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The Paper for People who Care about the West

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The Garrison Diversion Project is North Dakota's history, and destiny

by Mike Jacobs

There are several ways to think about North Dakota's Garrison Diversion Project: as a billion dollar boondoggle, as a bonanza for farms and farm-related business, as an intricate and on-going legal minuet, as a shotgun marriage between the Missouri basin and Hudson Bay.

But the best way to understand the uproar about the project is to think of it as a metaphor for North Dakota's history and an expression of its psyche. The themes of North Dakota history are reflected in this project. Understanding how North Dakotans think of themselves helps explain why the state values the project so much --

and has used its clout in Congress to get it funded.

North Dakota is a state with a chip on its shoulder. With Poland and Lower Slobovia, it is the brunt of mean jokes, some of which hit quite close to home. It is among the flattest of the 50 states, and it is the coldest and most isolated of the lower 48. From Dickinson, N.D., it is farther to a major American city than from almost any other place in the continental United States.

Remoteness and economic disadvantage have given North Dakota politics a special flavor, born of the North Dakota inferiority complex. Conspiracy theories have dominated political rhetoric in North Dakota almost since statehood.

The Garrison Diversion project illustrates this. Moreover, the project reflects the attitude toward the environment of an immigrant generation. It is an effort to make the northern plains more like the prairies of the Middle West.

That such a transformation could be promoted so vigorously reflects another truth about North Dakota. It is a young state, in some ways still a frontier. The centennial of statehood is still five years away and scores of communities are a quarter century or more from their own 100th birthdays. Exploitation of the state's resources has hardly begun. Oil was discovered only 30 years ago and large-scale mining of lignite coal began within the last decade (although a turn-of-the-

century underground coal mine near Wilton was the largest in the United States).

There is a sense of possibility among North Dakotans, and there is the conviction that somewhere, someone is keeping the state from realizing its potential. There is a feeling that the state is being picked on. At the same time that its political leaders are boomers of North Dakota, they are blamers, too.

It is easy to see where the idea of Garrison Diversion came from. The Missouri River carries more than 16 million acre-feet of water past Bismarck each year, and the pioneers, many of whom arrived during the relatively dry years of the 1890s, saw it

[continued on page 10]



A typical view of North Dakota -- very flat and very orderly, where the only "landmarks" are surveyors' stakes and

roads. Even the planted windbreak trees are lined up in precise rows. In this flat, intensively farmed land, only the still

undrained or uninundated prairie pot-holes, marshes and sloughs host North Dakota's wildlife -- enormous flocks of migratory waterfowl.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Coal company settles blasting lawsuit

What is believed to be the first lawsuit involving blasting damage from a western strip mine has been settled out of court. Big Horn Coal Co., a subsidiary of Peter Kiewit Sons', Inc., has awarded Gerald "Digger" Moravek \$235,000 in exchange for ownership of his 130-acre ranch along the Tongue River in northern Wyoming. The Moraveks had sought \$103,000 in actual damages and \$500,000 in punitive damages because of repairs and depreciation of their cut-stone home. The Moraveks said they had recorded more than 250 blasts from the mine since 1977 that had damaged their property.

Moravek, a former chairman of the Powder River Basin Resource Council,

objected in 1976 to Big Horn Mine's plans to mine the Tongue River Valley, and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality declared later that the area was an alluvial valley and unsuitable for mining. Big

Horn Coal is still involved in two lawsuits seeking compensation for the coal and asking the federal government to provide exchange coal. The Moraveks hope to remain in the area.

--Marjane Ambler



High Country News

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Dear friends,

Unlike bears, High Country News hibernates for part of August. But with Labor Day, life returns. We've been blessed in the last week or so by a flood of articles and suggestions for articles. It's a welcome contrast to June, when calls to writers yielded answering machine messages telling us they'd gone fishing, or climbing, or whatever.

In addition to articles, new subscriptions pick up in September. The September 6 mail brought nine new subscribers at the University of Oregon Law School at Eugene, all members of Professor John E. Bonine's environmental law class. We offered the students a three-month subscription for \$5 -- an offer extended to any teacher from Kindergarten to post graduate willing to enroll a class in the HCN School of Environmental Journalism.

Also on September 6, we got a reminder that summer wasn't over. Subscribers Chuck Slack-Elliott and Lisa Jo Sedlacek stopped in the office in search of a map of Gunnison National Forest. The pair, who are spending three months pedaling through the Rockies, publish books on cycling. One, called *Cycling in the Shadow of Shasta*, has 21 maps of far northern California. They do the entire booklet themselves, hand lettering the words, drawing the maps, cutting and stapling the pages together, and then filling orders out of their Pedaler's Institute, 1631 Salem St., Chico, CA 95926.

Although it made us envious, we approve of Lisa and Chuck taking their vacation in September. On the calendar, even on the Earth First! 1985 calendar reviewed in this issue, seasons move chronologically: spring follows winter, summer follows spring, and fall follows summer. But in the North Fork Valley, weather doesn't follow the calendar. Right now, for example, summer and fall are mixing it up freely. Usually, the nights belong to fall and the days to summer, but occasionally cool days and warm nights break even that pattern.

It is not only humans who are confused. Tomato plants seem unaware that they are living on borrowed time -- that tomorrow morning may find them shrivelled by the first frost. So instead of hunkering down, they are blossoming, putting out new growth and flowers instead of repaying us for our gardening efforts by ripening the fruit already hanging on them.

The job comes home.

Asbestos, which was banned in 1978 as a spray-on construction material because it can cause cancer, forced a regional EPA administrator out of his Denver office last month. It seems that renovation work on the building caused chunks of asbestos to

peel off girders above the office of administrator John Welles. Other offices of EPA's 250 employees were also suffering from "asbestos rain." A check showed that unacceptable asbestos levels were present, and EPA officials, charged with protecting the public from asbestos, made plans to protect themselves while at work.

BARBED WIRE

An acquaintance suggested they be dealt with harshly: "Go in there and pull off the flowers and break up the tops of the plants," he said, as if advising us on how to invade Normandy. He's the kind of fellow who takes a rough and ready approach to any situation, but what he said sounded right. So we pulled off the blooms and broke off limbs that didn't have tomatoes.

We suppose we should do the same thing to the strawberries. Like the tomatoes, they are still putting out flowers. But unlike the tomatoes, they're also working hard on ripening: the fall crop, although not as well shaped, is plentiful and delicious. So we let their flowers be and contented ourselves with picking the fruit. We feel relaxed about letting strawberries find their own way; they defend themselves well against disease and bugs and come back year after year. By comparison, without nightly visits from us with flashlights, our tomato plants would long ago have fallen prey to green caterpillars.

In wandering about the garden, we realized that it is not just summer and fall that are mixed together. Spring is supposed to be the time sexual energies are at their peak. But the autumnally flowering tomato and strawberry plants show otherwise. And it is not just the plants. The grasshoppers, which were very plentiful this year, and which spent many happy hours chawing on the vegetation despite a spore we put out to visit a black death plague on them, are no longer hungry for food. They've turned into satyrs and nymphs and use the plants only as spots from which to spy out and copulate with grasshoppers of the opposite sex (at least we assume they're of the opposite sex). We sometimes feel as if we're hosting an around the clock orgy in the backyard.

Another sign of misplaced seasons was found in the rhubarb patch. Rhubarb is alleged to be a spring plant, and we hadn't looked at them since late May. But our neglect must have been benign, for they have been producing away. We understand that oxalic acid or some such chemical builds up in the plant in the summer, but the rhubarb looked as pink and delicious as the spring stuff; cooked up, it tasted fine. It we're wrong, the new staff will tell you about it in the next issue.

The present staff celebrated Labor Day by spending much of it at 12,000

feet, walking an escarpment which circles Lake Irwin near Crested Butte, Colorado. From that long curving ridge we could see Mount Emmons, which by this time might have been a beehive of underground molybdenum mining by AMAX. The moly market collapsed before AMAX could get to work collapsing the mountain. We could also see, in the opposite direction, on the Ruby Range ridge, the site of an exploration rig which had drilled away in the early 1970s. We don't know what they found or didn't find, but the only remnant of the exploration is the slumping road a bulldozer bulled into the dirt side of the ridge.

We suppose we're all a little poorer because Mount Emmons isn't being mined, and because the Ruby Ridge is gradually healing itself. We drove to the hike, for example, in a one-ton car that gets forty miles to the gallon. Were the good times rolling, we would have driven there in a two-ton car that got ten miles to the gallon. Speaking for ourselves, we're willing to accept the deprivation.

This issue speaks for itself, especially the long story by Mike Jacobs on the Garrison Diversion Unit. We're not sure non-North Dakotans can ever be made to understand and care about this incredibly remote, flat state. But if anything can do it, it is this article. We ran into Mike in August, while on a trip to Minot, Bismarck and maybe a couple of other places in North Dakota. The occasion was a press conference by Interior Secretary William Clark. Mike is the author of the *Grand Forks Tribune*, a large daily newspaper in the east end of the state. Keeping 40,000 or so families informed keeps him busy, but he was good enough to spend his Labor Day writing the story in this issue. We thank him.

The Clark press conference was followed by a trip in a flotilla of small planes over half of North Dakota. We went on it to get a feel for North Dakota and the Missouri River basin, but the real feel we got was nausea. It's shameful to admit, but we can't remember a thing we saw from the air. We only know that for a perfectly flat land, North Dakota has extremely mountainous air. It also has tough journalists. The two Dakotans on the flight didn't notice the roughness -- they happily munched on the sack lunches the Bureau of Reclamation provided.

--the staff

Poachers' pride leads to arrests

Two Cheyenne bow-hunters committed several blunders when they shot a bull moose last December. Not only did they shoot it inside Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park, which is a federal offense, but they shot one of the park's more famous moose. Their biggest blunder, however, came when one of them, Mike Dawson, brought the antlers to the Game and Fish Office in Cheyenne. He asked that it be measured for possible inclusion into the Pope and Young Record book, which recognizes archery trophies.

The antlers were indeed an archery record. In fact, even when compared to the record book for antlers obtained from rifle hunting, the antlers ranked an impressive twenty-fourth on the list, says Al Langston, Information Manager for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The Game and Fish Department took pictures of Dawson with the antlers and issued a news release and photo. That's when locals and Game and Fish Officials in the Jackson, Wyoming area became suspicious. The antlers resembled those on a moose which had long been a common sight in the park, and had been frequently photographed. After comparing photographs of the live moose with photographs of the antlers, officials determined they were the same animal.

After a six-month long investigation, Dawson and fellow hunter Mike Albee, along with "Doc" Scheschi of Cheyenne, who helped transport the illegally acquired moose, were charged with poaching in a national



Cheyenne archer Mike Dawson with famous moose antlers

park, a federal offense, and a violation of the Lacey Act. The violation is a high misdemeanor punishable by a \$10,000 fine for each count, a year in jail, or both. The antlers and all

remaining edible portions of the moose have been confiscated by the Game and Fish Department.

--Jeff Marti

Critics hit Wyoming's 'best' water project

Development of the Little Bighorn River in Wyoming seemed to speed up last spring when the state decided to build its own pipeline, tunnel and reservoir close to Montana's border. The momentum continued in late August at a public hearing on proposed projects, when consulting engineer William Clevenger reported that of all the state's projects, the proposed \$75 million Bighorn was the most feasible and least expensive.

But it continues to be controversial. Big plans have been in the works for more than a decade and every one of them has sparked opposition, mostly from those who question whether the water is needed and whether it is worth harming a virtually untouched canyon.

To Governor Ed Herschler, 30,000 acre-feet of the Little Bighorn River per year is worth preserving for Wyoming and last year he persuaded the state legislature to take action. They voted to spend \$500,000 to buy options on water permits owned by private developers, plus another \$3 million to buy the permits outright once the river is apportioned.

Apportionment, however, is a major snag. Montana, Wyoming and the Crow Indians all lay claim to water in the river, which flows from Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains through the Crow Reservation. Because the Little Bighorn is the only tributary not apportioned under the 1950 Yellowstone Compact, Wyoming and Montana must settle its fate among themselves and the Crows, who have been reluctant to sit down and talk about it.

Herschler argues that the best way to cement Wyoming's claim to the

water is by a water storage project -- particularly if the dispute goes to court. And the "use it or lose it" belief is so pervasive throughout Wyoming that few suggest the state drop the project.

Rep. Lynn Dickey (D-Sheridan) said she has considered that option. "I don't care if Wyoming never develops any of that water," she says. "But few people agree with me." As a representative of her Sheridan County constituents, she says she has to support the majority view. "I will support continuing to see if there's something we can do to assert our right to some of that water."

Critics of development, particularly the Sheridan-based Powder River Basin Resource Council, point out that no one has proved the project is needed.

"There are no identified users of the water," said the Council's Katie Humphris at the August 29 hearing. "None apparently exist and for good reason." Boysen and Yellowtail Reservoirs, Lake DeSmet and the Tongue River store a combined surplus of 490,000 acre feet of water, Humphris said. "We simply do not need the Little Bighorn's water."

Engineer Clevenger's report said only industry would be able to afford the water, priced at an estimated \$250 to \$300 per acre-foot. It would be too expensive for agriculture, and "borderline" for municipalities, Clevenger said.

The first plan for the water, a coal slurry pipeline, surfaced in the late 1970s. But when public outcry against exporting water deflated that scheme, the water was promoted for power-generating and synfuels plants.

There has been no new industrial buyer for the water since synthetic

fuels dropped out of the picture and slackened demand for electricity made new plants unlikely.

That leads to the question of whether the project is even necessary and whether the state should pay half a million dollars to buy options on the water permits. And, as some critics ask, why does the state want to buy the permits when by law the state owns all the waters within its borders and merely "permits" private parties to use them.

Two years ago, the Wyoming legislature voted \$8 million for the Sheridan Group to start to build its project. But attempts to write a contract were wrecked by accusations of conflict of interest, speculation and government subsidy of private business. So far, that money has never been spent.

Antagonism to the project isn't solely based on economics. The canyon, most of it in the Bighorn National Forest, is a favorite for hikers, fishermen, hunters and summer cabin owners. The U.S. Forest Service plans to recommend that 19 miles of the river be studied for possible Wild and Scenic River protection.

"It's pristine, which is something rare," said one objector at the meeting. "You have something there you need to keep."

Since according to law, apportionment must be settled before any permits can be purchased, and the Crows are in no hurry to sit down at the negotiating table, actual construction is a long way down the road. Some people are happy with that, and content to see the canyon of the Little Bighorn stay just the way it is.

--Susan Harlow

HOTLINE

Lumber company wins

The *New York Times* for September 3 reports that Louisiana-Pacific has won its battle against the Western Council of Lumber Production and Industrial Workers, which had put 1,500 workers on strike at 17 mills in Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon and California (*HCN*, 6/11/84). According to the *Times*, new, nonunion employees and workers who crossed picket lines have voted to decertify the union. The union says the firm has been badly hurt by the strike, but stock analysts say the firm's president, Harry Merlo, has become a "folk" hero among executives for beating the union while continuing to do well economically.

Wyoming desert elk in decline



The population of the only desert-dwelling elk herd in Wyoming, the Steamboat Mountain Elk Herd, is declining. According to game officials, the herd, which dwells on the desert plains north of Green River and Rock Springs, Wyoming, has dwindled from 1200 to 400 due to a heavy harvest in the late 1970s and increased seismic activity by oil exploration in 1981-1982. The Game and Fish Department says the area should be able to support at least 700 elk. A study of the herd's decline began in December, 1983 and officials are now conducting aerial population counts and gathering information on how to strengthen the numbers. The herd's range covers 1,442 square miles, extending from White Mountain to the western end of the Great Divide Basin in Sweetwater County.

Montana tribes ban nukes

Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes of the Flathead Reservation have declared their lands in Montana a nuclear-free zone. The tribes hope to block siting or transporting of nuclear wastes and weapons within their boundaries. Since the city of Missoula had adopted a similar resolution, the tribes feared that wastes bound for the Hanford nuclear waste facility in Washington might be routed north through their 1.2-million acre reservation. In 1982, the tribes were the second government in the nation to utilize the Clean Air Act to protect their air through a voluntary Class 1 redesignation.

Wild birthday

Happy Birthday to the National Wilderness Act, which was 20 years old and 25 million acres large in the Lower Forty-Eight on September 3. The Montana Wilderness Association suggested that its state's delegation observe the milestone by reconsidering its proposed wilderness bill.

HOTLINE

Bigborn transplants



Colorado Division of Wildlife

For the second consecutive year, Desert bighorn sheep have been transplanted into western Colorado's Dominguez Canyon. Ten sheep were trapped in Arizona, shipped by boat across Lake Mead and loaded into a horse trailer bound for Colorado. After a medical checkup at the Colorado Division of Wildlife Office in Grand Junction, the collared and ear-tagged three rams and seven ewes were released in Dominguez Canyon, 30 miles southeast of Grand Junction. They joined ten other sheep released last year as well as at least two lambs born in the canyon, says Jim Olterman, a Division of Wildlife biologist. The canyon was chosen as a transplant site for sheep in part because Indian petroglyphs in the canyon show a past history of bighorn sheep. A similar sheep reintroduction program in nearby Colorado National Monument five years ago has resulted in a current population of about 50 sheep.

Ornery in Wyoming

Horses were not kind to Wyoming officials this August. Bridger-Teton National Forest supervisor Reid Jackson had his leg broken when a horse kicked him as he was about to mount. Jackson, Congressman Dick Cheney (R-WY) and others were starting off on a four-day pack trip to investigate acid rain in the Bridger Wilderness Area when the accident happened. The area is threatened by a nearby Exxon gas sweetening plant. Adding insult to injury, the fractious horse is owned by the Forest Service. In a separate event, State Senator John Turner, who runs a guide and outfitter operation near Yellowstone Park, tore ligaments in his leg in the Teton Wilderness Area. Turner's mishap came while subduing a horse which had just thrown one of his clients, breaking her leg.

Chlorine-cancer link to be studied

University of Idaho veterinary scientists will spend the next three years and a \$438,000 EPA grant trying to learn what role, if any, certain by-products of water chlorination may play in the development of cancer. Their goal is to learn whether trichloroacetic (TCA) acid and dichloroacetic (DCA) acid have any part in either initiation or promotion of cancer in white rats. Both chemicals may be present in varying small amounts in chlorinated water, depending upon the amount and kind of organic material in the water when it is treated with chlorine. Scientists have only recently gained the ability to measure these chemicals in the very small amounts in which they may appear in drinking water.

Hunting code imposed on reservation

Hunting regulations have been forced upon the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. In late July the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced it would impose and enforce a game code on the Arapaho and Shoshone tribes, which have not been able to agree upon a game code themselves.

The Shoshone, who have pushed the idea of hunting regulations since 1980, applauded the BIA decision, while the Arapaho have consulted lawyers and are prepared to fight the decision.

Enrolled members of the reservation have always enjoyed the privilege of open hunting rights -- no limits on number, sex or season. Over the years this has seriously depleted the numbers of big game to the point that moose and antelope are almost completely absent on the reservation, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife studies. And because the game is migratory, the depletion affects lands adjacent to the reservation.

Many Indians of both tribes have seen the problem develop. But it was only the Shoshone tribe that passed a

moderate game code in 1980, putting limits on numbers and establishing a hunting season. For a code to become law on the reservation, however, both tribal councils must agree. The Arapaho put the code to a vote more than once since 1980, but it has never passed.

To try to force the issue, the Shoshone tribal council wrote then Secretary of Interior James Watt in 1982 and Secretary William Clark in 1983 asking for a moratorium on hunting until the Arapaho voted in a code. Neither secretary ever granted the request.

One of the arguments the Arapaho tribe has used against the need for a code is lack of scientific evidence confirming the declining numbers. There was one study done in 1978, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Lander hired Bruce Smith to work exclusively on reservation problems. Smith's data showed the reservation had good habitat, plenty of forage, no major conflicts for critical winter range, but very few wildlife. Aerial counts found few moose, antelope, deer, elk and bighorn sheep.

Dale White, an attorney represent-

ing the Arapaho tribe with Fredericks and Pelcyger in Boulder, Colorado, said the Arapaho have hired an independent wildlife biologist to study the U.S. Fish and Wildlife data and other data collected on the reservation to make a separate determination. White said that if the biologist is convinced a game code is needed the Arapaho may decide not to challenge the Bureau of Indian Affairs' decision.

But White said if the Arapaho decide to take the issue to court, they should have a good case. He explained that the BIA has no power to put hunting regulations into effect on the reservation. To do so there must be some statute giving them that power, he said, and none exists.

However, Dick Whitesell, BIA area director in Montana, said that the BIA has the responsibility to protect natural resources on reservations and "we consider wildlife a natural resource." Whitesell said the BIA is in the process of hiring five federal game wardens for the reservation. The federally-imposed game code should be in effect by the time Wyoming state hunting seasons open this year.

--Carol Jones

BOOK NOTES

Earth First! dates itself with a calendar

The 1985 Earth First! Calendar

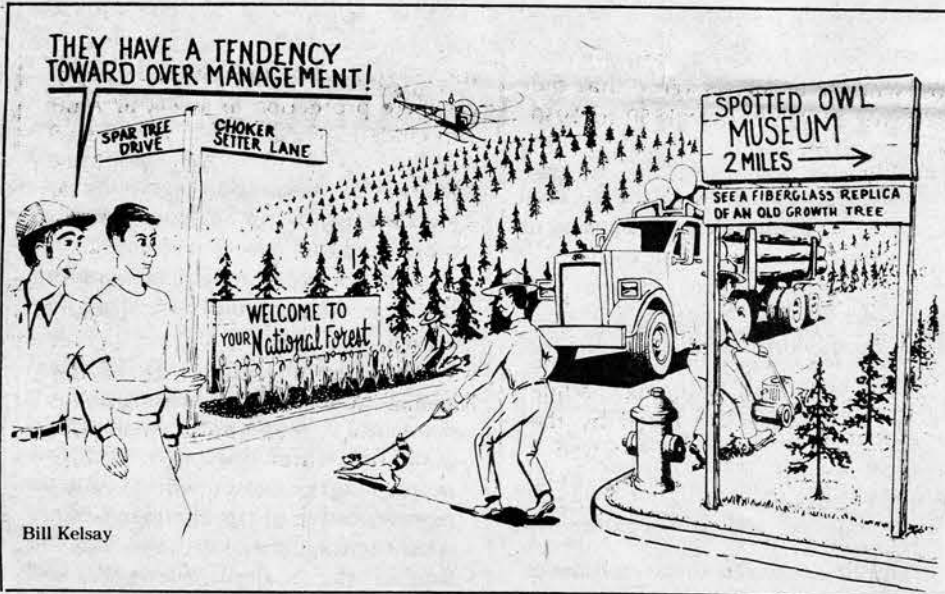
Earth First! P.O. Box 235, Ely, Nevada 89301. Illustrated. \$6 by mail. Review by Ed Marston

Earth First!, the radical environmental organization, paints itself as a beer-drinking, dragline sabotaging, fun-loving alternative to the good, gray, buttoned-up environmental groups. With publication of its 1985 calendar, they have stripped away that disguise.

For what the annotated dates and quotes show is that the organization has a coherent philosophy, an historic framework, and is capable of enough discipline and sustained work to come up with 986 birthdates, wilderness anniversaries, massacres and victories. The calendar might make an especially good gift for youngsters: it turns the world on its head and should get even the most hormonally-distorted teenager thinking.

Each month is set off by a cartoon; none of them high art, but all have a punch and some are wonderfully vicious. Opposite a cartoon showing Stumpey the Bear warning people to watch out for logging trucks and not to play with dead animals, the calendar marks January 24, 1848 as 'the beginning of the end for the west (gold discovered at Sutter's Mill)'. The news is not all grim in January. Less than a calendar week later, on January 30, 1813, the rope meant to hang Ned Ludd of Luddite fame breaks and the English destroyer of machinery escapes.

March, illustrated by a decayed Glen Canyon dam, opens with a quote from Harold Gaither: "It (Canyonland National Park) sits there, bloated and useless, attracting these environmentalists like a stinking carcass attracts blowflies." Bad news is noted on March 10, 1774: "Daniel Boone develops route through Cumberland Gap ('civilization' surges through the Appalachians)."



April 19, 1955 is bleak: "Conservation groups make compromise leading to Glen Canyon dam." On that same awful day, but in 1968, "Snowmobiles deface North Pole." It isn't until April 27, 1812 that there's a piece of really good news: "Assassination of anti-Luddite fiend William Horsfall."

The movement of Montana dust across the globe during the dustbowl days of 1934 is recorded in May -- the dust reached Bermuda on May 13, having left Chicago on May 9. The first auto accident is recorded on May 30, 1896, without noting whether it was caused by Montana dust.

June opens with a quote from Earth First! publisher Dave Foreman: "A monkeywrench thrown into the gears of the machine may not stop it. But it might delay it. And it feels good to put it there." June is generally a good month. On June 24, 1983, 20 elephants destroyed a Sumatran village intruding on their forest, and on June 25, 1876 there was the "victory of the Little Bighorn." That day was marred, however, by a traitorous act in 1913: "Gifford Pinchot supports Hetch Hetchy Reservoir."

June 11 puts the man-nature relationship in perspective. On that day in 1898, "Grand Teton allows humans on top."

In addition to environmental matters, the calendar marks many labor dates. On August 26, 1919, "Fannie Sellins, union organizer, murdered by Steel Trust goons, Natrona, PA." September opens dismally, with the death of Martha, the last passenger pigeon, in 1914 in a Cincinnati Zoo. On September 4, 1886, Geronimo surrenders, and on September 5, 1379, "Three sows kill swineherd, St. Marcelle France, later tried and hung." On Sept. 14, 1956, doctors did the first frontal lobotomy.

The year ends well enough, with DDT banned in 1972, Hells Canyon Wilderness formed in 1975, and wilderness areas closed to prospecting in 1983. The final entry is "1970 Environmental Protection Agency established (destroyed ten years later by Anne Gorsuch)."

The last quote is by B. Traven: "This is the real world, muchachos, and you are in it."

A grim message, but each day can be lightened by this calendar's vicious cartoons and its secular, profane and occasionally spiritual observances.

The wolf is on the edge of extinction

Some 80 years after sponsoring an all-out program to destroy wolves, the Interior Department is seeking ways to rescue northern Rocky Mountain wolves from near extinction. Changing direction isn't easy. The Northern Rockies Wolf Recovery Plan has become one of the most controversial and politicized plans for restoring an endangered species since the Endangered Species Act became law in 1973. Recovery efforts may well provide one of the Endangered Species Act's greatest challenges as conservationists confront an Interior Department that is trying to balance the concerns of livestock growers.

Wolves once roamed virtually every part of North America. Various subspecies inhabited all of the West with the possible exception of the Mojave Desert. But European settlers, hostile to predators, set about eliminating wolves in favor of domestic livestock. In 1915, the Interior Department joined their efforts, sending teams of "predator control agents" into the wilderness to trap wolves, raid their dens, and offer bounties for wolf parts. Park rangers in Yellowstone joined the effort and systematically exterminated wolves within the new national park.

The structure of wolf society, with small numbers of breeding individuals in a territorial pack dependent on a large range, made the animals vulnerable to human pressures that coyotes have endured with seeming ease.

Though some may say the livestock industry could not coexist with wolves, most wildlife biologists agree that the slaughter of wolves from 1850 to 1930 went far beyond what was justified by their actual impact on livestock. The canines were victims of an obsessive hatred that still exists in much of the West and Canada.

Today in the U.S., some 800 wolves live in northern Minnesota and scattered individuals live in remote areas of Idaho and Montana. While Minnesota's wolves are listed by the federal government as "threatened," wolves in the Northern Rockies have always been listed as "endangered."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) formed a wolf recovery team in 1975, as required by the Endangered Species Act. Along with state and federal wildlife specialists, the team includes representatives from the conservation community and the livestock industry. Their purpose is to devise a plan for helping wolf populations increase in selected areas where the team believes there is adequate habitat and minimal potential for human conflict exists.

The team chose three wolf recovery areas. One centers around Yellowstone National Park and nearby wilderness areas, a second encompasses the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park area, and the third includes the vast River of No Return and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness areas in east-central Idaho and southwestern Montana.

The Yellowstone recovery effort has presented the greatest challenges to the team. Livestock growers point to the large numbers of ranches nearby and claim the wolves leave the park and prey on livestock. But Yellowstone Park officials, who have been interested in reestablishing wolves in Yellowstone for decades, point to a long-standing overpopulation of elk in the park as evidence of a sufficient wild food supply and a need for the wolf's presence in the park ecosystem.



Marty Stouffer Productions, Ltd.

Yellowstone also presents the most troublesome aspect of the recovery effort: reintroduction. Although wolves still exist in small numbers in Idaho and Montana, experts agree that there are none remaining in the Yellowstone area. Wolves would have to be brought in from Alaska or Canada and released into the park if they are to howl in Yellowstone once again.

Livestock growers have been particularly alarmed by the prospect of reintroduction. To address the stockmen's concerns, the team borrowed an idea from the grizzly bear recovery plan called the "zone management system." According to the system, wolves would enjoy complete protection in a central zone surrounded by a buffer zone from which troublesome wolves could be relocated. Wolves could be killed or removed from a third zone closest to private lands.

When the wolf zone management system was proposed in 1980, stockgrowers feared reintroduction was imminent. Joseph Helle of the National Wool Growers Association voiced the stockmen's concerns, urging that wolves be taken off the Endangered Species list. He asked for Congressional hearings to "determine whether Endangered Species programs such as the wolf recovery program are in the best interests of the tax-paying public."

The stockgrowers got their Congressional inquiries and public hearings and succeeded in sidetracking the first wolf recovery plan. The team is currently working on a second draft which could be completed later this year. It is expected to contain stronger provisions regarding wolf/livestock predation.

The wolf recovery team's latest draft plan now proposes reintroduction into Yellowstone, a recommendation that the regional USFWS office sent on to Washington. Hank Fischer, Defenders of Wildlife's Northern Rockies Representative, says the proposal is probably still "too hot to handle."

"The current political climate is such that it couldn't be a successful venture," says Ken Czarnowski, a wildlife specialist at Yellowstone National Park. "A huge amount of negative pressure is being put on the recovery team by local political delegations. The National Park Service director is on record as saying wolves should not be reintroduced at this time. In order to succeed, we would have to have public acceptance since a lot of people would rather wolves were not here. So we're

working on public education at this time," says Czarnowski.

Czarnowski points out that Yellowstone Park officials have been grappling with overpopulations of elk and deer for decades, often arousing public criticism of their elk control efforts. "We are in favor of reintroducing the wolf since it has been eliminated and it belongs here," Czarnowski says. "But we only want to do it if there is a decent chance of success."

The USFWS must fund and coordinate any endangered species recovery program through the Office of Endangered Species in Washington. To a large extent, the National Park Service and the Forest Service would be responsible for managing wolves on their lands.

"A recovery plan doesn't mandate money or management actions," says USFWS Endangered Species Coordinator Larry Thomas. "We fund recovery actions according to our list of priorities."

USFWS priorities are rarely based on biological criteria alone. Political considerations such as interest group pressure also come into play, given a backlog of more than 3,827 endangered species needing federal action and Reagan Administration budget cuts for the Endangered Species Programs over the last three years.

"There's no doubt that the Reagan Administration is hostile to wolf recovery efforts," says Defenders of Wildlife's Hank Fischer. He points out that Defenders and other conservation groups are ready to go to court to force the USFWS to take action on wolf recovery if necessary. "We're not going to just sit on our hands while this administration squashes all wildlife efforts."

Whatever the outcome of the recovery team's efforts, wolves on the North Fork of the Flathead River in Montana and on Kelly Creek in Idaho face the imminent likelihood of clearcuts and oil and gas exploration within their current wilderness ranges. While the recovery plan fights its way through a hostile bureaucratic environment, the wild environment of the few remaining Rocky Mountain wolves may become increasingly hostile as well.

But many conservationists are optimistic. "A lot of people in Idaho and Montana are very excited about wolf recovery," says Hank Fischer. "I'm confident that we're moving to the point where, legally, there won't be any choice but to reintroduce wolves."

--Thomas Ribe

LETTERS

IF YOU PARTAKE OF CARRION

Dear HCN,

Thank you for spotlighting "Grazing in the West" in HCN 7/23. BLM has always been a mysterious entity writing in "Governmentese."

The damage done by grazing provokes the following: "In hamburgers is the downfall of the Western lands." or: "If you partake in carrion -- don't complain about over-grazing."

Georgie Leighton
Aspen, Colorado

A GRAZING COMMENT

Dear HCN,

Your July 9th issue coverage of the BLM oversight hearings conducted by the House Public Lands subcommittee is a welcome exception to the apathy shown by much of the press to BLM's "stewardship" of the public lands.

The lands administered by the BLM are an asset of incredible value and unique beauty. Protection of that value and beauty will require a change from the "business as usual" service to the commodity interests traditionally served by the Bureau. Such a change will take place only if the management of the public lands is subject to the scrutiny of the people who own those lands, the American public. Your article will help focus that scrutiny.

I would like to clarify one problem discussed in my testimony. The Interior Solicitor's initial disapproval and subsequent reversal applied only to that portion of the Jacks Creek pipeline which would be constructed within the Big and Little Jack's Creek Wilderness Study Areas. The Bureau has consistently held that construction of the stockwatering pipeline adjacent to the ungrazed WSAs is consistent with its Interim Management Policy. This interpretation will result in grazing pressure far in excess of the level in existence at the time FLPMA was enacted.

Thanks for your coverage of public land issues. Keep up the good work.

Charles C. Yoder
Chair, Conservation Committee
Sierra Club
Boise, Idaho

THANKS FOR FOE NEWS

Dear HCN,

I am very thankful you put the 'troubles' of Friends of the Earth in your paper. I would not have known about it otherwise.

Keep up the good work!

Agnes P. Baker
Security, Colorado

BARBS

No surprises here.

A report titled "1984 Religion in America" has found very little difference between the "behavior of the church and the unchurched on a wide range of items, including lying, cheating and pilferage." Religious concern is up but morality is down, according to the George Gallup organization. It called the results "paradoxical."

6-High Country News -- September 17, 1984

HOTLINE

High cleanup estimates

The Environmental Protection Agency recently released a report that estimates the cost of meeting federal clean air and water standards at half a trillion dollars during the 1980s. An estimated \$526 billion in cleanup costs will be needed for the period from 1981-1989, with \$270 billion going for water pollution control and \$256 billion for minimizing air pollution. The report, prepared for the EPA by Development Planning and Research Associates, Inc., also says the cleanup costs will contribute four tenths of a percentage point to inflation each year, raising prices as measured by the government's consumer price index to an average 6.6 percent above what they would otherwise be by 1987.

Diesels are down



Sara Hunter-Wiles

People who like their air without seasonings can take a deep breath -- sales of diesel-powered cars are falling drastically. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, plentiful gasoline supplies and increasingly efficient gasoline engines have pushed sales of new diesel-powered cars from 6 percent of the market in 1981 to 1.5 percent this year. That's good news from a health and esthetics point of view. The National Resources Defense Council reports that diesel truck drivers suffer from high rates of certain types of cancer. Diesel trucks emit up to 100 times more particulates than gasoline-powered cars.

Idaho to inventory

The Nature Conservancy and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game have begun a program to inventory rare, threatened, and endangered species and ecosystems in Idaho. The Idaho Natural Heritage Program will be a computerized data base of information on the status and distribution of rare plants, animals, and ecosystems throughout the state. The project, begun last March, is funded by private grants and matching funds from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Similar studies are underway in 32 other states, and the Conservancy hopes to consolidate each state's program into a national data base.

Coal is cheaper

If your utility is building a nuclear power plant, then for the safety of your pocketbook, experts suggest you move to an area which gets its power from coal. According to the Electric Power Research Institute, coal-fired plants may produce power for up to 50 percent less than nuclear plants due to the high cost of building a nuclear plant. Those costs led to additional nuclear casualties last month, when the Tennessee Valley Authority cancelled plants on which it had already spent almost \$3 billion.

Compromise possible on wilderness bill

A push is on to come up with a compromise Idaho wilderness bill in the closing days of Congress. Some of the pressure comes from John Seiberling (D-OH), who chairs the House Interior Committee's public lands subcommittee.

In part as a result of the pressure, negotiations were held in Idaho in August, while Congress was in recess, between conservationists and timber and mining interests. However, the meetings were not very productive and the lobbying and negotiating action shifted back to Washington, D.C. in September, when Congress came back into session.

The Senate has passed the 526,000 acre wilderness bill sponsored by Senator James McClure (R-ID) and introduced into the House by Representative Larry Craig (R-ID). The House public lands subcommittee has held hearings on the Idaho bill, but it has not yet considered markup of the McClure bill.

In early August, two out-of-state Congressmen introduced a competing bill. Peter Kostmayer (D-PA) and Jim Moody (D-WI) submitted a bill which would create 3.4 million acres of wilderness, the areas supported by Idaho conservationists.

McClure denounced the new bill as "last minute meddling in the legislative process," but it could lay the groundwork for some sort of compromise. Seiberling has been very supportive of conservation wilderness interests in the western states, but his staff is now putting on the pressure for some sort of bill.

Seiberling aide Andy Weissner, for



Idaho Dept. of Commerce and Development

example, told the press, "The areas are more important than the acreage," indicating that the vast gap between McClure's half million acres and the conservationists' 3.4 million acres could be bridged if key areas were made wilderness.

Tom Robbins, Idaho field representative for the Wilderness Society, said, "In the next month and a half, we may be in our best possible position to get something moderately acceptable passed." He added, if a bill doesn't pass, "In the next two years we could be vulnerable to a very bad bill."

In the absence of a bill, the Forest

Service will continue to re-evaluate wilderness candidates. Areas recommended for wilderness in RARE II may not be recommended for wilderness under a new evaluation.

But the Idaho Conservation League, an in-state group, seems reluctant to rush to compromise. Executive director Wendy Wilson said, "Pressures (for compromise) are coming from Congress" due to a desire to put the issue behind them and avoid political fallout from a failure to pass bills.

"Those are legitimate concerns. But they're not my concerns. We're in no rush. I don't think we need a bill all that much. If we don't get a bill, there will be continued wars in the woods about timber sales and road building."

But Wilson believes conservationists will be better able to fight those wars without a bill. "Without a bill, we can keep fighting timber sales until hell freezes over." With a bill, she said, roadless areas not put into wilderness would be very vulnerable to roading and timbering.

Part of the League's attitude comes from the negotiations held in August between conservationists and timber and mining firms. Wilson says the meetings were strongly encouraged by Seiberling, but that McClure and Craig refused to commit to support their outcome. And Senator Steve Symms (R-ID), she says, denounced them, discouraging serious compromise.

--Rick Johnson, staff

Gas spill 'fills up' a Montana aquifer

A ranching family west of Missoula, Montana is suing the operators of the Yellowstone Pipeline over contamination from a 1982 gasoline spill. George and LaVerne Mastel are asking for \$30 million in damages, claiming the spill permeated the land, ruined their water supply and destroyed the market value of their ranch.

The spill occurred on June 25, 1982, when a product line carrying leaded gasoline ruptured in a watershed above their ranch. The spill sent over 230,000 gallons of gasoline into Lavalle and Butler Creeks. A floating boom, similar to those used to contain marine oil spills, was erected briefly on LaValle Creek, and some of the gasoline pumped out with a firetruck. But most of it seeped into the ground, and now, LaVerne Mastel says, it is fanning out through the aquifer.

Toluene, benzene, and lead are among the persistent components of gasoline listed by the EPA as toxic chemicals. These and other products have been found by the Mastels in springs, wells, and sloughs in Grass Valley, where the ranch is located. The water table there is high, with impermeable clay underneath. The Mastels say the sediment in the streambeds produces a "gasoline sheen" when disturbed, and that the sheen has appeared in other water sources at an accelerating rate.

"In the past six to eight weeks we've found it in places we've never seen it before," Mrs. Mastel says.

The Mastels have filed suit against Conoco, Inc., Continental Pipeline Co., and Yellowstone Pipeline Co., the three joint operators of the pipeline,

for negligence, exposing them to hazardous wastes, and violating both the state Water Quality Act and the 1972 Montana Constitution, which guarantees residents "a clean and healthful environment" as an inalienable right. At least two other suits have also been filed.

If the aquifer is contaminated, the gasoline will eventually reach the Clark Fork and be gradually flushed away. But no one knows how long it will take for the land to cleanse itself.

William Rossbach, the Mastel's attorney, says that the companies never warned of the extent of the possible damage after the spill.

Over the last year, the Mastels say that 40 percent of their cattle have aborted or are "open" (non-fertile), and autopsies on slaughtered cattle have shown serious damage to the kidneys, liver, the gastro-intestinal tract, and the intestinal flora in the rumen. They have also noticed the loss of wildlife in and around the valley's waterways.

Bill Scott of Continental Pipeline said that he didn't know of any method for cleaning a groundwater supply. He was unable to comment on the lawsuit.

--Lisa Lombardi

Wyoming wilds bill stalled

Wyoming's sole U.S. Representative, Richard Cheney (R), and House subcommittee chairman Rep. John Seiberling (D) are still trying to iron out their differences and pass a Wyoming wilderness bill before the adjournment of Congress in early October. Cheney congressional staffer Patty Howe says an agreement seems close at hand and that the Wyoming delegation is hoping to pass a bill by next month.

A spokesman for a Wyoming wilderness group is not so optimistic. "I don't believe there's going to be any legislation coming out of this session of Congress," says Peter Laybourn of the Medicine Bow Wilderness Committee, a group that has been promoting wilderness

designation in southeastern Wyoming for two years.

Stalling the bill, he says, are three small areas near the continental divide in the Sierra Madre Mountains of southeastern Wyoming: Encampment River, Platte Ridge, and Huston Park.

It is near these areas that diversions of the westward-flowing Little Snake River are planned over the continental divide and into the North Platte River. Called the Stage III water project, it would supply water to Casper and Cheyenne. Although planning isn't completed yet, Laybourn says Cheney has written to him several times about his fears of lawsuits and conflicts if the project starts up after the three areas are designated wilderness.

--Mary Moran

Montana fires affected range, wildlife and water

Larry Mayer

A seven-day siege of forest and range fires that charred 250,000 acres across Montana is dying a slow, smoldering death, but it may take the snows of winter before it is finally extinguished. Meanwhile, federal, state and local agencies are trying to determine what the extent of damage will be to forests, rangeland, wildlife, water systems, fish -- and humans.

The 16 major fires that turned national news attention to the Big Sky State for a full week began August 25 when a series of lightning storms sparked blazes across parched Montana. Major portions of the state -- with the exception of the western quarter -- have been suffering from dry conditions for the past two years.

By the time the blazes were brought under containment the weekend of Sept. 1-2, they had blackened:

- 145,000 acres at Hawk Creek, between Billings and Roundup in south-central Montana;
- 28,000 acres at North Hill near Helena;
- 13,000 acres at Houghton Creek near Libby;
- 13,000 at Centennial Mountain near Havre;
- 11,500 acres at Pine Hills near Miles City;
- 3,400 acres at Napi Peak on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation on the eastern edge of Glacier National Park;
- 3,000 at Crystal Creek southeast of Glacier National Park;
- 2,000 near Glasgow;
- 1,400 at Red Owl Creek south of Kalispell;
- and seven other areas of 1,000 acres or more across the state.

"Our state literally is on fire from Glacier Park in the extreme northwest corner to the Custer (National) Forest and the Bull Mountains in the southeast," observed Gov. Ted Schwinden early in the week of fires.

An army totalling more than 5,000 firefighters attacked the blazes. Although the state's western fires were of smaller acreage than those in the east, they were difficult to fight because of dense timber and heavy naturally accumulated fuel loads.

In the east, where an estimated 32 mobile and frame homes were destroyed at Hawk Creek, winds of nearly 60 miles per hour pushed flames through ponderosa pine timber stands and nearly roadless rangeland. Smoke columns reached 32,000 feet.

Tragically, the fires also claimed a life: Doug Spaith, 35, a volunteer firefighter from Roundup, died Sept. 1 of second- and third-degree burns obtained Aug. 25 when his clothing caught fire as he attempted to start a backfire to protect homes. No other serious injuries were reported.

Numerous state and federal level agencies began meetings after Labor Day to sort out effects of the fire. While total economic damage and environmental loss is not expected to be completely assessed until late

September, fire suppression alone may have cost \$400,000 a day.

But what about cost to the environment?

Timber: Federal Emergency Management Agency officials in Denver have estimated the loss of timber in state and national forests alone at \$15 million. Private timberland losses are only beginning to be tallied, with major holdings in eastern Montana belonging to a subsidiary of Burlington Northern Railroad and to Consolidated Coal.

"The negative part of the fire is the damage to the forest, which will take many years to re-establish," concluded James Eggen, of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in Bozeman, Montana. Foresters said those "many years" could range from 50 to 100.

However, beneficial results will occur too, according to U.S. Forest Service spokesman John Gibson in Billings. "Some plants require heat to open their seeds," Gibson said. Other tree species need fires to give them more room for growth.

Rangeland: Although thousands of acres of grazing land are now beyond use because of the fires -- and hay is nearly \$100 a ton -- ranchers can expect to see more grass growing in the next few years.

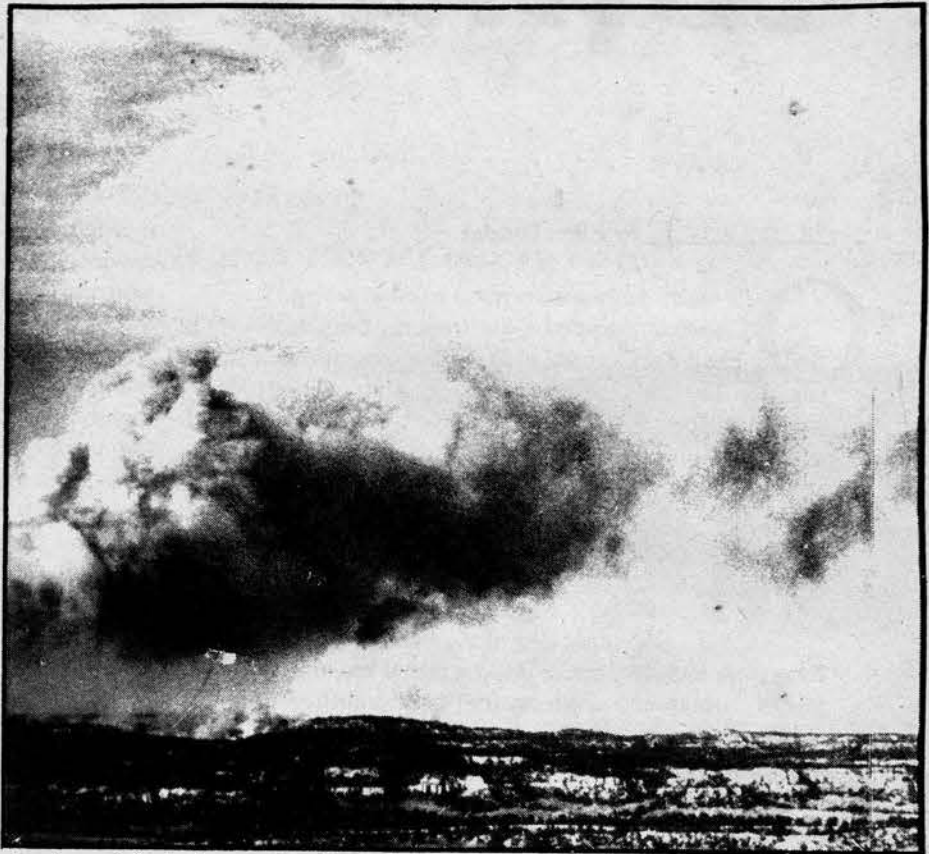
"The only possible good from the fires will be that there will be more grass," said Jim Beaver, acting area manager in the Bureau of Land Management Billings office.

But if adequate rainfall doesn't return to eastern Montana, prospects will be dimmer for the resurgence of range, timberland forage and pastures. Portions of northeastern Montana are staggering under conditions of less than 25 percent of normal precipitation for the past two years, while the greater portion of eastern Montana has received between 50 and 75 percent of normal moisture. This year's wheat crop is expected to be the smallest in 15 years.

Wildlife: While wildlife suffered some short-term hardship from the fires, the long view may be more beneficial.

Roger Fliger, of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, said fires "reduce the habitat for a while." In isolated cases, you could have some direct reduction of elk, deer, turkey and grouse." But, he added, "historically, you can look back and see fires are a natural thing. They bared the country from time to time; Indians even used to set fires so they would get new grass so the buffalo would come and feed."

As the fires swept eastern Montana, there were many reports of herds of antelope and deer moving ahead of the fires into new terrain. Montana State University biologists in Bozeman said that while many wild animals managed to flee and survive, their greatest threat may eventually



Smoke and clouds from a fire obscure and rise 30,000 feet above the Bull Mountains of Montana.

come in the trauma of moving into new range.

Professor Robert Eng said there will often be islands or pockets of land even in the fire area where vegetation is not destroyed. Deer, antelope and other small animals will attempt to move into those areas to try to re-establish themselves. But according to his studies, Eng said the newcomers will have a lower survival rate than established animals, in addition to becoming easier prey for predators because of greater numbers.

Overall, however, initial reports limit serious animal deaths to small game and rodents.

Streams and fish: The greatest danger to water and fish lies in denuded land and resulting soil runoff, according to a number of experts.

The only serious incident of stream damage has come from Beaver Creek, a prime trout spawning area near Helena. Water tests showed the water after the North Hill fire to be 100 times more alkaline than normal, and the water "so thick with ash that it was hard to fill a bottle of it," said U.S. Forest Service hydrologist Bill Putnam. Dead fish along the stream had heavy deposits of silt and ash in their gills that prevented them from taking oxygen from the water. In order to rehabilitate the stream, a concerted program of re-seeding, rip-rapping, re-vegetation and channel dredging is being planned.

Erosion: Soil erosion will be magnified greatly in areas of steep, hilly or mountainous slopes where

soils are thin and fragile, according to the Montana Cooperative Extension Service in Bozeman. "It took thousands of years for shallow soils in mountain areas to develop, and if the 'A horizon' or fertile top level of the soil is lost to erosion it could be a great many years before much grows," Montana State University soil scientist Ray Gavlak said. Once the organic matter is removed, the soil can't absorb as much water and increased erosion can carry away valuable soil nutrients and minerals, according to Gavlak and fellow MSU soil scientist Bill Schafer.

Gavlak said an early freeze in Montana this year would be helpful in keeping the soil from washing away. And a slow, gradual thaw next spring would allow germination of some plants to help hold the soil.

According to Gavlak and Schafer, extremely hot fires leave a fine ash containing phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and other valuable minerals but also steal nutrients such as nitrogen and sulfur.

Meanwhile, the smoke plumes are gradually disappearing from Montana skies but the fire vigil is far from over. State and local fire patrols will continue, particularly in the west. Fires in heavy timber are capable of smoldering for weeks or months, and prolonged dry weather and high winds could revive them.

It may take the snows of the winter of 1984-1985 before the final chapter in the Montana fire story is finally written.

--Peter Fox

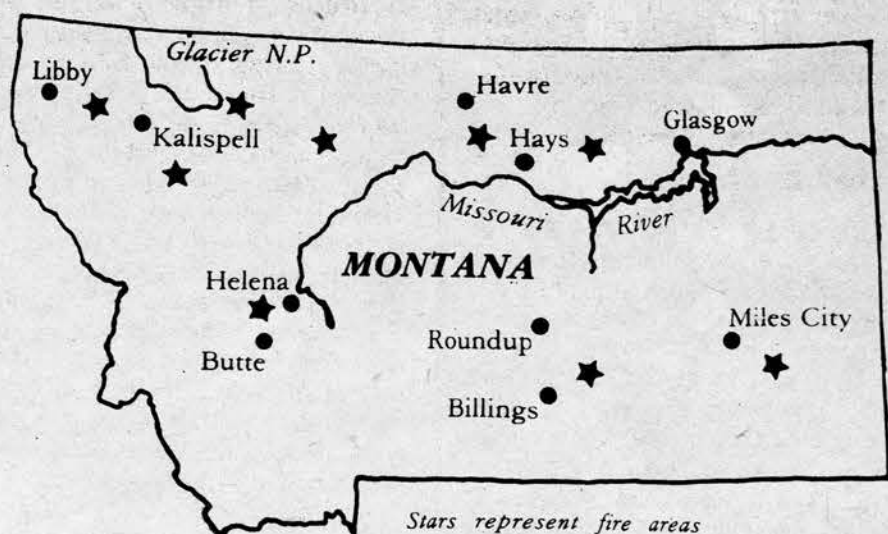
Montana's very large context

Westerners like to complain that the West isn't understood back East. If true, it's not the fault of the *New York Times*, which worked hard to put the Montana fires in a Big Sky context. Montana, the paper wrote, could shrug off the fires because it is unimaginably large.

"Forest and grass fires may have

burned 250,000 acres in Montana, but that leaves 93,918,320 unburned acres, an area equivalent to 30 Connecticut with fewer people than the city of Baltimore."

Or, to put it differently, "The distance across Montana is roughly the same as that from Detroit to Boston."



Stars represent fire areas

8-High Country News -- September 17, 1984

County fairs are as Am

by Ellen Ditzler

One warm August afternoon a few years ago, I carefully slipped a pie from my oven and inhaled the savory aroma of an exceptional success. The crust hovered like a delicate golden halo over fresh Utah-grown peaches still gently gurgling with their last pockets of sweet heat, summer's bounty captured and baked with such perfection an ordinary destiny seemed most unfitting. I decided to do something I'd never done before. I would enter the pie in the county fair then in progress in my rural Montana town.

I went dizzy with images of my Perfect Pie on a long table in a noisy shed, amidst jars of bright red beets, tomatoes, applesauce, grandmotherly cookies and rich fudge brownies. My pie with a blue ribbon on it. Me surrounded by admiring matrons in sensible shoes, shaking my hand and asking me to fill out recipe cards that said "From the kitchen of..."

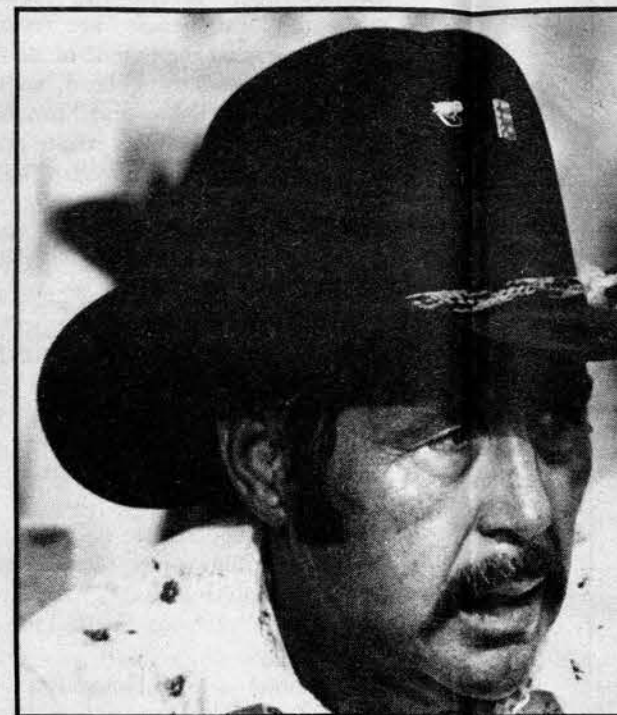
Vain reverie was interrupted by the arrival of several friends. They approached without speaking, I held out the pie. Ringed around it, noses inches from its still warm fragrance, groans

muffled and drools politely abated, we stood in reverence around that magic pie, like neurosurgeons examining the perfect cerebrum of a genius.

Perhaps most fair entries come about in a less impulsive manner. In fact, fairs these days take months of preparation and planning, drawing on the energies of an entire community for their events and spirit. The result is an occasion as old as a fete, a showcase of how rural people live, work and play. More than 2,000 state and county fairs are held across the U.S., combining regionalism rare in a culture bent on sameness, with a common heritage.

Fairs are an extension of the marketplace and, in that sense, are as old as civilization. They first began as a means to carry on peaceful trade among tribes and clans who came to places considered holy, places where the gods would punish anyone who cheated or fought. The underpinnings of religion remained with these gatherings for centuries.

London's St. Bartholomew's Fair was one of the first to add entertainment to commerce, as jugglers, acrobats, actors and musicians



amused fair-goers. The context of the fair as a holy place persisted. Royal agents read aloud rules about honest weights and measures and "holding the king's peace," scolding the "lewd and disorderly rout" that increasingly frequented the medieval fair. Yet the sideshows continued to flourish and the strict rules gradually weakened. Fairs seemed to draw pickpockets, cheats and less desirable elements along with the traders and crowds.

Our fairs began with their anchor in agriculture, the business and culture of early rural America. Fairs were essentially cattle shows where local farmers could gather to admire the fine rump, depth of body, clean neck and set of beef and dairy cattle or the well-bred sweat of their workhorses. Women showed foods, garden produce and crafts. Athletic contests, horse races and quilting bees were added and, over the years, something new appeared outside the fair gates: a carnival.

Out West, fairs took on the old traditions and spiced them with distinctly local flavor -- barbecues, square dances, calf roping and bronc riding (later formalized into a rodeo), the inevitable cavalcade of livestock and, eventually, the midway carnival. Not quite a circus, no longer an adjunct of rakish snake-oil vendors, girly shows and galleries of human weirdoes, today's midway is gut-wrenching rides and games played for the plastic booty of Taiwan.

When I was about 10 years old, I won a midway pitch game at the county fair. I knew exactly which prize I wanted: a glittering silver ring set with a diamond-like rhinestone. Across its facets were the colors of a rainbow. I put it on my finger and as my friends admired its extraordinary beauty (hardly tinsel in our young eyes), they warned me that if I wasn't careful, the gypsies would steal it from my finger and I'd never know until it was gone.

I anxiously searched the fairgrounds for gypsies, not quite certain what to look for. All I saw were cowboys and girls, a few toddlers with tufts of pink cotton candy stuck to their heads, some lowriders cruising the parking lot and a man with banana-colored vinyl loafers and plaid polyesters a bit short in the leg. Hardly the type.

"I thought gypsies lived in Armenia," I told my friends, hoping to thwart their discovery of my ignorance.

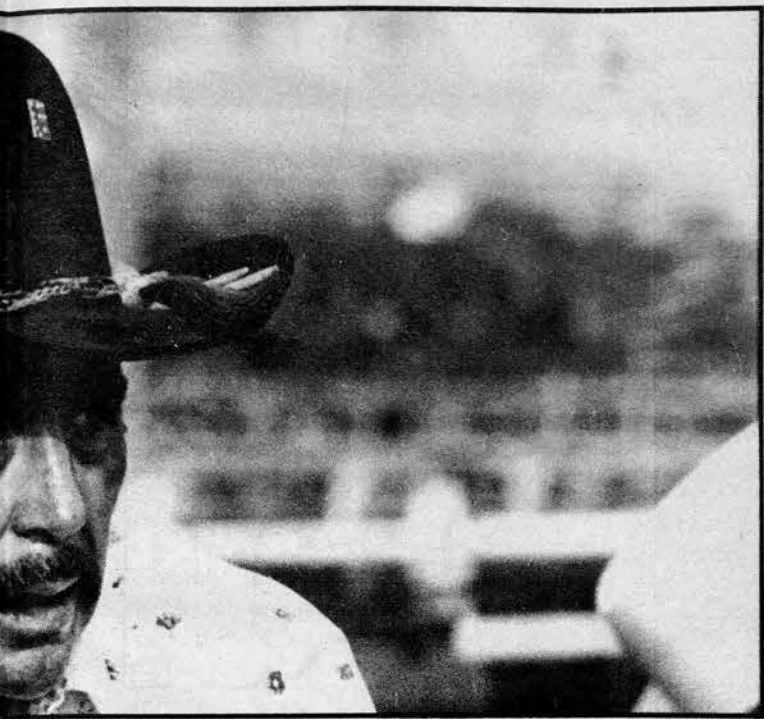
After many of the midway rides -- Dodge-Em, Tilt-A-Whirl, Round-Up, the Octopus -- all mad mechanical lurches that left your head stuck to your shoulder and your stomach the consistency of damp marshmallows, I looked to see if the ring was still there. But I soon forgot it. When I came home, all that was left on my finger was grime and



American as peach pie

Photos by Ellen Ditzler

from the Lewis and Clark County Fair
in Helena, Montana



the telling, sickly green of fake metal. The ring was gone and I was a believer.

Today, as then, there's not much worry about gypsies at fairs. Fairs are places where the world's worries (taxes, nukes, pervers, UFOs carrying off your dog, etc.) can be left behind to indulge oneself in an entirely group rather than private endeavor. Fairs are classless, nonesoteric. You are not required to know a thing about anything, you needn't even know about cows. The livestock judges see to the details while you wander through barns of crocheted mittens and toaster covers, floral arrangements, jars of pickles, braids of onions, fat pumpkins, shiny green peppers and misshapen cucumbers. Stalls of Rambouillet, Targhee and Finn sheep, glistening quarter horses, chickens, geese, ducks, rabbits and varicolored goats whose eyes evoke such wisdom and affection, you wouldn't mind if they bit off and pulverized all the buttons from the front of your shirt.

Crowded arenas of steers on parade: tons of uncooked beef atop tiny polished hoofs, fluffed tail tips encased in plastic bags, hides shampooed and curried to a blinding gleam, led by eager young 4H-ers or FFA-ers who have called the animals by name ever since they first emerged as "fair projects." Sweet pastries sold by the Sons of Norway, cold fresh lemonade from the Cowbells, the Republicans and Democrats offering flyers and political advice, their booths separated only by a snowmobile club and a tombstone display.

This year I shunned my local fair's rodeo when a barrel race between a motorcycle and a horse offended my anti-iconoclastic notions of overblown purism about rodeos. Instead, I wandered in the chutes and corrals behind the arena where I struck up a conversation with a cowboy from New Mexico whose son was a bronc rider. Tall, leathery, with the handsome face of a Chihuahuan *vaquero*, he commiserated with me about the commercialism of rodeo sport. Aside from the rodeo, I asked him, why did he go to fairs? "I come for the horses," he said. "And the girls." His grin could have melted a dinosaur. I declined his gentle invitation to run off to Las Cruces with him "forever" and wandered back to a barn whose entry was intriguingly marked by a banner saying "Auction of Fat Livestock and Baked Goods. Swine Breeding."

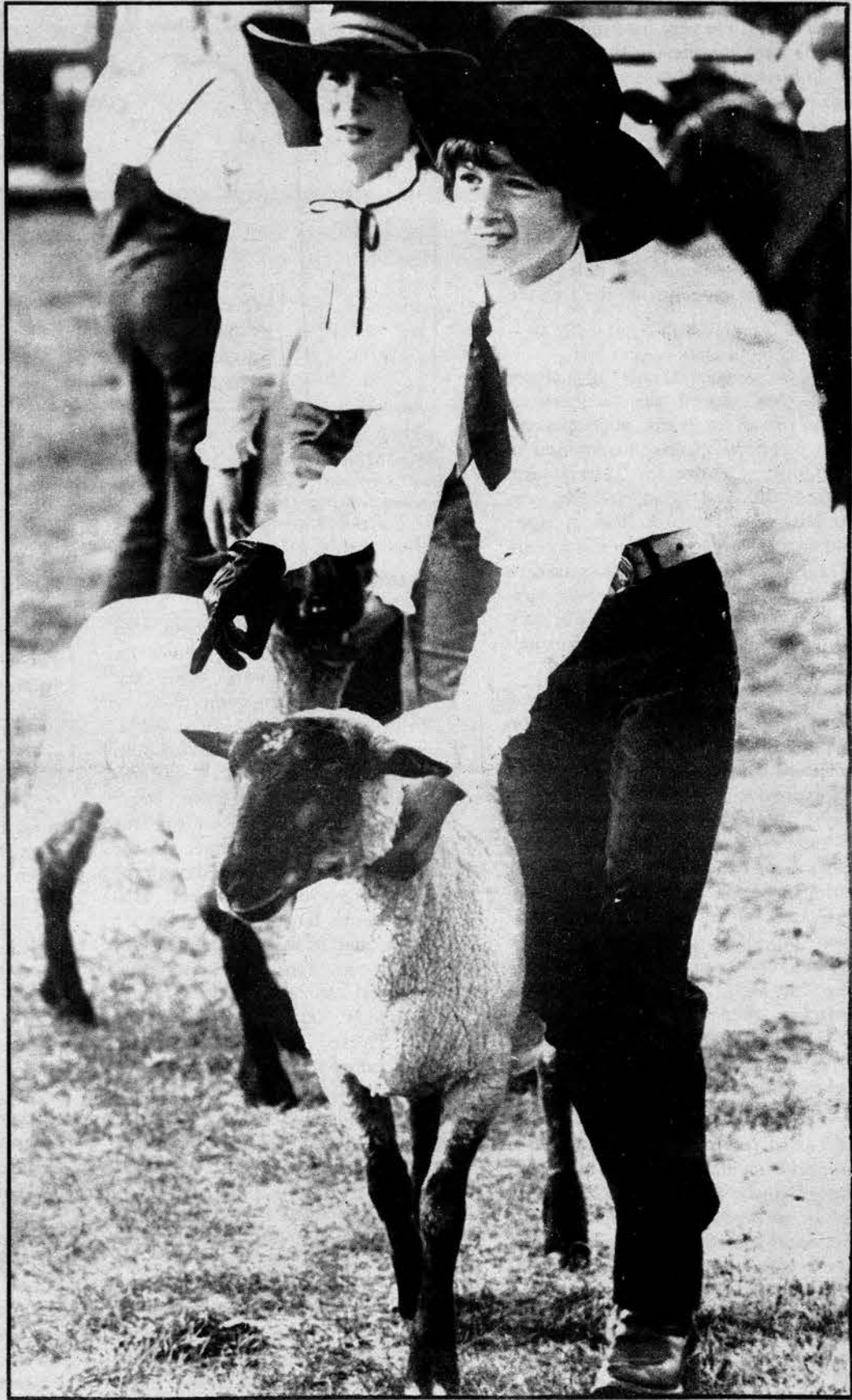
"Nothing masquerades as history more persistently than myth," wrote Western historian K. Ross Toole, myths that are "a warm blanket in a cold world." We want fairs to celebrate the rural, agrarian life, even if the lambs and calves are raised on suburban ranchettes instead of a diminishing range. Even if many of the rodeos and sideshows are not produced locally, but are

imported "hired" packages and the midway prizes are Michael Jackson and Gonad (that's not a typo) the Barbarian T-shirts, instead of kewpie dolls.

In 1904 the World's Fair at St. Louis featured entire villages of natives in their natural surroundings, reconstructed in every detail, staffed by authentic aborigines in authentic half-dress. "Anthropology Games" featured foot races, javelin, archery and jumping contests, at which the natives apparently fared poorly. Yet here was the "quaint" human order of the past, peered at by the society of the present, vanishing to the inspirations of the future. Small fairs, in their own way, exhibit the same mix of cultural tensions. Traditions fashion expectations, home grown effort and local flavor reassure everyone that their part of the West has a concreteness of its own, obliterating for the moment the underlying reality of a way of life increasingly paying the hard price of change.

About that peach pie. It never made it to the fair. It was forked into oblivion by delirious, coercive droolers who convinced me that the most exalted reward for capturing summer with such perfection was not a blue ribbon from the fair, but the first bite. Immediately.

Ellen Ditzler now bakes her pies in Helena, Montana, where, she tells us, "the harvest season blesses Montana. I'm competing with a terrible infestation of grasshoppers, trying to salvage most of my garden before the little buggers devour it. My brother rips off their back legs and lets them go. I just run over them with the lawn mower, preferably while they are copulating. Still, the squashes are fat, the beets juicy and my herbs hang drying from the rafters as if I'm some sort of herbal witch woman. I'll be sorry to see the summer pass."



Garrison...

[Continued from page 1]

as a source of irrigation water. In those days, Bismarck was pretty nearly the end of civilization. Almost all of the 190,000 citizens of the new state of North Dakota lived to the east, in the Red River Valley, an incredibly flat and fertile 50-mile wide swath of land along the eastern border of the state. Settlement moved west from the valley simultaneously with the drought of the early 1890s -- and with the panic of 1893. Settlers west of the valley found life very hard indeed.

The idea of relieving the hardship by diverting the Missouri to the east for irrigation is so old in the state that no one remembers exactly who proposed it. The state constitutional convention, meeting in 1889, asked Congress to appropriate money for an irrigation project. Perhaps it is only coincidental that John Wesley Powell addressed the convention delegates, urging them to plan to use their water supplies.

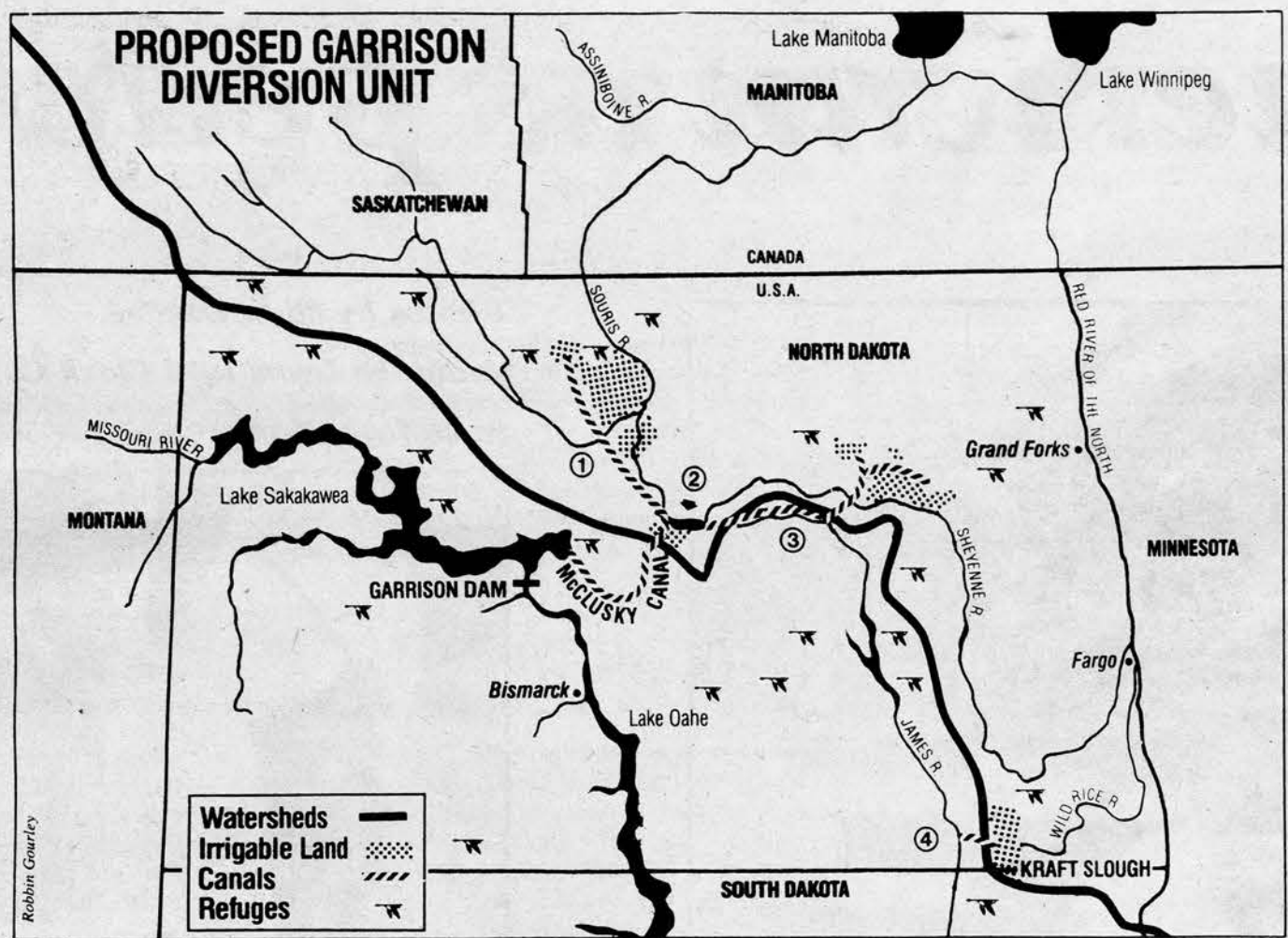
But it wasn't only agriculture that moved the pioneers to press for water development. They were Europeans, accustomed to community recreation. Letters and diaries of Norwegian settlers, especially, remark on the lack of trees and talk nostalgically about the forests of the Old Country. The pioneers wanted places to refresh themselves, and shade to cool themselves, but they found little in the treeless, waterless and altogether desolate plains.

Diverting the Missouri River was seen as a solution -- and recreation was behind the first major push for the project. A man named Sivert Thompson is credited with it. In many ways, Thompson was the embodiment of the ideal North Dakotan of his generation. The son of Norwegian immigrants, he was born in 1889, the statehood year, in Grand Harbor Township of Ramsey County, within sight of Devils Lake, a 170-square mile lake. He went away to Minnesota to learn law, then came home to the town of Devils Lake, where an economic depression had set in because the lake had begun to shrink.

Until about 1900, Devils Lake was a focus of recreation, deep enough to support steamboats and forested enough to shelter a yearly Chautauqua that drew thousands of people to hear the leading speakers of the day. The lake began to dry up at least by 1880; by the early 1900s, it began to stink and by the late 1920s, it was an alkaline cesspool, nearly lifeless and worthless for recreation.

No one knows exactly why this happened, but Thompson suggested a way to reverse the process: Divert the Missouri River to restore and freshen the lake. His idea was greeted enthusiastically. A water congress held in 1924 endorsed it and it took root immediately in the North Dakota imagination. Thompson promoted the scheme until he died in 1962.

The Depression resurrected the idea of irrigation on a large scale. North Dakota suffered more than many other states during the drought. Fully a tenth of its population was lost. No one has calculated how much topsoil blew away or how many people were made desperate. The Red River at Fargo, North Dakota's largest city, didn't flow for 165 days in 1936. Another source of support for a Missouri River diversion was born and the dream quickened.



North Dakota is as flat as this piece of paper, but it does slope a bit to the east. The Garrison Diversion would take advantage of that slope to irrigate 250,000 acres of land. Water pumped out of Lake Sakakawea behind Garrison Dam will flow

by gravity through the completed McClusky Canal into Lonetree Reservoir [2], which is now under construction. From Lonetree, it would flow into three river systems via the unbuilt New Rockford Canal [3] into the James and

Shenando River and via the unbuilt Velsa Canal [1] into the Souris River. The heavy black line running from the northwest to the southeast is the divide separating Missouri River water draining into the Gulf of Mexico from water flowing north into Canada's Hudson Bay.

A passage from a textbook used in North Dakota schools for almost 40 years shows just how well accepted the project was.

In *Our State, North Dakota*, Conrad Leifur wrote, "The Missouri River Diversion project is the greatest in the United States, being even larger from an irrigation standpoint than the famous Grand Coulee project in the state of Washington. Even though the estimated cost of the project, \$150 million, seems large, the benefits are so great that it would soon pay for itself. It is estimated by water commission officials that the project would add 10,500 farm families to the area. These, together with a corresponding increase in the sizes of towns and cities, would contribute 125,000 people to our total population. The size of the average farm would be reduced from 575 acres to 100.

"Twenty million dollars would be added to the farm income annually. Recreational opportunities would be greatly increased and would be made available much nearer to the homes of our people. New industries would be established. These would include meat-packing plants, meat and dairy processing plants and many sugar factories. Transportation facilities would be expanded; new business enterprises would spring up. Successful irrigation projects in Montana have shown that the disadvantages of adverse climate can be overcome. The benefits in North Dakota should be still greater than those in Montana, as our soil is better than that in the irrigated areas in the latter state."

Some of the school children who read those words grew up to be supporters of the project, but theirs has been a long struggle. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rejected the first plan for a dam on the Missouri River and the Bureau of Reclamation turned down the first irrigation plan. After the two groups finally agreed on the Pick-Sloan Plan, a bill authorizing development of the Missouri basin was passed in 1944.

The result was two huge reservoirs

flooding almost half a million acres of Missouri River bottomland, among the most fertile areas in North Dakota. Downstream, the dams reduced flooding and improved navigation, but except for better fishing, North Dakotans saw few benefits.

From the day the Pick-Sloan plan was approved, the state's congressional delegation pressed for a diversion plan, which they regarded as the payment for land that was flooded by the Missouri River dams. Sen. Milton Young, a Republican who served for almost 36 years in the Senate, used his seniority to get a seat on the Appropriations Committee, a position that gave him bargaining power with other senators. His colleague, Democrat Quentin Burdick, worked his way onto the same committee, and when Young left the Senate, his successor Mark Andrews took his place.

Despite this concentrated power, the state waited until 1965 for funding of the Garrison Diversion project. That year, Congress approved the plan to irrigate 250,000 acres of farmland in central and eastern North Dakota, to freshen half a dozen small lakes and to create a dozen new ones, to restore Devils Lake to two-thirds its former size and to supply water for 14 towns, including Fargo, Minot and Grand Forks, three of the state's four largest cities.

Construction started soon thereafter; controversy quickly followed.

The first flickers of unhappiness appeared in 1972 when the *North Dakota Union Farmer*, the official organ of the state's largest farm group, the Farmers Union, published "Rumblings on the Ditch," a plea from farmers in the path of the project. Its author was Rich Madson.

Madson left his job at the Farmers Union to found the Committee to Save North Dakota, a group of landowners objecting to the project mostly because they felt they were mistreated by land agents for the Bureau of Reclamation. But Madson looked far

and wide for allies. Within a few years he had enlisted the National Audubon Society and the Canadian government. Madson's activity weakened the project morally; construction was stopped by court order and by Jimmy Carter's presidential mandate and Madson was reviled as a traitor to the dream.

Among people predisposed to conspiracy theories, Madson was an easy target. He was born outside the state, in southwestern Minnesota, and he attended South Dakota State University. He turned to the East for help in his opposition to the Garrison project, eventually accepting a job, which he later lost, as regional vice president for the Audubon Society.

But Madson was well suited to his role as slayer of dreams. A Lutheran lay preacher, he brought intensity, even stridence, to his cause. And he brought information. His collection of material about the project fills two rooms of a rented office in Jamestown. Madson has apparently read all of it and his recall is near perfect. Environmentalists and Canadian officials were impressed, and conservative opponents of government spending took notice.

The conservatives, represented by the National Taxpayers' Union, objected to the project's cost. A billion dollars, they suggested, is a lot of money for a project that would irrigate only 1,500 farms. Partly because of criticism such as this, support in Congress for the project began to soften.

Environmentalist opposition weakened the project, too. Environmentalists took an interest in the project because it would affect a dozen wildlife refuges. One would be completely flooded; others would be damaged in varying degrees. Some unprotected areas, including one of the best remaining wetland complexes in the middle of the continent, would be destroyed.

Canadians were interested because the diversion plan would bridge

the continental divide separating the Missouri River drainage from the Hudson Bay drainage. The continental divide is only a low range of hills, hardly noticeable before the state highway department put up a sign pointing it out. But the barrier separates rivers, and the life forms of the two drainage systems are quite different. Canadians came to fear that fish in the Missouri would get into the Red and Souris rivers and from there into the great lakes of central Manitoba. These lakes, remnants of the last glacier, are the source of much of the continent's freshwater fish and sustenance for many Manitobans.

Environmentalists took their cause to Congress and the courts; Canadians went to the State Department and the International Joint Commission, a bilateral group established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. The commission found that the project as designed would violate the treaty by polluting water that flows north into Canada. The United States agreed not to build any part of the project that would have an impact on rivers the two countries share. About two thirds of the project, including restoration of Devils Lake, municipal water for Minot, Fargo and Grand Forks, and irrigation of more than 150,000 acres, was thus abandoned.

Opposition from environmentalists and landowners has since focused on the remaining third of the project, especially on features that seem to have the potential to affect Canada. Chief among these is the Lonerree Reservoir, which would straddle the continental divide and flood Cheyenne Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The unknown impacts of those actions have been a key part of the legal campaign against the project, brought on the grounds that the Environmental Impact Statements are deficient.

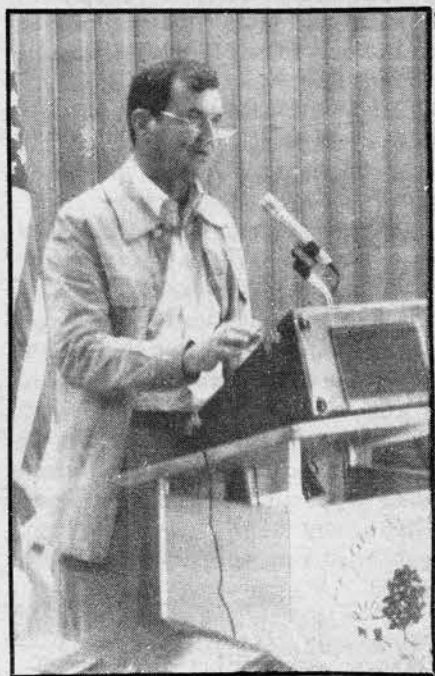
The project also ran into trouble at home, when thousands of farmers who wouldn't receive irrigation water discovered that their land might be taken for wildlife mitigation to replace habitat lost when the project is built.

In Barnes County, where no irrigation is planned, several thousand acres were included in the mitigation plan. Residents objected and the county commission voted to leave the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, a 25-county unit that is a legal subdivision of the state -- with the authority to levy taxes. Since Barnes County's rebellion, three other counties have sent anti-Garrison representatives to sit on the district's board of directors, creating a gap in what had been unanimous support for the project. Mitigation remains a potentially explosive issue in the state, which annually produces 10 percent of the ducks raised in the United States.

The state's bulwark against these attacks in many ways typifies the ideal North Dakotan of this generation. He is attorney Murray Sagsveen, grandson of Norwegian immigrants and North Dakota pioneers, graduate of the University of North Dakota Law School, landowner and National Guardsman. Sagsveen neatly straddles both political parties; he was administrative assistant to former Gov. Arthur A. Link, a Democrat, then assistant to former Attorney General Allen I. Olson, a Republican. Olson is now governor.

Sagsveen's strategy neatly exploits the state's sense of itself as a victim in modern American history. There is a contract between the United States and the state of North Dakota, he insists, and the federal government has violated it by not providing a water project, which

Members of the Garrison Diversion District board of directors hint darkly that Senator Mark Andrews ruined his political career by embracing the compromise



Interior Secretary William Clark

he says is guaranteed in return for the land that was flooded by the Missouri River dams. The Garrison project is the only one approved by Congress, he says, and the federal government can fulfill the contract by building it.

But Sagsveen is not a purist. He is willing to discuss alternatives to the project -- a position that makes him a dissenter among those who insist it should be built as it was authorized. Included among them are the state's past and present government officials, from the U.S. senators to the state public service commissioners. Whatever the office, a nod in the direction of the Garrison project is regarded as essential for North Dakota politicians.

Among the high priests of the project is William Guy, who was governor of the state for 12 years, until 1973. After his loss to U.S. Sen. Milton Young in 1974, Guy virtually disappeared from North Dakota politics. Now a planner with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, he has reemerged as an outspoken supporter of the authorized Garrison project.

In a letter to the editors of *Esquire* magazine, which printed an article critical of the project in May 1984, Guy sounded the familiar themes of the Garrison religion. North Dakotans, Guy wrote, are sick of reading "about what was not good for them in water resource development, stories and speeches coming from people who live in other states or Canadian provinces. Most of the stories and speeches are thinly veiled self-serving expressions from people who gain advantage from preventing water resource development in this prairie state."

The conspiracy against North Dakota gets even more pointed expression from Lynn Hoghaug, a Devils Lake businessman. He traces the National Audubon Society's

opposition to the project to its alliance with the oil industry, which helps support Audubon's slick magazine and contributes to its sanctuary program -- and wants to use the Missouri River to help develop North Dakota's coal, Hoghaug says.

Sen. Young had his own epithet for opponents of Garrison diversion. He called them "eastern environmental extremists." Young died in 1983. In his last newspaper interview, he said the failure of the Garrison project was one of his greatest disappointments in almost 36 years in the Senate.

Ironically, Young's death cleared the way for the compromise that could save Garrison diversion. Mark Andrews, who took Young's seat in the Senate, engineered the agreement with the National Audubon Society that led to appointment of a 12-member federal commission to study Garrison diversion. The group, whose work began in late August, has until December 31 to recommend alternatives to the project. Until then, federal funding for the project is embargoed; construction will come to a halt on September 30, the end of the fiscal year.

Newspaper editorialists greeted the commission enthusiastically. The *Grand Forks Herald* called it "North Dakota's best chance to keep alive some kind of federal project to use the huge supply of Missouri River water behind Garrison Dam."

Supporters of the project are suspicious, however. George Sinner, the Democratic candidate opposing Gov. Olson's re-election bid, said he expects little from the commission because it doesn't include such long-time supporters as former Gov. Guy.

Testifying at a hearing called by a state legislative committee that oversees efforts to support the project, Guy said: "Today, North Dakota stands humiliated by further compromise..." Members of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Board of Directors hint darkly that Andrews ruined his political career by embracing the compromise.

Opponents of the project are no more sanguine about the commission. Madson said he thinks the time left for the commission to do its work is impossibly short and that the commission will fail to agree on an alternative to the project. If that happens, the Bureau of Reclamation will be free to spend \$53.6 million appropriated by Congress for this fiscal year.

Even so large a sum won't come close to finishing the project, though. The Bureau of Reclamation now calculates that the project will cost \$1.2 billion. So far, about \$213 million

has been spent and the project is less than one fourth done. But not a single acre has been irrigated nor a single city home supplied with water from the project.

Still, North Dakotans remain supportive of the project. In a poll in late August, the *Herald* found that 63 percent of North Dakotans support the project; only 18 percent oppose it. The rest said they don't know.

The poll also showed a fairly high degree of sophistication about the project. North Dakotans surveyed said both environmentalists and Canadians oppose the project and most agreed that farm land would be destroyed to build it.

But on one issue, their knowledge failed. A majority said the project would be paid for both with state and federal money. In reality, the federal treasury would provide the entire cost.

Even this answer reflects North Dakota's world view. It indicates that, in their minds, North Dakotans are an independent people. But in reality, the state remains dependent on federal largesse -- just as it did when the framers of its constitution asked for a Missouri River diversion project almost a century ago.

Meanwhile, even nature seems to have joined the conspiracy against the Garrison Diversion Project. The authorized plan for Garrison calls for restoring Devils Lake to 1,425 feet above sea level. A series of wet years and the almost unregulated drainage of prairie potholes has pushed the level above that, to 1,528 feet, however, and the rising lake now threatens to inundate the city's sewage lagoon. Since Devils Lake drains a closed basin, the political rhetoric issuing from the town has changed. Instead of a call to restore the lake, it is now a plea for an outlet to drain away excess water.

Mike Jacobs is editor of the *Grand Forks Herald*. For four years, he and his wife, Suzzette Bieri, published *The Onlooker*, a newspaper about politics, agriculture and the environment in North Dakota. In 1978, the newspaper was merged into *High Country News*. He is the author of *One Time Harvest*, a book about coal development in the state. He owes a major debt for this article to Elwyn Robinson, emeritus professor of history at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and the author of *History of North Dakota*, University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

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

12-High Country News -- September 17, 1984

Garrison compromise is as controversial as the Garrison project

At the moment, the 20-year-long battle over North Dakota's Garrison Diversion Project is between optimists and pessimists rather than between conservationists and water developers.

The optimists believe the time is right to transform Garrison into a project that will help the economy while minimizing damage to the wildlife of North Dakota. The pessimists believe that North Dakota politicians and the Bureau of Reclamation have no intention of seeking change -- that the name of their game continues to be construction of a \$1.2 billion project to irrigate 250,000 acres and wipe out the prairie pothole habitat of hundreds of thousands of waterfowl and other wildlife. The pessimists believe the compromise is of the same kind that led to Glen Canyon Dam.

The differences in the conservation community have been put most starkly by Richard Madson, a North Dakota resident, who describes the June 1984 Garrison compromise worked out between the North Dakota Congressional delegation and the National Audubon Society as "a Trojan horse stuffed with bulldozers."

Gary Pearson, a Jamestown, North Dakota veterinarian and chairman of the Water Projects Committee for the North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, says, "I felt betrayed by Audubon. It ignored local people. It struck a deal that can't help. The compromise is not worth the paper it is written on. Basically, Audubon has undercut 15 years of work by hundreds of people out here. They never consulted with us. They never told us anything. It will be the monumental conservation blunder of the decade."

Much of the work Pearson refers to was done by the local and national offices of Audubon, which has led an uncompromising legal and legislative attack on Garrison for many years. Because Audubon has led the fight against Garrison in the courts and in Congress for so many years, when its board of directors decided to compromise, the decision was accepted by pro-conservation congressmen and by other environmental groups.

Dr. Glenn Paulson, the New York-based scientist who speaks for National Audubon on this issue, says his organization believes real changes in the Garrison project are possible, and that the current compromise is the best way to test that possibility. "Audubon's views and actions from now through New Year's Eve is directed to working through the Commission to find environmentally and economically acceptable alternatives to Garrison."

To Madson, who worked for Audubon in North Dakota from 1975 to 1982, there is no need to wait for New Year's Eve, the day the 12-person commission appointed by Interior Secretary William Clark is to report. He says the Congressional resolution creating the Commission gives it no teeth; the resolution only allows minor tinkering with the project, he says.

According to Madson, even tinkering is unlikely because, by his count, five of the 12 commission members are pro-Garrison, and it takes 8 of the 12-member commission to make a recommendation. He also says the commission's four-month framework is much too short for them to come up with a reasonable alternative.

In Madson's and Pearson's view, the compromise was a screen to get a \$53 million appropriation for Garrison -- the largest it has had since it was authorized in 1965. According to the Congressional resolution, if the Commission can't come up with an alternative by December 31, 1984, the Bureau of Reclamation can begin spending that \$53 million on New Year's Day, completing key elements in the \$1.2 billion project.

Moreover, Madson charges, the Bureau has been accelerating its construction despite a moratorium imposed by Congress in the compromise resolution. Finally, he says, the Commission appears stacked, favoring project proponents in the Bismarck hearings held on September 10 and 11.

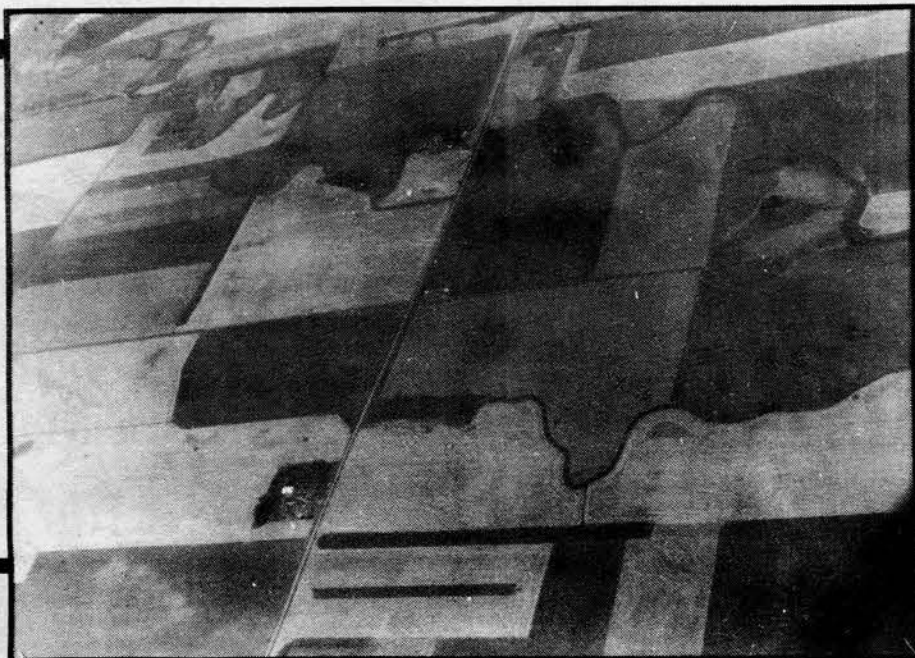
Madson and Pearson are not alone in their suspicion of the Commission. Murray Sagsveen, an attorney for the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, says that the Commission is giving project supporters too little time to present their case. A list of witnesses released by the Commission before the hearings appears to be top heavy with opponents.

In addition, those who have backed the project for several decades are said to be furious with Senator Mark Andrews, who was the key figure in the compromise, for putting the future of the project in the hands of a commission ten of whose twelve members are from outside North Dakota. Both the state delegation and National Audubon appear to be running the risk of alienating large parts of their constituencies.

Audubon's Paulson says he is not surprised that there are elements on both sides who are threatened by the compromise and the possibility that an alternative to Garrison will be found. "We understand there are many who don't want any alterations to the North Dakota landscape. And some want significant alterations. So Audubon is on the middle ground."

He says there are indications that some North Dakota leaders also occupy that middle ground. "Now we find that some of the political leadership in the state is willing to reopen the question and look at alternatives to Garrison. That is significant."

The Congressional resolution setting up the Commission appears to say that more is expected than tinkering with the present project. It says in part: "There are irrigation and agricultural water needs in areas which cannot be met by the Garrison



North Dakota from the air

Diversion Unit as presently authorized... The water of the State of North Dakota should be resolved by contemporary water development alternatives," and "A secretarial commission should be established to examine the water needs of North Dakota and propose development alternatives which will lead to the early resolution of the problems identified."

Optimists hope those phrases mean North Dakota's leadership recognizes that the project is an enormous, wasteful, destructive boondoggle which would use up the state's federal patrimony without doing it any good. In fact, critics say, Garrison would leave North Dakota with a thousand or so newly-irrigated farms raising crops already in surplus, but without any claim on the U.S. Treasury to meet its real water needs.

A key to the compromise between Audubon and the North Dakota delegation was a June 1 letter from Audubon's president, Russell Peterson, and its board chairman, Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. The letter said that Audubon continues to oppose Garrison as it has been authorized, but that the society no longer challenges "its very premise. We now recognize and accept the position of North Dakota that it is entitled to compensation for the acreage inundated by the creation of the Garrison Dam and the formation of Lake Sakakawea..."

The Commission, then, in the eyes of Audubon, is not a tool to kill North Dakota water development; it is a way to search for good development. Paulson says that with the creation of the Commission, the emphasis within Audubon shifted from political to scientific. Until recently, Audubon's Garrison effort was headed up by political people in Washington. But now, says Paulson, who is vice president for science, "I'm in charge."

He thinks the Commission will do a good job of exploring the technical alternatives. "I see a very strong-minded and independent group. I also see the staffing decisions as good ones. The kinds of individuals going on the Commission staff aren't rabid environmentalists, but they are professionally competent. The Commission will be balanced. They will be fair and vigorous." In the end, he says, "We're hoping for a 12-0 vote. We hope to break a long-standing log jam."

He says Audubon recognizes that the \$53 million appropriation for 1985 is the largest ever. "But it's small against the \$1.2 billion of the total project. We're still at the earliest stage of this project" and there is time to change. He rejects Madson's charge that the Commission has no

teeth. According to Paulson, "The Interior Department's lawyer said that if there is an 8 to 4 vote or better, the Secretary has no choice but to follow the recommendation. There is no wriggle room. It was said flat out. And that's also how we interpret the law."

Paulson says he believes history is running against Garrison. "The long time period between the original idea and today without the project even significantly begun means the issue hasn't been resolved. And from the national point of view, it gets more difficult each year to build large, environmentally-damaging projects. Several have been cancelled. Now it's Garrison's turn."

It's a statement Senator Mark Andrews (R-ND), the architect of the compromise, seems to agree with. He told a press conference, "Earlier this year, Senator (Quentin) Burdick (R-ND) and I, faced with the failure of the House of Representatives to provide funding for the project for the third consecutive year, became increasingly and painfully convinced that, unless modifications were made, the Garrison Diversion Project simply would not be completed."

So, Andrews said, they agreed to the Commission as a way to convince their colleagues in Congress and the public at large that Garrison, "as a whole, can withstand close scrutiny," and that it should be built.

Whether Andrews desires close scrutiny as a way to redirect the project or simply as a way to buy another year's appropriation in an increasingly hostile Congress will become clear this December 31.

The Commission members are: Chairman David C. Treen, former Governor of Louisiana; Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma, a former U.S. Senator and member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission; William B. Ingersoll, a Washington, D.C. attorney; Norman (Ike) Livermore, a businessman who served as California's Secretary for Resources under Governor Reagan; Dr. J. Gordon Milliken of Colorado's Denver Research Institute; Patrick Francis Noonan, a Washington D.C. executive who is active in the American Farmland Trust and is the former president of the Nature Conservancy; J. W. (Pat) O'Meara, executive vice president of the National Water Resources Association in Washington, D.C.; John Paulson, retired editor of the *Fargo (N.D.) Forum*; Dr. James G. Teer of Texas, a board member of the National Audubon Society; Henry C. Wessman, a businessman and mayor of Grand Forks, N.D.; Dr. John Whitaker, former Under Secretary of Interior for President Nixon; and Ann Zorn, a former member of the Nevada Environmental Commission and member of the League of Women Voters.

--Ed Marston

Garrison pits wildlife against irrigated farms

To its critics, the Garrison Diversion Unit is a wildly wasteful, wildly destructive project. According to the National Audubon Society, it will cost \$3,800 for each acre irrigated; \$700,000 a farm; and represent a flow of \$2,000 federal dollars for each resident of North Dakota.

In addition to the economics -- which some have compared to a \$1.2 billion national lottery for up to 1,300 farmers -- National Audubon says the project would destroy 178,000 ducks a year through the drainage of the potholes, sloughs, marshes and shallow lakes that host wildlife in this fearsomely flat, intensively farmed, glaciated land. It would damage or destroy 12 wildlife refuges, channelize 142 miles of streams, and destroy 70,000 acres of waterfowl marshes. The latter includes the 950-acre Kraft Slough, which provides nesting for 40 percent of the species in North Dakota.

The full 250,000 acre project would put Missouri River water into the Hudson Bay drainage. Canada fears the introduction of rough fish, fish parasites and fish diseases into its Manitoba fisheries.

Worst of all, say critics, is the fact that the project would irrigate less than 1 percent of North Dakota's lands, and the crops to be produced on that irrigated land are already surplus in the U.S.

Supporters say critics don't understand how important even a small amount of irrigated land can be in a drought-prone state. Murray Sagsveen, the attorney who represents the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, says that droughts devastate North Dakota not just by destroying dryland crops, but by forcing the sale of brood cattle and hog herds for lack of feed. Often, he says, those brood herds had been built up over decades, and after the drought ends, they must be painfully built up again.

He likens the irrigated land to oases because it will produce feed during droughts, allowing surrounding farmers to keep their base herds. The irrigated land, he says, will anchor large sections of North Dakota, keeping base populations and agricultural activity intact through droughts.

He also argues that North Dakota appears to have been shaped with

Garrison in mind. Lonetree Reservoir, which requires three dikes or dams, is located so as to feed its stored water into the Souris, James and Sheyenne River systems. With most of North Dakota's water in the Missouri, the ability to supplement flows in these three rivers is vital, says Sagsveen.

Thus far, Audubon says, less than 20 percent of the project has been built. That includes a pumping station to take water out of Lake Sakakawea, behind Garrison, and put it into the completed 74-mile long McClusky Canal, which conveys the water to Lonetree Reservoir, which is under construction.

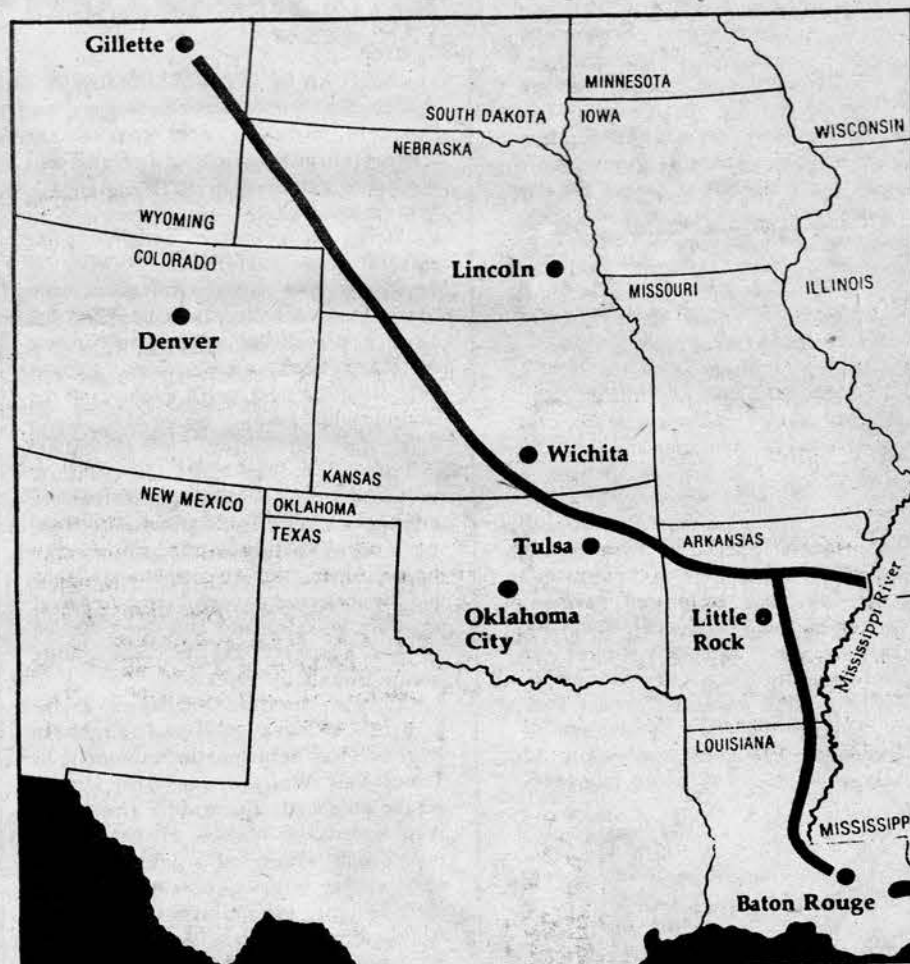
Although Garrison was authorized in 1965, national opposition, later joined by opposition from North Dakota farmers devastated by the way the Bureau of Reclamation built McCluskey, has kept the project on a very slow track.

As Mike Jacobs explains in his lead article, so far as the people of North Dakota are concerned, the Garrison Diversion Project is a 'local' matter, to be settled by the 0.2 percent of Americans who live in the state.

The argument is rejected by both national environmental groups and by the states which share the Missouri River basin with North Dakota. The Missouri has a great deal more water than the Colorado River, but the upper basin -- lower basin conflicts have similarities, and states often meddle in each other's water affairs.

The most prominent example is provided by the ETSI (Energy Transportation System, Inc.) coal slurry pipeline. It was to take water out of South Dakota's Oahe Reservoir, which backs the Missouri River almost to Garrison Dam, to ship up to 30 million tons of Wyoming and Montana coal a year to Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas. South Dakota saw its lucrative water sales contract with ETSI as a major step in putting its share of the Missouri to work. But the other upper basin states were envious and the lower basin states were fearful.

So fearful, in fact, that Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska filed a lawsuit to stop the sale. They also joined the railroads and the environmentalists in Congress to oppose eminent domain for ETSI, something it needed to get the 1,800-mile-long, \$3.8 billion



Proposed route of the ETSI pipeline

pipeline past blockading railroad lines.

ETSI is now dead, officially killed by sponsors on August 1, 1984 because of the loss of the eminent domain battle and rate cutting from the railroads. But lower basin fears remain that water use by upper basin states will reduce hydroelectric revenues and downstream navigation.

The lower basin states haven't opposed the Garrison Diversion Project, but appropriations thus far have only been for use within the basin. If North Dakota wants the entire project, which includes diversions into the Hudson Bay drainage, the situation may change.

In addition to Garrison, there are a host of other suggested projects. South Dakota has its CENDAK irrigation diversion. The High Plains states are talking of using Missouri River water to replace the rapidly declining Ogallala Aquifer, much as the Central Arizona Project is replacing depleted Arizona aquifers. Montana, which produces much of the Missouri River flow, did a major

study, titled *A Water Protection Strategy for the Missouri River*, describing how it hopes to get its share of the water in the face of so many other demands.

Missouri River water has even been suggested for Western Colorado, which produces most of the Colorado River's flow. Exxon, when it was promoting a grandiose oil shale scheme in 1980, spoke of diverting the Missouri River to water the new cities which were to spring up around the enormous rolling oil shale pits.

All this maneuvering goes forward without an interstate compact such as governs the Colorado River. In *Environmental Diplomacy* by John E. Carroll, the author speculates that North Dakota's main allegiance to Garrison Diversion is as a way to hang onto part of its 3 million acre-feet per year claim to Missouri River water. Carroll suggests that one resolution of the Garrison dispute may lie in having Congress cancel Garrison while simultaneously guaranteeing North Dakota's Missouri River water rights.

--Ed Marston

LETTERS

ABSURD CONCLUSIONS

Dear HCN,

I would like to respond to Rob Dolan's comments (HCN, 7/23/84) concerning oversight testimony on the BLM wilderness review program, and his characterization of BLM's study of proposed alunite mining in the Red Cloud Peak Wilderness Study Area.

The purpose of the oversight hearings before Congress was to point out the often absurd conclusions of BLM with respect to management of WSAs. The proposed alunite mine in Red Cloud Peak WSA was one such example, a case where BLM stated, after environmental analysis, that removing a mountain top from a WSA was an insignificant environmental impact. We do not deny that the

process was not complete, that, as Mr. Dolan notes, an EIS on the entire project might have been done and BLM gone ahead with leasing the mountain top. The important point to remember, however, is that the EIS would have been written *only* if BLM had granted the lease, and BLM would have granted the lease *only* if there was shown to be no "significant, adverse environmental impacts" from mining of the deposit.

The fact of the matter is that in the only written, public conclusion provided by BLM in a draft Environmental Assessment, BLM did decide that allowing a 2,000 foot deep strip mine inside a Wilderness Study Area was environmentally insignificant. As Mr. Dolan states, the process stopped in midstream before BLM could analyze public comment and issue a final decision due to the mineral leasing ban contained in the Interior Appropriations Act. Up to that

point, though, BLM's public position was indeed that removing a mountain top from a Wilderness Study Area was an insignificant environmental impact, a very odd conclusion that hopefully could be reversed by the public outcry that Mr. Dolan referred to.

Mark Pearson
Colorado Open Space Council

DECRIES POLARIZATION

Dear HCN,

I wish to congratulate the editors of HCN for an excellent review of grazing in the west. I was particularly glad to see the article by Jim Robbins. As a private consultant working with Allan Savory, I am currently assisting many ranchers in applying Holistic Resource Management. I am also monitoring ecological response in the range communities. I have observed many

areas where the range has recovered considerably concurrent with increased stocking rate and proper management.

Most encouraging is the increased awareness of individuals applying Holistic Resource Management to the overall ecology of their land, including wildlife to a large degree. Proper planning allows the manager to cater to wildlife and other uses to a degree never before possible.

I think it is very unfortunate that ranchers and environmentalists are being increasingly polarized on the crucial issue of grazing management. I encourage HCN readers to find out more about the non-profit Center for Holistic Resource Management, which is dedicated to stopping desertification worldwide. The address is Box 7128, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87194. (505/242-9272).

Kirk L. Gadzia
Albuquerque, NM

14-High Country News -- September 17, 1984

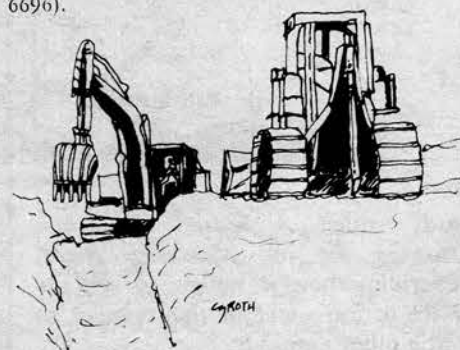
BULLETIN BOARD

DIABLO GETS THE OK

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has given permission to the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant at San Luis Obispo, California to begin operation. The plant has been plagued for a decade by earthquake fears and design foul-ups. NRC Chairman Nunzio Palidino delayed the effective date of the order for two weeks, giving opponents an opportunity to challenge in court the commission's approval for a full-power license for the \$5.1 billion plant. The commission's vote, 3 to 1 with one abstention, came after government safety officials said an investigation revealed no significant threats among 1,406 allegations of problems at the plant.

MONTANA ENERGY CONFERENCE

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the U.S. Department of Energy will sponsor a conference October 3-5 on innovative financing for conservation and renewable energy projects. Specialists from across the country will gather in Livingston, Montana to speak on shared savings, tax-exempt leasing and other financing options as well as case studies of successful applications. Registration is \$85, to be paid in advance. Contact Tom Livers, Energy Division, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, 32 S. Ewing, Helena, MT 59620 (406/444-6696).



RANGELY CO2 PIPELINE

A draft Environmental Impact Statement concerning proposed construction of the Rangely carbon dioxide pipeline has been released by the Bureau of Land Management for public review and comment. The project would consist of construction and operation of a 176-mile-long pipeline to carry carbon dioxide from Exxon's proposed La Barge plant near Opal, Wyoming to the Rangely oil field in northwest Colorado. The CO2 is a by-product of the "sour gas" sweetening plant Exxon is building as part of the Riley Ridge natural gas project. Currently, there are no plans to hold a public hearing unless demand warrants otherwise. If so, hearings will be scheduled in Rock Springs, Wyoming and Vernal, Utah on October 15 and 16, respectively. If you want to testify or attend either hearing, notify officials at the address below by September 19. Those who wish to submit written comments should do so by October 30. Copies of the draft EIS are also available. Contact Janis Van Whye, Bureau of Land Management, Division of EIS Services, 555 Zang Street, Denver, CO 80228.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COURSE

A Wildlife Rehabilitation Basics Short Course will be taught October 5-7 at the Chesapeake Bird Sanctuary in Maryland. George and Rosemary Collett of the Felicidad Wildlife Foundation will teach first aid and convalescent care for all kinds of injured or abandoned animals. Contact Dianne Pearce, Director, Chesapeake Bird Sanctuary, 10305 King Richard Place, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 (301/372-8799), for that workshop; or if interested in sponsoring one in your area, contact the Colletts, Felicidad Wildlife Foundation, P.O. Box 490, Waynesville, NC 28786 (704/926-0192).

REMEMBER THE ANIMALS

"Remember the Animals" is one woman's project to focus public attention on the management and welfare of animals. Corina Roberts is collecting folders from people of all ages which demonstrate, in words or pictures, solutions to problems in animal management or abuse. The folders will be sent to the White House in January 1985. For more details, contact Corina Roberts, P.O. Box 3054, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

HOT TIPS

For fire information in the National Forests in the Northern Region, call the regional office in Missoula at 406/329-4880, 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., and 406/543-5111 6 P.M. to 6 A.M.

RETURN OF THE REBELLION

The Sagebrush Rebellion lives on. Business, industry and government leaders, organization directors and academics gathered in Washington, D.C. September 12-13 to formulate a statement on resource and land use policies. The conference, "Crisis in Resources: The Great American Land Grab," was hosted by the American Land Alliance, a coalition of farming, timber, mining, labor and other groups "opposing the no-growth excesses of the environmental lobby." Some of the topics were the implication of systematic government lockup of our strategic resources, the widening current of federal-state regulatory provisions limiting energy production and energy independence, the environmental lobby and the unelected government bureaucrat as power brokers, and the quiet war on private property rights and public land-use rights in America.

ALA President Joe Gughemetti said in a press release, "The Sagebrush Rebellion was defused, unfortunately, by James Watt. Watt unnecessarily alienated the poor and the middle class. It is their issue. The blacks, Hispanics, the poor people who need a job, who need some chance to have recreational use in their lifetime, who don't have enough money to support their families -- their issue is a right to own their own piece of property or business in the future. James Watt cut off the very people who should be addressed to this issue."

BIG MEETING FOR BIG THOMPSON

A public meeting to solicit public comment and identify significant environmental issues associated with the Green Mountain Reservoir, Colorado - Big Thompson Project will be conducted by the Bureau of Reclamation. The new operating policy was prepared to identify current use of water from Green Mountain and to provide for disposition of remaining water for beneficial consumptive use on Colorado's Western Slope. The meeting will be held at 7 P.M., September 20, at the Best Western Motel in Frisco. Information from the meeting will be used in preparing a Draft Supplement to the Final Environmental Statement. Further information may be obtained from Richard Eggen, Regional Environmental Officer, Bureau of Reclamation, P.O. Box 25247, Denver, CO 80225 (303/236-0690).

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

A two-day conference on low chemical, resource-conserving agriculture will be presented by the Alternative Energy Resources Organization. The Sustainable Agriculture Conference will feature speakers, workshops, panel discussions, displays and exhibits to inform participants on how to rebuild and sustain soil fertility and tilth, reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides, and improve farm profitability. The conference will be held October 12-14 at the Strand Student Union Building, Montana State University at Bozeman. Pre-registration is encouraged. For information about fees, lodging and meals, and a pre-registration form write to AERO, Agriculture Conference, 324 Fuller C-4, Helena, MT 59601 (406/443-7272).

OPERATION GAME THIEF

Casey Stengel, a gunshop owner who lives in Hotchkiss on Colorado's Western Slope, has been appointed president of the Citizen's Advisory Board for Operation Game Thief, a program designed to help stop poaching. The volunteer Citizen's Advisory Board oversees the statewide program which encourages people to call in anonymously to report poaching. Rewards are given for information that leads to the arrest or citation of a poacher. The call is toll-free: 1/800/332-4155. People may also help by making a tax-deductible contribution to the reward fund: Operation Game Thief, Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216.

FOR SOLAR INVESTORS

The 1984 Solar Profitability Survey has been released by Energy Investment Research, Inc. The 102-page report presents financial data on solar companies with an eye to investors and special sections include investing in photovoltaics, tax credits, and an analysis of the impact 1984 elections will have on the solar investment climate. The survey is not cheap at \$75 from EIR, P.O. Box 73, Glenville Station, Greenwich, CT 06830.

SMOKEY BEAR'S 40TH

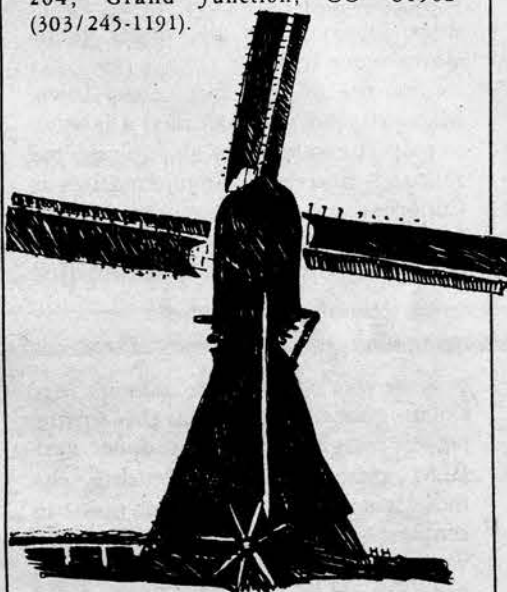
In honor of Smokey Bear's 40th birthday, a registry of former forest fire lookouts is being compiled. Persons interested in being listed should send the following information: Name, lookout(s) on which served, dates, location or general address of the station, whether USFS, BIA, state, private, or other ownership. Funny, scary or unusual descriptions of memorable incidents, maximum 300 words, are also welcome. Write Former Forest Fire Lookout Registry, P.O. Box 44, Glenwood, WA 98619, and receive a free bumper sticker in thanks.

TRAINING ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

The Conservation Foundation has published an \$11.95 paperback called *Training for Environmental Groups* which emphasizes the need for management among other skills. The book is based on analyses of 225 questionnaires filled out by environmental organizations. The Conservation Foundation is at 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

BLM WILDERNESS TRIPS

The Colorado Open Space Council is sponsoring Bureau of Land Management wilderness trips this fall. Designed to acquaint people with the special plants, wildlife, geology, and rugged beauty of these remote, little-known pieces of the original frontier, the treks are free and open to all. On September 22-23 a trip is being offered to the Tubguache Creek Wilderness Study Area, adjacent to the Uncompahgre National Forest. The area is characterized by the winding, narrow Tabguache Creek and the surrounding benchlands and canyons. Contact trip leader Dick Guadagno at 626-5586 for meeting time and location. The location of the September 29-30 trip is the Redcloud or Hadies Peak WSA, an area of alpine and subalpine stream drainages and two 14,000 foot peaks, Redcloud and Sunshine. Contact trip leader Mark Pearson at 245-1191. For more information write the Colorado Open Space Council at 2239 Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80306 (303/393-0466), or P.O. Box 204, Grand Junction, CO 81502 (303/245-1191).



WIND POWER SITES WANTED

In cooperation with the Western Area Power Administration, the Energy Office is looking for commercial or residential sites on Colorado's Western Slope that could produce electricity or pump water with wind power. The Energy Office will provide one or more automatic recording wind anemometers for at least one year at a minimum charge of \$500. Before this joint venture, customers were required to pay \$1500 for a wind-measuring device. Also provided are machine maintenance, data gathering and evaluation, and results and recommendations as to whether your site has wind-power potential. For more information write The Energy Office, 440 Main Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 (303/241-2871).



UTAH: NONE DARE CALL IT IDAHO

Dream Garden Press of Salt Lake City has a new \$6.95 paperback out designed to amuse visitors and even some natives of the Beehive State. But *Utah, Gateway to Nevada!* will certainly offend some readers who don't like to see Mormonism mocked. A cartoon of a clean-cut fellow on a bike illustrates "The Ten Warning Signs of the Missionary" and a "Tribute to Mormon Women" features a rather stout matron ironing a tree. There are seagull forking tips, a guide to Plutonium National Park (where people leave with glowing reports), warnings about the scourge of ice cream abusers and much more. The state song of course, is "Utah: None Dare Call it Idaho." Authors are Tim Kelly, Neil Passey and Mark Knudsen.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS SHUTOUT

The Bureau of Land Management says four north-central Wyoming Wilderness Study Areas are unsuitable for wilderness designation. The BLM's newly released Grass Creek/Cody Resource Areas Suitability Draft Environmental Impact Statement documents the effects expected to result from wilderness designation or nondesignation of the Bighorn Basin's McCullough Peaks, Sheep Mountain, Red Butte and Bobcat Draw Wilderness Study Areas. The four areas contain 74,840 acres of public land; all four have high oil and gas potentials. Comments on the draft EIS can be aired at public hearings on September 18 at Worland High School and on September 19 at the Cody Convention Center. Both hearings will start at 7:30 P.M. Written comments must be submitted by November 1 to Chester E. Conard, District Manager, Worland District Office, BLM, P.O. Box 119, Worland, WY 82401.

FOR WYOMING GEOPHILES

The Geological Survey of Wyoming's list of available publications is enough to warm any geophile's heart. Reports, pamphlets, bulletins, the quarterly Wyoming Geo-Notes, and of course maps of all kinds: topographic, structural, mineral, geothermal, vegetative, paleontological; even a geologic highway map. For a copy of the list or to order a specific publication, contact the Geological Survey of Wyoming, Box 3008, University Station, Laramie, WY 82071 (307/766-2286).

ARTIFACTS - ARTIFAKES

"Artifacts/Artifakes" is the subject of the Eighth Annual Plains Indian Seminar at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. Experts will discuss the history, growth, motivation, detection, and implications of "non-authentic" traditional Plains Indian art works. Topics include "The Forging of Native American Indian Art," "Art and Imitation," "Replicas and the Law," "Replica Detection," and "Protecting Yourself." The program begins Friday, September 28 with a lecture at 7:30 P.M. Sessions the following Saturday and Sunday will run from 9:00 A.M. to 5 P.M. For details about registration, fees, scholarship applications and schedule, write P.O. Box 1000, Cody, Wyoming, 82414.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

The Denver Petroleum Exhibition & Conference '84 will provide an opportunity to wine and dine with a former Interior Secretary. James Watt will address participants October 2 at Denver's Fairmont Hotel on the topic: "The Raging Controversy: Preservation versus Development -- You can't have one without the other." Cost per ticket to the James Watt Dinner is \$60, or a bargain \$500 for a table of ten.

GUEST ESSAY

Feeding wildlife kills wildness

by J. M. Peek

Wildlife conservation has finally caught up with the rest of the world, and wildlife biologists, conservation officers, and the rest of us in the business had absolutely nothing to do with it.

Now we have Brigitte Bardot out on the French hustings on behalf of the Newfoundland seals, Brooke Shields contributing five grand to feed the deer, Mariel Hemingway out saving the peregrine. Reagan even gave \$100 to feed the deer, about what one expects he might give to the indigent and starving. I was remarking to someone that Hemingway was given prominent visibility in *Idaho Wildlife*, and he asked me if I was going to contribute more to the non-game program because of it. I said no, I was going to renew my subscription to *Idaho Wildlife* after all!

If you look objectively at, for instance, the Newfoundland seal management program, you will discover that from the viewpoint of the population biologist, there is strong justification for conducting the harvest, and the population isn't hurt a bit. But if you have a shred of emotion left, you'll wince a bit at the thought of clubbing one of those baby seals.

I hate to think of the black eye this state is going to receive in 1991 when the jackrabbits take off once again, and Dolly Parton decides to side with the Friends of Animals against the Mud Lake Committee. The point is, when Brooke Shields decides to fund deer feeding, Brigitte Bardot comes out on behalf of the seals, and Mariel Hemingway stands up for the peregrines, you clods in the profession had better take note. Wildlife conservation has indeed come of age.

Furthermore, I see that Reagan has decided to go easy on conservation, visit China, the Pope, and push the school prayer legislation. We see that Gary Hart portrayed himself as a latter day JFK, while poor old Mondale is tarred with the onus of being supported by organized labor. Congress debates prayer in the schools and abortion, but studiously ignores the national deficit and our military involvements. Yes, election year is upon us with all the superficiality that comes with it.

So, what does all this have to do with feeding deer? A whole lot. Feeding deer represents a failure of wildlife management, not a success. Feeding deer is just as superficial and crass a way to curry public favor as is a visit to the Pope or an attempt to identify with JFK. Feeding deer represents a symptom of a large problem in public relations and realistic wildlife management, and if we pursue it, it will cease to reflect our failures and will become an ultimate cause.

We feed deer because we have failed to convince otherwise well-meaning individuals that they are usurping the previous wintering areas of these animals. Rather than stand up and urge land-use planning legislation that has teeth and forthrightly portray the consequences, we acquiesce, or we fail to acquire critical habitat before it is turned into another place to spread water from the already over-subscribed Snake River. We feed deer because there is damage to haystacks and crops, sometimes ornamental shrubs. Rather than ask Brooke or Mariel or Brigitte to urge folks not to build a condo out on the winter range because it ultimately defeats the very reasons we love this state, namely for its natural values, we ignore the issue, and Brooke aggravates the problem, thankfully in another state.

We feed deer because of the deep snow and the heavy crust which, we all know, is unusual. We bank on the fact that the severe winter is but a one in 100 occurrence and won't happen again.

Well, I'm reminded of the one in 100 rain-on-snow events that caused the virtual wipe-out of the chinook run in the South Fork of the Salmon when all the logging roads washed out. How come we've had several since the first one in 1964?

We're just hoping we won't have to forthrightly address the issue with the public, and it will go away next year. I'll be charitable and just let this go by by saying that things have a way of not going away.

We feed deer simply because folks ask us to. Rather than take time to explain the costs and

consequences, we just opt to go along, take the easy way out, jump on the bandwagon and save the poor things.

There's no denying that the short-term consequences of not feeding deer, when folks ask, can be equivocal from the public relations point of view. This is especially so when they are starving in full view of a teary-eyed public.

I have personally witnessed die-offs of elk in the Yellowstone area and it is not a pleasant experience. But even so, there has to be some recognition that malnutrition loss is one of nature's many ways of checking population growth. The other ways, namely disease, parasitism, and predation, aren't exactly pretty either.

We've killed off most of the predators, we're attempting to solve the disease with artificially feeding bighorn sheep and ultimately everything else with chemicals, and now we're going to solve the malnutrition problem with a better pelletized foodstuff. When the chukars crash, we try to solve the problem by planting more. When the hunters bark, we roll over and pant.

The ultimate problems of habitat loss and too many demands on wildlife resources are tacitly ignored in favor of short-term public relations gains. Some day we are going to have to tell folks the truth: there's little we can do to compensate for Mother Nature. There is one very simple, highly compelling argument against the all-pervasive practice of artificial forms of wildlife management. They tend to interfere in the

processes of natural selection. For those of you who don't believe in evolution, it can be put another way: it tends to reduce the wildness of the wildlife.

I realize that this issue is extremely difficult to visualize and quantify. But wildlife conservation is not warmed-over animal husbandry. You can feed and maintain a deer on hay and an elk on pellets without question. But the extent to which the animal becomes dependent upon humans is one more measure of the taming of this state.

Things may be tough out on the sage slopes when the snows are deep, and our natural urge to interfere notwithstanding, there is a reason for allowing those critters to cope on their own. They've done so for time immemorial, and the satisfaction of knowing that they are still there, to live and die in the traditional ways, is important.

The end result of this slow process of artificializing the wildlife resource is an ultimate deterioration of our own lifestyle. The ultimate dilemma we face in wildlife management is how to keep wild things wild, even when our basic inclinations are to interfere.

As we continue to acquiesce to the deterioration of our state through subdivisions, improper forestry and agriculture, and artificial forms of wildlife management, we contribute to the demise of the very reasons we appreciate this state.

It's too bad we don't ask Brigitte, Brooke, and Mariel to address these issues.

□

Jim Peek, professor of wildlife management at the University of Idaho, gave this speech to Idaho's Fish and Game Department. He also tells us that one of his first jobs was feeding elk in Montana for the Fish and Game Department during 1962's hard winter.



Robert Hingenfeld

'The dilemma we face in wildlife management is how to keep things wild, even when our basic inclinations are to interfere.'

16-High Country News -- September 17, 1984

LETTERS

RANDAL O'TOOLE DISSENTS

Dear HCN,

The central theme of George Sibley's article, "The National Forests are Cooking," is based on completely erroneous premises which, if corrected, would completely change the tone of the story. Sibley seeks to glorify Louisiana-Pacific as a good old-fashioned company which is only out to make some money. In doing so, he claims, L-P will help to "avert a timber crisis sometime around the turn of the century" and at the same time "solve a major resource problem" (aspen). This he applauds as "something a little refreshing" in comparison to the synfuels boom which Western Colorado experienced during the 1970s. It sounds wonderful, but none of it is true.

The Forest Service has long promoted fears of an impending timber crisis. The spectre of lumber and toilet paper shortages makes

national forest timber seem more important than it really is. Yet there is no evidence that such a crisis could ever take place without enormous government interference in the market place. Changes in price levels would insure that there is always just as much wood and paper as people want.

Yet the Forest Service seeks to fulfill its prophecy by supplying timber at far less than its true value. This forces timber producers elsewhere out of business. In Colorado, for example, the agency will probably make less than 25 cents for every dollar it spends on sales of aspen. What private landowner would produce timber under such conditions? None will, and so we will have our crisis when the national forests run out of timber -- or when taxpayers are unwilling to continue the subsidies.

This is especially ironic because, contrary to Sibley, the national forests really are "somebody else's leavings". All the best timber lands in the West had already been acquired by major timber companies when the national forests were created. The

national forests were the dregs -- which is why they lose so much money selling timber while private timber companies show a profit. Yet management of the very low quality national forests discourages private timber owners from managing their moderate quality lands.

Sibley's premise that aspen is a "major resource problem" is equally questionable. The Forest Service is overestimating by at least a factor of four the number of acres of aspen which must be "treated." Yet Colorado aspen could be maintained indefinitely without losing money -- indeed, while producing greater profits.

The Forest Service says that, if not clearcut, aspen will be replaced by stands of spruce. At the same time, the agency goes to enormous pains to insure that harvested spruce stands are not replaced by aspen. Why not clearcut spruce -- the only Colorado tree which has any value -- and let the sites go to aspen? The aspen stands can then be allowed to go to spruce. This will cost less and produce higher revenues than current policies.

Louisiana-Pacific's presence in Western Colorado is nothing more than a repeat of the synfuels program. It will stay as long as the Forest Service is willing to subsidize it. When the subsidies end, it will disappear. Meanwhile, viable producers of timber elsewhere will receive incorrect signals in the form of artificially low prices, and convert their lands to other uses. Ultimately, most of the Forest Service's problems descend from its faith in "timber absolutism" -- the belief that cutting trees is necessary

for multiple use as well as our own survival. If Sibley continues to report for HCN, he should make a serious effort to question this Forest Service mythology.

Randal O'Toole
Cascade Holistic Forest Consultants
Eugene, Oregon

OUTRAGED IN CALIFORNIA

Dear HCN,

I read it and "What the hell!" I checked to see if I was really reading HCN. I read it again: "Can Edward Abbey Learn to Love the Glenn Canyon Dam?" Sure enough, the lead article said what it said. Then I checked to see who this Ed Marston dude was. There his name was on the masthead: Publisher. Apparently your publisher is enamored of the Glen Canyon Dam. This fact, in itself, does not seem so unfortunate. Apparently, however, your publisher feels guilty about loving dams and tourists and our boys who are working on the dam, and must take his guilty feelings out on Edward Abbey. Your publisher so maligns and distorts the Abbey of *Desert Solitaire* (a writer of far vaster talent than his) that he hinders your (our) cause.

The question is not, "Does he have any moral right to drag Abbey into his guilt problem?" but, rather, "Should he be allowed to write lead articles?"

Outraged

Steven Foster
Big Pine, California

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NEAT STUFF

FIND OUT how you can be an (unpaid) intern at *High Country News* this winter. Participate in writing, production and the inevitable scut-work. Write HCN, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428. (303) 527-4898.

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