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High Country News

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Friday, September 18, 1981

Lander, Wyoming

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Crying wolf — restoring the "rapacious predator" to the Rockies



by Jim Robbins

Wolves have an unsavory reputation. It was, after all, a wolf that kept Tchaikovsky's Peter hanging from a tree throughout most of a symphony. A wolf gobbled up Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother and would have done in the little lass herself had not a mighty hunter saved her. And a wolf was the heinous villain that evicted two of the Three Little Pigs from their homes.

In all of literature, one is hard-pressed to find a flattering portrait of wolves, though they do exist. Romulus and Remus, the founders of ancient Rome, were saved and suckled by a female wolf. And there are real-life stories of wolves raising human babies as their own.

Nevertheless, many still believe that wolves attack and kill people, though there is no record of this ever happen-
 ing.

Fear and economics inspired western settlers to drive the Rocky Mountain wolf — *Canis lupus irremotus* —

nearly to extinction. Domestic livestock, brought west in great numbers in the late 1800s, drove out what remained of the ungulate populations after the vast buffalo herds were decimated. Deprived of their primary food sources, wolves turned to sheep and cattle. With federal government help, ranchers began a systematic program to exterminate the wolf. For all practical purposes, the campaign succeeded by the mid-1930s.

Although no viable wolf populations exist in its former range — all of Idaho, and parts of Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon and South Dakota — several sightings of lone wolves have been reported in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, usually in national parks or remote wilderness.

WOLF RECOVERY

Since the completion of the Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan in 1980, a team of biologists has been working to re-establish a breeding population of wolves in Montana, Idaho

and Wyoming, where the animal was listed as an endangered species in 1973.

The first step in re-establishing the wolf is bringing them into the Rockies. Wyoming's Yellowstone Park originally was selected as a site for re-introduction of the wolf, but the expense and shift in Department of the Interior philosophy have shelved the idea for the time being.

Glacier Park in Montana is now the focus for a re-establishment of the wolf. With protection, the recovery team hopes that wolf packs from Canada, where the species is still hunted and trapped, will naturally re-establish themselves in the U.S.

The project, which is in its very early stages, poses a raft of problems that must be solved before a viable population can be established. Foremost among them is the misconception that casts the wolf as a rapacious predator.

People who still believe that the wolf is a threat to human beings may not relish the idea of wolf packs roaming a national park. Some hunters and hunt-

(continued on page 10)

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Dear Friends,

This issue marks the beginning of a series of changes at HCN that we hope can be phased in without undue upset on our side of the press or yours. We've been promising changes for some time — sometimes to mollify complaining readers, other times to effect our own ideas for a better paper.

Quietly, and not without some gaps and soft spots, we're inaugurating with this issue a series of "special issues." This time around, we're concentrating on "wildlife," and the experience of putting the issue together has been educational. Our aim is to highlight issues and areas of the region once a month — but to continue, every issue, to cover all the news of the region in our five page Western Roundup. Alternate issues will contain our usual varied fare.

We did a couple of test runs on the "special issue" concept last year — first with a "winter heating" issue that included stories on rising winter bills from utilities and the health dangers of wood stoves. Those two stories got considerable attention, but the issue still lacked focus. Then a year ago in August we put out a "solar" issue, with articles on the Solar Energy Research Institute, "double envelope" houses and the state-of-the-art in photovoltaics. We printed it on higher quality paper, distributed it at solar conferences, and it was a rousing success.

Why the lag between the solar and successive "special" issues? The difficulty of planning that far ahead intimidated us. But recently, a consultant suggested we map a whole year's worth of issues, and suddenly we were thinking in the long term again. We began collecting ideas for special issues, figuring to do half a year's issues — 12 — in which our features focussed on a particular issue or area.

Here are some of the special topics you can expect to see. State issues — a special on Montana will be coming up soon, with other states in the region to follow. Another winter issue. A special on ranching and farming in the Rocky Mountain West. A "books and the arts" issue, concentrating on regional culture. Another solar issue next summer.

These are just a few ideas. We'd like to hear from readers. What sort of topics do you think deserve a whole issue of features and opinion? Let us know.

— the staff

Western Roundup

Pest spray linked to game poisoning

The Canadian Wildlife Service has warned hunters in Alberta and Saskatchewan not to eat any ducks or geese that might have been contaminated by toxic pesticide spraying in Montana. Spokesman for the wildlife agency, Dan Nyman, in Saskatoon, Sask., said they are warning people to keep the birds frozen until officials can test them for toxic levels of endrin.

The chemical was combined with toxaphene and sprayed over 200,000 acres of eastern Montana winter wheat to fight an outbreak of pale western and army cutworm, whose larvae attack the roots of the wheat plant.

Montana Gov. Ted Schwinden (D) sent a letter to Environmental Protection Agency director Anne Gorsuch, asking her to re-evaluate EPA's registration of endrin. "The bottom line," Schwinden told *High Country News*, "is that endrin is an EPA registered pesticide that, when used on small grains in recommended levels, is supposed to have no significant impact on the environment. I am asking that they reconsider their position on approving endrin based on our experience."

Schwinden said that, in most cases, the chemical was applied correctly and in the few instances where it was misused, the people were prosecuted. The Crow Indians in southeastern Montana are asking the state to have game birds on their reservation tested for endrin, he said.

Canadian official Nyman said that there has been much concern over the possibility of Canadian birds being contaminated, but there is no way to predict if levels will be toxic. He said that birds living in Montana ingested more of the poison than those that passed through to Canada. Canada banned use of endrin two years ago.

Montana Department of Agriculture

director Gordon McOmber said that if farmers hadn't sprayed Montana's agricultural economy would have been devastated. U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials in Ft. Collins, Colo., said that, in addition to the Montana acreage, endrin was used on 100,000 acres in Wyoming and 30,000 in South Dakota.

The contaminated water fowl could affect hunting in 17 states, Canada and Mexico, because the birds travel such long distances.

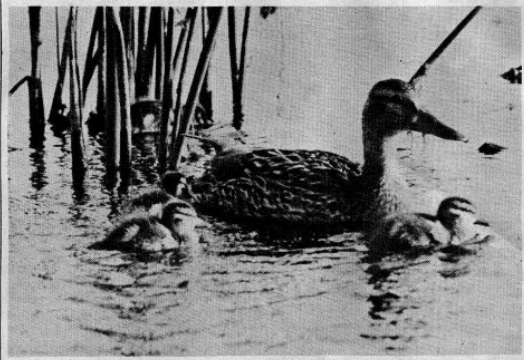
Endrin levels above the EPA recommended safe levels were found in sharp-tail grouse and partridge several weeks ago. The Montana Department of Health recommended against eating the contaminated birds, but the Fish and Game Commission allowed the season to open as planned.

EPA recommended safe levels for endrin in fowl is .3 parts per million.

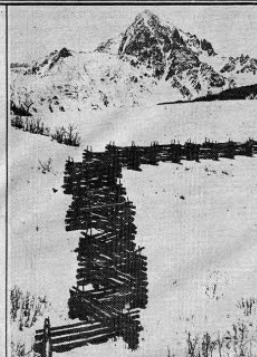
The grouse and partridge had levels as high as .53 ppm. Last week, several ducks and geese were found to have levels as high as 1.2 and .9 ppm. More test results will be available on September 25 when the Fish and Game Commission meets to determine whether to open the migratory waterfowl hunting season in Montana on Oct. 3.

Montana Department of Health director Dr. John Drynan said that if the levels are as high as the other duck and goose samples, he will recommend no season because of the hazards to human health. "The ramifications of this are mind-boggling," he said. "One of the things I am concerned about is leaching. If we wait a year or two, will endrin end up in our groundwater supplies and our well water? I have asked my people in water quality to follow that for the next few years."

— Jim Robbins



Ken Olsen



Mt. Sneffels

Wild mining eyed

Most of the publicity about wilderness and mineral conflicts has gone to the "jewels" of the wilderness system, like Montana's Bob Marshall. Now, however, the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service has identified wilderness and wilderness study areas in Colorado and Wyoming with mineral leasing conflicts.

The conflict areas are located in eight national forests and include popular wilderness areas in Colorado, such as Mt. Zirkel and the Maroon Bells-Snowmass areas. Other existing Colorado wilderness areas listed as having lease applications within them are Flattops, Raggeds, West Elk, Mt. Sneffels, Lizard Head and Eagles Nest. Colorado wilderness study areas with mineral conflicts are Piedra, San Juan, Spanish Peaks and Sangre de Cristo.

In Wyoming, there are lease applications for the Washakie wilderness, Glacier primitive area (Whiskey Mountain), the Fitzpatrick and North Absaroka wilderness areas.

The Forest Service is in the process of preparing either forest plans or environmental impact statements which will propose ways to process the pending lease proposals. The deadlines for completion of these analyses range from February of 1982 for the Washakie wilderness to March of 1983. Leasing decisions will be made by April 1983 in all the areas.

In a related development, sources at the Interior Department said that the agency very nearly decided to re-open the Bureau of Land Management wilderness inventory in an attempt to reduce the amount of land being considered for inclusion in the wilderness system. Said the source, who asked not to be identified, "The processing of all the appeals was held up pending the decision...They just don't like wilderness around here." The inventory was not re-opened because of the time involved — about four years — and the cost.

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New slurry tap

A major element in the controversy over coal slurry pipelines from Wyoming's Powder River Basin may have been eliminated this week with the announcement that South Dakota's Oahe Reservoir would provide water for the pipeline proposed by Energy Transportation Systems, Inc., of San Francisco, Calif.

ETSI got approval from the Wyoming legislature in 1974 to draw water from the Madison aquifer, which provides well water for ranchers and farmers in eastern Wyoming, western Nebraska and western South Dakota. Ranchers and environmental groups have protested the export of water from the arid region, and an environmental impact statement on the pipeline indicated it would lower the water table.

The proposed pipeline would carry pulverized coal from Wyoming to power plants in southern states.

ETSI President Wesley M. Witten called it a "positive, equitable solution to a complex issue." An ETSI spokesman said that the memorandum of understanding with S.D. Gov. William Janklow calls for a 288-mile water line, carrying enough water to fill ETSI's pipeline to the Southeast without requiring supplements from the Madison. The right to Madison water, however, will be held as "back up."

"It looks promising from here," said Reed Zars of the Powder River Basin Resource Council, which has opposed the slurry, partly because of its possible effect on the Madison. "But we still have outstanding questions about the need for the slurry itself."

State Rep. Marlene Simons (R-Crook), told the **Casper Star-Tribune** that she still feared ETSI might plan to use Madison water for sale to municipalities or for additional pipelines. An ETSI spokesman would not comment on Simons' remarks.

Hot leak lingers

Two years after 94 million gallons of contaminated water burst through a mill tailings dam at United Nuclear Corp.'s Church Rock, N.M., uranium mine, more than 30,000 gallons a day of highly contaminated water are still leaking from holding ponds at the site, according to the company's own estimates. The site is causing "serious contamination," the state Dept. of Health and Environment said. Water samples taken from an observation well more than 200 feet off the property boundary found high concentrations of acid, a total dissolved solids level of 31,000 ppm, levels of aluminum at 19,000 ppm, sulfates at 18,000 ppm, iron at 2,185 ppm and manganese at 90 ppm. A state environmental staff person described these figures as "unbelievable." So far, the contamination has not reached a domestic drinking water well one mile from the site.

This month, the company is scheduled to begin constructing two new lined evaporation ponds. The state has also ordered United Nuclear to install a line of barrier wells northeast of the site in an attempt to intercept the contamination. Ten wells have been put in place, each pumping about six gallons a minute. But the effectiveness of the system has yet to be confirmed.

— Virginia Munger Kahn



Watt flushes federal water policies

To the obvious delight of most of the governors attending the Western Governors' Conference in Jackson, Wyo., this week, Interior Secretary James Watt reversed a legal opinion from the previous administration that established so-called "federal non-reserved water rights." The precedent, established by a 1979 opinion by former Solicitor Leo Krulitz, said that the federal government could appropriate unappropriated water on federal lands.

Watt told the governors that the new approach "means federal land managers must follow state water laws and procedures except where Congress has specifically established a water right or where Congress has explicitly set aside a federal land area with a reserved water right. If (federal agencies) need more water for their program, they must take their place in line like any other citizen and let state authorities decide."

Most officials in states with large amounts of public lands hailed the decision as a victory for states' rights and the precedence of state water laws. Environmentalists were unsure of the decision's ultimate impact, but one Sierra Club official said, "If it means that there will be no federal water on public lands for public purposes, Watt is reneging on his responsibilities."

Watt also told the governors that the Reagan administration is planning to

oppose legislation now before Congress that would grant coal slurry pipelines the federal right of eminent domain.

Finally, Watt endorsed a proposal by Utah Gov. Scott Matheson (D) to consolidate Utah's state land holdings by trading some state lands for federal lands. Matheson said that, because the states often hold only one state section surrounded completely by federal lands, federal land use decisions essentially determine the use to which state lands are put.

Matheson wants the government to trade federal lands to the states in more logical planning units and to do so outside of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Matheson said the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requirements were too burdensome and that he would like to complete the trade "within my lifetime."

Watt was met by demonstrators at the Jackson conference. The largest crowd, about 350, opposed his policies, while a motorcade of about 25 pickup trucks full of firewood demonstrated their support for him. The anti-Watt demonstration was planned by a "group of interested citizens," mostly members of the environmental group Earth First!, and a Jackson-based group called Construction Workers for Wilderness. The pro-Watt rally was organized by Bob Baker, chief forester for Louisiana Pacific in Dubois, Wyo.

Oil firm bows out of Teton forest

With both environmentalists and the Jackson, Wyo., Chamber of Commerce lined up against a proposed oil and gas drilling project in nearby Cache Creek, the National Cooperative Refinery Association last week withdrew its drilling plan.

NCRA Vice-President Donald I. Lawless said "no comment" when asked why the company was pulling out. Lawless would not give reasons for his company's silence.

Bridger-Teton National Forest, site of the well, has just released an environmental impact statement on the Cache Creek well and another in nearby Little Granite Creek. The statement recommended approval of the NCRA well and the one in Little Granite Creek.

NCRA has held a 10-year lease on the

Cache Creek site since 1969, and the deadline for development had been extended to allow completion of the EIS. The document took 20 months and cost over \$600,000 to produce.

Forest Supervisor Reid Jackson said the research was not wasted. "A lot of the information...will be helpful in writing our forest plan," Jackson told the **Jackson Hole News**.

The leases are still good for another 15 months, according to Bridger-Teton officials.

Opponents of the Cache Creek well say they will now turn their attention to fighting the Little Granite Creek drilling project. The Little Granite well, located atop a saddle south of Jackson in the proposed Gros Ventre Wilderness area, is still scheduled to go ahead, according to officials at Getty Oil, holder of the lease.

Cheyenne voters reject high-priced water project

Voters in Cheyenne, Wyo., this week turned down a \$40 million municipal bond to help build a massive water project known as Stage II. The rejection, say state water planners, will usher in a new era of more cautious water development in Wyoming.

"The voters showed a little sophistication and I'm not surprised," said water engineer John Wheelan, whose Department of Economic Planning and Development was sponsoring the project. "The bond had a lot of hooks, a very high cost. And I think project opponents were able to show we didn't need such a big project, that there are smaller alternatives."

Stage II would have diverted water from the Little Snake River east over the Continental Divide and across forest land to Cheyenne. Critics cited several environmental and social impacts.

The issue also pitted ranchers, whose water would be diverted, against city dwellers, who now use 40 percent of Cheyenne's water consumption to water lawns and parks.

But with water rate increases estimated at 400 percent or more, the cost of Stage II turned this week's vote, observers agree. The bond was turned down by a 58 percent majority of those voting.

"I guess it came down to people looking at dollars," said Ken Brengle of the local Chamber of Commerce. "We felt the need for water was worth the price."

The chamber had joined realtors and builders to lobby for the bond, raising campaign monies that Brengle said he wouldn't add up until he filed state reports later this week.

Also surprised at the vote was Michael Reese, director of the State Water Development Commission, which last year recommended to the legislature that it approve the project. "But what it does is send the city looking for alternative sources, if there are alternative sources."

Tapping the nearby Casper aquifer for ground water is one option, he said, but a lack of testing data and a "general discomfort in the state for messing with groundwater" due to the coal slurry controversy might hinder that option.

Water conservation is the answer, along with smaller water projects, said Tom Wolf of the Wyoming Outdoor Council, which had campaigned against Stage II and the bond issue. His group wants any future development restricted to projects that won't encourage growth in Cheyenne above the current two percent rate.

Stage II's next regulatory step is unclear. "We just don't know what will happen," said Wheelan. "But I think this thing is dead."

Both the chamber's Brengle and environmentalist Wolf alike plan to go back to the legislature and ask for more money — Brengle for the state to pay a higher share of the Stage II cost; Wolf for more state studies on alternatives.

The city of Cheyenne may also ask the legislature to kick in more than the \$40 million loan and \$20 million grant it had previously approved for the estimated \$100 million project.

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Western Roundup



Range fires fuel grazing gripes

A profusion of range fires in southern Idaho this summer is heating already tense relations between ranchers and the Bureau of Land Management. On the griddle is the agency's fire management policy.

Some 250 fires have charred 468,000 acres of BLM land in the Gem State, four times the average and over 30 times the number of acres that burned during the 1977 drought.

"It's the worst anybody's seen in 50 years," said Odell Frandsen, BLM district manager in Idaho Falls. Frandsen blamed the fires, 60 percent of which were human-caused, on heavy spring rains that grew record-breaking seas of grasses.

In recent public meetings, however, area ranchers were quick to blame the BLM's grazing and fire management policies. The agency, they said, allowed range grass to grow too high by restricting livestock grazing. At least some flexibility should be worked into permit allocations to take advantage of lush years, they said.

The BLM was also criticized for proposing suspension of all grazing on reseeded burned areas for two growing seasons. "They need to be a little looser," said rancher Jim Elsworth of Salmon. "Those grasses after a fire are usually the finest grazing."

The BLM's Frandsen conceded both points. He argued, however, that a one-season increase in grazing would be hindered by most ranchers' inability to purchase extra cows for only one summer. The two season suspension, he said, was to allow native grasses to take root.

Most of the fires were fought by the BLM, although Frandsen noted the agency is "slowly moving towards" a policy of allowing natural fires to burn under controlled conditions, as the National Park Service has done. Frandsen feared this summer's burns and rancher criticism would stall that policy switch.

Water quality data remains the key to Utah public land transfer deal

Federal environmental officials, worried about possible groundwater contamination in the Jordan Valley near Salt Lake City, are continuing to oppose a federal land exchange until water quality is further considered.

But in a recent policy reversal, the Utah Department of Health backed off its previous opposition to the exchange after the mining firm involved promised to divulge more water monitoring data it possesses. The debate is headed back to federal court.

At issue is a proposed several-thousand-acre land transfer between the Bureau of Land Management and Kennecott Minerals Co. One part of the exchange, 230 acres just south of the firm's giant Bingham open-pit copper mine, would allow Kennecott to expand its operation by dumping and then leaching some 200 million tons of waste rock.

Kennecott, in a mining plan sent to the BLM earlier this summer, said that unless market conditions improve, they will not leach the waste rock (a process to recover leftover minerals — uneconomical unless copper prices are high enough).

But the federal Environmental Protection Agency is not satisfied with the firm's assurances. In a Sept. 4 letter to BLM District Manager Frank Snell, EPA Regional Administrator Steve Durham said that unless Kennecott signed a contract with the BLM specifying that leaching will not occur, the National Environmental Policy Act requires the BLM to consider the effects of leaching in its analysis of the land exchange.

"Kennecott understandably indicates that if the economics of the situation improve, then leaching may be initiated on or near (the exchanged land)," wrote Durham.

The land transfer was challenged in U.S. District Court earlier this year by two men owning nearby land. They claim the exchange will lead to groundwater contamination, among other damages. They also claim the BLM has failed to adequately consider such effects. The court agreed and sent the matter back to the BLM for further analysis.

The agency this week is considering two new studies on groundwater in the area — one by Kennecott and one by Battelle Northwest Labs (also paid for by Kennecott). Based on those and previous studies, BLM hydrologist Paul Summers in the agency's Denver Service Center said his preliminary finding is that "there is no particularly serious problem with natural leaching of mine dumps in the area," referring to leaching caused by rain or snow.

But again raising the question of whether Kennecott will commercially leach the waste piles, Summers said he did not have enough data to determine the effects of such leaching on the area's groundwater.

Summers also concluded that ground water in the area is moving east and northeast into the Jordan Valley, toward nearby drinking water wells. (The Kennecott study found the flow to be west, back into the mine area; the

Battelle study reached no conclusion for lack of data.)

A worst case scenario would have heavily-contaminated water flowing some 30 miles to Salt Lake City, via the Jordan River. But the rate of groundwater flow, Summers stressed, is still unknown and such movement could take decades.

In an Aug. 19 letter to the BLM's Snell, Utah State Environmental Health Director Alvin Rickers said his agency also found no adverse effects, a conclusion also "conditioned on no leaching program (stress in original)."

However, Rickers added, "We are very concerned about the possibility of serious pollution as a result of the leaching operations..."

Rickers and other state and federal officials have repeatedly requested detailed water quality monitoring data from Kennecott. They believe that Kennecott has tested wells for heavy metal contamination for several years.

However, Kennecott's environmental services director Robert Heaney said all of the firm's data has been released. He denied that more such data exists.

Unconvinced EPA and state officials privately conceded that they are opposing the land exchange in part to force Kennecott to release such data.

There is also concern that once the exchange goes through, state laws will not adequately regulate the mine operation. "We are alarmed that if BLM relinquishes its control on these public lands the opportunity will be lost to be able to monitor the impact of a large leaching operation on the Jordan Valley aquifer," Rickers wrote.

But in subsequent correspondence between Kennecott and Rickers, the firm said it was reluctant to cooperate more fully with state officials because the data it has released has been misinterpreted by the media and by the private landowners contesting the land exchange.

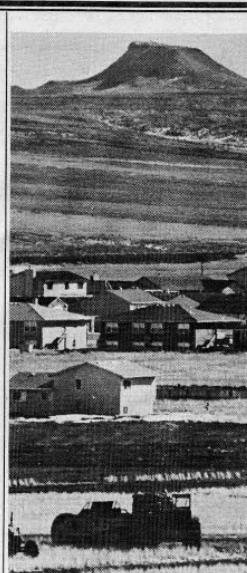
Kennecott promised more cooperation after approval, including releasing water monitoring data on mine lands near the exchange parcels.

Rickers wrote back to Kennecott attorney Keith Taylor Sept. 16, agreeing not to oppose the land exchange. "We've now got an understanding with the company that they'll cooperate in a comprehensive monitoring program," Rickers told *High Country News*. Rickers said that agreement did not influence his decision not to oppose the land exchange.

"There's been an effort even by employees here to use sort of blackmail, holding up the exchange until Kennecott releases its data on its other leaching operations," he said. "But we're going to move ahead on that outside of the exchange."

Furthermore, Rickers said that should Kennecott decide to leach on the exchanged land, state environmental laws would ensure a complete consideration of groundwater quality.

BLM officials said the agency planned to send its revised analysis of the land exchange back to the federal court for review this month.



Public land sold for private use

The town of Rangely and the federal Bureau of Land Management are near an agreement that could break new ground in federal land sales within Colorado.

Under the deal, agreed to in principle by both parties, Rangely would purchase from the BLM some 106 acres of public land at the assessed market value. Unlike previous BLM land sales in Colorado, however, the acreage will not be used for public facilities, but rather private housing and commercial businesses.

Land sales for such purposes are allowed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Other federal law prohibits eventual private use only if the land is sold at below market value — a practice the BLM commonly uses when the land will be developed into a park, sewer treatment plant or other public project.

Some 80 acres of the land bordering Rangely (which is hemmed in on three sides by BLM land) will be purchased for \$4,500 an acre and resold to a private contractor for housing. The balance, priced at \$6,000 an acre, will be used for retail stores.

Rangely will solicit bids from private developers for both projects. "We want this to be a really fine operation," said Don Peach, Rangely town manager. "There's a whole set of stipulations we'll impose on the developer to control speculation and ensure a mix between single and family housing. We've even got provisions encouraging solar energy and water-conserving landscaping."

Most of the housing, estimated to reach 700 units, will be used by workers moving to Rangely to work in the nearby coal mine being developed by Western Fuels.

Colorado BLM State Director George Francis said he expects more communities on the Western Slope to request similar land sales for housing as energy development escalates.



hotline

ANDRUS ASSAILS WATT

Former Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus broke his silence on the performance of his successor, James Watt, last week, attacking Watt's intention to open wilderness areas to oil and gas development. "Why make war on wilderness in America when there's so little of it and there are better places to go?" Andrus told reporters in Jackson, Wyo., two days after Watt had attended a Western governors' conference there. Andrus was joined by former Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson, now president of the Wilderness Society. Andrus acknowledged, however, that Watt had not yet approved leases or drilling in any wilderness areas, despite his pro-development rhetoric.

LOAN FUELS POWER PLANT

Deseret Generation has obtained a \$900 million loan guarantee from the Federal Finance Bank to help build its 360 megawatt coal-fired power plant near Bonanza, Utah. The project already received \$330 million in loans from the National Rural Utilities Cooperative. The project's total cost, including a coal mine over the border in Colorado and transmission lines, is \$1.2 billion. Deseret is a member of Western Fuels, a large association of utilities that recently negotiated a record-breaking deal providing Rio Blanco County with some \$15 million to ease the impacts of the coal mine. Critics charge that the aid package was inflated because the utilities, unlike private developers, can pass on all of their development costs to consumers.

COAL SALE DOUBLED

To help the firm turn a profit the Interior Department has doubled the amount of federal coal it will lease to Wyoming Fuel. The firm had sought an emergency lease to continue its Canadian Strip Mine in Jackson County, Colo., and after getting 521,000 tons, complained it needed more to avoid laying off employees. Bidding on the new sale will be held Sept. 24 by the Bureau of Land Management in Denver.

TAXPAYERS GIVE FREELY

Colorado taxpayers gave a record \$740,700 donation to the state's non-game wildlife management program this year, marking their "X" in the check-off box provided on state income tax forms. Nearly 140,000 taxpayers gave an average of \$5.30, a 14 percent jump from last year's tally and more than double the results of the program's first year, 1978. Program manager John Torres said the donations will provide one-half of this year's \$1.34 million budget, which will be used to manage some 783 species of wildlife that aren't hunted, trapped or otherwise sought after as game.

TIGERS IN THE ROCKIES

A new fish species will ply the waters of the Rockies if the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has its way — a tough and voracious creature called the tiger muskie. Game and Fish biologists say the tiger muskie — which is now found in Wisconsin waters — will control overpopulated fisheries and make room for game fish to be introduced where they now aren't. The tiger muskie is a cross of the male northern pike and a female muskellunge — it is sterile and won't reproduce.

WASTEWATER PLANTS PRESERVED

Some 14 proposed wastewater treatment plants in Colorado are back on line after a Denver District Court judge this week dismissed a suit challenging the way federal grants are doled out. Colorado Springs, 52nd on a list of 59 towns in the state seeking the Environmental Protection Agency grants, fell far short of the cut-off point set by the tight Reagan administration budget. Only 14 plants will be funded this year. But City Attorney Martin Thrasher said the allocation scheme — basically chronological — does consider a city's need, and that if it did, Colorado Springs would be near the top. The city's suit was dismissed on a technicality and Thrasher said he'll pursue the issue with the state Water Quality Control Commission, which helps EPA set priorities.

TROUBLES SELLING TIMBER

A proposed 200-acre timber sale on national forest lands near Estes Park, Colo., is raising criticism that the deal will cheat taxpayers while subsidizing the industry. "The Forest Service will spend about \$27 for every \$1 it gets back," building roads and cattleguards and processing the paperwork, claimed Laurence Moss, head of a local environmental group. The group is suggesting the agency restrict the sale to areas near existing roads. But John Windsor of the U.S. Forest Service office in Fort Collins, reports the *Denver Post*, defends the original plan as a legitimate subsidy for the ailing timber industry. "It costs about \$400 to produce a thousand board feet today, but the selling price is only around \$350," Windsor said he didn't hear environmentalists complaining about the \$1.5 million spent by the agency on recreation in that forest alone.

BUNKER BUYS BREATHING ROOM

Prospects of finding a new owner for the soon-to-be-closed Bunker Hill lead smelter at Kellogg, Idaho remain dim. But to give a purchaser "breathing room," both the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency say they'll extend compliance deadlines. The smelter has consistently broken EPA air pollution standards for lead, as well as OSHA's worker health rules. Under pressure from state officials, however, EPA has suspended its monthly inspection of the plant. Spokesmen for both agencies said they would extend a clean-up moratorium for three to five years to give a new owner time to settle in.

FISHING FRACAS

The Crow Indians having lost a Supreme Court battle to control fishing access to the Bighorn River in Montana, tried last month to block access by non-Indian fishermen, only to have another court push their blockade aside. The Crows had backed up 100 carloads of fishermen heading for the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. The Crows claimed control of the water running through their reservation under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. But U.S. District Court Judge James F. Battin of Billings ruled Aug. 21 the treaty did not include the river bed or its banks.

EPA ASSAILS AIR RULES

When it comes to controlling nitrogen oxide emissions from cars, polluted areas in the country should depend on the natural phase-out of older cars, said Steve Durham, regional director for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Denver. In a speech before the Colorado Medical Society last week, reported by the *Denver Post*, Durham said the current 1 gram a mile ceiling for new cars was too strict and should be raised to 2 grams. That would save car manufacturers \$1 billion a year, he said, and would not significantly damage air quality. He also backed other Reagan administration proposals for relaxing federal standards for carbon monoxide emissions. A former state senator from Colorado Springs, Durham fought EPA's efforts last year to upgrade the state emission program. His subsequent appointment to EPA has upset clean air advocates.

barbed wire



Washington politicians are calling California Gov. Jerry Brown (D), who is embroiled in a controversy over the Mediterranean fruit fly, "Lord of the Flies."



The manager of Casper, Wyoming's Ramada Inn, explaining why Sierra Club demonstrators protesting the appearance of Interior Secretary James Watt are welcome to park in his parking lot: "Maybe somebody will run over them."



Only you can prevent sun teal. A solar energy expert warns that a jar of water, sitting in the sun slowly brewing its way into sun tea, can focus the light from the sun and start a fire.



Agricultural experts at Utah State University, concerned about the oversupply of zucchini from recent backyard vegetable harvests, suggest cutting them in half and having zucchini dugout canoe races down your local irrigation ditch.



An international conference on new and renewable resources, held in Nairobi, costing \$50 million and attended by 5,000 delegates from 125 countries, agreed that rich and poor countries alike must make a "rapid transition" to renewable energy sources, but failed to provide any mechanism or money with which to do it. The American delegate pronounced himself "thrilled" at the outcome, according to *Science*.



Maybe they should report that bald-headed guy who runs the agency: The Interior Department has issued a memorandum to heads of its bureaus and offices requiring that they report to the office of the secretary, "Incidents which may result in adverse publicity for the department."



6-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981

Memoirs of a

Story and photos by Dick Randall

I put in two hitches with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a "gopher choker," a term of endearment used to describe a government trapper. My work for the agency as a predator control agent covered two periods: 1958-62 and 1967-73, both in Wyoming. I retired from the Service in 1973 because of injuries suffered in two aerial coyote-hunting accidents.

The first accident, a mid-air collision in September, 1968 northeast of Rock Springs, claimed the life of my pilot, Barlow Call, and mine was touch-and-go for a while. Barlow was probably the most experienced mountain pilot in the West. His son Glen was piloting the other plane and suffered severe brain damage in the crash.

My memory of the collision spans about five seconds. Our altitude was less than 200 feet. I felt a strong thump and all at once I was looking straight down over Barlow's shoulder. Sagebrush spun to the left meaning we were spinning right — and then nothing. I have scars across my hips that attest to the value of seat belts.

Remains of the aircraft came to rest in a radius of about 50 feet. I learned later that Barlow had shut off the ignition on the way down, which may have saved us from burning. Fuel lines had ruptured and gasoline soaked the cockpit.

What happened next, as related by Elza Eversole, a Rock Springs cattle rancher who pulled me out of the wreck, seems a bit bizarre. I guess there is a part of your brain saying "get with it" while another part says "you are unconscious."

Because of the cockpit jumble, Elza couldn't lift my weight straight up through a smashed window. He asked me to push with my legs — and I did. Elza left me propped against the wreckage, ran for help, and when he returned I was in the front cockpit trying to cut Barlow's safety harness and drag him out. I don't remember any of this.

In addition, I always kept my pocket knife in my right Levi pocket. My right arm was broken in three places, rendering it useless (courtesy of a shotgun barrel that flew by during the wreck. It was bent into an "S" by the impact and I keep it as a souvenir.) No way can I get that knife out of a tight right pocket with my left hand, but when the chips are down, strange things occur.

If a plane crash can be funny (and hurt a lot at the same time) my second one was. In February, 1971, we were cruising a few feet above the deep snow just under Steamboat Rim north of Rock Springs. Jerry Thompson from Craig, Colo., was at the controls of a high-performance Super Cub.

Ahead of the plane four coyotes flushed in the tall sage. Jerry full-throated and climbed for a turn. As we passed over I fired two random shots from the 12-gauge to spook our quarry up the rim onto the mesa. At the top of our steep turn I was reloading the shotgun. Jerry pulled the huge wing-flaps to full-on, which usually results in a bounce upward, but this time — nothing!



Predator control is based on the theory that lots of dead predatory wildlife equals happy woolgrowers.

We settled into the side of the rim almost three point. The wheels caught on something, flipped the plane on its back, and we continued across the rim, upside down, rudder first.

After what seemed like a long time of plexiglass flying, parts breaking, and an above-average pulse rate, the plane came to a halt. Just as we were about to exhale, that big wing lying on the snow acted like a ski, and we slid about half-way down the mountain. When the plane reached its final destination we were hanging upside down from our

seat belts, the cabin was demolished, blood was dripping, and the first thing Jerry did was to reach out a hole that used to contain a window and carefully extinguish his cigar in the snow. The cabin reeked of gasoline. And Jerry's first comment (after "Are you okay?") was: "I broke my airplane."

But we were still in trouble. If we reached up and released our safety belts, we would land on our heads. We both came down rather hard, but managed.

The Killpecker Sand Dunes probably

saved our bacon. No one had much idea where we were flying and the snow was at record depths that winter. We floundered through four-foot drifts to the bottom of the rim, took an hour or so to maneuver through belly-deep snow and big-sage in the valley, then climbed to the top of the sand dunes. The dunes are aeolian (formed by the wind) and that wonderful wind had cleaned the tops of the frozen dunes and provided an eight-mile path to the Chilton ranch, from which George Chilton hauled us to town.

gopher choker

This wreck finished me off psychologically as far as low-flying aircraft were concerned, aggravated some old injuries, left me with some new ones, and ultimately led to my retirement. I like to think the great coyote gods (American Indians believe in them) arranged these near misses to set me on a new path.

Four months after Barlow Call was killed and his son Glen disabled, another flying son, Dean, was killed near Fort Bridger. Dean made a downwind turn on a coyote, evidently without enough airspeed, and nosed in. He died in the Evanston hospital. The FWS trapper, Eugene Slagowski, still bears marks of that crash, which ended his years with the Service. Wesley Bonnell, who was my supervisor for a short time at Rock Springs, was transferred to New Mexico. Shortly after, while hunting coyotes near Silver City, his plane went down. The pilot burned to death. Wes managed to crawl out, with a broken back, which led to his retirement from FWS. There have been many others.

There is a theory that coyote populations have a lot to do with the amount of predation suffered by the sheep industry. During the 1970-71 winter we had three aircraft flying our part of Rock Springs, slaughtering coyotes who had absolutely no place to hide because of the deep snow. When Jerry and I hit the rim, I had 230 kills to my credit for that one month. By spring, the howl of a coyote was something of a rarity. And yet, trouble calls from sheep ranchers were about the same as the previous year, when there were lots of coyotes.

Coyote densities do not have much to do with the degree of predation on sheep. Studies and past history prove this to be true. Whether coyotes are controlled or not controlled, their populations fluctuate up and down depending on availability of prey species; trying to tie more coyotes to more predation is like trying to ring a cracked bell. If most coyotes made a living killing sheep there wouldn't be a western sheep industry.

But predator control is based on the theory that lots of dead predatory wildlife equals happy woolgrowers — sort of a war on a species. This thinking has never answered the real problems, mostly economic ones, that face the sheep industry, and it never will.

Research that throws coyotes and sheep together under the eye of hidden researchers shows that sometimes a few coyotes kill sheep, and sometimes more than a few coyotes kill sheep. Not much of a revelation.

At the U.S. Sheep Experiment station at Dubois, Idaho, where more than 150 coyotes are housed for sheep-coyote studies, some coyotes put into enclosures with sheep have actually starved to death without killing a sheep. On cold winter nights some of the coyotes curled up with the sheep to keep warm. And, in experiments calling for a coyote that would dependably kill sheep — it was difficult to find one.

Some sheep ranchers do suffer considerable predation. Many more suffer little or none. In some areas, there will always be predation. Grazing something other than sheep on these ranges could be a solution. Animal husbandry



Jerry's first comment was, "I broke my airplane."

practices and experienced herders have much more to do with how many fat lambs to go to market than do coyotes. And like any other business, there are competent ranchers who will stay out of the red, regardless, and others who will go out of business even if coyotes never existed.

But killing coyotes is much easier than trying to deal with economic factors such as: a synthetic fiber industry that dominates the apparel market; foreign imports that compete with domestic production; lack of competent labor, especially herders; an American public that defiantly refuses to "Eat More Lamb" (less than four pounds per capita compared with more than 100 pounds of beef); and industry tradition that reduces all of these very real problems to a common denominator, namely — coyotes.

Just now, industry spokesmen are crying that a predator emergency exists and that compound 1080 must be back on the range before the next lambing and calving season. There is no more "emergency" today than there has been for the past thirty years.

In 1940, there were about fifty million stock sheep in this country, mostly in the West. In the early 1940s predator control really got going, with thallium sulphate, strychnine, sodium cyanide, compound 1080, many trap-

pers, aerial hunting, and all the rest. Not only were coyote populations decimated, but millions of other animals were slaughtered and poisoned. Those fifty million sheep have declined to about nine million today in the West, despite the slaughter. If the answer to sheepmen's woes could be found in poisons, then this industry would have thrived.

Why did I, once a confirmed gopher choker, join with Defenders of Wildlife? They were (and are) the most anti-poison wildlife organization going, dedicated to whatever is best for all species of wildlife — a heritage severely diminished (or lost) in many other countries. I felt a few things needed to be said by someone who had been there, and for almost eight years, Defenders has given me that opportunity. While I am a leper to some, former FWS friends often tell me, on the QT, "Right on!"

One last tale. Like the rest of the human race, there are sheep ranchers who try to pound smoke in your ear every chance they get. If others told me a three-legged coyote was cutting lambs out of the herd and running them across the scale to see which one was fattest before he dined — I wouldn't have to go look. It would be true. But for the smoke pounders, some trappers used what is called a mobile den.

In the spring when ewes were raising

lambs and coyotes were raising pups, a lot of imaginary coyote trouble came over the telephone, usually about midnight. If a trapper had checked out the area and was convinced the trouble was conjured, the mobile den was trotted out of cold storage. This would be a few dead coyote pups and a couple of adults. Dumping the bodies by a two-track road frequented by the sheepman would cure the depredations in an instant. Of course, you had to vary litter size or someone would get the idea every den you took contained exactly the same number of pups. Cheating? You're darned tootin'! But did you ever try to argue with a sheepman?

Dick Randall is based in Rock Springs, Wyo.



8-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981

Loon-acy: crazy as

by Susan L. Marsh

On a chilly mountain morning, when the smell of coffee on the fire is just beginning to stir an interest in the new day, a yawning camper strolls to the lake's shore to contemplate the mist rising before the black forest beyond. Suddenly, the reverie is broken. From far down the lake, still in the grey shadows of dawn, rises a piercing, mournful wail. Perhaps a wolf, the startled camper thinks, but the howl changes to raucous laughter, sounding nothing like a wolf.

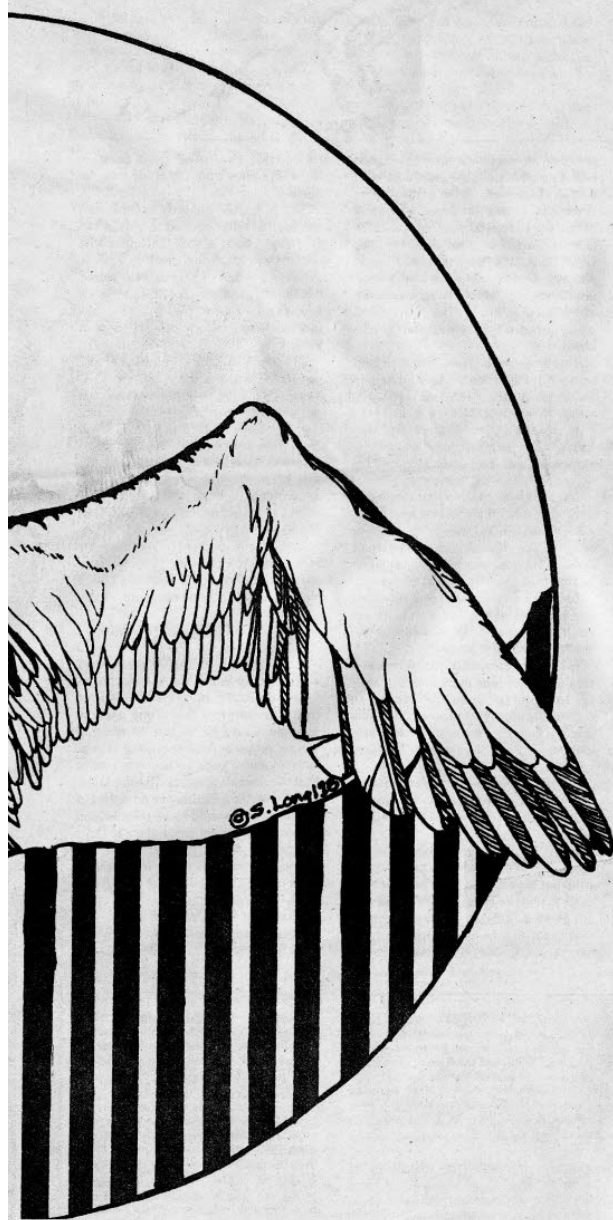
The cry dies and begins again, this time joined by another voice, and soon a wild chorus envelops the lake. After a few moments, all is again silent, and the crackling of the tiny campfire in the woods intrudes on a stillness greater than before.

The call of the common loon has for centuries engaged the imagination of humankind, yet it is surprising how little is known of the life history and habits of this intriguing bird. Loons are among the most ancient and primitive birds, having evolved directly from the large Cretaceous genus *Hesperornis*. Fossil evidence suggests that *Hesperornis* was very similar physiologically to modern loons, and their relatives, the grebes. The ungainly, five-foot ancestor of the loon is thought to have been a flightless, aquatic bird which used its large, flipper-like wings for underwater propulsion. *Hesperornis* became extinct in the early Cenozoic Period (about 30 million years ago), and was replaced by the much smaller, but larger-brained loons and grebes. Fossil skeletons nearly identical to the skeletons of modern loons have been found in rocks 25 million years old. The loon is a living fossil. The common loon (*Gavia immer*) is one of four species found in North America today.

Like its ancestor *Hesperornis*, the loon spends nearly all of its time in water. It may spend its winters along North American coasts, but breeds only in fresh water. The loon's legs are set far back on its body, allowing it to swim with ease above or below the water's surface, but the position of the legs also serves to make the loon clumsy and vulnerable on land. In Britain, the loon is called the Great Northern Diver; loons have been observed diving to depths of 200 feet. They can dive for several minutes at a time and can adjust their body densities to swim just



is a Hesperornis



below the surface, making scarcely a ripple, with only their eyes and nostrils exposed to evade predators.

Loons dive largely to feed. Their diet consists primarily of small fish and fry. The loons have thus gained an undeserved reputation among many sports fishermen as voracious consumers of young game fish. Many ornithologists, in defense of the loons, have pointed out that fish and bird have coexisted for eons and suggest interference by humans may be to blame for any recent decline in fish populations. Regardless of the merits of this argument, shooting loons remains an unfortunate practice on many northern lakes.

Loons frequently swim at the surface of the water with their heads submerged, searching for small fish. When a candidate for supper is found, the loon slips beneath the surface and pursues, using its strong, paddle-like feet to propel itself. When sudden bursts of speed are desired, the wings come into play, used in much the same manner as the flippers of Hesperornis. The wings also serve to guide the direction of the loon's underwater flight.

It is believed adult loons choose a mate for life after their second year, when they reach sexual maturity. Loons which nest in northerly regions are generally mated before arriving at their nesting site, which the pair uses year after year. The nest is built on or near the water, and holds from one to three eggs. The eggs are mottled olive with brown spots, blending well to help disguise an otherwise unprotected nest. When the chicks hatch, they immediately take to the water, swimming and diving like experts a few minutes after birth. The chicks reach adult size and are ready to fly by early autumn, but it will be two years before they return to the north to nest, and three or four years before they attain full adult plumage.

Loons are given to bizarre antics. In addition to outstanding courtship and rivalry displays, they may roll onto their backs and flap at the water or air with their feet, splash one another with the wings, or gather into a group of six to 12 and skitter down a lake for a mile or more in what appears to be a race. Some observers suggest this is an exercise to strengthen the wings in preparation for migration. Not all of the loon's activities suggest such a rational explanation, however. Many remain mysteries, and lend to the myth that the wildly laughing loon is indeed crazy.

10-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981



WOLVES...

(continued from page 1)

ing organizations are staunchly opposed to the wolf, claiming that its depredations have a devastating effect on game populations and hunting opportunities. One organization has distributed bumper stickers reading, "Save our deer — shoot a wolf."

Livestock operators have been especially antagonistic toward wolf recovery, fearing that an endangered species would be impossible to control and would hamper their efforts to trap and kill coyotes.

A problem that the recovery team will have to live with is the difficulty of tracking and studying an animal as scarce and elusive as a wolf. There are lone wolves throughout Idaho and Montana, but no one can even guess how many.

One of the most difficult decisions that the recovery team is going to make in the near future is sure to be controversial, even within their own ranks. At a recent meeting of wolf biologists, recovery team leader Bart O'Gara of the University of Montana said that the only way the wolf can successfully be re-established is to change its official status from an "endangered" to a "threatened" species, affording it less protection but allowing more leeway in management.

O'Gara said the Endangered Species Act is cast in concrete and not flexible enough to allow proper management of the animals. The "endangered" designation does not allow any animals — even problem ones — to be killed; changing the classification to "threatened" would allow regulations to be written specifically for the species and allow more flexibility.

The endangered designation also

throws a monkey wrench into the zone management plan that the recovery team is now working on. They agree this unusual program is the key to re-establishing the wolf in the Rockies.

"We need the support of the livestock industry," O'Gara said in support of the change. "With a far ranging animal that eats cattle, we need to be able to destroy those that kill livestock. We can't do that with an endangered species."

But Robert Ream, a Recovery Team member from the University of Montana who has been studying wolves for 12 years, is not as convinced as O'Gara that the "threatened" listing is a smart move.

"Politically it might be a mistake," Ream said. "People will question our credibility if we downlist the wolf at a time when there are still very, very few wolves."

Hank Fischer, Montana representative for Defenders of Wildlife thinks a change in status could result in a "tremendous loss of confidence in wolf recovery efforts." He said, "I'm not sure all of the avenues have been investigated. We should do that before we talk about downlisting."

ZONE MANAGEMENT

The zone system of management that the wolf recovery team is banking on was pioneered by wolf biologists working in Minnesota and Wisconsin where the largest populations of gray wolves in the lower 48 states are found.

The zone system is based on the premise that there are areas of their original range where wolves are now an undesirable species and their presence in that area would be in conflict with an existing use, such as agriculture.

The zones are divided into four categories. Zone one is an area that

provides an excellent prey base, good habitat and few, if any, conflicts with people. In short, it is a sanctuary. Wolves in a zone one would be fully protected. Potential zone ones include Glacier Park, Yellowstone Park, the Great Bear, Bob Marshall, and Lincoln-Sagegoat wilderness area in northern Montana, and the contiguous River-of-No-Return and Selway-Bitterroot wilderness areas in central and eastern Idaho.

A zone two area is remote public land with good wolf potential that surrounds a zone one. Wolf recovery is a priority in a zone two but problem animals could be taken and destroyed by government trappers. There would be some restrictions on land management activities during the denning period.

Zone three is an area that offers fair to good potential for wolves but where substantial conflicts are present. There would be few, if any, land management constraints and problem wolves would be removed by government trappers.

Zone four is an area of poor potential and substantial conflict, such as an agricultural area. Wolves would be removed from these areas.

The key to control of the wolves in a zone management system is the ability to remove them. According to O'Gara the only way to accomplish this is to kill them. "Moving a problem animal only moves the problem," O'Gara said.

The livestock industry has monitored the recovery process closely and is adamant about the need for control on wolves.

Bob Gilbert, executive director of the Montana Woolgrowers Association, said that his organization "has no objections to wolves being reintroduced into the parks as long as people understand that once they become a problem (outside the park) they'll be taken care of."

He said that a foolproof way of dispensing with wolves that kill sheep must be devised.

Caution is urged not only by those who are traditionally opposed to wolves. Dr. L. David Mech, a wolf biologist who conducts research for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Minnesota, voiced cautious optimism in an article in *Montana* magazine on the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone Park.

"Re-establishing a population of any species of plant or animal is a very serious undertaking, possibly as serious as extirpating the population of any species," Mech said. "The natural world is dynamic and adjusts to change. When a species is removed, changes in the ecosystem are triggered until a new dynamic equilibrium is reached. Today, in much of its former range, the wolf would be an exotic."

"Let no one mistake my caution for reluctance," Mech said. "I solidly support an intelligent, ecologically sound wolf re-establishment program."

RELOCATION PROBLEMS

A serious stumbling block toward wolf recovery in the Rockies is the extreme difficulty in relocating *Canis lupus irremotus* from one area to another. Ream said that to relocate wolves properly it is necessary to capture an entire pack in order to assure that the animals are socially adaptable. Then, once the animals are brought to a new area they would have to be held in an enclosure to acclimate them to their new territory. Prey would be gradually introduced into the enclosure. According to Ream, if this is not done carefully, the animals may attempt to return to their home range.

Recently completed research also indicates that a pack of wolves may need

classifieds

Classified ads cost 10 cents a word. They must be prepaid.

WATT MEMORABILIA. A group of curious citizens is beginning a scrapbook of Interior Secretary James Watt's rejection letters. If Watt has refused in writing to see or speak to your group, please send either the original or a copy to Scrapbook, P.O. Box 1108, Lander Wy. 82520. Anecdotes also accepted.

WANTED: ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE. Fiction, poetry, autobiography about the assault on the environment of the American West and the fight to save it. No essays or fact pieces. For publication in anthology. No previously published material. Payment. Send manuscripts with return envelopes. R. Ellis, Star Rt. 1, Box 100, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Montana-based nonprofit organization with national reputation for providing consulting and training services to citizen groups in the Rocky Mountains, and for building progressive political coalitions. Full responsibility for programs and staff. Excellent fundraising,

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ORGANIZER. Friends of the Earth seeks experienced field-campaign organizer (with research, lobbying, administrative skills) to organize public education and citizen action concerning synfuels industry development in western Colorado. Grand Junction location. To \$12,000 plus benefits. Resume, information: Search Committee, FOE, 2239 E. Colfax, Denver 80206, 303-399-2288. Deadline: Oct. 15, or when filled.

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"The natural world is dynamic and adjusts to change. When a species is removed, changes in the ecosystem are triggered...Today, in much of its former range, the wolf would be an exotic."

— Dr. David L. Mech

the territorial pressure of other packs to keep it cohesive. If a pack were to be located in Yellowstone the lack of other wolf packs may mean the relocated pack would abandon its social structure.

Because of the expense and complications involved with re-introduction of the wolf, that method of recovery is on a back burner, Ream said. The team is concentrating instead on protecting and researching the wolves that have wandered or may wander south of the Canadian border near Glacier and westward in hopes that viable, breeding populations of wolves will re-establish themselves. Ream said that there has been a recovery of breeding packs of wolves in Wisconsin by establishing a zone management program and allowing a natural relocation from Minnesota to Wisconsin to occur.

There is a big hitch developing in plans that researchers have for a recovery of wolves in Glacier. A large, open pit coal mine is scheduled to be built on

Cabin Creek just 12 miles north of the park in the middle of what is now undeveloped. It is difficult to tell what the effect of the mine on the wolves may be but Cliff Martinka, the Glacier Park supervisory biologist said that the mine could place "severe restrictions" on wolf recovery efforts.

Research efforts have focused on the Montana border near Glacier Park because of the migration of dispersals from Canada, Alberta and British Columbia, which border Montana and Idaho, have large populations of wolves and even allow trapping and hunting of wolves. Yet, thus far, the wolf has not roamed into the U.S. in any great numbers and the closest pack is thought to be some fifty miles from the border.

Wolves in this area are so few, in fact, that studies of the wolf are something like chasing a ghost, and many researchers have gone years without seeing a wolf, although scat, tracks and urine have been identified.

One researcher on the Wolf Ecology Project, which is studying wolf habitat on the North Fork of the Montana's Flathead River, told a story about a day spent calling wolves by imitating howls, a common practice. After several hours of fruitless howling the excited researcher finally heard an answer. Climbing the ridge toward the sound he came face to face with another researcher, howling away for the same reason.

In 1979, the Wolf Ecology Project finally did capture a female wolf on Kishenehn Creek in the study area. Diane Boyd, a researcher on the project, placed a radio collar on the wolf and for four months tracked the animal periodically from an airplane. After the wolf was located by air, project members would hike into the site and record information on wolf scat, tracks, kills, and habitat types.

The information collected will be used to draw up a zone management plan

for Glacier Park in hopes that the wolves will return. "We know little about the ecological requirements of wolves," Ream said. "We need to determine the needs and characteristics of the wolves in order to draw up the zone plan."

When asked why there is a need for re-establishment of the wolf in the U.S., Ream shrugs his shoulders. "It's personal," he said. "I feel that we're missing an element of the wilderness. I, and a lot of other people, want to hear wolf howl in Montana. A wolf is an integral part of the wilderness. And now we have a mandate to bring the wolf back by virtue of the Endangered Species Act."



One organization has distributed bumper stickers reading, "Save our deer — shoot a wolf."



Coming up in future issues:

October 2

HCN looks at the bond market for growing western businesses, and listens in while the Western Governors confer. Edward Abbey carries his paperback Thoreau from the Concord woods to Utah's wild rivers.

October 16

HCN takes a special look at the state of Montana — its differing domains, its politics, its history, its beauty. Special reports on the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge, the crumbling beauty of Butte and the Rocky Mountain Front, and the words of the late K. Ross Toole and Gov. Ted Schwinden.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to the New Institutional Health Services Act, W.S. 35-2-201 (1977) et seq., NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Division of Health and Medical Services and the Certificate of Need Review Board of the State of Wyoming have received an application for Certificate of Need review from Memorial Hospital of Natrona County. The Cardiopulmonary Department will be provided with \$91,600.00 of new equipment, if approved, and will then be able to perform coronary artery bypass surgery and will probably increase the number of heart catheterization procedures.

A public meeting will be conducted by the Certificate of Need Review Board for the purpose of reviewing the application for a Certificate of Need. The meeting will be held at Casper's Natrona County Memorial Hospital auditorium at 10:30 A.M. on September 21, 1981. Any party requiring interpreters for deaf individuals and brail or taped information for the blind shall provide written notice to Certificate of Need at the address given below.

Any person desiring to present testimony on this application may do so during the public meeting. A copy of the testimony shall be made available for review by the Board. Written statements may also be presented and read into the meeting record if the originator cannot be present. All correspondence regarding the public meeting should be forwarded to: Certificate of Need, Division of Health and Medical Services, Hathaway Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002, prior to September 18, 1981.

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12-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981

Bulletin Board

A NAME GAME

Where else but in Colorado will you find 115 towns, creeks, canyons, lakes, and other places named Cottonwood. And who else but the U.S. Geological Survey would have counted. Besides the native tree, designations for 28,000 other places and features in the state are compiled into the first completed state listing in a national gazetteer project. The listing for Colorado can be purchased for \$20 from: National Cartographic Information Center, USGS, Box 25046, Mail Stop 504, Federal Center, Denver 80225.

CALCULATING THE COLORADO

Researchers are gathering in Las Vegas Nov. 16-19 to compare notes on the Colorado River. The symposium will dwell on new energy projects, reservoirs, water transfers, groundwater, and other land uses affecting the river basin. Contact Vincent Lamarra, Utah Water Research Lab, UMC 82, Utah State University, Logan 84322.

NEW MEXICO WILDS

The proposed El Malpais wilderness, nearly 100,000 acres of mostly lava covered desert land in west central New Mexico, has been studied by the Bureau of Land Management. Noting few impacts on other area resources, the draft impact statement recommends wilderness designation. Written comments for the final statement are due by Oct. 30 to: Mike Pool, Socorro District Office, BLM, P.O. Box 1219, Socorro, NM 87801. Oral comments are invited at public meetings Sept. 29 in Grants, N.M., and Sept. 30 in Albuquerque.

TRUST 'EM

They're looking for local, non-governmental solutions to using and preserving open space in the Jackson Hole Valley, and they've formed the Jackson Hole Land Trust to do so. Contact the group at Box 2897, Jackson, Wyo. 83001.

TIMBER HARVEST

Basic environmental, biological and resource management implications of timber harvesting in Rocky Mountain coniferous forests, are covered in an Intermountain Station new study. The 526-page General Technical Report INT-90-FR26 is available for free from the IS, 507 25th St., Ogden, Utah, 84401.

PARK PLANNERS GUIDE

A simplified approach to estimating cost per user-day when considering selection and design of public recreational developments is described in a new report from the Pacific Forest and Range Experiment station. The study Tech. Report PNW-110 relates costs of construction, operation and maintenance of facilities to the projected level of use, and is available from PNW, 809 N.E. Sixth Ave., Portland, Ore. 97232.

SEPARATISM IN RECREATION

Efforts to assimilate Americans into one society are failing in the area of outdoor recreation according to a recent study, "Black-White Ethnic Differences in Recreation Participation." Decisionmakers are turning away from those programs deemed 'good for everyone', to those meeting specific needs of different groups. Cultural factors were found to govern recreational choices often conforming to activities traditionally valued by an ethnic group, and often both the activity and site set off and contrast one group from others. Research paper INT-249-FR26 is available from IS, 507 25th St., Ogden, Utah, 84401.

SALVAGING DEAD PINES

An estimated 300 million board feet of western white pine are killed annually by rust and pests, but less than 10 percent of this is salvaged. The availability, uses and costs of utilizing the trees are reviewed in the Pacific Northwest Station's "Dead Western White Pine" (Tech. Report PNW-270). For a copy, write PNW, 809 N.E. Sixth Ave., Portland, Ore., 97232.

KEEPING IT CLEAN

Mountain home developments involving road systems and improper sewage disposal are having a marked effect on nearby streams and lakes, report scientists with the Rocky Mountain Station. Aerobic systems with chemical toilets and sealed storage vaults can help alleviate water pollution. "Effects of Mountain Home Developments on Surface Water Quality: A case study" (Research note RM-396) may be obtained from RMS, 240 West Prospect St., Fort Collins, Colo. 80526.

WIND ADVISE

For some help in choosing a wind machine for your roof or backyard, attend the Oct. 31 workshop in Cheyenne, Wyo., sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Wind Energy Association. Contact the group at P.O. Box 9408, Casper, Wyo. 82609.

NEW HOW-TO

For a potpourri of how-to publications, from teaching 5th graders to insulating hot water heaters, write for a new publications brochure: National Center for Appropriate Technology, P.O. Box 3838, Butte, Mont. 59701.

FUEL FROM FOOD

Forget gasohol, says agricultural economist Fred Sanderson of Resources for the Future. Advocates argue it will reduce U.S. dependence on oil imports by 10 billion gallons of gasoline by 1990. But Sanderson claims the savings will be only two-thirds that, with motor fuel used to grow the grain for the gasohol. The food system, he also argues, may also be disrupted. Copies of his recent study are available from RFF, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

THE BLM NEEDS HELP

If you have expertise in natural resources, know the ins and outs of the National Environmental Policy Act, and can write a readable report, the Utah Bureau of Land Management needs you. They're anticipating an influx of new ventures in the state that will require rights-of-way or other BLM permits. The agency says it will need help producing the necessary environmental assessments. Interested consultants should submit a Standard Form 245 to Project Management Staff, Utah State Office, BLM, 136 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

COAL CALL

The Powder River Regional Coal Team is meeting in Billings, Mont., Oct. 2 to discuss the regional draft environmental impact statement that proposes leasing 1.5 billion tons of federal coal in the eastern Wyoming and Montana area. Contact Robert Buffington, Regional Coal Team Chairman, 208-334-1401.

BURNING BURNOUT

For \$395, the Grantsmanship Center — a nonprofit training group based in Los Angeles — would like to teach you how to deal with "burnout," and the other stresses accompanying many jobs in the public interest field. The workshops are aimed at nonprofit groups, and promise, among other things, new skills at fundraising, crisis management, and financing. Sessions are planned in this region for Boise, Idaho, Feb. 22-26, 1982, and Billings, Mont., Oct. 19-23, 1981. Contact the Center, 1031 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90015; 800-421-9512.

POWER PLANT SITING

Colorado State University's Experiment Station in Fort Collins, Colo., has published two reports on energy facility siting in the West. "Environmental, Legal and Political Constraints on Power Plant Siting in the Southwestern United States," and "Regional Factors in Siting and Planning Energy Facilities in the Eleven Western States," are available for \$3.50 each from the Dept. of Political Science, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, 80523.

CALENDAR CORRECTION

Dream Garden Press has published for the Utah Wilderness Society a special calendar, "Abbey in '82," and contrary to an earlier report here there's no minimum order required. Contact the group at 722 Judge Bldg., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

NEW THERMAL RULES

They're not expecting a new rush, but just in case, the Bureau of Land Management is loosening the rules for tapping federal lands for geothermal energy. See the *Federal Register*, Sept. 1. Comments on the new rules are due Nov. 2.

SOUTHWEST'S FUTURE

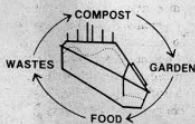
"Balancing the Southwest's natural resources" is the theme of an Oct. 11-15 gathering of the American Forestry Association in Santa Fe, N.M. Notable speakers include Luna Leopold, water resource expert and geography professor, and Garrey Caruthers, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Water Resources. A cast of other academics and public officials will discuss forestry, hardrock mining, and clean air act revisions. Bus tours throughout the region are planned. Contact the group at 1319 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; 202-467-5810.

\$30,000 IDEA

If you've got ideas about new and more effective roles for business corporations in addressing long-term societal problems and can spell them out in a 7,500 word essay, The Woodlands Conference may have \$30,000 for you. Or \$20,000, or \$10,000 or \$5,000 if you come in behind the first place winner in its 1982 Mitchell Prize contest. Directing the competition is Gerald Barney, who managed the famed Global 2000 study. Send for guidelines: The Woodlands Conference, P.O. Box 9663, Arlington, Va., 22209.

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Opinion

"Coyotes are more of an asset than a problem"

The following is testimony presented by Eugene Hodder of Farson, Wyo., before the Environmental Protection Agency's hearings on predator control toxicants in Denver on July 29, 1981.

by Eugene Hodder

One of my boys and I run a ranch in partnership north of Farson, Wyoming. We raise cattle and a small flock of sheep.

I am here in opposition to reinstating compound 1080 as a predator poison. In the past, 1080 has destroyed many of

guest editorial

our flesh-eating animals such as foxes, bears, pine marten, badgers, bobcats, birds-of-prey — and the list goes on.

Since the cancellation of predator poisons in 1972, species of wildlife that are vulnerable to these poisons are beginning to make a comeback. Only recently, for the first time in twenty years, kit fox sightings have been reported not far from our ranch.

From my observation, there has been good control of coyotes in this area, even after poisons were banned. Our coyotes are fat and healthy — not the kind of coyotes you might expect to see if there were high densities and extreme competition for food.

For the past several years, prices for coyote pelts have been high and everybody and his dog has been hunting them. However, last winter, as a result of lower pelt prices and the mildest winter I can remember, snowmobilers and helicopters were not very successful in taking coyotes. We have heard a few around our place and, for the first time in many years, we lost two lambs to coyotes. We sprayed our sheep with a repellent called "coyote guard" — sometimes called sheep perfume — and we have not lost a lamb since.

Coyotes have always lived around our ranch and we regard them as beneficial to our operation. If they ever begin giving us trouble we can get on top of the problem by changing our management, by repellents or by shooting a coyote or two.

I have never lost a calf to a coyote in my life. Last spring I watched a coyote wander into a pasture where we had cows with calves. The cows spotted the coyote right off and came running. The coyote left that pasture in a hurry.

Until the poison campaigns, the coyote had always been a great scavenger. Back in the 1930s, I was feeding cattle for a rancher. In December, a horse died in the corral and about ten coyotes began hanging around. The carcass was frozen solid so I used an axe, cut off a hind-quarter, and dragged it out into the field. I set a couple of traps — and with a new snowfall and beginners luck, I caught an old dog coyote the first night. After I learned something about trapping, I caught quite a few coyotes around carcasses.

But after poisons had been in use for a few years, most coyotes quit visiting



Dick Randall, Delineator of Wildlife

Treating sheep carcasses with 1080 solution

carcasses. Poison has made them shy. Last winter a horse died about two miles from our ranch. No one poisoned the carcass or set traps around it. And yet, no coyotes came near. I had a calf die over in our far forty. Coyotes roam that area, but none came near the carcass.

We lose a calf occasionally and I drag them out in the sagebrush, but coyotes avoid the carcasses — another indication of what poison has done. Coyotes that used to be scavengers now look for something live to eat.

Also, I have noticed, when a coyote makes a kill it seldom comes back to feed on the kill again. For too many years, every carcass was treated with some kind of poison — and the coyotes soon learned.

When the cyanide gun was first used, it was a deadly tool. It was planted all over the range and it killed thousands of coyotes. In 1972, cyanide was banned, along with other predator poisons. Later, EPA allowed this poison to be used in the M-44 cyanide gun, with certain restrictions. I believe this device, used in a responsible manner and set where predation is occurring, can take coyotes that are causing problems.

The whole problem with 1080 is that a carcass cannot be treated with this poison so that it will kill only coyotes. It kills most of our meat-eating mammals and a lot of birds. Right now, we are losing a lot of wildlife habitat to mineral development. We sure don't need to damage our wildlife further with poison.

If poison had ever solved any problems there might be some argument. But it hasn't. Even when several kinds of predator poisons were being used, with hardly any restrictions, sheep ranchers continued to go out of business and sheep numbers went downhill. Poison isn't going to solve a lot of economic problems that must be solved if the sheep industry is to make a comeback.

Along with other predators, coyotes can be a real asset to help control rabbits, ground squirrels and other rodents. Some winters, my haystacks have fed 30 rabbits for every cow I was feeding. My ditch banks are honeycombed by ground squirrels. Without the predators, things could get much worse.

Red foxes have never caused any problems on our ranch. In fact, along with the coyote, they are the best rodent catchers you ever saw. Last year we had a den of red foxes not far from our home. Everyone, including the neighbors, would watch those foxes from our front window. You can't believe how much interest they created as the pups scrambled around the den or had a tug-of-war with ground squirrels the adults brought in. As far as I know, we have never lost a lamb to a fox. And if we did, we wouldn't have to poison foxes to solve the problem.

Years ago, a sheepherder left camp with the sheep — about sunrise. About sundown he grazed the sheep back to the wagon and bedded them. During the day, if a coyote came near the herd a

well-placed bullet would take care of the problem — or at least let the coyote know that someone was looking after things. Today, good herders are just about impossible to find. Other jobs pay more and you get weekends off. But without good herders, the open-range sheep industry cannot operate successfully. And poison won't help.

On the open range during lambing, ewes that have had their lambs are left behind while the drop herd — those that haven't lambled — are moved ahead. This kind of operation will often string sheep for four or five miles. And, since everyone is busy with the drop herd, ewes and lambs left behind, unattended, are fair game for any kind of predator. The coyote has always been one to follow the line of least resistance. It is much easier to pick up a small lamb than to chase down a rabbit. This practice encourages coyotes to become sheep killers.

I am not opposed to killing coyotes, but I am convinced the coyote that is causing problems is the coyote least likely to feed on 1080 bait.

Since poisons were banned in 1972, coyote numbers around our ranch have been up and down — like the sheep. There hasn't been any increase. And even though sheep, coyotes have proven to be an asset to our ranch than a problem. As a long-time cattle and sheep rancher, I believe we have tools to control coyotes — poisoning all kinds of wildlife need compound 1080.

14-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981

Opinion

Oil and gas vs. wild lands: Harder choices follow 'easy'

Gov. Ted Schwinden (D) of Montana recently told the Montana Wildlife Federation that saving the Bob Marshall Wilderness from oil and gas development was "an easy one; it's a crown jewel." The public seems to be fully behind the congressional move to protect the Bob.

The same might be said of Cache Creek, site of a proposed drilling rig near Jackson, Wyo., where developers announced last week they would not erect rotary rigs. Like the Bob Marshall, Cache Creek had attracted a vocal and diverse crowd of defenders.

So much for the easy ones. Are we ready for some hard ones?

Not far from Cache Creek is Little Granite Creek. From the naked saddle where Getty Oil plans to drill, you can look across a valley to the upper end of Cache Creek, Jackson's playground. But Little Granite Creek is a little too far from the tourist mecca to upset the Chamber of Commerce; it is also within the Forest Service's proposed Gros Ventre Wilderness. Roads, the Forest Service decided in its draft Environmental Impact Statement, will be built up the steep creek bed to the rig site.

Adjacent to Montana's "crown jewel," the Bob Marshall, is an area of public land called the Rocky Mountain Front. It provides winter range for elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and gets little public attention. It is under intense pressure from developers, and the Forest Service has leased over 350,000 acres of it for oil and gas development. The state fish and game department has been critical of road-building and other aspects of development along the Front, which it cannot control. Wildlife doesn't understand official wilderness boundaries the way the oil and gas boys do.

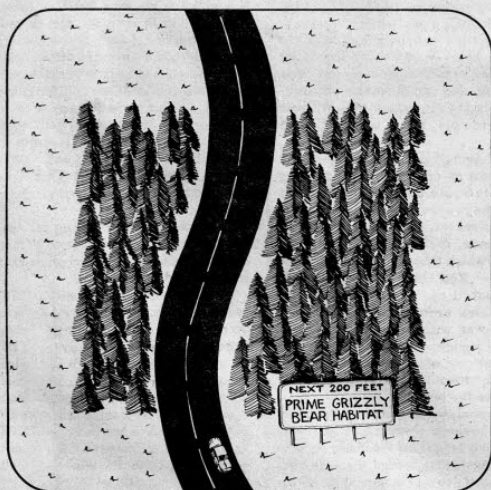
Then there is Wyoming's Washakie Wilderness, adjacent to another "crown jewel," Yellowstone National Park. It may be the first wilderness area in the country to have its skin punctured by oil and gas drills — but few people know about it.

All around the region, these "hard ones" are coming up. The more glamorous "easy ones" are better out of the way — Cache Creek might have raised a stink in Jackson, but Little Granite Creek matters more when it comes to habitat and wilderness preservation.

The oil and gas spear carriers get paid to fight for access to these areas. The public, on the other hand, uses its spare time to learn about the "crown jewels," but nobody is paying citizens to travel all over the Rockies learning about the values of these "hard" areas. That means the bureaucrats who make decisions on the future of these resources get more pressure from the paid industry minions. Will they correct for this imbalance?

It seems unlikely, given the current attitude at the Interior Department. It becomes, therefore, crucial that the public learn about and speak for its interests in these "hard ones." For starters, try the Washakie and the Rocky Mountain Front and Little Granite Creek. That's just the beginning.

— GOG



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Letters



HORSE SENSE

Dear HCN,

Congratulations on your perceptive editorial concerning the Interior Department's plans to eliminate nearly two-thirds of America's wild horses from the public lands over the next four years.

Although the Interior Department has been making wild equines the scapegoats for livestock-related range management problems for a number of years, the Reagan administration is mounting a full-scale assault on horses and burros. Killing 6,000 animals each year will be bad enough. However, other alternatives under discussion include a plan to obtain congressional approval to contract with private companies to gather the horses; the companies would be free to sell the gathered horses for slaughter. All of this is an attempt — in the name of "fiscal austerity" — to make the Department's wild horse and burro program a pay-as-you-go operation.

All of this is being done despite the relative ignorance of the horses' role in range land ecology. A recent National Academy of Sciences preliminary report on wild horses acknowledged the need for much more study, but the Interior Department plans will proceed unchecked.

Even in those areas where comprehensive grazing environmental impact statements have been done, wild horses and burros are shortchanged. In almost every case, the EIS calls for large initial reductions of wild horse numbers, and maintenance of that low number even as range conditions improve. Livestock numbers will increase, as will wildlife, as more forage becomes available, but wild horses will not. This is the way Interior is treating one of America's unique national resources.

AHPA will continue to fight these misguided policies as vigorously as it can, and in court when appropriate. We applaud you for bringing the issue to the public's attention.

Joan R. Blue
President
American Horse Protection Association
Washington, D.C.

PLEASE CANCEL

Dear HCN,

As a four-year subscriber to your paper, a five-year veteran of the Environmental Protection Agency, and an almost (but not to be) three-year employee of the Solar Energy Research Institute, I was greatly angered at your recent portrayal of Denis Hayes and the insinuation that he somehow abandoned the environmental and decentralized renewable energy principles upon which Earth Day and his tenure at SERI were based. The bulk of Michael Moss's remarks were simply not true and sorely discredited the accuracy of your newspaper in my eyes.

While many aspects of your paper have been extremely valuable over the years (indeed, I quoted Marjane Ambler's articles on Native Americans

extensively in a paper before the Western Political Science Association this past spring) I have to express my disappointment at the Moss article by not renewing my subscription. Perhaps if some editorial clarification helped redress the insult paid to Mr. Hayes, I would be willing to resubscribe.

I sincerely regret this action, taken after a month's deliberation, and a month's wait for some clarification on your part of the inaccuracies of MM's account. Here's hoping that the slur of Denis Hayes and (indirectly) of those of us who worked for him will be an isolated incident and that I may one day have confidence enough in HCN to resubscribe.

David A. Schaller
Denver

RIO BLANCO IS READY

Dear HCN,

I would like to compliment you on your coverage of the historic agreement reached between the Western Fuels Corporation and Rio Blanco County, Colorado (HCN, 7-24-81). You are certainly correct in reporting that the company's agreement giving the county and Rangely close to \$17 million to prepare for the growth resulting from the construction and operation of the coal mine and power plant might very well change the course of energy planning in the West. There are two points, however, that your readers should know about this agreement.

First, Rio Blanco County has an effective land use permit process which gives it the authority to condition the developer's permit based on the project's impact. Projects having potential adverse impacts are required to submit to the County Planning Commission an impact statement covering a multitude of concerns including housing, community facilities, and social services, as well as proposals to mitigate adverse socioeconomic impacts.

The impact statement then goes through a series of reviews by the Planning Commission and public at large. The process is used as a mechanism to stimulate serious negotiation between the energy company and local officials.

The second interesting point of the agreement is the role that the federal government played in the agreement. The Office of Surface Mining was responsible for assessing the mine plan submitted by Western Fuels. Rio Blanco County requested OSM to independently assess the socioeconomic impacts related to the project, and to delay the granting of the federal mining permit until the county had an opportunity to reach an acceptable agreement with the company. OSM worked closely with local officials and Western Fuels to assure that there was a timely resolution of the issues.

Local government officials as well as energy developers in the West could learn much from the Rio Blanco County-Western Fuels experience. The agreement points to the necessity of having well-defined powers at the local level to define and mitigate impacts. It also illustrates that the participation of the energy industry in local affairs will become increasingly important if Western communities are to remain desirable places to live.

Sarah E. Bransom
Community Planner, OSM
Denver

"Fiscal restraint" means a squandered heritage

by Bernard Shanks

Nearly 70 years ago, William Hornaday wrote, "The wildlife of the world is not ours to dispose of wholly as we please. We hold it in trust for the benefit of ourselves and equal benefit to those who come after us. As honorable guardians, we have no right to waste

guest editorial

and squander the heritage of our children and grandchildren."

Since Hornaday's time, public concern for wildlife has grown. Professional management programs have developed and a large national wildlife refuge system has been established. Federal funding assisted state management in many ways. In recent years, the accelerated demise of many species brought about the federal Endangered Species Act. The act provided the teeth for nationwide protection and funding to encourage badly needed state species recovery programs. Progress began in other areas such as non-game management.

Today, the U.S. Interior Department's budget for the Fish and Wildlife Service reveals that Interior Secretary James Watt and his cohorts are embarked on a different approach to wildlife conservation. Hornaday would not be impressed. Neither should today's conservationists.

Interior's 1982 fiscal year budget proposals will seriously damage the national endangered species program. Research on wildlife management — both game and non-game — has been reduced. Small but important programs authorized by the Marine Mammals Act and the Anadromous Fisheries Act have been completely eliminated. And career FWS employees report that next year will bring proposals to cut funding for the popular Pitman-Robertson program, a key element of Western state big game programs since 1937.

Garry Trudeau's widely distributed cartoon "Doonesbury" has attracted attention to attempts by Watt to transfer Matagorda Island to the state of Texas. The island is part of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, wintering ground for the endangered whooping crane. Despite attention drawn to wildlife refuges, any attempt to transfer them is limited by congressional restraints.

Environmentalists who worked to protect Montana's Charles M. Russell refuge and other Western game ranges from weaker management a few years ago, sowed fertile seeds of protection. Congress passed legislation to reverse an executive order of the Secretary of the Interior transferring four western wildlife refuges to the Bureau of Land Management. When Congress reversed the executive order on the game ranges, they also removed the Secretary of Interior's authority to transfer federal refuges without the approval of Congress. So, the refuge at Matagorda Island is protected — for now — from the covetous eyes of Texas.

However, Watt's zeal has been directed

to other more vulnerable programs. The FWS budget was an obvious target. Although the national wildlife refuge system's size has increased nearly three times in the last two years, (to 88.7 million acres) because of the Alaska Lands legislation, Watt has proposed an overall decrease in funding for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The agency historically has been seriously underfunded. Today, things are worse.

The Reagan Administration is bringing out mothballs relic World War II warships at extraordinary expense. But FWS staff are considering "mothballing" many refuges because of lack of operating funds. Watt and staff have considered "disestablishing" 21 refuges, including six areas in Montana and three in Wyoming. The Fish and Wildlife Service has long been the poorest stepchild of the federal land management agencies. In this administration, it faces nothing less than orphan status.

Most seriously, Watt's budget eviscerates the Office of Endangered Species and the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act. The fiscal year 1982 budget cuts the office by 30 percent from FY 1981 budget levels at a time when rapid development of federal land resources demands a more intensive program. The overall endangered species budget is to be cut from \$22.8 million to only \$15.1 million. The details of the cuts are worth considering.

Law enforcement and protection programs are cut by a million dollars. Twenty-nine different protection operations in the FWS are being reduced to only five. The grant program designed to stimulate state endangered species policies was cut completely. Money for protecting critical habitat was severely reduced, as were funds for use on wildlife refuges to protect those species facing extinction.

Interior professionals feel that the remaining budget will continue protection for well-publicized endangered species, like the California condor, whooping crane and peregrine falcon. "The whoopers are safe," one Interior official said, "But others take a beating." This will affect literally dozens of species from the handsome Kaibab squirrel to the masked bobwhite quail of the Southwest desert and little-known reptiles like the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. As a result, animals without the public relations clout of a California condor — like the California least tern, the San Joaquin kit fox and the elf owl — face an eternity of extinction. Dozens of lesser known species, such as the Owens pupfish, the light-footed clapper rail or the unarmored three-spined stickleback, will get little more than perfunctory attention.

In Secretary Watt's reign, publicity is a life or death matter.

Although programs designed for rescuing endangered species have been cut, even deeper slashes are scheduled for programs that list endangered species. The listing of a species under the Endangered Species Act requires all federal agencies to help assure its survival. This can slow development of energy and other resources on federal lands, and Watt is strongly opposed to hindering private enterprise or resource development. Part of the effort of

this administration to remove "free market" hindrances is to bring changes in the regulatory language mandated by the Endangered Species Act. Definitions of "harm" to wildlife have been simplified and generally weakened. But the language of federal regulations is often the only lifeline of many species engulfed in a storm of development.

The depth of the Fish and Wildlife Service budget cuts is also demonstrated by the recommendations for cooperative research units. First established in 1935, the program has been small but extremely effective. Some 29 states and 31 universities have "co-op" units, where federal research monies and staff assist state wildlife programs. Federal fish and wildlife researchers are widely respected.

One important area of FWS research has been predator control. The careful study and analysis by FWS researchers has lifted the problem above the politics of western states and provided detailed scientific research on predators. Other programs have focussed on grizzly bears, mountain lions and whooping cranes.

Nationally, the co-op program is tiny. Less than \$5 million was budgeted in 1981. Because of the high quality of FWS research, the program attracts \$3 in private and state funds for every federal dollar invested. Yet the budget proposed by Watt and company recommended zero funding for fiscal year 1982. Fortunately, Congress restored the funding for at least this coming year, the Watt administration plans zero funding once again.

Animal damage control is a quaint euphemism for predator control. For over 50 years this program has provided unique support to the western livestock industry — federal money spent by the Fish and Wildlife Service to

protect domestic livestock. The animal damage control program was funded at \$17.8 million for 1982, essentially the same level as 1981 — no programs were cut and no positions were eliminated. The Department of Interior will now spend more money to kill predators than to protect endangered species.

In the area of public lands and wildlife today, resource development and free market economics are the watchwords. The consequences of this approach are predictable. Aldo Leopold, in *A Sand County Almanac*, wrote, "A system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore and, thus, eventually eliminate, many elements in the land communities that lack commercial value, but that are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy functioning. It is assumed, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts."

Conservation budgets designed by Watt and the Reagan administration in wildlife and other areas clearly are based on the economic self-interest of a few at the expense of the public trust. The balance needed between development and conservation is sorely lacking. The needs of species facing extinction are largely ignored.

The free market approach to wildlife management means more coyotes hanging from western fences, less diversity and fewer wild animals in the field. Parts of the biotic clock will soon be missing. The heritage of our children and grandchildren will soon be squandered.

Bernard Shanks is the assistant to the secretary for the California Resources Agency.



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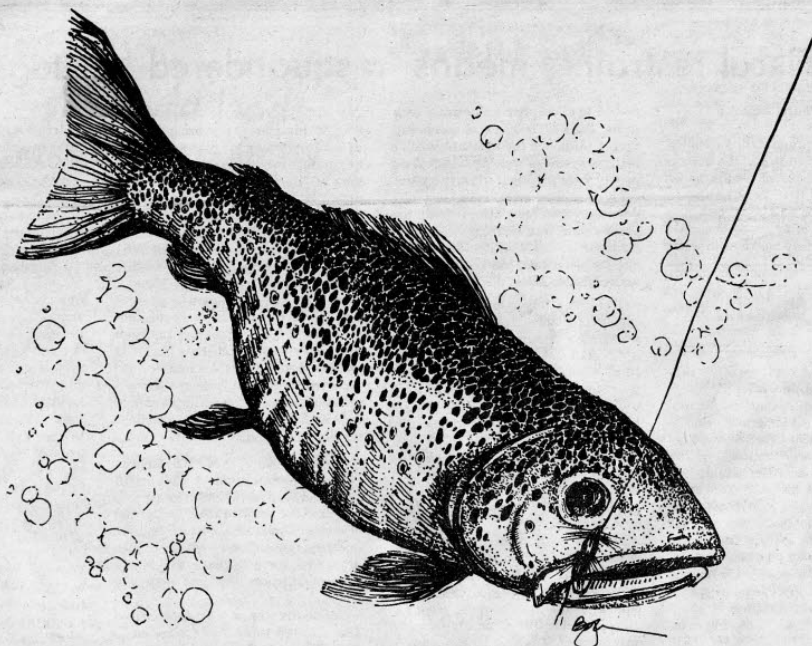
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16-High Country News — Sept. 18, 1981



by Don Snow

Today the rain blows in like a California tourist. The five-day heat wave is shattered. Mist parts raggedly on the Bitterroots, showing twisted pines and the gunmetal grey plates of Kootenai Canyon.

Montana's heat arrived a week ago on the aftershock of a wind that toppled cottonwoods up and down the Valley. One of my neighbors, a Kansas transplant, opened all the windows in her log house and headed for the basement. Days later she was still gluing lamps and dishes back together. The highway meat shop sign that used to advertise PORK ROAST \$1.69 A POUND now states: O K A S \$ U N D. Chaos spoken here.

I hide out in the basement, rummaging through my tackle for some of those long lost Irresistibles that look like pipe cleaners with wings. I muse upon the gorgeous trout of the West, whom I respect and admire even though they are given to chasing whores. I uncover instead the residues of a pleasant memory — rubber shock tippets I once bought for my father to make his trolling more cushy. These must be some I missed in a rushed mailing.

My father used to be one of those flyfishing yahoos of the flats who accumulated vacations days for the wild ride North where The Mammoths lurked. He and a buddy named Buss would hit some smooth bends of the

Madison just before dusk on Friday and cast until their arms cramped, then head home drunk and ready for work.

One summer, after a long hiatus known as bass fishing, he arranged to rendezvous with Buss at a favorite point on the river. For reasons that are now lost, neither made the rendezvous on that ill-starred day in 1959 when the quake hit. The spot is now called Earthquake Canyon, and travellers from all over gather there to marvel at the earth's occasional chaos. Several other yahoos there lost their lives and their calcium remains, knobby from excessive casting, have gone on down the Lethe of Lost Trout. I was 8 years old then, barely able to break my own snags.

Now my father's back is shot and he cannot cast. So he chugs along in his fiberglass boat trolling worms in a manner that would disgust even temperate purists. I go with him whenever I get the chance and we two toot the glass horn and lug in baskets of planters we can barely lift. Then I feel guilty for a few days and write a letter to the editor urging Fish and Game to lower the limits. "There would be fewer lives lost," I argue, "if the limits were lower."

Well, on the 4th of July, in the very heat of aftershock, I decided to stalk the spirit of my yahoo father up some little squirt of a creek that nobody in their right mind would fish. I didn't know when I started out, however, that I would do such a thing.

And it really wasn't I, but we. Unfortunately, I had a loved one with me who would tell this story differently.

We spent the morning flailing at the Bitterroot River below Darby. I caught one fish — perhaps the smallest brook trout in North America. It looked sad, dangling from that enormous Humpy, No. 16. Jan had soundly outfished me by catching two, so I decided that we should "crank up and get the Christ out of here."

"Look," I begged, "it's Independence Day and I want to see the fabulous reds and whites of some American trout."

She consented, then said, "If you don't get us back to this river before dusk, I'll kick your ass."

That's what I like about liberation: you can talk like a drill sergeant to your betrothed.

After much debate, we decided to hit Blodgett Canyon, which on the 4th of July would attract tourists like flypaper. But none of them would fish. They would just sit on the plank bridge throwing in hunks of boiled egg and cheese sandwiches. We knew, though, that the creek was plumb full of tough little cutthroats, the kind that on a sweltering day hit with Dr. Jekyll complicity then fight with the foaming terror of Mr. Hyde. These were, anyway, American fish, the originals, and they lived in a canyon that only diehard yahoos would try to fish.

We hiked a mile of trail wide enough to accommodate grass medians and a few Stuckeys, then dropped over the bank. The Blodgett flatirons towered above us. Their furrowed brows thinking vertical thoughts. Jan poked me in the butt with her rod and said, "I don't want to do this."

We stopped and discussed our marriage plans. I notified her that her decision, whatever it was, would be accepted. I also told her that once in my irresponsible youth, I had lost a girlfriend in a similar canyon. We had gone down together and come up apart. I wasn't sure whether she had disappeared into the rapids or what. I never saw her again. Jan went upstream where the creek was not temperamental.

Now I was alone with the spirit of my father, and about to drop false bugs into ice water.

The first fish hit like a dishrag. I released him and he swam off limping from the heat. The next three were as determined as Yankees but I missed

them all. I began swearing at the horseflies, who bit so hard they raised welts.

Bushwacking upstream, I nicked my left calf and let blood. This brought down whole squadrons of flies who not only bit but tried to bury themselves in my wound like Eskimos crawling into a freshly killed polar bear to wait out the night.

After much grunting, I finally found that perfect hole: a long sluiceway of plunging white that parted around a boulder, making two deep breasts of water with a breathtaking cleavage between. The fish in there would be snuggling the bottom, I thought. I tossed in the little Black Gnat and let it disappear in a banner of suds. I held taut, waited, then retrieved it upwards.

Here came my fly through phosphorescent seltzer and after it a wriggling dark form. She hit with a thump and turned down. For a moment, I just watched the water as she fought.

It sounded funny even as I said it to myself, and as I repeat it now it still sounds funny: This is no game. This is her life.

For the umpteenth time, I felt the hefty pull of the planet. Gravity, mortality, feelings of love beyond words. The feeling always pours into gratitude, finally, for the mystery of however all of this occurred, however life became possible. I released her and she vanished, taking her life deeper. I stopped fishing and walked slowly up the slope, not cutting myself, and walked back down the trail feeling the green of the forest. Jan was waiting for me.

We hit the river before dusk and sat on its ancient rocks, listening to it sigh. We sat with our arms around each other, forgetting ourselves, and just listened.

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