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High Country

news

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Mountain sheep ewe above Shoshone Pass, DuNoir proposed wilderness, Wyoming

In Wyoming and Montana it's

Wilderness on the rocks

by Dan Whipple

Two wilderness proposals for Rocky Mountain states have gathered some unusual supporters. Representatives of snowmobiling and timber interests have come out in favor of wilderness bills for Montana and Wyoming. Their enthusiasm for the bills is not shared by environmentalists, however, who say that neither bill should pass in its present form.

Elsewhere on the wilderness front, Interior Secretary James Watt has proposed a "Wilderness Protection" or "Wilderness Destruction" act, depending upon the point of view.

The Wyoming congressional delegation has proposed a state wilderness bill that throws a bone to everyone. And, Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) has proposed wilderness legislation in honor of the late Sen. Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.)

which state wilderness advocates call "a disgrace" to Metcalf's memory.

The Wyoming bill would create an additional 478,500 acres of wilderness in the state, about half of the total acreage recommended as wilderness by the U.S. Forest Service in the final environmental impact statement on RARE II (second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation). It contains very strong language releasing lands that are not designated as wilderness to other uses. However, in response to intense public pressure, the Wyoming wilderness package also removes from oil and gas leasing all existing wilderness areas as well as those created by the bill.

The Wyoming act has been endorsed by all three members of the state congressional delegation — Sen. Alan Simpson, Sen. Malcolm Wallop and Rep. Dick Cheney. All three are Republicans. It would add four new units to the state's existing wilderness system: Cloud Peak,

a 158,000 acre area in the Bighorn National Forest; Gros Ventre, 228,500 acres in the Teton National Forest; Popo Agie, 81,000 acres in the Shoshone National Forest; and the DuNoir, an 11,000 acre addition to the Washakie Wilderness. Both the Cloud Peak and Popo Agie are currently designated primitive areas. The DuNoir is protected by a "Special Management" designation, effective until Congress acts.

There are currently 2.2 million acres of designated wilderness in Wyoming, covering about 3.5 percent of the state. The delegation's recommendations would bring the total to about 4.2 percent of the state. Paul Holtz of Simpson's staff said, "Some people are surprised that there are not more acres designated. But when the delegation looked at the already-designated wilderness in the state, they thought that made up a

reasonable amount. There were trade-offs of handling timber and oil and gas activities in these areas."

According to Bruce Hamilton of the Sierra Club, however, "It seems that they simply wanted to avoid all controversy. This is a typical rocks and ice wilderness bill. None of these areas has any controversy surrounding it. If this is all they are going to offer, we're better off without a bill. We'll oppose it."

There are two main areas of concern for wilderness advocates: the amount of the acreage and the release provisions. The Wyoming Wilderness Association and other activists are proposing an Alternative W, calling for 2.5 million acres of new wilderness in the state. The Forest Service had recommended 909,000 acres in the RARE II EIS and the Carter administration had recommended 996,000 acres.

(continued on page 10)

WESTERN ROUNDUP

New Mexico U-mines unreclaimed

The nation's top uranium producing state, New Mexico, has no reclamation requirements for uranium mines, for either temporary or permanent shutdowns. The only mine being reclaimed in the state is Anaconda's Jackpile mine, which is located on Laguna Pueblo reservation land and thus must meet federal requirements.

After persistent demands from environmentalists, however, New Mexico authorities are adding stabilization license conditions for one mill that has temporarily been closed, the Sohio mill. They are now working on conditions for Anaconda's mill at Bluewater, which is also closed.

For mills that are being temporarily closed, the state is requiring that mill tailings be monitored and stabilized, security maintained and groundwater monitored. Companies must be bonded or self-insured, meaning the state has some guarantee a company won't abandon a site without reclamation if the uranium market does not recover.

Chris Shuey of the Southwest Research and Information Center, which encouraged the state to impose license conditions for temporary shutdowns, said he is pleased the state has responded. However, he is still worried about seepage at the Sohio site. He said groundwater near the site has been contaminated by pollutants seeping from the tailings ponds.

He also thinks operators should be required to submit economic reports to give evidence that shutdowns are only temporary, as Wyoming requires.

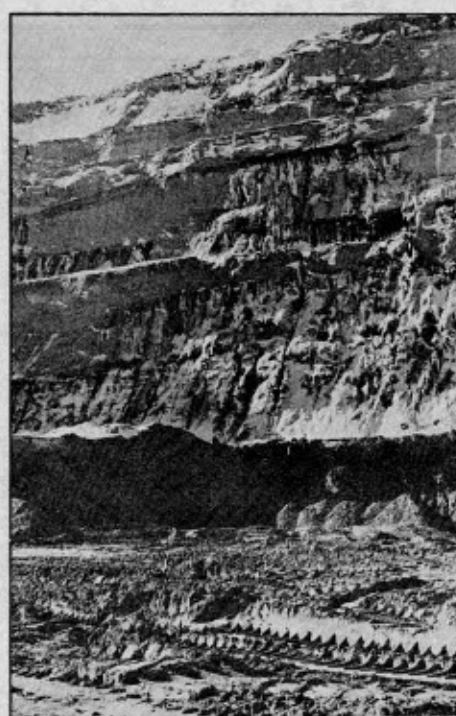
As an indication of the New Mexico position on regulation of the uranium industry, the state's Environmental Improvement Division officials recently wrote to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission objecting to plans for decommissioning Tennessee Valley Authority's Edgemont, South Dakota uranium mill.

The division objected to a plan to dispose of the tailings off the site, saying it set an unrealistic precedent that would be too expensive to the federal and state governments and to the industry. The federal government has assumed partial responsibility for

decommissioning 22 abandoned mill sites across the country.

TVA chose to move the tailings from Edgemont because it would improve the utility company's relationship with the town and the state, according to *Nuclear Fuel*, an industry publication. TVA plans to build a new mill and two uranium mines in the area.

— Marjane Ambler



Wyoming uranium mine

No help for uranium industry

The Wyoming Legislature considered two measures to help the uranium industry that were recommended by a governor's ad hoc uranium study committee, but neither will have any effect.

The legislators rejected an attempt to lower the state's severance tax on uranium from 5.5 percent to 1.5 percent on the value of uranium extracted. Opponents said the change would not have helped since the worldwide uranium market slump is the cause for the industry's problems, not state taxes.

The legislators accepted an amendment designed to provide regulatory relief to the industry, but because of its wording, it will not affect state-federal negotiations over

regulation of mill tailings. Sen. Roy Peck (R-Fremont County), who introduced the amendment, was upset about the lack of public or legislative involvement in the negotiations. The state Department of Environmental Quality and the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission have written a memorandum outlining their jurisdictions.

Peck's amendment to the department's appropriations bill said, "The department may not spend any appropriated funds for activities pertaining to uranium mill tailings pre-empted by the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission unless an agreement with the commission has been approved by the legislature."

However, Dennis Boal of the state attorney general's office said the state could not and is not trying to regulate anything "pre-empted" by the federal NRC. Therefore, work on the state-federal agreement is continuing; another meeting between the two agencies is planned April 22.

The senator's concerns seem to be reflected in the agreement anyway. Peck was worried about the state imposing its jurisdiction on the nonradiological hazards in mill tailings the wastes left from processing uranium ore. While the NRC has officially recognized the state's jurisdiction over these hazards, under the agreement, the state is deferring its authority to the NRC. This means uranium companies will be required to get a federal permit only, rather than two permits.

— Marjane Ambler

Dollar snag clogs pipe

Officials of a company planning to build a Wyoming to Louisiana coal slurry pipeline say they are having difficulty getting up to \$3 billion in financing because the company cannot sign contracts with coal consumers until it knows what its financing costs will be.

"It's a chicken and egg situation," said a financial officer for Energy Transportation Systems, Inc. He said the company expected to resolve the problem and move ahead on the project. Tariffs for coal hauling by slurry cannot be determined without knowing the cost of financing, he said, but banks won't finance until they see contracts for the slurried coal.

The project is expected to cost \$3 billion to \$4 billion. The pipeline will

really taken hold. Cyndy held a brunch in honor of Mama Schimelpfenig, Jill had a St. Patrick's Day party in honor of Director Emeritus O'Gara and Ginger will hold an equinox party on Saturday. Practically any excuse will do.

When parties are scarce, the staff fills in their weekends at the Hitching Rack listening to the punk folk (that's not a typo) music of "Quit," featuring Managing Editor Dan Whipple, Finance Coordinator Ginger Tillemans, Production Assistant Phil Heywood and Dave Hudson, accompanied from the audience by Typesetter Debbie East playing the spoons. The music may be flat sometimes but the beer never is.

Another great event overtook the paper this past two weeks as well. Susan Tweit, our intrepid intern, took it upon herself to clean up the office. It was quite a shock to the rest of the staff to see what color the floors actually were under their disguise of dirt, grime and discarded newspapers. We can now reliably report that the rugs in the editors' offices are brown and black and the floors are white.

— the staff



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Dear friends,

Spring is in the air and *HCN's* fancy turns to...parties. So, in honor of the incoming spring, most of the staff attended the third annual Atlantic City Wild Game Feast and Cross Country Ski Weekend.

This is an event at which large quantities of food, spirits and good times are consumed. There was only one drawback this year — no snow. Hence, the weekend was a little short on cross country skiing.

The feast was first organized in 1979 by several residents of Atlantic City, Wyoming, a "ghost town" in the gold mining area of historic South Pass. Original organizers *HCN* photographer Mike McClure and his wife Amy, Larry Davis, Richard Boulette, Kathy Curless and Toni Emerson are all strong supporters of *HCN* and friends as well.

The meat dishes at the feast are all traditionally made from wild game killed by the participants during the past hunting season. This year there were antelope rice curry, elk green chili, beaver stew, sweet and sour elk, moose

stew and other game goodies. Invitees brought pot luck vegetable, salad and dessert dishes. And of invitees there were plenty. About 100 people attended and, of course, they each brought food for three more. To say there was a lot to eat would be understating the case by 50 percent.

The feast nearly overflowed from a house owned by Dr. Mary Irvine, McClure's mother. In the past, people have come from as far as San Francisco to attend. This year's distance award winners were Ken Hamlin and Sue Hoover, who flew up from Denver in their single engine plane.

The after-feast festivities moved a few miles down the road to the Cove Bar where the Buffalo Chips were playing. Revelry was condensed into a space about one quarter the size of Dr. Mary's place, and the cramped quarters crimped the style of a few diehard country swing aficionados, who were reduced to some variety of punk polka. No black eyes were reported.

The party instinct seems to have

carry 30 million tons of pulverized coal a year suspended in water from Wyoming's Powder River Basin to power plants in the South. ETSI recently signed a contract with the state of South Dakota to take water from the Oahe Reservoir to use in the pipeline.

An official in ETSI's San Francisco office said the financing snag was no indication of financial difficulties facing the project. ETSI is owned by some of the country's biggest corporations, including the Atlantic Richfield Company and the Bechtel Group, a family-owned engineering and construction company.

Officials say ETSI is currently spending about \$1 million a week on the project, though no pipe has been laid. The money is going for design and engineering studies, legal costs and the \$9 million-a-year contract the company recently signed for the South Dakota water. Frank Odasz, ETSI's representative in Wyoming, said there would probably be lawsuits resulting from the Oahe water deal.

The ETSI official in San Francisco said a decision would be made to go or not go ahead with the project at the end of the year, and that current thinking was the company would build the pipeline. The market potential along the pipeline route, he said, appears to be even larger than the carrying capacity of the planned pipeline.

— Geoffrey O'Gara

Gillette group asks water controls

A group of Gillette, Wyoming residents are asking that the Wyoming state engineer's office and state Board of Control establish a groundwater control area in Campbell County to protect them from potential conflicts with a proposed coal gasification project in Gillette.

Hampshire Energy is proposing a \$2 billion coal liquefaction plant that would draw up to 5.5 million gallons of water a day from the Lance/Fox Hills underground formations. Residents who pump water from adjacent aquifers are afraid that Hampshire's plans will result in some drawdown of their own wells. A number of subdivisions and ranches around Gillette use underground water. In addition, the city of Gillette takes some water from the Lance/Fox Hills formation.

A control area would require that new appropriators — like Hampshire — file a public notice on their request for water and that a hearing be held if there are substantial objections. The applicants would have to demonstrate that the new well would not interfere with existing uses and would establish them as junior users.

Hampshire conducted a five-day pumping test of the Lance/Fox Hills water it wants to use. The company said those results show that the pumping of the water will not damage the other water users because shale layers between the aquifers prevent water from migrating among them.

However, Gerald Fuller, a spokesman for the Citizens for Responsible Development, said the Hampshire tests were too short and were inconclusive.

Hampshire hopes to begin construction on its plant in 1983, after getting federal assistance from the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation. No timetable has been set for the state engineer to decide the control area question. However, Hampshire's review by the state Industrial Siting Commission cannot proceed until the water question is solved.

Hampshire plans to convert five

million tons of coal annually into 800,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline and other fuels.



EPA/Kennedy

Clean air dirtied in committee

The Clean Air Act revisions are wending their way through subcommittee markup in the U.S. House of Representatives with little for environmentalists to cheer about. Strengthening amendments proposed by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Health and Environment Subcommittee, have been defeated.

The subcommittee is marking up legislation sponsored by Rep. Thomas Luken (D-Ohio). Luken's bill is supported by the powerful chairman of the full Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.). Waxman has introduced his own bill, and is offering amendments to the Luken measure from his own legislation. However, these amendments are being soundly beaten and it would appear that the Luken measure is the one that will move through the full committee and go to the floor.

The Dingell-Luken bill would double the allowable carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide pollution standards for new automobiles.

The bill also would allow five to ten times as much pollution in areas currently protected by Class I air quality standards — areas with very clean air, including most national parks and wilderness areas — according to the National Clean Air Coalition. The Reagan administration said the changes would only double the allowable pollution in those areas.

Waxman will introduce his bill, which is backed by the NCAC, on the floor of the House. David Gardiner of the Sierra Club said, "On the floor, the representatives will have a fairly clear-cut situation. Congress will be presented a choice between Dingell's dirty air bill and Waxman's clean air bill, which is a good one. It is going to be a tough choice which most of them would rather not deal with."

Gardiner said that most of the changes are harmful or unnecessary. "In the 1981 model year, 70 percent of the U.S. cars met the tougher standards. In the 1982 model year, because of waivers granted by the Reagan administration, only 30 percent met them. This shows two things: one, that they can meet the standards; and two, that they are getting some relief by administrative decisions.

"Most places with dirty air are relying heavily on cleaner cars to help relieve their air pollution." According to a NCAC study, 16 urban areas with about 40 million people will have permanently unhealthy levels of CO if the standards are changed.

The auto industry is pushing for the changes because they say the tougher standards are unnecessary and their elimination would provide some economic relief to the beleaguered industry (HCN, 10/16/81).

The Senate Environment Committee is proceeding slowly and has not made any substantial changes in the current act. They will soon consider changes in the prevention portion of the significant deterioration program, which attempts to maintain clean air in areas in which it is already fairly clean.

Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.) has said that he wants to change the whole program, in part to allow Basin Electric Power Cooperative to build a new power plant near Theodore Roosevelt National Park.



WPPSS Plant 4

WPPSS woes grow

A ratepayer revolt has begun to develop in the Northwest in the wake of the termination of two nuclear power

plants by the Washington Public Power Supply System last January 22.

Two small Oregon cities, Drain and Canby, have joined with 26 Springfield, Oregon ratepayers in bringing a suit against WPPSS, the city of Springfield and the Springfield Utility Board. That suit challenges the defendants' participation in a plan to finance the \$7 billion debt that resulted from the cancellation of the two plants. Other utility districts are discovering that customers are refusing to pay and some cities have sought legal counsel to study the matter.

In addition to the troubles resulting from the termination of Plants 4 and 5 of the five plant WPPSS nuclear scheme, the 88 utilities that are members of the consortium have learned that still another plant might have to be put on ice. The combined effect of the problems has sent the utilities scrambling for help.

The difficulties are the latest installment of the nuclear nightmare that descended on the Northwest when the WPPSS consortium realized it could no longer afford the climbing costs of its plants 4 and 5 at Hanford and Satsop, Washington. When construction was stopped, there were 365 outstanding contracts which, when added to other termination costs, totaled \$343 million (HCN, 3/5/82).

Additionally, the 88 sponsors owed \$2.25 billion in bonds on the plants. Interest on the bonds brought the total obligation to more than \$7 billion. About two million utility customers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming are liable for the bill.

Many of the smaller utilities are expected to raise their rates by as much as 60 percent for the next three years to meet their obligations and larger utilities are expected to push rates up between 15 and 30 percent a year. As word of those increases gets back to ratepayers, the rumbles of revolt grow louder.

Oregon Congressman Jim Weaver has even threatened a class action lawsuit to block WPPSS from passing debts to consumers for plants that will never generate electricity. Weaver and the Springfield ratepayers claim that financial liability agreements between the utilities and the supply system violate the Oregon constitution.

The WPPSS woes were aggravated early in March when Peter Johnson, administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration, told a Senate subcommittee that he had doubts about the need for one of the three remaining

(continued on next page)

BARBED WIRE

God may soon be out of a job. Denver's Gates Planetarium employs a "Cosmic Awareness Facilitator" and a "Universe Fabrication Coordinator."

What? No jacuzzi? In Bondurant, Wyoming, a developer is proposing construction of 100 condominiums in 16 buildings, a 20-unit motel, tennis courts, swimming pools, a service station, a restaurant/supper club and a nine hole golf course. Bondurant's current population is about 100.

That's because, with Reaganomics, they're the only jobs available. Interior Secretary James Watt, complaining to an Izaak Walton League meeting about criticism of his policies from the league's paid Washington staff: "I call them commercial environmentalists because they are making a living off being what you folks are out of a love for the land and its natural life."

We knew smoking was hazardous to your health, but we didn't know it had such immediate effect. A San Francisco man was arrested for stabbing a woman who was smoking in an elevator. He is pleading self-defense.

Try not to squash the tomato plants, fellas. A Sula, Montana couple has sent a telegram to President Ronald Reagan offering their back yard as a site for an MX missile silo.

It would probably be an improvement. Terry Dolan, director of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, told KUTV in Salt Lake City in 1980: "We could elect Mickey Mouse to the House or Senate."

You won't even need a microwave to cook it. The Missoulian recently pulled this quote from *Gung Ho*, a magazine for soldiers of fortune, giving tips on survival after a nuclear war: "Hunting may be easier than ever. A large number of nuclear blasts may disrupt or even destroy the ozone layer...That also means that any animals which survived the fall-out may be partially — or even completely — blind. Hunting them would be like shooting targets."

New listings from Century 21. The Fiske Planetarium in Boulder, Colorado, is now selling real estate at two cents an acre — on Mars.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

(continued from previous page)

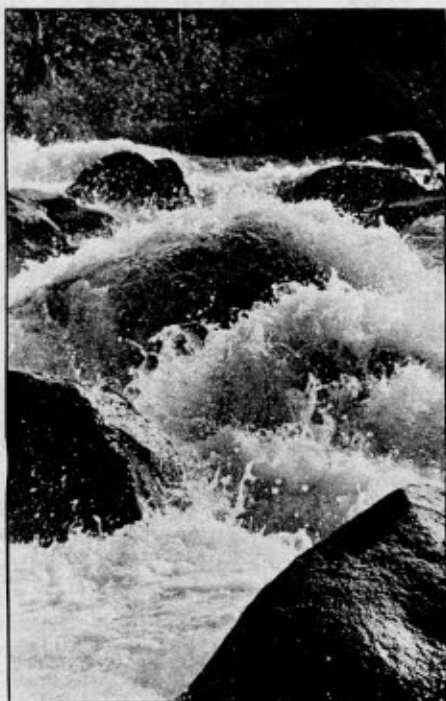
plants. It was the first time Johnson questioned the future of Plant 3 at Sat-sop, which is 43 percent complete and has cost \$1.13 billion so far. Plant 3 is due to come on line in 1987.

The BPA has agreed to buy 100 percent of the production of Plants 1 and 2 and 70 percent of Plant 3 and has insisted the power will be needed. A utility study which estimated regional electrical demand would grow at an annual rate of 3.2 percent was the basis for that claim.

But a BPA forecast, expected late this month, will cut that growth rate almost in half as a result of the depressed economy, mushrooming utility rates and growing conservation efforts. Even some Wall Street analysts question the need for the plant.

Fifteen of the consortium members went to the Northwest Power Planning Council recently and requested that the BPA buy the two cancelled plants immediately. BPA ownership would spread the costs throughout the region, affecting ratepayers at the many utilities that own no interest in the plants but do receive BPA power. The council turned them down.

— John Soisson



In-stream flow group calls it quits

After gathering 30,800 signatures, spending nearly \$30,000 and providing the impetus for one of the more interesting eleventh hour debates on the floor of the Wyoming House of Representatives, the Wyoming In-Stream Flow Committee is calling it quits.

Under the leadership of Lynn Dickey, the group's initiative petition drive had sought to gain recognition for minimum stream flows as a beneficial use of Wyoming water and to permit the state to acquire water rights to maintain flows for fish, wildlife and livestock.

Secretary of State Thyra Thomson disqualified 2,434 of the group's signatures, leaving it 1,266 short of the required 27,100. Dickey said a committee spot-check of the disqualified signatures turned up "several hundred good ones, so we're quite sure that there are 1,266 good ones that she missed." But Thomson has refused to reconsider her ruling and Dickey said, "The only way we can demonstrate she missed them is by going to court."

She estimated the group would need \$10,000 to pay off its past debts and take the signature question into court. A final appeal for that sum went out March 10,

but Dickey was not encouraged about it. "We've basically exhausted our sources," she said.

Dickey credited the initiative drive for the fact that the Wyoming legislature readily allowed the introduction of an in-stream flow bill during the recent budget session, where non-budget items must secure a two-thirds vote to be considered. But the legislators did not feel equally bound by constituent pressure to pass the bill, even in the "watered down" form in which it finally made it to the floor.

Much of the drama over the issue was reserved to the last day of the session when the House failed to agree with the Senate version and appointed a conference committee. That committee failed to reach agreement and the Senate dragged its feet about appointing a second one. The second committee finally brought a consensus to the floor of the House, where it failed a 31-29 vote. A third conference committee was appointed, the Senate stalled, and the measure died.

Assessing the prospects for the next session, Dickey said, "If they couldn't pass that last bill, it's hard to imagine what they would pass." Her only hope: constituent pressure during the elections next November.

Big bucks for Overthrust facilities

Seven major projects, from an urgently needed sewer treatment facility to a new library, should be under construction this year in Evanston, Wyoming, the hub of the oil and gas boom in the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt.

The projects, costing a total of \$23 million, will be financed by a unique package of grants from the federal government, state and local agencies, and the Overthrust Industrial Association (OIA); an organization sponsored by oil and gas companies currently working in the Evanston area.

One of the biggest difficulties faced by Evanston during the boom of the last two years has been a chronic housing shortage — a problem which was not addressed by the \$23 million financing package. Evanston City Manager Steve Snyder said city officials and representatives from the OIA were trying to make headway on that problem, but nothing had come of it.

Besides the sewer treatment facility, costing \$10.7 million, and the library, costing \$1.5 million, the projects include: a recreation center, \$2.85 million; a human services center, \$2.25 million; a county court house, \$3.5 million; a public works building, \$1.5 million; and a public safety building, \$800,000.

The OIA is paying for 15 percent of the package, the city of Evanston, 5 percent and Uinta County, 11 percent. The Environmental Protection Agency will provide 14 percent of the cost in the form of a sewer construction grant, and the State Farm Loan Board, which is financed by energy severance taxes, will provide a grant for nine percent of the cost and a loan for 30 percent. The rest of the funding will come from developers' and new residents' hookup fees.

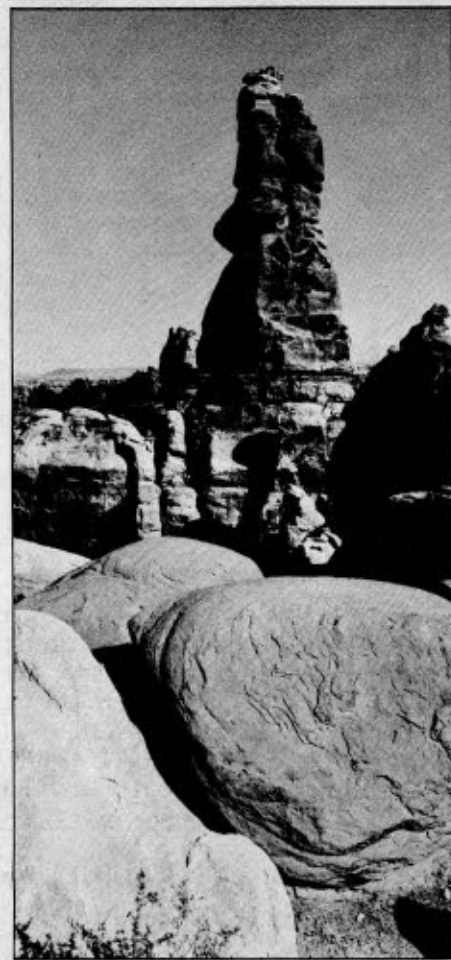
OIA representative Andra Schmidt said the contributions from the county, city and farm loan board would be repaid by present and future taxes paid by oil and gas developers. "We don't think industry ought to have to pay twice," said Schmidt. "This will help the community get over the initial shock until the enormous tax revenues start coming in."

Evanston Mayor Dennis Ottley said the package allowed the town to avoid

raising property tax rates. Local officials stressed that without the financing it would have taken several years before all the projects could get underway. Gov. Ed Herschler called it "an outstanding example of industry-government cooperation."

City Manager Snyder indicated, however, that even the hurry-up schedule may not prevent overflow in the city's present sewer facilities. Last year, raw sewage was dumped into the Bear River when the facility reached full capacity. With the new sewage treatment facility expected to take 12-16 months to build, he said there may be more problems this year.

— Geoffrey O'Gara



The Doll House, Maze Section, Canyonlands National Park

Utah asks for EIS on nuke dump

Utah Gov. Scott Matheson (D) has formally asked the U.S. Department of Energy to conduct a full programmatic environmental impact statement on the site selection process for a proposed high-level nuclear waste repository. The facility, which will be a deep geologic repository in a salt formation, will be located in Utah, Texas or on the Gulf Coast (HCN, 2/19/82).

Matheson wants DOE to publish an EIS on how the agency is making decisions regarding the final selection of a dump site. The agency has already decided to develop exploratory shafts — each at a cost of about \$50 million — in salt, basalt and tuff formations. Studies are being made of three salt sites, including the Gibson Dome near Canyonlands National Park in southeastern Utah.

"In contrast," Matheson wrote in a letter to Energy Secretary James Edwards, "the location decisions for the tuff and basalt sites were made not on the basis of similar extensive geologic study of a number of sites, but largely as the result of the existence of federal facilities at these geologic media."

DOE is leaning toward preparing an EIS on the sinking of the shaft only, not on the entire repository project. State officials and some other federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service, are resisting this approach.

A source with the Utah task force that is studying the proposal said, "DOE has

been pushing all along for doing an environmental assessment, rather than a full EIS. They initially said they would consider doing an EIS, then put off the decision. Later it became clear that it was not true that DOE was even thinking of doing an EIS. They argued that, in terms of the overall cost of developing the repository, the cost of the shaft is a small expenditure and this isn't really a major federal action.

"We said, 'Wait a minute. You don't determine whether there's a major federal action by looking at the percentage cost.'"

The issue of the programmatic EIS became more critical when Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.) put language in a repository siting bill, now in the Senate, that would preclude siting a dump near high population concentrations. Mississippi and Louisiana are two possible sites. Louisiana already has strong veto legislation if the dump is sited there.

In addition, Bill Clements, the Republican governor of Texas, told a reporter he thought he had already told DOE to leave his state out of consideration for the repository. The combination of these two factors would leave Utah as the salt site by default.

In his letter to Edwards, Matheson said, "The people of Utah stand ready to accept the possibility that our state may contain one or more acceptable sites for the geologic disposal of high-level nuclear waste."

"However, it is equally important that DOE stand ready to accept the possibility that our state does not contain an acceptable site. The burden of proof for either determination, however, rests with the federal government."

Jet service remains in Jackson

The United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., has ruled that jet service can continue at the Jackson Hole (Wyoming) Airport within Grand Teton National Park. The decision was brief and did not make any findings based on the arguments presented by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. The case was simply thrown out of court.

The Sierra Club had argued that the Federal Aviation Administration's February, 1981 decision to allow Boeing 737 jets to land at the controversial airport was invalid. The club said that the environmental impact statement prepared was inadequate and that the FAA should have prepared a 4(f) statement. This latter statement is based on a provision in the 1966 act creating the Department of Transportation, of which the FAA is an agency, that said park lands could only be used for transportation activities if no alternatives were available.

The permit allowing the jets to land comes up for renewal in April, 1983. Tony Ruckel, who argued the Sierra Club's case, said, "The court did not decide the legal issue. In regard to how to handle the renewal, we have no instruction. A decision of this nature provides the maximum number of alternatives in fighting the renewal, but it doesn't help the present situation very much." Ruckel said he won't appeal the decision because, by the time the Supreme Court could even consider the case, the issue would be moot.

Michael Morgan, the lawyer who represented the Jackson Hole Airport Board, said, "The decision means that the EIS was adequate and that no 4(f) statement was necessary. It is evident that the 4(f) statement will not be necessary." However, since the decision is not in the form of a written opinion, it will have no force as a precedent.



Cabinet Mountains

Montana eco law broadened

Ever since the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969 and the numerous state laws that parallel NEPA, state and federal agencies have been confused by the effect of the broad environmental protection mandate on other laws. A recent judicial decision in Montana might help clear up some of the confusion.

District Court Judge Gordon Bennett of Helena has ruled that the Montana Department of State Lands misinterpreted the effect of the Montana Environmental Policy Act in granting a mining permit under the state's Hard Rock Mining Act. The ruling said DSL must consider environmental issues that extend beyond those prescribed in the narrow hard rock reclamation law.

The case concerns a permit granted to the ASARCO Troy Project in the remote northwestern corner of the state. Slated to become the second largest silver mine in the country, the Troy Project is the first of what many believe will be a string of copper-silver mines sited in and around Montana's Cabinet Mountains, a roadless range that includes one wilderness area.

The U.S. Forest Service and DSL prepared a joint environmental impact statement on the project that identified numerous impacts to wildlife, water quality, and the social and economic stability of nearby Libby and Troy. But, in granting an operating permit, DSL limited the findings of its mine plan review to protection of air and water quality and the adequacy of reclamation plans — the three issues specified in the hard rock law — ignoring the bulk of its own EIS.

Two citizens' organizations, the Cabinet Resource Group and the Montana Wilderness Association, promptly filed suit, alleging that DSL had a responsibility under MEPA to require and not merely recommend all of the important mitigating measures identified in the EIS.

William Rossback, attorney for the two groups, explains his clients' case: "If you do an EIS and identify alternatives, which the department did, why not enforce them? DSL says it has no authority to enforce any measures beyond those prescribed in the hard rock law. Our position is, that's absurd. It makes MEPA little more than environmental window dressing."

John North, attorney for the Department of State Lands, disagrees. "By doing an EIS we are able to get into the areas we regulate (under the hard rock law) more deeply, so that we could use the EIS information to refine our review. But beyond the hard rock act, we felt that it was simply a process of advising what the effects are and suggesting

alternatives. The EIS in that sense is only informational."

While Judge Bennett ruled in favor of the citizens on one count — that DSL misinterpreted the impact of MEPA on the hard rock law — he failed to rule on whether the mining permit was granted in error. That decision, he said, awaits further fact-finding. Attorneys for all parties are meeting in April to decide how to present those facts to the court.

Meanwhile, the effect of the court's decision on DSL and other state agencies now reviewing other applications for development remains unclear. The court said, "MEPA must be applied, and if properly applied undoubtedly binds DSL to consideration of environmental factors beyond those specified in the HRMA."

The effect on the department "all depends on what Judge Bennett means by 'consideration' of MEPA," said John North. "If he rules that we were right with ASARCO, then there will probably be no change." North points out that DSL did consider the findings of the EIS in making recommendations to ASARCO. The Department refused, however, to condition its permit on those findings.

While the court's recent decision lends additional substance to a law that many view as merely informational, it will take a second ruling later this year to refine further how MEPA must be applied.

Meanwhile, Montana conservationists are calling the decision a landmark, while industry is beginning to fear that it will have yet another substantive law to satisfy before mining can begin.

— Don Snow

Idaho house bans PUC inverted rates

Idaho representatives took a swipe at the Idaho Public Utilities Commission March 10 when they voted to place a two-year moratorium on inverted rates for most private utilities in the state.

The measure, which passed 59-11, now must be approved in the state Senate.

Underlying a nearly hour-long House debate was the question of how much authority the PUC should have over "social policy" questions.

"The broader question is, how far should we let the PUC go in making these major social decisions?" said bill sponsor Rep. Gary Montgomery (R-Boise).

PUC President Perry Swisher warned that repealing inverted rates would ensure further substantial rate increases. He said the rates encourage conservation by accurately reflecting the increasing cost of building new power plants to meet demand.

PUC figures show an inverted rate ban would mean higher rates for 75 percent of Idaho Power Company residential users, who have seen a reduction in their power bills since the PUC imposed the rates last fall.

But Montgomery argued there is no proof that inverted rates are effective. "It tends to hurt most those least able to pay," Montgomery said. "If, in two years, it's a good idea, we'll go with it. Let

some other states around us be a laboratory for awhile."

The bill was prompted by the PUC's decision to adopt inverted rates for Idaho Power residential users beginning October, 1981. The company, as well as some of its ratepayers, complained the rates were unfair to people who were encouraged to install electric heat years ago when cheap hydroelectric power was abundant. Inverted rates impose higher charges per unit of electricity as more is used.

Idaho Power appealed the inverted rate decision to the state Supreme Court, then submitted to the PUC a modified inverted rate plan that includes different blocks for summer and winter.

Under the House bill, the PUC would have to repeal inverted rates it imposed after July, 1981 — a provision that applies to rates imposed for Idaho Power and Pacific Power and Light Company, which serves a small section of northern Idaho. Washington Water Power Company would be allowed to retain inverted rates in northern Idaho because the rates were adopted three years ago.

The cutoff date was added to the bill after Washington Water Power officials told legislators they oppose such a ban because their customers have been benefitting from the rates.

A citizens' group spokesman in Boise accused legislators of passing the bill primarily to meet Idaho Power's objections. "It looks to me like Idaho Power owns the Idaho Legislature," Idaho Citizens' Coalition executive director Al Fothergill said. "It's selectively designed for them because they don't want it (inverted rates)."

— Ellen Marks

HOTLINE

RADIOACTIVE FLOODPLAIN PLAN

The Cotter Corporation, a Consolidated Edison firm that operates the Schwartzwalder uranium mine northeast of Golden, Colorado, has agreed to submit a floodplain-hazard plan to Jefferson County and other appropriate officials before building a radioactive water treatment plant along Ralston Creek. The plan is needed to address protection of the area in case of a 100-year flood. The treatment plant was ordered after a controversial 1979 Environmental Protection Agency study found drinking water in the area to be 60 times the average level of radiation received in normal water and food consumption.

CASH FOR GAS

Homeowners and builders in Idaho may receive as much as \$200 cash bonuses for installing natural gas for heating rather than electricity. Washington Water Power Company is seeking permission for the plan from the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. The company hopes to cut demand for electricity and consequently reduce the need for building more expensive power plants. PUC President Perry Swisher told the *Idaho Statesman* the plan would probably be approved. It would be effective in areas where WWP provides both gas and electricity to consumers.

PUC ELECTIONS SUGGESTED

A coalition of neighborhood organizations in Denver, Colorado, has started a petition drive to require popular election of Colorado's Public Utility Commission. The organization, ACORN, hopes to have the proposal placed on the November ballot. The three PUC members are currently appointed by the governor. ACORN representatives told the *Denver Post* that the PUC is not responsive enough to consumers. They need 38,900 signatures.

STATE INSPECTIONS MAY CEASE

State inspections of small coal mines in Colorado may be abolished if the state legislature approves one pending bill. Proponents of the bill say there is too much duplication between federal and state inspections, but the state division of mines reports a sharp increase in the number of injuries and fatalities in Colorado coal mines over the past four years. Last year the legislature passed a bill to eliminate state inspections of large coal mines employing more than 75 miners.

LOGGING PLANS CANCELLED

The Idaho Wildlife Federation has convinced the U.S. Forest Service to cancel for the second time three timber sales in the South Fork drainage of the Salmon River. The first halt came in December, 1981, when the Forest Service was planning to award two of the timber sales before the 45-day deadline for filing appeals had expired. The Forest Service made plans to proceed with the sales after the deadline, but the IWF claimed another environmental assessment is needed. They said a planned increase in the amount of road building in the area will not protect salmon, elk or wolf habitat. The Forest Service has agreed to start over with a new EA.

POACHING ANGERS UTAHNS

Utah's fish and game officials are alarmed over the illegal hunting and fishing practices of the state's large Asian refugee population. According to the *Denver Post*, about 7,000 refugees live on tracts of uncrowded land and near isolated streams, where they have proven to be efficient food gatherers. The poaching refugees have angered the state's paying, legal fishermen and hunters, and officials fear the refugees may become targets of violence from enraged sportsmen.

A BLOW FOR REAGAN

A Senate Energy Committee's rejection, by a 16 to two vote, of President Ronald Reagan's proposed budget cuts for the Energy Department seems to indicate Congress will not agree to dissolve the Energy Department later this year. In fact, the committee added nearly \$2.2 billion to the administration's proposed \$17.6 billion 1983 budget for the Energy and Interior departments. The committee voted to keep funds for energy conservation programs and for research on fossil fuels and alternative energy. The committee also rejected the President's proposed drastic cut in spending for urban parks and federal park acquisition.



WARNING: FOWL PLAY

The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Colorado Division of Health have warned that birds and other wildlife near the Rocky Mountain Arsenal northeast of Denver may be harmful to your health. Limited data from the health department showed significant levels of toxic chemicals in the meat of ducks, pheasants, doves and fish found on Arsenal property.



Randy Bradbury

Williston Basin oil rig

North Dakota: The oil boom is on

by Randy Bradbury

Billings County, N.D. — There is a quiet in the badlands of North Dakota, a pervading quiet that draws one in, that is a part of its spirit.

A few years ago much of this country was nominated for inclusion in the nation's wilderness system. But now, roads push out into many once-inaccessible areas, and the prospect is for more industry, not more wilderness.

The oil boom is on.

In a land where erosion is the law and justice is meted swiftly, drilling platform pads quickly become gullied where they are carved into the steep butte and valley walls. Roads seem to run up every major drainage, and across the buttes and plateaus.

Workers flood Dickinson and Williston, the two largest towns in western North Dakota. Although construction continues at a record pace — despite high interest and the national building slump — new arrivals reportedly have offered rewards in efforts to find places to live.

The entire western half of the state has been affected to various degrees by the renewed interest in oil, but the most intensive development has centered in Stark, Dunn, Billings, Golden Valley, McKenzie and Williams Counties.

There are no official population figures available for the boom period, but regional planners have made estimates of the growth. Rod Landblom of the Roosevelt Custer Regional Council, a

planning agency covering the state's eight southwestern counties, estimated a 26 percent increase in population in those counties between 1970 and 1982. He believes the population has grown from 43,000 in 1970 to 54,000 today.

"We're seeing a lot of centralization" of people, services and the problems that come with growth, Landblom said. That's evidenced by the growth in Dickinson which, according to Landblom's estimates, has grown from a farm trading center of 12,500 in 1975 to a bustling boomtown of 18,500 today — nearly a 50 percent jump in seven years.

In the early 1970s, North Dakotans worried about reports of tremendous coal development in the west. And while the mining of coal has increased and is increasing, the less-heralded oil boom has had far greater impact.

This is the state's second boom. Prior to the 1950s, there had been little exploration and no petroleum production. Once oil was discovered, there was a period of intensive exploration, followed by steadily increasing production that peaked in 1966 at 27 million barrels.

Production then fell off yearly until 1974, and hovered around 20 million barrels a year through 1978.

By then, the cogs were in place for this latest surge.

The North Dakota Geological Survey said the new boom stems from two events of the early 70s. The first was the discovery of a new field in McKenzie County in 1972, spurring a new rush for mineral lease holdings. Second was the 1973 OPEC embargo, followed by

increased prices and controlled production.

As the survey put it in a 1980 review of North Dakota oil and gas exploration and development, "Exploration for oil again became a profitable venture. Prior to the price increase, many companies found that exploration-risk money provided a better return in a regular bank savings account than in actual wildcat drilling...exploratory drilling picked up."

Production jumped to an estimated 40.3 million barrels in 1980, and another increase was expected in 1981, although production is now tapering off. Since residents of the state use only 20 million-plus barrels a year, the state exports oil. North Dakota oil production accounts for about one percent of the nation's oil consumption, or enough to fuel the United States for about four days a year, according to geological survey estimates.

The oil in North Dakota, like all oil, is the mineral legacy of millions of years ago. According to the scenario constructed by geologists, what is now North Dakota was once the edge of the ocean, an outwash plain where the sediments of the eroding mountains were deposited. In the more recent geologic past, only a few million years ago, bayou-like swamps formed widespread coal beds just beneath the state's surface. These are also the subject of intensive development efforts.

Oil lies much deeper, often two or three miles below the surface. Generally, it is contained within a large, bowl-

shaped geologic feature known as the Williston Basin, which covers most of North Dakota and extends into South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Canada. The bowl's center, its deepest part and the site of most of the oil discoveries, is beneath western North Dakota.

Much of the semi-arid surface of this country is controlled by the U.S. Forest Service through its national grasslands program. Because early attempts to homestead and farm the land were doomed by the hot, dry summers and clay soils, the government and the grazing associations have attempted to help the fragile land recover from the abuses of farming and overgrazing.

The ill-fated homesteading efforts left not only a patchwork of private and federal surface ownership, but an even crazier quilt of mineral holdings.

In the early 70s, when it looked as though oil development was on a permanent decline in the state, the U.S. Forest Service was still signing 10 year leases on land it controlled. In 1975, according to the Forest Service's John Gibson, of Billings, Montana, 13 areas totalling 243,000 acres were identified as essential roadless areas under the Forest Service's Management Plan.

To preserve their roadless character, the Forest Service began stipulating that mineral developers could not occupy the land surface, but decided to honor the existing leases. Leases in the various areas expired over a span of time ranging from December 31, 1980, to August 31 of this year. The Forest Service also said that if oil is discovered on a lease, development may continue outward

from that point until the wells no longer strike oil.

When the RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) program began, all such Forest Service roadless areas were automatically included, Gibson said. That meant the 13 North Dakota areas were studied for potential wilderness designation.

Meanwhile, the boom hit, and suddenly there was interest in developing the leases in the roadless areas. One area, the Ash Coulee, now has about 70 miles of road; two others, the Bennie Peer and Magpie, have 50 and 30 miles of road, respectively, according to Forest Service estimates.

Only three areas escaped development before the old leases expired.

In the North Dakota portion of the Williston Basin, the number of drilling rigs peaked at 146 last fall, according to Wes Norton, chief enforcement officer of the Industrial Commission's Oil and Gas Division, the agency that now polices the industry. In 1978, the number of rigs in operation averaged between 30 and 40, he said. That same year, a total of 340 wells were drilled. Nearly 850 were drilled in 1981, according to Norton.

Evidence of the increase was readily apparent to anyone who frequented the winding, dusty roads of the badlands interior, but the outward signs were fewer, more subtle. Sales of state mineral leases began to set records time after time. The sparsely populated western counties began to grow. Oil and gas taxes began to account for a major share of the state's budget.

According to the state, oil companies paid a total of \$294,000 in bonuses for state-owned mineral rights in 1970; by 1978, the total was nearly \$20 million; in 1980, the last quarter sale alone raised \$30 million.

North Dakota state government owns a total of about 2.5 million acres of mineral rights, according to Otto Bervik, who handles mineral leases for the state land department. The state rents tracts on five year leases at \$1 per acre annually, but developers must bid and pay extra for the privilege of leasing state-owned minerals. The average bonus bid in 1976 was only \$3.75 per acre, Bervik said. Last August developers paid an average of \$230 per acre in bonuses.

One of the reasons for those high prices is the relatively high success ratio for wells in the Williston Basin.

Norton of the state's oil and gas division estimates that between one in three and one in four wildcat wells in the North Dakota fields becomes a producer, compared to the national average of one in fifteen to twenty.

The North Dakota Petroleum Council said there were 48 seismic crews at work in the state this fall, literally on land, water and air. There has been dialogue between the operators of Theodore Roosevelt National Park in the badlands and the oil industry to minimize the number of low-flying helicopters and airplanes that had multiplied to the point of detracting from the park's wild quality. And barge trains float the waters of Lake Sakakawea in western North Dakota, discharging large air bubbles to make seismic charts of the mineral layers beneath the lake's surface.

Oil has brought greater wealth to the state.

For years, since the first boom of the 50s, the state levied a five percent tax on oil and gas production. Efforts by legislators to raise the tax were easily and consistently defeated. Two years ago, the state's residents, pinched by the property taxes used to fund education and local government, and becoming aware of the magnitude of the oil boom, approved by a substantial margin another 6.5 percent tax on oil production. The result was a windfall for state government. Only a few years ago, the total from lease sales, royalties and production tax revenues amounted to less than \$50 million; that total may have risen to as much as \$200 million last year, and now accounts for a quarter of the state's general fund budget.

The boom has also brought wealth to many of the citizens and businesses of Western North Dakota. Subdivisions sprout on the hillsides like mushrooms after a spring rain; four-wheel drives and gas-guzzling sports cars multiply as though there were no such thing as \$1.25 gasoline.

Oil also has brought environmental and social costs.

In a series of articles the *Grand Forks Herald* observed that sons and daughters of second- and third-generation ranchers and farmers now mine and blast and build roads through their family's land.

The close-knit and homogeneous ranching and farming communities, settled in blocks by immigrants of common background, are now being strained or breaking down as they are overrun by a new brand of itinerant immigrant — the oil field worker who follows the rigs from place to place and, as a rule, feels little allegiance to the places he or she calls temporary home.

Before 1981, the state had no program to deal with the impact of oil development, but the 1981 legislature appropriated \$10 million to be billed out during the 1981-1983 biennial for impact assistance.

The funds go to support the "whole range of basic services" according to Jim Luptak, deputy director of the state's energy development impact office. That includes such things as road, sewer and water projects, policing and school programs, he said. The funds do not go for so-called soft programs, such as social services.

There is no organized or outspoken opposition to the oil development, but rancher-farmer organizations in most of the western counties have raised questions about specific oil industry practices. Although independent, the organizations belong to a central coordinating structure, known as the Dakota Resource Council (DRC).

Originally an outgrowth of organizations formed by farmers and ranchers opposed to coal development, the DRC has grown to encompass organizations in the oil producing counties. The Billings County Surface Interest Association is one such group.

Harold Oderman, a Belfield, North Dakota rancher, is chairman of the association. "At no point have we ever said, 'Hey, we don't want this development,'" he said. "However, let's do this developing with a minimum of danger to our environment, to our farms and to our ranches."

Environmental costs, in addition to the aesthetic damage in the ruggedly beautiful badlands, include such things as air pollution and the rotten egg smell from hydrogen sulfide; the salinization of tracts of land around drill sites; and the concern of some farmers and ranchers that seismic blasts are contaminating groundwater supplies.

The Petroleum Council said it believes the industry has done a good job of meeting the environmental problems. There have been no major disasters reported.

The ranchers seem to believe that the state's laws and regulations are adequate, but they say there are too few enforcement personnel to keep tabs on all the activities.

Wes Norton of the Industrial Commission, admits there have been problems in the past, but he says the division's 27 positions, including 13 field inspectors, are fully staffed now, and "I think there is a much better job being done now than a year or two ago. It's something you don't get in line overnight."

+++

Randy Bradbury is a freelance writer living in La Moure, North Dakota. This article was paid for by the HCN Research Fund.

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS, PLANS, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL STUDIES CURRENTLY UNDER PREPARATION BY THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE — Bridger-Teton National Forest

To assist public participation and awareness of the Bridger-Teton National Forest program of work, the forest has prepared a listing of environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, preliminary scoping statements, special studies and other plans being considered for 1982.

Because of costs, this list is not printed here in entirety, but a copy is available upon request from the Forest Supervisor's Headquarters in Jackson, P.O. Box 1888, Jackson, Wyoming 83001, or the Ranger District Offices in Jackson, Kemmerer, Big Piney, Afton, Moran, and Pinedale, Wyoming.



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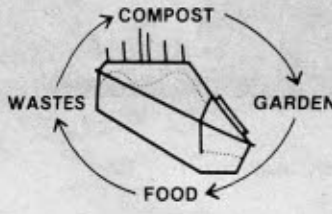


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BEFORE THE WYOMING INDUSTRIAL SITING COUNCIL NOTICE OF CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY AND WESTERN RAILROAD PROPERTIES, INC. APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT RAILROAD FACILITIES IN CONVERSE, NIOBRARA, AND GOSHEN COUNTIES, WYOMING

DOCKET NO. WISA-81-7

Pursuant to provisions of the Wyoming Industrial Development Information and Siting Act (W.S. 35-12-101 through 35-12-121, Wyo. Stat. Anno. 1977), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY AND WESTERN RAILROAD PROPERTIES, INC. HAVE FILED AN APPLICATION WITH THE INDUSTRIAL SITING COUNCIL FOR A PERMIT AUTHORIZING CONSTRUCTION OF RAILROAD FACILITIES IN CONVERSE, NIOBRARA, AND GOSHEN COUNTIES, WYOMING. The complete application was filed with the Office of Industrial Siting Administration on February 24, 1982. The Applicants propose to construct a line of railroad in Niobrara and Goshen counties, Wyoming, between Crandall (Van Tassel) and the Wyoming/Nebraska state line, a distance of 42.3 miles in Wyoming; to rehabilitate and upgrade a 45-mile portion of existing line in Converse and Niobrara Counties between Shawnee and Crandall, Wyoming; to construct a Wye track of 6.1 miles in length in Converse County, Wyoming between Shawnee and a connection with the existing Burlington Northern (B/N) joint line; to construct certain yard and railroad support facilities near Bill in Converse County, Wyoming; and to construct a microwave communication system for the project lines. These facilities will be constructed to enable the Applicants to transport low sulfur coal produced at Eastern Powder River Basin mines in Campbell and Converse counties, Wyoming by rail to a connection with the Union Pacific Railroad at Joyce, Nebraska.

The estimated cost of the proposed facilities exceeds the approximate \$88,000,000 (1982 dollars) cost criterion under W.S. 35-12-101(a)(iii)(B), thereby requiring that a permit application be filed.

Construction of the facilities is proposed to commence during 1982 and will be basically completed by October, 1983. Additional construction of passing tracks, signals and buildings will continue in subsequent years with final completion scheduled in 1987. Construction employment will peak in September-October, 1982 with a peak construction employment of 746. Construction employment will decline during the winter months and then increase to a second peak of 414 in May-June, 1982. The number of unit coal trains moving over the project lines will be one loaded and one empty train daily beginning when basic construction is completed in 1983. The number of trains will increase gradually as coal traffic volume builds. By 1992, 13 loaded and 13 empty coal trains will move over the project lines daily. The total number of persons required to operate the Wyoming portion of the project will be approximately 66 maintenance and operating personnel based at Bill, 5 maintenance personnel based at Shawnee, 31 maintenance personnel based at Lusk, 6 maintenance personnel based at Van Tassel, and 2 maintenance personnel based at Douglas and Node. A total of 85 supervisory, operating and maintenance personnel will be based at South Morrill, Nebraska.

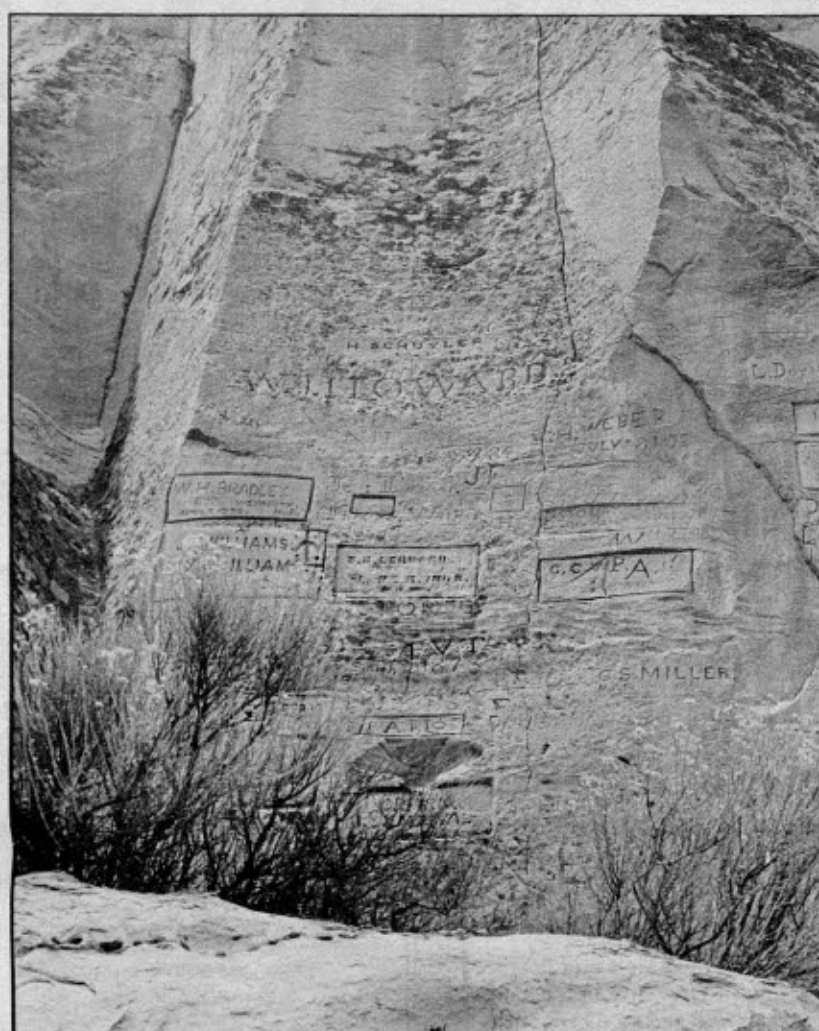
Copies of the application have been filed with the County Clerks of Converse, Niobrara, and Goshen Counties. Copies have also been forwarded to the Converse County Public Library, 3000 Walnut, Douglas; the Niobrara County Library, 476 South Main, Lusk; and the Goshen County Public Library, 2001 East A, Torrington, and are available for public inspection.

Persons desiring to become parties to the permit proceeding may do so pursuant to W.S. 35-12-112, by notifying the Office of Industrial Siting Administration in writing of their intent to become a party.

Limited appearance statements will be received in the matter in accordance with provisions at W.S. 35-12-112(c). These should be mailed to the Director, Office of Industrial Siting Administration, Suite 500 Boyd Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002.

Dated this 17th day of March, 1982.

Office of Industrial Siting Administration
Suite 500 Boyd Building
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002
(307) 777-7368



HANDW



Photos by Dale Schicketanz
Story by Dan Whipple

Few of us, when younger, resisted the temptation to carve our initials — and perhaps those of our sweet babbo — into a tree. Doubtless, we are all now conscience-stricken at the damage done that innocent tree, but it is there nonetheless. I always wondered whether, as the tree grew, the initials got further from the ground.

Graffiti is as old as humankind. Scratchings on the caves of Neanderthal man give archeologists evidence of the habits and neighboring animals of our ancient ancestors. Graffiti has been found on walls in ancient Egypt and in Roman catacombs. In Pompeii, archeologists discovered the words "Sodoma, Gomora" scratched into one wall.

The Anasazi of the southwestern United States scratched petroglyphs into sandstone canyon walls, securing themselves a peculiar sort of immortality, since the desert climate has preserved the drawings for a thousand years. The Anasazi graffiti is believed by some to have been identification and directions for nomadic relatives who followed the writer.

As the pioneers moved west along the Oregon Trail, they engraved their names on Independence Rock in Wyoming and on similar landmarks along other routes, like Inscription Rock in New Mexico.

Modern graffiti often takes on a political overtone, the most famous example being "Yankee go home."

During World War II, Kilroy was everywhere, though no one ever reported meeting him.

More recent graffiti usually runs to the profane and tasteless on the walls of rest rooms. It is my considered opinion that the quality of graffiti has declined noticeably in the past 15 years or so. One of the tragedies of modern life is that men never see the graffiti in women's rest rooms and vice versa. From limited experience swabbing out rest rooms in restaurants, bars and the like during previous periods of underemployment, I would argue that the women's graffiti is far superior to men's.

A woman named Laura Tahir gathered 517 samples from 54 different women's rest rooms in New York City libraries, restaurants and bowling alleys. The women authors (if that's the term) often used the space for communication, much like the Anasazi, rather than simple defacement. One anonymous writer would begin the message and subsequent writers would offer advice, encouragement or whatever. The hottest topic, Tahir reported, was romance, the subject of 18.6 percent of her samples.

It is a little hard, however, to figure out what was happening in this sequence reported in *Psychology Today*:

*Love is the answer!
No, Christ is the answer!*

*But Christ
Well, I'm
these type*

*Some s
God is
Nietzsche
Back in
Save So
A wom
bicycle.*

*There a
Renee I
And es
physics:*

Quarks

*There is
writing yo
— a tree,
you. Lord
Poseidon
is on the r
is as old
Erasing J
Pompeii a*

WRITING ON THE WALL



Upper left: petroglyphs, Newspaper Rock, Arizona.

Left to right: Inscription Rock, El Morro, New Mexico; Sinks Canyon State Park, Lander, Wyoming; Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona; Soap Lake, Washington; Chula Vista, California.

Below: Old Concho, Arizona.

*But Christ is God and God is love!
Well, I'm from England and I don't recall having
these types of problems.*

Some samples from other graffiti hot spots:

God is dead — Nietzsche.

Nietzsche is dead — God.

Back in a minute — Godot.

Save Soviet Jews — win valuable prizes.

*A woman without a man is like a fish without a
bicycle.*

There are jokes about transsexual tennis players:

Renee Richards wins mixed singles at Wimbledon.

And esoteric jokes from the world of particle
physics:

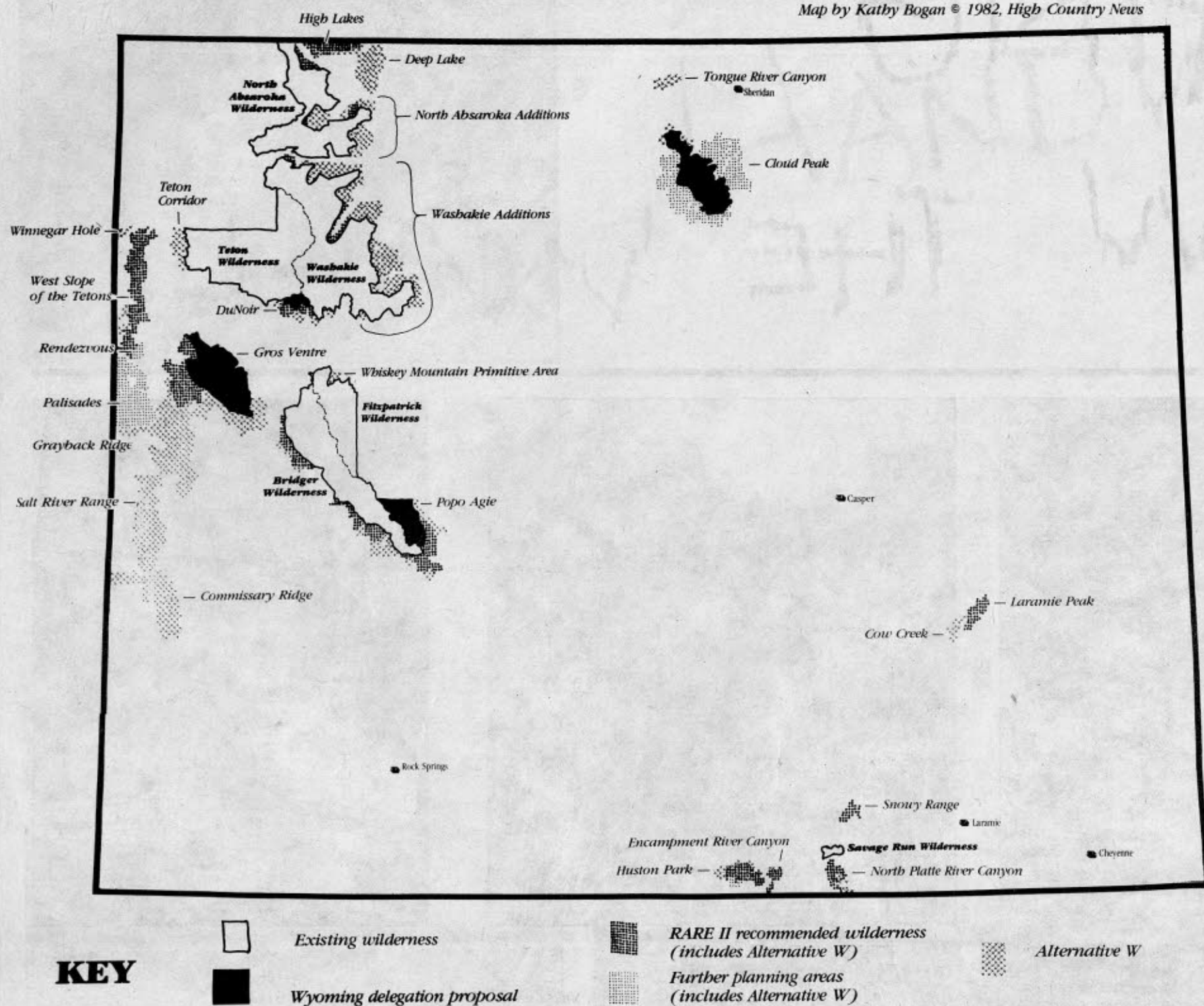
Quarks have charm.

There is something compelling and enduring about
writing your name or leaving your mark on something
— a tree, a wall, a rock — that will presumably outlast
you. Lord Byron scratched his name into the temple of
Poseidon in Greece. And graffiti, as objectionable as it
is on the rocks of your favorite canyon — "Jerry '79" —
is as old a form of expression as human life itself.
Erasing Jerry also erases Lord Byron, the stones of
Pompeii and the messages of the Anasazi.



WYOMING WILDERNESS PROPOSALS

Map by Kathy Bogan © 1982, High Country News



Wilderness...

(continue from page 1)

Alternative W proposes 10 additions in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, two on the Targhee National forest, 14 on the Shoshone National Forest, six in the Medicine Bow National Forest and two on the Bighorn National Forest. The Forest Service called for one in the Bighorn National Forest, four on the Bridger-Teton, five on the Medicine Bow, one on the Targhee and nine on the Shoshone.

The only area the delegation's bill would add to the wilderness system that is not now protected in a wilderness state is the Gros Ventre. The Forest Service and the Carter administration had recommended 290,000 acres of wilderness in the Gros Ventre. Alternative W called for a Gros Ventre Wilderness of 392,000 acres. However, the delegation's bill would declare 228,500 acres of the Gros Ventre wilderness. The 60,000 acres dropped out are in the Cache Creek and Little Granite Creek areas, which are potential targets of oil and gas exploration. Such activity has been vigorously opposed by the residents of nearby Jackson, Wyoming. Some areas were also left out because of their potential for timber.

The DuNoir is an approximately 44,000 acre tract on the Shoshone National Forest next to the Washakie Wilderness. It has been the subject of intense controversy for nearly 12 years. Louisiana-Pacific Co., which operates a lumber mill in nearby Dubois, has lobbied intensely to have only a small portion or none of the DuNoir declared wilderness, because of the area's timber potential. Conservationists want all

44,000 acres in wilderness. In the delegation's bill, the timber industry seems to have gotten its way. The boundaries are drawn to include only the cliffs above the DuNoir valley, with little timber.

The Cloud Peak proposal is a full 100,000 acres smaller than the Alternative W proposal, but is roughly the same size as that recommended by RARE II. Alternative W wants 113,000 acres of wilderness in the Popo Agie. The delegation is calling for 81,000 acres. RARE II had recommended about 100,000. Both of these areas are presently under administrative protection as primitive areas.

The delegation's bill also left out two areas that seem to have very little controversy surrounding them — the west slope of the Teton and the Teton Corridor. Hamilton said it appears the delegation is simply using these as bargaining chips and is prepared to add them to the legislation as compromises. The bill also omits all areas in the Medicine Bow forest, arguing the individual areas are too small.

The bill's language releasing wilderness lands is the harshest proposed to date. All Forest Service lands not included in the wilderness system after the passage of the bill "shall be managed for multiple uses other than wilderness, until...otherwise directed by an Act of Congress." In addition, it prohibits the consideration of any lands for new wilderness designation until after the year 2000.

According to Andy Weissner, a staff member on the public lands subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives, "The release formula will be a definite problem. Seiberling (Rep. John Seiberling, D-Ohio, subcommittee

chairman and strong wilderness advocate) feels that the laws should not be amended to change the direction of current Forest Service management policies. This language would amend the Forest Management Planning Act."

According to Weissner, the release language isn't really necessary anyway. He said, "When RARE II was finished, there were questions about non-wilderness. As of April, 1979, it was decided that all lands not recommended for wilderness or further planning would be made available. Since then, more than one billion board feet of timber have been sold, hundreds of miles of roads have been put on those lands and oil and gas leases have been let.

"The release has been proceeding apace. Now the timber industry is seeking to repudiate the compromise that was reached then. Originally, they wanted statutory language that there would be no more wilderness until the year 2000. We agreed to release language and they agreed to drop the 2000 deadline. Then, after the election, the industry saw a more cooperative Senate and administration and went back, saying they wanted language that we could never again look at wilderness. The Wyoming bill's release provision takes us back to step one — the 2000 deadline.

"They've upped the ante. In the Alaska, Colorado and New Mexico bills last year, all of the senators and congressmen from those states had agreed to the compromise."

The legislation is precedent-setting in that it would withdraw all wilderness lands in Wyoming from oil and gas leasing and exploration, although it would still allow seismic testing. This has

become a highly-charged issue in Wyoming since leasing was proposed on a portion of the Washakie Wilderness. The language would put that issue to rest.

However, Bart Koehler of the Wyoming Wilderness Association and a long-time wilderness activist said, "In its present form, the amount of land protected by the oil and gas withdrawal is miniscule compared with the amount of de facto wilderness that will be destroyed.

"Here you're starting with about one-half of the Forest Service recommendation. The delegation says they'll compromise, but how are you going to get close to anything acceptable when you're starting from such a low point? The Forest Service proposal was all rocks and ice. This is half of the rocks and ice."

Patty McDonald of Wallop's staff said, however, "We think the proposal reflects a good, fair approach. But the delegation wants to hear what people have to say and they are willing to make compromises."

However, it appears that the aspect of the legislation most troubling to conservationists — the release language — is the aspect least likely to be open to compromise. Paul Holtz of Simpson's staff said, "It's the strongest release language to date and it reflects their absolute agreement that those acres should not remain in a never-never land status. Further planning designations leave them not in multiple use. All three members thought that had gone on too long."

Traditionally, Congress has placed a very heavy emphasis on consensus by a state's delegation on wilderness legisla-



(continued on page 12)

Watt's 2001 wilderness odyssey

Interior Secretary James Watt dropped a bombshell on the February 21 edition of NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" when he proposed withdrawing all present wilderness and wilderness study areas from mineral development and oil and gas leasing until the year 2000. Watt denied it was a change in the administration's position, but it is fairly clear that the secretary was attempting to solve a problem of his own creation.

About four months after entering office, Watt circulated a memo with a list of management-by-objectives goals for Interior's program offices. This memo was leaked to the press. One of the goals for the solicitor's office was to "open wilderness areas."

The Wilderness Act of 1964 contains language allowing mineral activity in wilderness areas until December 31, 1983, provided that it is carried out in a method consistent with preserving the wilderness characteristics of the area. Before the Reagan administration, presidents and interior secretaries had generally viewed this leasing authority as discretionary, not mandatory. Exercising that discretion, they had not issued wilderness leases.

On October 19, 1981, the Interior solicitor stated "...we do not believe that the secretary can decline to issue mineral leases or permits solely on the basis

of a desire to protect the wilderness character of a particular area."

The issue of mineral development was most heated when discussing oil and gas leasing on wilderness lands. Rich hydrocarbon discoveries in the Overthrust Belt in Utah, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana spurred industry interest in leasing these areas. The Overthrust runs underneath much of the de facto and designated wilderness in Wyoming and Montana.

Apparently encouraged by Watt's overtures, the oil industry responded by filing about 1,000 oil and gas lease applications on 200 wilderness areas throughout the country. The first area to feel the heat was the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana. This area was withdrawn from leasing when Rep. Pat Williams (D-Mont.) sponsored a House committee resolution under the aegis of a little known emergency provision of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Watt reluctantly agreed to the withdrawal.

Then in November, the Forest Service recommended leasing on a portion of the Washakie Wilderness in Wyoming. The public outcry was loud, and the House Interior Committee imposed a six-month moratorium on wilderness leasing. Bowing to the pressure, Watt extended the moratorium until the end



Interior Secretary James Watt

of 1982, apparently to avoid injecting the highly charged issue into a campaign year.

Finally, Watt made his announcement that he would favor immediately closing wilderness to mineral leasing until the year 2000.

Environmentalists were at first uncertain how to respond. It was akin to the Christians discovering that the lions were vegetarians. However, after the full legislation was unveiled, the environmental community sent up a howl. They charged that the Watt proposal was really a "wilderness sunset" bill, in which all wilderness areas would be open to development after 2000.

Many conservationists cannot understand why there needs to be a sudden push to open wilderness areas after nearly 210 years of benign neglect by the mineral industry. The Wilderness Society sponsored a study that showed designated wilderness areas contain only 1.1 percent of the potentially discoverable oil and 1.2 percent of the natural gas in the country. Potential wilderness areas contain only 3.4 percent of the oil and 2.5 percent of the gas.

Fully 70 to 80 percent of the oil and gas is on state and private land, according to the society.

— DSW



West slope of the Tetons

Wilderness...

(continued from page 11)

unanimous on the proposal, Cunningham said that conservationists should be able to work through the delegation to get some changes. How-

ever, he said, "It should not pass in its present form."

Interior Secretary James Watt announced on the television show "Meet the Press" that he wanted to close all wilderness areas to mineral development until the year 2000. Watt told the interviewers, "We think these are special lands and ought to be preserved."

However, on closer inspection, it

appeared that Watt's proposal would protect the lands until 2000 and then open all wilderness lands for development. Wilderness Society chairman Gaylord Nelson said, "The proposal is a sham from the first line to the last. Instead of preserving wilderness, it will destroy it."

Apparently, however, the bill was dead as soon as it hit the halls of Congress. Public Lands subcommittee staffer Weissner said, "It's not going any-

where." A number of congressmen, including Wyoming's Cheney have said publicly the bill "will not fly."

In order to protect wilderness areas from oil and gas leasing and mineral development, conservationists are pushing for the approach taken by Rep. Phil Burton (D-Calif.). This would amend the Wilderness Act to permanently prohibit leasing and mineral development effective the date of passage.

Watt's proposal came in for sharp criticism at the Cody hearing despite Cheney's contention that the secretary "deserves credit for being willing to change." But Floyd Schneider of Pine-dale, Wyoming, said, "Who are these nameless, faceless people who seek to release public lands, who use our representatives and bureaucrats as spokesmen?"

A speaker for the Wyoming Heritage Society, a conservative group based in Cody, said that true public opinion was not represented at such meetings and that there was strong support for releasing more public land for multiple use management.

Conservationists in both Montana and Wyoming point to the irony of the unusual pattern of support the wilderness proposals have received. Both the timber industry and snowmobile interests have come out in favor of both the Wyoming and the Melcher plans, while wilderness advocates are unanimously opposed. Cheney and Williams have indicated a willingness to change the respective bills, but the Sierra Club's Hamilton said, "Everybody that doesn't have a commercial interest in this is opposed. It is symbolic of how far we have to go when Louisiana-Pacific says it favors this wilderness bill."

Geoffrey O'Gara contributed research to this article. It was paid for by the HCN Research Fund.

BULLETIN BOARD

DAMFIGHTERS CONFERENCE

"Saving Rivers in the 1980s," a conference on rivers, dams and national water policy will be held April 2-4 at the American Institute of Architects, New York Ave. at 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. The 7th annual "Damfighters Conference" will focus on the future of water resources. Registration is \$25 (make checks payable to River Conservation Fund) and some low cost lodging is available. Contact the National Conference on Rivers, 323 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

REVISED NFMA REGULATIONS

The National Forest Management Act regulations of 1979 have been revised because of their "length and complexity," according to the U.S. Forest Service. The FS invites comments on the revised regulations, published in the Feb. 22 *Federal Register*, Vol. 47, No. 35, by April 23. Comments should go to Charles R. Hartgraves, Director, Land Management Planning, USDA, FS, P.O. Box 2417, Washington, D.C. 20013.

SNOWMOBILE REGS PROPOSED

Snowmobile regulations proposed for Grand Teton National Park and the Rockefeller Memorial Parkway in Wyoming will continue under the 1980 interim policy, according to Park Superintendent Jack Stark. Snowmobile use will still be allowed in the Potholes roadless area. A limited number of copies of the proposed rules and environmental assessment are available from the Superintendent, Grand Teton N.P., P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, Wyo. 83102. Written comments on the rules should be directed to the above address by March 31.

HELP THE GRAND CANYON

The Grand Canyon needs your help, according to the American Wilderness Alliance's River Defense Fund. Letters urging the Bureau of Reclamation to review its environmental assessment findings on the proposed uprating of power generating facilities at the Glen Canyon Dam are needed by March 19 or soon after. Letters requesting an extended comment period should go to the BuRec, P.O. Box 11568, Salt Lake City, Utah 84147.

WYO. ENVIRONMENTAL MEETING

The Colorado River Salinity Forum report and an Audubon Society's unsuitability petition for potential coal mine land near Medicine Bow, Wyo. are among topics scheduled for the March 24 Wyoming Environmental Quality Council meeting at 10 a.m. in the Natrona Public Library, 307 E. 2nd, Casper.

SOLAR/WIND RESEARCH

"Solar- and Wind-Powered Irrigation Systems," a report published by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture concludes that wind-powered and non-concentrating photovoltaic systems may be cost-efficient power for irrigation by the year 2000. The report is available free from ERS Publications, Room 0054-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 (request by title and publication #AER-482).

PROTECTING FISH

The Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council will hold a public hearing March 26 in Missoula, Mont., to obtain initial public input on a regional fish and wildlife plan that will determine the fate of Montana's salmon and steelhead runs. The hearing will be held at the Village Red Lion Motor Inn, in the Blackfoot Room, 100 Madison, Missoula, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 to 10 p.m. Those wishing to make statements should contact Torian Donohue (503) 222-5161.

WOOD SELLER NEEDED

Firewood sellers, this could be for you. The National Park Service seeks a firewood concessioner for the Devil's Garden Campground at Arches National Park in Utah. A prospectus describing the three-year permit is available from the Superintendent, Canyonlands National Park, 446 S. Main, Moab, Utah 84532. Bids must be submitted to the Superintendent by April 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM LIST

Looking for environmental or nature films? The National Audubon Society offers a "1981 Filmography" with information about some 90 recommended films for \$4 from Film and Media Services, NAS, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

RUN AGAINST NUKES

The Grand County Concerned Citizens Coalition is sponsoring a walk/run from the proposed nuclear dump site near Canyonlands National Park, Utah to the the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City, March 19-21. The group plans a six day 60-mile hike through the canyon country around the dump site, followed by the U-235 Relay Run on March 28-29 from a point north of Moab, 235 miles to the Capitol. A rally on March 29 on the Capitol lawn will end the race. Contact Craig Rayle, Grand County Citizens Coalition, P.O. Box 405, Moab, Utah 84532 or (801) 259-8465.

ENERGY PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

A series of publications on alternative energy policy, legislation and use by state and local groups has been published by the Energy Project of the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies. A flyer detailing publications and prices is available from: Conference Publications, 2000, Florida Ave. NW, Room 407, Washington, D.C. 20009.

NUKE DUMP EA RELEASED

The Bureau of Land Management has released the draft environmental assessment on the Department of Energy's investigation of bedded salt formations adjacent to Canyonlands National Park in southern Utah for a nuclear waste dump site. Comments on the EA are due April 8 at either: BLM, Moab District Office, P.O. Box 970, Moab, Utah 84532; or BLM, San Juan Resource Area Office, P.O. Box 7, Monticello, Utah 84535. Copies of the draft EA are available at the above addresses. Questions or comments about the proposed nuclear waste dump should go to the DOE, Office of Nuclear Waste Isolation, 505 King Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43201.

COMMENT ON WYO POWER LINE

The Department of Energy's Western Power Administration seeks public participation in preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed replacement of power lines from Thermopolis to Alcova, Wyoming. Request a comment from the Area Manager, WAPR, Loveland-Ft. Collins Area office, P.O. Box 2650, Ft. Collins, Colo. 80522 or (303) 224-7231.

1982 CONSERVATION DIRECTORY

The 1982 edition of the *Conservation Directory* listing federal, state and congressional officials, committees and agencies involved in natural resource management and use, and conservation-oriented citizen's groups and international organizations is available from the National Wildlife Federation. Send \$7.15 for each copy to NWF, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

CLEARCUT PLANNED

The Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming is planning a 500-acre clearcut timber sale on Spread Creek, adjacent to Grand Teton National Park. The environmental assessment on the Gobbler's Knob sale is available for review at either the Gros Ventre District Ranger's office, 140 E. Broadway or the Forest Supervisor's Office, 340 N. Cache in Jackson. Written comments on the EA should be submitted to either office by March 22.

COLO. URANIUM MINE/DUMP HEARING

A public hearing on the radioactive materials license application of Pioneer Nuclear, Inc. for a new uranium/vanadium mill and tailings disposal site in San Miguel County, Colo. will begin at 9 a.m., March 22 in the all-purpose room of Norwood High School in Norwood, Colo. The hearing, conducted by the Colo. Department of Public Health, will include testimony by the public and conservation groups. Copies of a project summary are available at area libraries and at the Colorado Dept. of Health, 4210 E. 11th Ave., Denver 80220. Send written comments on the application to Albert J. Hazle, director of the Radiation Control Division at the above address, by April 9.

WYO. GAS LINE PROPOSED

The proposed Cave Creek gas pipeline system will be the topic of a public meeting held by the Rock Springs District of the Bureau of Land Management in Evanston, Wyoming. The BLM seeks to identify issues for an environmental impact statement on the proposed system, which involves multiple pipelines and a gas treatment facility. The meeting will be at the Ramada Inn, U.S. Hwy. 30 W., Evanston; March 30 at 7 p.m. Contact the BLM, Rock Springs District Office, P.O. Box 1869, Rock Springs, Wyo. 82901.

STATE OF WYOMING PUBLIC NOTICE

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE IS TO STATE THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1972 (FWPCA), P.L. 92-500 AND THE WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (35-11-101 et. seq., WYOMING STATUTES 1957, CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT 1973).

IT IS THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS TO (1) INDUSTRIAL FACILITY, (2) COMMERCIAL FACILITIES, AND (3) OIL TREATER FACILITIES, TO MODIFY AND (2) INDUSTRIAL PERMITS, AND TO RENEW

APPLICANT INFORMATION

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| (1) | APPLICANT NAME: | Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | P.O. Box 538
Allentown, PA 18105 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Painter Field Nitrogen Generating Plant, Uinta County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0031143 |

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. intends to construct and operate a nitrogen generating plant in the Painter Field, Uinta County, Wyoming. The Nitrogen is produced by the refrigeration of air and it will be used for enhanced oil and gas recovery. Pad washwater, laboratory wastewaters, and sanitary wastewater will all be discharged to a complete containment, non-discharging lagoon. Uncontaminated surface runoff will be allowed to drain off the site naturally. Atmospheric condensate (discharge point 001) will discharge to Long Hollow Creek (Class IV Water) via an unnamed drainage.

The proposed permit requires compliance with effluent limitations which are considered by the State to represent Best Available Treatment Standards. Monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required on a regular basis with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire March 31, 1987.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| (2) | APPLICANT NAME: | Bridger Valley Development |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | Bridger Valley Subdivision
1670 Washington Blvd.
Ogden, Utah 84402 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Uinta County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0031011 |

The Bridger Valley subdivision is a proposed development located near the town of Fort Bridger in Uinta County, Wyoming. The proposed development will have 720 permanent single family units. The method of wastewater treatment has not yet been decided, but the discharge will be to the Blacks Fork river (Class II Water).

The proposed permit requires immediate compliance with effluent limitations based upon the In-stream Water Quality Standards and National Secondary Treatment Standards. Self-monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required on a regular basis with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire February 28, 1987.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|
| (3) | APPLICANT NAME: | Airport Business & Industrial Center |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | Joss Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 1085
Rock Springs, WY 82901 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Uinta County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0031178 |

Joss Enterprises, Inc. is the developer of a 60 unit industrial and commercial subdivision located approximately five miles north of the City of Evanston, Wyoming. Wastewater treatment will be provided by an activated sludge package plant which will discharge to the Adin-Brown Irrigation ditch (Class IV Water).

The proposed permit requires immediate compliance with effluent limitations based upon National Secondary Treatment Standards and Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards. Periodic self-monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results quarterly. The proposed permit is scheduled to expire March 31, 1987.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|
| (4) | APPLICANT NAME: | Hanson Oil Company |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | P.O. Box 1515
Roswell, NM 88201 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Lite Butte Federal #1, NE 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 2,
T50N, R92W, Big Horn County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0031135 |

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

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

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease, which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date for the permit is December 31, 1984.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|--|
| (5) | APPLICANT NAME: | Townsend Co., Inc. |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | 210 Grandview Drive
Newcastle, WY 82701 |

FACILITY LOCATION:

Gose State #1, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 36, T38N,
R63W, Niobrara County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER:

Wy-0031151

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

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

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease, which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date for the permit is December 31, 1982.

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| (6) | APPLICANT NAME: | Conoco, Inc. |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | 907 Rancho Rd.
Casper, WY 82601 |

FACILITY LOCATION:

Leinzer Field - Conoco Weymouth 5-1, NE 1/4,
Section 5, T36N, R63W, Niobrara County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER:

Wy-0031160

Facility is a typical oil treater located in Niobrara County, Wyoming. The produced water is separated from the petroleum product through the use of heater treaters and skim ponds. The discharge is to Leinzer Stock Pond (Class IV Waters).

The discharge must meet Wyoming's Produced Water Criteria effective immediately. No chemical limitations have been imposed on this facility except for oil and grease (10mg/l) and pH (6.5 - 8.5). This is due to the extreme aridity of the area which allows for beneficial use of the water for agricultural purposes. There is no evidence to indicate that limitations more stringent than the Produced Water Criteria are needed to meet Wyoming's Water Quality Standards. The Department will continue to evaluate the discharge and, if necessary, will modify the permit if evidence indicates that more stringent limitations are needed.

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease, which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date for the permit is December 31, 1982.

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|-----|--------------------|--|
| (7) | APPLICANT NAME: | The Thunder Basin Coal Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Atlantic Richfield Coal Company |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | P.O. Box 1569
Gillette, Wyoming 82716 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Black Thunder Coal Mine,
Near Reno Junction
Campbell County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0024091 |

This permit is being modified to reflect a change in the Total Residual Chlorine limit. Because the receiving waters for this facility are Class IV Waters, the Total Residual Chlorine limit is being raised to 2.0 mg/l for outfalls 006 and 009. A limit of 0.5 mg/l was erroneously set in the December 14, 1981 modification of this permit.

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|-----|--------------------|---|
| (8) | APPLICANT NAME: | Glenrock Coal Company |
| | MAILING ADDRESS: | P.O. Box 398
Glenrock, Wyoming 82637 |
| | FACILITY LOCATION: | Converse County, Wyoming |
| | PERMIT NUMBER: | Wy-0028525 |

The Glenrock Coal Company operates an open-pit coal mine located approximately 15 miles north of the Town of Glenrock, Wyoming. A recent inspection by personnel of the Division revealed that one of the mine's settling ponds was receiving coal storage runoff water. Since such water is considered to be "process" water, the discharge from that point needs to be specifically identified in the permit.

The proposed permit specifically identifies the new discharge point as 001 and allows discharge into Bishop Draw (Class IV Water). The other authorized discharge point is 002 which is the outfall from the mine's sewage treatment plant which also enters Bishop Draw.

All effluent limitations are based on National "Best Available" Standards and Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards. Self-monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required on a regular basis with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire March 31, 1987.

STATE/EPA TENTATIVE DETERMINATIONS

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are invited any time prior to April 16, 1982. Comments may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division, Permits Section, 1111 East Lincolnway, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Enforcement Division, Permits Administration and Compliance Branch, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295. All comments received prior to April 16, 1982 will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling the State of Wyoming, (307) 777-7781, or EPA, (303) 327-3874, or by writing to the aforementioned addresses.

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

Public Notice No: Wy-82-003

OPINION

Playing the game: public input in NEPA planning

by Susan Tweit

In 1969, Congress responded to the environmental activism of the 1960s by passing the National Environmental Policy Act. Hailed by conservationists as a giant step toward establishing a coherent environmental policy and lambasted by industry as an unnecessary obstruction, the act attempted to integrate environmental planning into government activities and to encourage public participation in that planning. The results of the public input mechanism

GUEST EDITORIAL

have in general been disappointing — discouraging thoughtful planning and public participation rather than encouraging them. Both often occur in spite of, rather than because of, the complex and mysterious process developed by agencies attempting to comply with NEPA.

From the outside, the NEPA process might as well be a foreign culture with its own language and customs. It is a tangle of "scoping" meetings and packets, EAs (environmental assessments, FONSI (findings of no significant impact) and environmental impact statements (EISs). Faced with such confusion, it is a lot easier to lapse into apathy than to participate and try to have some impact on government actions. Apathy is dangerous, even in the most hospitable of political climates. It is much more so now in the era of "use 'em or lose 'em" resource management policies.

A brief guide to NEPA: The act requires federal agencies to prepare either an EA or an EIS when planning any major action, from building a dam to setting wilderness use policy. The EA is basically a short-cut to the long, complex process of preparing an EIS. Both EAs and EISs simply document the agency's step-by-step progress through government-style environmental planning.

If the EA shows that the planned action will not significantly affect the environment — a phrase open to interpretation — a FONSI is published and the agency goes ahead with its project unimpeded.

If, on the other hand, the EA shows the planned action will have significant environmental effects, an EIS must be prepared. This not only requires full-scale environmental planning, examining the effects and proposing alternative actions, it also requires public participation throughout.

Public participation, therefore, occurs at the discretion of the agency, dependent upon whether an EIS is prepared. Because EIS preparation is both time-consuming and costly, agencies understandably try to avoid it.

During environmental planning, agencies must hold public hearings or meetings to allow oral, as well as written, comment.

The process makes it easier to comment in writing because, as long as written comments are pertinent, all are considered.

Giving oral testimony is more difficult. Not only does it take more courage for the average person to brave the spotlights and confront the formerly faceless bureaucrats he or she is criticizing,

but testimony must often be submitted and approved in advance of the hearing. This quite effectively prevents many people from testifying.

It takes considerable energy and motivation for most people to express their views to the government. It takes only a little more time to express those views effectively.

Comments should be as specific as possible, but need not be technical. For instance, in the scoping process before an EIS is prepared, agencies are not interested in votes for or against the proposed action, but in determining what issues the EIS should examine, and why. The same goes for comments on the EIS documents themselves. The agencies are not simply taking an opinion poll on their choice of alternatives. They want to know why the public agrees or disagrees with their analysis of the situation or choice of alternatives.

Conciseness and clarity also make comments more likely to be heard. If nothing else, the government gets a relief from its own bureaucratic lingo and verbosity.

The government's willingness to listen to "the People" varies. Though not a requirement of NEPA, the public hearings on the Project Independence blueprint prepared by the now-defunct Federal Energy Administration are an example of government lip service to public input.

In 1974, in response to the general hysteria over the Arab oil embargo, FEA (now a part of the Department of Energy) was preparing Project Independence, basically a computer study of energy source options designed to make the U.S. energy independent. The FEA ceremoniously scheduled 12 public hearings across the country to gather input.

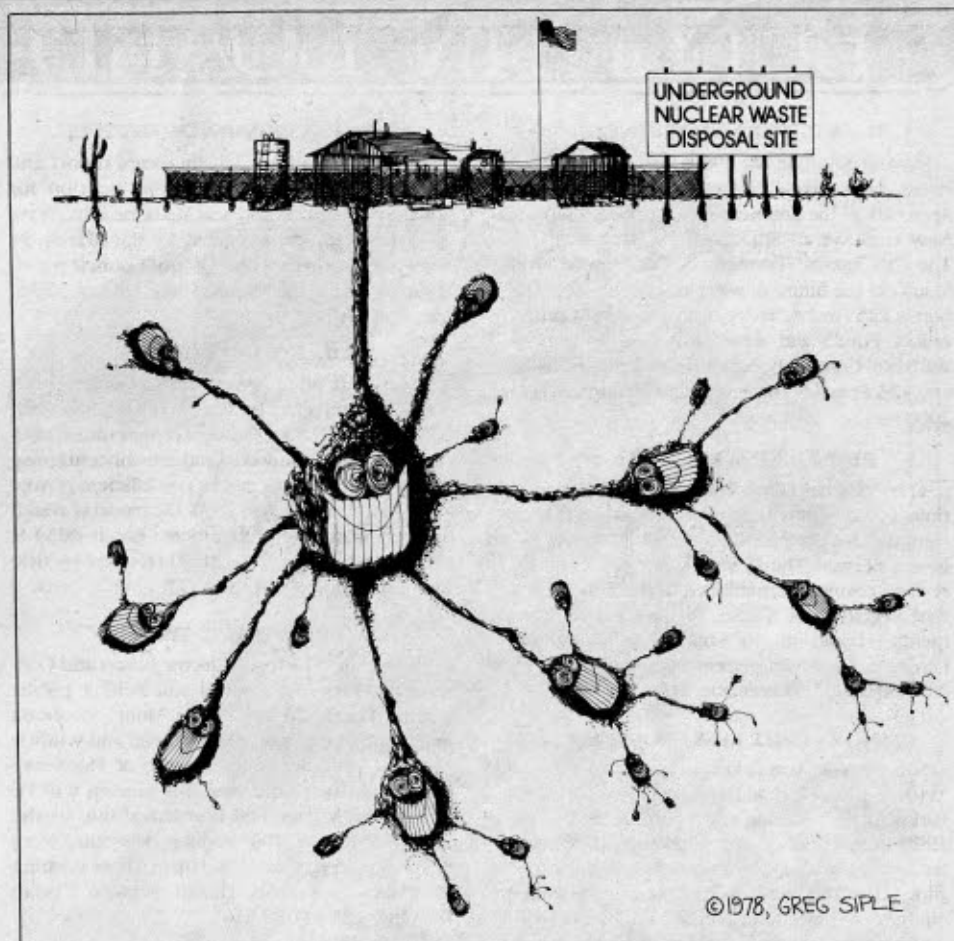
When the public hearings were first proposed, then-NEA administrator John Sawhill balked at taking verbatim transcripts of the testimony because of the cost involved. The argument that it would be hard to convince people that you were listening to them if their testimony wasn't recorded finally persuaded him to do so. However, the hearings were not even half over before the Project Independence report was completed.

This fiasco was an example of the problems of trying to legislate ethics. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. If people want to find a way to subvert the system, they will.

In other cases, the blame for the system's failure rests, at least in part, with the public. People either didn't care enough about the issue to attend meetings or write letters, or they failed to take the time to understand what the government was asking.

The Shoshone National Forest officials in Wyoming recently requested written comment on the proposed oil and gas exploration and leasing in the Washakie Wilderness area. They received a large number of responses, overwhelmingly opposing leasing. Unfortunately, forest officials had wanted to know what issues pertinent to exploration and leasing the EIS should cover, and most respondents simply cast their vote on whether leasing should or shouldn't be allowed.

Here there was a failure in communication, not an intentional subversion of



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the public's right to express its views.

Even assuming one hundred percent willingness on the part of government agencies to allow the public to take part in environmental planning, the NEPA process may still be doomed to failure for several reasons.

While the process explicitly defines requirements for written documents and inter-agency cooperation, it creates large loopholes with poor definitions of important terms. For instance, the definitions of both "exclusions," actions which do not fall under the environmental planning process, and "significant environmental effects," are open to broad interpretation. The process should be overhauled to clarify when and where it is to be applied, rather than concentrating on rigid formats and timetables.

Communication, however, is the

worst failing of the process. The government just can't speak in plain English, in simple terms that are easily understood.

The brightest hope for changing the process seems to be learning to use it and taking every opportunity to express one's views whenever possible. Government agencies are accountable to the public — if told over and over of the public's dislike of the system they will eventually respond. However, as with all inert matter, a great deal of energy must be applied to start things moving.

Until the rules change though, it is up to the public to learn to play the game effectively and make its voice heard.

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Susan Tweit is an intern with the *High Country News*. She worked with the U.S. Forest Service in Cody, Wyoming for four years as a botanist.

LETTERS

CODE COERCION

Dear HCN,

After reading Joan Nice's article about building codes (*HCN*, 2/5/82), I await the midnight knock on the door: Will a minion of the governor learn of my failure to have running water for a major portion of the winter, or that my home is hard pressed to maintain 55° "in all habitable rooms," or that I have installed some wiring without the blessing of a bureaucrat?

The issue is coercion, not codes. Without coercion, those codes drawn up to protect obsolete or monopoly labor practices or to protect certain manufacturers or suppliers (e.g., in some areas, those of metal pipe) would be moot. Without coercion, it would be harder for communities to discriminate against people in disfavor, such as eccentric owner-builders or fundamentalist churches. Without coercion, innovation in housing would be less inhibited. Without coercion, houses could be less expensive.

I say keep the codes, but only as a method of evaluating a building. Prospective purchasers could hire an expert to check the building against the UBC or whatever and list exceptions, which the prospect could choose to ignore, to use in negotiations or to flee from. This approach would attend not only to "unscrupulous developers" but to old buildings as well as new, unlike much current regulation. Owners of buildings open to the public could be required to post discrepancies from code. After an arsonist succeeded in killing some ten people at a Holiday Inn near here in 1979, partly because of unopenable windows and building materials that

emitted especially poisonous smoke, the company was able to rebuild the damaged area in kind, yet today's customers don't likely know that.

Even Ken Kern admits that a building ought not to be a hazard to neighbors. But most codes pertain to the alleged safety or fancied living standard of a building's occupants, who should be permitted to make informed choices. So what if such choices horrify Hocker; one man's "enduring public nuisance" is another's castle, as the rash of monstrosities in Boulder, Colorado, attests. Informed choice would negate the energy dogma of the mysterious Matthews, who would allow a rich man to build an efficient, 16-room house while requiring a poor man to forego a small home with inexpensive, inefficient heating even though it would consume less fuel than the big house.

So I'm trembling in my boots, which are soiled from dredging a cess trench. Shhh! Don't tell Columbus I'm living in modern squalor.

Douglas A. Long
New Concord, Ohio

GOOD START

Dear HCN,

Your February 5 article on a possible nuclear waste dump near Canyonlands National Park was a good start on the subject. I hope you will have in-depth articles in the future on the dump's impact on this area. For instance, the project will attract 4,000+ people. Where will they live? Monticello, 45 miles from the dumpsite with a population of less than 2,000, is the nearest town.

The Davis Canyon preferred site appears in the upper right and corner of your front page photo — in the clear

Chasing the wild (bureaucratic) geese

Much has been written in the popular press about the Reagan administration's attempts to plug leaks in its ship of state. Like virtually every other administration, the current one has been occasionally embarrassed by the untimely release of information that makes it look less than illustrious — or even competent.

And, like every other administration, rather than addressing the problems pointed out in the material leaked, the Reagan administration has adopted the attitude that the bearer of bad tidings is somehow responsible for them. Thus the cry is not "Solve the Problem," but "Plug the Leaks."

In response to this type of behavior by the people in power, there is a good deal of self-righteous hand-wringing by the news media. Countless columns are written about the public's right to know, the press's right to find out and the goodness of open government. Most of this is almost as nauseating as the initial flurry of memos generated by the administration.

It is, however, instructive to pursue information with a bureaucracy that has adopted this head-in-the-sand attitude about disclosing information.

A few weeks ago, I was told by a usually reliable individual that the National Park Service had recently completed a very interesting study of how the changes in the Clean Air Act proposed by the administration would affect air quality in Grand Canyon National Park. This individual felt these findings were fairly alarming. And he gave me the name of the Park Service person who had done the study.

Now, this information would be interesting, but hardly earth-shattering. There are as many theories about what these air changes mean as there are interest groups. Still, the information shouldn't have been classified under any current interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act or, more importantly, of common sense.

So, I called the Park Service office in Denver that had conducted the study. I asked for the man whose name I had been given and identified myself as a reporter for *High Country News*.

His secretary put me on hold. A few minutes later she came back and explained that, because of a memo from the public affairs office, Mr. A. couldn't talk to me. I had to call the public affairs office in Washington, D.C. "They aren't going to know anything about the study," I told the secretary.

"I'm sorry, sir, that's all I can do," she said.

"Well, can you tell me if such a study exists?"

"We do lots of studies like that. You'll have to call Washington."

There are few things more irritating to a reporter than knowing you have found the expert on a subject you are researching and then being told to call a public relations representative. These people are skilled at deliberately obfuscating information. Nevertheless, I called. The number I was given was the main Interior Department office for public affairs.

"Well, I don't know why they told you to call here," said the flack. "You ought to talk to public affairs over at the Park Service."

So I called the Park Service public affairs. "Well, I don't know anything about that study," said the Park Service flack. "Why don't you talk to the air quality people?" He gave me the name of a D.C.-based air quality person.

"Well, we wouldn't know anything about that study here," said the air quality expert. "You'd have to call the people in Denver who did the study." And, he proceeded to give me the name and telephone number of the man in Denver who initially refused to talk to me and sent me on this snark hunt in the first place.

For an administration that admires efficiency — if not exactly candor — in its dealings with the public, this whole runaround seemed like a colossal waste of time and money for everyone involved.

In this particular case, I never found or saw the study I was looking for. That is not because I didn't think I could — there are ways of getting material through the good auspices of "friendly sources" elsewhere in the bureaucracy — but because the information seemed limited in scope and essentially not worth further pursuit in the face of impending deadlines. However, the consistent attempts by administrations to completely manage the flow of information are an enormous waste. In addition, they generate a lot of misinformation.

This administration is not alone in trying to stop leaks. Every one in recent memory has attempted it — liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat. It never works, but it gobbles up everyone's time.

So, next time you call the government to learn something about an issue of interest, you should know, in the words of Bureau of Land Management Public Affairs Chief James Monroe, "We welcome interest from the public and want to do our best to respond to it in a timely and accurate manner within the guidelines regarding timing of any information release." They just won't tell you anything.

— DSW

area about 3/8 inch from the top and 3/8 inch from the right side.

Owen Severance
Monticello, Utah

CLEAN WRITING

Dear HCN,

Although I am a subscriber from a far-off midwestern state, I want to add my voice to that of Myra Connell in supporting clean and good writing in HCN. You have a high-level mission and it is not necessary to degrade your publication in any way to accomplish that mission.

From reading some of your attempted responses after Connell called you to

task, I detect your efforts to justify the publication of the Don Snow piece without editing after you had committed your sin of publishing it. Just admit your error and let it go at that.

Yes, we are all conscious of what is heard on the street and in bars, and also on TV, but that is no reason that you have to adopt such an approach.

As another example, I cite the last page of HCN on January 22, 1982. Chip Rawlins should have been edited a bit to clean it up. If your writers do not like such cleaning up, then they should write for some other publication.

Thank you for thinking further about this issue of good and clean writing.

Emil H. Jebe
Ann Arbor, Michigan

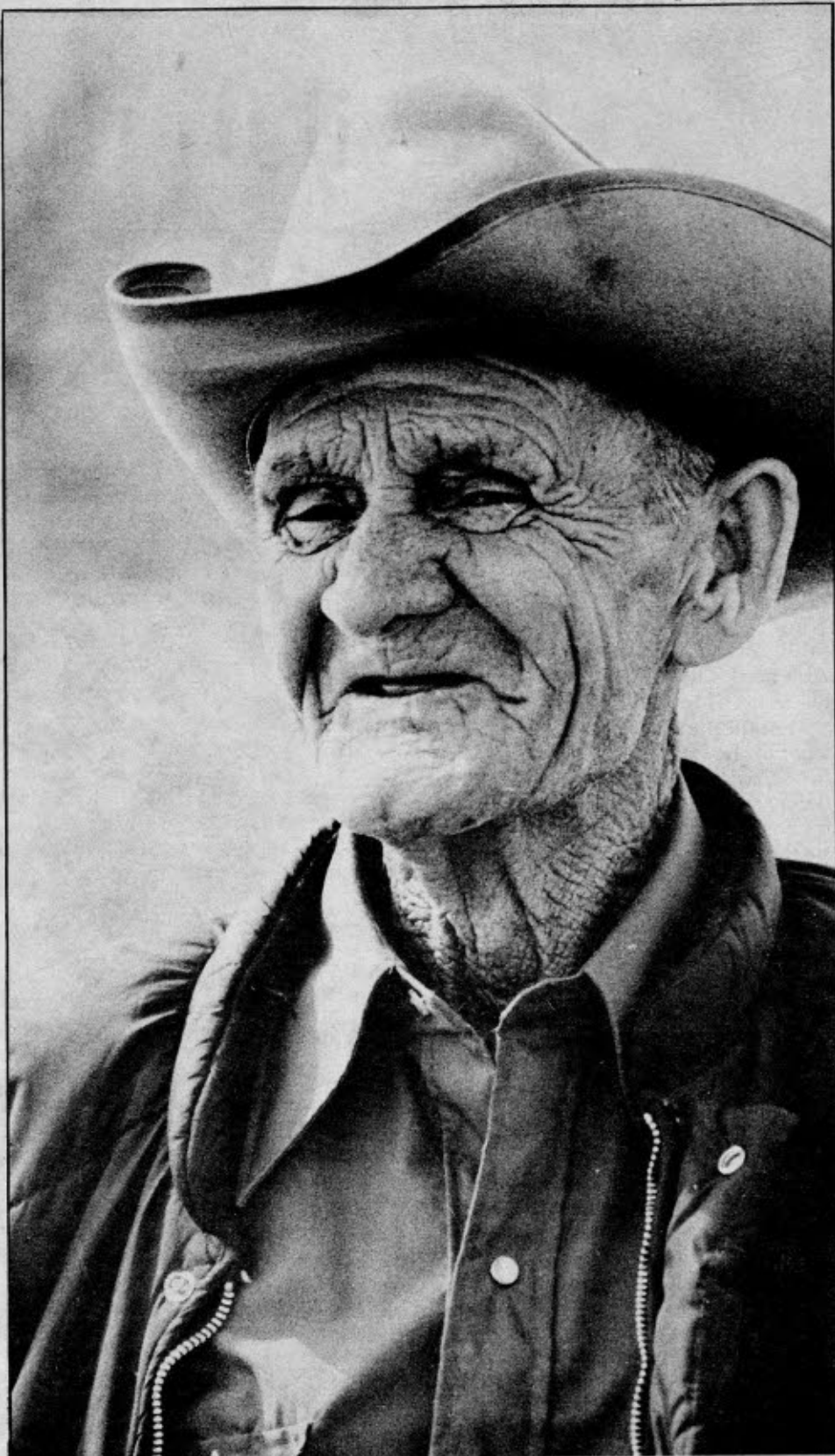


Photo by Kathy Bogan

The West we know has many faces. Cattle moving to summer pasture through the streets of small towns. Clear spring water from the kitchen tap. Elk bugling in the high mountain meadows.

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Devil in the woodwork

by Chip Rawlins

Most people in the West today are city folks. They live in a house on a street with a lot of other houses, tied into a web of power and water and gas lines. They get home from work about the same time every day with many choices of how to spend their evening: television, radio, stereo, movies, discos, bars, meetings. They may feel personally lonely or isolated — a common urban complaint — but not for lack of options.

But there are a lot of other places too small to be cities or even towns; places with names like Cora or Joe's Valley or Big Sandy or San Ysidro. There might be a post office and a crossroads store with a bar in the back room, isolated among the rolling sagebrush hills or sandstone mesas or granite peaks; an ocean of space and quiet against which to measure a human body and single heartbeat. The kind of places where a visiting city cousin's first question is: "What do you people do around here, anyway?"

The answer is mostly work. Cowboys and miners and loggers know work in a different way than most other folks. Long hours and tough going are part of the life. Reputations in these places center around how a person works. A typical comment: "He don't look like much and he's mean when he's drunk, but he's a good hand. Works hard."

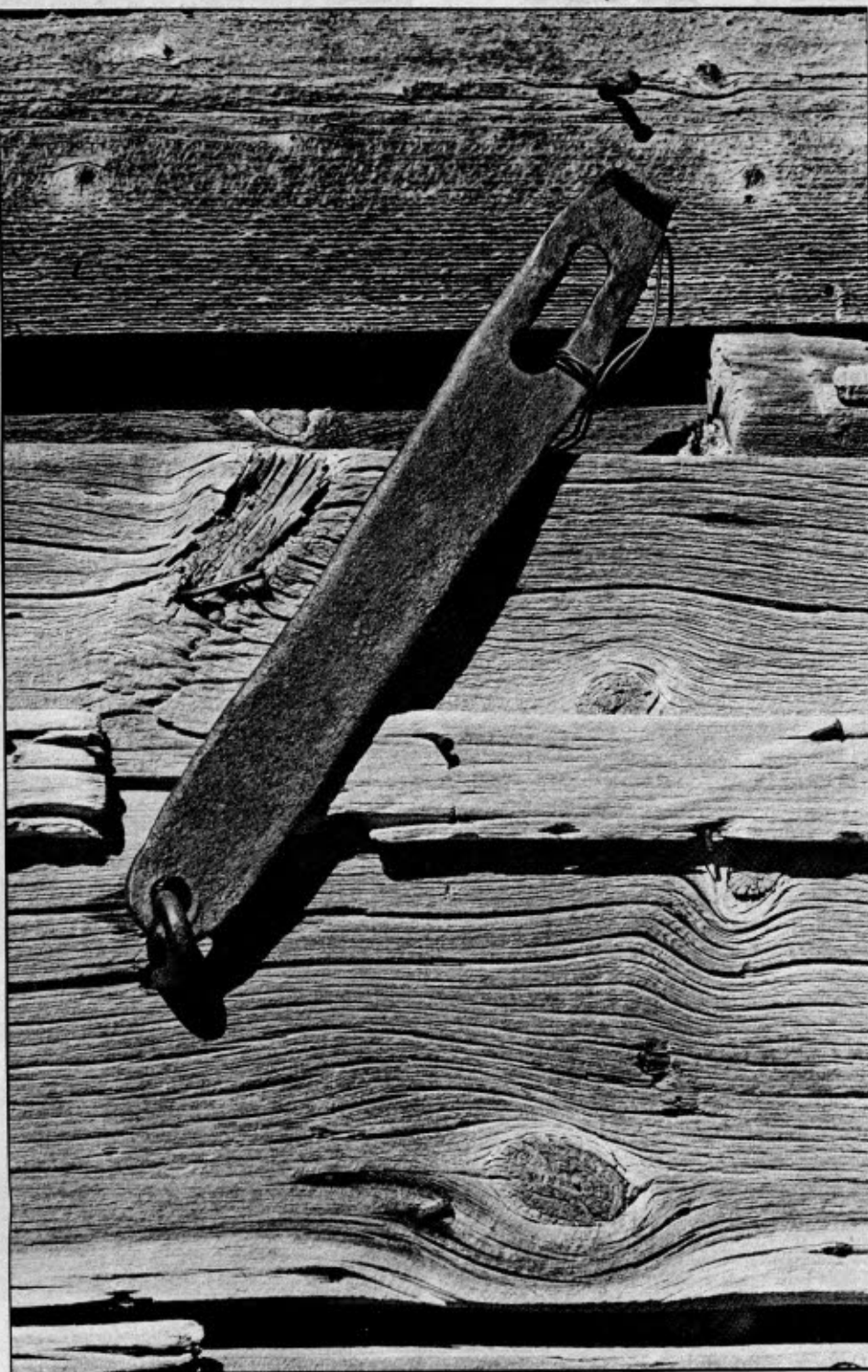
In places with small populations and little industry, the job choices are few and people who stick with something tend to get good at it and take pride in their skill. Money is important, but it isn't the cure-all it seems to be in the cities. Cowboys, for instance, take pride in busting their tails for about the same wage as a counter-girl in a hamburger joint. And their investment is considerable: boots, \$125 and up; hat, \$50; chaps, \$100 or so; rope, \$30; a new saddle can go well over a thousand dollars. And the value of good gear is more functional than symbolic of status.

Working people need to play. There might be fishing, or dancing-drinking-fighting at the nearest bar big enough to support a live band. Or a party at the neighboring ranch twenty miles away. It's not an every-night occasion. Rodeos or brandings or logrolling contests are woven into the daily round of labor, mixing business with the pleasure of seeing friends and tipping a few beers behind the chutes, the enjoyment more tangible for its rarity.

When winter roars down and fortifies mountain fastnesses with drifting snow and biting cold, life can get rough. Most outdoor work is over till the spring thaw and ranches lay off hands, the cowboys drifting for Texas or Arizona or taking jobs in town and parking their worries on a barstool for the duration. The fringes empty out and civilization draws in her skirts, leaving only the committed or the unwary on the periphery.

Some folks keep up the pace. An elderly, small-outfit rancher said, with an ironic glint in his eye, "People who move out here have the wrong idea about winters. I used to get up before dawn and hitch up a team and dig hay to spread for my own cows. Every other day I'd snowshoe over seven or eight miles to the feedground and do the same for the elk herd and then snowshoe back. I was running a trapline — twenty miles or so — and building cabins so we could put up a few hunters and dudes to make ends meet. Me and my wife were busy all year and happy that way. Bone-tired a lot of the time, but too busy to be bored."

But there are other hibernants (winterers in the fur-trade parlance): hunt-



ing guides who hire on as winter caretakers for a lodge, cowboys who have saved enough to have a grubstake and rent for a place twenty miles past where the snowplow turns around, or carpenters flush from a summer building boom who anticipate a winter of goofing. It's fine for awhile. Lots of hours to read or wander around on snowshoes in the woods or sit by the stove with coffee and talk.

But feeding a few horses and splitting a few armloads of wood don't fill up the short days and the nights are long and arctic. Snow stacks up to the eaves, the wind howls and the cold seems to crouch in the corners of the cabin, waiting.

Letters are written to close friends and then to casual acquaintances. A list of projects is compiled, finished and crossed off, and the last pair of holey socks is darned. If there's a spouse or a sweetheart in residence, you run out of words and spend hours in a relative silence that gets itchy in time, like a set of wool underwear worn too long. The supply of beer or wine or whiskey that was supposed to last all winter is gone by the middle of January.

There are a lot of names for the feeling: cabin fever, the woodsies, going Injun, stir-crazy. It's a claustrophobia that attacks people cooped up in apartments or ships at sea or submarines, but it seems to have a special, chilling grip for those far out in the proverbial boondocks. Every part of the fringe has its own quota of horror stories: an old sheepherder found frozen in

his chair, face turned to the wall and a pile of well-thumbed *Reader's Digests* on the board floor. Plenty of wood in the woodbox and stores of food in the cupboard, but the doctor said he died of starvation. Or a newly married couple turn on each other with a hatchet and a butcher knife after three months in a snowed-in lodge, all their nightmares distilled into one shattering moment of rage. Or a young idealist, compelled by a vision of the simple life in austere surroundings is discovered in late February by the driver of the county snowplow walking aimlessly down an icy road, emaciated, bearded, with frozen hands and feet, having lost his ability to do much except stare and mutter in a language known only to himself.

Fortunately, most hibernants don't suffer to such extremes. Some enjoy the experience and take a certain pride in their newfound ability to hold two-hour conversations with their dog or to

count the knots in the pine paneling every night before bed, with a different total every time. A sense of humor is essential. It helps to tell yourself you're becoming colorful or charmingly eccentric rather than fearing an imminent plunge into the deep end.

I used to go out every night and howl with the coyotes. After diligent practice, I got good enough that they began to howl back. I came to relish the nightly session and got the impression, after a month or so, that they were looking forward to hearing from me. My girlfriend came to visit and, after an initial bout of fascinated loathing, decided the practice was "cute." But she resolutely declined to accompany me after the first few nights. I don't think the idea upset her as much as the intense feeling I put into it. Our concepts of sanity and normal behavior seem to have diverged at that point.

For determined winterers, it helps to develop daily rituals: building a fire, doing exercises till the coffee is ready, keeping a journal, carving erotic sculpture in the roof beams. Anything is fine that seems worthy or feels right. There's a rare opportunity to refine esoteric skills: spitting accurately, cooking fried eggs exactly the same every morning, breathing through one nostril, estimating the number of peach slices in a can, peeling an orange one-handed, or sampling exotic food combinations — like a marshmallow omelet — without embarrassment or ridicule. There is a feverish glow of freedom in doing something undeniably weird just for its own sake.

We humans are a social species. If years in sheep camps and wall tents and snowed-in shacks teach anything, it is that wild country, for all its power to enlarge the soul and the vision, doesn't need people in the least. Mountains and deserts don't return your love, regardless of its depth. The far fringe, especially in winter, can be a very lonely place. It's like loving someone who doesn't care whether you stay or go.

The way you emerge from the hills after a long sojourn depends a lot upon how you go in: intelligence, alertness, calm, humor and most good social qualities are also good solitary ones. A broken-down cowboy past his prime repaid me for an evening's ration of beer with fifty years of open-range wisdom and finished a memorable drunk by saying, "I've been chased by bears and moose and bulls and women, and near-kilt by lightning and rank horses. But I always pulled out somehow. The only thing I could never get away from was my own miserable self. So, by hell, I just had to learn to like the son-of-a-bitch."

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Chip Rawlins is a freelance writer from Cora, Wyoming. This article was paid for by the HCN Research Fund.

Ahead:

HCN begins a series on the use of toxic chemicals in the Rockies, starting with the pesticide-duck connection in Montana. While we're in Montana, we spend a day with Governor Ted Schwinden. Then we'll head south to Arizona to investigate the century-old struggle over water rights between the White Mountain Apache Indians and the Bureau of Reclamation.

