

High Country

news

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His 33-month legacy

What Watt Wrought

Even in defeat, Secretary of Interior James Watt has achieved a certain triumph. He has denied the fruits of victory to those who finally beat him.

Thanks to his 'joke' about the Coal Commission, Watt has created the impression that he shot himself out of the saddle. But those who have worked to defeat Watt say he didn't shoot himself; they say he was already beaten when he made his now famous remark. In fact, they say he made that remark because he recognized that he had been beaten once and for all.

Watt's defeat, they say, came in the United States Senate -- a Republican-dominated body which had been his staunch supporter. But in September, twenty Republicans joined the Democratic minority to cripple Watt's programs.

The Senate voted 63-33 to deny Watt the power to lease coal at his discretion, to forbid the leasing of certain key off-shore oil and gas tracts, to forbid drilling in Wilderness, and so on. Probably as rankling as the prohibitions was the fact that the bill ordered Watt to do something he'd sworn he wouldn't do -- to buy additional National Parks land.

The day after his Senate defeat, Watt went before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and gave a gloomy speech about the state of the nation. "The world is ready to ignite, and your Secretary of Interior has to deal with 535 members of Congress that don't seem to be concerned about the future supply of energy in America."

The one 'light' remark in his pessimistic, angry speech concerned the ethnic makeup and physical attributes of the coal leasing commission Congress had earlier thrust on him.

Watt's stunning defeat in the U.S. Senate (The House had been voting against Watt for several sessions) can be seen as part of a pattern. For example, almost all of the hundreds of changes he has made in the federal strip mining regulations are in court. Many of the changes he's made in the rules governing coal leasing are also in court.

Not only had he run into legal opposition when he changed rules and regulations; he had also been compelled to enforce regulations he tried to ignore. Interior recently

agreed in court to enforce coal mining regulations -- some of them carrying criminal sanctions for operations -- that it had ignored.

The same picture emerges in oil shale. In coal, Watt inherited a coal leasing program from the Carter administration that he had modified. In oil shale, Watt had to create from scratch a leasing program. The one he tried to create would have let the Reagan administration lease billions of barrels of oil shale in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming before the 1984 election.

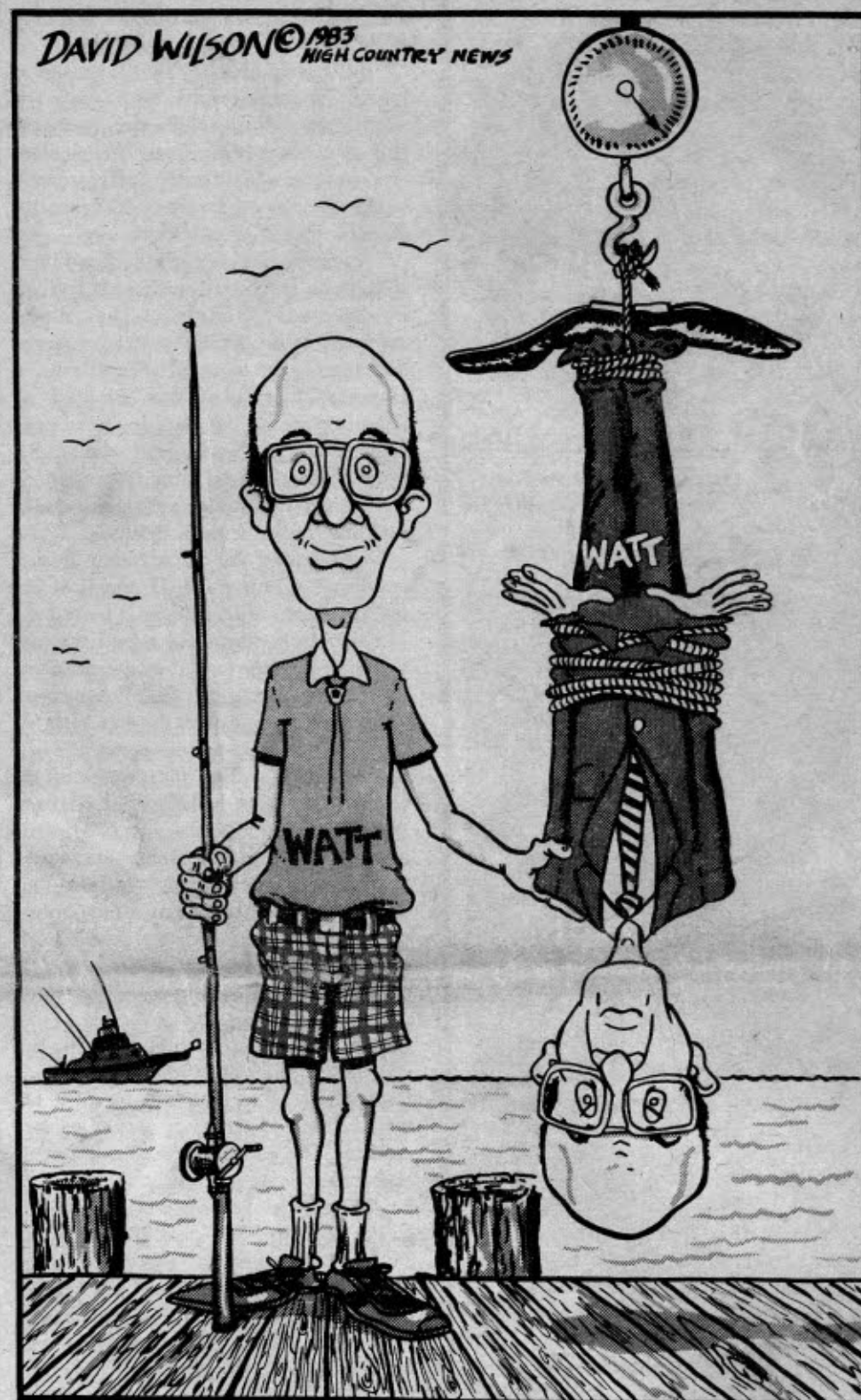
But his leasing program was stopped dead by a unique coalition of industry, the oil shale states, environmentalists, and local Colorado counties and towns. That same coalition is now trying to create a new leasing approach to take the place of Watt's defunct program.

The story on the sale of public lands and drilling for oil and gas in Wilderness is much the same. Either Watt was stopped by Congress, was stopped by the courts, or halted action himself in response to pressure. The story on the leasing court fight in the Palisades area on the Wyoming-Idaho border (HCN, 10/14/83) is one example of the multitude of such fights.

It would be false to imply that Watt lost every battle he fought. In fact, he was consistently successful in changing the internal makeup of his gigantic department. Its 50,000 to 80,000 employees are spread among the BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Parks Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Mines. Watt succeeded in replacing many of the top employees in these agencies with people loyal to himself. Where he didn't replace, he often eliminated jobs, and the people along with them.

The veteran of Washington's bureaucracy also used the budget process in a masterful way to change Interior's direction. He downgraded or eliminated spending on research, collection of data and environmental and resource analysis, and increased spending on leasing of resources.

Watt's strategy, then, was to change people, spending patterns and rules and regulations. On that foundation, he was going to build the



large-scale leasing of coal, oil and gas tracts, oil shale, off shore oil leases, and the like.

In general, he succeeded in building his foundation, although the pending lawsuits could change that. In some cases, he also achieved his goals. He bought no new parklands, he drastically increased oil and gas leasing, he held two large coal sales, he stopped doing resource and environmental research and analysis, and he put many BLM Wilderness Study Areas into non-Wilderness status.

But as of the moment, he appears to have failed on the big things. For the time being, there is a moratorium on coal leasing. Large scale oil shale leasing is certainly dead. The selling of private lands, assuming it was ever a serious effort, is stopped. New oil

and gas drilling in Wilderness areas is stopped.

The questions now all concern the future: to what extent will Watt's policies survive Watt? Has he laid the foundation on which William Clark will build Watt's house?

Or will Clark be the helpless inheritor of Watt's situation, ringed by lawsuits and by a new Congressional and public resolve to guide Interior along a path opposite to the Reagan administration's choosing.

Inside this special public lands issue are stories describing Interior today, and the direction in which the department, and the 700 million acres of land it affects, may move.

[See related stories on pages 10-14.]

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Dear friends,



High Country News

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This week, *High Country News* could have had three times as many pages as it has. We could have easily doubled the paper's size just by including all the information we accumulated on Interior Secretary Watt. We then could have added another 16 pages or so by printing the newspaper we intended to print before the Watt resignation burst upon the West.

But discipline, in the form of a budget, prevailed, and the paper is its normal size. Watt aside, the theme of this issue is the gradual, unwelcome discovery that Wilderness Areas can't really be treated like wilderness. Benign neglect won't work.

An illustration is provided by Janet Robertson's detailed article on Indian Peaks near Denver. The most attractive parts of that area have been damaged or destroyed by intense use. Happily, that use has created a reaction -- co-operation between concerned residents and the U.S. Forest Service. And that co-operation has created a management plan which just may revive Indian Peaks.

Just in case you think Indian Peaks is unique, we have Bill London's story on an Idaho Wilderness conference. The conference attracted ten times as many people as expected because of its theme: managing the Wilderness areas the nation already has. It's a problem whose time has come.

It could be that it took time to recognize the problem because Wilderness opponents often argued against Wilderness designation by saying that such areas attract too much use. The argument was suspect because it often came from people who wanted to mine or log, which doesn't preserve an area either.

Out of HCN's founding town of Lander, Wyoming, comes an article by Marjane Ambler on allottees -- Indian landowners who charge they were cheated out of their oil royalties by Amoco. The landowners have come together to seek justice.

There are, as always, several pieces on WPPSS, the Washington Public Power Supply System, which may become as famous as the Tower of Babel, or Howard Hughes balsa aircraft, or any of the other scores of large-scale technological miscarriages. A story by former editor Dan Whipple concerns a safety challenge lodged against the only WPPSS plant that has a chance of getting into operation. The safety problem was first revealed in the pages of *High Country News* back in December 1982, in an interview with Stuart Sandler, a welding engineer on the project. Sandler charged that welding on the project was deficient. The story was ignored at the time, but has now surfaced.

A Son of WPPSS hotline discusses the problems run into by a Wyoming electric co-operative -- Lower Valley Power and Light in the Jackson area. An audit reveals that Lower Valley is living extravagantly, with some of the extravagance related to excess travel and possibly neglect of the home operation due to Lower Valley's involvement with WPPSS.

One of the things we hope Lower Valley doesn't cut out is its role in helping to bring back the peregrine falcon, whose return is discussed in another hotline.

The formal preaching this week is found on page 15, in an editorial on the coal industry and Watt, and in a guest column by Toby McLeod on the West as America's garbage pail.

The Watt part of the issue is introduced on the front page by cartoonist David Wilson. He shows

Watt as a fisherman having just caught a fish that looks remarkably like Watt. It is the national perception of Watt's resignation -- that he did himself in, and Wilson has represented it masterfully.

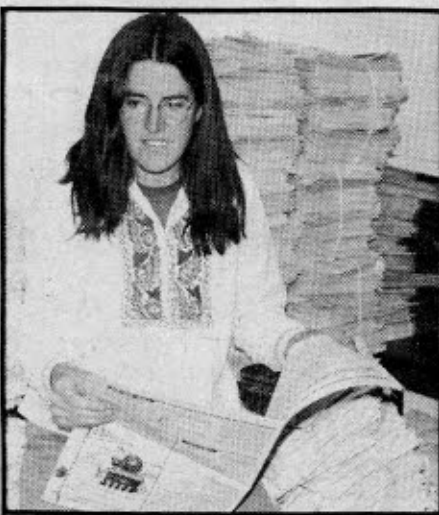
But much of the issue is devoted to a contrary view: that Watt was not done in by his big mouth. Several of those interviewed hold that he was done in by the cumulative reaction to his policies, with the coup de grace being the September 20 Senate vote which tied his hands on coal leasing.

The question is far more than a matter of history. If Watt was done in by his personality, as the National Coal Association argues, then William P. Clark should be able to implement the policies Watt established. But if Watt was done in by the lawsuits and legislative reaction to his policies, then Clark will be spending a helpless 15 months in office. That question will be answered only by time.

An interesting question about Watt's years at Interior is how much resistance he met from career professionals among the department's 500,000 or so employees. Stories by Glenn Oakley on Idaho, Jim Baker on the BLM, and Don Snow on Montana touch on this question.

Oakley describes the firing of two state BLM directors who didn't take enough direction, while Snow writes that Interior employees in Montana were able to resist or modify some of Watt's policies.

The stories on coal and oil shale leasing give no indication that there was effective internal resistance. At that policy level, it appears Watt was in total control of the bureaucracy, which spent the last 33 months attempting to undo much or all of the work that they had spent the previous decade doing. The battle against those policies was instead carried on outside Interior, in the courts and Congress.

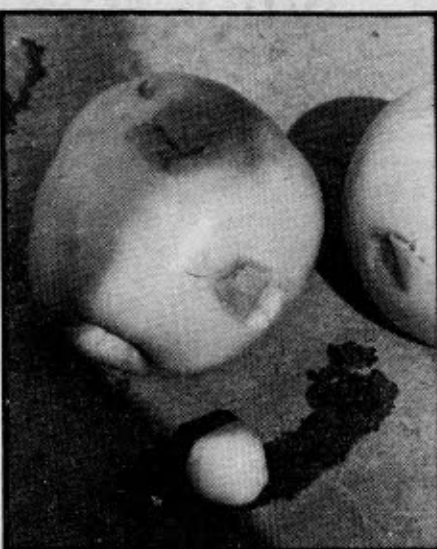


Mary Moran

Sometimes we look over at Mary Moran, the *High Country News* intern, and wonder how we functioned without her. She pitches in, doing everything from proof reading and research to writing bulletin board items and hotlines (see page 4). Her goals as an intern are to learn more about environmental issues in the region and to sharpen her writing skills.

Mary began work October 1, fresh from a two-month, solo bicycle trip through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, southern Idaho and briefly, Utah. That was a break from her most recent job as a geologist with a groundwater consulting firm in Socorro, New Mexico. With a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Texas and a master's degree in geology from the University of Wyoming in 1981, her choice of a major story for *High Country News* during her three months here isn't surprising. It will be on the geologic

history of the Rockies. We're looking forward to it.



The hailstone is in the foreground

Most of us at least have the illusion of safety and security in our everyday lives. That's not true of those who till the soil, as a hailstorm in Colorado's North Fork Valley showed in early October.

From our office, the enormous hailstones were curiosities. But to the apple growers around us, the hailstones were a potentially lethal threat. As it happened, hail damage was spotty. But also as the picture of a punctured apple shows, hail can wipe out an apple crop just as it is about to be harvested.

At best, fruit growing in the Rockies is a high risk situation. Growers can get frozen out in the spring, diseased out in the summer, or -- if they survive those seasons -- hailed out in the fall. The fruit people we know in the North Fork joke that they never go to Las Vegas -- when you spend all your working days gambling, slot machines and poker tables have no appeal.

We've discovered that some readers who think they're receiving two copies of each *High Country News* are not really. The second copy is a "sample," and in our purging of sample lists some subscriber names inevitably sneak through. So, if you get an extra HCN, just pass it along to a friend or library.

We recently read two articles which may be of interest to *High Country News* subscribers.

The first, in the October 1983 *Atlantic*, explores man's relationship to the nearly-vanished condor, or naked vulture. The Kenneth Brower article raises the same wildlife "management" questions as the grizzly question. It pits those who would "save" the condor through intensive management and captive breeding against those who wish to give the condor room to breathe and breed by preserving its natural habitat. It's as bitter a battle as could be imagined.

The second article, titled "Servile Education in America," is an exploration of the perpetual question: education for what? Author V.J. Emmett, Jr. argues that the professional and career approach is education for serfdom -- or perhaps for robot-dom. There is nothing soft about Emmett's arguments for a liberal education, and against the hard-nosed "practical" career education that is today's trend.

The "servile education" article appeared in the philosophical weekly, *Manas*. While supplies last, a free sample of the September 21 issue can be obtained by writing: *Manas*, P.O. Box 32112, El Sereno Station, L.A., CA. 90032.

--the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Wilderness areas are getting beat up

It was, as R. Max Peterson, Chief of the Forest Service, said, "historic ... a landmark conference, something we should have done 15 years ago." Expected to draw 40 participants, the First National Wilderness Management Workshop held in Moscow, Idaho October 11-13 drew nearly 400, with the four major governmental agencies represented along with conservation groups.

The focus was "Taking care of what we've got," rather than the on-going debate about adding more wild lands to the preservation system. Writer Michael Frome, in his keynote address, called attention to the "shabby" condition of our wilderness areas.

"I haven't seen a single wilderness in this country being managed as it should be," he said. Repeatedly, representatives from federal agencies as well as environmental groups cited examples of wilderness areas that have been degraded since passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The decline, they said, was due primarily to uneducated uses of wild lands by a growing population interested in recreation.

"As Dr. Arnold Bolle of the Wilderness Society put it: 'Recreational overuse or misuse may result in areas being loved to death. They may become empty shells; wilderness in name only.'"

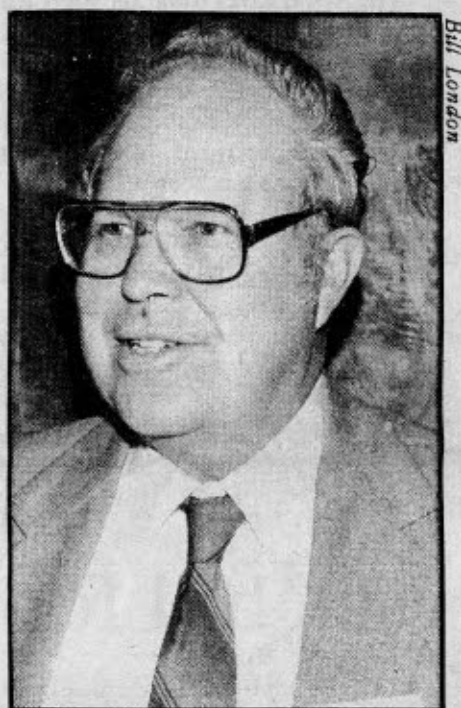
Other threats to wilderness that were discussed included most of the activities now allowed on wild lands, including grazing and mining, and external threats such as acid rain.

The management focus narrowed down to finding a balance between two philosophical approaches. One stresses managing wilderness so that people can "use it"; the other stresses preserving a natural ecosystem. Max Peterson pointed out that in the 1960s the Forest Service settled on the

ecosystem approach which led to alarm as user-pressure on fragile environments increased. Now, Peterson said, his agency takes an "enlightened view," which means using minimum tools to protect wilderness both for its own continuance and for use by people.

How to find a proper balance took up a great deal of conference time. Participants asked if good management included the use of flush toilets at camps at high elevation, as now occurs in the Ofenokee Wilderness? Should requests from American intelligence-gathering agencies to install top-secret data-gathering equipment on mountain peaks in Wilderness be allowed?

Those and other questions were not fully answered at the workshop, although they were asked for the first time in a national forum. What participants did do was identify concerns along with a range of actions



Max Peterson

to take. One need identified was that of developing wilderness management professionals; another was for continuing research on the impact of people on wilderness. As Max Peterson said, "Some of the conventional wisdom is wrong."

According to research done at the Forest Service's Wilderness Management Research Work Unit in Missoula, Montana, even one or two uses a year at a high-elevation campsite will seriously impact a wilderness site.

Another need, not surprisingly, was for adequate funding, although the directors of four federal agencies could offer no hope for more money to manage wilderness. "The time is past for us to expect more money from Congress," Peterson said. He suggested greater efficiency and an extensive use of volunteer labor, along with user fees.

Joyce Kelly, the BLM's director of recreation, wilderness and cultural resources, agreed. "Volunteers can help us be more cost-effective, so we can live with our present funding constraints," she said.

The workshop was organized by the Wilderness Research Center at the University of Idaho and its director, Dr. Edwin Krumpke, with the help of Michael Frome, the workshop's program chairman. Agency participants included the National Parks Service, Forest Service, BLM, and Fish and Wildlife Service. Near the end of the workshop, Max Peterson suggested that the information developed form the basis of an "action plan" to guide wilderness management nationwide. He proposed a steering group of representatives from the four agencies and user groups which would meet again under the direction of the University of Idaho.

-- Bill London

Frome was the catalyst

Russell Dickenson, Director of the National Park Service, labelled him "our national conscience on wilderness." For more than twenty years, in speeches, a half-dozen books and innumerable articles, Michael Frome has eloquently supported the rights of wild places and wild creatures. Many of the key participants at the University of Idaho's Wilderness Management Workshop said that they came because Frome had asked them.

In 1958, at age 38, Frome's life dramatically changed course. Quitting a secure job in Washington, D.C. in the public relations department of the American Automobile Association, he became a free-lance writer, freeing himself from the small compromises and restraints that accompany employment. He is still happy with that choice: "I don't think there's anything that wrecks principle more than a steady paycheck -- I can hew to principle and purpose of my own choosing without fear or favor."

Also at that time, at the invitation of the Forest Service, Frome took a trail ride in the Bridger Wilderness in Wyoming. "It was a turning point for me. I was overpowered by the sense of space, history, and the romance of the West. It was like a Western movie come to life."

He became a dedicated and militant environmental protector. "I used to be a great confrontationalist; I fought everybody at one time or another," he recalls. The confrontations became most bitter during the 1971 Congressional hearings on Forest Service clear-cutting. "That was war," Frome explains. Later, he became one of the casualties. Within a few years he was fired by both *American Forests*, the publication of the American Forestry Association, and *Field and Stream*. He had been writing regular, no holds barred, columns on environmental matters for both magazines and had offended powerful interests.

That didn't stop him. He kept on writing and speaking, but his tactics changed, even mellowed, with time. Realizing that there were good people in all the bureaucracies he had fought, and the mess things would be in if those good people quit, Frome began to write about them as well. "I still don't want to back off from the truth, though," he says.

He communicates through books (his latest, entitled *The Forest Service* is due soon), his columns (in *Western Outdoors* and *Defenders* magazines) and now as a teacher (Visiting Associate Professor of Communica-

tions and Wildland Recreation Management at the University of Idaho). He also continues to name those in industry, management agencies, and environmental groups who he thinks fail to fully protect our resource heritage.

And he is still, at age 63, enjoying the outdoors. Training this summer for an intended climb of Mt. Rainier, he ran a race of 9 1/4 miles in less than two hours. He's also trying out many of the new ideas circulating on the college campus -- a diet with a natural emphasis, meditation, yoga, exercise. "It's such an exciting world, why should I quit learning?"

-- B.L.



Michael Frome

HOTLINE

Son of WPPSS

A Wyoming utility which is part of the ill-fated WPPSS project has troubles at home. Lower Valley Power and Light, which serves Northwest Wyoming, has been told by an auditor that it could save enough money to pay a large chunk of its contested \$20 million WPPSS debt. The Jackson-based co-op was cited by Price Waterhouse for excess staff travel, overstaffing, too many vehicles, excess inventory, and the like, according to the *Jackson Hole News*. Ironically, much of the travel was in connection with the abortive WPPSS project. Thus far, the courts have ruled that Lower Valley need not pay its \$20 million share to the WPPSS bondholders.

A falcon comeback



Immature peregrine falcon

It was a good year for the peregrine falcon recovery program in Wyoming.

Nineteen young falcons were released at sites in the western part of the state and by the end of summer, eighteen had reached independence. That is, they were capable of capturing smaller birds. In comparison, 33 birds were released in the previous three years with only nineteen reaching independence.

Before 1970, a decline in young falcon births accompanied the use of DDT and other now-restricted pesticides. After the Wyoming Game and Fish Department documented that no viable breeding populations of peregrines were left in their historic habitats, the state initiated a reintroduction program. It is a cooperative effort by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, the National Elk Refuge, Lower Valley Power and Light and private citizens. Young falcons are obtained for release from the Peregrine Fund Inc. of Fort Collins, Colorado.

Wyoming-released birds should begin nesting soon, says biologist Bob Oakleaf, who adds the program is already bringing results. There were 20 reliable observations of peregrine falcons in the release areas last year compared to an average of one or two observations a year before the release efforts.

Because "every observation of peregrine falcons is extremely important," Oakleaf asks Wyoming residents to report any sightings to the state Game and Fish Department (307) 777-7736.

HOTLINE

Calling young foresters

Forest Service chief Max Peterson said that his agency is planning to expand the volunteer programs next summer to include young people ages 14 to 17. Called the Touch America Program, it has received an enthusiastic response from sponsoring organizations even before getting underway.

According to Peterson, who announced the program at a press conference at the Society of American Foresters national convention in Portland, Oregon, the program will have three goals.

First, it will give youngsters, who have not been included in most past forest volunteer programs, the opportunity to participate as a group in forestry and environmental activities. A small group, the exact size of which is still undetermined, will be supervised by one adult to increase the amount of work being done by regular staff.

Second, it will provide a public benefit in increased services available on the forests. And third, it will educate young people about natural resources and environmental decisions.

An arms link

The encirclement of Rocky Flats may not have been complete, but it was impressive.

Protestors gathered eight miles south of Boulder, Colorado October 15 to "link arms" around the 17-mile circumference of the Rocky Flats weapons plant. The crowd, protesting the build-up of the nuclear arms race, was estimated to number between 10,000 and just short of the 17,000 to 18,000 needed to complete the circle. Rocky Flats manufactures plutonium "triggers" for nuclear weapons.

More than 100 counter-protestors rallied at the southeast corner of the plant. Some flew small airplanes around the plant shouting hard-to-hear slogans down at the crowd. One airplane pulled a banner reading "More Nukes, Less Pukes."

After two hours of organizing and distributing themselves, the protestors faced inwards toward the weapons plant. Taps were played on trumpets. A short silence followed. After singing *We Shall Overcome*, the human chain dispersed.

The Rocky Flats event was sponsored by the Colorado Nuclear Freeze Campaign and a coalition of more than thirty other groups. The event was one of the first in a week-long series of nuclear arms protests throughout the United States and Europe. The series of events emphasized the public sentiment against planned December deployment of U.S. Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe.

--Mary Moran



Indian landowners go after Amoco

Lander, Wyoming. Showing a distrust of the Interior Department to protect their rights, 70 individual Indians who own oil filed a lawsuit October 18 against the Amoco Production Company.

The members of the Allottees Association from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming allege that Amoco did not pay royalties on 1.3 million barrels of oil during an 11-year period from January 1971 to March 1982. They are seeking either the return of that amount of oil or an unspecified amount of money as compensation. They also claim punitive damages for both accounting and field violations of lease requirements. They specifically allege that the company used resettle meters and engineered piping and storage pits that bypassed meters.

A spokesman for Amoco, which is based in Delaware, said he had not seen a copy of the complaint. But based on company records and an internal audit, "the lawsuit is without merit," said Richard Nichols, who works in Amoco's Denver office.

Billy O'Neal, a Shoshone rancher who is president of the association, said he and other individual Indian oil-owners, known as allottees, became suspicious when oil thefts were reported from tribal leases in the Lander field three years ago.

"The allottees have more land and wells in the Lander field than the tribe, so we figured if anyone was being shorted, it was probably us," he said.

Allottees own minerals as the result of the General Allotment Act of 1887, which divided many tribes' reservation lands into 160-acre

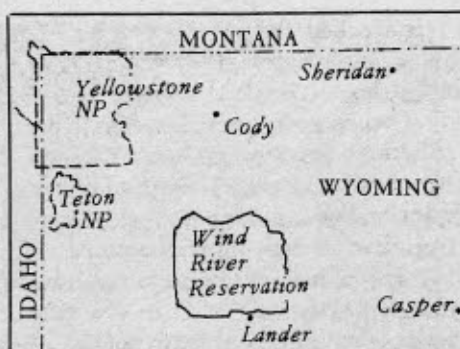
parcels. They were distributed to "competent" Indian adults so they could become farmers. The policy was reversed in 1934, but heirs of the original allottees now own 10 million acres, compared with 40 million acres owned by tribes in the lower 48 states.

O'Neal's organization finally convinced the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1982 to contract with two attorneys to audit the allottees' leases. The results of their investigation were turned over to the BIA three weeks before the suit was filed. One of the attorneys, Carol Connor, said that when the audit began, she discovered that the Minerals Management Service had audited only tribal leases in the Lander field in response to the widely-publicized allegations of theft from the field. Allottee leases were ignored.

"The tribes had more political power," O'Neal explained. "We are just individuals." But O'Neal said he harbors no ill-will toward the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribes. "They were hurt -- just like us."

The Wind River tribal oil theft led to a congressional investigation, radical changes in the federal royalty management system, and eventually, in May 1982, to a lawsuit by the BIA cancel Amoco's tribal leases. That lawsuit still has not been resolved.

When the audit report on allottees surfaced, O'Neal was not confident that the Interior Department would respond quickly. "This stuff gets tangled in the bureaucratic tape. It could get stuffed away and nothing would happen for ten years." Consequently, the association decided to file the lawsuit in federal district court in Cheyenne, Wyoming.



Asked about O'Neal's allegations, Richard Whitesell, area BIA director in Billings, Montana, said, "I don't think we have been doing a very good job for allottees before Mitchell." In *U.S. vs Mitchell*, the Supreme Court in April 1980 confirmed the federal government's responsibility to allottees in a timber case in Washington state. Whitesell admitted that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been more responsive to tribal government than to allottees.

BIA decided to hire attorney Connor because it was not satisfied it could get a good audit from the Minerals Management Service, and because it lacked sufficient experts within the agency to do it, Whitesell added.

Connor said it is crucial that the BIA fulfill its responsibility to allottees as well as to tribes. An allottee herself from the Fort Peck Reservation, Connor has been a champion of allottee rights for several years.

"We're talking about the poorest people in the country. But unlike other poor people, these people have land and have resources. So how come this is not helping them?" she asked.

--Marjane Ambler

There's no crystal ball for U.S. energy

The 1983 Colorado Energy Conference held in Grand Junction October 14 offered experts, a talk by Congressman 'Mo' Udall, (D-Arizona) who was not enthusiastic about synthetic fuels, and agreement that we face an unpredictable energy future.

Consultant Daniel Yergin served as the panel's moderate. "Conservation is our major energy source and will continue," he said. Yergin, co-author of *Energy Future: Report of the Energy Project at the Harvard Business School*, pointed out that although energy conferences boomed after the 1973 oil shock, many predictions were wrong. Oil prices, he

ventured, would stay down until the late 1980s.

The energy witch-hunt in this country was unfortunate, he added. Utilities blamed Big Government and environmentalists blamed Big Oil. "Thank God for the environmentalists," he said, "or we would have more power plants."

A nuclear power plant proponent on the panel was Joseph Plante of Stone & Webster Engineering in Denver. Plante said he supported breeder reactors, reprocessing spent fuel, and "one-stop licensing" for nuclear plants. Early licensing, he said, would save 100 percent of the costs of building a nuclear plant.



Ray Kogovsek, Morris 'Mo' Udall

The conference was chaired by Congressman Ray Kogovsek (D-Colorado) and coordinated by the Columbia Institute for Political Research in Washington, D.C.

--the staff

Welds questioned at WPPSS

Just when it appeared that the Washington Public Power Supply System was ready to get at least one power plant on line, a Portland, Oregon-based group called Coalition for Safe Power has asked the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission to withhold the operating license for WPPSS plant No. 2 near Richland, Washington.

The coalition says that there are numerous uncorrected construction deficiencies in the plant that render its operation unsafe (*HCN*, 12/10/82). The group's petition includes an affidavit from former WPPSS welding engineer Stuart Sandler. He says there was no quality control assurance program for welds that were made to

correct deficiencies spotted in earlier inspections.

WPPSS says those welds have already been corrected, pointing to the repair of 118 pipe welds in about 18 days to make them more resistant to cracking. The Coalition contended the repairs were not properly made. The group also said there were problems with electrical cables and in other areas.

NRC officials said that the petition will not automatically result in delays for the plant. But there could be additional delays if the NRC decides to take further action as a result of the petition. No timetable has yet been established for NRC review of the petition.

--Dan Whipple

BARBS

It takes scores of movies.

Will "The Right Stuff" help Democratic presidential candidate John Glenn? Reagan aide James Baker says: "I can't believe the voters are going to be basing their voting decision on a movie."

The crowded sky approach to tourism.

The Colorado Tourism Board is about to unleash on an unknowing public the first stage of its \$3 million tourism promotion campaign. The theme -- to be developed in radio jingles, in TV ads, and in print -- is: "Guess I'd rather be in Colorado." That bit of lyricism is followed by: "Guess I'd rather be out where the only crowd I'll see is in the sky."

Denver's brown cloud is there to stay

It's called the "brown cloud" or the "Denver haze." That people used to move to Denver because of the city's pristine air has become an ironic reflection of how things have changed. The brown cloud, laments Mayor Federico Pena, is "what has come to symbolize Denver."

Those hard facts prompted policymakers, industry people and citizens to attend an October 12 conference sponsored by the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC).

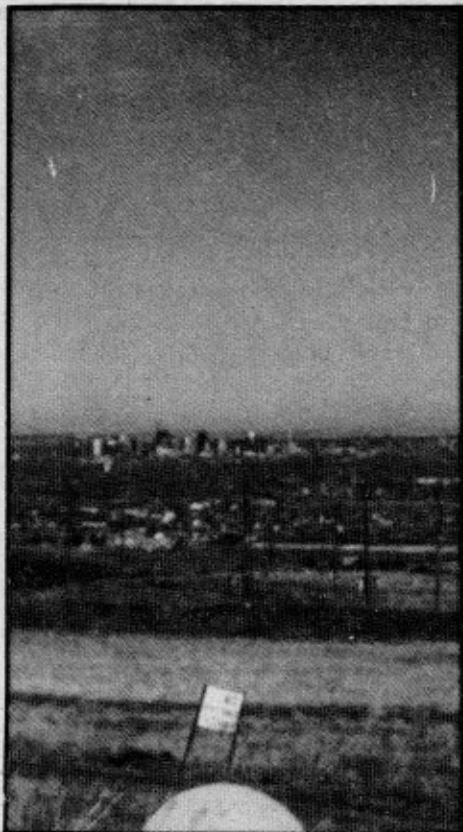
Denver's brown cloud stretches over most of the sprawling Front Range metropolis, wrecking views of the Rockies and the city's self image. But Denver is not alone. Bob Stevens of EPA's Office of Research and Development estimated that Albuquerque's haze problems may be "three times as bad" as Denver's. Officials in Oregon, Western Colorado ski country and Montana are battling haze-producing smoke from wood stoves and fireplaces.

Denver's haze is caused by sunlight reflecting off tiny particles of dust-like material suspended in the air. Scientists at the conference agreed that the three main emission sources are motor vehicles, wood burning and industry. A main purpose of the conference was to see what could be done to solve the problem.

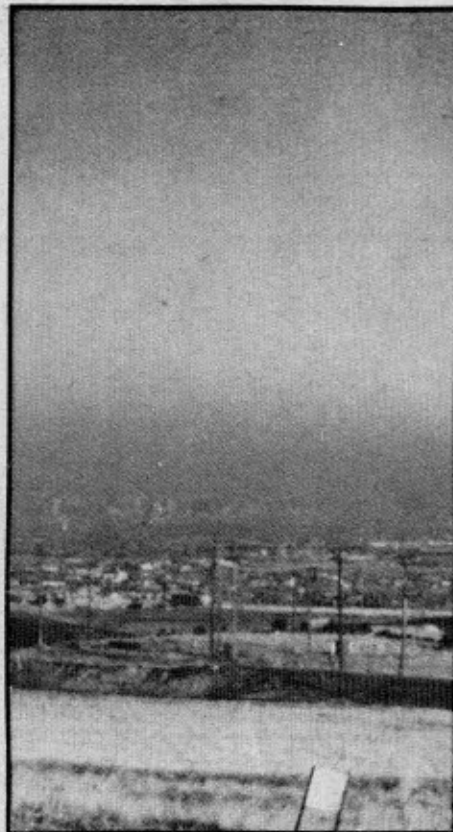
Based on his study of trends in Denver to the year 2000, Robin Dennis of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) provided conference attendees with a sobering set of answers. Just to keep the haze from getting worse, he said, will require immediate implementation of the delayed federal standard for light-duty diesel vehicles (cars, pickups), tighter standards on diesel trucks, and a 50% reduction in emissions from home fireplaces and wood stoves. The tremendous popularity of diesel cars and residential wood burning in recent years has made control of those sources not only more vital, but also more difficult, he said. In addition, Dennis said that a hefty 20% reduction in emissions from industrial sources of particulates will also be needed to hold the line on the haze. Denver's industrial community is already applying controls in the area's as-yet unsuccessful effort to meet the 1982 deadline for complying with the federal standard for total suspended particulates (TSP).

Dennis emphasized the importance of applying strict controls on all three types of sources. The reason, he said, is that within the metro area, the culprit differs.

"If you're downtown, it will be the



Clear day in Denver, Jan. 17, 1982



Denver brown cloud, Jan. 19, 1982

Photographs by:
National Center for Atmospheric
Research/National Science Foundation

cars. If you're in (suburban) Aurora it may be wood burning. If you're in Commerce City, it could clearly be Public Service Company," Dennis said. That creates problems for regulators who traditionally have been able to focus control efforts on the larger, usually industrial, sources.

AQCC Chairman Carol Sullivan said that attempts to target all three sources will result in "people coming in and saying 'I'm not that big a part of the problem -- it's really someone else.'"

Colorado State Senator Martha Ezzard noted that while her constituents seem to favor new controls on diesels, there is much less support for rules on wood burning. Bob Pearson of Public Service Company pointed out that the utility will soon have spent a total of \$159 million to meet current air pollution rules on Denver-area power plants. George Wolff of General Motors Research Laboratories expressed concern about tougher vehicle standards.

Compounding the problem of control is the need for joint action among levels of government. Sullivan said that solutions "will require more cooperation than even a subject as complex as water." Motor vehicle emissions are the province of the federal government in all states except California. Controlling industrial sources is primarily the responsibility

of state government. An Oregon-style strategy for wood burning would involve both state and local rule-making and implementation. For Denver, effective local action will mean involving the many government entities within the metro area. "Denver is willing to take the lead," Pena aide Tom Gougeon said. "We just need somebody else to follow."

Even if the necessary public support and intergovernmental co-operation can be secured for the measures recommended by Dennis' research, his forecast is that Denver can only hope to maintain "a future level of haze similar to that today." Sullivan pointed out, however, that Dennis' study assumes "that VMT (vehicle miles travelled) will continue to increase, that we will continue to demand a high level of energy and growth." Perhaps, she ventured, "we are not doomed to that scenario."

So far, generating public support for air pollution standards has been aided by evidence of adverse health effects and by the ability to place most of the clean-up responsibility (and cost) on industry. That support may continue as people are asked to share in the solution by driving less, burning less wood, and limiting growth. The question, as posed by Ezzard, seems to come down to "whether the brown cloud is important enough for people to change their lifestyles."

-- Hal Winslow

HOTLINE

MacGregor Ranch is eased

The National Park Service has finally bought -- for \$4 million -- a conservation easement on MacGregor Ranch next to Rocky Mountain National Park (HCN, 6/25/82).

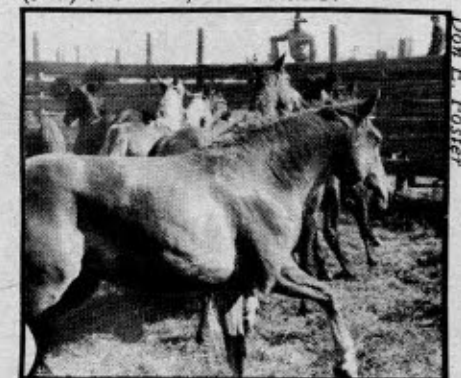
The easement allows ranch trustees to retain title to the property, but forbids any development incompatible with the national park. The easement covers 1221 acres of the ranch on the east boundary of the park, plus other easements for four acres of trails and title to 11.5 acres for parking. The contract was signed September 30. According to the Colorado Wilderness Bill of 1980, ranch trustees could look elsewhere for funding if an agreement with the National Park Service wasn't reached by October 1, 1983.

A question of values

An economic study has added to the fight being waged over the Jackson Hole Airport in Teton National Park. The study shows that the airport is used by the wealthy coming to sightsee or ski in the area. The visitors spend \$14.3 million in the area. The study is being used to attack a recent Sierra Club lawsuit aimed at limiting the airport's existence within the park. The *Jackson Hole Guide* suggests a compromise to the long legal and political battle: that the Airport Board give up its plans to expand, and the Sierra Club in turn stop trying to obliterate it.

Free no more

About 200 wild horses will soon be removed from the McCullough Peaks herd east of Cody, Wyoming and made available for adoption around November 11 and 13. The BLM says the range can then better support the remaining 250 horses. Those participating in the Adopt-a-Horse program must pay a \$125 fee and agree to certain requirements for maintenance for one year before applying for ownership. The Cody BLM office, (307) 587-2216, has details.



Wild horses gathered near Grand Junction, Colorado

Oregon leads again --- this time on wood stoves

Wood burning has come to be recognized as a major air pollution problem in many parts of the West. At the Denver haze conference, Oregon air pollution control chief John Kowalczyk and Colorado State Senator Tom Glass described efforts to control fireplace and wood stove emissions in Oregon and in Colorado's ski towns.

Kowalczyk said that, although emissions from industrial plants in the state declined from 13,000 to 3,000 tons per year during the 1970s, "all the effort and cost of controlling industrial sources was totally negated in a matter of two years." That occurred because emissions from

home wood-burning rose from 1,000 to 10,000 tons per year. Now, he said, "if people want to breathe cleaner air, they have to go into the central business district or the industrial areas."

Kowalczyk's agency initially responded by urging citizens to burn their stoves hotter, use dry wood and weatherize; measures that he said could reduce emissions by up to 30% while cutting home fuel costs. In addition, local governments were encouraged to pass ordinances ranging from weatherization incentives to mandating the installation of controls on existing stoves. Ultimately, Kowalczyk said, the

agency decided that explicit regulatory authority was needed.

Over stiff opposition from the wood-stove industry, Oregon's legislature passed the first state law of its kind to control emissions from wood burning. The 1983 act directs the agency to develop test methods and to adopt an emission standard by 1984. Beginning in 1986, only state-approved stoves may be sold in Oregon.

State Senator Glass, whose district encompasses some 70% of Colorado's ski areas, said that action by a number of mountain communities was prompted by the appearance of a Denver-style haze caused by wood burning. An ordinance in Aspen, he

said, requires that only stoves meeting specified requirements can be sold for use in the town. In Vail, officials broadcast a taped request by former President Gerald Ford that people limit their burning during the Presidents' Day Weekend and Christmas, periods when wood burning is at its highest level.

The most elaborate scheme exists in Beaver Creek, a planned ski town community near Vail. There, an air-quality monitoring device is used to detect high levels of particulates in the air. At a certain point a red light on each unit alerts residents to stop using their fireplaces. Thermometers in each fireplace tell the town's security guards if residents are complying with the restrictions.

--H.W.

Citizens and the Forest Service join

by Janet Robertson

When the Indian Peaks Wilderness, not far from Denver, Colorado, drastically changed its regulations, effective May 1, 1983, it did so with the help of a unique band of citizens called the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area Working Group.

The Group consisted of people from environmental and recreational organizations, representatives from Congressman Tim Wirth's office and the City and County of Boulder, private property and resort owners, llama packers, guides and outfitters, researchers, citizens -- anyone in fact who wanted to be part of the Group. As one member who knew the east side of the Indian Peaks well put it, "I've been watching it going slowly to hell."

Two characteristics of the Indian Peaks are an unfortunate mix. They are ruggedly beautiful and they sit within easy driving distance of a few million people living in the Denver-Boulder area. The Continental Divide splits the Indian Peaks inequitably. The smaller portion, the 31,000 acres that are east of the Divide, receives 60 percent of the visitors. The 41,000 acres on the west side attract 40 percent. As if this didn't create problems enough, estimates are that 30 percent of total visitors on the east side go to just one area, Brainard Lake, where two valleys with sparkling lakes converge.

About 125,000 people use the Indian Peaks but since the average stay is three days, the more telling figure is that the area has 300,000 visitor days a year. The vast majority

of those visits occurs in summer, between late June and Labor Day.

Looking at a map of the total area, 72,000 acres looks like a reasonable area to accommodate heavy use. It isn't.

Most of the Wilderness is above tree line. It's full of rock piles (talus), cliffs and steep ground. Early on, campers began camping on the flat sites by lakes. They gathered rocks for fire rings. They spread out and took short cuts, creating many little "spaghetti" trails. They trampled plants and flowers. Over the years, they camped in the same places again and again, compacting the soil so that water had a hard time penetrating down to the roots of bushes and trees.

They frequently chopped down 'krummholz' for firewood, thus destroying forever some of the most remarkable trees in the Indian Peaks. Krummholz means "crooked wood" in German and refers to twisted trees growing in harsh alpine conditions. The krummholz do not replace themselves in the Indian Peaks; one theory holds that they were seedlings many centuries ago when the climate was much wetter than now. The tricky part about krummholz is that the dead part of the tree is necessary to protect the living part from killing winds and cold. Campers often hacked off the dead wood, insuring the death of the living tree.

In the fall of 1981, Boulder District Ranger Whitney Lerer arranged a field trip to Lake Isabelle to look at the damage. Participants included representatives from the district and representatives of local environmental groups. That trip hatched what

became the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area Working Group.

Early on, Lerer said, there was Forest Service support for the idea of what became the Working Group, support that included the supervisor of the Arapaho-Roosevelt Forest in Ft. Collins and Regional Headquarters in Denver. The Forest Service had been watching what was happening to the Indian Peaks as its budget plummeted; they were hoping for an advisory group of citizens. The fall of 1981 was a crucial time for such a group to form because the draft of the Forest Service Land Use Plan was due out in January.

Anne Vickery was well aware of the timetable. Concerned about the problems of Indian Peaks for years, she was (and is) the paid staff of the Conservation Committee of the Colorado Mountain Club. Although her job took in the entire state, the Indian Peaks were particularly dear to her. She'd backpacked in them in the '50s (when they were called "The Arapahos") as a counselor for Cheley Camps, near Estes Park. And she recalls that Norm Mullen of COSC (Colorado Open Space Council) would call her up every so often and say, "Why don't you do something about the Indian Peaks?"

Vickery met Dr. Forrest Ketchin at a Forest Service Users Workshop earlier in the summer. Ketchin is a cultural anthropologist who worked for many years as an independent researcher. While she was a graduate student at the University of Colorado, she ran the dining room at the Research Station at the base of the Indian Peaks for several summers. There she met Dr. Jack Ives who was working on an environmental atlas of the Indian Peaks, funded by NASA. Ketchin persuaded Ives that a map showing human impacts should be part of the atlas.

She interviewed people using the Wilderness, counted 1,904 fire rings in only four drainages, and made a map, color-coding degrees of impact or damage in three major drainages on the east side and one on the west side. The Boulder District and the local chapter of the Colorado Mountain Club contributed money for the project.

It showed at a glance where the human impacts and damage were: lake shores, stream banks, dry meadows.

Vickery and Ketchin, who by now knew they were on the same wavelength, discussed the concept of what became the Indian Peaks Area Wilderness Working Group. They approached Ranger Lerer with the idea and he responded enthusiastically. Together they worked out its framework.

Vickery and Ketchin wrote the agenda and Vickery chaired the meetings. Ketchin typed out the minutes using Forest Service copy machines, paper and stamps for mailings. The Forest Service provided background and statistics and was represented at all Working Group meetings. Each of the eight meetings was held in Boulder and addressed a specific topic such as campfires, pets in Wilderness, revegetation, day use,

overnight use, patterns.

The goal of the Working Group was to come up with a set of recommendations to the Forest Service on how to manage the Indian Peaks and -- this was a critical point -- each recommendation was to be backed up by a tightly organized scientific justification, not merely opinion or preference.

Most meetings featured a speaker, an expert on a particular subject. Civil engineers told about the quality of the water they'd measured in several streams and lakes in the Wilderness. A geologist discussed what he knew about soils after digging hundreds of holes. Biologists discussed elk calving grounds and which stream contained rare native trout.

After listening to "experts," the working Group searched for answers. How could the wounds be healed? How could crowds be accommodated without ruining the Wilderness? What were the limits, or in Forest Service terminology, the "carrying capacity" of the Wilderness?

The Working Group occupied a peculiar niche. It operated in partnership with the Forest Service yet part of the unwritten ground rules, as Lerer remembers it, was that members could "feel free to lay everything out on the table rather than using the media or politics to bring about pressure."

The meetings were not always smooth. Ketchin put it this way: "...The ultimate success depends upon a mutual and beneficial relationship between the agency and the group. And yet it's sure easy for such a group to become adversarial because of its energy and commitment."

Sometimes members did become adversarial, pointing out what they saw as Forest Service inconsistencies and past mistakes. "But," Lerer has said, "Anne (Vickery) made sure we got back on the track and stuck to the agenda."

By May, 1982, the Working Group had reached a consensus on 27 recommendations. Members felt most strongly about a ban on all campfires on the east and west sides of the Indian Peaks, prohibiting camping in some of the most trashed-out sites, and an eventual permit/quota system.

In January, 1983, Ray Benton, supervisor of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, signed the new regulations effective May 1983. They included a ban on all campfires east of the Divide and at several alpine lakes and drainages on the west side, and closure to all camping in the most popular and abused drainages accessible from Brainard Lake.

In addition, the Forest Service announced they would inventory potential campsites to prepare for what will be the first permit system in the National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region. It will go into effect in 1984. Piet Hondius, a member of the Working Group who had been frequently critical of the Forest Service said, "At the start, I frankly didn't think it (the Working Group) would have much use, and I was wrong."



Dogs are allowed in the Wilderness if leashed. The Working Group concluded that many dogs end up on the loose. They'd like the policy changed.

forces to save a Wilderness area

The Group resumed its meetings in September, 1982, knowing that the ban on camping and fires was in the works. Members hailed the changes yet worried about the so-called "jello" effect. When you close one area to camping, campers flock to the open areas in greater numbers than before. What would happen to the approaches to the Wilderness boundary, the Forest Service lands that lined the access road into Brainard Lake, the roads to Hessie and the 4th of July Valley full of privately-owned cabins? And what about the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve, excluded from the Wilderness but abutting it? And how about the Rainbow Lakes, Meadow Mountain, Rock Creek, Lake Eldora, Caribou approaches -- how could they be monitored given a meager Forest Service budget?

Two new citizens' groups formed to address specific problems relating to the most popular access areas adjoining the Wilderness. The Boulder District of the Forest Service and Boulder County lent strong support.

A Wilderness backcountry ranger, Edie Eilender, and the author of this article collaborated on a slide show, "Indian Peaks -- What Next?" It was an attempt to publicize the new regulations and their rationale. A local photography lab donated three sets of duplicate slides and the Forest Service made a tape of the script. Boulder District Ranger Lynn Young (who replaced Lerer in September, 1982) and several members of the Group gave talks to any group willing to listen about the new regulations.

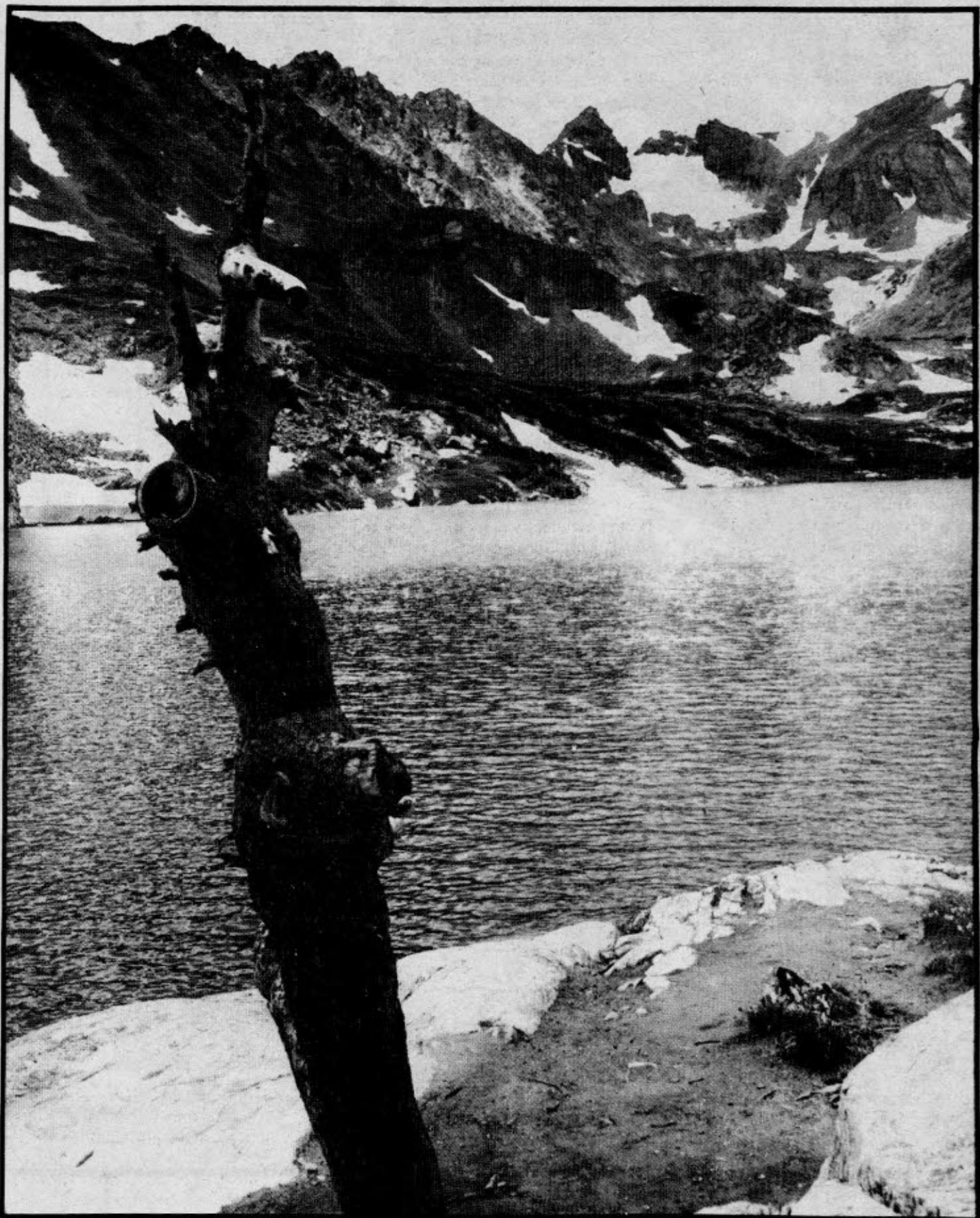
But nobody, Forest Service or Working Group, was fooled. They knew their efforts to publicize the new regulations were a drop in the bucket and dreaded the summer. Thousands of people would arrive at the Indian Peaks area where they usually did -- or build fires. What would they do?

In September, a month ago, the Working Group convened for the first time since May. The first question was: how did it go this summer? Surprisingly, the answer was, "Not badly."

Backcountry rangers from the east and west sides gave their impressions. They had encountered many violations but compliance was considerably higher than the 20 percent the Forest Service had predicted for the first year. Ralph Johnson of the Boulder District thought it might be as high as 80 percent.

The Group as a whole made several observations. The unusually deep, late spring snows were a godsend to the Wilderness since trails were snowcovered three or four weeks later than usual. Few visitors read signs -- period. Person to person contact, such as rangers and volunteer hosts can provide, are the most effective way to reach visitors.

Dr. Jim Halfpenny reported definite 'jello' effects on the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve: more incidents of hunting, trespassing, vandalism and camping than ever before. This jibed with the impression



Janet Robertson

This Krummbolz stump was once a living tree. Camping is now prohibited in the Long Lake/Isabelle Lake drainages.

Indian Peaks Wilderness near Denver is being loved to death

of Charlie Denis, a property owner for 40 years in the 4th of July Valley. "More cars, and more people camping, especially on the tundra."

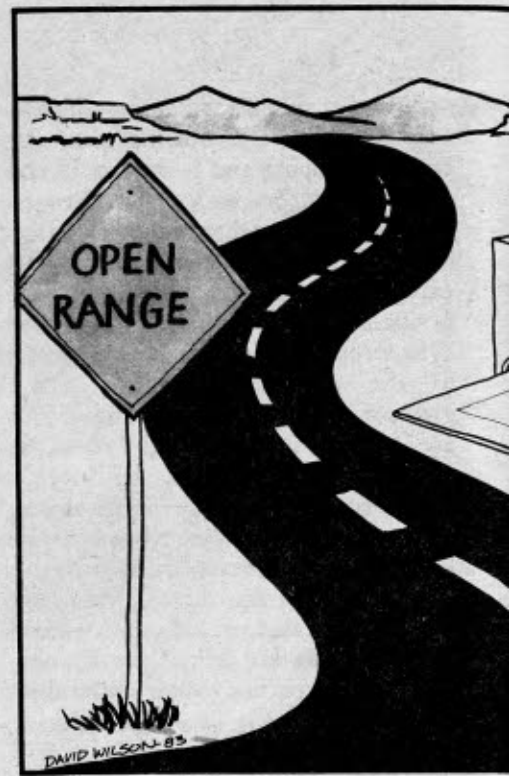
Where will the Working Group go from here? It will become more formally organized. It will publicize the brand new Indian Peaks Trust Fund, now temporarily housed by the Colorado Mountain Club Foundation.

It will become a clearing house for volunteers who want to help with projects in the Indian Peaks. It will consider publishing educational materials that the Forest Service (and all government agencies) have had to curtail. It will direct "all that energy and commitment and caring" to what it has from the beginning: The Indian Peaks Wilderness.

□

A writer and photographer from Boulder, Colorado, Janet Robertson would like readers to know they can contact the Indian Peaks Wilderness Foundation c/o the Colorado Mountain Club Foundation, 1925 Foothills Drive South, Golden, CO 80401. This article was made possible by the *High Country News* Research Fund.

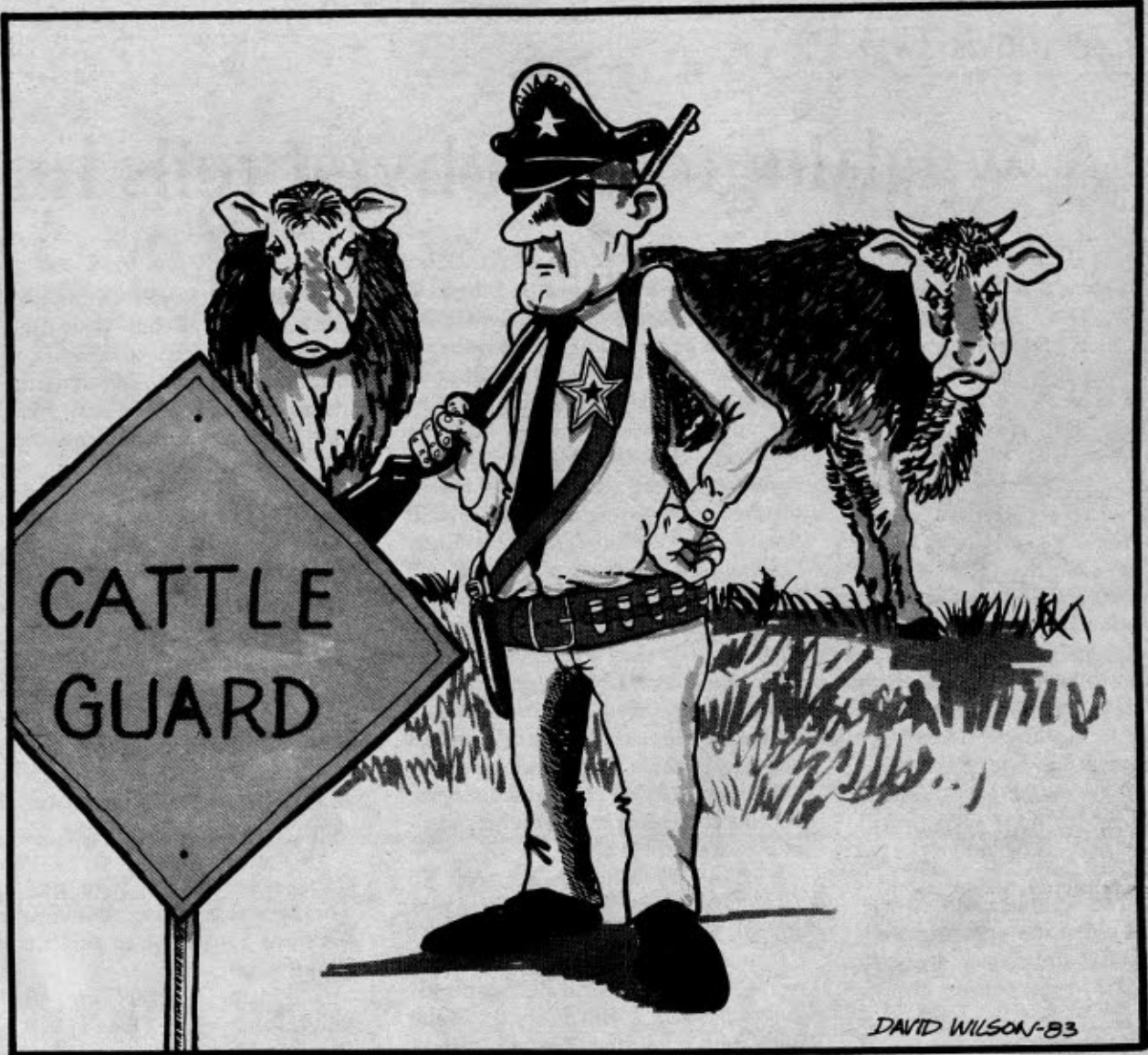
8-High Country News--Oct. 31, 1983



Strange Intersect

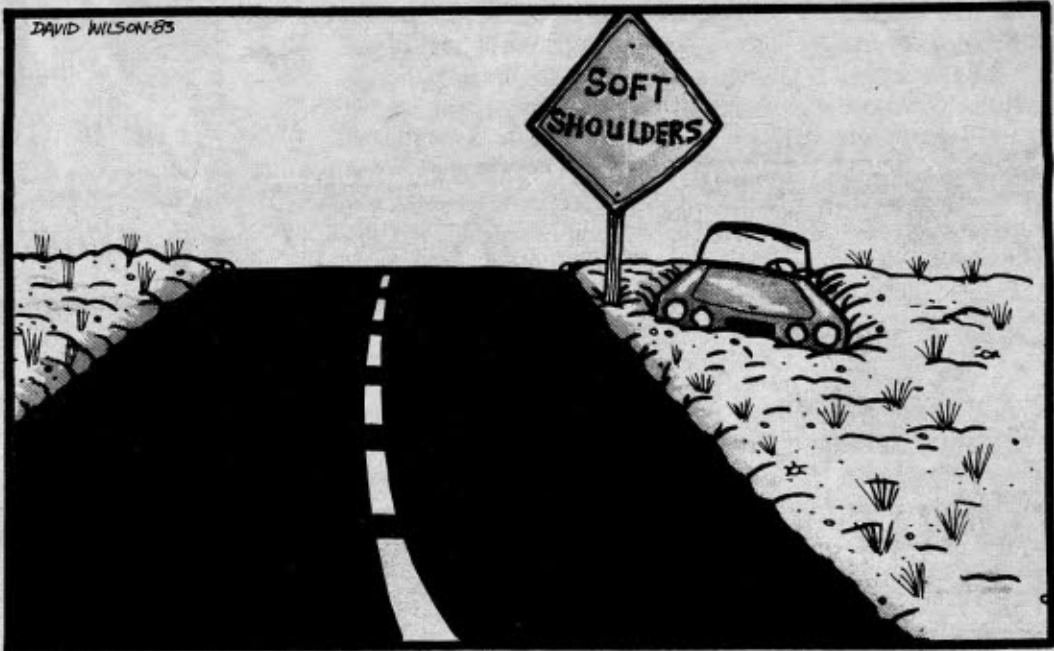


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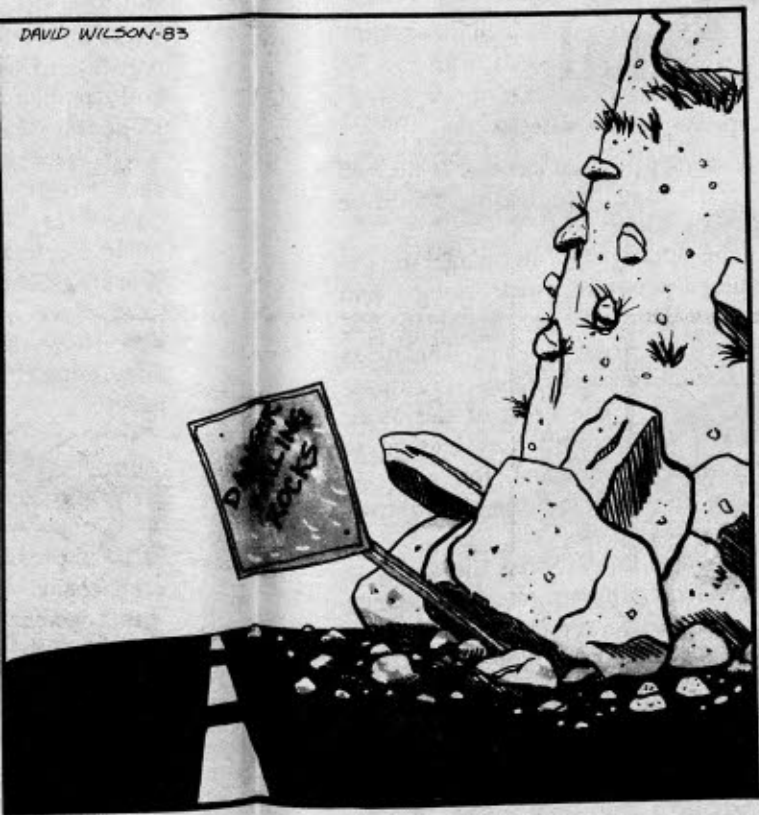


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DAVID WILSON-83



DAVID WILSON-83

David Wilson



Born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, David Wilson has worked as a river guide, cow hand, field biologist, and environmental science teacher. Now in Durango, Colorado, he does occasional cartoons for the Durango Herald, also works in their circulation department part-time, and is staff artist for Thumb Print Graphics, Inc.

Senate vote was key

A Washington lobbyist tells how Watt fell

Geoff Webb was one of five Washington, D.C. lobbyists who conceived and implemented the Congressional policy which brought down James Watt.

The Friends of the Earth representative worked with Carl Gawell and David Alberswerth of the National Wildlife Federation, David Masselli of the Western Organization of Resource Councils, and Brooks Yeager of the Sierra Club. Their aim was to handcuff Watt through the Congressional budget process.

The five conceived the strategy over a year ago, and quickly won in the House of Representatives. That body three times passed Interior Appropriations bills that would have limited Watt's ability to lease coal, drill Wilderness, and sell off-shore oil tracts.

But the five couldn't win in the Senate. And when the opposing bills from the House and Senate went to conference, the Senate version always won.

Webb speculates that the abortive Fort Union coal sale in South Dakota helped change the Senate's mind. The sale of coal for less than a penny a ton to a desultory group of coal bidders caused a number of Republican and Democratic senators to switch votes. So on September 20 the Senate amended Interior's 1984 appropriations bill. The coal leasing moratorium, an amendment offered by Senator Dale Bumpers (D-Arkansas) passed by an overwhelming 63-33 vote.

The loss, Webb said, led the next day to Watt's now famous September 21 speech before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "He was clearly unnerved by the vote. That vote sent him off the deep end."

Webb says the vote was not a personal rebuke to Watt -- it was directed at Interior's policy. "That vote was about coal sales in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico."

In Webb's view, the Senate vote signaled Watt that 30 months of work were going down the drain. "Until now, the main thing Watt did was to uproot his department of professionals and replace them with ideologic fellow travelers. He'd changed people, policies and the rules of coal leasing" in preparation for 1984.

"1984 was to be his big year. He was going to lease up to 17 billion tons of coal, some of it adjacent to Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, some near Chaco Canyon and Bisti Badlands in New Mexico." But the vote, Webb said, told Watt that his big year of leasing was at least delayed, and possibly permanently stopped.

Webb and his allies fought Watt through the budget, or appropriations, process even though Webb says it's an unfortunate approach. Basic policy on issues like coal and off-shore oil leasing is properly made through laws addressed to those questions. "You're not supposed to legislate via appropriations." The appropriations process is only supposed to fund policy decisions Congress has already made.

"But we fought fire with fire." According to Webb, Watt had used Interior's budget to rework policy, directing money to leasing and resource development and away from park acquisition and resource and environmental analysis. "So we used the appropriations process" to try to reverse that.

Why aren't the Congressional policy and budget systems working? Why aren't the relevant Congressional committees exercising oversight on the way Watt implements laws?

"Ideally, that power should be exercised by Mo Udall (D-AZ) and his House Interior Committee. But power has eroded over there through lack of use. And the prospects of things getting better aren't bright."

Webb was generally critical of Congress for letting Watt get so far. And he was admiring of several of the Western Senators who shielded Watt for so long.

"Senator Jim McClure (R-ID) is tough and smart. So is Domenici (R-NM). We don't have many like that on our side. There are a lot of wimpy members of Congress. The Democrats always want to work things out. So they get rolled."

Webb's admiration for the abilities of some of Watt's supporters does not extend to the Secretary. "In dollar terms, Watt gave away far more than Albert Fall (of Teapot Dome fame)." But Watt didn't profit personally. "It wasn't so much criminal behavior as criminal negligence."

Webb disagrees with those who see Watt as an idealist. "He's not a pure conservative. He's a sleazy character who misrepresents and lies. He is at heart an extremist. He has an apocalyptic, paranoid view of the world."

Finally, Webb says it took environmental groups a long time to turn from minor issues to leasing. "For a long time, environmental groups focused only on Wilderness drilling and park sales. It took them a while to realize that the biggest threat Watt posed was the leasing of public resources on long-term contracts at cut-rate prices."

The press was no help in educating the public. "The land sales threat was never proportional to the attention. *Time* and *Newsweek* did cover stories on the land sales. But not on leasing."

-- the staff

"The Democrats always want to work things out. So they get rolled."

Surrounded by lawsuits

Watt's ignorance of coal proved fatal

The Department of Interior William Clark inherits from James Watt is ringed about by lawsuits, Congressional initiatives, and aroused citizens. That holds for offshore oil drilling, Wilderness and National Parks. But it is most true for coal.

Some of the credit, or blame, for Watt's predicament on coal must go to dozens of citizen and environmental groups from Appalachia to the Rockies who took him on.

But in retrospect, most blame must go to Watt's apparent failure to understand that the major coal issues and the economy had evolved since his earlier stint in Interior in the mid-1970s. Washington attorney and lobbyist David Masselli says it is likely that Watt's coal policies reflected the lessons he learned in the mid-1970s, and that he never modified them in light of the evolution that has occurred since.

According to Patrick Sweeney of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC), coal had been in turmoil all through the 1970s. The turmoil started in 1970, when it was realized that Interior was leasing large amounts of federal coal without regard to the marketplace or to the environment.

From that year on, the battle was joined. Three laws resulted from the decade-long fight: the federal Coal

Leasing Amendment Act, which spoke to leasing and to the timely mining of leased coal; the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), which spoke to land use planning on federal lands; and the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), which spoke to the effect of both underground and surface mines on the land and water affected by mines.

The laws were general, and for several years, in various departments, the federal bureaucracy labored to write regulations to implement them. Nowhere did that go smoothly. Surprisingly, it went easiest in coal leasing. But late in the Carter administration, a comprehensive leasing-land use planning-reclamation program was in place for coal. Surprisingly, the coal leasing approach put in place in 1979 by Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus met least resistance.

Washington attorney and coal specialist Eldon Greenberg says not everyone was pleased. But, "The 1979 program was a compromise and neither the environmentalists nor industry sued."

"But when the administration changed in 1981, Watt sent out a letter asking industry and the public to tell Interior about regulations that were burdensome and cumbersome."

Greenberg says, "The result of Interior's review was the issuance of new regulations which in my view tilted toward coal companies and against surface owners and the environment. We think the regulations made it easier to lease and harder for others to affect the system."

Watt's revisions of the Andrus regulations were issued in July 1982, and by September 1983, Greenberg was in Washington district court on behalf of an array of groups challenging the new leasing. The lawsuit is a throwback to the 1970s -- an overall challenge to the entire leasing program.

It claims Watt didn't do an adequate EIS; that Interior didn't adequately explain and disclose the changes under the Administrative Procedures Act; and it challenges a supposed weakening of due diligence procedures which require companies to either mine a lease within a certain number of years or surrender the lease.

If the lawsuit is successful, it could send the entire leasing process back to the beginning. But the suit poses an alternative. "Our briefs suggest that the court order reestablishment of the Andrus leasing program."

Greenberg continues: "The ironic effect of Watt's program was to result

in a moratorium on leasing. If he had let Andrus in place, leasing would be bumping along now."

The changes Watt made in the leasing program were long and complex. But Sweeney, whose WORC umbrella organization includes rancher-dominated Plains organizations, says: "The heart of the Watt changes was to shift from leasing to meet market demand for coal to leasing to meet industry's demands for reserves."

Why did industry risk the stability the Andrus program offered? *Energy Daily*, which serves the energy industry, says coal didn't go along with Watt. The paper says industry tried to tell Watt that the leasing of 10 billion tons of coal (Andrus called for about 1.5 billion tons in the same period) in a slack market was crazy. Watt supposedly didn't hear or didn't heed coal's views.

But the coal industry is not monolithic. The National Coal Association says it supported and still supports the Watt leasing program. According to spokesman John Wasowicz in Washington, D.C., "The views he took on coal leasing were not dated or inappropriate. He was saying we have to provide an adequate resource base." Wasowicz is optimistic about the future. "With James Watt

(Continued on page 14)

Americans vs Liberals

Conservation is now a partisan issue

Michael Scott of the Wilderness Society sees grim years ahead as a result of the less than three years James Watt served as Secretary of Interior. The Wilderness Society is suing Interior over its treatment of Wildlife Refuges. But Scott's concern is more general:

"Watt's legacy is a more highly politicized Interior Department. Our parks and wilderness areas are the finest in the world and he has for the first time politicized conservation. He has said there are Americans and Liberals, and if you're an American you're for exploiting resources."

"Before Watt, conservation was bipartisan. You could deal with the issues on their merits. As a kid, you went to the National Parks to see

Smokey the Bear and Rangers. The parks said: We're a big enough country to set these things aside for the best interests of everyone."

"But Watt said: uh, uh, Democrats don't care about the best interests of the country."

Scott says this is something new in America. "Eisenhower enclosed Wildlife Refuges. Nixon signed NEPA, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act. Ford increased the Land and Water fund. Carter did Alaska. All the way back to Teddy Roosevelt there was pride in the heritage of the country."

"That pride's been broken or politicized now."

Now that it's been politicized, Scott continued, it will be difficult to return to the old bipartisan approach.

That's especially true because the Democrats may take up Watt's approach. "The Democrats see the advantage" of it being a partisan issue.

"That's truly unfortunate. It will take a lot of time to heal."

Scott also thinks it will take time to reverse other actions Watt has taken. "The blatant stuff like huge coal sales have been stopped. But if you look at Watt's annual report, it says oil and gas leasing has gone up 7,000 percent. And there's a backlog of almost \$2 billion of proposed park acquisitions under the Land and Water Fund."

"Watt wouldn't ask for the funds to buy additions to Yellowstone, inholdings in National Parks, etc." That's three years delay, Scott said,



Glenn Oakley

and in that time prices have gone up, development has occurred, and in some cases land has been lost altogether.

-- the staff

MMS, decentralization cited

Praise for Watt's programs

Marlyn Jones has been a District Manager with the Bureau of Land Management for about a decade, first in the Montrose, Colorado area and now in Phoenix, Arizona. So far as Jones is concerned, Secretary of Interior James Watt's tenure has been a time of progress for his agency.

Jones says the controversy which has embroiled the upper levels of the Department of Interior has not touched him or the 80 people he supervises.

"I don't know that people on the ground have seen anything that resembles the rhetoric you see in the paper."

"The changes we have seen have been positive -- decentralization and the consolidation of MMS (Minerals Management Service) into the BLM."

"In the last two years, we have seen increasing decentralization -- a lot of tasks that used to be done at the state level and in Washington are now done at the District and Resource Area level."

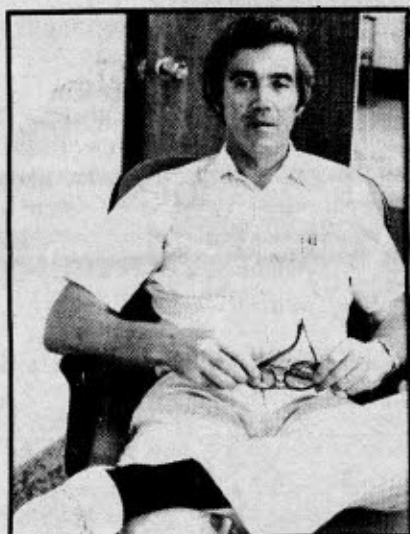
Jones, before his recent move to Phoenix, was District Manager of the Montrose, Colorado BLM area -- a job roughly comparable to being head of a National Forest. In addition to his own central office, he had under him several Resource Area offices, roughly comparable to District offices in the Forest Service.

Altogether, his domain included over 2 million acres, including 300,000 acres of Wilderness Study Areas in 14 Colorado counties and one northern New Mexico county.

The evolution during his ten years, but especially lately under Watt and BLM head Bob Burford, has been to give authority to the land managers on the ground.

"Ten years ago, coal and other mining work was done in the state office and at Washington, D.C. Down here at the District and Area levels, we concentrated on range, wildlife and forestry."

Now, he said, responsibility for all resources are concentrated at the local level. "It eliminates a lot of unnecessary reviews. And it has made the Resource Area job more interesting. He's the guy meeting the



Marlyn Jones

public. He knows the people and the county commissioners.

"We had studies showing he could only be effective if he had authority to make decisions. It was underway before (BLM head Bob) Burford and (state director George) Francis. But it's really come to fruition in the last 2 years."

Jones said he is especially pleased that the 800 or so employees of Minerals Management Service were merged by Watt into the BLM. He said the old split authority, under which BLM gave out oil and gas leases was MMS (the successor to USGS) administered them, was unwieldy.

"But since December 3, 1982, someone wanting an oil and gas permit goes to one agency -- the BLM." And responsibility for issuing and administering that permit, he said, has been put close to the ground, at the Resource Area level.

Jones said his major concern about the Watt years is the derailment of the land sales, or asset management, program. "We have a lot of isolated tracts that should be on the private tax roles. But the program has come to be viewed as mass land disposal and I think the Secretary was wise to get out of it."

But Jones said that was the only example he could think of "where we have felt the extremes on the District." Otherwise, "When you get down to the grassroots level, we don't have much in the way of problems. And that hasn't always been true."

Careers and programs destroyed

The BLM was trashed

When William Clark becomes the 44th Secretary of the Interior, he will inherit a Bureau of Land Management that may well be the prime example of the damage done by James G. Watt in less than three years as Interior Secretary.

The BLM administers 343 million acres of federal lands, mainly in the 11 westernmost states and Alaska. As the custodial agency for subsurface mineral rights on all federal lands, the BLM was the cutting edge in Watt's headlong drive to permit offshore drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf, to open up wilderness areas for petroleum exploration, and to lease massive tonnages of federal coal. In the furor over these very visible programs, subtle abuses at the Bureau escaped notice.

When Watt came to power, his first priority was to bend every Interior Department agency to his will. In March, 1981, Watt bragged, "We fired every person in the Department of the Interior that was a (Carter) Presidential appointee. I mean, we've cleaned every one of them out and then we started appointing good people."

At BLM, the clean-out went very

deep -- all the way to two agency State Directors, Jim Ruch in California and Bob Buffington in Idaho, fired due to differences of opinion and personality with their new boss. Through a "career enhancement" program, other senior civil service officials have been involuntarily transferred, or have nervously watched the knife swing over their heads.

On the appointment side, Watt installed Bob Burford as BLM Director. A rancher and former state legislator back in Colorado, Burford had routinely indulged in Bureau baiting while in private life. And Watt packed the National Public Lands Advisory Council and other panels with clones of himself.

These dismissals and appointments were accompanied by budget changes. Funding moved away from renewable resources and into commodity programs. For example, while funding requests for recreation were cut in half between fiscal years 1982 and 1984, the non-energy minerals management budget almost doubled.

Even if William Clark decides to repudiate the policies of his predecessor, he will need months, even years, to rebuild BLM. In view of the radical staff and budget cuts during the Watt era, qualified persons are not likely to sign up cheerfully or soon to work for the agency. Watt is gone now, but his legacy endures.

A prime example of that legacy is the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which provided the BLM with a statutory "charter." Almost without exception, every program mandated by FLPMA was distorted or undermined during James Watt's tenure at the Interior Department. It now appears doubtful that the BLM can fully implement FLPMA by the Congressional deadline of 1991.

FLPMA directs that the public lands should, in general, be retained in federal ownership. But throughout 1982 and 1983, Watt promoted his Assets Management Plan to sell off "excess" federal property. During just the first round of sales,

[Continued on page 12]



Bob Burford

Colorado Statesman

Avoids coal's mistake

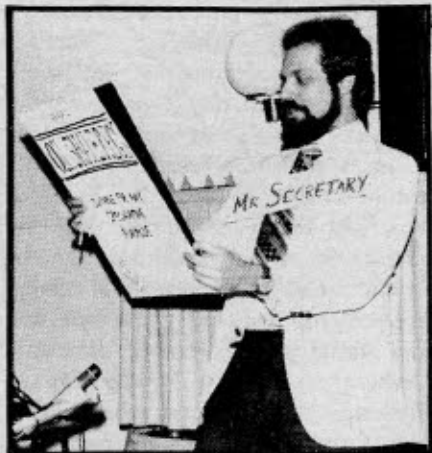
Industry rejected Watt's oil shale giveaway program

The story of oil shale leasing is similar to that of coal leasing. In both cases, the Department of Interior controls enormous reserves of energy in the West. In both cases, Interior Secretary James Watt wanted to lease as much of that energy as possible in this administration. In both cases, Watt was not able to accomplish his goal.

But his oil shale setback was different from his coal defeat. Watt inherited from Carter a coal leasing program which he modified for his own purposes. But Watt did not inherit a general, or programmatic, oil shale leasing program. He had to create one from scratch before he could begin to lease the 600 billion barrels of oil shale underlying 17,000 square miles of buried lake beds in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

This new leasing program was released in early 1983, and was promptly pounced on by the three oil shale states, by local government in Colorado's oil shale region, by the oil shale industry, and by the environmentalists. Each group had its own objections, and the sum total of those objections spelled death for the program.

In July, 1983, BLM director Bob



Kevin Markey, Friends of the Earth, mocked Interior's oil shale leasing plans at a Grand Junction meeting this year.

Burford implicitly acknowledged that death by halting work going on under the proposed regulations. But his announcement was almost irrelevant since those who opposed Interior's program had taken matters into their own hands.

In fact, his announcement came in the midst of continuing secret negotiations among the coalition which had halted Interior's program. Industry, local government, and the environmentalists had formed a so-called Joint Working Group. For the past several months they have been trying to create a leasing program.

It is still not clear whether the coalition will come up with a program. There are splits between industry and local government, and between industry and parts of the environmental community. But a protracted effort is being made. If agreement is reached, the proposed program will be taken to the U.S. Congress rather than to Interior.

Each member of the coalition attempted to influence Interior while it was developing its now deceased leasing regulations. None of the groups got what they wanted. The states and local government were unhappy because they did not believe the program gave them a say in the way leasing occurred. Nor did it provide local government or the states with mechanisms to take care of the impacts they might suffer.

The environmentalists were most threatened by the speed with which leasing was to take place. The BLM's program combined two land use planning steps into one, making it possible for the Reagan administration to do large-scale leasing before the 1984 presidential elections.

Environmental groups, led by Friends of the Earth, also charged that Interior had adopted a very low royalty rate on oil shale -- some said the

effective rate would be zero percent. They charged there was little or no protection against environmental damage done by the cumulative effect of several oil shale projects, and that there was lack of adherence to the comprehensive land use planning required by the Federal Land Planning Management Act (FLPMA).

Interior's proposal presented industry with a no-win situation. On the one hand, the companies had no immediate use for additional oil shale reserves. Enormous amounts of oil shale are already in private hands -- much more than is likely to be developed in the next decade or so.

Industry, of course, had no inhibition against accepting large reserves it could hold onto until need arose. But it faced the possibility that if Interior's program were implemented, lawsuits would tie it up, just as lawsuits have tied up coal leasing. Getting off on the wrong foot could cause immeasurable delays in the future, when the resource might be needed.

The result of this constellation of objections, backed up by lack of market demand, was the death of Watt's oil shale leasing program.

-- the staff

BLM...

[Continued from page 11]

approximately 2.5 million acres of BLM territory were slated to go on the auction block. The sales were stopped when the whole Assets Management idea collapsed in August, 1983.

But Watt's well-publicized halt of the Assets Management Program didn't necessarily end it. For Watt to comply even minimally with FLPMA, any and every sale of BLM acreage land had to be justified within land-use plans. Watt withdrew the Assets Management Program. But he left intact all the land-use plans. As a result, William Clark will be overseeing either massive sales of BLM lands during implementation of the land-use plans, or massive revisions of land-use plans which call for land sales.

Revisions might not hurt much since progress toward the FLPMA goal of comprehensive land-use planning by 1991 has been snail's paced: official agency policy now frowns upon the collection of new data; the budget for land-use planning has been sliced by 25 percent; and time continues to be spent on transitional, stopgap documents rather than the required Resource Management Plans (RMPs). According to Carolyn Johnson, Senior Public Lands Specialist for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the half dozen RMPs to emerge so far have "varied considerably" in quality from barely acceptable to "the pits."

Congress in FLPMA directed the BLM to conduct within its land-use planning process a wilderness review of its entire holdings. Soon after taking office, Watt put the wilderness review on a separate accelerated schedule for completion by 1984. This sped-up schedule, coupled with

budget cuts of 42 percent, has crippled the wilderness program.

The budget cuts and schedule speed-up were aggravated on December 27, 1982, when Watt signed an order which eventually eliminated 1.5 million acres in 289 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) or portions thereof. The order dropped any study units of less than 5,000 acres, any tracts with so-called "split mineral estates," and any acreage contiguous to other federal agencies' wilderness areas or proposals but unable to stand on its own merits. Several conservation organizations immediately sued in federal district court. In September, 1983, they won a temporary restraining order against the former Interior Secretary's action. A final judgment is still pending.

Interim Management Policy (IMP) has been callously neglected. Under this provision in FLPMA, the Bureau must maintain the wilderness values in each WSA until Congress decides whether or not to designate the unit as wilderness. But conservationists across the West have discovered a host of IMP violations inside WSAs: oil wells, new roads, mine diggings. In Idaho and Utah, conservationists are protesting the agency's own plans to install such range improvements as reservoirs and pipelines for watering livestock.

Thanks to Jim Watt, the credibility of the BLM wilderness review may be broken beyond repair. In two cases, Congress has pre-empted the Bureau's final recommendations by introducing wilderness bills for the Bisti Badlands in northwestern New Mexico and for the Arizona Strip (that portion of Arizona north of the Colorado River). The Arizona Strip bill is a compromise between environmentalists and a developer, Energy Fuels Nuclear; the BLM was not a party to their unprecedented negotiations.

Currently, wilderness advocates

Watt resurrected the annual

Barstow-to-Las Vegas motorcycle race

estimate the agency will recommend to Congress fewer than 10 million acres for wilderness out of 172 million acres in the 11 western states.

Another controversial area is grazing. Under FLPMA and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, one central mission of the BLM is the management and improvement of agency grazing lands. Since 1975 under a federal court order won by NRDC, the Bureau has been writing Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for some 144 grazing districts in the West.

Usually, the EISs recommended some reduction in grazing. But in the fall of last year, Director Burford issued a new instruction memorandum ordering that the proposed action for all EISs be made "no action." By May of this year, NRDC was back in court.

This year, in new grazing regulations, the Bureau brought into existence -- without any statutory authority from Congress -- the Co-operative Management Agreement (CMA). Instead of annual leases, ranchers can now sign ironclad 10-year contracts in exchange for paying the costs of various range improvements. As some see it, under these long-term leases, the public domain passes from the federal government into private hands.

On the recreation front, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has filed suit over another Watt initiative: the resurrection of the annual Barstow-to-Las Vegas motorcycle race. BLM put a halt to the cross-country race in 1974, when some 3000 participants roared across the southern California desert.

By the Bureau's reckoning, wildlife populations along the race route declined by 90 percent since the first Barstow-to-Las Vegas, and have not recovered to this day. Nonetheless, Watt reversed the nine-year ban and gave a permit for a Thanksgiving, 1983 edition of up to 1200 racers.

This was the latest in the former Interior Secretary's efforts to open the public lands to off-road vehicles (ORVs). Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 by Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter respectively limited ORV use on federal lands. In 1981 Watt recommended that Ronald Reagan rescind both orders. Reagan has not yet done so.

Finally, Watt's aggressive attempts to lease federal coal were his undoing. But many similar programs did not make headlines. For example, the Bureau has been designating public lands as Areas of Critical Mineral Potential essentially upon demand from industry. The former Interior Secretary came up with the ACMP which has never been enacted by Congress.

It is at least possible that Watt's ultimate legacy will be restoring the BLM's old nickname: The Bureau of Livestock and Mining.

--James Baker

A free-lance writer in Salt Lake City, James Baker chairs the Sierra Club's National BLM Wilderness Subcommittee.

This article was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

He most affected grazing

James Watt left his mark on Idaho

by Glenn Oakley

Lining the snow-banked road that led past the Boise Red Lion Motor Inn where the Interior Secretary was busy raising money for Republicans, Wattophobes stood and waved placards. It was January 1982.

Motel security guards -- young, peach-fuzzed men -- patrolled the perimeter to keep out protestors, who in turn taunted the junior policemen. On the other side of the building the pro-Watt rally group -- a caravan of some 60 jeeps, trucks and a haywagon full of Republican state legislators -- waited to cheer on the man from Wyoming who had brought their kind of balance to resource management.

As Watt wrapped up his luncheon speech, the press was allowed into the banquet room for a scheduled press conference. The Republican audience, which had paid to listen to James Watt, stayed on, outnumbering the press corps by about 20 to one. This gave Watt an unusual advantage not normally enjoyed at a political press conference, a cheering support group which loudly laughed and applauded the quips handed out in lieu of answers.

At one point a question came from a woman who identified herself as representing KBNY, a local radio station. Watt took that to be an acronym for some crazy environmental group. For a moment the confident grin left his face as he demanded, "Are you with the press? This is for the press only."

When Watt visited Idaho less than a year ago, he had already let the axe fall on state BLM Director Robert Buffington, who was seen as not subservient enough to cattlemen. In the months ahead he would further enrage conservation-minded Idahoans by stacking the BLM citizen advisory boards with industry, livestock and mining leaders, by dropping some 20,000 acres of BLM land from wilderness study during Congressional recess, and by proposing to help balance the budget by selling off "surplus lands." But Watt's greatest influence on Idaho was through the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees some 12 million acres in the state.

Buffington was the first casualty in Idaho during Watt's reign of terror. The 25-year career BLM employee somehow got on the hit list of influential ranchers and was summarily offered a new position in Washington, D.C. Buffington ended up declining the offer and departed for private enterprise in southern Africa.

Buffington left saying he was still not sure why he was ousted, but told the press his inquiries and filings for information under the Freedom of Information Act led him to believe Watt was at the end of the fuse which blasted him out of his office. Several ranchers and at least one mining company manager had written to Washington, D.C. complaining about Buffington. Perhaps that was enough; little more was learned.

Although Buffington's replacement, Clair Whitlock, is viewed as a reasonable -- albeit conservative -- manager, the ousting left no doubt

among the state's BLM employees where the power lay, and what would happen to those who were not mindful of it.

Watt's unique concept of balanced management next landed on Idaho with his appointments to the BLM districts' citizen advisory boards. They are panels of people representing all aspects of the community charged with advising the BLM on matters of policy, from wilderness decisions to grazing, wildlife management and the like.

On the Boise BLM District, Watt chose Logan Lanham, an Idaho Power Company vice president, to represent the public-at-large; he selected Boise-Cascade Corporation's Glen Youngblood to represent recreation; he chose rancher-wife Rayola Jacobsen, a vocal opponent of the BLM's Birds of Prey Natural Area, as the environmental representative. On down the list of openings, Watt filled them with people all but guaranteed to rubber-stamp his policies.

On the Shoshone BLM district, his selection for the environmental representative was finally shuffled into representing public-at-large following the outcry. Even the appointee himself, Vern Ravenscroft, was surprised at his original appointment. As founder of Sagebrush Rebellion Unlimited and lobbyist for industry, Ravenscroft did not even try to pretend to be an environmentalist.

On the controversial wilderness question, Watt withdrew from wilderness consideration ten areas in Idaho totalling 21,745 acres during a Congressional recess in December 1982. Nationwide, Watt had axed 1.5 million acres in what critics termed his midnight raid. All these areas have been appealed.

Of all his national policies, only Watt's Asset Management Plan galvanized the Idaho public. As the outcry in Idaho grew over the plan to sell unspecified amounts of "surplus" land, Idaho's Congressional delegation -- staunch Watt supporters every one -- eventually backed away from the plan.

"To some extent," said Idaho Conservation League Director Pat Ford, "he was responsible for a lot of Idahoans spending a lot of time to stop a lousy idea that he had."

But while Watt's brash and bold programs and politics drew the public's and the media's attention, his greatest impact may well be the

innocuous little regulation changes that filtered down unnoticed. An example is the Cooperative Management Agreement Program, a brainchild of Watt's which grants livestock grazers greater control over how to manage the public land on which their cattle graze.

Under the plan, which was put into effect without public notification or involvement, ranchers may increase the number of livestock on a particular range without BLM approval. Watt's concept behind the program is to recognize the livestock industry's stewardship of the public land. To alarmed environmentalists, the program gives far too much discretion to a group which is responsible for the current poor condition of the range.

Said Tom Robinson, the Wilderness Society's Northern Rockies director: "This (program) overall probably has had a greater effect" than would the derailed lands sale program. "The Cooperative Management Agreement Program, after all, affects a far greater amount of land in Idaho than would ever have been sold."

Along with regulation changes, Watt instituted a change in emphasis throughout the BLM. Attention and money was shifted toward livestock



management and siphoned away from range and wildlife enhancement. Although less visible, these moves will likely last longer in Idaho than the rest of Watt's actions.

Idahoan Cecil Andrus, former Secretary of the Interior and former Idaho governor, perhaps summed up the fall of Watt best: "The astonishing thing about it was that his personal insensitive feelings brought about his eviction. It wasn't this administration's plunder of the natural resources that brought him down."

This article was made possible by the High Country News Research Fund.



Watt protestors in Boise, Idaho, 1982



Robert Buffington

BLM state director

Robert Buffington filed

Freedom of Information requests

to find out why Watt fired him

A mixed record

Montana surveys the impact of the Watt years

by Don Snow

With some pride, Northern Rockies conservationists point to a litany of James Watt's failures in their states. Led by Montana Congressman Pat Williams, they stopped the secretary from "Bombing the Bob" -- the popular catch-phrase for Watt's scheme to allow oil and gas seismic testing in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

Watt's plan to sell off 17,000 federal acres in Montana -- including a big hunk of the Crazy Mountains north of Livingston -- triggered howls of outrage from conservationists but just plain indifference from potential land buyers. Sales will reach less than one-fourth of Watt's stated goal next year.

The Fort Union coal lease sale died at the hands of a skeptical Senate, and thousands of roadless acres Watt wanted to drop from Bureau of Land Management wilderness review were reinstated. Two groups even managed to overturn Watt's refusal to add Idaho's Selkirk caribou to the list of threatened and endangered species.

So the secretary's record in the Northern Rockies states appears dismal, but some fear that Watt's management legacy will live on. Take, for example, Watt's national park policies.

In 1981, the General Accounting Office reported that 172 national park facilities failed to meet government safety standards. A year later, Watt's Park Restoration and Improvement Project had solved 80 percent of those problems by shifting funds out of the lands acquisition program and into the new Improvement Project. Watt pumped over \$200 million into park improvements in 1982 while cutting the land acquisition budget from \$282 million to only \$65 million. Total spending on the parks nearly doubled under Watt's direction, but additions to the park system were minimal.

Bill Cunningham, conservation director for the Montana Wilderness Association, says that Watt's park improvement plan worked very well

"for people who value clean restrooms more than the parklands themselves." He adds that Watt's refusal to make boundary additions to some of the parks hurt important wildlife species.

"I can't remember a single instance where Secretary Watt took an ecosystem approach to park management," Cunningham said. "He treated the artificial boundaries we've created for the parks as if they were absolute, and he sold America on the notion that he was protecting the parks like nobody ever had."

According to Cunningham, Watt ignored opportunities to buy important boundary lands around Montana's national preserves, even though some of those lands are critically important to the very species the parks are designed to protect.

Cunningham points to the North Fork of the Flathead River, where landowners were willing to sell to Glacier National Park 1,400 acres of important grizzly habitat. The park's management, acting under policy from the top, refused to buy. The land is now available for subdivision.

Montana's Defenders of Wildlife representative Hank Fischer offered a different version of Watt's record in the Northern Rockies.

"Oil and gas leasing and all of the energy programs under Watt received such high priority, they are potentially the most damaging acts Watt left us," according to Fischer.

Since 1981 the Bureau of Land Management has processed a backlog of 1,600 oil and gas lease applications on 2 million federal acres. While the Montana Petroleum Association insists that Watt's leasing program has had no appreciable effect on Montana, Fischer fears for the future of the C.M. Russell Wildlife Refuge and other important habitat lands experiencing accelerated leasing.

In 1982, the Department sent written instructions to federal wildlife refuge managers to expand virtually all economic uses of refuge lands. According to Fischer, most of the refuge managers failed to respond,

prompting Watt's office to issue a second, more strongly worded directive. Oil and gas leasing was at the top of the list for expanded activities on the C.M. Russell, despite the presence of a 1978 Interior study detailing the serious impacts that such a program would have on the preserve's wildlife.

Fischer said it's still too early to tell what effect the rapid leasing has had on the CMR, but it appears to be a program that could serve as a barometer to measure the effect of Watt's mineral policies on Montana.

Watt's actions -- or lack of them -- as steward of the nation's threatened and endangered species also worry Montana conservationists.

When Ronald Reagan took office, about 2,000 species of plants and animals had been placed on the list -- the first and most obvious step in treating the problem of impending extinction. During Watt's first year in office, no new species were added. Instead, Watt's lieutenants spent their time trying to sell the idea that cost-benefit analyses can be applied to species extinction.

Hank Fischer recounted the difficulties his organization encountered when it tried to place the Selkirk caribou on the list. The caribou exists as an isolated population in northern Idaho's Selkirk Mountains, an area where logging is closing in on the animal's range. Little is known about the relict herd, an anomaly in the lower 48, except that it numbers fewer than 20 and it migrates across its range like its northbound cousins. Poaching has become a major problem for the tiny herd.

Defenders of Wildlife and the National Audubon Society teamed up to lobby the caribou onto the list, but James Watt's office opposed the nomination. The two groups filed court papers and prepared for a protracted battle with Interior, beginning with an administrative hearing.

"At 11:59 in the action, Interior reversed its earlier decision," Fischer

said. "The reversal just came out of the blue. Now if you listen to Watt talk about it, you'd swear he's the acting chairman of the Selkirk caribou anti-defamation league."

Unfortunately for the northern grey wolf, Watt saw no public relations advantage in championing the animal. According to Fischer, recovery plans for the wolf have suffered as the Fish and Wildlife Service, an arm of Interior, changed its preferred method from transplanting to natural recovery through propagation.

Fischer said the approach is doomed. "In many areas in the wolf's central range, there aren't enough of them to propagate. They have to be transplanted."

Fischer believes that unlike the Selkirk caribou, the grey wolf is viewed as politically explosive by Interior officials. He also noted that Watt approached the national wildlife refuge system much as he approached the national parks. While he increased the budget for operation of federal wildlife refuges, he quietly cut back on the number of employees in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and recommended the elimination of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Units. According to Fischer, these units have been the real workhorses of federal wildlife research, and they are among the most cost-effective of all the federal wildlife programs.

While Montana conservationists continue to blast the natural resource protection policies of Watt and Reagan, state officials credit the secretary with at least one good deed. Watt's department managed to break a 50-year bottleneck in the state's claim on 26,000 acres of federal land that were supposed to have been given to Montana when it achieved statehood. Under Watt's direction, 9,000 of those acres have been transferred to the state.

But by the end of 1984, Watt's privatization policies will probably cause the transfer of over 4,000 federal acres to private ownership.

Coal...

[Continued from page 10]

leaving, it may be easier to remove the personality issue and let Congress focus on leasing."

Greenberg agrees that coal probably supported Watt. Although the Andrus approach was acceptable, "When the new Secretary of Interior says we can give you all the things you didn't get in 1979," it's a hard offer to resist.

It was even harder to resist Watt's offer to drastically change the Surface Mining Act regulations because industry was fighting those in the courts. According to Tom Galloway, another Washington attorney who specializes in coal litigation, both industry and environmental groups had challenged the way Andrus implemented SMCRA.

Those industry and environmental challenges, grouped as *In Re Permanent Surface Mining Regulation Litigation I*, were bouncing around the courts when Watt came in and

"rewrote 91 percent of the regulations." An environmental coalition Galloway represents then went back to court to challenge Watt's new regulations. For the most part, industry went to court to defend the Watt changes.

The result is *In Re...II*. Galloway said, "It's a massive lawsuit. We will litigate 60 to 80 issues." The case is a classic lineup. Galloway is representing the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, WORC, several Appalachian groups, an Illinois group, and others. Arrayed on the other side are the American Mining Congress, the National Coal Association, and individual firms.

Among the 60 to 80 issues are revegetation in alluvial valley floors, replacement of water sources damaged by mining, the right of Interior to delegate surface land reclamation to the states, recontouring the land, and the application of SMCRA to coal preparation done away from the mine site.

In Galloway's view, industry "knows Watt wrote extreme regulations. And a component of industry

wants a certain level of regulations to ward off more extreme environmental controls. They want to moderate the extreme swings of the pendulum. These wild political swings make it difficult for them to plan mines. "But others would just rape and run -- happy days are here again."

In addition to challenging regulatory changes, Galloway says groups have gone to court to force compliance with what regs there are. "In one case, Interior didn't act on 1700 situations in which coal operators walked away without reclaiming land. It failed to assess \$44 million in civil penalties." Galloway says the groups won in the courts, and Congress has "just voted money to implement the court order. The cases are all over the East."

Carolyn Johnson, a coal specialist with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Denver, suggests that Watt's attempt to weaken reclamation regulations doesn't recognize the progress that some western coal companies have been making. "Watt is out of sync; a decade behind the times. He perceived the coal industry as very

much against regulations. That was true in the early 1970s. They'd still like fewer regs today, but they also need" those regulations to impose uniformity and stability on the industry. If one company can mine and run, it puts pressure on others to do that in order to compete.

Johnson, who just returned from a tour of coal mines in Colorado and Utah, said: "I saw some mines that had done a terrific job of cleaning up long-standing problems. Trail Mountain mine in Utah, for example, had done an outstanding job. Two years ago, it was a God-awful mess, with mine water running down the road. Sunnyside Mine in Utah owned by Kaiser also did an outstanding job. We detected at every mine a more cooperative attitude. Before, we'd only found resistance."

In addition to the major Washington, D.C. lawsuits on coal leasing and reclamation, there are scores of "local" suits challenging actions taken under Watt's revised regulations. These include suits against the well-publicized coal sales, as well as suits on individual mines around the nation.

OPINION

James Watt was coal's ideological pied piper

James Watt's reign had very different effects on the coal and oil shale industries.

Oil shale escaped undamaged, while Watt devastated coal. He may have set it back ten years. It is at least possible he fatally wounded it.

To see why takes some history. During the 1970s, Congress, the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations, and the courts painfully worked out compromises on coal leasing, reclamation, and safety. By 1979, the major elements of a national coal policy were in place. There were aspects that needed improvement from both the industry and environmental perspectives. But at a minimum, the program promised a stable framework within which coal and its watchdogs could function.

Watt arrogantly and ignorantly threw this stability away. He radically altered both leasing and reclamation policies.

The result was predictable: coal is now back in the courts and back in the Congress. There is a moratorium on coal leasing, just as there was in 1970, when Rogers C.B. Morton was Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, or in the mid-1970s, when *NRDC vs Hughes* stopped most leasing. There are lawsuits challenging hundreds of reclamation regulations. There are-- as during the 1970s -- emergency approaches to the Congress by companies which need a new lease to keep a mine going.

An enormous amount of blame accrues to Watt. He shrieked that leasing and regulatory reforms were needed to keep the country strong. He acted as if only he knew that the country needed energy. Because he was so noisy, he didn't hear people telling him that everyone knows America needs coal. We all understand that coal is

a bulwark against foreign oil.

But most of us also know we need other things in order to keep free -- productive agricultural land, relatively clean water, relatively clean air, and a leasing system which charges fair prices to those who develop publicly-owned resources.

Among those who didn't tell Watt about the need for balance and fairness was the American coal industry, an industry which relishes its past mistakes and welcomes the opportunity to remake them.

This industry is faced with serious problems: acid rain, barbarous rail rates, an inability to convince the public that coal slurry pipelines are in everyone's interest, and a coal research budget only slightly smaller than the amount spent by Finland on tropical diseases.

Rather than work on its real problems, coal decided to take a high-risk fling with Watt. It decided to have some fun. So it stepped out on the work it had to do and instead pursued lax environmental laws and enough penny-a-ton reserves to last it through the year 3000. Now coal gets to suffer the long hangover brought on by its binge. It gets to endure Congressional hearings and investigations, moratoria, an even lousier public image than it had, and scores of lawsuits.

The tragedy is that it didn't have to happen. Industry doesn't have to follow every ideological pied piper who whistles a 19th century, rip-em-up tune. The oil shale industry proves that.

Unlike coal, oil shale didn't heed Watt's song of rapid, unlimited leasing, easy environmental regulations, and the fun of rolling a helpless public. Instead, oil shale chose to join with the three oil shale states, local government, and the

environmentalists in fighting Watt's leasing approach.

The coalition not only fought, it beat Watt's program this spring, and is now drafting its own program for submission to Congress. It is not clear that government, industry and the environmentalists will be able to reach agreement. The Congress and the courts may yet have to impose a solution. But how much better, how much more far-sighted, an approach oil shale took than coal.

Optimists will say that this latest debacle will pull the coal industry as a whole into the 20th century; that the failure of the National Coal Association approach will put industry moderates in the saddle.

That would be nice. The nation and the coal-rich West could use a progressive, constructive industry. But coal appears to have a death wish. Even now, the National Coal Association continues to support Watt's policies. From another direction, industry's *Energy Daily* is rewriting history, claiming that coal didn't really support Watt. *Energy Daily* wrote on October 12:

"Watt repeatedly asked the coal industry if he was doing the right thing in trying to lease vast tonnages in a slumping market. Watt repeatedly took the industry's thundering silence for approval, when it was really opprobrium."

"Thundering silence" has a nice sound to it, like a wooden nickel. This historic revisionism does show that industry knows it screwed up. But it also shows that coal has no intention of reforming. It's just going to go underground while it waits for another pied piper to follow in search of the good old days.

-- Ed Marston

GUEST EDITORIAL

The West as victim

by Christopher McLeod

We all store the stuff we don't know what to do with under the bed, in the closet or in the garage. We all know the meaning of "out of sight is out of mind." It is a universal principle.

It is no accident, therefore, that the "remote," "sparsely populated" West has been targeted so often in recent years by Eastern policy-makers as the receptacle of deadly technological experiments. It's not just that we get these experiments because there's more room out here. It's more deliberate than that. This is a consciously-evolved policy, a dangerous trend of American history.

Consider the wide array of technologies which have been tested, or soon will be tested, at sites west of the 100th meridian:

- *The bomb.* First tested at Alamogordo, New Mexico, after secret development at Los Alamos. Tested thereafter at the Nevada Test Site (530 announced nuclear test firings to date, 84 of them above ground). Fallout still blankets the Southwest, and though health effects are disputed back East, they're painfully obvious in Utah.

- *Mega-Mining.* In the Rockies, whole mountains are taken down for molybdenum and copper, leaving thousands of acres of toxic waste to contaminate the sources of the West's watersheds. In the desert, the largest machines on earth dig coal from arid lands which many scientists believe may never recover. The National Academy of Sciences, in fact, coined the phrase "National Sacrifice Area" when it warned that stripmining in arid regions might permanently damage the land.

- *Coal-slurry pipelines.* Millions of gallons underground water are pumped to the surface each day to move coal through pipes across hundreds of miles of mountain and desert from Navajo-Hopi country to a power plant in Nevada. Though only one slurry-line exists, seven more are proposed throughout the West. Those most concerned about the impact of slurry-lines in this

water-short region are ranchers and Indians, and their concerns are rarely heard.

- *Uranium mining and milling.* Over two hundred million tons of radioactive mill wastes, called tailings, have accumulated in the West. They blow in the wind, wash into rivers, and contaminate underground water supplies. Though national attention has focused on the toxic chemical waste issue, little mention is made of tailings. You can bet they would never be allowed to remain on the banks of the Hudson River.

- *Plutonium.* Plutonium is the most toxic substance yet created by man. Major fires in 1957 and 1967 at Rocky Flats, a nuclear weapons plant north of Denver, sent 48 pounds of plutonium into the atmosphere. Thousands of leaking 55-gallon drums containing machine oil laced with plutonium were "stored" in an open field adjacent to the plant from 1958-1967 (since paved over with asphalt). Soil samples taken east of the plant show elevated levels of plutonium.

- *Nerve Gas.* During the moratorium on nerve gas production in the United States, the nation's stockpile was stored near the Denver airport. A public outcry in Colorado resulted in shipment of the weapons for storage at Toole Army Depot outside Salt Lake City.

- *High-level nuclear waste.* Since no one knows what to do with it, or whether the soon-to-be-built repositories will be able to contain their ultra-hot contents, federal policy has not surprisingly dictated that four of the five sites under study for America's first nuclear waste dump are in the West -- Nevada, Texas, Washington and Utah. The Department of Energy's "preferred" sight is in Utah, one mile from Canyonlands National Park. For good measure, the military's high level nuclear waste will be buried in New Mexico, near Carlsbad.

- *"Nuclear Parks."* About the only dangerous technology which doesn't predominate in the West is the nuclear power plant. There are two reasons for that: there's barely enough water in the West to cool a reactor's core, and nuclear power plant builders originally believed they were safe, so they

saw no reason to put them in the West. As if to make up for the oversight, the Department of Energy has awarded the State of Utah a \$460,000 grant to study a "Nuclear Energy Center" containing nine reactors near Green River, Utah.

And inevitably, we come back to the bomb. Montana and North Dakota already have enough nuclear missiles to the super-powers in their own right. Wyoming will soon get the MX. "Fratricide" is a recent East-coast strategic concept which conceals the ultimate trade-off: not just the weapons are vaporized, but the West as well. Unlike the European reaction to the presence of nuclear warheads on their soil, there has been little opposition in the West. An exception to that was the MX missiles' infamous "racetrack," which was certainly not welcome in Nevada or Utah.

I suppose one could argue persuasively that the entire United States -- or the globe even -- is a technological testing ground which is fast becoming a "Sacrifice Area." After all, when Los Alamos' scientists tested their first atom bomb in New Mexico, they couldn't guarantee it wouldn't destroy the earth's atmosphere.

But whatever the global possibilities, the test itself was in New Mexico. There is something sinister about the total amount of destructive technology that is dumped on the West.

But let there be no mistake about it: what is being done to the West is as conscious as it is dangerous. Just as Eastern policymakers allow the export to Third World countries of products which are hazardous and have been banned in the United States, so too they export their dangerous, untested technologies to the "interior" -- their Siberia.

The West is a colony, and a change won't come from the outside. Until the people of the West develop a regional awareness of the danger that U.S./corporate policy represents for their fragile environment, the future of that environment is in jeopardy. Until the West develops mechanisms to protect itself and local self-sustaining economies, it will continue to be raped and plundered like any other colony.

□

Christopher "Toby" McLeod directed the film *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?*, which will be broadcast nationally on P.B.S. starting November 15.

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BULLETIN BOARD

MEASURING WYOMING'S GAME

A concise, well-written account of how Wyoming's game herds are measured, and how their management might be more adequately financed, has just been published by the Wyoming Heritage Foundation.

The 30-page, free White Paper is dryly titled *A History of Wyoming Game Management and Numbers*, and was researched and written by Len Edgerly, assistant director of the Wyoming Heritage Society. The report is rich in detail and makes clear how the state's Game and Fish Department uses sophisticated computer modeling to estimate herd population. An interesting observation in an account of declining hunter harvests is that "Hunters are not as good as they used to be," despite more sophisticated equipment.

To learn more about the unusual and diverse wildlife resources of Wyoming, which hosts two-thirds of the pronghorn antelope in the world and the nation's largest herd of big horn sheep, write: Wyoming Heritage Foundation, Box 2065, Cody, WY, 82414, or call 307/587-5681.

SALMON NATIONAL FOREST ROADLESS AREAS

Idaho's Salmon National Forest is looking for public participation during the reevaluation of Roadless Areas in the forest. The reevaluation is part of the forest planning process to determine the area's wilderness characteristics.

National Forest planning regulations have been changed based on potential effects of a U.S. Court of Appeals decision declaring inadequacies in the RARE II Environmental Impact Statement. The changes went into effect on October 7, 1983, and direct that all roadless areas reviewed in RARE II, Unit Plans, or Forest Plans be evaluated for their wilderness potential in current and future forest planning cycles.

Write to the Salmon National Forest Supervisor's Office, P.O. Box 729, Salmon, ID 83467 for a description of the Roadless Areas. Open houses to answer questions about the reevaluation will be held in Leodore, Idaho on November 16; North Fork, Idaho on November 17; and Salmon, Idaho on November 18 and 19. The deadline for written comments is December 21, 1983.

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE OUTDOORS

If you're interested in volunteer outdoors work, there's a new 20-page directory just for you. *Helping Out in the Outdoors* lists volunteer jobs in parks and forests in 24 states. Work available includes ski trail layout and campground cleaning, as well as indoor work such as graphic artist or warehouse manager. In some cases, housing or food allowances are provided.

The directory is published by a non-profit educational organization called the Northwest Trails Association and may be obtained by sending \$2 to "Helping Out," 16812 36th Ave. West, Lynnwood WA 98036.

BIRD-FEEDING BOOKLET

A booklet is out for anyone who likes to help wild birds make it through the winter. It's called *Banquets for Birds: Suggestions for Supplementary Feeding* and it covers feed, plantings, and more.

Copies are available for \$1.60 each from the Informational Services Department, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Thanks goes to the Yellowstone Valley Flyer, published in Billings, MT by the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, for the tip on this manual.

CUT WITH A PERMIT

Permits will be required for all firewood cutting in Rocky Mountain Region National Forests starting January 1, 1984. The Region includes Colorado, Wyoming, and contrary to what the name implies, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

The new policy will eliminate current confusion arising from different policies in different National Forests, or even different areas within one National Forest, we're told. It will also tell foresters how much wood is being removed and where it's being cut. Because some permits will be free and others available at small cost, check with your local Ranger District office.



THE VIRTUE OF NECESSITY

A 46-page report from the non-profit World Watch Institute in Washington, D.C. focuses on *Materials Recycling: The Virtue of Necessity*.

In detailing progress around the world, author William Chandler notes that Japan and the Netherlands collect half of their waste paper, that South Korea produces 40 percent of its paper from imported waste, and that the nine states in this country with deposit laws on the book exceed 90 percent returns for cans and bottles.

The report is available for \$2 from Worldwatch at 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

MINERS WANTED, MAYBE

That rare creature - a new coal mine - is under development 20 miles south of Steamboat Springs. The underground Twentymile Mine, owned by Getty Oil's Plateau mining company, is under development by a 75-person workforce. If Plateau decides to begin mining, it will hire about 50 people in early 1984. The nearby Oak Creek - Yampa - Craig area has a large number of coal miners, many of them unemployed.

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