



High Country News

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In the News

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There's very little good news in controlling this toxic chemical. It continues to leak — out of regulatory hands, and into the environment.

WATT'S HOT 4

Commanding the president-elect's respect as an environmentalist, but not the "extremist" type, attorney James Watt zeros in on Interior Department top slot. The extremist types react.



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The rap on these leathery mammals is that they're blind, vicious and verminous. But HCN finds it's the critics who are shortsighted.

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Sierra Clubbers may be human after all — they like a good sci-fi read. In fact, they're publishing the stuff. Peter Wild fell into a Dream.



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Jeffrey City

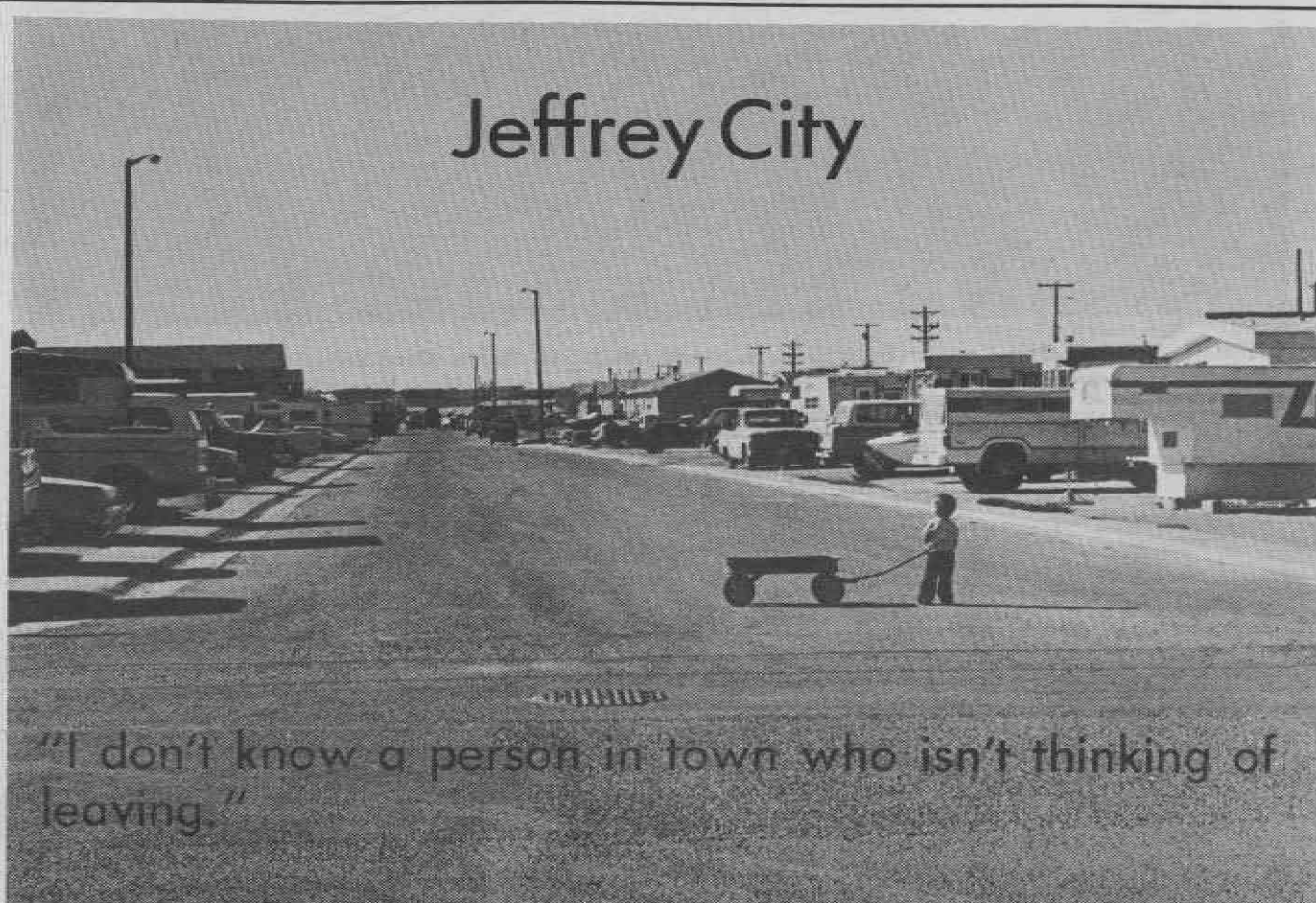


Photo by Sara Hunter-Wiles

by Geoffrey O'Gara

(While many communities in the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains are bracing for the energy development boom, some towns are actually declining, their mineral or energy wealth exhausted or unwanted. In November we looked at Anaconda, Mont., after the shutdown of its copper smelter; this story examines Jeffrey City, Wyo., a uranium mining and milling town.)

Part two of two parts

JEFFREY CITY, Wyo. — At nightfall, the temperature dips well below freezing and a chill wind blows down Highway 287, the spine of this town.

Driving in from the east, travelers who've crossed 70 miles of dark, high desert terrain since they left Rawlins, stop on the outskirts for gas. At midtown, 500 yards later, the cook and waitress at Drillers' Delight joke when "another live one" buys the third dinner they've sold in a long evening. Another few hundred yards, at the west end of town just before the highway disappears into more flat sagebrush country, pickups pull in at a dark A-frame building with a faded Lion's Club insignia on the side.

About a dozen people enter the building, all men but one. They struggle for a while with a heater fan and then sit down to business. The group constitutes

the leadership of United Steelworkers of America Local No. 8814. Membership in the local is down to about 50 because of lay-offs at Pathfinder Mine Corp.'s Big Eagle Mine.

The uranium industry is in a slump (see related story on page 3) and Jeffrey City, with its low-grade uranium ore, is at the bottom of the economic pit. Pathfinder has laid off 220-230 workers this year from a workforce of about 360; Western Nuclear, Inc., the largest employer here with a mine and uranium mill, has dropped 163 workers from a peak payroll of over 550. Most of the laid-off workers lived in Jeffrey City, and in a town of less than 4,000, that's massive unemployment.

NO STEREOTYPE

The situation here is serious enough that an outsider might expect to find Jeffrey City falling apart. Men and women are out of work, the town lies in one of the most hostile environments in the country, and there is little available recreation to distract people from their problems. Nor is there a longstanding community bond — Jeffrey City has been here for only about 25 years; few of today's residents were here at the start.

Experts on boomtowns say that when a boom ends, the combination of unemployment, isolation and transience can lead to increased crime, family violence, liquor and drug abuse and, sometimes, industrial sabotage.

But residents in Jeffrey City reject

the stereotype. "People in town get along better (since the lay-offs)," said Ted Keller, Western Nuclear's general superintendent here. A Pathfinder miner agreed: "It's become an almost church-like community."

In fact, one of the items on the union agenda tonight is a dinner for the town's senior citizens, a somewhat church-like function sponsored by the Steelworkers. The union officers are worried about attendance, publicity and volunteers. They want to get the word to some of the older ranchers in the area.

When all that is settled, though, the miners express weightier concerns. "I don't know a person in town who isn't thinking of leaving," said Fred Cameron, a Western Nuclear employee who sat in on the Pathfinder union meeting. (The Western Nuclear employees are represented by a separate Steelworkers local.) Having had little or no warning when the first round of lay-offs took place last spring, workers tend to discount company promises that no further cuts are coming.

Many miners, including Pathfinder local president John Raynor, wonder if it wouldn't have been better to have lost a job in the first round. They dread the prospect of a mid-winter lay-off, when the harsh snow, ice and wind make it much harder to move and find a new job.

Fearing the worst, many spend their (see next page)



Photo by Kathy Bogan
THINGS MOVE SLOWLY at the Split Rock Bar, and other businesses, since the lay-offs in Jeffrey City.

Jeffrey City...

(continued from page 1)

weekends, vacation and sick leaves searching for work elsewhere. A middle-aged Big Eagle worker living outside of town has a "for sale" sign on the gate, even though he has a salaried job. He is pursuing job leads in Colorado, Utah and Idaho.

For him and others, leaving will not be as simple as throwing the suitcases into the station wagon and driving

away. Many arrived here thinking they would rake in \$12- to \$24-an-hour wages for a few years and then take their savings to a less hostile environment, but the town and the country has taken hold of them.

Raynor, like many other wage-earners in Jeffrey City, bought some land outside of town — land which is, for the moment at least, almost worthless. Others bought trucks, cars, snowmobiles, and trailers, and settled into a rough, rural life. "People take 'helping out' their friends very seriously here," said the wife of one Western Nuclear employee. "It's a good feeling."

has made it more livable.

"I've seen a lot of changes," said Keller of Western Nuclear, who first came to Jeffrey City in 1968. "Adequate housing, paved streets, a doctor, ambulance service, our own schools..."

Fifty years ago, there was but one log cabin in what is now known as Jeffrey City. Beulah Peterson Walker and her family settled "Home on the Range" in 1931, and she still lives there.

When Western Nuclear began mining uranium on claims in the Green Mountain-Sheep Mountain-Crooks Gap area, it built a trailer-town to house workers.

In 1970 the population stood at 750. Pathfinder opened its Big Eagle Mine in the 1970s, and the Anaconda Co. has had on again-off again plans for

A TRANSFORMATION

The town has improved physically in recent years — and the transformation

another operation in the vicinity. The population swelled to over 4,000 last year.

Company officials talk about how difficult it was to get skilled, dedicated workers when the town was nothing more than a windy, dusty trailer park. They have put considerable money into permanent housing, and most city services are subsidized by Western Nuclear. Most of the property belongs to Western Nuclear and Pathfinder, though there are some private holdings.

To an outsider's eye it still does not amount to much. The town expands from several horseshoe-shaped streets at its center. There are several company-owned townhouses — labeled "Townhouse A," "Townhouse B," etc. — some permanent housing and hundreds of trailers. Trees are few and scraggly, though more planting is underway.

Hub Thompson, a 35-year-old who is probably the town's most important owner of land and businesses, after the mining companies, said: "This town was really taking hold until these layoffs." An effort to incorporate was under way and "you couldn't find a trailer spot in this town."

Children who once had to be bused and boarded away for school are now educated here. A large sports center is under construction, and there is even a country club, though the sagebrush and sand golf course is barely discernable from the rest of the desert.

Kids can play on the sidewalks without supervision, as long as they stay away from the highway, and crime does not reach the levels reported by many more notorious boomtowns, according to the sheriff's staff and county social workers.

Thompson still believes, along with others who have high stakes in the town, that the uranium industry, and the town, will recover in a year or two, especially now that a Republican administration is taking over in Washington. Driving around in his "portable office," a black, four-wheel-drive pickup, Thompson said of regula-

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Photo by Sara Hunter-Wiles



Beulah Peterson Walker

In 1937, Beulah Peterson Walker and her late husband built a 12' x 24' cabin on the desolate central Wyoming plains. It had a south-facing window, and through it she could see, miles away across sagebrush flats, Crooks Gap, Green Mountain, and a little hump known as Squaw's Tit.

At dusk, Squaw's Tit catches the sun after the rest of the mountains have fallen into shadow. "There was hardly

What the old-timers say...

a day I didn't come to this window and look out," she recalled recently, showing a visitor.

Looking through the window today, however, you cannot see the spectacle. Instead, you see a "dishpan," as she calls it, a saucer-shaped receiver for cable TV.

That is just one of many changes Walker has seen come to Jeffrey City: two grocery stores, schools, a bank, and thousands of people, with cable TV.

For 20 years the local uranium industry grew, and the town's population peaked last year at 4,000 — some of it settled on land that used to be Walker's homestead. Now she's watching the population drop. "Some of them just put what they could in the car, left the trailer behind, took the kids and dog — sometimes they left the dog," she said of recent lay-offs.

When Western Nuclear began developing uranium claims in the 1950s, 40 trailers formed the earliest incarnation of Jeffrey City. "At first I thought it was going to be real nice having someone around," said Walker. "But the kids were pretty destructive. They shot BBs at the bluebirds, even shot my tulips off."

The early workers "abused every

privilege they could," she said, often leaving ranchers' gates open and burning fenceposts for firewood.

When permanent workers arrived, the old-time ranchers were hostile, fearing more of the same. But once she got to know them, "Some of them were very nice people," said Walker. "But their ideas, if they came from any distance, were all different."

Twice widowed, and requiring a cane to get around, Walker said, "I can't say that I'd like to see it all back like it was. I've made lots of friends, and I enjoy the convenience of the banks and stores." So does Ted Graham, whose ranch is about nine miles out of town. Graham, 70, has lived there all his life.

His ranch has electricity, telephones and fire protection — things his parents never dreamed of when they bought it in 1893. "A lot of good things come from it," he said of Jeffrey City's growth. And most of those things are being paid for by the companies. The big fear of many area ranchers is that the mines will close down completely and the tax burden for all the services will pass to the ranchers. "It's a problem," said Graham's son, E. Tom Graham, "because we're going to be here whether they stay or not."

tion: "When it starts killing the economy, it's going too far."

Mike Kemler, owner of the Food Fare grocery store and president of the local Chamber of Commerce, describes the town's economy today as "bad, dismal, terrible — have I left out anything?" Like other businessmen, he has cut back — from 11 to five employees. He expects some businesses to go under by spring.

Kemler came from Dubois, Wyo., two years ago, eager to build his own store and ride the boomtown wave. While the nuclear industry was already showing signs of weakness nationally, Jeffrey City had not suffered a serious slump in 24 years, and the companies had expansion plans.

Kemler speaks bitterly of the way companies spring their lay-offs without warning. Families that bought convenience foods a year ago switch to do-it-yourself substitutes, such as sausage-making materials, when times get hard.

The local merchants had a full calendar of events scheduled this year, from community dances to giveaway promotions. "Since the lay-offs," said Kemler, "the Chamber of Commerce has been laid off, too."

HARD TO STAY

The transients who filled the first jobs the uranium industry brought to Jeffrey City were accustomed to moving along to the next bunkhouse, oil rig or coal pit. But those who live in Jeffrey City now often have families, friends and land, partly because the companies hired for that kind of stability to ensure a productive work force.

Workers at the shut-down copper smelter in Anaconda, Mont., are getting severance benefits totaling about half a year's pay. Workers in Jeffrey City get nothing to tide them over for even a few months. "The unions here are fairly young (about two years old)," said Delano Lords, District 33 representative for the Steelworkers union. "We haven't built the kind of benefits packages over the years that they have in Montana."

The Jeffrey City miners are applying for benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, which gives a year's support and retraining to workers whose jobs are lost due to foreign competition. One of the biggest factors in the uranium industry's decline is higher grade ore being mined in Australia and Canada.

Whatever pressure a miner may feel when his high pay is abruptly halted, the companies apply more. While working in the mines, a miner gets a subsidy on his trailer slot rental — bringing it down to only \$50 a month, for example, in one local trailer park development. Thirty days after a lay-off, Pathfinder removes the subsidy, and a miner and his family are paying \$150. With a sharply reduced income and higher rent, "Once they get that pink-

"If we were given the go-ahead to expand tomorrow, it would take us a couple of years to get a good crew together."

— Western Nuclear executive

Photo by Tony Huegel



Photo by Sara Hunter-Wiles

THE COUNTRY CLUB is just one of many improvements in Jeffrey City in recent years. The greens aren't much, but the sagebrush and sandtraps are unmatched.

slip, boom, they're off down the road," said Keith Murdock, a social worker.

That, in part, may explain why the town is so peaceful now.

Leota Didier-Douglas, an expert on family violence, moved here in July. Unemployment and isolation are two important factors in family violence, she said. "There's probably hell to pay in those families," she said, "but they're not here any more." And despite the anxiety felt by many of those who remain, she finds Jeffrey City a peaceful place to live.

Before the cutbacks the most raucous elements in the town's population were housed in Western Nuclear's "bunkhouse," a three-story building in the center of town, which housed single male workers. Residents hint that it was the town drug center. Now it stands empty, along with several company-owned townhouses and trailer spaces.

THE COMPANY VIEW

"If the uranium doesn't come back," said Beulah Peterson Walker, Jeffrey City's original homesteader, "there's no reason for the town." Many residents recognize a debt to the industry.

"These (company) towns have been the first step out of poverty for so many people," said Leota Didier-Douglas. They offer job training, excellent wages and inspire "a sense of gratitude."

But there is a new bitterness among some workers. "There's definitely a feeling among the people that they're pawns of the companies, and they'd like to break that dominance," said Keith Murdock, a counselor with the Wyoming Department of Public Assistance and Social Services.

"We've listened to the old wolf call," said the Steelworkers' Raynor. "We get the rumors (of lay-offs), then we con-

front the company and they deny them. And then they turn out to be true."

Pathfinder's John Atkins responded: "There's no way to tell until it happens."

A lot of the cause of what's happened to the industry is beyond our control."

Western Nuclear officials were (continued on page 8)

Uncertain future for J.C. yellowcake

What sort of future does the uranium industry have in Jeffrey City? It depends on who you talk to.

"There'll probably be a persistent decline," said John Raynor, President of the United Steelworkers local at Pathfinder's Big Eagle Mine.

"I'm optimistic that with the change in Washington the uranium industry could revive," said John Atkins, government affairs representative for Pathfinder. "There has to be a commitment all the way at the top to nuclear power."

Pathfinder, a subsidiary of Utah International, which in turn is a subsidiary of General Electric, mills its ore at Pathfinder's Lucky Mc mill in Gas Hills, 25 miles north of Jeffrey City. The yellowcake (milled ore) is shipped to various utilities, among them the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Western Nuclear, Inc., a subsidiary of Phelps Dodge, Inc., produces its ore and mills it in Jeffrey City for shipment to utilities around the country that company officials refused to name.

Like most of Wyoming's uranium, the Jeffrey City ore is considered low grade. (For a more detailed description of the U.S. uranium industry, see Marjane Ambler's article in HCN 8-10-79.) When the uranium market is weak, and prices drop, the low grade producers suffer first.

Last year, yellowcake was selling for \$42 a pound. Industry sources put the current price at about \$26. And Colorado Nuclear Corp., of Denver, recently told an industry newsletter, **Nuclear Fuel**, that prices would bottom out late in 1981 at levels as low as \$17-26 a pound.

Two factors are commonly cited by industry sources to explain the decline in the nuclear industry. One is the weakness of the domestic market — brought on, they say, by regulatory burdens that have brought licensing and nuclear plant orders to a standstill. The other cause, they say, is foreign competition: High grade ores have been discovered and are being produced in Canada and Australia at considerably

less cost than American ores. The solutions would seem to be controls on uranium imports and reduced regulations.

But international uranium brokers, who wheel and deal in uranium but don't mine it, are pessimistic. Even if import restrictions were imposed, they say, the cheaper foreign ores would win overseas markets that U.S. producers need.

Nor do they see "over-regulation," as the single cause of depressed domestic markets. Electricity demand has not lived up to utility projections; costs have risen, making financing of new power plants difficult; and, of course, there is public uncertainty over the safety of nuclear power.

Most important, though, said one industry analyst who asked to remain anonymous, is that utilities in the United States have built up large inventories of nuclear fuel. Utilities now have about six years worth of inventory, he said, and when they need capital, they sell off their uranium inventories rather than taking high interest loans from banks. This undercuts producers.

Ted Keller of Western Nuclear said that the going rate for yellowcake — which he pegs at \$25 a pound — is too low to justify Western Nuclear's cost of production. In the current market, "We don't plan to produce more than we're committed to sell," he said.

One industry expert also questioned whether the incoming Reagan administration could bring about any sudden changes. He said the new government won't be able to re-shuffle nuclear regulatory agencies immediately, and noted that even if new reactors were ordered next year, it would take another ten years before they were on line and ready to consume yellowcake.

"If you want to see good news (on uranium) you can see it in anything," said the analyst. "But this is really capitalism working in its best way: The guy who's the most expensive producer falls by the wayside."



PCB: Toxic material escaped transformers, now regulation

by Michael Moss

Two years after its manufacture was banned, and some 18 months since an accidental spill in Montana contaminated food stuffs in Western states, the carcinogenic insulating fluid known as PCB remains in widespread use, largely unregulated and undisposable.

Several recent developments may help officials corral the chemical before more outbreaks occur, but the problem has thus far defied any regulatory or technical fix.

— Proposed federal rules that would quickly phase out the use of PCB-filled electrical equipment in feed and food facilities have been attacked by industry; final regulations, expected to be significantly weaker, are not due until next spring.

— A nine-month old proposal to test burn PCBs to perfect an incineration process is still unapproved and the nation's first such incinerator is months, if not years, away; authorized temporary dumps are scarce and filling up.

— A miracle detoxification process discovered by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. is yet to be scrutinized by Environmental Protection Agency technicians, but is thought to be less than perfected.

The PCB issue is also hamstrung by unresolved litigation, including a mass of suits stemming from the Montana incident, a test case on illegal PCB dumping, and a suit by environmentalists that would nullify the core of EPA's regulatory strategy.

THE PRICE

For half a century, PCB — a polychlorinated biphenyl — has been used in transformers and other electrical machinery. In the 1970s it was discovered to cause cancer in animals and its manufacture was banned in 1979.

EPA opted, however, to gradually phase out existing uses of PCB-filled equipment over a 20-year period, easing the tremendous cost burden on in-

dustry. Unexpected leaks, though, have put a high price on that strategy.

The most publicized leak occurred in 1979, when PCB contaminated meal from the Pierce Packing Co. in Billings, Mont. It spread undetected to nearly 20 states, causing large losses of agricultural products and unknown human health effects.

Pierce, sued from all sides, in turn filed suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and EPA, charging negligence in regulating the situation.

That suit, still undecided, prompted new proposed rules to phase out in six months use of PCB equipment by fertilizer and pesticide makers, food processors, including slaughterhouses, poultry, egg and fish processing facilities, and animal feed producers.

Those rules, however, will never see daylight, predicts F. Leo Kauffman of the USDA. "I don't see how we could do it as proposed," he said. "Everyone is saying they're too costly."

Cost estimates are imprecise and range from one agency's "several hundred million dollars" to the guess by John Festa, of the American Paper Institute, of \$500,000 for the packaging industry alone.

Festa's was one of some 140 comments the agencies received on the proposed regulations; most were negative. "No one is arguing this from a safety standpoint," said Susan Balucas of the American Frozen Food Institute, which represents 150 frozen food-related firms. "We're just saying there's a better way."

The industry, according to Balucas, would like to wait for equipment currently in use to expire, while emphasizing self-policing to determine the limited high risk cases that need immediate removal.

Festa, who said the rules caught him "by surprise," argues for exempting entirely the packaging industry because it is "several processing steps removed" from food plants. "There's never been any PCB accident in packaging plants," he said.

Said Bartie Woods of the USDA: "Everybody has the opinion that it's not going to happen to them. But if (an accidental leak) does, yeah, it could wipe them out."

The agencies argue that a quick phase out could save industry money in the long run by eliminating costly product losses and liability suits. (The Pierce Packing Co. case has resulted in some \$3 million in product losses, with much more at stake in lawsuits.)

Then again, it's unclear whether the agencies could enforce the new rules anyway. Today, less than 1,000 USDA inspectors make fewer than 20,000 annual checks — general inspections that may not include electrical equipment, said Kauffman. Public comment on the proposed rules will be accepted through March 4, 1981.

IN COURT

The proposed food and feed industry rules would be nullified if an upcoming U.S. Court of Appeals decision upholds an Oct. 30 lower court ruling. Made on a lawsuit brought by the Environmental Defense Fund, that ruling held that EPA's minimum standard concentration of 50 parts per million — concentrations below which would be exempt from regulation — was arbitrary and not based on scientific evidence. The court also challenged EPA's definition of a "self-enclosed container," the basis for another major exemption from regulation.

Both EDF's Bill Butler and EPA's counsel Ellen Siegler predict the ruling will be upheld. Butler said he would then sit down with EPA to work out a compromise strategy. "We want ultimately to see all PCBs phased out," he said. "But in the meantime we're pushing for adequate inspection and maintenance, and an intensive two month information gathering effort."

In other litigation, the federal government is trying to prosecute an Idaho toxic-waste disposal company for illegally burying seven barrels of PCB wastes in a southwestern Idaho Titan

missile silo.

If the 60 witnesses and 250 government exhibits prove the company, Wes Con Inc., guilty, it would be the first prosecution under the 1978 Toxic Substances Control Act, and would set a precedent for similar cases.

HOW TO DISPOSE

The recent EPA rules on managing hazardous waste (see HCN 11-28-80) left one gaping hole: How to dispose of PCBs. There are less than half a dozen authorized disposal companies across the country, and EPA intends to allow only temporary underground disposal, with eventual incineration or detoxification.

Two proposals to start up incineration plants have run into local opposition, however, and EPA is only now nearing a decision on a proposed test burn of PCBs at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver.

EPA Regional Administrator Roger Williams is expected to approve the burn. The project is intended only for PCBs now contained at the site, however, and all parties discount the fears of some nearby residents that the weapons plant will start taking outside PCB waste, if the incinerator is approved.

That leaves the country without a commercial incinerator for months, if not years, while the nearest temporary disposal sites in Idaho Falls and Arkansas are filling up.

One other technological fix shows more promise. The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. in Ohio has developed a process of converting PCB liquid into sodium chloride, or salt, and a sludge that is easily burned. The inventor, Dave Parker, told *Outside* magazine, "We could routinely drop the PCB level from 200 parts per million to 10, even 1...It costs us about 30 cents a gallon to treat it."

Lou Johnson of EPA in Denver is skeptical of those claims and noted that until the agency's technicians test the process, expectations should not be raised.

Watt: Reagan's Interior man from pro-enterprise group

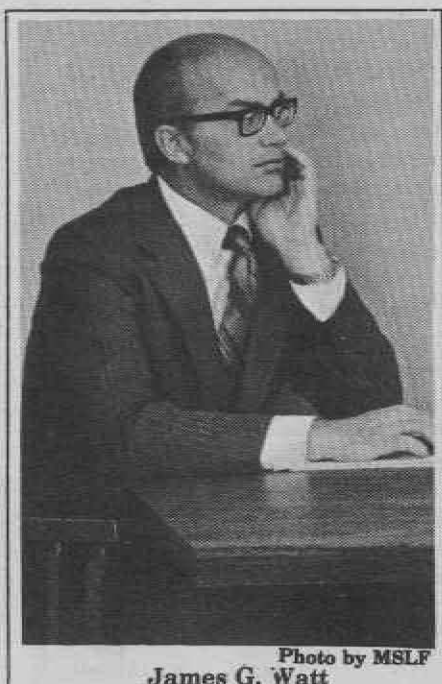


Photo by MSLF
James G. Watt

In what may be one of his most controversial Cabinet appointments, President-elect Ronald Reagan is expected to name James G. Watt, 42, as Secretary of Interior.

Watt, a Wyoming native who has headed the Mountain States Legal

Foundation in Denver for the past three years, was praised by conservatives, "Sagebrush Rebels," and energy interests, and denounced by environmentalists.

"His reputation is favorable," said Vernon Ravenscroft, head of Sagebrush Rebellion, Inc., of Idaho.

"He would be the worst thing that's happened to public lands since Charles McKay (Eisenhower's Interior Secretary)," said Charles Callison of the Public Lands Institute in Denver.

Watt went to the University of Wyoming law school and began his career in government as chief aide to Sen. Milward Simpson (R-Wyo.). He worked for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce from 1966-69 as secretary to the Natural Resources Committee and Environmental Pollution Advisory Panel.

He was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior from 1969-72, specializing in water and power issues, and from 1972-75 he served as Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

After a two-year stint as a commissioner and vice-chairman of the Federal Power Commission, where he spearheaded the move to deregulate natural gas prices, Watt became head of

the Mountain States Legal Foundation.

That group, bankrolled by conservative brewer Joseph Coors and other big corporate names, has launched a wide-ranging and effective legal attack on government regulation of private industry. The targets have included the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, admission quotas to educational institutions for minorities, and, in several cases, the Department of Interior.

"He is not 'middle-of-the-road,'" said one environmental lawyer working in the Rocky Mountain region. "He is a constant advocate of corporate access to public lands — very pro-development...His history has been one of direct financial links to the companies he will be regulating."

Watt's supporters disagree, pointing out that he has not been employed by energy or development companies. In fact, he has worked for government or non-profit institutions most of his life. But there are links: Mountain States Legal Foundation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are supported primarily by business interests.

Sen. Al Simpson (R-Wyo.) said he did "not see Watt as being at the other end

of the spectrum" from conservationists, despite the activities of MSLF. "He believes in the multiple use concept of administering the public lands: recreation, wilderness, mining, timbering — the whole spectrum."

Simpson predicted that Watt would make the Bureau of Land Management "a responsive agency" that did not delay decisions and listened better to what public land users had to say. The Sagebrush Rebellion, he predicted, would be defused, and so would the conservationists. "He's going to disarm them," said Simpson. "When the flak really flies around his old bald dome he just throws back his head and laughs...But he'll listen to what their positions are."

Reagan told newsmen Watt's past actions were aimed against "environmental extremists."

Among recent MSLF legal actions involving the Interior Department are the following:

— MSLF brought suit in federal district court in Wyoming to force Secretary of Interior Cecil Andrus to open to energy development public lands designated as in need of "further planning" in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

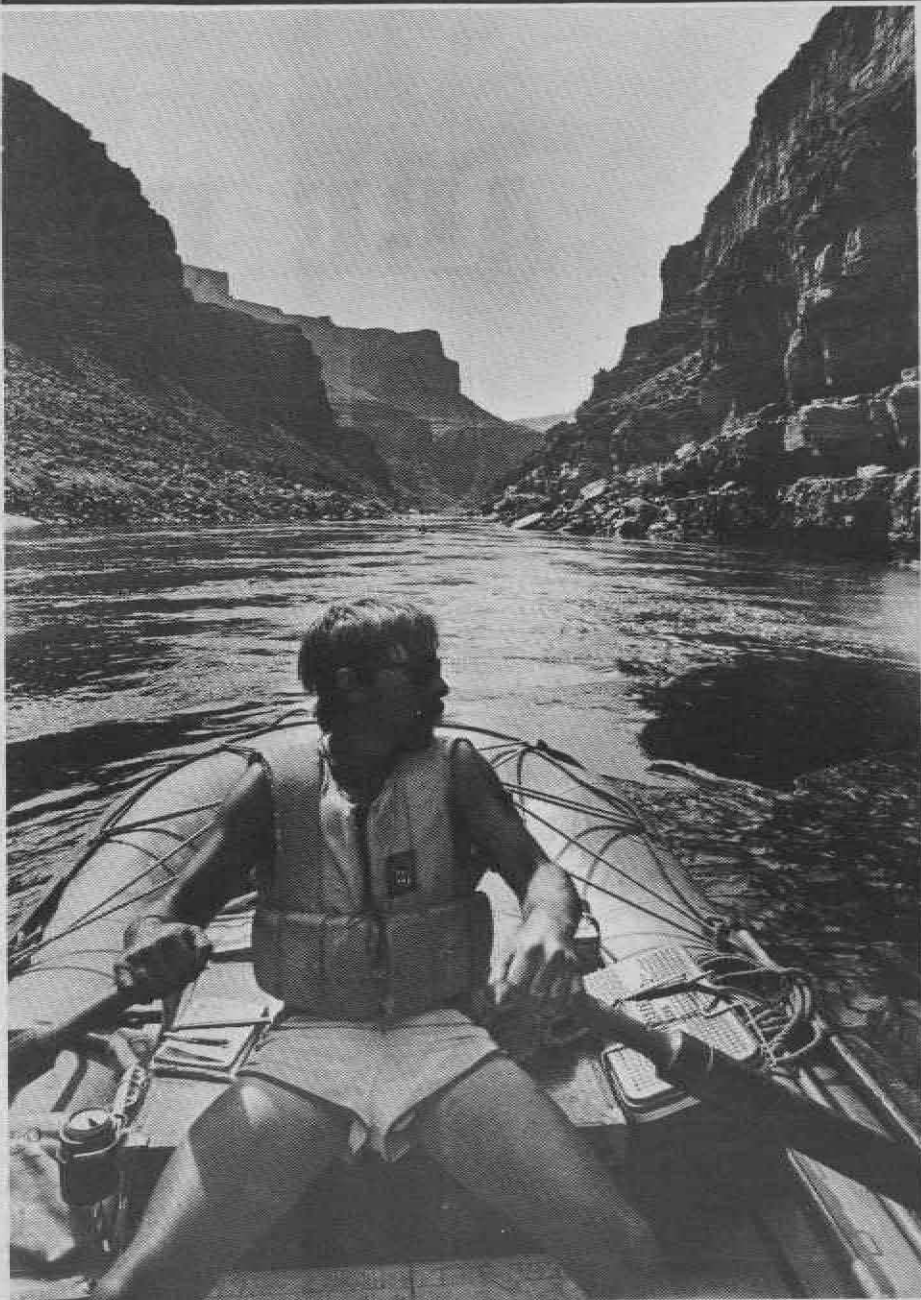


Photo by Bob Woodall

OAR-POWERED RAFTS would dominate the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park if a proposed phase-out of motors takes hold. But that plan, along with several other controversial park service schemes, was temporarily dewatered in last-minute funding skirmishes.

U.S. District Court Judge C. A. Brimmer ruled in MSLF's favor in the case, which concerned 247,090 acres of Targhee National Forest in Idaho and Wyoming and the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming, and part of the Overthrust Belt in Montana. The federal government has not appealed the decision.

— In September, MSLF filed suit in a Washington, D.C., district court with the Utah Association of Counties challenging the federal government's power to restrict pollution visible from, but not over, national parks or wilderness areas. Such regulations "illegally expand the power of federal land-managing agencies to control the use of private and state lands adjacent to federal land," Watt was quoted as arguing.

— MSLF also brought suit last year with 27 Colorado legislators to stop the Environmental Protection Agency from withholding federal funds from Colorado after the state failed to come up with a suitable air pollution control plan. The organization has opposed extending the ratification period for the Equal Rights Amendment, fought low "lifeline" utility rates for the poor and elderly in Colorado as discriminatory, and argued in court that lowered education admission standards for disadvantaged minorities should be done away with.

MSLF has both a Board of Directors and a Board of Litigation, including such members as former Interior Secretary and Wyoming Gov. Stan Hathaway, James E. Bruce of Idaho Power Co., David True of True Oil, Wyo., and Norman Lawrenson of Burlington

Northern Railroad.

What effect the appointment would have on the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Office of Surface Mining and other agencies under the Interior umbrella was uncertain.

Pat Ford, of the Idaho Conservation League, foresees a sizable turnover of staff in the affected agencies, but Ralph Heft, area manager for the BLM's Diamond Mountain Resource Area in Utah said it would "take a while" before new policies trickled down to affect lower staff levels.

River raft rider decorates Congress' Christmas tree

by Michael Moss

It will be business as usual for Colorado River rafters next year. Congressional budget conferees have refused to fund a National Park Service plan that would have ended motorized rafting through the Grand Canyon by 1985.

The cut was made in the fiscal year 1981 appropriations bill for the Interior Department — legislation that, in the holiday spirit of the lameduck session, traditionally gets decorated with an assortment of special interest provisions.

Besides shelving the Colorado River plan, conferees severed from the \$4 billion bill funds for managing recreation in Glen Canyon, controlling jet noise in the Grand Tetons, studying the impacts of energy development on parks, and assisting states to develop new city parks.

The Colorado River rider, as such often last-minute amendments are known, was the most controversial. The five-year park service plan would have begun phasing out motorized rafting next year and would have increased from eight to 33 percent the number of private trip permits. The typical river trip today is motorized and run by one of five commercial concessionaires.

The move to axe the plan was initiated by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who said it "would deprive all but the hardy, young, wealthy elite of any hope of ever sharing the awesome grandeur of the Canyon from inside the gorge." Hatch argued the all-oar trips would cost too much, take too long and aren't wanted by most of today's river users.

"I wouldn't deny that someone who's only been down the river on motors would settle for motors," said Destry Jarvis of the National Parks and Conservation Association, which supports the park service plan. But Jarvis denies Hatch's calculations on the cost and time requirements for man-powered trips, and argues that the park service plan is elitist "only in that we think the user should have the highest quality experience."

Brant Calkin, Southwest representative of the Sierra Club in Santa Fe, said Hatch's move was an "abuse of Senate power, whether you agree with him or not."

"We had years of research, extensive

and grueling public hearings, a endless concessions, and when a said and done, the concessionaires own the park," said Calkin.

Hatch said he cut funds for the plan to get more congressional oversight hearings on the proposal. Given little choice, both Jarvis and Calkin say they're willing to reopen the issue. "The park service can make a compelling case," said Jarvis.

Tony Bevinetto, general counsel for the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, which has authority over park service programs, said it was too early to predict whether oversight hearings will be held, but that the new Republican dominance of the panel could help Hatch get new hearings.

The final Interior Department appropriations bill sent to President Carter most resembled the Senate version. It was \$115 million less than what the House wanted and over \$400 million less than FY 1980's funding.

Jarvis called it a "stable, no growth budget," which he said is disturbing because there's been a 165 percent increase in acreage and 28 percent increase in the number of sites the department manages.

Senate staffer Bevinetto said the bill reflected a general Capitol Hill feeling that "we're authorizing more than we could fund and the system was going to hell." He took issue, however, with the last minute amendments that "throw out everything." He cited, for example, the irony of funds being cut for an agency program that studied alternatives to creating new parks. That program, said Bevinetto, should have been supported even by congressmen wanting to limit new additions, but wasn't because it "simply wasn't understood."

Jarvis, who said agency funding is the top priority for his group now that the Alaska lands bill has passed, was also disturbed by cuts in the park service's resource management budget. The agency may not have enough funds to continue studies on the impacts of energy development at Bryce and Zion national parks, he said.

Acting on other amendments to the Interior Appropriations bill, the conferees voted to:

— approve private oil company development of the National Petroleum Reserve in northwest Alaska, and exempt the first two lease sales, some two million acres, from the National Environmental Policy Act;

— reject a \$45 million state grant program designed to help states develop more city parks; the House had approved the measure;

— approve a \$2 million water treatment and distribution system in South Dakota;

— approve a \$200,000 study by the Fish and Wildlife Service of endangered fish in the Yampa River, which could be affected by the proposed Cheyenne water project;

— cut \$33 million from the Office of Surface Mining's proposed budget, \$21 million of which was for restoring land around abandoned strip mines.

Fill in the blanks

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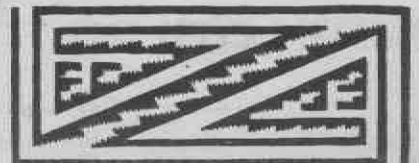
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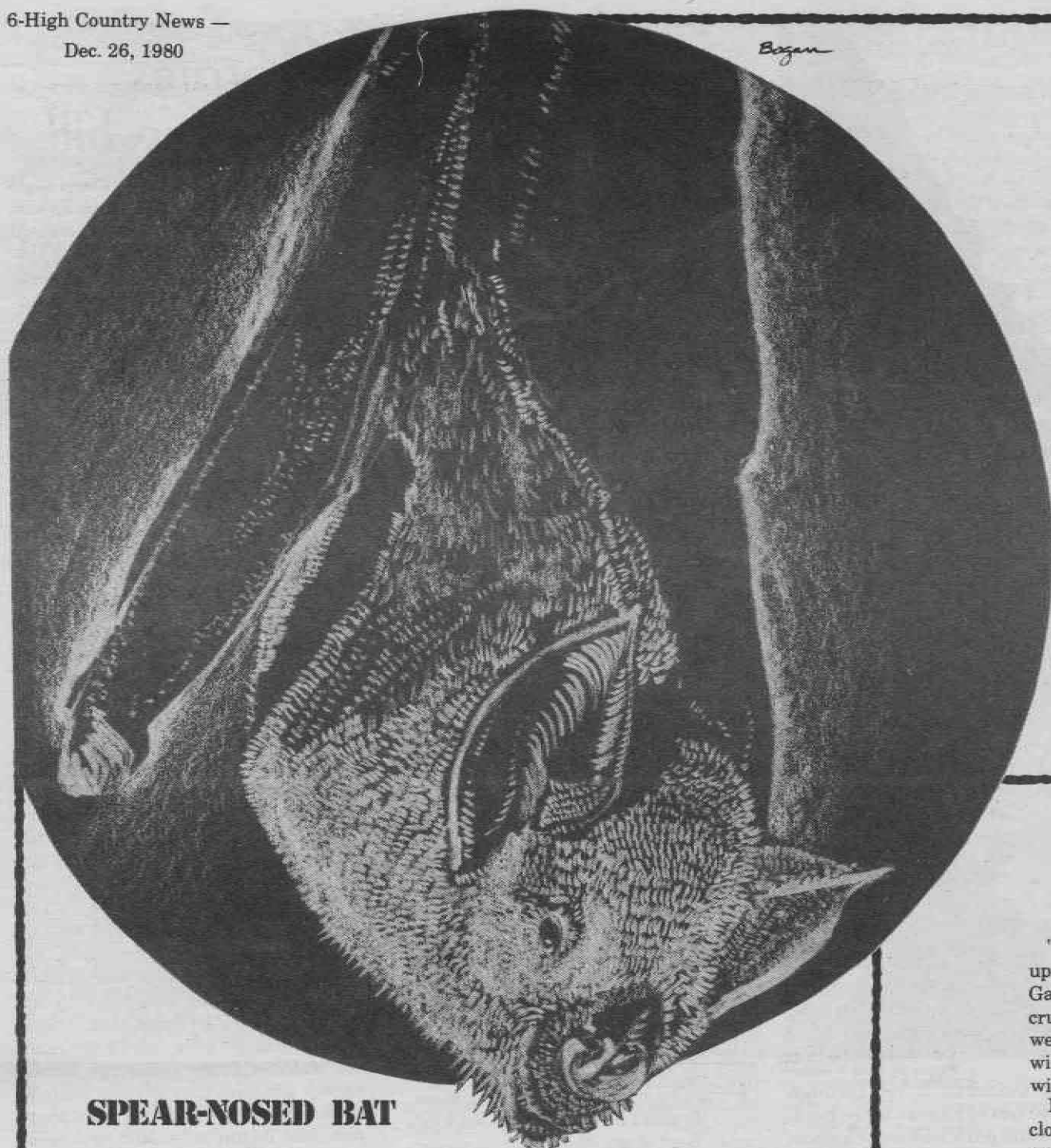
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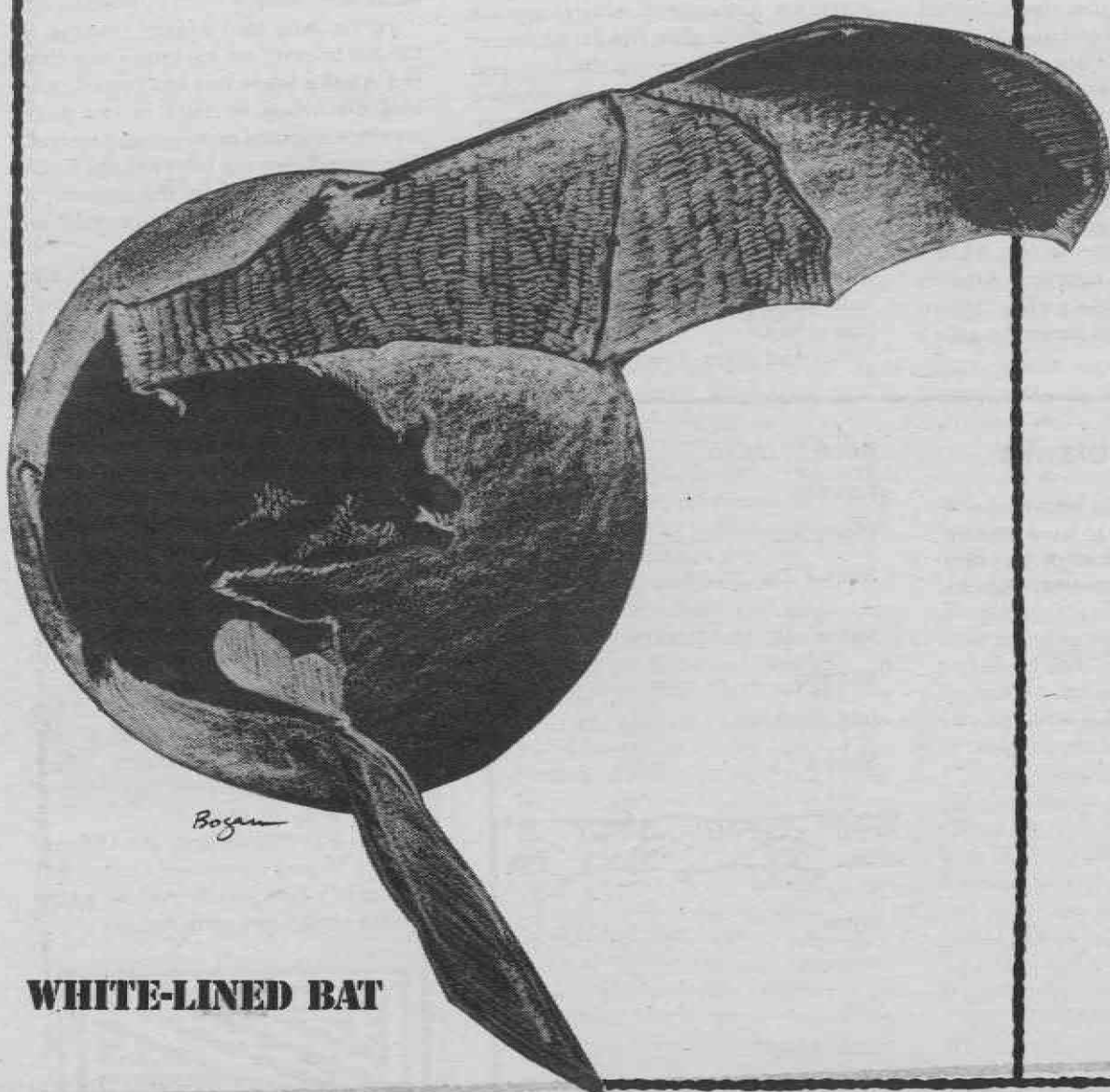


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SPEAR-NOSED BAT



WHITE-LINED BAT

ARE BATS SO BEASTLY

by Tom Jenkins

"I found a dead bat one time, picked it up and held it open," observer Brendan Galvin wrote. "It looked like something crucified to a busted umbrella, as if it were made of parts of different animals, with long legs stuck in lizard pants and wire feet."

Most of us have never taken such a close look. Linked to Halloween, spooky castles and Dracula, bats are perhaps more misunderstood and maligned than any other animal on earth. Misperceptions persist even though there has been more than enough time to dispel them; bats date back over 50 million years.

Most of the misinformation, once examined, is easily set aside. Bats are mammals, not birds. Although some can see better than others, none of them are blind. Bats only rarely become entangled in human hair (and only by accident); they are shy and avoid people whenever possible. They are neither verminous nor filthy, nor do they carry bedbugs; their parasites are no worse than those of domestic dogs and cats. They are not a serious threat to human health. There have been only 10 reported cases of human rabies from bats since record keeping began in 1946.

The bat is the only mammal that truly flies. The bones of its wing have the same structural configuration as the human arm and hand, with bat's hand expanding to form its highly maneuverable wing. A double membrane of skin stretches between the wing's bones, leaving free the short, sharp-clawed thumb. The elastic and almost hairless wing membrane is a two-layered extension of skin from its back and abdomen. The intricate system of blood vessels in the wing membrane gives nourishment and cools the bloodstream during the strenuous physical labor involved in flight.

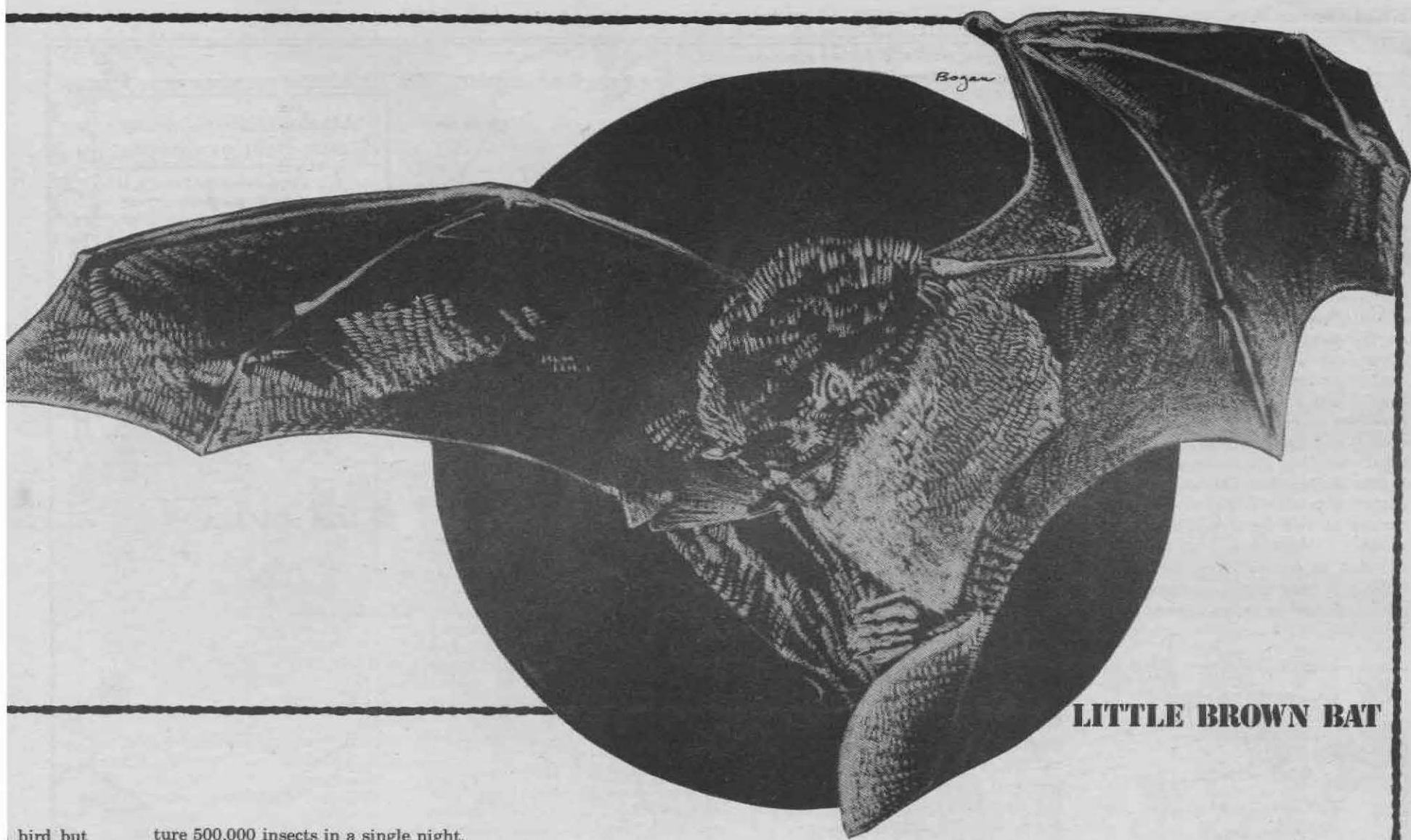
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ture 500,000 insects in a single night. The largest colonies eat as much as 100,000 pounds of insects each evening.

But not all bats are insectivorous. There are colonies of fruit and nectar-eating bats, mostly in the tropics, that can strip a fruit orchard in one night. Often the trees and shrubs nearby depend upon these bats for pollination and seed dispersal. Avocados, mangos, breadfruits and guavas probably need bats; in all, 130 genera of plants depend on bats for survival, and vice versa.

Other bat species eat frogs, lizards and small birds, while two species of Mexican bats specialize in catching fish. Swooping low over the water, these bats rely on echoes bouncing off dorsal fins or ripples on the water's surface. Then the bats drag their claws through the water to snag their prey.

Still others, the vampire bats, feed solely on the blood of live animals. Sleeping animals, usually livestock, are the most common prey. After slashing a shallow gash in the animal's skin, the bat laps (not sucks) the blood of its victim. Anticoagulants in the saliva keep the blood flowing. The only true mammalian parasites, vampires are tiny creatures, weighing about an ounce. But they can drink over half their body weight at a sitting, quickly urinate and then hop away. Blood loss, by itself, seldom kills cattle, but open wounds caused by the bats can result in deadly infections. Most vampires live in an area from Mexico City south to Argentina, roosting in caves, hollow trees, houses and culverts.

COOL RETREATS

Many bats retreat to caves for the winter, where they hibernate six months or longer. In preparation, they may double their body weight with fat accumulations during the late summer.

Once they've settled in, their rate of metabolism drops to about one-eighteenth of what it is during their active periods.

Caves make the ideal winter sleeping quarters since they are dark and quiet with a constant temperature above freezing. Because a hibernating bat's temperature fluctuates with the air temperature, however, not all caves are equally hospitable. In the warm ones, the bat's metabolism speeds up, using up the stored fat too quickly, and it will starve. In caves where large entrances allow the temperatures to drop to below 32 degrees, bats freeze to death. Hanging in their usual way, upside-down from the cave's ceiling and walls, those just above freezing feel cold and stiff to the touch and may even have ice on them. Once disturbed, they awaken quickly, and within minutes their temperature has risen to 90 degrees and they are flying around.

Some bats travel north to hibernate. Most gray bats living in northwestern Florida migrate more than 300 miles to a cave in northern Alabama that holds one of the world's largest known hibernating bat populations. This rare abode is ideal for bats, trapping cold air all winter, but not freezing beyond its entrance area. One observer, Merlin Tuttle, wrote, "In 1969, when the cave was discovered, it held 1,500,000 gray bats. In places, a solid mat of hibernating bats covered the cave walls as far as I could see. I estimated the weight of the bats to exceed 16 tons."

As bats arrive in September to hibernate, they mate. Females enter hibernation quickly, storing sperm in the uterus all winter. Ovulation and fertilization do not take place until spring, at precisely the point that allows the new generation to be born shortly after the

colony awakens in the spring. Hibernation at stable low temperatures seems necessary to delay pregnancy. If a female bat is taken from hibernation prematurely, she will become pregnant, even in mid-winter.

In some places pesticides and vandalism have recently reduced bat numbers. In 1964, the bat population at Carlsbad Cavern National Park in New Mexico was 4 million; in 1979, only 300,000 were left.

But there are still caves where bats gather in the millions. Engleke says, "Seventeen to 20 million bats still live in Concan Bat Cave in Texas, and their nightly exodus takes so long that returning bats meet those only then leaving. If it takes 4 million bats four hours to clear out a cave, how long must it take 20 million?"

Such a sight is awesome, in some circumstances. Dr. Alvin Novick explains, "Bats almost always urinate and defecate upon awakening so they will not have to take flight with a useless load. They avoid soiling themselves or their neighbors, but they lack consideration for any observers that might be below."

Worldwide, bats are doing well. Some of their 900 species are found on almost every continent. In fact, one-fifth of all mammals are bats.

And in some parts of the world they have risen above spook status. For the Chinese, for instance, bats symbolize good luck and long life. They appear in art as emblems of health and virtue. One's perceptions depend in part on one's knowledge.

Tom Jenkins is a free-lance writer in Englewood, Colo. This article was paid for by the HCN Research Fund.

Hot Line



SPIDERWORT WARNING. John C. Cobb, professor of preventative medicine at the University of Colorado Health Services, recommends that spiderwort flowers be planted at coal and oil shale facilities as an early warning system for possible carcinogens and other environmental hazards. Spiderwort is a member of the Tradescantia family, with blue or purple flowers and grasslike leaves. Cobb says the flower cells turn from their normal color to pink when they are mutated. The UC professor says that Colorado will experience a significant increase in cancer as energy minerals are developed. Colorado is already seeing an increase in testicular cancer, which Cobb says may signal an increase in genetic defects in future generations.



UTAH TAX PROPOSAL. A gubernatorial task force is recommending to Gov. Scott Matheson (D) that Utah adopt a "modest" severance tax on all mineral and energy development in the state. The task force recommended a net value-based severance tax be applied to all extractive industries including oil, natural gas, oil shale, tar sands, coal, metallic minerals, non-metallic minerals and geothermal water. Currently, Utah is one of a very few Western states that does not assess a severance tax on energy minerals. The task force did not recommend a level for the tax, saying only that it "should be modest and...revenues should be used largely to establish permanent impact trust funds to mitigate socio-economic and environmental effects" of mining boom and bust.

UTILITY OVERPLANNING. The U.S. General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, reported

that the forecasts of future electric power demands made by utilities are often unreliable and may be leading to the construction of too much electrical generating capacity. GAO said utilities' demand forecasts "are the leading edge of electric power planning." However, said the agency, "Few states have developed sufficient analytical capabilities to ensure that utility forecasts are credible." The GAO recommended that the federal government supplement the states' role in review of utility plans.

ALASKA GAS RIGHT-OF-WAY. Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus has approved a right-of-way across about 430 miles of federal land for construction of a major part of the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, which will carry natural gas produced in Alaska to Midwest and West Coast markets. The line will traverse about 740 miles of Alaska. The remainder of the right-of-way, across federal, state, Alaskan Native and private land is still being reviewed. Most of the approved route has not been environmentally controversial because it parallels the already-constructed Alaska oil pipeline. The entire system will be 4,790 miles long, including 2,200 miles through Canada, with a western terminal in San Francisco and a midwestern terminal near Chicago. Pipeline sponsors have had a very difficult time lining up financing for the project.

SOLAR POND FUND. No one wanted to kill it, it simply got in the "wrong hands," says Rep. Dan Marriott (R-Utah). It, in this case, is a \$800,000 study to convert the Great Salt Lake into a solar pond, an idea the congressman has been promoting since his visit this summer to a solar pond project in Israel's Dead Sea. Funds for the study were slashed by the Office of Management and Budget. But it was because the money was added to the wrong department's budget, not due to the merits of the study, says Marriott, and he's working to reinstate the funds. Marriott says that, while not feasible in the near future, the solar pond could ultimately "supply most or all of the electricity needs along the Wasatch Front."

NUCLEAR NUISANCE. Two researchers from the Electric Power Research Institute have released a new study contending that the chances of public radiation exposure as the result of a nuclear power plant core meltdown have been "grossly overestimated." Milton Levenson and Frank Rahn said in a summary of their report: "The main

own.

While workers criticize the companies for failing to give them adequate notice, they acknowledge that if they knew further lay-offs were in the works, they would try to leave. It is difficult to attract new workers to a hostile environment in a state already suffering a chronic labor shortage.

"When these people are removed from the payroll," said Keller, "they scatter to the four winds. You can't reopen Monday morning...If we were given the go-ahead to expand tomorrow, it would take us a couple of years to get a good crew together."

At the Pathfinder union meeting, many of the miners feel a certain solidarity with and sympathy for the companies. The forces that are threatening



thrust of this study is that the natural

Laws of physics and chemistry substantially limit the distribution of radioactive effluents from any nuclear accident, no matter how severe." The authors say that the quantity of radioactive material escaping from the containment during and after an accident has been estimated in the past at ten to one hundred times more than might actually occur. This would reduce the number of "acute" fatalities — those occurring within six months of the accident — to zero. The new study contradicts every other major study completed to date concerning the danger of core meltdowns. The paper was presented to the American Nuclear Society in late November.

AIR HOLES. The Western Interstate Energy Board says that air quality, not water availability, will be the major constraint to synthetic fuel production in the West. Many prime synfuels sites have already used up their particulate

emissions allowances, according to the 16-state organization, and new facilities may not be allowed there. The Powder River Basin in Wyoming, for instance, would probably exceed standards if synfuels facilities were built there. In contrast, says the group, most plants already have enough water for first-round projects. Pressure is already building to modify air quality standards in Congress. WIEB's findings were reported in the McGraw-Hill newsletter *Coal Week*.

SOLAR-POWERED FENCE. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Yuma County, Ariz., has installed five miles of solar-powered electric fence on federal land. The 12-volt, three wire fence is electrified by a battery charged by a solar panel. Fiberglass posts support the wires. The system can electrify up to 17 miles of fence, according to BLM. Materials for the solar fence were purchased by the BLM's Lower Gila-Phoenix Grazing Advisory Board.

Jeffrey City...

(continued from page 3)

do an economic analysis on costs, production volume, that's it." Keller told HCN he did not foresee any more lay-offs in the near future. Ten days later, 23 millworkers got their pink slips.

Keller justified cutting rental subsidies to laid-off workers by calling it "free market economics" — to subsidize anyone no longer working for the mine would be unfair to privately owned, competing trailer parks. Atkins was more straightforward: "Essentially, if they don't work for us, they don't get benefits." Both companies make efforts to find jobs for laid-off workers, though Atkins noted that many quickly found new jobs on their

their jobs come from outside.

Union leader John Raynor, though, feels that some of the nuclear energy industry's problems may be deserved — he has met a number of sick miners who used to work underground digging uranium. "And people ought to take a better look at the waste problems," he added.

Jeffrey City is a small town, growing smaller, but it is still large enough for Raynor — a "radical" to some of his fellow workers — and more conservative miners, managers and families to live side by side. And they hang together well when things get tough.

Using proceeds from a turkey shoot, the union held its senior citizens' dinner Dec. 13. Posters had been put up around town, but there was some confusion over notifying the local media.

"Maybe nobody in Jeffrey City thinks of themselves as old," said Cindy Gramke, secretary of the union, who was left with eight uneaten pies.

Still, the town, down on its heels and considered by many outsiders as just another disintegrating boomtown, took time to hold the charity event. Local merchants donated the turkeys, local residents participated in the turkey shoot and the unions did the legwork.

Perhaps the poor show was fortuitous — the leftover food was given to those out-of-work miners who had chosen to remain in Jeffrey City against all the odds.

Research for this article was contributed by Tony Huegel, a freelance writer based in Lander, Wyo.



Bulletin Board



XIUHOMOLPILLI 1981

For more listings of solar events than would even fit on the 18-month Aztec solar calendar, Xiuhomolpilli, write the National Solar Information Center for their Solar Events Calendar. It lists conferences, symposia, and workshops on solar and other renewable energy resources, from Mother's Solar Seminar in Phoenix, Ariz., to the 7th International Heat Transfer Conference in Munich, West Germany. Contact: NSIC, P.O. Box 1607, Rockville, MD 20850. The calendar is free, paid for by the Department of Energy.



SERI PAPERS

The Solar Energy Research Institute in Colorado is collecting some criticism for not promoting solar effectively, but one thing it is doing is producing volumes of studies on renewable energy sources and conservation issues. For a bibliography contact SERI, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, Colo. 80401.

DANCING IN DC

Stuck with nothing to do in the nation's capital during the inauguration of the president-elect? You might consider attending the American Indian Inaugural Ball, to be held in Arlington on Jan. 20. The dance is being sponsored by the National Congress of American Indians, which is also having its annual meeting the following day. Contact NCAI, 202 E St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002; (202) 546-1168.

GOING UNDER

Protecting ground water from a variety of contaminants is the theme of a Jan. 12-13 workshop in Denver sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. Sessions will include discussions of the hydrologic cycle, sources of pollution, and the agency's proposed protection strategies and policies. Public comment is also being solicited during the second day. Contact Robert Weaver, 2266 South Gilpin, Denver, Colo., 80210; (303) 733-2190.

ENVIRONMENTAL R&D

Research and development in the energy and environment fields is the focus of a May 14 and 15 conference in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. Write Sheri E. Marshall, Enviro Control, Inc., P.O. Box 827, Rockville, Md., 20851.

PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

The Architectural Alliance, a Minnesota-based corporation, has scheduled a series of two-and-a-half day workshops in the Midwest and Rocky Mountains on designing passive solar multi-family housing. The first workshop will be held in St. Paul, Minn., Feb. 2-4, and another will be conducted in Vail, Colo., March 18-22. The workshops, designed primarily for professionals and government officials, will cover planning, design, construction and financing. The fee is \$195 for the sessions, two lunches and a 200-page workbook. For more information contact Mary Rollwagen, TLH Associates, Inc., 900 Minnesota Bldg., 4th and Cedar Sts., St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

RURAL AMERICA

Rural America, a Washington-based group representing rural and small town interests, is holding a conference on "Empowerment and Equity for Rural People" Feb. 8-10 in Washington, D.C. The organization's executive director, David Raphael, says the conference will produce a "Platform for Rural America," during the coming Reagan administration. There are 45 workshops on the agenda. The registration fee is \$25 for Rural America members, \$50 for non-members. For further information contact Joyce Hom at (202) 659-2800, or write Rural America, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

PLUGGING HOLES

Tips for states that want to conserve water have been compiled by the U.S. Water Resources Council. They include information on establishing state policies, the pros and cons of various conservation measures, and emergency shortage plans. Contact the State Programs Division, U.S. WRC, 2120 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

RUNNING OFF

The runoff of livestock waste and its potential as a water pollution source in northern Utah has been studied by the state's water laboratory and the results are now available. The study found that major violations of oxygen standards occurred during winter thaws, while grassland and other overland flow areas were effective in reducing the flow. Reports cost \$5 from Utah Water Research Laboratory, UMC 82 Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322. Ask for Water Quality Series UWRL-Q-80-02.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Man-made caverns 3,000 feet under the ground are the best way to permanently dispose of radioactive wastes from nuclear power plants. This is the conclusion of the Department of Energy's final environmental impact statement on permanent nuclear waste disposal. The agency says it considered a wide range of accident possibilities, including meteorites and accidental drilling, and that the typical repository would impact about 750 acres above ground. Copies of the study are available from: Office of Nuclear Isolation, Battelle Memorial Institute, 505 King Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

GROWTH CONTROL

California style. Since 1978, Golden State voters have approved 19 local growth control propositions, including many precedent-setting growth-rate limits and management plans. A new report, "The Growth Revolt: Aftermath of Proposition 13?", scrutinizes each of the initiatives, with information on the vote, spending, and the public debate. Texts of the propositions are also included. Write Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 1400 10th Street, Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

ECOLOGICAL TOURISM

How to make tourism compatible with the environment is the focus of a new publication of proceedings from the International Symposium on Tourism. Sponsored in part by the U.S. Forest Service and the United Nations, the symposium featured discussions on developing, managing and marketing tourism programs, and many of the papers are included in the two-volume proceedings. Each volume is \$13.95 postpaid from International Symposium, Department of Human Kinetics, George Washington University, 817 23rd St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20052.



MEETING THE LAW

Billed as a "quick and easy guide" that will help coal mine operators obtain federal permits "as quickly, easily and cheaply as possible," Coal Mine Permitting has been published by McGraw-Hill. In 342 pages it covers the gamut of surface mining regulations and gives a 22-step game plan for getting a permit to surface mine coal. \$62.50 per copy, from McGraw-Hill, 457 National Press Building, Dept. 1, Washington, D.C. 20045.

WILD TRIPS

"Wilderness is our life, our love, and our business," says the American Wilderness Alliance in announcing their 1981 adventures. The group, which runs commercial outdoor trips to help subsidize its lobbying work, is in its fourth season and this year is offering jaunts throughout the West via ski, boat, horse or foot power, as well as educational workshops. Trip prices range from \$400 to \$600 for a week. Contact: AWA, 4260 East Evans Ave., Suite 8, Denver, Colo. 80222.

HOME MOVIES

Three new half-hour films on reducing fossil fuel consumption in the home have been produced by Rodale Press along with Bullfrog Films. Contact: BF, Oley, Penn. 19547.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The Soil Conservation Society has several scholarships available for undergraduate and postgraduate study in the conservation field. Contact: SCSA, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021.

TALKING SHALE

Oil shale development will be discussed next month at workshops in Colorado. In Grand Junction, Kevin Markey of Friends of the Earth, other environmentalists and government officials will discuss a gamut of related topics during a 3-day conference, Jan. 16-18. Send \$10 to Oil Shale '81, P.O. Box 2932, Grand Junction, Colo., 81502 by Jan. 1 to attend. And in Glenwood Springs, local environmentalists and, again, Markey will talk oil shale on Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m., in the Presbyterian Church, 1118 Bennett Ave.

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FREE appropriate technology book list. High Country Books, 107 Iverson, Laramie, WY 82070.

RURAL NETWORK is a social support group for single, mid-life(broad age range), country-oriented, ecologically concerned people. Information with SASE. **RURAL NETWORK**, Rt. 1 Box 49B, Avalon, WI 53505.

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Western Roundup



Photo by Michael McClure

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FARMLAND should be saved from sprawling towns, but not at the landowner's expense. This unresolved conflict typifies Utah's new growth study and helped shelve Colorado's management scheme.

Growth studies spur much talk, little consensus

Controlling growth in the Rocky Mountain West has never been fertile ground for a consensus of opinion. So few people were surprised this week that just as Utah announced a brand new growth study, the governor of Colorado was forced to swallow his control proposals.

Conceding there is simply too much opposition in the Republican-dominated state Legislature, Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm (D) has rescinded his controversial Human Settlement Policies.

The policies, established by executive order earlier this year without legislative approval, gave state agencies guidelines for doling out federal grant monies. The policies suggested, for example, discouraging local governments from planning water and sewer projects in flood plains or where they would encourage urban sprawl.

From their inception, however, the policies drew sharp criticism. Lamm was attacked for trying to implement state land-use controls. Said the gover-

nor this week in rescinding the policies: "Colorado has too many other important things that need to be accomplished for the entire 1981 legislative session to be spent in a battle over the Human Settlement Policies."

Lamm is still hopeful the Legislature will consider designing guidelines for awarding grants — action the Senate's new majority leader, Republican Sen. Ralph Cole, says might be possible. A more comprehensive growth study for the state's Front Range is continuing.

Some two thousand Utahns, meanwhile, participated in 39 hearings this year on a growth study called Agenda for the Eighties. The study's main conclusion, however, is that there is widespread disagreement on how to manage growth.

Residents agree, for example, that agricultural land should be saved from urban development, but not at the expense of landowners' rights to dispose of their holdings as they wish.

The citizens' panel coordinating the study did agree on one generality —

that the issue was "managed growth versus unmanaged growth, not growth versus no-growth," and on one specific issue, that the state should adopt a mineral severance tax to help pay for growth impacts. Utah is the only Rocky Mountain state without such a tax.

But there is sharp disagreement, even over how much the state's population will grow. The study predicts a 40 percent growth by 1990 while University of Utah researcher Thayne Robson says high interest rates and a job market slump may keep it down annually to this year's 0.2 percent rate.

Participants in "Agenda for the Eighties" also split on the issues of pollution control, wilderness study, and how the state should regulate local decisions.

The final report was sent to Gov. Scott Matheson (D), who called it "solid and meritorious" and said he would do everything he could to guide it through the Legislature, which is even more sensitive about the issue than Colorado's.

Goldpanners exempt from mining rules

New rules on mining the public lands for hardrock minerals were issued last month by the Bureau of Land Management, and despite several years of horetrading, both industry and environmentalists are still dissatisfied.

Starting the first of next year, an operating and reclamation plan will be required for extracting gold, silver, zinc, lead, uranium and other non-fuel minerals on BLM managed lands.

All sides agree on the need for new regulations — to date these minerals have been covered by the antiquated 1872 Mining Law. (Leasable minerals such as oil and gas, and salable sand and gravel are regulated by more recent law.)

But industrial representatives said the rules still threaten the confidentiality of discoveries made by large exploration operations. "To run the race, we need secrecy," said Karl Mote of the Northwest Mining Association. And environmentalists are upset over a small miner exemption.

Under the new rules, mining plans will not be required of the casual miner who doesn't use bulldozers or explosives, or of professional operations that disturb less than five acres a year. Three-fourths of next year's expected 1,200 operations will be less than five acres, the agency said.

Moreover, said Bob Golten of the National Wildlife Federation law clinic in Boulder, Colo., the rules don't require a miner to show that deposits will be profitable enough to pay reclamation costs. "You can mine the hell out of the land," said Golten, "and then when it comes time to reclaim, simply say you can't afford it."

Reforming the 1872 Mining Law has long been a priority for western environmentalists and others concerned with the law's lack of environmental standards and high economic dividends to miners.

In addition to watchdogging new agency regulations (the Forest Service issued theirs in 1974), both industry and environmentalists will continue to jockey for new legislation, court interpretations and state controls.

Dividing waters

Arizona Indian tribes have won an important, if temporary, victory in their fight to obtain a larger share of the irrigation water to be provided by the Central Arizona Project.

Outgoing Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus has increased the tribes' allotment of water during drought years. Even though the ruling could presumably be overturned by the new adminis-

tration, Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt (D) immediately filed suit, arguing that the ruling violates the Colorado River Basin Project Act.

The estimated \$2 billion water project is currently under construction, although funds have been previously held up for a variety of reasons, including the project's questionable economic, environmental and social impacts, and disputes between farm and urban water users.

similar organic chemicals. Modified, the wood waste process seems to work on sludge.

A breakthrough would help solve both the problems of sewage disposal and finding cheap road repairing materials, researcher Robert Lottman points out, adding, not incidentally, that his Environmental Protection Agency grant has run out and he's shopping for new funds to complete the project.

Public knowledge shows environmental voids

Americans still support efforts to protect the environment, according to a recent poll, but they remain surprisingly uninformed on many controversial issues.

Asked, for example, whether this country produces enough oil or has to import oil, 36 percent said they did not know or answered incorrectly. Two-thirds of those surveyed could not associate toxic chemicals with Love Canal. And nearly one in four did not know Three Mile Island involved a nuclear power plant accident.

The survey was conducted for the Council on Environmental Quality by Resources for the Future, a not-for-profit research group in Washington, D.C.

The findings confirmed many arguments environmentalists wield today: That a majority of people are willing to make economic tradeoffs to protect en-

vironmental quality; that solar energy and conservation are the preferred energy sources; and that cutbacks in federal spending should not include funds for environmental protection.

The poll also found, however, that concern about environmental quality, particularly air and water, has slipped far behind other concerns, such as inflation, crime, and even public education.

And public knowledge of environmental issues has numerous gaps. Among the other voids in the public mind: 55 percent couldn't identify automobiles as the prime source of air pollution; 57 percent couldn't identify synthetic fuels as gas or oil made from coal, oil shale or tar sands; 67 percent couldn't say if acid rain was polluted rain that harmed the environment; and over two-thirds of those asked still believe a nuclear power plant can explode.

Repaving with asphalt sludge

In an ecological version of rags to riches, a University of Idaho researcher is close to perfecting a process that will convert sludge into asphalt.

The sewers to streets scheme grew out of an unsuccessful wood waste recycling experiment, which incidentally found that sludge and wood waste share

Trackings

followups on previous stories



RAILROAD TRACKS at the copper smelter in Anaconda, Mont., lie unused and await the wrecker's bar.

ARCO refuses EPA Anaconda reprieve

(see HCN 11-14-80 for previous story)

Pressed by Montana Sen. John Melcher (D), the Environmental Protection Agency announced last week that the Anaconda Copper Co., a subsidiary of the Atlantic Richfield Corp., could operate its smelter in Anaconda without any major modifications for the next seven years.

But a spokesman for ARCO said the decision to close the smelter was "final and irrevocable."

Melcher announced in a news release EPA's willingness to grant a special "non-ferrous smelter order," good through Jan. 1, 1988, that would allow the smelter to emit more pollutants than federal clean air standards normally allow. The Montana Board of Health has also agreed to allow the smelter to exceed air quality limits under the new state ambient air standards.

However, the EPA's offer was conditional: ARCO would have to begin building a new copper smelter in Anaconda in 1983, to be completed in 1988. Likewise, a spokesman for the state health board, which has granted Anaconda air quality variances for the past five years, said the company would have to do "something to improve" be-

fore further exemptions from air quality standards would be allowed.

HCN asked ARCO spokesman Curt Burton whether the company would consider re-opening the smelter if ARCO was not required to construct a new one, and he said, "No."

Burton said the company is now negotiating with companies in Japan to use Japanese smelters. While ARCO may in the future build a new smelter in the United States, it will not be in Anaconda, officials said.

ARCO released a statement blaming economic and regulatory problems for the smelter closure. Among the regulatory problems mentioned were standards for protecting smelter workers from sulfur dioxide and other emissions set by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Melcher's response, according to the *Associated Press*, was to call Anaconda "reprehensible." He also criticized EPA for delays and unclear positions.

EPA officials, however, have said from the start that the closure was due primarily to economic considerations: an excess of smelting capacity worldwide, the age of the Anaconda facility, and the cost of transporting ores from outside of Montana to the facility.

Controversial wilderness bills pass

(see HCN 10-30-80 for previous story)

Colorado and New Mexico wilderness bills passed Congress this month with precedent-setting provisions to allow resource development in other potential wilderness areas.

Some 1.4 million acres of U.S. Forest Service land in Colorado was added to the wilderness system, bringing that state's total wilds to 2.6 million acres. The New Mexico legislation established 611,000 acres.

The bills grew out of the agency's second national Roadless Area Review and Evaluation; similar state omnibus wilderness bills are proposed for most other western states, but only a handful have passed.

Foam insulation prompts cancer alert

Those laboratory rats have done it again. A federally-funded study of 240 rodents exposed to large doses of formaldehyde has led to a recommendation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission staff that urea-formaldehyde foam insulation be banned.

The foam insulation, which is usually injected into the hollow walls of buildings, is now found in about 500,000 homes nationwide.

A spokesman for the Commission said the five-person panel had not yet voted on the staff's recommendation.

The recommendation was prompted by the conclusions of 16 government cancer experts from various federal agencies. The *Washington Star* reported that their findings were based primarily on preliminary findings of a two-year study by the Chemical Industry Institute for Toxicology in North Carolina.

The findings seemed to support earlier conclusions by the National Academy of Sciences that even with a

small amount of home insulation, gases from urea-formaldehyde could endanger the occupants' health.

The *Star* said the commission had received 1,550 letters from homeowners complaining of nausea, respiratory problems, headaches, rashes, nose bleeds and eye irritation in houses insulated with the material.

Formaldehyde is also used as glue in plywood and particleboard, and is found in cosmetics, toothpaste and clothing.

Jack Murray, executive director of the Formaldehyde Institute in Washington, D.C., told reporters that "a ban would be precipitous." He said his group supported a labeling requirement warning of possible discomfort caused by insulation. The label was proposed by the commission last spring, but is not yet in effect.

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BLM compromises on Utah road opening

(see HCN 7-11-80 for previous story)

Ducking a head-on collision with Sagebrush Rebellion advocates, the Bureau of Land Management has agreed to open a controversial road into Negro Bill Canyon, in Grand County, Utah.

The road was blockaded by the agency two years ago to prevent vehicles from entering the canyon, under consideration at the time for possible wilderness designation.

County residents, however, wanted access to the area, and in a much-celebrated July 4th event they breached the barricade and drove in.

The area has since been dropped from consideration as potential wilderness. But a dispute remained over who should pay to maintain the road. The BLM agreed to do so, in exchange for the county dropping its claim to the road and lawsuit challenging federal control of roads on public lands.

A similar incident this past summer, in which local residents graded a road into another potential wilderness area, has not been settled.



OWL HOWLS

Dear HCN,

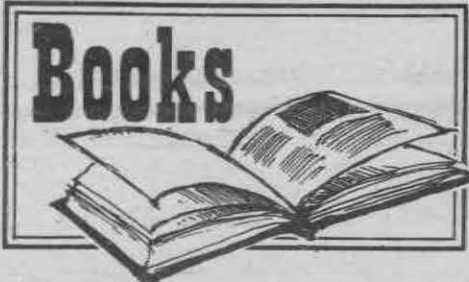
Nick Anderson's letter to HCN (11-28-80) intended to identify "an error in the article on snowy owls," which I wrote.

However, there is no error in my article: the snowy owl is the largest of North American owls. My evidence: an exhaustive study by Allan W. Eckert published in *The Owls of North America* (Doubleday and Co. — 1974).

Considering the factors of total length, wingspan and weight, the snowy owl is ranked the largest with 171.877 points. The great horned owl is second with 153.384 points and the great gray owl third with 146.719 points.

Tom Jenkins
Englewood, Colo.

(Ed. note: The real error in all this was that we failed to check with Tom Jenkins before publishing Nick Anderson's letter.)



Terry Carr, ed., Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1980. \$14.95, cloth; \$5.95, paper, 313 pages.

Review by Peter Wild

A century ago, Jules Verne delighted our great-grandparents when he sent Captain Nemo plunging in his *Nautilus* through the ocean depths and Phileas Fogg circumventing the world in 80 days. Besides spinning entertaining tales, the Frenchman was celebrating the possibilities of a dawning technology. Since then, as Terry Carr explains by way of his introduction, science-fiction writers have voiced both the hopes and fears of their times. From about the 1950s, their vision of the future has become ever darker as they recognized the dangers of overpopulation, pollution and dwindling resources.

Thus it is not at all incongruous that Sierra Club Books has published this anthology of science-fiction short stories. After all, science-fiction writers and environmentalists share a common bailiwick: the future. What happens when the public must be excluded from wilderness in order to save our last wild areas? How much do we really know about the interior lives of creatures we are driving to extinction? And is it possible for the government to legislate against larger families? The 20 stories collected in *Dream's Edge* struggle to answer these and other questions — often with bizarre twists not typical of conservationists' thinking but nonetheless provoking.

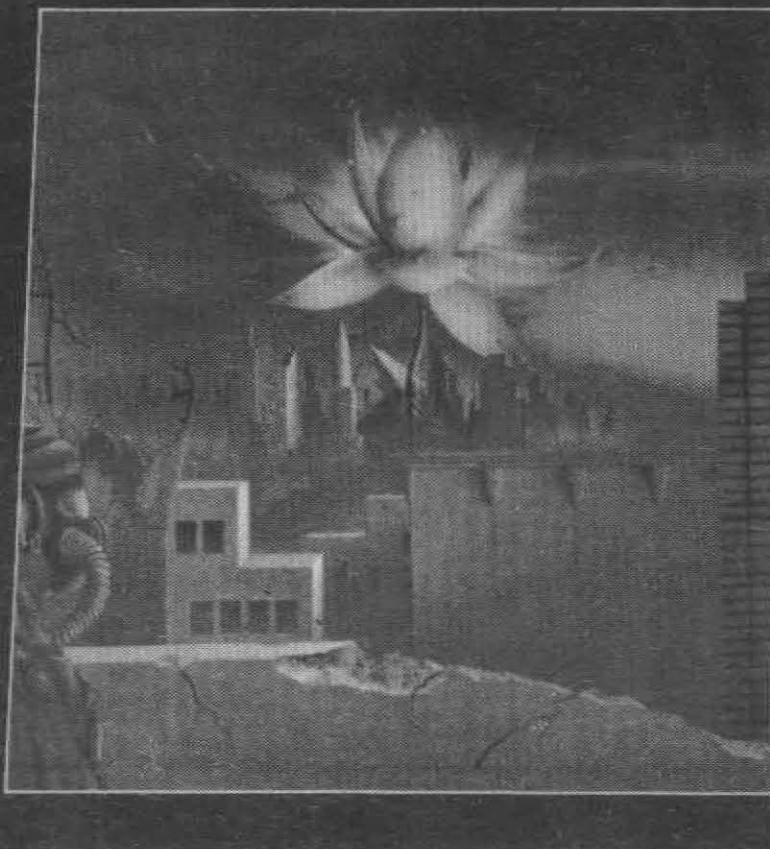
In these stories the protagonists do not abandon their abused earth to rocket off into space in search of greener pastures. Editor Carr has rejected "stories of humanity escaping the prob-

DREAM'S EDGE

Science Fiction Stories
About the Future
of Planet Earth

by Ursula Le Guin
Frank Herbert
Robert Silverberg
Theodore Sturgeon
Brian W. Aldiss
and others

Edited by Terry Carr



lems we face on this planet by establishing colonies in space." Instead, he insists, as do many environmentalists, that "we have to concern ourselves with living on the planet of our birth."

Because of this, Carr's selections have an immediacy, perhaps even an applicability, not found in outer-space

solutions to our world's ills. Take, for example, the ironically titled "People's Park," by Charles Ott. In this glimpse into the future, the wilderness areas of an overpopulated America remain beautiful only because the government has declared them off-limits to the public — a public now relegated to "enjoy-

ing" nature via television. Still, despite fences and remotely controlled patrol vehicles, a few wilderness die-hards manage to creep in to savor the wilds.

On the night of our story, a weary ranger must track down yet another of these obnoxious "hiders" and dispatch him with a tranquilizer rifle. After a tussle, the ranger gets his man. The story may not be that far from reality in light of the present people-pressures on much of our wilderness.

Yet all is not gloom-and-doom in the various visions presented in *Dream's Edge* by such top sci-fi writers as Frank M. Robinson and Theodore Sturgeon. We get a whimsical piece on air pollution by R. A. Lafferty. Eric Vinicoff and Marcia Martin take us tearing through ice floes aboard a hopped-up yacht on the world's last hunt, not to kill whales but to save them.

Occasionally in *Dream's Edge* the sci-fi penchant for unpronounceables — "chirpsithra" and "glgstith(click)-oktok" — cloy when it has little to do with the progress of the story. All in all, though, the pieces serve to give us pause about a future presently being created for us by an enslaving technology.



CORRECTION

On page 12 of HCN 11-28-80, Five Springs Falls, near Worland, Wyo., was mistakenly identified as being within a Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Area.

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