaks and high valleys — were not especially lucrative for mining or lumbering. Yet as with almost all the battles for preservation in America, the wilderness movement generated fears, some of them irrational. Accustomed to centuries of doing what they wanted to the land, some Americans looked upon the idea of leaving a mere two or three percent of the nation untouched as heretical.

Some Forest Service officials also felt threatened. If some of their bailiwick — even a small portion — were withdrawn from exploitation, wouldn't that mean fewer rangers on its payroll, and hence fewer secretaries, pickup trucks, hard

Sept. 21, 1979 — High Country News-7



Photo by James Marshall, courtesy of The Wilderness Society

HORSE SENSE. Zahniser planning his route on a pack trip in the Idaho back country. When Zahniser awoke the next day, this horse and 14 others had broken loose, leaving the party stranded 20 miles from civilization, according to an account in an old edition of *LIFE*.

hats, paper clips, and forms in sextuplet — in short, a smaller bureaucracy? Even the traditional land-preserving agency, the National Park Service, suffered from the trepidation, worried that curbs on future access roads, scenic drives and tramways would mean a loss in bureaucratic status.

In response to these objections, Zahniser emphasized the basic issue — the preservation of "our oldest resource," as he called it. Alerted to the urgency of the problem, the public generated thousands of pages of hearing testimony and tens of thousands of letters to their representatives in Washington.

Yet for eight years Congress vacillated, tugged by exploiters on the one hand and the clamors of their more ordinary constituents on the other. Sixty-six different times the Wilderness bill was rewritten and resubmitted into the legislative mill.

Meanwhile, weary Zahniser was crisscrossing the country, attending each federal hearing on the issue, repeating the words that for all their repetition represented a fresh vision: a national program establishing wilderness for "the first time in the history of the earth." It was a step that no civilization had taken before, a test, as he saw it, of our cultural development. Zahniser answered critics from the timber industry: "We are not fighting progress. We are making it."

In the spring of 1964, Zahniser sensed victory, but he would not taste it. He died of a heart attack at the age of 58, only a few weeks before Congress passed the Wilderness Act.

Granted the help of others, the Wilderness Act of 1964 remains Howard Zahniser's monument. As might be expected from such a prolonged legislative storm, the bill emerged with flaws of compromise. The act allowed mineral exploration on wilderness lands until 1984, and it did not entirely eliminate the motorboats and aircraft that hikers come to wilderness to escape. But in one sweep it did establish nine million acres of untrammeled land, while creating a review process for possible inclusion of other areas. Finally, it created the impetus for a second wilderness act, passed in 1974 and specifically aimed at setting aside badly needed preserves in the populous Eastern United States. As the provisions of the two acts are implemented, Zahniser's legacy to the nation grows.

wives' tale?



TRASH from one campsite in the Fitzpatrick Wilderness of Wyoming included one torn pair of jeans, dirty plastic plates, plastic bags, an unopened can of soda pop and a can of pudding.

growth rate of wild land use in general.

"The 'neon-sign' effect has been avoided by not advertising," said the district ranger for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona about its Mt. Baldy Wilderness.

"A guidebook or an article in *National Geographic* can increase use as much as wilderness designation," Shanks said. Managers of the Sycamore Canyon and Petrified Forest wildernesses in Arizona said that articles in the *Southwest Wilderness Digest* have boosted use there.

Some national parks which have difficulty avoiding publicity, have taken a harder line in an effort to avoid overuse. Mesa Verde National Park allows no one in its wilderness area, and Rocky Mountain Park has been limiting use in its proposed wilderness with a permit system since 1973.

Forest Service managers of Idaho's Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness have initiated educational programs at trailheads and in the state's public school system to soften the impact of increased visitors. In the Superstition Wilderness in Arizona, managers have been focusing on building new trails in the surrounding non-wilderness to alleviate use pressure. One says, "Right now everyone comes to the wilderness because all the trails are there."

Some wilderness theorists say that use levels will stabilize after an initial in-

crease. This seems to be the case with the Chiricahua Wilderness in Arizona. Visitors flocked to the unique southwestern spruce-fir forests for 10 years after Chiricahua became wilderness, but use has dropped about 20 percent over the last two years. The gas crunch probably also has contributed to the decline in use, managers say.

Though some Western wilderness areas have noticed no change in use this summer despite gas shortages, others have. "The gas situation has had a greater effect on wilderness visitation this year than classification did last year," says the district ranger for the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.

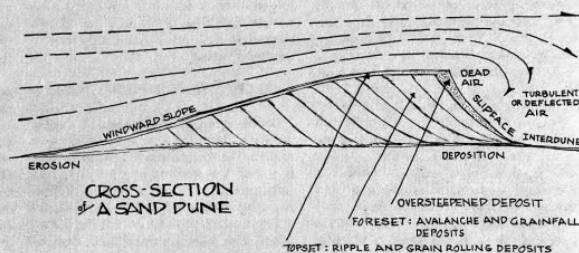
Though people probably won't stop coming to the wilderness, the energy crisis is certainly going to have some tremendous effects on the style of use," George Stankey said. "Not only will there be political pressure to explore the oil and gas reserves that tend to coincide with wilderness areas, but the whole geographic pattern of visitor use will be different. Wild areas near population centers will probably receive heavier use, and once people get to the back country, they'll tend to stay longer — at least more than a couple days."

— — —
Louisa Willcox, a student at Williams College, worked as a summer intern at High Country News.

SAND MOUNTAINS AT THE FOOT OF THE ROCKIES

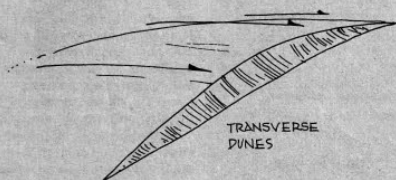
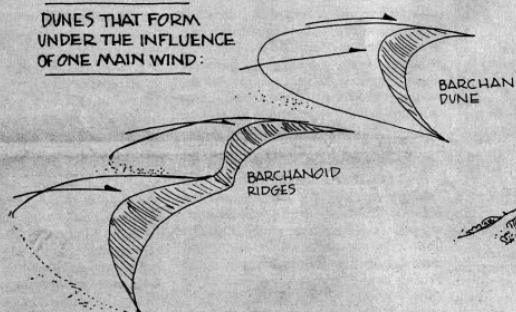
The Rio Grande has been depositing sand in the San Luis Valley of Southern Colorado for millions of years. When southwest winds sweep across the valley they pick up sand, then drop it at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, forming some of the highest dunes on earth. They are protected by the National Park Service as Great Sand Dunes National Monument.

The clean, spare lines of dunes are shaped by continuous fluid adjustments between the forces of wind and gravity.

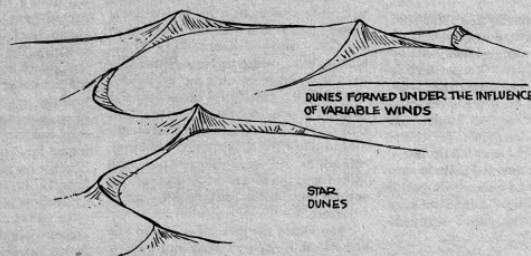
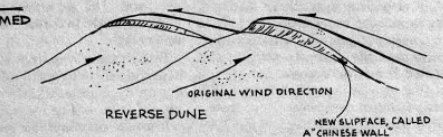


There are several dune forms represented in the national monument:

DUNES THAT FORM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ONE MAIN WIND:



A DUNE FORMED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF TWO MAIN WINDS



Sept. 21, 1979 — High Country News-9

ROCKIES an exquisite, unlikely juxtaposition

by Thomas M. Jenkins

GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL MONUMENT, Colo. — Muted light made dawn seem like a dream. I stood in the shadows at the edge of the mounds of sand, watching their illuminated crests curve away from me to the base of the snow-capped Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The combination of sand and mountains was a shock to the senses.

The air was cool and still. Medano Creek flowed quietly nearby, leaving broad stretches of cool, wet sand.

Then wind started. I could see it moving the ridgetops of the dunes slightly eastward toward the mountains. The sand particles have been bouncing and blowing like this for 35 million years, I'm told. Occasional "reversing storm winds" move the crests back again, sometimes as much as 18 feet in 24 hours. Despite the surface shifting, underneath, the dunes remain just as they have been for centuries.

As I walked back to camp, I noticed eight mule deer nosing the crumbs of my last meal and pawing the trash cans. They raised their heads to stare at me for a few moments before darting away through the scattered pinons and junipers.

Later that morning, I climbed 700 feet to the summit of the highest sand dune with the Boy Scout troop I had brought to the monument. As we climbed, the boys bounded and leaped in the clear air, bare feet digging into the sand, seeking the wet cool spots beneath the hot surface. Sometimes they'd sprint toward the edge of a high dune and leap into the air, sliding and tumbling head over heels down the smooth slopes to the bottom. Now there was a zany in the air. The boys were oblivious to the harsh life of the dunes. Both animals and vegetation occasionally perish in the wind-driven sand and summer sand surface temperatures of up to 140 degrees.

"Where are we? At the beach or the mountains?" one boy asked facetiously.

On the way back, we noticed a sparse clump of blowout grass with a ladybug on one of its thin, wavering blades. Living things seem incongruous on the dunes and in the semi-arid grassland that surrounds them. But the area shelters coyotes, chipmunks, raccoons, tiger beetles, kangaroo rats, pronghorn and other creatures — including 150 species of birds.

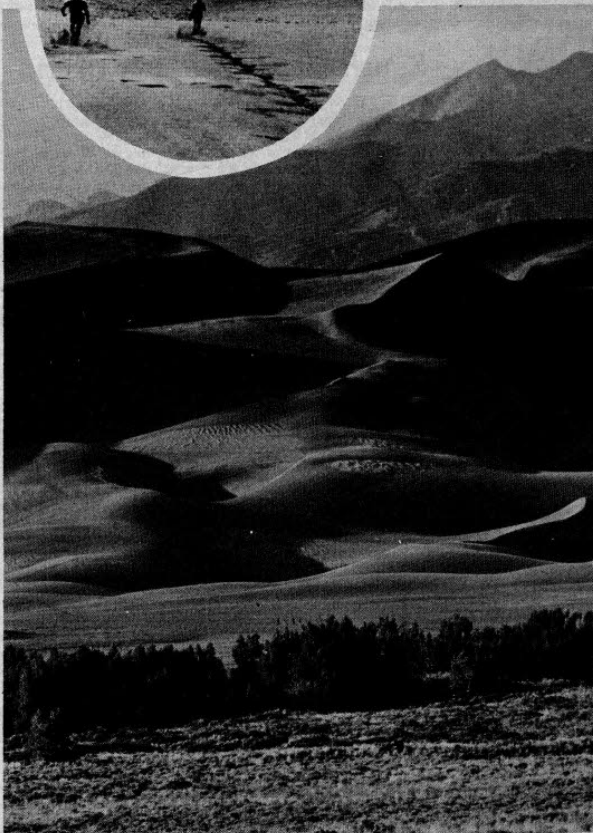
I scanned the countryside — from grassland to dunes, to the scattered pines of the foothills, to the dense higher elevation forests, to timberline. Even higher was the alpine tundra approaching the summits. With one long glance, I could encompass as many ecosystems as one would find on a trip from the southwest deserts to the Alaskan arctic — an exquisite, unlikely juxtaposition.

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

RIGHT: Rain solidifies blown sand patterns on the surface of a dune.



Photo by Tom Jenkins
BELOW: Kids run at top speed down the steep slipface of a dune.



National Park Service Photo by Walter Baenger
ABOVE: Streamside cottonwoods give way to a gulf of sand. Behind it, mountain forests rise abruptly and end in alpine tundra.

Indians, esthetes steam over geothermal plant

by Jack Kutz

A geothermal power plant proposed for a remote canyon in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico has sparked a controversy that could have a far-reaching impact on this promising alternative energy source. Geothermal energy is generally considered a relatively clean source of electrical power. It has the potential to supply five percent of the nation's energy needs, yet — as the Jemez Mountain controversy shows — improper siting of geothermal plants can cause problems that may outweigh the benefits.

The proposed Jemez Mountain project

consists of geothermal well field development, transmission line construction and the operation of a 50-megawatt power plant. The electricity generated would be used by the town of Los Alamos and would be sufficient for 25,000 homes. If the demonstration plant is successful, additional units will be constructed, raising the capacity to 400 megawatts.

The \$125 million project, jointly funded by the Department of Energy and the Public Service Company of New Mexico, would be sited on the giant Baca Ranch in the Valles Caldera near Bandelier National Monument. The caldera, a huge subcircular depression formed eons ago by volcanic

violence, is one of New Mexico's most beautiful scenic areas.

The area has been designated a National Natural Landmark, and the U.S. Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in Santa Fe fears the power project will damage the caldera's scenic integrity.

A recently released environmental impact statement acknowledges the "possibility" that the landmark status would be affected and that the transmission lines would interfere with the area's esthetic values and recreational uses. The statement also notes likely loss of elk winter habitat and a threat to the habitat of the Jemez Mountain salamander, which the state already classifies as endangered.

Many residents living near the project are concerned about the power plant's impact on their water resources.

At public hearings held in Albuquerque on August 29, representatives of Pueblo Indians living downstream from the proposed plant expressed their opposition. The Indians said the project would take water that is rightfully theirs.

Harold Sando of the All Indian Pueblo Council said DOE failed to consult the pueblos on almost all aspects of the environmental statement.

The statement says that although the flow of springs, wells and the Jemez River

will be reduced, the loss will be minimal. However, Pete Balleau of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, testified the project would take about 13 percent of the Jemez River water table. "All the pueblos rely on waters from this table," he said. "The EIS may be in error by a factor of 10 in water level reduction."

Walter Dasheno, governor of Santa Clara Pueblo, said his pueblo may go to court to block construction if the project is not relocated.

PNM, however, views the geothermal plant as inevitable and necessary. According to PNM Public Relations Officer Sherry Robinson, "Within the energy picture, we have run out of attractive alternatives. Anyway we choose to go, there will be a price to pay."

Energy board bills advance

Legislation backed by the White House to speed domestic energy production continued its journey through the corridors of Congress this month — and the many routes it took left Western observers uncertain about its impact on their states' futures.

In the House, two committees produced significantly different versions of President Carter's controversial "fast track" proposal to cut through red tape on synthetic fuels projects and other non-nuclear energy-producing ventures.

The House Commerce Committee's bill, shepherded by Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), would give an Energy Mobilization Board powers to bypass most local, state and federal laws for priority projects. Rep. Timothy Wirth (D-Colo.) led an unsuccessful move to curb the EMB's power to sweep aside existing laws, and a motion by Rep. James Santini (D-Nev.) to exempt local and state laws was defeated. White House lobbyists supported the stronger version of EMB, though Carter has repeatedly said he wanted only the power to waive procedural hindrances to energy projects.

The House Interior Committee, chaired by Rep. Mo Udall (D-Ariz.), produced legislation that would allow EMB only to speed approval processes for energy projects — not to skip over substantive laws.

On the Senate side, the Senate Energy Committee is putting the finishing touches on a bill which would prevent the EMB from overriding existing federal, state and local laws, unless a law is specifically mentioned in the legislation. However, any laws passed subsequent to formation of the EMB could be waived by the five-man board. The Senate legislation would also allow the EMB to make decisions for those agencies that failed to act according to an expedited schedule.

All three bills face further modification on the House and Senate floors. In addition, the Senate Energy Committee's bill has raised a cry from several other Senate committees that feel their turf has been raided, and amendments and alternate bills are expected.

Environmental lobbyists object strenuously to the Senate Energy Committee's bill, which closely resembles President Carter's plan, and presently rate the House Interior bill highest.

Of particular importance to Western states are sections of the legislation dealing with the EMB's power to interfere with regional water laws. The Senate bill would bar any waiving of state water laws. The House Commerce Committee version would exempt laws governing water quan-

tity — but not quality — from the EMB's waiver authority.

Various committees in both chambers were at work this month on proposals for federal aid to synthetic fuels development, which Carter proposed with his "fast track" legislation. It appeared that Carter, who initially wanted a crash \$88 billion synfuels program would now accept a slower-starting program, though his goal is still to have 80 to 90 synfuel plants operating by 1990.

Ranchers upset over Colstrip ruling

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this month approved Montana Power Co.'s permit for building Colstrip units 3 and 4, saying, "The unprecedented environmental conditions of the permit will make the new units the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the nation where sulfur dioxide pollution is concerned."

However, the Northern Plains Resource Council says the two units in southern Montana won't be clean enough. The council, a rancher-conservationist group that has been fighting the units for several years, says other pollutants — nitrogen oxides and particulates — will not be adequately controlled. Both contribute to haze and health problems.

Visibility has been an important factor in the Colstrip debate. The two units were turned down in 1977 by EPA after the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, 20 miles south of the Colstrip site, asked for and got EPA's highest air protection status. The reservation's "Class I" designation prohibits pollution of the air above certain levels and includes protection against haze.

Under the 1977 proposal, Montana Power

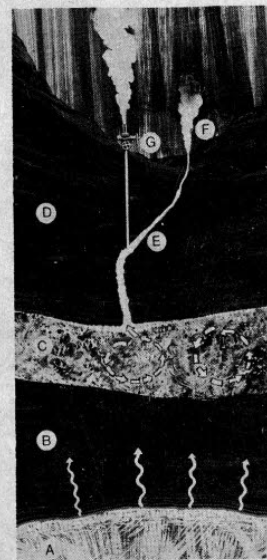
said it would remove 82 percent of the sulfur dioxide from Colstrip emissions. Under the new proposal, Montana Power must remove 95 percent of the sulfur dioxide and 99.6 percent of the particulate emissions. Nitrogen dioxide will be controlled if and when technology becomes feasible, EPA says.

Montana Power must install elaborate monitoring systems. EPA says that if pollution control devices don't produce the expected results, the permit could be rescinded.

The company will not have to retrofit Colstrip units 1 and 2, which are now operating at the same site with pollution controls that catch 82 percent of the sulfur dioxide emissions.

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe and the rancher group will be deciding within the next few days whether to appeal the EPA ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Montana Supreme Court ruled Sept. 17th that the state board of health had fulfilled its responsibility for reviewing the plant, removing the last roadblock to construction.



Pacific Gas and Electric Co. photo

GEOTHERMAL FIELD: A) magma (molten mass, still in the process of cooling); B) solid rock (conducts heat upward); C) porous rock (contains water boiled by heat from below); D) solid rock (prevents steam from escaping); E) fissure (allows steam to escape); F) geyser, fumarole, hot spring; G) well (taps steam in fissure).



The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

SENATE SCRAPS STRIP MINE REGS. The U.S. Senate, bowing to pressure from coal operators and state agencies, has approved amendments that severely weaken the 1977 Surface Mining Act. The amendments passed the Senate on a vote of 68 to 26. The bill, if approved by the House, would retain performance standards contained in the original legis-

lation, but would allow states to circumvent the detailed regulations drawn up by the federal Office of Surface Mining. In addition, the amendments allow states a six-month extension — Feb. 3, 1980 — to prepare their own surface mining programs or to enforce federal programs. The Secretary of Interior has the authority to increase that deadline by an additional six months.

CHINESE FEAR U.S. SYNDROME. The Chinese government has canceled letters of intent to purchase two Westinghouse reactors because the country is re-evaluating its development programs for energy and heavy industry, according to *Nucleonics Week*. Chinese officials say part of the reason is concern about the Three Mile Island accident in the United States, which could have resulted in a core

meltdown. In the United States, such a meltdown is referred to as "The China Syndrome" because the core could sink deep into the earth headed toward China. **PHOTOVOLTAIC FUNDING DOUBLES.** The Department of Energy has awarded nine grants totalling \$21.6 million for photovoltaic energy system demonstrations. Photovoltaic cells, which convert solar energy into electricity, will be used at a hospital in Hawaii, a shopping center in New Mexico, airports in Arizona and Texas, a power plant in New Mexico, an ocean entertainment center in Florida, a high school in Massachusetts, and a science and arts center in Oklahoma. A DOE official said the amount of money allocated to the program has more than doubled because of the high quality of proposals submitted.



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

DESOLATION CANYON DAM. Utah Power and Light Co. has applied for storage rights to 4.1 million acre-feet of water on the Green River. If it can get the water, the utility has tentative plans to build a 500-foot dam near the town of Green River that would provide 1,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power, twice the generating capacity of any UP & L coal-fired plant. The dam would also wipe out Desolation and Grays canyons, which comprise one of Utah's most popular river-running routes. The state engineers' office says that it's not clear yet whether water for the project is available. That determination may take two or three years. Meanwhile, the plan has been condemned by Ken Sleight, a Green River float trip outfitter, who told United Press International, "We oppose it, just like we did Glen Canyon. We won't let it happen to Desolation."

SAN JUAN BASIN URANIUM MINING. A federal judge has ruled that proposed uranium mining projects in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico, Colorado and Utah can continue. U.S. District Court Judge Harold Greene ruled that the federal government has properly considered the environmental impacts in the area. The lawsuit that prompted the ruling had been brought by Friends of the Earth and 72 Navajo Indians. The plaintiffs argued that mining should be halted because the federal government had not prepared a regional environmental impact statement. In addition, FOE asked for a regional EIS on the Powder River Basin uranium mining and a national uranium programmatic EIS. In denying the requests, Greene ruled that the suit "would effectively end by delay almost half of the nation's uranium production and jeopardize the exploitation of three-fifths of the reserves." The plaintiffs have not announced whether they will appeal the decision.

ISRAELI OIL SHALE MOVES WEST. About 150 tons of Israeli oil shale will be tested at Paraho Development Corp.'s Anvil Point oil shale retorting facility in Grand Junction, Colo. If the tests prove successful, the Israeli government hopes to produce 10,000 barrels per day at a plant in the Negev Desert. A spokesman for the Israeli embassy says that Israel will be 99.9 percent dependent on imported oil after it returns the Sinai oil fields to Egypt as part of the recently signed peace treaty.

COMPANY WILL FIGHT URANIUM REFERENDUM. Supporters of a proposed South Dakota referendum, which would require a vote of the people before uranium development can take place in the state, will face opposition from Union Carbide, a company with extensive uranium holdings in the state. The company says it will work to defeat the referendum by "informing people of the facts...and to do that, we have to convey the importance of nuclear power." The referendum, supported by the Blacks Hills Coalition, requires nearly 13,000 signatures before it can be placed on the 1980 ballot. The signatures must be collected by spring.

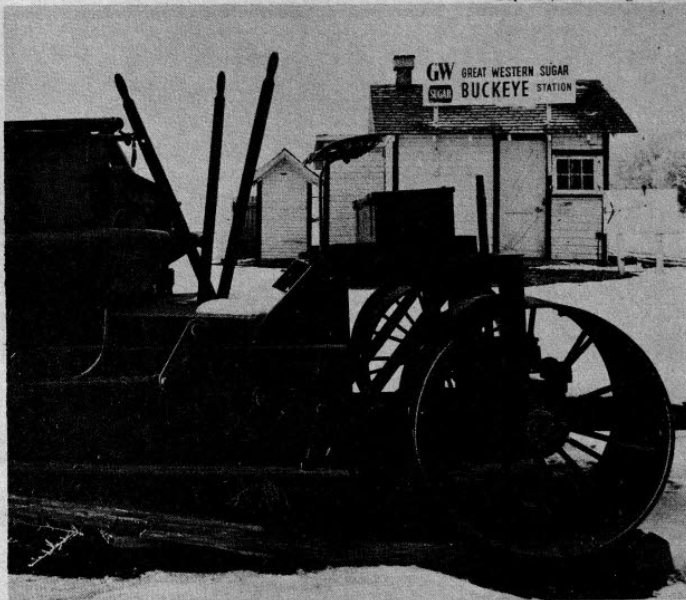


Photo by Steve Meyer

GEO THERMAL PLUS BEETS EQUALS GASOHOL. A \$25 million project that would use geothermal heat to process agricultural products to make ethanol has been announced near Bliss, Idaho. The ethanol will be mixed with gasoline to make gasohol. According to Integrated Energy Systems Inc., coordinators of the project, the energy costs of using the geothermal water in the fermenting of the foodstuffs and creating the ethanol is about one-third the cost of using natural gas for the same purpose. The source of the ethanol would be sugar beets, potato skins, and wheat and barley that is grown on surrounding farmland. The sponsors hope to get under way within about two years. Pictured is old beet-harvesting equipment in Colorado.

TVA seeks immunity from Wyo. law

by Marjane Ambler

While most Western states can only speculate about the possible effects of President Carter's proposal to override state laws with a federal Energy Mobilization Board, Wyoming may soon get a preview of what it would be like.

The Tennessee Valley Authority has gained sole control of a uranium operation in eastern Wyoming. Because it is a federally-owned utility, it is immune from some state and local taxes and possibly from state law.

Wyoming Assistant Attorney General Rick Lewis said he is researching whether the state can force TVA to comply with the state's Industrial Siting Act, which requires that energy companies help alleviate the social and economic impacts of large industrial projects.

TVA assumes it is exempt, according to Wyoming officials, and it has peppered Lewis with details of several cases in the East in which TVA was granted such immunity by the courts.

Officials in Converse County, where the mine and mill will be located, are up in arms. They have contacted state officials and the Wyoming congressional delegation for help. According to state siting administration estimates, TVA's exemption as a federal entity may save it as much as \$1 million in property, sales and use taxes. It definitely would not be subject to property taxes — and might not have to pay sales or use taxes either. When TVA was created in 1933, Congress said it must make payments in lieu of taxes, but the formula for computing the payments is

based on a percentage of power sold. TVA isn't sure how much it must pay on its Western properties.

Local officials say that without the tax money they will have difficulty providing water, sewer and school facilities for the 1,565 new people TVA's operation will attract to the county.

TVA can't understand what all the fuss is about. "We've told them TVA is dedicated to proper impact mitigation," said Bob Steffy, assistant chief of TVA's nuclear raw materials branch in Knoxville, Tenn. "I don't think Blaine Dinger (director of the Wyoming industrial siting staff) had any grave questions remaining about whether TVA will be a good neighbor. If there's a problem, it's just communications....The question is whether the impacts will be properly mitigated. If the answer is yes, then any other questions are irrelevant," he said.

Dinger, however, is concerned. TVA's assurances that it must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act don't satisfy him. "NEPA requirements are different both legally and philosophically from the state siting act's requirements," he said. While NEPA requires environmental impact statements, a uranium project can be approved regardless of environmental problems if the national need for the fuel is thought to outweigh the impacts of mining it. The Wyoming Siting Act, theoretically at least, prohibits development if significant adverse impacts can't be prevented.

Under the state siting act, steps must be taken to alleviate social and economic impacts. "In all the federal environmental impact statements I've read on uranium mining and milling I haven't found any

specific requirements for social and economic impact alleviation," Dinger said.

Since TVA has all the other state and federal permits it needs, the siting act is the only way to force TVA to help ease local social impact, Dinger said.

For now, the jurisdictional dispute only involves the Morton Ranch property in Converse County. But TVA has other uranium and coal operations in the West. In previous disputes, courts have ruled that TVA must comply with state regulations that are backed up by federal laws, such as the Clean Air Act or the federal Surface Mining and Reclamation Act. The Wyoming siting act is not backed by federal law, however.



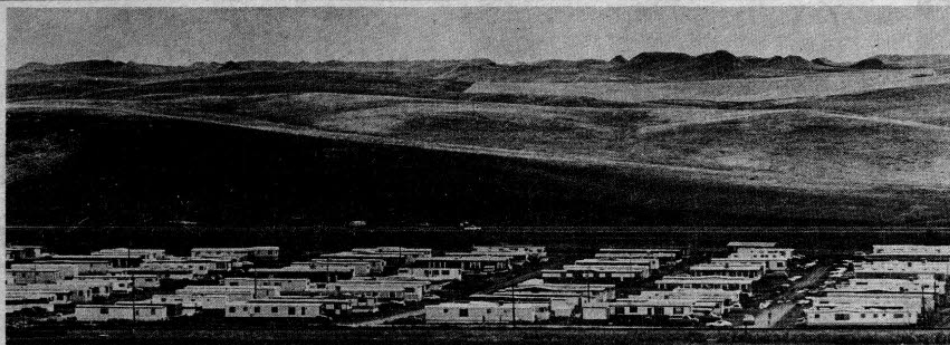
Nyctale scandiaca

Ghost-like designs of the lovely arctic owl, scolding only nest upon the tundra's ground. They are dependent on lemmings or arctic hares for food. When lemmings or hares are scarce, the owls will starve their great homes or even migrate nearly a thousand miles south to survive.

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12-High Country News — Sept. 21, 1979



BOOMTOWNS like Gillette, Wyo., where trailer camps sprawl on the west edge of town, would get help from Hart's bill.

Photo by A. Held

Future uncertain for Hart's 'boomtown' bill despite link to Carter energy supply package

by Jody Phibbs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With energy supply legislation barreling down Capitol Hill's fast track, Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) is once again pressing for federal aid to communities faced with rapid development of their energy supplies.

Calling Craig, Colo., Rock Springs and Gillette, Wyo., some of the "most extreme examples" of the boomtown syndrome, Hart — a leading advocate of energy impact legislation since 1976 — attached his boomtown bill to the Senate's energy supply bill just before the August recess. Hart's proposal would make available \$1.75 billion in federal grants over the next five years to states, local governments and

Indian tribes, to help them absorb sudden growth and disruption caused by energy development. Last year, Hart's boomtown bill never got out of a divided Environment and Public Works Committee. That version would have set up a federal grants program run by the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration.

To ensure better chances for passage this year, Hart revised his bill to expand an existing Farmers Home Administration program and tacked it onto the national energy development plan now before the Senate Energy Committee.

"The president's proposal to spend \$88 billion producing synthetic fuels means more assistance will be needed to deal with

the community impacts," Hart said.

Hart's "Inland Energy Assistance Act of 1979" would allocate \$150 million for fiscal year 1980, and \$400 million for each of the following years.

The FmHA program was authorized in 1978 under the Coal Conversion Act to provide limited assistance to communities beset with coal and uranium development. Hart's bill would expand the program to areas coping with any form of energy development, including oil shale, and increase overall funding.

Sen. Wendell Ford (D-Ky.) introduced a second boomtown aid bill in August when he and Hart could not agree on a unified approach. Aides to the senators expect differences to be resolved during committee

mark-up. The two bills vary critically on the form federal aid should take. While the Hart approach favors federal grants and substantial state control of spending, the Ford bill authorizes loans, rather than grants, to impact areas — except in cases where a state's constitution forbids it from incurring debts.

Supporters say the Ford approach would give the federal government more power to monitor spending and guard against the creation of state-controlled slush funds.

The Hart bill would provide \$1.75 billion in "seed money" for state revolving funds to make loans and grants to energy impact areas; with special attention to local planning units; an additional \$1.5 billion in loan guarantees to local communities; and intra-agency coordination of relevant federal assistance programs on the community level.

Opponents argue that both Hart's and Ford's programs would be superfluous, that planning and mitigation needs of impact areas can be met through implementation of existing laws, and that any further aid should be wrested from the development interests or the swelling revenues of the developing states and communities.

In the House of Representatives, which has been inactive on the issue, prospects for passage of an impact aid bill this year are hazy, though strong advocates of such legislation, such as Rep. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.), feel the current rush toward synfuels development requires such programs. It is unclear whether the House will wait for a text from the Senate side or draft its own bill.

The Carter administration, which has officially endorsed energy impact assistance on the order of \$150 million a year, has so far failed to actively lobby for Hart's proposal.

Energy Committee hearings on impact aid have been scheduled for Oct. 18 and 19. If Hart's bill is thrown out of the energy supply package, it may be considered as part of a separate omnibus energy bill or amended to another piece of energy-related legislation.

Observers on both sides of the issue agree that in Capitol Hill's race toward energy development legislation this fall, the question of impact assistance is commanding greater attention than before. For that reason alone, the chances for passage of an impact aid bill this year have brightened.

Glitter returning to N. Cheyenne coal

Coal mines are starting to look more attractive to some members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, which has fought coal development for several years.

With a growing population and decreasing revenue from grazing and timbering on its reservation in southern Montana, the tribe has been running short of cash. Consequently, several proponents of coal development are now circulating a petition calling for a referendum on the issue.

No one is willing to predict the outcome of a referendum on coal development. Many tribal members have visited coal mines in the Southwest and talked with Navajos and Hopis about the effects of coal development. According to the tribal newspaper, *Tsististas Press*, those Cheyenne who made the trip now oppose development.

Allen Rowland, tribal chairman for the last 10 years, doesn't think a tribal majority would favor coal development. "But they surprise me all the time," he said. "I have only one vote, and I know which way I'll go, but the majority rules in this country."

If coal development is approved, he said the tribe will be sure it gets a good deal this time instead of the 17-cent-per-ton royalties that the old leases provided. "The times are gone when we'll give away our land for nothing," he said.

At a meeting Sept. 17, the tribal council considered a proposal from Global Petro-Chem of Houston that could bring as much as \$1.7 billion into tribal coffers over the

20-year life of the contract. However, after an unfavorable critique by tribal researchers, the council took no action on the proposal. Some tribal members do not expect it to come up again.

Even if the proposal were approved, most people doubt it would go ahead until old reservation leases and prospecting permits are officially scrapped. The tribe asked the Interior Department to void the leases in January 1974, saying they did not conform with federal regulations. Since the federally-approved permits cover nearly half of the small reservation, the Northern Cheyenne felt incoming miners would make them a minority on their own land.

Former Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton left it to the coal companies and the tribe to resolve their differences, and the contracts have been in limbo ever since. Now Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) has offered to introduce a bill voiding the contracts if the tribe can convince him a reservation majority approves.

Opponents and proponents of coal development on the reservation support Melcher's bill, but that seems to be the only thing they agree upon.

Some tribal members still support the joint venture proposed with Global Petro-Chem, which would provide 42% percent ownership to the tribe, 42% percent to Global and 15 percent to Domestic Energy of Helena, Mont. Critics of the proposal told the tribal council there were too many unanswered questions about the

two companies. They couldn't get financial information on Global, and Domestic Energy is a paper corporation created to deal with the tribe. The same companies made a similar offer to the Crow Tribe a year ago, which was rejected.

Even if the mood toward coal mining on the reservation has changed, federal regulations prohibit power plants there. Three years ago, the tribe became the first local government in the country to win the Environmental Protection Agency's most stringent air protection classification (see Colstrip story elsewhere in this issue).

To reverse that classification would be very difficult.



Drawing by Hannah Hinchman
ALLEN ROWLAND doesn't think a tribal majority would favor coal development. But the tribe seems more interested in mining than it used to be.



Western Roundup



BN forces Jack Creek showdown

Burlington Northern is forcing a showdown in the controversial Jack Creek roadless area in the Madison Mountains in Western Montana. The railroad, frustrated with Forest Service appeal processes and the apparent hopelessness of ob-

taining a large land swap, has begun construction of a logging road on its own land into the drainage.

Environmentalists want the Jack Creek area included in a unified Madison Wilderness Area, which would include the Madison Mountains, the Spanish Peaks Primitive Area to the north and Taylor-Hilgard Primitive Area to the south. Jack Creek is considered the "weak link" to the concept. Burlington Northern owns every alternate section in some parts of the area, which has also been proposed as a power line corridor.

The railroad is building the road to reach the timber on its own private sections. It applied for a permit for a shorter route across Forest Service land in August of 1978, but approval has been held up on appeals. So in August of this year, the company decided to go ahead with a nearly mile-long road on its own land into the first 60 million board feet of company-owned timber in the area.

Environmentalists organized a protest march against the road construction. They did not force a confrontation with the company, but apparently attracted enough attention to bring Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) and Rep. Pat Williams (D-Mont.) to a public meeting in Missoula on Aug. 29.

A solution to the problem, proposed last year, would be a swap of other productive timber lands in Montana for the Burlington Northern property in Jack Creek. However, Melcher made this option less attractive with an amendment to the Omnibus Parks Bill, passed in Congress last year. The amendment limited land swaps to 6,400 acres unless congressional approval could be obtained. At the public meeting, however, Melcher said that he would consider a smaller land exchange to settle the problem. Both the company and environmentalists say they support the swap idea.

A number of Montana groups, including the Madison-Gallatin Alliance, the Wilderness Society and the Montana Wilderness Association are supporting the addition of Jack Creek to the proposed wilderness area. Both Taylor-Hilgard and Spanish Peaks are congressionally-designated wilderness study areas. Melcher says that he will add Jack Creek to the proposed areas, if the land swap is successful.

ORVs blamed for Utah flood damage

Utah state geologists are blaming off-road vehicles for heavy flood damage in Ogden in August. Tons of water, rocks and gravel poured out of an irrigation canal and onto two residential streets. Bruce Kaliser of the Utah Geological and Mineral Survey, who has been investigating flash floods for over 13 years, told the *Deseret News*, "At no time have the damaging effects of off-road vehicles been more clearly demonstrated."

Roads and paths created by four-wheel-drive vehicles and trail bikes diverted flood runoff across areas of loose soil instead of down existing natural drainages, Kaliser said.

Carter okays MX missile deployment

The elaborate and expensive MX missile has been approved by President Carter for deployment in the West. The plan will cost \$33 billion and will do the "best job" of meeting Soviet threats to existing fixed-base missiles, the White House announced.

The MX is a mobile missile (see HCN 5-4-79). It will be shuffled among 4,600 blast-proof, underground shelters built in 40 Utah and Nevada valleys. The missiles will move from shelter to shelter on giant transporter trucks driving along "race-tracks" — which resemble civilian highways. The missiles will be moved regularly so that the Soviets will not know their location from day to day.

Carter and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown stressed that this type of deployment will minimize the impact on the environment in the Western states where the missiles will be located — barring a Soviet attack on those states.

The system will actually occupy an area of about 7,000 square miles — 2,000 more than the state of Connecticut — but may impact as much as 22,000 square miles — an area slightly smaller than West Virginia. Dr. Carlos Stern, Air Force deputy for environment and safety, told the Public Lands Institute that the new roadways will be the linear equivalent of three coast-to-coast highways.

The new "racetrack" system replaces a previous proposal in which the missiles would have been placed underground and moved from site to site via railroads through tunnels.

Wilderness Society appoints Moyle

The Wilderness Society announced recently that Perry Moyle will be its new regional representative for Colorado, Wyoming and Kansas. Moyle has been the society's field program coordinator. The press release announcing his appointment calls him "one of the society's most capable and influential staff members."

In announcing the appointment, society executive director William Turnage said, "We wanted to send one of our top people to the Rocky Mountain region."

The Wilderness Society had been criticized recently for de-emphasizing its field program. Utah representative Dick Carter was removed from his position and Wyoming field representative Bart Koehler resigned in protest over the change in emphasis.



Photo by William Nell

PICKETS demonstrating against the Burlington Northern logging road under construction in the Jack Creek area.

Bisti gets BLM wilderness study nod

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management recommended that three areas in New Mexico — including the controversial Bisti Badlands — be designated as BLM wilderness study areas (see HCN 4-20-79). In addition to the 3,980 acre Bisti area, BLM recommended further study for the De-na-zin tract of 24,240 acres near Farmington and the Ah-shi-sle-pah containing 7,122 acres near Chaco Canyon.

A spokesman for Western Coal Co. sharply criticized the proposal, saying that the areas being considered may have as much as 6 million tons of coal reserves. George Byers told a public hearing that BLM took the steps to eliminate mining on the areas "only eight days after the presidential calls for increased reliance on coal."

A fourth area in the Star Lake-Bisti coal region failed to meet the criteria for further study, meaning they are released for possible development. BLM has recommended further study for about 35,240 acres of 1.6 million acres originally inventoried in northwest New Mexico.

If the BLM's recommendation is accepted, the areas will go to Congress for potential designation as wilderness. Comments will be accepted on the proposal

until Nov. 2 and should be addressed to the District Manager, BLM, P.O. Box 6770, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107.

U.S. appeals desert development ruling

After four months of uncertainty, the federal government has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on whether under the 1894 Carey Act Idaho is entitled to 3 million acres of federal desert.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last April that the state was entitled to the land, which can be homesteaded and developed.

Environmentalists say the costs — in terms of both dollars and energy — of bringing water to irrigate desert lands are too high.

According to *The Idaho Statesman*, the state of Idaho says that even if it wins the case, massive development is unlikely. The state says it would allow development as water, energy and the farm economy allowed.

About 600,000 acres have been developed, and more than 1,000 applications have been filed on the remaining land.

14-High Country News — Sept. 21, 1979



HCN Bulletin Board



LOONEY LIMERICKS by Zane E. Cology

We know it may drip in the soil
And make the odd purist recoil.
But we're so fuel-sick
We can't choose and pick —
We need that big Tier pipeline's oil.

PROTECTION FOR THE LOS PINOS

Fifty-four miles of the Los Pinos River in the Weminuche Wilderness in Southwest Colorado have been proposed for addition to the nation's Wild and Scenic River System in a draft environmental statement published by the U.S. Forest Service. Comments on the proposal are due Oct. 12 to the Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest, 701 Camino Del Rio, Durango, Colo. 81301. Requests for copies of the statement should be sent to the same address.

COLORADO RIVER REVIEW EXTENDED

The public review period on the final environmental impact statement for the Colorado River Management Plan in Grand Canyon National Park has been extended through October 2, 1979. The statement analyzes a plan for management of the Colorado River in the park, including a phasing out of some motorized river-running craft over a five year period. Copies of the final EIS are available for review at National Park Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.; the NPS Western Regional Office in San Francisco; at the Southern Arizona NPS office in Phoenix; at park headquarters; at public libraries near the park; and at the NPS Information Office in Los Angeles.

FURTHER WYOMING BLM WILDERNESS STUDY

Three BLM areas over Wyoming's oil-rich Overthrust Belt have been identified as deserving further consideration for wilderness designation. The three areas that are suggested for further study are: Lake Mountain, 13,970 acres; Raymond Mountain, 33,236 acres; and Coal Creek, 13,174 acres. Public comment will be accepted at the state BLM office until Nov. 16. Public meetings will be held in Rawlins on Oct. 24, Lander Oct. 25, Pinedale Oct. 30 and Kemmerer on Nov. 1. Comments should be sent to Wyoming BLM State Office, 2515 Warren Ave., Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.

ARAVAIPA CANYON WILDERNESS EIS

A draft environmental statement on Aravaipa Canyon, which may become the first designated Bureau of Land Management wilderness area, has been released. The proposed area covers 4,044 acres and is considered a "classic example of desert and riparian vegetation with nearly all desert songbirds species found along the stream in high canyon walls." Copies of the EIS may be obtained from the BLM State Office, 2400 Valley Bank Center, Phoenix, Ariz. 85073. Comments will be accepted until Sept. 29, 1979, and should be addressed to the director in the BLM state office.

CHICANOS AGAINST WIPP

The Florencia Land Rights Coordinating Committee, a coalition of local Chicano groups from southeastern New Mexico, will hold a "national survival gathering" on September 28, 29 and 30 in Florencia (Loving), N.M. The gathering will be to "spiritually and physically demonstrate opposition to the dumping of radioactive waste at the nation's first permanent nuclear waste dump — WIPP (Waste Isolation Pilot Plant)." For more information contact the group at P.O. Box 1326 Florencia (Loving), N.M. 88256 or call (505) 745-3690 or (505) 242-4766.

PHOTO CONTEST

Entries for the National Wildlife Federation's photo contest, "Nature in America," are due Oct. 15. All entries must be in color, must be photographed in the U.S., and all plants or animals depicted must be American natives. Slides are preferred, but prints up to 8 by 10 inches are acceptable. The photos, which are limited to five entries per person, should have the name, address and telephone number of the photographer attached, as well as a brief description of where, when

and how the shot was taken, the make and model of the camera and lens used, and the exposure setting. The Federation is offering \$2,000 in prizes. Send entries and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Photo Contest, National Wildlife, 225 East Michigan, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53202.

CONFUSED ABOUT COAL?

Federal officials will hold workshops to explain their coal program to the public next month in Albuquerque, N.M., and in Oklahoma City, Okla. The Albuquerque meetings will be Oct. 2-3 at the Sheraton Old Town Inn. The first day's session, which will begin at 7 p.m., will be aimed at public and community leaders. The second session, which will run from 9 a.m. to noon on Oct. 3, will discuss issues of concern to industry, with emphasis on regulations. The third session, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. the same day, will emphasize the federal planning system and environmental issues. The meetings will be hosted by the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management. For more information contact the BLM New Mexico State Office, P.O. Box 1449, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501.

ABBEY, NASH TO SPEAK

Author Edward Abbey and historian Roderick Nash will speak at the Colorado Wilderness Conference, a gathering for people interested in preserving the state's remaining wild land and rivers. Abbey is author of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and *Desert Solitaire*. Nash, a history professor at the University of California, wrote *Wilderness and the American Mind*. The conference is sponsored by the Wilderness Workshop of the Colorado Open Space Council. It will be in Boulder Nov. 3 and 4. For a conference brochure and registration form, write: Meg Nagel, 2239 E. Colfax, Denver, Colo. 80206 or call (303) 333-0932.

URANIUM INFORMATION

An information packet and a slide show on the hazards of uranium mining and milling are available from the Uranium Information Network at 2239 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo. 80206 or call (303) 321-6588. The network, which is supported by membership fees and small donations, opposes uranium mining and milling and supports Indians in their land struggle.

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Photo courtesy of the Colony Development Operation

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PERSONNEL The Northern Cheyenne Research Project, an independent research office of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, has openings for 3 VISTA Volunteers beginning in October. Commitment for one year desirable. College graduate with Science or Educational skills preferred. Experience with Mini-Computers desirable. Benefits total about \$100-week. Rewarding work, invaluable experience. Send resume to NCRP, P.O. Box 388, Lame Deer, Montana 59043, or call (collect) (406) 477-6278.

FALL QUARTER IN THE WILDERNESS 63 day Western Wilderness Course for academic credit. Sept 2-Nov. 20. Mountain Skills, Wilderness Ethics, Field Leadership. Colorado Rockies, Canyonlands, Grand Canyon. Challenge Discovery. Box 229 Crested Butte, Co. 81224. (303) 349-5432.

WANTED. Freelance writers or photographers to cover North Dakota natural resource news. Pay is two to four cents a word or \$4 per photo. One-sided diatribes unacceptable. Contact Marjane Ambler, High Country News, Box K, Lander, Wyo. 82520.

PART TIME POSITION AVAILABLE. Northern Great Plains office of the Sierra Club has a one half time assistant regional representative opening. Applicant should be able to work independently and co-ordinate well with volunteers. Some state and national legislative and administrative lobbying. Work will focus on regional water, agriculture, and public land issues. Send letter of application and resume to Bruce Hamilton, Box 1078, Lander, WY 82520. For more information call 307-332-9824. Applications due by Oct. 15, 1979.

WANTED. Persuasive people to sell advertising for HCN. 15 percent commission. To apply, send references and letter with your ideas for selling advertising in your area to Hannah Hinchman, HCN, Box K, Lander, Wyo. 82520.

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BRANCHING OUT

THE PAUL BUNYAN SYNDROME

by Myra Connell

When my children were youngsters they delighted in the Paul Bunyan legends. As I read the tall tales to them it never occurred to me that I might be indoctrinating them with a dangerous idea. Other kids as

well as mine cut their teeth on Paul Bunyan stories. It seems no wonder that "bigger is better" has become the real motto for America.

Paul Bunyan, whom I shall call Old Paul, or Paul the First, saw the great forests as his challenge, and he tamed them. His descendants found other worlds to conquer. Their creed was simple: The landscape is to alter; Nature is Enemy Number One.

Paul the Second became a farmer. Taking the numerous progeny of Babe the Blue Ox westward to the Great Plains, he ripped up the buffalo sod that held the soil in place and planted crops. For a few years farming went well. World War I broke out and Paul the Second planted every available acre to wheat, a crop that doesn't protect the soil well, and the ground began to drift. Drought in the 1930s turned his farms into a dust bowl. In 1933 or '34 dust from Oklahoma blackened my laundry near Saginaw, Mich.

Paul the Third came on the scene early in the 20th century and he was bound to outdo both Old Paul and his father. Old Paul had flattened the wild Big Augur River by having Babe pull a mountain all the way down it. Paul the Third flattened the much larger Colorado behind Hoover Dam in 1936 and, later, put Lake Powell where Glen Canyon had been.

Paul the Third moved on to the Columbia in 1942 and installed the Grand Coulee. By then he was hooked on dam

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building; at last count there were 134 dams in the Columbia system. Environmentalists howled to no avail about the salmon that couldn't get up the fish ladders to their spawning places. Salmon became so expensive that Paul the Third couldn't afford to serve it to his construction workers.

Whereas it is told that Old Paul knocked down 10 acres of timber by merely blowing the breakfast horn, the Third far outdid him by inventing modern clear-cutting machinery. Old Paul had his double-bitted rope-handled ax; he would have flipped if he had ever seen a chain saw.

Another storyteller claims that Old Paul caused a destructive cyclone by blowing the big breakfast horn. His grandson has given that a new twist: He flies planes loaded with chemicals into the clouds to make rain.

According to legend Grandpa Paul could straighten out a crooked road by hitching Babe to one end of it. Paul the Third has connected all points of the nation by paved expressways.

One of Old Paul's log jams killed 40 deer. Sourdough Sam, the cook, served the venison to the loggers. A brother of Paul the Second slaughtered 60 million buffalo for the hides and wasted most of the meat.

Johnny Inkslinger, bookkeeper at the logging camps, did all his figuring "by hand" never dreaming of computers to be invented by Paul the Third.

Sourdough Sam had problems with cookhouse garbage piling up, a difficulty of our modern times that Paul the Third, genius though he may be, hasn't had time to notice yet—he's been so-o-o busy, with stippling, nuclear power plants and rockets to outer space!

Bunyantitis: an American disease, passed from generation to generation.

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Review by Gary Nabhan

text by John Nichols, photographs by William Davis, 1979, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 144 pages, \$20.

John Nichols' latest work is a pretty, oversized picture book about a not-so-pretty situation in New Mexico. As he explains, "Taos county may be beautiful, but it is not a happy environment for many of its nineteen thousand inhabitants."

For Nichols, the key tragedy in the West is the rapid displacement of cultures that

How can anyone be an effective conservationist with no more than a few years' stake in a place?

had long-term commitments to certain parcels of land and particular watersheds. Ironically, the natives are being displaced by people who move West in superficial appreciation of the landscape, but who do not dig in and become part of the land-based community.

"Over the last ten years, an influx of newcomers has enormously altered the area," Nichols says. "Escapes from urban blight...are forging the type of nightmare they fled only a few years earlier, creating an unstable and selfish environment that

will become as crowded and uninhabitable and frenzied as much of the rest of the nation."

Nichols points out the cost of Taos' reputation for being picturesque. "Taos Valley is being changed from a stable, agrarian, Spanish-speaking area of strong individual communities held together by cultural ties, into a retirement-recreation, middle-class suburban, ghettoized urban mess, and the change is occurring with stunning rapidity. Little planning, lackluster zoning, and no overall philosophy are guiding it....Few of the newcomers here bother to learn Spanish, or to become involved in the crucial land and water politics....Newcomers will organize to try and stop a few pretty trees from being cut down by highway crews, but will rarely attend meetings about a proposed powerful taxing district that could efficiently wipe out the remaining rural population. Being middle-class in a nation whose middle-class population tends to move every couple of years, they come in for short stays, then leave, creating an un-

healthy transient ethic in the county, which further undermines community roots."

These conflicts are probably deeply felt by anyone who has lived in a back country area in the West for more than a couple years. How can anyone be an effective contributing resident with no more than a few years' stake in a place? On the other hand, when ranchers and farmers can't even afford the taxes and maintenance costs of remaining on ancestral property, is there any incentive for stable communities? Nichols' tentative answer is that everyone ought to fight for where they live, regardless of whether they are native or recent immigrant. Despite Nichols' own recent arrival in Taos, he seems convinced that he has made some contribution to local life.

One of the problems with the book is the irony of beautiful color landscape photos of a place Nichols says he is trying not to advertise. But it goes beyond that. While Nichols' says the durable human aspect of a landscape should not be ignored, Davis'

photos show little more of the human influence than a few farm buildings or fences on the horizon. The valleys of Taos County aren't little parcels of undisturbed wilderness; where are the images of farmers working — of ditches being diverted, of beans being harvested? Where are the ugly signs of development that Nichols rants and raves about? The photos simply do not reinforce the essay; in fact, they are purely naturalistic to the point of being antithetical to the text.

The first few chapters flaw the essay as well. They tell us in excruciating detail how Nichols came to Taos. Except for in-

HCN books

frequent spurts of good humor, it is tedious stuff. Nichols is at his best documenting how the natives respond to land conflicts, not dealing with his moments of alienation in a new home.

Nevertheless, Nichols must be commended for examining the internal and external conflicts of living in the West today. The challenge he offers is one which each of us should consider.

Gary Nabhan is a free-lance writer from Tucson, Ariz. He's also a consultant on desert agriculture for the Papago Indians and a collector of endangered plant seed for the University of Arizona.



by Hannah Hinchman

The change in the angle of sunlight is the first intimation of fall. Glaring midday hours have been bypassed; the sunlight at noon already has a p.m. feeling: long shadows, more of the yellow spectrum. If it's true that evening hours, the summing up of the day, bring out reflective qualities in people, then it's no surprise that the long evenings of fall are traditionally a time for mulling things over, making changes, reckoning up the elapsed year.

People who live in the West seem to relish the coming of winter and prepare with enthusiasm. It's one of those rough edges they like to sharpen themselves on. Everyone seems to be going to South Pass to gather wood these days, taking advantage of beetle-killed lodgepole pine. Marjane Ambler said she was never out of range of the sound of chain saws during her wood-gathering trip.

In Dubois, a little town close to the headwaters of Wind River, where Whiskey Mountain rises right over your shoulder, hunters on the wooden sidewalks, in cold morning light, look anxious to leave for the woods. The chill

makes me feel domestic; I purchase a wool blanket from Frank Welty's General Store.

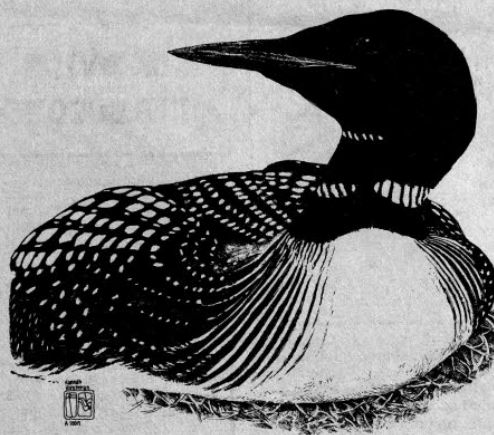
Stop on a high plateau on the way home, listen to the wheatgrass hiss like wave foam. Feel that strange ache in heart and gut, part exultation, part fear, part loneliness, that such emptiness calls up.

I'm impressed again with birds' strange behavior in the fall. Last year it was the flickers that seemed a little daft. This year it's the robins. They are singing a strange quiet version of their spring song: ornithologists call it a "whisper song"

The robins sing with little en-

thusiasm, breaking into squawks and alarm notes as they move around, restless and ruffled. They are no doubt responding to light intensity, now the same as it was in March when they were courting. But their distracted manner makes me think of nervous public speakers, humming to themselves before going on stage. Fall exerts a challenging and unsettling influence on creatures, felt less tangibly by humans.

Joan discovered another candle-power confusion at Popo Agie Falls: pasque flowers in bloom. They were encouraged by the week of rain we had in August as well as the light intensity.



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