

COMPLIMENTARY  
COPY

# High Country

news

April 1, 1985

Vol. 17 No. 6

A Paper for People who Care about the West

\$1.00

Patricia Guthrie



## A New Mexico uranium town wonders how far it will fall

by Patricia Guthrie

**G**RANTS, N.M. -- The Uranium Cafe, in unwilling imitation of the industry it was named after, sits boarded up and empty on the main street of this self-proclaimed "Uranium Capital of the World." It and the many other closed businesses on Santa Fe Avenue are an echo of the dozens of closed uranium mines and mills in the countryside surrounding Grants.

The many businesses that have failed aren't helping the survivors. Down the street from the Uranium Cafe, Stella Gonzales worries about her family-operated Mexican restaurant. "It's been so scary. You don't know what to believe any more because one day the mines are open, and the next day -- you read about it in the paper -- they're gone. That's the

way this last closing of Quivira hit. From one day to the next, it was gone. It was a shock to everyone."

An unsuspecting Gonzales had bought her restaurant in 1983. "No one in town or myself thought the uranium industry was going to blow away just like that. Everyone panicked when the first layoff came in 1984 from Gulf," she says. The panic has been replaced by resignation. From her cafe windows, Gonzales watched trailers full of furniture roll by after the Quivira layoffs.

Quivira, a subsidiary of Kerr-McGee, announced January 16 that it was closing its New Mexico uranium and potash mining operations, affecting 450 Grants workers. The next day, as if Quivira had triggered an economic chain reaction, Western Nuclear said it was shutting down its mining operations in nearby Thoreau, leaving 54 more miners jobless.

The closures have spared only one of the dozens of uranium companies which once operated in the Grants Mineral Belt stretching 60 miles from Grants west to Gallup. The survivor is Homestake. According to manager Ted Beck, it is operating its mill at 20 percent of capacity to fulfill long-term contracts, employing 350 at the mill and associated mine. Beck would not comment on when, or whether, his operation would join the other mines and mills in the region.

It has been a long, precipitous drop for both Grants and New Mexico. At its 1980 peak, 8,000 people in the state had uranium jobs, most of them at the 37 mines and five mills around Grants.

Today, the industry employs less than 500 people, and the unemployment rate in Cibola County, of which Grants is the county seat, has hit 25 percent.

**I**n the wake of layoffs that began as "a trickle and ended in a waterfall," says Grants city manager Frank King, officials are scrambling for new industry to prop up the town. Grants is grateful for a new state women's prison 30 miles away employing 180 local people, a new coal-fired power plant built in nearby Prewitt, and a new state highway district office employing 115. But it needs more, and the town is not bashful to advertise its fire sale.

"This is a buyer's market," says King. "We have over 200 homes for sale in Grants for between \$20 to \$30 a square foot. The same houses would go for twice that in Albuquerque or Phoenix." King believes "the sunny mild climate" of Grants and its stock of cheap housing should make it attractive to retired people.

(Continued on page 10)



## Dear friends,



### High Country News

HIGH COUNTRY NEWS (ISSN/0191/5657) is published biweekly, except for one issue during August and one issue during January, by the High Country News Foundation, 124 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado, 81428. Second-class postage paid at Paonia, Colorado.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

Tom Bell  
Editor Emeritus  
Ed Marston  
Publisher  
Betsy Marston  
Editor

Judy Moffatt  
Promotion  
Marjane Ambler  
Glenn Oakley  
Geoffrey O'Gara  
C.L. Rawlins  
Pat Ford

Contributing Editors  
Mary Moran  
Editorial/Graphic  
Bruce Farling  
Editorial  
Lisa McKhann  
Intern  
Nancy Barbee  
Circulation  
Linda Bilheimer  
Darkroom  
C.B. Elliott  
Production  
Judy Heideman  
Typesetting

Tom Bell, Lander WY  
Michael Clark, Boulder CO  
Lynn Dickey, Sheridan WY  
Adam McLane, Helena MT  
Geoff O'Gara, Lander WY  
Garrett Ray, Littleton CO  
Herman Warsh, Emigrant MT  
Robert Wigginton, Boulder CO  
Board of Directors

Articles appearing in High Country News are indexed in Environmental Periodicals Bibliography, Environmental Studies Institute, 2074 Alameda Padre Serra, Santa Barbara, California 93103.

All rights to publication of articles in this issue are reserved. Write for permission to print any articles or illustrations. Contributions (manuscripts, photos, artwork) will be welcomed with the understanding that the editors cannot be held responsible for loss or damage. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope with all unsolicited submissions to ensure return. Articles and letters will be published and edited at the discretion of the editors.

Advertising information is available upon request. To have a sample copy sent to a friend, send us his or her address. Write to Box 1090, Paonia, Colorado, 81428. Call High Country News in Colorado at 303/527-4898.

Subscriptions are \$18 per year for individuals, \$25 per year for institutions. Single copies \$1.00 plus \$1.25 postage and handling.

In late January we sought the help of new and former subscribers in improving our efforts to attract readers to High Country News. As we've mentioned before, HCN wants to find out this year if it can grow beyond the 3000 to 4000 subscriber plateau it's been on almost since its founding.

To learn more about how and why subscribers come to HCN and why some leave it, we sent short surveys to 120 new subscribers and 120 former subscribers. Seeing ourselves through the eyes of both these groups has been helpful, and we want to share some of their responses.

Exactly half of our new subscribers returned the survey, while 37 former subscribers responded. Overall, the return was 40.4 percent, with surveys still trickling in.

Those responding confirmed what we'd only suspected: introductions to HCN come mostly from friends -- friends at work, in different organizations, at large. Twenty-three of our 60 new subscribers learned of HCN through friends, while 10 said they became acquainted with the paper through work -- where again word-of-mouth advertising is a factor.

Nine people attributed their subscriptions to samples arriving in the mail, eight to libraries or bookstores and fifteen to "other" (if our numbers don't add up, it's because some people legitimately checked more than one category).

People subscribe to HCN for many reasons, but 46 out of 60 said they are "generally interested in the West." Even though 23 said they subscribed because they are "involved in environmental/natural resources issues in a paid position," only 19 said they did because it would be "helpful in their work." Volunteer interests attracted almost as many new readers as paid ones. Twenty-one people subscribed because they are environmental/natural resources volunteers.

"Other" reasons for subscribing included some expected replies, such as former residents of the region wanting to keep in touch, and some that were unexpected. A Medora, North Dakota, man signed up for "entertainment," and a Colorado Springs, Colorado, man agreed: "Political controversy is fun." That same Colorado man wanted to see more "water and sex" in HCN.

People's answers, both underlying and directly stated, showed they are not only interested in the West, but are concerned and care about the region. A Utah meteorology research technician, who is especially concerned about the Colorado Plateau, subscribed because he likes to stay informed about "threats to the West." Many replies were necessarily general (we didn't provide much space), such as "Idaho's a mess."

Geographically, non-renewing subscribers come from 10 states while new ones from 19. But most live in the Rocky Mountain states. Colorado and Montana were the most active states. We lost 12 Colorado subscribers, but gained 12; lost eight Montana people, but nine subscribed, for a net increase of one!

Both groups were more diverse occupationally than geographically, from artist to waiter. The only common work traits were a connection with universities -- graduate students, Ph.D. candidates, professors, scientists. "Private" people far outnumbered those working either for federal agencies or for national environmental organizations.

Despite the limited room, new subscribers were generous in answering our open-ended questions -- what they like least and most about HCN and subjects they'd like to see the paper cover.

Some readers liked least the length, frequency and delivery of HCN: "too short," "it doesn't come often enough," "sporadic delivery," "the length of some articles," "when you guys fail to send me an issue like you did with your first issue after your Christmas break."

Others critiqued the paper editorially: "I think you overdo some issues like the Forest Service timbering and road situation," "lack of national perspectives," "sometimes get too wrapped up in quoting government officials," "lack of New Mexico coverage."

The Grand Junction hydrologist who least likes "soul-searching articles such as 'What do environmentalists really want?'" seconded the Wyoming architect who least likes "thoughtful 'fate of the West' stories." A new Idaho subscriber chided us for "too much of an editorial slant," and a graduate student in land reclamation said he least likes "letters like this." Many said to give them time -- they hadn't read enough of HCN yet to tell us what they liked least.

In relaying what they liked most about the paper, the majority of new subscribers focused on HCN's coverage of issues: "its willingness to print both sides of an issue," "its balanced approach to environmental issues in the West," "the impartiality with which the articles are written," "non-hysterical reporting of the issues."

And, a Montana writer drew an opposite conclusion from the man in Idaho about HCN's bias or lack of bias -- what he liked most was our "biased coverage."

Many also gave HCN high marks for the breadth, depth, range and diversity of our reporting of issues. Forest Service, Indian, geology, Garrison Diversion, water and wilderness were issues people singled out as liking to read about in HCN.

Using it in different contexts, most people responded with "more of" when they answered our question on issues they'd like to see HCN cover. "More" sometimes was associated with geography and depended on where the respondent lives: "more Utah," "more Western Colorado news," "more Southwest issues." Many wanted more coverage of specific issues and "more of" certain



kinds of articles: acid rain, nuclear plants/waste, toxic waste disposal, management of national parks and pressure of concessionaires, archaeology of the Southwest, aesthetic/philosophical responses to the West, water, book reviews, related club and organization meetings.

The 13 people who checked "other" as their reason for not renewing gave explanations ranging from "getting it at work" to "your articles became more adversarial than objective," to "too political," to "HCN is for Yuppies." Only one person admitted to forgetting to renew.

Several subscribers wanted to learn more about the proposed BLM/Forest Service land swap, and we hope they saw the 2/18/85 HCN, which arrived about the time they returned their surveys.

Lack of time to read and lack of money to subscribe were the most common reasons people gave for not renewing. Several former subscribers indicated they'd lost interest in issues, several indicated they were still interested but didn't feel HCN was adequately covering them.

A Pontiac, Michigan, woman who cited a move as her primary reason for not renewing also wanted shorter articles plus less "bias." She said presenting the anti-more-wilderness side, for example, would help pro-wilderness people develop better arguments for wilderness. She, along with a number of other former subscribers, promised to renew when circumstances changed.

One survey came from a single-minded New Mexico student, who said what he liked most about HCN was "geology articles," what he liked least was "not enough geology" and then named "geology of the West" as the subject he'd like to see HCN cover.

We thank each person who answered the survey. We not only are using what we learned from you to design new ways of finding subscribers (see the ad on page 13), we also will pursue some story leads you gave us over the next months.

--the staff

## BARBED WIRE

*It sounds anti-American, if not communistic, to us.*

The University of Southern Colorado at Pueblo will drop its football program next fall in order to divert funds to its academic program. Approximately eight coaches on the staff plus 63 returning players, as well as 20 recruited high school seniors, are expected to seek berths at other schools.

*Was its last name Monroe?*

The Department of Energy reports that a nuclear test with a yield between 20 and 150 kilotons was conducted underground March 15 at the Nevada Test Site. "It was named Vaughn."

*No honor among the predatory classes.*

In defending themselves against a lawsuit brought by the family of smoker Rose Cipollone, several tobacco firms are trying to show that other factors may have caused her cancer. According to *The New York Times*, attorneys for the tobacco companies, in depositions taken before her death, "asked her about the insulation used in her childhood home; whether she used aerosol sprays in her house; whether she barbecued her food; whether she consumed large amounts of diet soda."



# WESTERN ROUNDUP

## The bison's wandering ways can be fatal

Bison wandering out of their Yellowstone National Park home in search of greener pastures are encountering a surprise lately -- the business end of a rifle. As of late March, more than 88 had been shot.

State wildlife officials say the shaggy beasts may carry a livestock disease called brucellosis. When they leave the park and come in contact with cattle the disease can cause spontaneous abortions.

Herding the intractable animals back into Yellowstone hasn't worked well, so the state veterinarian has ordered wildlife officials to shoot bison that won't stay in the park. But there are people who say there are better choices than slaughtering the docile, lumbering animals, which can weigh up to 2,000 pounds. One bill now under debate by Montana lawmakers would establish a hunting season for bison, allowing sportsmen to shoot the animals rather than having state wildlife officials do it. And a Park Service environmental assessment issued last month proposed shooting the bison before they cross the park boundary.

The Yellowstone bison are one of the last free-roaming herds in the United States, and number some 2,000 animals. The problem is that a portion of their winter range lies outside the 2.2 million acre park, and the bison migrate north as they have done for hundreds of years.

Cindy Hoe is a resident of Gardiner, a tiny tourist town perched at the northern border of the park. She thinks the animals should be driven back into the park rather than be shot. "It's a sad state of affairs when you can see the buffalo walking free in the park, and you see them being shot across the river," Hoe said.

But officials argue that turning the animals back is expensive, time-consuming and often impossible. "We drive them back into the park with helicopters and trucks in the afternoon," said Jeffy Wells, assistant director of Montana's Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Bozeman office, "and they're back out by evening."

While they are in the park the animals are federal property. Once they cross the invisible border they become the property of the state.

The Park Service management philosophy is to manage wildlife naturally, which means not at all. Under that policy, they refuse to treat the animals for the disease. "Attempts by man to manipulate nature have generally failed," said Yellowstone Chief Ranger Thomas Hobbs.

The Volkswagen-sized animals can cause quite a stir in Gardiner as they wander slowly through the streets, occasionally blocking traffic and entertaining passers-by.

The docile nature of the animals has led to criticism of the proposal to allow them to be hunted. The legislation has passed the Montana House, and is now being considered by the Senate.

"It's like shooting a cow," said one environmentalist who asked not to be identified. "It's not sport. If people want to hunt them they should have to hunt them with rocks."

But a spokesman for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, an environmental group which recently proposed that areas bordering on Yellowstone

Bob Kennedy, Hungry Horse News



Park be managed in concert with park values, said that shooting the bison is a "reasonable management tool."

"What this shows, however, is that there is a need for protection of areas outside the park, in order to preserve the park's wildlife," said Rick Reese, the chairman of the group's board.

Currently the dead animals are being sold at auction. Several weeks ago in Bozeman, 23 bison carcasses were sold for a total of \$11,000 -- an average of \$490 per animal. Buffalo meat, which is primarily made into steaks and hamburger, is tougher than beef, but contains less fat.

The bison, which once numbered

in the millions, was almost extinct by the turn of the century because of unbridled slaughter by the pioneers. Perhaps fewer than 100 animals existed by the 1900s. After Yellowstone became a park, 22 animals were brought to Yellowstone, bred like cattle, and numbers were restored to 300-400.

The number was believed to be optimum for the park, and for many years the animals were shot as a form of population control. After the natural management philosophy was adopted in the 1960s, the bison population was allowed to increase naturally.

--Jim Robbins

## Progress on the northern border

Canada's proposed Cabin Creek coal mine, to be located six miles north of the British Columbia - Montana border, is making news again. The International Joint Commission, a Canadian/American agency, is launching an 18-month study on the project's potential impact on water quality in Montana's portion of the Flathead Basin.

First proposed 10 years ago, the proposal has been on hold since the coal market turned soft. The international dialogue on the huge mine, which will cover 4,000 acres, produce 2.2 million tons of coal a year and employ over 500 people for 21 years from its location on a Flathead

River tributary, was prompted by concerns from Montana residents. They say the project threatens not only the water quality of the Flathead Basin, but also grizzlies and wolves, air quality in nearby Glacier National Park, valuable spawning habitat for bull and cutthroat trout and the recreational values of the North Fork Flathead/Glacier Park country.

The commission's study is the first cooperative assessment between the two countries on the proposal; the mine has already survived several steps under the Canadian government's environmental review process.

--Bruce Farling

## HOTLINE

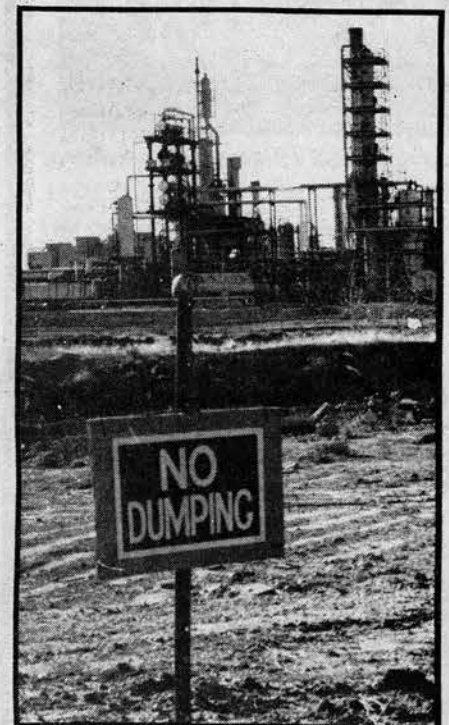
### Cashing in on failed socialism

Former Secretary of the Interior James Watt seems to have a new job as advisor to Wyoming's Arapahoe Tribe. Invited by the Arapahoe Business Council in mid-March, Watt and consulting partner Roy Sampsel promised to increase oil and gas revenues by \$100 million and charge no consulting fee if their plans fail. The plans were not spelled out. There is a hitch: the Shoshone Tribe, which shares the Wind River Reservation with the Arapahoe, must agree to any projects that effect the entire reservation. They have not agreed to meet with Watt. In a meeting of about 100 Arapahoes, there were questions about the Business Council's authority to hire Watt, who charged as Secretary of the Interior that the poverty of American Indians is due to "failed socialism."

### Aspen sale delayed

A second appeal by two western Colorado conservation groups has temporarily halted the sale of 640 acres of aspen to the Louisiana-Pacific Corp. Forest Service Chief Max Peterson has agreed to review the appeal, first turned down by the Regional Forester Jan. 31, and make his decision by April 3. Western Colorado Congress and Western Slope Energy Research Center charge that the aspen treatment cut isn't covered sufficiently in the Forest Plan (HCN, 2/18/85). If Peterson rejects this second appeal, says WCC organizer Kevin Williams, the next step is bumping it up to the Agriculture Secretary or seeking a preliminary injunction in District Court.

### Toxic waste study



After a 16-month, \$1 million research study financed mainly by industry, scientists found little evidence that toxic waste dumps have harmed human health. New York's Love Canal was the one site out of 21 which provided "acceptable scientific evidence of statistically significant and biologically plausible cause-and-effect relationships," according to Dr. Joe Grisham, president of the American Association of Pathologists. Grisham added, "I am not telling you that there is no risk... the concern of the public is well placed." The study was financed by groups such as the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.



## HOTLINE

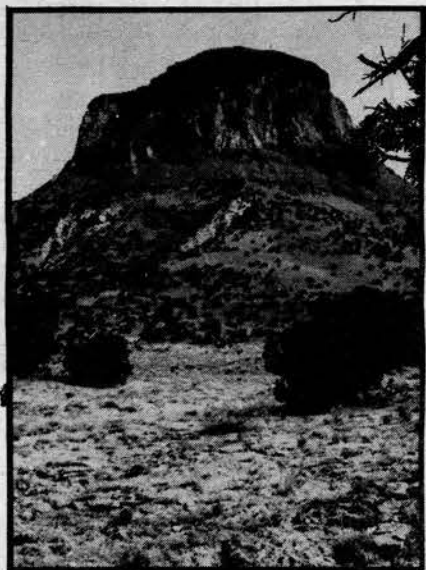
## A bill to bust sodbusters



South Dakota Travel Division

Another "sodbuster" bill has been introduced by Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Co. The bill would deny benefits to farmers who grow crops on highly erodible land. Because soil erosion and grassland preservation are issues of increasing public concern, says an Armstrong aide, Congress is expected to pass the new bill this year. Attempts last year failed. A similar bill was introduced in the House in January (HCN, 1/21/85).

## Girding for battle



Cabazon Peak Wilderness Study Area, New Mexico

The Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society have joined with local conservationists in New Mexico to prepare for the state's upcoming BLM wilderness battle. The Bureau of Land Management will release a statewide draft environmental impact statement by May 1, the first to be released in the country. This first case will set the example for BLM wilderness area designations nationwide. The draft is expected to propose that over half of the state's BLM lands suitable for wilderness designation be opened up to development. Meanwhile, conservationists are preparing an alternative proposal for Congress which would grant wilderness protection to more of the state's remote areas.

## Non-technical advice from OTA

The Office of Technology Assessment has some advice for the Department of Energy about managing high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power plants. In a recent report, OTA says DOE must strive to build public confidence in its search for an underground repository, and that an independent waste management agency would "enhance credibility." OTA is a non-partisan agency that helps Congress deal with technical issues.

## Prescott wants the Forest Service to stay

PRESCOTT, Az. -- While Congress and the Reagan administration scuffle in Washington, D.C., over the proposed 35-million-acre land exchange between the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (HCN, 3/4/85), related fights are being fought in many of the localities to be affected by the swap.

One of the hottest battles is taking place in Prescott. The day the story hit the local press that the Prescott National Forest was to be part of the proposed land swap, Jeri Smith-Fornara wasn't at home.

When she got home the next day, there were 103 messages on her answering machine. There might have been more, but that's as many as the tape can hold.

"People were calling from all over the state, from the other western states, too. They were all very upset. They wanted to know what to do," said Smith-Fornara.

"We got busy," she said.

Since then, Smith-Fornara and her associates in Citizens for Protection of the Prescott Area have worked nonstop to channel the initial uproar into an organized "commotion" and make it big enough to be heard in Washington.

For once, every interest group seems to be united. The citizen group (composed of former executives who retired to Prescott's rural mountain splendor, housewives, ranchers, and virtually every other specimen of local resident) is working with the Chamber of Commerce, the local horsemen's association, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Audubon Society to stop the Reagan administration's proposed plan.

The federal government proposes putting the western half of the Prescott National Forest under the domain of the BLM and adding the eastern half to the Kaibab and Coconino national forests. The Forest Service supervisor's office in Prescott would be eliminated, saving an estimated \$2.5 million.

In February, at a packed, raucous public hearing on the plan, Prescott's mayor said, "Whenever the great bureaucracy says it will save money... it gives me cause for concern."

Smith-Fornara said her group's research indicates that a simple switch to computerized record-keeping for the Prescott National Forest alone would save the \$2.5 million.

The unified opposition to the Prescott land exchange is built around the apparently unanimous feeling that Prescott residents like their Victorian-era picturesque retreat the way it is -- and they don't trust the BLM.

Smith-Fornara, 43, has lived in Prescott for 33 years, and proudly points out that *Newsweek* magazine routinely names her town one of the ten nicest places to live in the country.

A long-time volunteer in the consumer movement, she said that like most other town residents she was "interested in the quality of life here," but never really got involved in local struggles until about a year ago, when the Phelps-Dodge Corp. proposed a copper mine for the Prescott National Forest.

She and 11 others founded the local citizen group, which now claims 800 members, to fight the mine proposal, and members of her group have linked the proposed land exchange to the spectre of a mine on

the Forest Service land southwest of Prescott.

Both the Arizona state director for the BLM, Dean Bibbes, and the Forest Service southwestern regional director, Milo Hassell, flatly deny it, but many Prescott residents believe that if the land goes to the BLM, it will eventually go into private hands.

Thomas Slaback, who heads Sierra Club activities in the Prescott area, called the land swap "a plan to eventually change ownership of public lands to private." And speakers at the public hearing called the BLM a "federal real-estate agency" and the "bureau of lumber and mining."

The local residents are especially suspicious of a connection to the copper mine because they say the government lists two relevant criteria for the land to be exchanged, neither of which is met in Prescott: 1) that there be more BLM land than forest land adjacent to a forest, or 2) that a BLM office is closer to the forest than a Forest Service office. (The closest BLM office is in Phoenix.)

To gear up a letter-writing campaign to congressional and administration officials, the crusade to stop the swap is running full-page ads in local newspapers pointing out that the criteria exist, but don't apply in Prescott.

"We really need to cause a commotion, or else the exchange will happen before Congress even knows what's happening," Smith-Fornara said. "We only have until June 1. That's not much time." The agencies have said they will have a plan in place for the swap by June 1, and begin implementation by Oct. 1.

But some environmentalists are taking the position that all the commotion Prescott residents are trying to whip up isn't necessary.

"There is no reason to panic over this land swap plan," said Debbie Sease, the Sierra Club's public land specialist. "It is another ill-advised proposal put forth by the Reagan administration with little political reality behind it. There is little support for the idea on Capitol Hill, and some powerful legislators are opposed to it."

Smith-Fornara says of those who pooh-pooh the likelihood of the swap: "I think they're wrong." She referred to an open letter written by federal officials from both agencies telling their employees to prepare to begin working together in June.

The Prescott groups are urging residents to support an alternative to the current land swap proposal, since they believe they have little chance of stopping the swap altogether.

The alternative would be to consolidate the forests and move the headquarters of the Kaibab National Forest, now in Williams, to Prescott. This has caused alarm in Williams, which doesn't want to lose the Forest Service jobs either.

But Smith-Fornara said moves are being made to organize all the area towns affected to work together on a plan that will be acceptable to each of them.

--Antoinette Martin

## BARBS

*Shouldn't they be taught how to fish with dynamite, too?*

The Rocky Mountain Camp near Divide, Colorado will teach conservation techniques this summer to 4-H youngsters between the ages of 14 and 19. The conservation techniques to be taught include the electroshocking of fish.

## L-P's sawmill in Dubois is cited



Smoke from L-P sawmill, Dubois, Wyoming

The Louisiana-Pacific mill in Dubois, Wyoming, has been issued its first notice of violation by the state's Department of Environmental Quality.

According to Dan Fauth of the DEQ in Lander, the sawmill exceeded legal emission standards in three out of seven tests last year. A December opacity test of the teepee burner's smoke averaged about 38 percent opacity at noon -- above the legal limit of less than 20 percent for 23 hours each day.

Wilbur Stewart, L-P's foreman, says, "I have been working on the damn thing for two months without any noticeable results." Stewart says he has tried burning drier wood, and

keeping the burner cleaner, but the excessive smoke persisted.

He blames the smoke on green spruce. The slabs and chips fed into the teepee burner contain a lot of moisture, Stewart says, although 50 percent of the plume that people see is steam.

Dan Dutton, L-P's operations manager in Coeur d'Alene, says, "We'll do what we can. We plan on being in compliance with the law."

In the past year the upper Wind River Valley has experienced several inversions east of Dubois, and black smoke from L-P has lingered along the valley floor.

--Meredith Taylor



# Three states sue DOE on the nuclear dump issue

Washington state filed suit March 1 against the U.S. Department of Energy over the federal government's proposed study of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation for siting of a high-level nuclear waste repository.

On December 20, 1984, DOE announced in a draft environmental assessment that Hanford in Washington, Yucca Mountain in Nevada, and Deaf Smith County in Texas would undergo site "characterization" to determine which should be selected for the nation's first permanent dump for high-level nuclear wastes, the most toxic substances known to man (HCN, 1/21/85).

The Washington State Nuclear Waste Board voted overwhelmingly to pursue legal action against DOE in two areas. First, the suit says DOE must provide federal funds to affected states so that they can independently study proposals for waste dumps within their borders. Last year the state of Nevada sued DOE on the same issue; on March 9, Washington joined Nevada's suit as a friend of the court. The action means that all three states -- Washington, Nevada, and Texas -- under consideration for disposal of high-level nuclear wastes have now gone to court against DOE.

Other litigation approved by the state's Nuclear Waste Board focuses on DOE guidelines for implementing the federal Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. An opinion from the Washington Attorney General's office states that DOE's guidelines are not written with sufficient specificity, do not consider alternatives to deep geologic disposal, do not give enough attention to the impacts from the transportation of nuclear wastes, and do not take into account the defense nuclear wastes already located at Hanford.

The Washington Nuclear Waste Board and Attorney General are moving against DOE with the blessing of Gov. Booth Gardner. The newly elected governor reportedly became angry when then Energy Secretary Donald Hodel turned down Washington's request for a 30-day extension to comment on the DEA. The DOE gave the state and other readers 90 days to review the DEA's many volumes and 800 pages.

Testifying at a public hearing in Olympia on March 7, Warren A. Bishop, chairman of the Nuclear Waste Board, indicated that the state will defy Hodel's decision. He said Washington will hand in a "digest" by the March 20 deadline but then take "up to 60 additional days" to produce detailed comments.

Bishop also laid out the governor's conditions for approving Hanford if it is eventually chosen for the waste repository: "demonstration that the repository will be entirely safe, demonstration that Hanford is better than any other site and demonstration of acceptability to the citizens of the state." Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the governor of the state selected for the waste dump must approve DOE's decision.

The testimony of 41 other witnesses at the Olympia hearing cast grave doubt that Gov. Gardner's conditions can be met. All but a half dozen speakers condemned DOE, the Hanford site and the draft analysis.

Eileen Butler, president of the Hanford Oversight Committee, sounded the battle cry, "We do not believe

that the first round of site selection for the first repository was carried out in any lawful manner," she charged. "We intend to take care of our backyard, unlike the U.S. DOE that has pumped, dumped, and aerosoled at Hanford for 42 years."

From its beginnings in 1943, when facilities were built here to produce plutonium for the first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, and for the Nagasaki bomb which ended World War II, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in southeastern Washington state has been the source of controversy. Replete today with a plutonium reactor, a breeder reactor, the military nuclear waste dump, eight plutonium production reactors now undergoing decommission, and a Plutonium Uranium Extraction (PUREX) plant, Hanford has been accused of numerous radioactive leaks that endanger the health of workers and nearby residents by polluting air, groundwater, and the Columbia River, which winds through the 570 square-mile reservation.

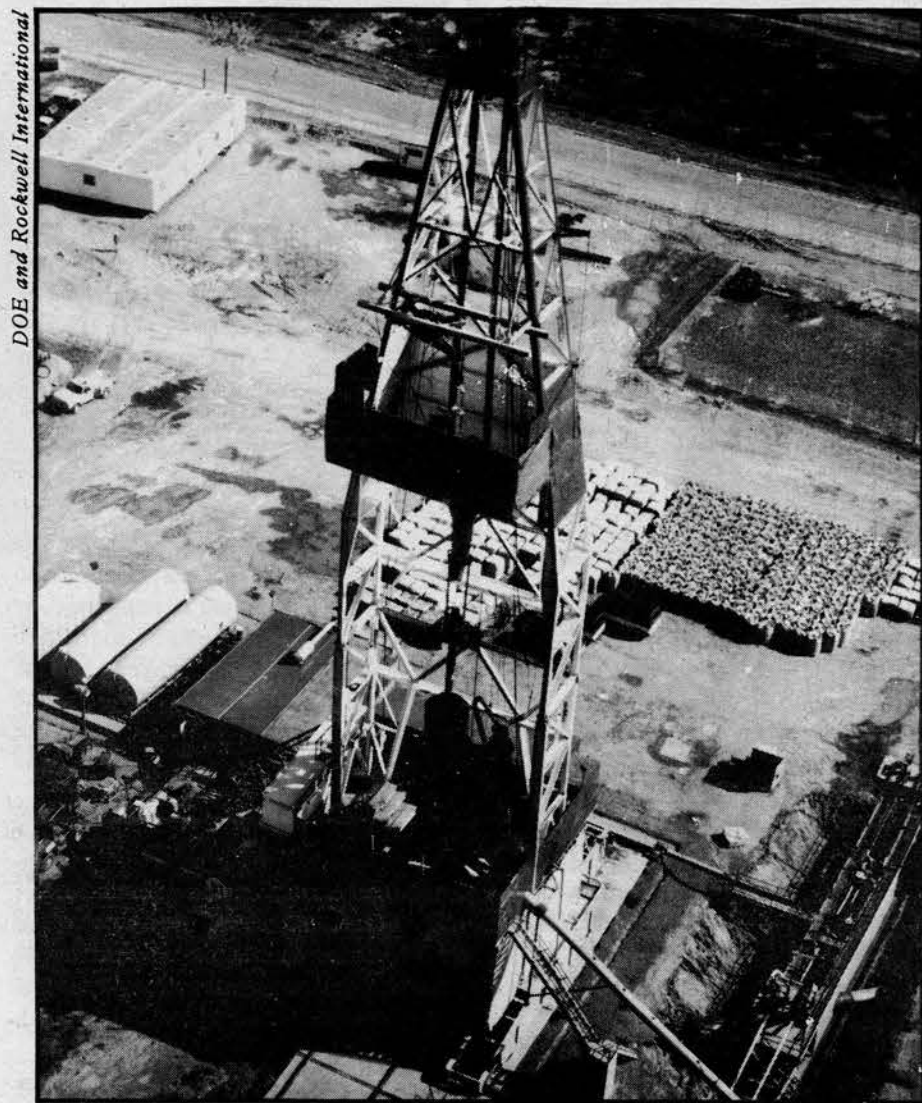
The proposed civilian high-level nuclear waste repository at Hanford would lie about six miles from the Columbia, fueling fears that the dump would sooner or later contaminate the river.

"Political expediency" was the term that Glen Hellman and a dozen other speakers for the Washington Public Interest Research Group used to explain DOE's choice of Hanford for "site characterization." At Olympia and at an unexpected hearing in Seattle two days later, WashPIRG repeatedly hammered the themes that DOE owns the Hanford Reservation and that DOE's Hanford contractor, Rockwell, stands to make billions of dollars from construction of a high-level nuclear waste dump here. Rockwell's collection of data for the DEA is "a clear conflict of interest," said Hellman, who added that the nearby Tri-Cities of Richland, Kennewick and Pasco have become economic "captive" of Hanford.

Other witnesses expressed alarm about the lack of science in the draft analysis. State Sen. Al Williams, chairman of the Senate's Energy and Utilities Committee, said that much of the data and conclusions in the document were not scientifically "reproducible." Ruth Weiner, a professor at Western Washington University, said that citations of scientific literature are largely misleading, missing or improper in the draft.

Albert Friedman, a geologist and a witness for the Sierra Club, concluded that "the Hanford Site has several liabilities which should have precluded it from further consideration." Friedman said the basalt rock at Hanford is too brittle, too cracked by folding and faulting, too prone to earthquakes, and too full of flowing groundwater to build the underground dump, much less bottle up wastes for the DOE standard of 10,000 years.

"The list of (Hanford site's) critics is impressive," said Friedman, and includes "the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the National Academy of Sciences. The Rockwell Hanford Hydrology Oversight Committee went so far as to state in their September 1981 report that, 'From a hydrogeologic perspective, the Columbia River Basalt Group as a whole is not well



Drill rig used in site characterization at Hanford

sited for a high-level waste repository."

At the Olympia hearing, support for Hanford was lukewarm at best. Daniel J. Ashburn, chairman of the Washington Waste Site Study Group, an industry organization, said that his group "does not advocate Hanford as the (repository) site, but we do support continued study and site characterization."

Speakers for WWSSG also criticized the draft analysis for not dealing adequately with questions about transportation. Because Hanford is in the extreme northwestern corner of the nation and most nuclear generators lie east of the Mississippi River, almost every canister of waste would be shipped through Spokane,

Washington. WWSSG also asked the DOE to conduct a public education campaign to allay public fears and ignorance about nuclear waste.

But the generally angry and gloomy tone of the hearing was probably best expressed by Larry Siminski, a former inspector at the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant in California. He said he was fired for protesting low quality control standards during the generator's construction. Based on his experience, he doubted that the DOE would choose the best possible site or build the best possible repository. For Siminski, the bottom line in nuclear waste disposal is: "What area are we willing to lose to a probable disaster?"

--James Baker

## HOTLINE

### McClure opposes national forest user fees

Despite opposition from the powerful Idaho Sen. James McClure, the Reagan administration is pressing ahead with an omnibus bill mandating user fees for public lands. One Forest Service proposal is for a national and five-day pass in addition to fees collected at developed sites. But at a hearing before McClure's natural resources committee last month, the Republican senator said he didn't think the Forest Service had a chance of collecting the fees. "Any heavy-handed management -- and that's how (the fee plan) will be regarded -- simply is not going to sell in the West... It will take an Army to enforce," McClure said. The *Federal Parks & Recreation* newsletter says the administration recently alienated some potential supporters when it proposed taking user fee taxes from sport fishing and dumping that money into the general budget (HCN, 3/4/85). According to the newsletter, "If OMB doesn't back off that, a user fee will go absolutely nowhere."



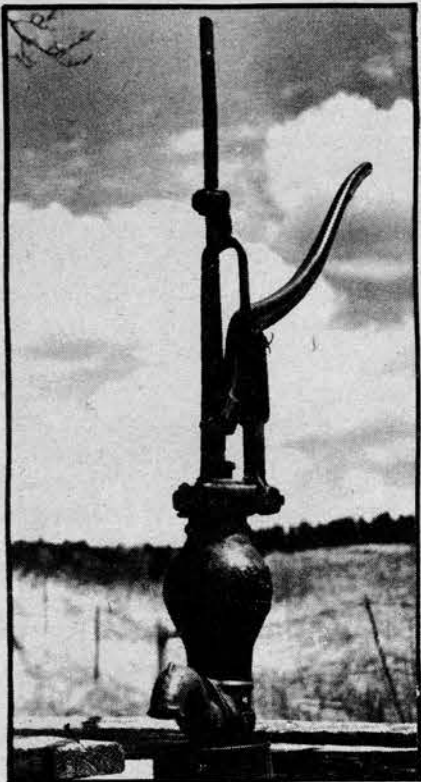
Senator James McClure



6-High Country News -- April 1, 1985

## HOTLINE

## Arizona starts conserving



Mike McClure

Arizona has captured the attention of water users throughout the West with its water management reforms to end disastrous depletion of groundwater. Mandatory conservation rules went into effect last month restricting non-agricultural water use and banning any new irrigation in targeted areas. The management goal is for "safe-yield" by 2025 when groundwater withdrawals would equal recharge. Although Central Arizona Project water is scheduled to be available to Phoenix late this year, and to Tucson by 1989, groundwater demand still needs to be reduced. The Arizona Department of Water Resources projects that by 2025, use of CAP water combined with conversion of irrigated lands to urbanized areas will reduce groundwater overdraft by 75 percent. Mandated conservation is slated to eliminate the remaining 25 percent.

## Innovative compliance

The EPA's final tall stacks ruling this spring may allow coal and power companies more leeway. The current policy allows a utility to balance emissions from stacks within a plant so long as total emissions do not exceed the allowable limit. The expanded "bubble" concept would allow utilities to balance emissions between facilities within the same state, not just within a single complex. This approach follows the philosophy of Joseph A. Cannon, EPA assistant administrator for air and radiation, who says the agency should adopt a "more innovative approach to compliance."

## Another dam no

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition has joined two other conservation groups in opposition to the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to rebuild the Jackson Lake Dam (HCN, 2/4/85). In a letter to BuRec, Yellowstone Coalition Executive Director Bob Anderson called the plans "unconvincing... erroneous and misleading." The Bureau has proposed to rebuild the dam in Grand Teton National Park, a project that would take over four years and cost \$82 million. The coalition of environmental and planning organizations favors solving the dam's safety problems by permanently lowering the level of Jackson Lake. The Bureau and Idaho farmers that benefit from the dam reject that solution.

## A report says Fishing Bridge must go

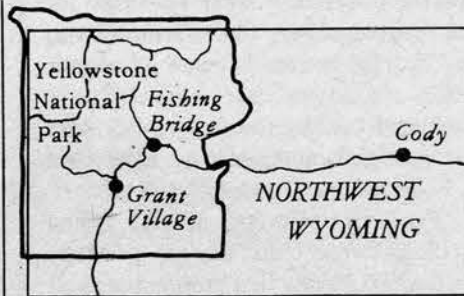
The National Park Service says it has scientific evidence that the campground and recreation vehicle park at Fishing Bridge in Yellowstone is causing serious harm to the grizzly bear population in the park. The evidence is collected in a detailed 150-page report released last month, and is the basis for the National Park Service's desire to remove the camping and RV sites and stores from the developed land along Yellowstone Lake.

The conclusion has been attacked by Cody, Wyoming, organizations that say the loss of Fishing Bridge will mean reduced traffic through their town to and from the east entrance to the park. But removal is supported by conservation groups, which see Fishing Bridge as a threat to the survival of the grizzly in the Yellowstone ecosystem. They also see the removal as a quid pro quo for the new Grant Village complex.

The study, titled "Fishing Bridge and the Yellowstone Ecosystem," is the base for an environmental impact statement examining other aspects of the proposed closure: where the new campgrounds should go, the timing of the closure and replacement, and the impact on Cody.

The removal and replacement of the 308 campsites and 353 RV sites will not be cheap. The park service estimates it at \$5 to \$6 million; Harry Roberts of the Cody Chamber of Commerce puts it at \$10 million.

Cody has powerful backing from Wyoming's three-person congressional delegation. The removal of Fishing Bridge was policy until the delegation demanded more study. Fishing Bridge was to be removed as part of a 1981 agreement between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Park Service. The removal of Fishing Bridge development was intended to replace grizzly habitat destroyed by Grant Village.



Now, former NPS head Russell Dickenson has promised, Fishing Bridge won't be destroyed unless its 661 sites are replaced elsewhere in the park. That has led to concern that 661 new sites will be built, and then political opposition will prevent removal of Fishing Bridge sites. Robert Anderson of the Yellowstone Coalition says that is a possibility, but one he believes planning and negotiation can handle.

The scientific study relies heavily on statistical data gathered from 1968 to 1983. The averaged data shows that the Fishing Bridge area is a grizzly trouble spot, with 10 human injuries caused by bears within a mile of the campground. But the raw data contained in the report shows that if the period from 1977 to the present is considered, only one injury occurred in the Fishing Bridge area.

1977 is significant because in the mid-1970s, a 40-site campground at Pelican Creek was removed, several hundred cabins containing 303 rooms were demolished, and camping was confined to those in hard-sided shelters. Dumps throughout the park had been closed about 1970.

Don Despain, a research biologist with the National Park Service, says it is incorrect to conclude from the lack of recent injuries that those reforms reduced bear-human problems in and around Fishing Bridge. He says, "We got better at recognizing incipient problem" bears and removing them from the area.

Fishing Bridge is also seen as a center of infection -- a sort of pool hall hangout where bears first go bad, even though they may then get in serious trouble elsewhere in the park, and therefore show up on the statistics for Grant Village or Old Faithful.

The Fishing Bridge developed area, which has been heavily used for 70 years, occupies a small fraction of 44,000 acres associated with it in the Pelican Valley. It is this backcountry whose vegetative diversity and trout spawning streams make it extremely attractive to grizzlies as well as an "ecological crown jewel" in Yellowstone, according to the report.

The report's charts show that most of the injuries caused by bears in the Fishing Bridge area occur in the backcountry, raising the question of whether it should be closed, either instead of the campground or in addition to the campground. Despain says the developed area and the backcountry can't be separated. "The concentration of people in the campground puts more people in the backcountry."

He also says that backcountry activity is more manageable. "In the backcountry, we close camp sites" if a problem develops or if a carrion is spotted. "We can't do that" in the developed area.

Despain also suggests that taking people out of the backcountry while maintaining the developed area could backfire. Without people in the backcountry, "You might get more bears in the valley," who would then wander into the campgrounds.

If Fishing Bridge is to be removed, then Grant Village will gain most of the relocated campsites. The development, which has also had its share of bear incidents since it opened, now has 438 campsites and 300 rooms, but no RV sites.

--Ed Marston

## A Wyoming forest plan draws lots of fire

The Forest Service's 50-year plan for Medicine Bow National Forest has drawn a wave of criticism from state officials and residents of southeastern Wyoming.

Forest Supervisor Sonny O'Neal estimates that he received about 300 letters during the public comment period which ended March 14. Though he has not yet analyzed the letters and singled out specific protests, O'Neal says, "I'm sure we'll have to make some changes because of this public input."

Among the letters is a 33-page critique of the management plan for Medicine Bow and the Thunder Basin National Grassland from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Although state biologist Joe Bohne worked with the Forest Service's planning team for a year, few of his recommendations for protecting wildlife were included in the draft environmental impact statement. The state says the plan continues to manage the forest for the timber industry.

"Earlier in the planning process, both high wildlife and high recreation alternatives were considered along with the high timber alternative," says the state's biological services chief Harry Harju. But the released plan, Harju charges, doesn't fairly

explore the area's wildlife and recreation options.

Many local residents questioned the economic sense of doing any logging in Medicine Bow, claiming that it is not an important source of jobs or income for the area. Jeffrey Foster pointed out in an editorial in the Casper *Star-Tribune*, that although "Medicine Bow spent \$12,769,000 on timber in the last five years... only \$832,700 in receipts for timber sales were collected."

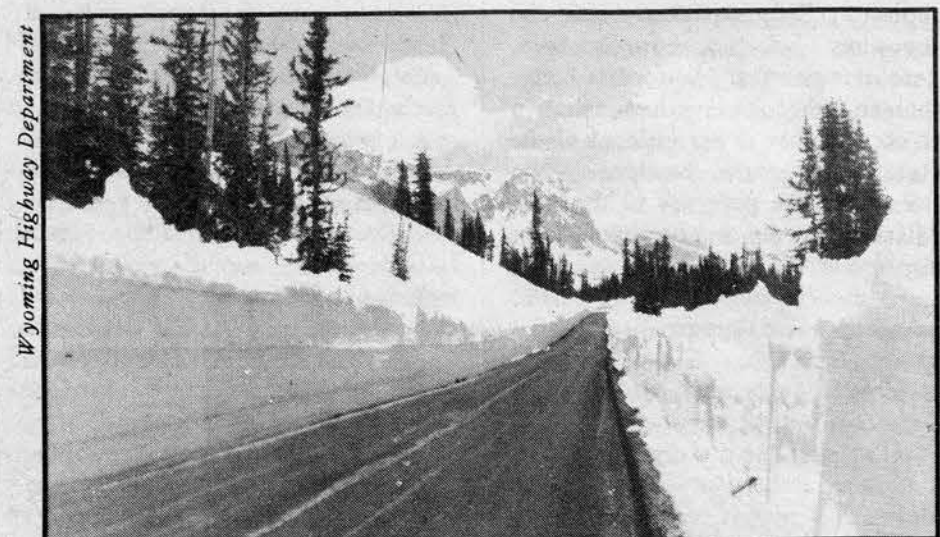
According to O'Neal, that calculation only considers the short-term

cash flow. The long-term benefits of logging for trees and wildlife are positive for the Forest Service, he says.

But the state's Harju says people feel they're not being listened to. "I've even heard some say they'd be willing to pay annual user fees if it would give them a say in how the forest is run," he adds.

The revised and final EIS for Medicine Bow will be ready in September, according to Supervisor O'Neal.

--Lisa McKhann



Wyoming Highway Department

Snowy Range Road, Medicine Bow National Forest



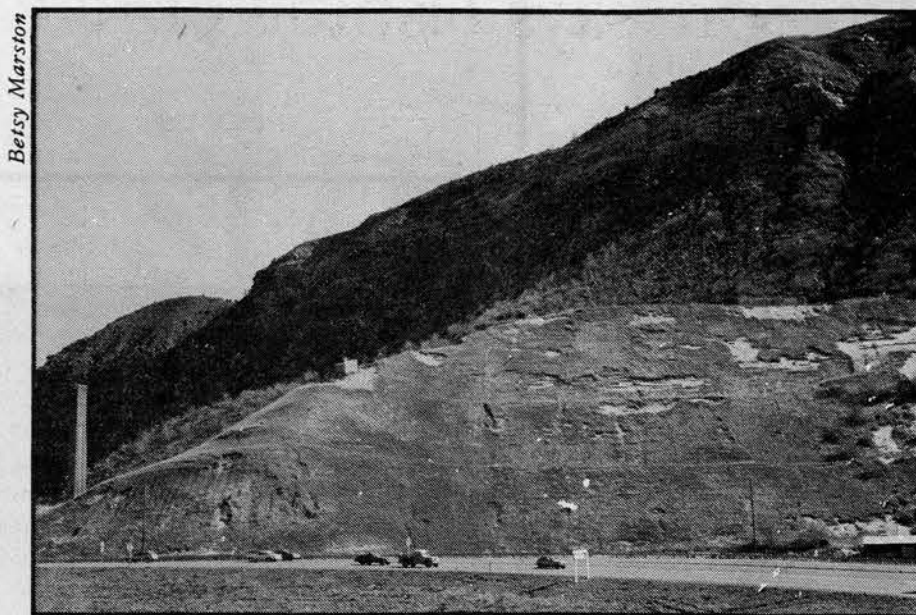
## A mountainous problem nears solution

Forty-three years after the Vanadium Corporation opened its uranium mill in Durango, Colorado, a solution is close for dealing with the 1.5 million cubic yards of sandy mill tailings left behind.

The low-level radioactive wastes on a 126-acre tract lie in a floodplain, stacked up on lead smelter slag above the Animas River. Two piles rise 230 and 90 feet against Smelter Mountain and are clearly visible across the river from Durango's business district. For years the tailings have been blown onto nearby rooftops and washed downstream in floods.

Last month a local task force selected its "preferred alternatives" based on the Department of Energy's draft environmental impact statement and a public hearing held in December.

What the eight-member task force recommends is either stabilization on site or moving the tailings to Bodo Canyon Wildlife Refuge three miles away, coupled with decontamination of the Durango site. Although the task force's original preferred alternative had been to reprocess and stabilize the tailings at a nearby site called Long Hollow, it was killed when the tailings owner, Hecla Mining Company of Wallace, Idaho, announced it would not reprocess the wastes for the remaining uranium ore. The task force then eliminated the Long Hollow option because of "overwhelming public opinion," says task force chairman Harold Steinhoff, a wildlife biologist. He adds that the Long Hollow option would cost \$10 million more than the remaining alternatives, would take longer to complete, and



Petroglyphs on Smelter Mountain

could contaminate groundwater.

To stabilize the tailings in place, DOE would recontour the pile to lessen the slope and spread it over 38 acres, says Steinhoff. The tailings would be covered with rock and sealed with concrete. Concrete ditches would also be installed along the upper edges of the pile to divert runoff to the river, all for a cost of \$16 million over one year, according to DOE estimates.

If the contaminated materials were moved southwest to the Bodo Canyon site, a hunting preserve, the tailings would be placed on two feet of clay lining and covered with five feet of clay. Because this site is level, it does not pose the problems of erosion and maintenance that exist at the Durango site, Steinhoff says. Task force member Tim LaFrance says the

refuge's deer and elk will be displaced only for the duration of the project, and that the grass-covered tailings will create more suitable range for wildlife. DOE predicts this option would cost \$17 million and take 1½ years to complete.

DOE is completing its plans with the task force, the Colorado Health Department, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, says John Arthur, a DOE Uranium Mill Tailings Project Officer. Remedial action at the dump site could begin in early 1986.

Durango is one of nine mill tailings sites in western Colorado targeted for a 90 percent federal - 10 percent state cleanup. So far, no state money has been appropriated for Colorado's share of the costs.

--Lynda Alfred

## Arizona does an about-face on smelters

Concern about acid rain and a lawsuit have led Arizona, the EPA and Mexico to agree that sulfur dioxide emissions from copper smelters in the southwest must be reduced. The question is how much and when.

Pressure to reduce SO<sub>2</sub>, which threatens the Rocky Mountains, came last fall after the Environmental Defense Fund filed suit against Arizona smelter operators. Two of Arizona's seven copper smelters emit amounts of SO<sub>2</sub> well above standards set by the Clean Air Act. Although the Magma Copper Co. has begun to install scrubbers to control pollution, Phelps Dodge Co.'s smelter in Douglas, Arizona, still has none.

EDF attorney Robert Yuhnke charges that Phelps Dodge has "no intention of controlling their SO<sub>2</sub> emissions," which have been 300,000 tons a year for the last 72 years. Yuhnke predicts that Phelps Dodge will close its Douglas plant rather than meet emission standards.

That day may be rapidly approaching. In what Yuhnke describes as a 180 degree turnabout, Arizona officials have agreed to enforce stricter compliance for SO<sub>2</sub>. An aide to Gov. Bruce Babbitt says the state will require the Douglas smelter to meet either the state's compliance deadline in 1986 or a federal deadline in 1987. The aide, Chuck Andrews, also predicts that Phelps Dodge will shut down before compliance is mandatory.

Now that Arizona has agreed to reduce its own SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the Environmental Protection Agency has begun talks with Mexico about that

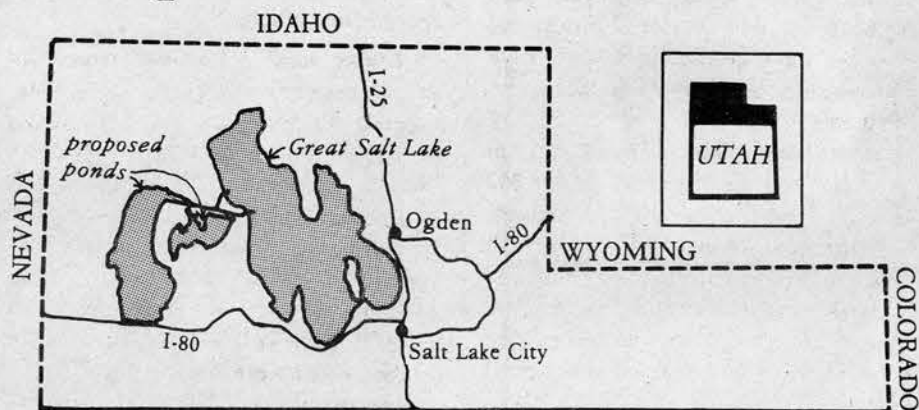
country's copper smelter just over the border in Nacozari. Slated for completion this fall, the smelter will be the second largest SO<sub>2</sub> polluter on the continent (HCN, 9/3/84). The plant was designed without scrubbers.

Mexico has agreed to install scrubbers on the Nacozari plant by 1987, but that's too late for the

Environmental Defense Fund. Once the smelter goes into operation this year, it will begin pumping its annual 500,000 ton load of SO<sub>2</sub> into the air. Yuhnke has urged Lee Thomas, EPA administrator, to press Mexico to add scrubbers to the plant before it starts up.

--Lisa McKhann

## Utah pushes to lower the lake



Utah is pushing plans to lower the water level of the Great Salt Lake, which will flood \$600 million worth of shoreline property if it rises three more feet.

The proposed West Desert Pumping Project would pump water from the lake's western shore into two evaporation ponds. With a total surface area of 463,000 acres -- about 725 square miles -- the ponds would evaporate approximately one million acre-feet of water each year. Filling the ponds would lower the lake's water level 1½ feet.

Because the site for the ponds is primarily Bureau of Land Manage-

ment and Air Force land, the agencies decided an Environmental Impact Statement was required. The project will affect wetlands, military operations and even the local climate of the West Desert, probably by making the area foggy.

Although project manager Jack Peterson says the state of Utah is pressing for an accelerated EIS, under the current schedule, a draft EIS will be available for public comment Aug. 25 with the final plan out by Jan. 17, 1986. Construction could begin as early as next spring.

--the staff

## HOTLINE

### Jail doesn't stop ski developer

The prime investor in the Ski Yellowstone resort proposed for southwest Montana faces four months in prison, two years probation and a \$10,000 fine because of his theft of \$4 million in cash and securities from his father. But the recent sentencing of Pennsylvania developer John P. Hall does not spell the end of the controversial proposal. According to the *Great Falls Tribune*, Hall's attorney says the developer still hopes to develop 1,000 acres of private land and 1,900 acres of Forest Service land west of Yellowstone Park. Conservationists charge that the resort will harm wildlife, especially the endangered grizzly, and destroy valuable habitat while introducing thousands of people to an otherwise remote area. As proposed, Ski Yellowstone will have a capacity for 6,500 skiers a day and feature a marina, golf course and recreational visitor park. Ski Yellowstone still needs Forest Service approval. The agency is studying the potential impact on grizzlies before it makes a final decision.

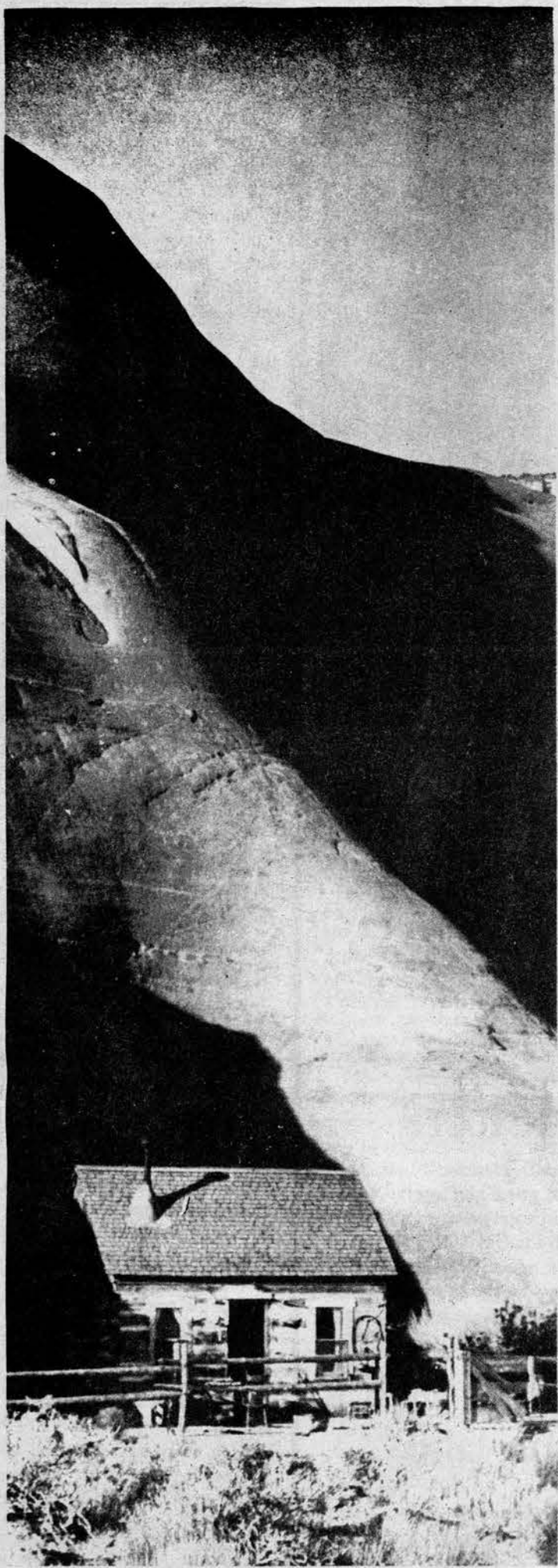
### Amoco takes over

The development of a \$180 million natural gas processing plant in southwest Wyoming near Evanston will go forward under the auspices of Amoco, rather than Chevron, as originally planned. Chevron will remain a partner in the operation. The Painter Reservoir plant is part of a complex of natural gas facilities in southwest Wyoming, the biggest of which is the Exxon Riley Ridge development (HCN, 2/18/85). However, Painter will produce 240 million cubic feet of gas per day, compared with Exxon's first stage of 700 million cubic feet. In addition, Painter's gas is 'sweet,' not having the sulfur dioxide and large amounts of carbon dioxide present at Riley Ridge. Hearings on the Painter project by the Wyoming Industrial Siting Commission are expected to be held this spring. Before control shifted from Chevron to Amoco, work was expected to start in the late spring, with the workforce peaking at about 500 persons. The permanent workforce is to be 24.

### Dye it black

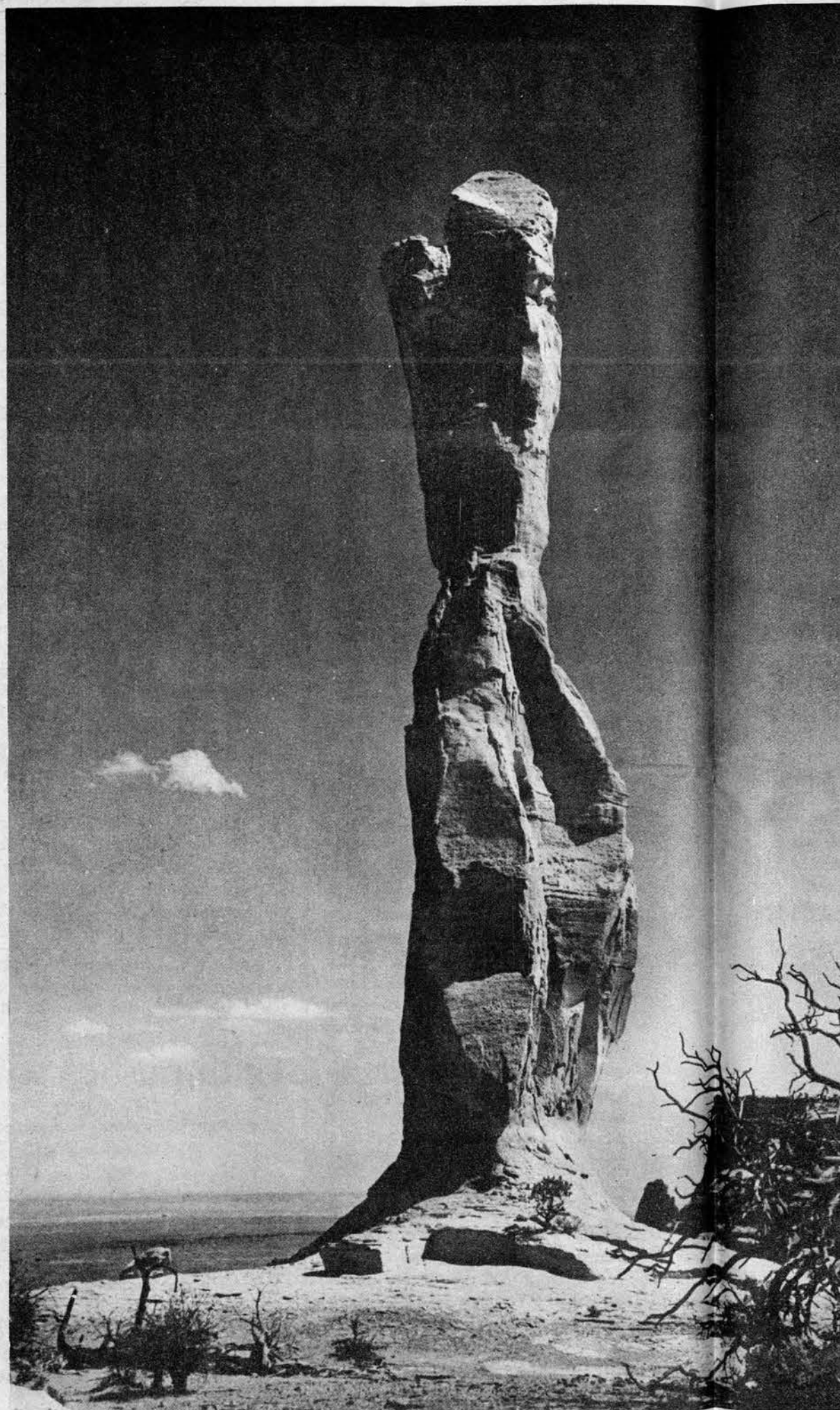
One foot of elevation could make a \$90 million difference to Utah. If the Great Salt Lake stays below 4,210 feet of elevation, the state won't have to build dikes and pumps, but if it reaches 4,211 feet, construction of dikes and pumping of water into the desert west of the lake will be necessary to protect Interstate-80 and Salt Lake International Airport. If the lake rises to between 4,210 feet and 4,211 feet, the state will have to guess whether or not control measures are needed, says Dee C. Hansen, head of the Department of Natural Resources, in the *Deseret News*. The elevation is now 4,209.15 and rising. But a large rise may not occur. The snowpack which feeds the lake is about normal -- it was 300 percent of normal in spring 1983 and 1984. Utah decided on diking and pumping as control measures after considering a variety of other proposals, including dyeing the lake black to increase evaporation.





*SODA CABIN. At the foot of Fifty-Mile Mountain, Utah.*

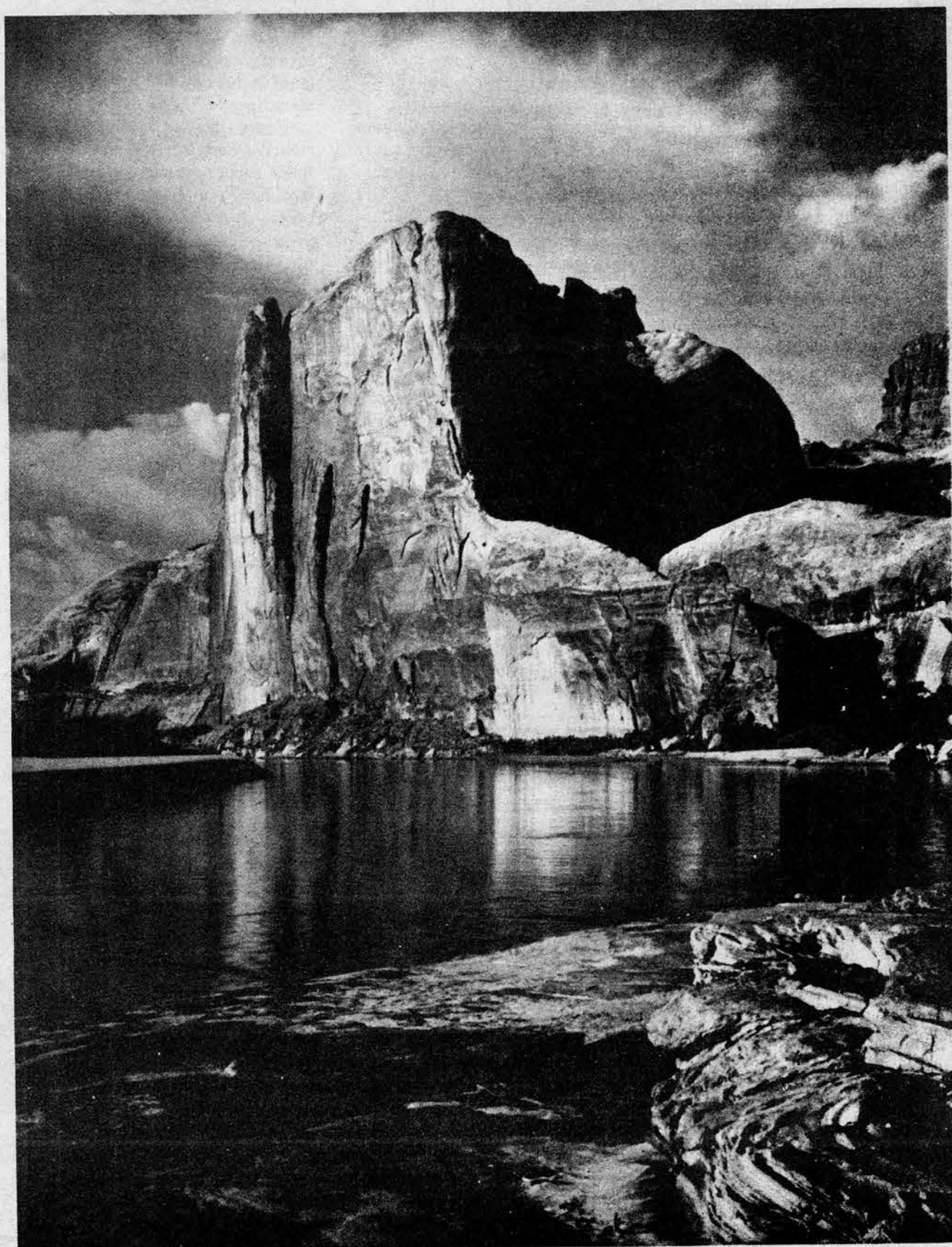
In *Standing Up Country: The Canyonlands of Utah and Arizona*, historian and explorer C. Gregory Crampton weaves human history with a world of scorching canyons and rushing rivers, soaring cliffs and endless skies. The book, illustrated with historic and more recent photos, was first published in 1964, and reprinted in 1983 by Peregrine Smith Books of Salt Lake City.



*MONOLITH. Atop the eastern cliff of White Mesa, Arizona.*



# STANDING UP COUNTRY



*GLEN CANYON, 1962. The entrance to Hidden Passage, Utah, before it was drowned by the impounded waters of Lake Powell.*



10-High Country News -- April 1, 1985

## Uranium...

(Continued from page 1)

"It's an ideal climate with four seasons and plenty to see and do." He lists Inscription Rock, Chaco Canyon, Bluewater Lake and 11,000-foot Mount Taylor, with its proposed ski resort on Forest Service land, as major attractions.

Grants is already involved with tourism; it is a stop on Interstate 40 -- a town travellers use for a quick dinner or a night's rest at one of the chain motels on the outskirts. Before the Interstate, Grants was one of the towns along the famous Route 66 that wound from Chicago to L.A. And back when passenger trains still carried most travellers, it was a stop on the Santa Fe Railroad.

Grants would like to be more than a waterhole for drivers who don't think they can safely push on to the next town. But the uranium wealth which flowed through Grants for thirty years didn't stick here, and much of the town is brown and dusty, with the dust set into periodic motion by tremendous gusts of wind. And although New Mexico is "The Land of Enchantment," Grants has little of what outsiders would recognize as charm.

Residents don't see those flaws, and they are quick to tell you why they "love Grants": it is friendly and small, but only an hour away from Albuquerque, the state's largest city. It is also well placed for outdoor recreation, right next to Cibola National Forest. What residents do not point out is that decades of uranium mining has left enormous quantities of uranium mill tailings.

At the processing mills owned by Kerr-McGee and Homestake, for example, waste piled up for more than 30 years. The Kerr-McGee pile alone contains 32 million tons covering 275 acres. From a distance, it looks like a sandy mesa; close up, it looks like what it is -- a huge uncovered, unstabilized pile of dirt.

By law, these piles must be reclaimed once a company permanently abandons a mill. Chris Shuey, research assistant for the Southwest Research and Information Center, sees economic and environmental hope in that requirement. Shuey's group is trying to convince the uranium companies to start cleaning up mill tailings piles now.

"There are a lot of wastes and hazards sitting around blowing in the wind, contaminating someone's groundwater supply and creating all kinds of environmental hazards," he says at his Albuquerque office. "We've been trying to get these companies to begin to take seriously their responsibility to clean up their mess, and in doing so put back to work the unemployed miners and millers."

Shuey says he knows the plan runs counter to the way companies usually operate. They would have to decide "to spend millions of dollars at a time when they're not getting any money from any product." Reclamation would also indicate something companies aren't eager to say: that they have no hope for the future.

Despite that, one firm recently waved an economic white flag. On February 22, United Nuclear Corporation announced it was discontinuing all uranium activities in the Grants area. The company, which once



Stella Gonzales

employed almost a quarter of New Mexico's uranium workers, cited a 1984 loss of \$122 million. United Nuclear's action hasn't set off a trend. Other firms are keeping their facilities on standby in case of a rebound.

Shuey doesn't see a rebound. "There's not a nuclear analyst in the country predicting any kind of turnaround for the domestic uranium industry between now and the early part of the next century." If it comes, he says, industry experts say "it will never approach the boom of the late seventies period. Never again."

Many laid-off Grants miners agree. The city's population plummeted from 12,000 in 1980 to about 8,500 today. "So many people have left, it's hard to say what the current population is," says Jean Fisher, head of the Chamber of Commerce. She came up with 8,778 people by counting active electric meters.

Fisher remembers when the Atomic Energy Commission first came to Grants in 1952, in the wake of the 1950 discovery of uranium by Navajo shepherd Patty Martinez. The AEC promised some "changes" for the town.

"I was so happy because I had just bought some property and value would go up. But I really didn't believe them. This was just a small town of 1,800 people that mostly depended on carrot crops for a livelihood," Fisher recalls.

In the short term, Fisher was wrong to doubt the Atomic Energy Commission. Prospectors, miners and developers moved into town, and almost overnight a "sleepy little town" dependent on ranching, lumber and agriculture turned its attention to prospecting, mining and milling. Grants made the transformation of its economic base official by discarding its "Carrot Capital of the World" slogan in favor of "The Uranium Capital of the World."

Margarito Martinez was one of the thousands of miners who descended on Grants to cash in on this latest Western payday. Born in Dawson, New Mexico, the son of a coal miner and one of 12 children, Martinez received his vocational education in the coal mines starting at age 16.

After 20 years of coal mining in Dawson and Colorado, a layoff from a coal mine sent him to Grants. A short, stocky man with huge tattooed forearms, he wound up at Kerr-McGee after being fired from the

nearby San Mateo Mine for trying to start a union. By 1973, he was president of the local Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. He led an important strike against Kerr-McGee -- a strike that kept 720 workers idle for eight months. They went back only when the company dropped plans to slash benefits.

Today, at age 62, Martinez is retired. "Forty-seven years of mining, that's enough for anybody," he jokes from his Grants home, surrounded by photos of his five children and 13 grandchildren, as well as memorabilia of World War II. His possessions reflect a man who worked steadily and hard during the lucrative days of mining. Martinez says he made up to \$35 an hour as a contract worker, earning \$34,000 during his last year at Kerr-McGee. "I'm one of the last of the Iron Men... I made more money than anyone else at the mines, even when I was 58 years old."

He has seen Grants boom and bust. "When I came to Grants in 1959, there were 72 different uranium companies. Everyone came here to get out of debt. Grants was booming. There were trailers as far as I could see. The streets were packed with people just trying to buy ordinary things like soup and bread, but the stores didn't have enough supplies."

It's a bit like that again, but for a different reason. Today, even stores still in business aren't re-stocking

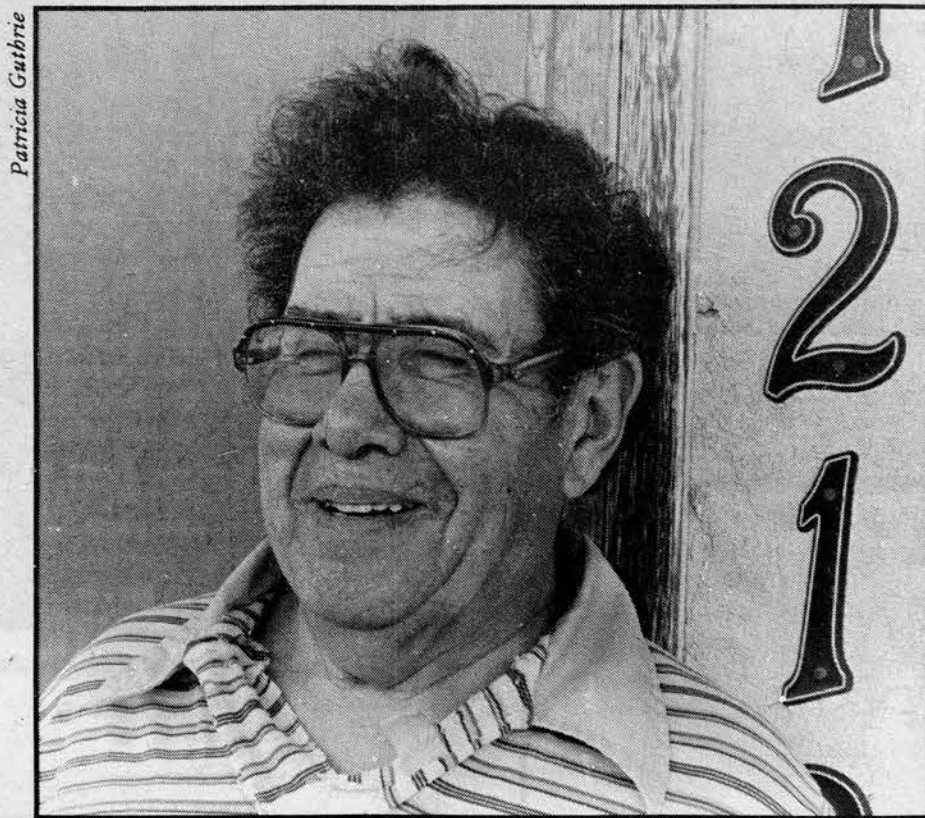
their shelves. Two Circle K corner stores closed within two weeks of each other, adding to the growing number of abandoned businesses and vacant lots.

For the moment, the declining economy is producing bargains -- not just homes, cars, boats and motorcycles put on the market by lenders or those under pressure to sell, but everyday staples: gas sells for less than a dollar; motel rooms rent for under \$10; and at the local chain-owned steak house, all-you-can-eat meals cost only \$5.

Enjoying such bargains, even for a visitor, isn't always easy. At the buffet, an older woman timidly asks the young cashier for a job application. "I haven't worked in over 20 years, but it looks like I'll have to now." The competition for work doesn't mean everyone is hustling. At the Grants Post Office, a harried clerk looks at his watch and grumbles, "There's 3,000 people looking for jobs in this town and I have to end up with one that's always late."

This isn't the first bust for Grants. City Manager King says, "For boom and bust, well, we had one in the '50s and one in the '60s. But this is the most severe. They climbed higher and they had further to fall."

The difference between Grants of 1952 and Grants of today isn't just too many homes and



Margarito Martinez



*Grants could get by in the 1950s on carrots, ranching and miscellaneous agriculture. But the carrot farmers long ago sold their water to the uranium companies... It is possible that uranium will now go the way of carrots.*

businesses. It's also a vanished economic base. The town of 1,800 people in the early 1950s could get by on carrots, ranching and miscellaneous agriculture. But the carrot farmers long ago sold their water to the uranium companies, the irrigation ditches were covered by developments and the people who knew how to farm either went into the mines or moved away. So the old economic base is gone, permanently. And it is possible that uranium will now go the way of carrots.

As in any disaster, there is a lot of finger-pointing, most directed at outsiders. Some blame the Department of Energy for over-projecting the growth of the nuclear industry; others the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for burdening nuclear plants with "unreasonable and costly" regulations; the remainder see the anti-nuclear movement's "hysteria" over Three Mile Island as the cause of Grants' crisis.

It is not just the anti-nuclear people who have turned on the industry. In a story on the front page of the March 2 *Arizona Republic*, reporter John Staggs provided an insight into the unhappiness of those who opted for nuclear energy.

Staggs got his story by quietly attending what was supposed to be a closed meeting of the Valley Leadership group in Phoenix. The meeting, from which Staggs was eventually ejected, was addressed by Jack Pfister, general manager of the Salt River Project, a major public water and electric power supplier in the Phoenix area. Ten years ago, it bought a 23 percent share of Arizona's huge Palo Verde nuclear power project. When complete, Palo Verde will be the largest nuclear complex in the nation and second largest in the world.

Pfister said, "If I had only known in 1973 what I know now, I never would have participated in Palo Verde. There's no doubt about it. But I can't go back and make that decision. Palo Verde is there; its first unit is 100 percent complete," with the next two units due to come on line by 1987. Pfister also said, "Nuclear power has fallen from grace in this country. No utility executive in his right mind would commit to a new nuclear power plant today." Pfister probably had in mind the Palo Verde cost overruns: from 1974's estimate of \$2.7 billion to \$9.3 billion today.

The lesson of the many Palo

Verdes has had its effect. According to Department of Energy spokesman Dan Butler, a new nuclear power plant has not been ordered since 1979, and 91 nuclear reactors ordered by American utilities before then have been cancelled.

The failure of U.S. demand for uranium to increase, the strong dollar and imports of uranium from abroad have hammered the domestic market. The spot market price for uranium yellowcake is at one of its all-time lows, selling for about \$15 a pound, compared with its peak price in 1978 of more than \$43 a pound. Grants' mines and mills are closed because it costs about \$30, or roughly double the present price, to produce a pound of yellowcake from local ore.

The cost of the nation's enormous nuclear miscalculation is appearing on consumers' electric bills and in the stock prices of electric utilities and uranium companies. But the most direct, least cushioned effects are felt in the Grants of America. Mag Martinez had a good 20 years or so in the industry, retiring just before it crashed. But that doesn't mean he escaped harm.

“My son got laid off more than a year ago. He's working for Allsup's (convenience store). He doesn't like it, but he's got a wife and two children. He's got applications in all over, and 10 years' mining experience. But the mining industry ain't here no more. It's not in this country... You hate to see an era come to an end.”

Restaurant owner Gonzales at her Stella's Cafe sees people preparing to abandon ship. "They aren't spending money. They're holding back. You can see people holding onto their money to just save enough to leave."

Mayor Dave Zerwas is more optimistic. "I think there will always be a Grants because of Interstate 40; having the railroad come through and being near a metropolitan area... It's just a matter of, is Grants going to be a community of 5,000 people or of 20,000 people?"

In addition to being mayor, Zerwas owns the largest real estate firm in Grants. In the mid-1950s, he competed against 17 other firms. Today, there are only six firms left to sell 200 homes, rent 25 percent of the city's apartments and fill 70 percent of

(Continued on page 12)



Entrance to Energy Fuels Nuclear, Inc.'s Hack Canyon Mine



## Uranium...

(Continued from page 11)



the vacant trailers. When his mayor's hat is on, he has to worry about a growing number of abandoned and dilapidated businesses. One motel owner has a suggestion: "bulldozing down half the town and starting over."

The core of the community is those whose homes tie them to Grants. Mag Martinez says, "My wife and I don't plan to go anywhere. Nobody can sell their houses here. Who's going to buy them? The only thing that's going to make Grants survive is the people who got laid off themselves. They're the ones who are going to stay here and scratch. They'll just scratch harder to save their homes."

While Grants tries to hang on, efforts are underway to rescue the domestic industry. Both uranium companies and politicians are calling for restrictions on cheap ore from abroad. In December, Western Nuclear, Uranium Resources and Energy Fuels Nuclear filed suit against the Department of Energy in U.S. District Court in Denver. They claimed the DOE has killed the

*'My wife and I don't plan  
to go anywhere. Nobody can  
sell their houses here.*

*Who's going to buy them?'*

industry by not curtailing foreign imports. In 1981, imports claimed 12 percent of the market. Today they are 45 percent, and Senator Jeff Bingaman, D-NM, predicts they will rise to 70 percent by 1990 if the federal government doesn't act.

**B**ingaman recently met with Energy Secretary John Herrington to dispute a 1984 DOE report to Congress that called the uranium industry "viable." According to Bingaman, "The reports don't bear much resemblance to reality. Clearly, the industry in this country and

particularly in my home state of New Mexico has been devastated by foreign competition. There's no question in my mind that the imports coming in from Canada are heavily subsidized." Bingaman and New Mexico Gov. Toney Anaya have called for steps to control imports.

Miner Martinez thinks the politicians are acting too late. He says his union warned "Kerr-McGee 15 years ago that the foreign market was going to kill us, that taxes were going to kill us, as well as too many regulations. But they didn't listen."

Martinez is pessimistic about uranium coming back, and even more

pessimistic about Grants attracting tourists and retirees. "Who is going to visit places that aren't attractive? I'd go visit Hawaii, Florida, Mexico -- someplace beautiful. Not a place that's almost a mile high and so damn cold you can't stand it. Who wants to come to Grants? Nobody."

Patricia Guthrie is a free-lance writer with DesertWest News Service in Flagstaff, Arizona. This article was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

# Jeffrey City loses 90 percent of its population -- and survives, barely

FREMONT COUNTY, Wy. -- With only 500 residents, Jeffrey City is a ghost of its former bustling self at the height of the uranium boom in 1978, when about 4500 people lived there. Still, a dozen businesses remain open, including two bars, a liquor store, a general store, and two gas stations. By thus far surviving its 90 percent drop in population, Jeffrey City has done better than two trailer camps whose sites are located 30 miles north in the Gas Hills. Those camps once had their own school and post office.

They are now virtually empty, the homes have been hauled away and the utilities shut off.

The effects ripple outward from these settlements. Riverton, a major town in the region with 9500 residents, once served shoppers from the uranium communities. According to city administrator Bill Peterson, sales dropped by 10 percent from fiscal year 1983 to 1984.

So far this year, no one has come to city hall for a building permit or a water hookup, and the atmosphere is "depressing." The city has laid off or not filled one third of its staff positions, according to Peterson. Like Jeffrey City and nearby Lander, Riverton depends upon continued oil field production to ease the downturn.

Behind the abandoned trailer towns, near-empty Jeffrey City and hard-hit Riverton, are uranium industry statistics.

In 1978, according to the Department of Economic Planning and Development, 4,000 people were directly employed in uranium. The state was second only to New Mexico, producing 42 percent of the nation's uranium out of 24 mines, nine mills, and three in-situ projects. It also looked to a bright future, based on the assumption that the nation would replace oil and natural gas with nuclear power. The state, for example, predicted that uranium employment would double, to 8,000, by 1990.

Instead, by the end of 1984, uranium ore production had dropped by 92 percent, to only 472,000 tons. The 4,000 jobs had dwindled to 760. And in the past few months that number dropped further, as Umetco closed its mill in the Gas Hills. Only four uranium operations remain active, with the largest employer, Pathfinder Mines Corp., heavily subsidized by its French parent, COGEMA.

Still, many residents of Riverton and Jeffrey City remain optimistic. They talk of "when uranium comes back" rather than "if." The Jeffrey City community is determined to keep its K through 12 school open for the 135 students.

They support the school not just to prevent their children from being bused 60 miles one way to Lander, or because schools are social centers, but

A black and white photograph capturing a large gathering of people at an industrial opening. In the foreground, two men wearing cowboy hats and light-colored shirts stand on the left, looking towards the crowd. To their right is a small, single-wheeled trailer with a large, boxy seat. The middle ground is filled with a diverse crowd of men, women, and children standing on a grassy area. In the background, a large, rectangular sign stands prominently. The sign has the text "WESTERN NUCLEAR" at the top, "WYOMING'S FIRST URANIUM MILL" in the center, and "JEFFREY CITY, WYO." at the bottom. Behind the sign and crowd, several cars and trucks are parked, and a tall utility pole is visible on the left. The overall scene suggests a significant public event or community gathering.

*A giant yard sale in Jeffrey City, following 1980 mine shutdowns*

also because, with 35 workers, it is the town's second largest employer. It could become the largest if Western Nuclear, Inc. lays off some of the 43 employees it had in December 1984.

To travellers condemned to the long trip from Riverton or Lander to Rawlins, Jeffrey City is inexplicable -- isolated and hot in the summer desert, and isolated and cold in the blizzardy winter.

Given that, and the grim future for the uranium industry, why does Jeffrey City hang on? Because,

its fans say, you can't judge a town from a car travelling 70 miles an hour. The area and life, they say, provides recreation, solitude and time enough for neighborliness missing elsewhere in America.

So the question for Jeffrey City residents isn't whether, but how, to stay. Mel Steers, chairman of the school board, says, "People are just doing what they can to exist until things get better."

--Marianne Ambler



BOOK NOTES

A hardrock miner looks at Leadville

Leadville: A Miner's Epic

Stephen M. Voynick. Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, June 1984. 165 pages. \$7.95, paper.

Review by Ed Marston

The author, who is a miner and a resident of Leadville, Colorado, has written an interesting, although misnamed book. Despite a few sentences on unions and on the romance of a hardrock town, Stephen Voynick's passion isn't for miners as people. It is for the work they do -- the ways in which they get ore out of the mountain, the scale of their machinery, and the deaths, wounds and diseases visited on them by their work.

He starts with the romance of mining -- the prospector/miner with burro and pickax. That era ended quickly, its place taken by a job that killed directly -- through explosions and falls -- and indirectly, through inhalation of dust or exhaustion caused by hard work at over 10,000 feet of altitude. Leadville lost "only" 400 miners to death and some 1,000 to maiming injuries because it had no single large accident. The machinery, rock falls and explosions picked off the miners one or two at a time. But in the West as a whole, Voynick says, 19th century mining killed 7,500 miners and maimed another 20,000.

Having described the horrors of Leadville's glory days, he traces the evolution of Leadville's mining practices to today's safer and much more productive industry. But he makes it clear that mining is still tough and dangerous, done wearing gear

and clothing most of us couldn't walk around in, let alone work in.

The work is the point of the book. He thinks historians have slighted hardrock miners; that in pursuit of color and romance they made the "silver bars seem to appear as if by magic." So they missed the everyday miners, who Voynick writes were exceptional men "with qualities as tough and enduring as the rock they conquered."

Voynick also comes close to missing them. There are no miners in his book -- only a record of what miners did, what they did it with, and newspaper accounts of the deaths and injuries they met daily in the Leadville mines.

Although he does not bring the miners to life, his technological approach succeeds. It makes you wonder how the miners did their work and stood their lives. How did anyone have the touch needed to use a woodstove to heat nitroglycerine out of its frozen, crystalline phase without exploding it? How could they drill into rock knowing they might be nearing an unexploded charge still buried in a drill hole? Given the hard work and exhaustion at 10,000 feet of altitude, why didn't more people fall into shafts or beneath wagon wheels?

When Voynick, after describing the impersonal mechanical terror of the mines, tells you Leadville had no fear of traveling gunfighters such as Doc Holliday, you believe him. Facing a pistol would be nothing after handling nitroglycerine or crawling back toward the face to find out why your charge hadn't gone off... yet.

The bloody carnage Voynick describes peaked before the turn of the century. Various technological advances -- from the replacement of

the miner's candle by the carbide lamp to the replacement of the mule and steam engine by electricity -- made the mines safer and more productive. The productivity was necessary because the rich ores were gone. Now mines had to survive by digging out large amounts of ore to recover relatively small amounts of gold, silver, zinc, copper, and lead. And by the Great Depression, despite increased productivity, the gold and silver operators had largely left Leadville. They left it littered with headframes and slagheads as well as with tall brick buildings and victorian homes.

The precious metal mines were barely dead when a new operation arose 1,300 feet above the town on Fremont Pass. There, the Climax Molybdenum Company developed a mine to extract molybdenum -- a worthless metal until the Germans in World War I showed how tough molybdenum-steel is. After the war ended, industry discovered that not just tanks but automobiles, ball bearings and other everyday objects do better with molybdenum-steel alloys.

So Leadville, its precious metals exhausted, came to be dominated by the Climax mine -- its 3,000 miners, its collapsing Bartlett Mountain's Glory Hole caused by the underground workings, its huge pits filled with the collapsed mountain's milled innards.

The boom for AMAX and Leadville which started in the Depression continued until 1982, when the steel industry took a dive and took the Climax mine and 3,000 miners with it. In his book, Voynick assumes that Climax is permanently dead. But he also assumes Leadville will survive. He writes that it will follow other



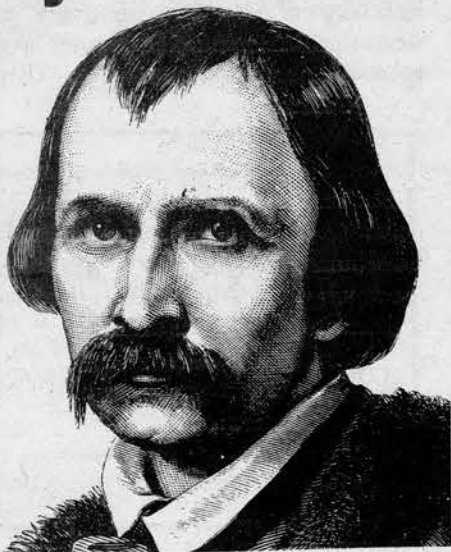
mining towns by turning to tourism for its next Mother Lode.

Voynick hopes Leadville will attract tourists not by creating a cute little false-front movie set mining town, but instead by preserving the reality of mining -- the "twenty square miles of headframes, ore chutes, access roads, tramways and mine dumps that are one of the West's greatest frontier graveyards... a superb, however unpolished arena of history."

Voynick may be too optimistic. There may be no tourist market for a 'real' mining town. Most travellers appear to want no more than a quaint backdrop against which to buy wind chimes and t-shirts and croissants. On the other hand, Voynick may be too pessimistic in counting Leadville out as a mining town. After his book had gone to press, Climax Molybdenum called back 1,000 miners. And even 1,000 paychecks coming off the hill may be enough to kill Leadville's interest in gourmet hamburger stands and shops selling mugs that say, "Wow, I'm great."

Earn a free subscription to  
High Country News

by turning in  
your friends,  
lovers,  
enemies...



Simply turn in to us the names and addresses of people who have been reading your copy of HCN and should be reading their own. You might also send us the names of other people, too shy perhaps, to borrow your copy, and unaware of how easy it is to get their own.

We will mail them all samples of the paper and solicit their subscriptions. For each person who subscribes off your list, we will credit

you with \$4.50 toward your renewal. What that means in practice is that we will extend your subscription three months each time you gain us a subscriber. We'll keep the records, but you're welcome, of course, to check up on us.

If, by chance, you're reading a borrowed copy, why not use the form to your right to turn yourself in.

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Name _____             | Name _____             |
| Address _____          | Address _____          |
| City, State, Zip _____ | City, State, Zip _____ |
| Name _____             | Name _____             |
| Address _____          | Address _____          |
| City, State, Zip _____ | City, State, Zip _____ |
| Name _____             | Name _____             |
| Address _____          | Address _____          |
| City, State, Zip _____ | City, State, Zip _____ |
| Name _____             | Name _____             |
| Address _____          | Address _____          |
| City, State, Zip _____ | City, State, Zip _____ |

☐ \$18 for one-year  
(individual subscription)

☐ \$25 for one-year  
(business subscription)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Box 1090, Paonia CO 81428



14-High Country News -- April 1, 1985

## BOOK NOTES

*The Indian nations seek sovereignty*

*The Nations Within*  
*The Past and Future of American*  
*Indian Sovereignty*

Vine Deloria, Jr., & Clifford Lytle.  
 New York, New York: Pantheon  
 Books, 1984. 291 pages. \$11.95,  
 paper.

Review by Bob Gottlieb and  
 Peter Wiley

Whites have long wrestled with the problem of fitting the native peoples of the continent into their notions of how Indians should live.

Some fuzzy-thinking Indian lovers would like to see the native peoples return to their traditional existence in pueblo towns or nomadic bands. Liberal social engineers, such as the famous New Deal Indian Commissioner John Collier, have imposed Anglo-Saxon governmental forms on the tribes as a means to their revival. Social Darwinists, such as President Reagan and former Secretary of the Interior James Watt, have urged Indians to abandon their "socialistic" reservations and embrace private enterprise.

The vagaries of white thinking about the Indian world have produced erratic swings in policy. The Reagan approach, for example, includes across-the-board cutbacks in social welfare programs. And a recent Presidential Commission on Indian Reservation Economics has recommended abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, promotion of outside investment on the reservation and replacement of tribal enterprises with private businesses.

For many Indians, these recommendations evoke the dark days of the 1950s that fell between the aggressive paternalism of the New Deal and the War on Poverty and led to an effort to terminate numerous Indian tribes.

Meanwhile in the real world of Indian affairs, Indians themselves, against debilitating odds, have made slow but steady gains toward a unique definition of their actual legal-governmental status within the U.S. and toward introducing reforms that are leading to an Indian revival and true self-determination.

This is the theme of an important new study of "the Indian problem" by Vine Deloria, Jr., a Standing Rock

Sioux and one of the foremost commentators on Indian affairs, and Clifford Lytle, a colleague at the University of Arizona. In *The Nations Within*, DeLoria and Lytle hammer away at two themes that are fundamental to any understanding of the realities of the Indian world.

First, that the Indian tribes are in fact "domestic dependent nations." This legal concept was originally established by Chief Justice John Marshall in a famous 1831 case involving the Cherokees. It means that Indians, rather than another minority, enjoy a unique sovereignty within the larger country, a sovereignty symbolized by the numerous treaties signed by the federal government and the Indian nations before 1871.

Their second theme is equally significant, but harder to grasp. Self-government, which was granted to (or imposed on) the Indians by the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, and extended through efforts of Indian Commissioner Collier to define and implement the act, is "not an Indian idea" and "cannot be regarded as the final solution to Indian problems."

Instead, argue DeLoria and Lytle, the Indian view of themselves is based on the primarily religious concept of being a people. And this concept of being a people and of being separate nations is leading to an Indian notion of self-determination.

This self-determination is being introduced into tribal life not by white Indian reformers and bureaucrats, but by the Indians themselves. Self-determination takes the white notion of self-government, which in the reality of present tribal governments still means a degree of federal governmental control over Indian affairs, and transforms it into a means toward true nationhood.

Modern tribal sovereignty began with a daring maneuver that Collier used to get around changes in the Indian Reorganization Act that were imposed by a recalcitrant Congress. He had an opinion written expounding on the IRA. It acknowledged that Indian tribes had certain inherent powers that predated the U.S. Constitution and were not delegated by the federal government. It took Indians another generation, according to DeLoria and Lytle, to see the paths Collier had opened for them and to go

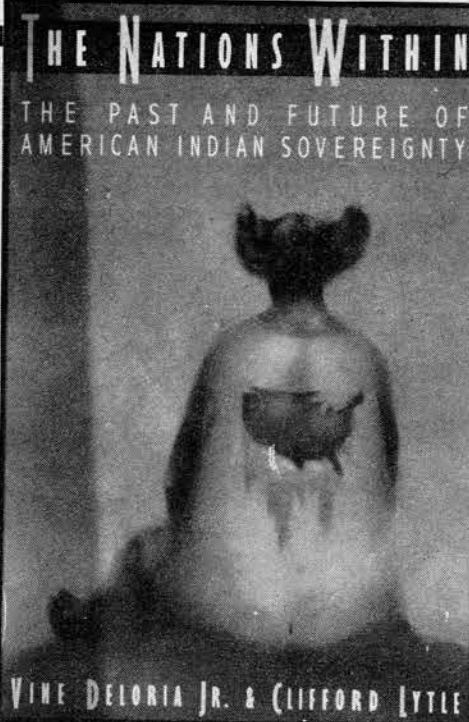
beyond self-government to seek "freedom of nationality."

A new generation of Indian activists began to redefine Indian nationhood starting with the fish-ins in the Pacific Northwest in the early 1960s. This era of militancy ended with the occupation of Wounded Knee on the Sioux Reservation in South Dakota in 1972. But it brought change on two levels. On the level of tribal government, the Kennedy-Johnson poverty programs strengthened tribal governments to a degree. The tribes were called on to administer these programs, but always under the ultimate control of Washington.

More important, young militants carried out a series of actions, such as Wounded Knee and the occupation of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, in the name of traditionalism and to secure the rights guaranteed to Indians by numerous treaties. These actions culminated in the 1972 march on Washington and the sack of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. During the march, a coalition of Indian groups drew up the Twenty Points which emphasized "the restoration of a functioning treaty relationship with the United States." Indians were again insisting on their status as nations within.

The decade since the high tide of militancy has been a period of retrenchment and coping with the steady cutback in federal support. DeLoria and Lytle note, however, a curious convergence of the Reagan Indian policies and the Twenty Points: if the Twenty Points were implemented it would eliminate the need for a large Indian bureaucracy. The problem is that the Reagan administration, like virtually all other administrations, has little knowledge of the true status of Indians and little interest in promoting self-determination.

In this spirit, DeLoria and Lytle make a number of recommendations. They call for an increase in the size of tribal councils so as to provide "a more intimate ratio" between groups of Indians and their representatives. They call for a court of elders to supplement tribal courts in the handling of domestic disputes to deinstitutionalize law and order and restore personal responsibility. They



also ask for a greater effort to teach Indian languages.

And most difficult, but most crucial, they call for the development of a tribal economic base that is not supported by the "artificial" welfare-cash economy, but by activities such as fishing, ranching and agriculture that are "a natural extension" of things Indians are already doing.

So once again it is necessary to look beyond the white view of Indians, this time as victims of cutbacks, to see the actual changes taking place within the Indian world.

**SUBSCRIBE**  
**ONE YEAR/24 ISSUES**  
**\$18/INDIVIDUAL**  
**\$25/INSTITUTIONAL**  
 SEND YOUR ADDRESS AND CHECK TO  
**HIGH COUNTRY NEWS**  
**BOX 1090**  
**PAONIA**  
**COLORADO**  
**81428**

### American Rivers Conservation Council



dedicated to the  
 preservation of America's  
 free-flowing rivers.

I want to do my part to save  
 our rivers. Here's my contribution of:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 (Regular Member)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 or more  
 (Contributing Member)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 The rivers of America thank you!

ARCC  
 322 4th Street, N.E.  
 Washington, DC 20002  
 (202) 547-6900

HC



Quality Outdoor Gear and Clothing Since 1938.

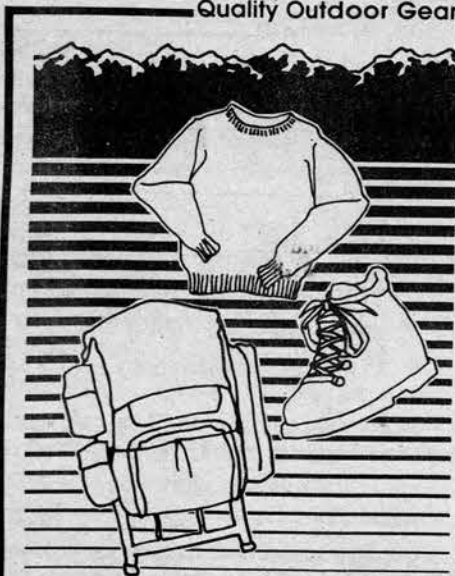
Send for Your  
**FREE!**  
**REI Spring**  
**Catalog**

REI offers one of the largest selections of rugged outdoor equipment and clothing for your outdoor adventures. From Gore-Tex® rainwear to climbing gear; hiking boots to weekend wear, REI has a unique assortment of goods, competitively priced. We guarantee satisfaction or your money back.

☐ Please send me a FREE color catalog.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: REI, Dept. 147, P.O. Box C-88127,  
 Seattle, WA 98188



SEMINARS IN THE NATURAL HISTORY  
 OF THE COLORADO ROCKIES

For information write to:  
 Cloud Ridge Naturalists  
 Overland Star Route, Ward, CO 80481

### Conserve Water



With each Flush.

- You can save 30,000 gallons of water with Seiche One, the Water-Saving Toilet.
- On demand flush: use only the water you need.
- Comes ready to install easily into standard plumbing systems.

**Teton Tinkers  
 and Traders**  
 Victor, Idaho 83455  
 208/787-2495



# OPINION

## Indians and environmentalists drift apart

by Vauter Parker

Until recently, conservationists have almost automatically supported, or at least refrained from criticizing, proposals by American Indians for the development of their lands and natural resources.

The reasons are not hard to understand. Environmental and Indian issues both came to public attention during the 1960s and 1970s, and the protagonists shared a desire to change existing institutions and practices. Moreover, Aldo Leopold's definition of conservation -- "a state of harmony between man and land" -- seemed to describe the core of traditional Indian ways and religious beliefs. It seemed logical that those few tribes that had any land left would prove to be better stewards of it than Americans generally have been, and certainly better than the federal government. Given these assumptions and the national history of injustice to native Americans, most conservationists comfortably viewed Indian control as being environmentally benign.

One cannot say that this simplistic view died on any specific date, or even that it is dead. It did take a hard blow, however, on Aug. 24, 1984. On that day the *Albuquerque Journal* reported that the Navajo Tribe had agreed to join in partnership with Public Service Company of New Mexico, General Electric and Bechtel Power Corporation to build yet another mammoth coal-fired power plant in the Four Corners region, this time in the San Juan River basin of northwest New Mexico.

Described by tribal chairman Peterson Zah in a publicity release as "the first time that an Indian tribe has participated as a partner in the development of its significant natural resources," the proposed New Mexico Generating Station presents both native Americans and conservationists with a host of potential conflicts and legal snarls.

Consisting of four 500-megawatt power plants, the New Mexico Generating Station would require

the development of more coal strip mines in the region. Coal companies are already trying to acquire rights to mine federal lands to supply the plant. These would include rights to mine within the recently established De-na-zin Wilderness and the proposed Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness (the New Mexico Wilderness Act of 1984, which designated the De-na-zin area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, expressly allows the development of any existing claim). The beauty of these and other areas, their rich fossil beds and scant topsoil would be destroyed forever.

New railroads would also have to be constructed to bring coal from the mines to the power plant. Linked to energy markets in California and Texas by high-voltage transmission lines, the plant would itself be a major source of sulfur dioxide, ash and other pollutants. Its site would be 12 miles upwind of Chaco Culture National Historic Park (formerly Chaco Canyon National Monument), set aside by Congress in 1907 to protect a priceless heritage of archaeological ruins. The cooling towers of the generating station would consume over 11 billion gallons of water a year, taken from the already overtaxed San Juan and Colorado rivers, or pumped from irreplaceable aquifers. The strip mines would require additional water.

American Indian history and rights are entwined with all of the environmental issues the New Mexico Generating Station raises. Because of a dispute between the Navajo and Hopi tribal councils and the return of much of the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Area to exclusive Hopi control, Congress has granted the Navajo the right to select 250,000 acres of federal lands currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management for inclusion in the Navajo Reservation.

Among the lands which the Navajo have selected are 35,000 acres containing nearly all 26 tracts of federal land that are subject to a type of mining claim known as a preference right lease application. This means that, in spite of intervening statutory reforms, these tracts may be available for mining at below their fair market value. Thus, through either outright ownership of coal deposits or through control of surface access to them, the Navajo are in a position to make substantial profits by supplying fuel for the New Mexico Generating Station, as well as by virtue of part ownership of the plant itself.

The entanglement of native rights and environmental issues does not end here. In addition to their other financial attractions, strip mines on American Indian reservations are not directly subject to the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. Therefore they may not be subject to environmental safeguards imposed elsewhere by federal law, including



requirements that the lands be both restorable and restored upon completion of mining.

Water brings its own set of problems. If the water is taken from the San Juan River, whose water is it? Utah International, Inc., a subsidiary of General Electric with mining investments of its own, claims San Juan water rights based on a proposal for a coal gasification plant which it in fact abandoned in the late 1970s. Potentially opposed to Utah International's claims are the Navajo's own claims to San Juan waters, and both Utah International's claims and the Navajo claims are potentially in conflict with those of the Jicarilla Apache.

The point of this sketch of the New Mexico Generating Station is not merely to condemn it on environmental grounds. The point is to emphasize that it is unreasonable to expect an identity of views between native groups and conservationists.

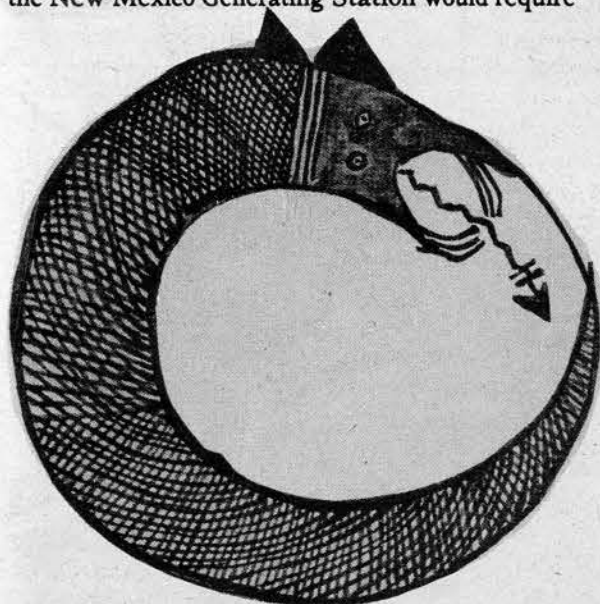
Indeed, in such a situation one cannot reasonably expect an identity of views even among native groups. It is unfortunate that, just as native people are becoming more aware of the communality of their interests, ever greater economic forces, especially those related to energy development, threaten to divide them further. One result is the destruction of the presumed identity of interests between conservationists and native Americans.

Conservationists may themselves have painted too ideal a picture of Indian attitudes toward land, and it is perhaps unfair to expect native religious values to fare any better than those professed by other Americans. Discarding unrealistic expectations and stereotypes, even well-intended ones, can ultimately be beneficial. The alliance of the largest Indian tribe with Bechtel, GE and a major utility to build another power plant in the Southwest illustrates almost too well the inadequacy of some old assumptions.

Much as it is to be hoped, it is not clear that either conservationists or native groups are devoting sufficient attention to replacing outmoded assumptions with something better -- or, for that matter, with something even as good.

□

Vauter Parker, generally known as Buck, is coordinating attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which is based in San Francisco.



### ACCESS

#### LAND

**PARADISE IN COLORADO!!** 50 acres with fantastic panoramic view; close to ski area, Forest Service lands, "gold medal" trout stream, and lakes; gentle south-sloping exposure; county road, power, and water along west boundary; stream on east side; 12 irrigated acres; excellent mesa soil that produces vegetables, grain, and alfalfa; rectangular tract is quiet, has great building sites, and numerous trees; in area of moderate climate plus good hunting and fishing; and adjacent to major fruit growing region. Request details (7081 S. Franklin St., Littleton, Co. 80122), go frolic over the land, breathe the clean air, verify these amenities, determine if this land is for you; if so, make an offer I can't refuse. Will consider terms and serious offers in the \$1100 per acre price range which is based on a local realtor's opinion of value. No agents, please.

**PIONEER TREE FARM**, Northwest Montana, 20 acres, garden, orchard, springs, creek, buildings, much more, \$45,000. Write: Robert Dello-Russo, Route 2, Box 16, Heron, MT 59844. (7x)

### NEAT STUFF

**FLY FOR THE FUTURE.** Project Lighthawk, The Wings of Conservation, has an opening for a professional pilot with strong fund-raising or sales experience. Minimum 1500 hrs. P.I.C. w/ 750 hrs. in Rocky Mt. West or Alaska, Comm., Multi & Instrument. History of involvement in conservation efforts very helpful. Good salary. To apply, please send resume and references to: Project Lighthawk, P.O. Box 8163, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-8163. (505/982-9656) (2x)

**SINGLE? ENVIRONMENTALIST, PEACE-ORIENTED?** Concerned Singles Newsletter links unattached like-minded persons, all ages, all areas of the U.S. Free information: P.O. Box 7737B, Berkeley, CA 94707. (2x)

**FOLDING KAYAKS** by Klepper and Nautiraid and large selection of rigid sea kayaks. Prompt service, economical shipment anywhere. Catalog. Baidarka Boats, Box 2158, HCN, Sitka, Alaska 99835, (907/747-8996). (2x)

**FOR SALE:** 5,000 sq.ft. store building in growing community with low taxes, good schools and nice people. \$57,000, terms. Box 66, Hotchkiss, CO (303/872-3633).

### WORK

**EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR OF DENVER AUDUBON SOCIETY:** Responsibilities: coordinates all functions of the organization; provides guidance and administrative support for Board and volunteer committees; supervises 2 staff members; oversees daily administrative and financial operations; oversees Urban Education Program; fundraises; acts as public spokesperson for organizations. Qualifications: B.A. degree; minimum 4 years practical experience preferably in volunteer coordination, office and financial administration, fundraising, and interacting with public; proven organizational and communication skills. Familiarity with environmental issues and interest in education. Salary range: \$23,000 - \$25,000 plus health benefits. Send resumes to: Denver Audubon Society, 1720 Race Street, Denver, CO 80206. Closing date, April 15th. Call 303/399-3219 for further information.

**CLASSIFIED ADS** cost 20¢ per word, prepaid, \$5 minimum. Rates vary for display ads; write HCN, Box 1090, Paonia, Colorado 81428 or call 303/527-4898 for further information.

**JOB OPENING:** Associate Director of Public Involvement for the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, commencing 6/1/85 (flexible). Fulltime, permanent. Hours salaried & flexible, often 40 plus hrs./wk. Frequent travel. Location: Juneau. Responsibilities include working with member groups, conservation issue work, grassroots organizing, public speaking, media work, some fundraising. Qualifications: Experience with conservation issues & grassroots organizing, preferably in rural areas. Forest Service planning & administrative appeals experience desirable. Must be self-starter who can work without supervision. Send resume, references, writing sample to: Hiring Committee - 1985, SEACC, Box 1692, Juneau, Alaska 99802. Deadline for Applications: May 1, 1985.

### CONSERVATION

**LEARN SOLAR RETROFIT:** Colorado Mountain College's next "hands-on" Solar Training Program begins late August. Fully accredited. CMC Admission, Box 10001 SP, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602. Call 1/800/621-8559, or in Colorado, 1/800/621-6902. (5x)



16-High Country News -- April 1, 1985

# BULLETIN BOARD

## LAS CRUCES BLM WANTS COMMENTS

Alternatives for managing 1.8 million acres of the White Sands Resource Area in south-central New Mexico are detailed in a Bureau of Land Management draft resource management/environmental impact statement. The public is invited to an informal discussion in Alamogordo of the draft on April 16 at 10 a.m. followed by a hearing, with opportunity for written and oral comment, on the same day at 1:30 p.m. at the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped, 1900 N. White Sands Blvd. On April 17 the same schedule will be followed for meetings at the Convention Center in Truth or Consequences. Copies of the draft released last month are available from the Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess St., Las Cruces, NM 88005. Written comments are due May 29.

## HANDICAPPED FISHING ACCESS

If the Colorado Chapter of Trout Unlimited has its way, handicapped fishermen in the Denver area will soon find themselves with expanded opportunities to do a little bank fishing. According to Ann Fothergill, members of Trout Unlimited and a team of handicapped citizens have been working since last summer on an innovative grid design that will allow handicapped fishermen safe access to previously inaccessible shorelines and river banks. If successful, the grid system could become a prototype for handicapped fishing-access sites throughout the country. Trout Unlimited is looking for additional private donations to pay for construction of the fishing grids. Those wishing to contribute or interested in more information can contact Fothergill at 303/752-2146.

## THE URBAN WEST

Carl Abbott, Professor of Urban Studies at Portland State University, will give a talk entitled "Western Cities: The Frontier is Still the Future" at Mesa College in Grand Junction, Colorado. He will also teach a five-week course on the urban West from April 8 - May 10. Abbott's lecture, which is free to the public, is set for April 17 at 7:30 p.m. in the Liff Auditorium. For more info, call 303/248-1696.

## JOB OPENING AT RAIN

RAIN Magazine, Oregon's bi-monthly publication on self-reliant living, has a position open for managing editor. The necessary skills for the position include the ability to manage the magazine from concept through production, promote and market RAIN, and work with community organizations. To apply for the job, which pays \$1,000 per month plus benefits, send a resume, cover letter and writing sample to: Stephen Schneider, Center for Urban Education, 0245 SW Bancroft, Portland, OR 97201. The deadline for applications is April 15.



## WILDLIFE ART SHOW

The High Plains Audubon Society will host its third annual North American Wildlife Art Show July 15-29 at the Cheyenne Civic Center in Wyoming. A separate Retail Wildlife Art Sale will also be held July 27 and 28 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. with the artists in attendance. Admission to both is free. Artists should submit an application, brief resume and up to three slides of their work by May 15. Both cash and ribbons will be awarded for original works of wildlife art in two- and three-dimensional categories. Applications for the show or sale may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Cheyenne High Plains Audubon Society, Wildlife Art Show, P.O. Box 10281, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

## WYOMING WATER MEETING

A two-day symposium, Wyoming Water '85, will be held at the University of Wyoming in Laramie sometime this April. Seven sessions will address issues such as water quality, economics, law and development, as well as public information programs. For more information and final dates contact: Wyoming Water '85, Wyoming Water Research Center, P.O. Box 3067, University Station, Laramie, WY 82071.

## CARIBOU TRANSPLANT PLAN

In an attempt to re-establish woodland caribou in the U.S. where they are now an endangered species, several government agencies have cooperated in planning to transplant caribou from British Columbia, Canada, to northern Idaho and Washington. The Selkirk Mountains Caribou Herd Augmentation plan proposes to capture 12 animals annually for three years and release them in the Selkirk Mountains near Ball Creek. There are about 30 caribou in the existing herd at Selkirk, which has been dwindling since the 1950s. Copies of the plan are available at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1201 Ironwood Dr., Coeur D'Alene, ID 83814. Public comments are due by April 19.

## BACKCOUNTRY WORKERS MEETING

Persons interested in improved management of backcountry areas are invited to attend the second annual spring meeting of the Backcountry Workers Association April 13-14 near Missoula, Montana. The Association was formed to encourage increased commitment from agencies and the public for management of backcountry areas and other non-commodity resources such as wildlife and cultural resources. Among the topics covered at the meeting will be Forest Service hiring, insurance options for seasonals, job opportunities for the 1985 season, as well as an information exchange on management techniques. The meeting is open to non-members and will be held at the University of Montana's Lubrecht Experimental Forest Conference Center beginning at 10 a.m. on April 13. Dinners, breakfasts and lodging will be provided for both days for \$5 a person. Participants should bring a sleeping bag. For more information and directions, contact Andrea Peterson, BWA, Box 5856, Missoula, MT (406/728-5916) or Bruce Farling at 303/527-4898.

## DOE OFFERS MASTER'S STIPENDS

The Department of Energy in conjunction with the Argonne National Laboratory is offering up to ten awards of \$12,000 each for masters thesis research on nuclear waste management. Selections are based on academic record, availability of research facilities, faculty guidance and applicability of the proposed research to DOE's objectives and programs. Research will be conducted at the student's academic institution; awards will be granted in June for the 1985-86 academic year. For more information contact DOE, Washington D.C. 20585.

## WILDLIFE TAX CHECKOFF

Montanans have an opportunity to contribute money to their state's Nongame Wildlife Program by simply checking a box on their Montana Income Tax Return. The program is aimed toward nongame species such as the pika, pelican and painted turtle. To contribute, look for line 61, page 2 on your Montana Income Tax Return and check the amount of your donation. For more information contact: Nongame Wildlife Program, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, 1420 E. 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59620.

## ACID RAIN RESEARCH

Six two-week wilderness research trips to collect acid rain data in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains are being conducted by Audubon Camp in the West this summer. The cost is \$375. For more information write Research Backpack Programs, 4150 Darley, Suite 5, Boulder, CO 80303.

## AUDUBON JOBS

Two field teaching positions in botany and ornithology are available this summer at the Audubon Ecology Camp in Wyoming. The camp offers a natural history program for adults from June 19-Aug. 2. Salary is \$900 including room and board. For more information write the Audubon Camp, Box 251, Dubois, WY 82513.



## WILD WESTERN WOMEN

Bronc bustin', trick shootin' women of the Wild West Shows are featured in an exhibit at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming until May 28. On display are show costumes and saddles from the early 1900s, and even the wedding suit worn by Goldie Griffith Cameron when she was married in the saddle at Madison Square Garden.

## CLEAN AIR COLLOQUIUM

The third biennial Clean Air Colloquium will be held in Washington, D.C., April 19-21. The National Clean Air Fund is hosting the event, which will feature speakers and workshops on acid rain, toxics, smelters and health effects as well as fundraising, media and coalition building. For details contact Cindy Shogun at the Sierra Club's Washington, D.C. office at 202/547-1141.

## CONSTRUCTIVE GRAZING

A former South African game warden who has developed a new approach to cattle grazing will give a slide show and talk in Denver on Thursday, April 11, 7:30 p.m. at Holiday Inn North. Speaker Allan Savory (HCN, 7/23/84) will discuss his holistic resources management, in which frequent rotation of cattle from pasture to pasture is said to allow increased production from a given amount of land. Admission is \$4. A limited number of places are also available at an all-day seminar Savory will give in Denver on April 10. For information, contact Sam Bingham, 1757 Roslyn St., Denver, CO 80220, or call 303/333-7521.



## BIRDS OF THE NORTHERN ROCKIES

Birds of the Northern Rockies is photographer Tom Ulrich's guide for the novice birdwatcher. Ulrich describes 170 species that range from the Canadian Rockies south to the Tetons. Presented by category for easy reference, descriptions include physical features, flying, nesting, dietary habits and range. Over 220 photographs illustrate the text. To complete this guide, Ulrich includes a glossary and tips on photographing birds.

Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1600 North Avenue West, Box 2399, Missoula, MT 59806. Paper: \$7.95. 160 pages.

## GRIZZLY EXPERTS CONVENE

A close look at grizzly bears from all perspectives is scheduled for Griz '85, a three-day symposium in Casper, Wyoming, May 3-5. Speakers include grizzly researcher John Craighead, Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson, and environmentalist Bob Anderson. They will talk about grizzly bear habitat, the politics involved in management, and even gruesome grizzly legends. Registration sent by April 26 is \$10.00 for individuals and \$12.50 for families. Fees are \$2.50 more if you register at the door. Mail checks to Griz '85, P.O. Box 114, Casper, WY 82602. For more information call Walt Merschat at 307/266-6942.



U.S. missiles on display at White Sands, New Mexico. Working Assets won't use your savings to finance nuclear overkill.

**Y**ou know where your taxes go. But chances are some of the money you've left in the bank is also working night and day to build needless missiles and bombs. Money you've set aside could also be financing nuclear power or job discrimination against women. Because bankers invest your savings where they—not you—see fit.

At Working Assets Money Fund, your money works for, not against, your principles. For example, we consciously avoid using your money to finance weapons or apartheid.

## Higher Interest, Too

What's more, Working Assets pays higher interest than most banks\*. You can write an unlimited number of free checks... withdraw at any time without penalty... and know that your money is safe.

To learn more, simply write or call for a free prospectus. You have nothing to lose. And what you'll gain is worth far more than money.

\*Based on 1984 yields of money market checking accounts at America's 50 largest banks and thrifts, as reported in Bank Rate Monitor. Working Assets yields fluctuate daily and principal is not insured. \$1,000 minimum investment.

## WORKING ASSETS

Assets now over \$40 million

WORKING ASSETS MONEY FUND

220 California Street, San Francisco CA 94111

☐ Yes! I want to get free check-writing and earn high current interest—without financing needless weapons. Please send me your free prospectus including more complete information about management fees and expenses. I'll read it carefully before investing.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

43A

**Earning Interest On Your Principles**

800-543-8800. Toll-free night or day.