

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar



Wilderness Society logo

The Wilderness Society's

Outstanding alumni

by Ed Marston

The good old days of America's wilderness movement, says Jerry Mallett, were the 1970s: "We could send five to six guys into a state and just wreck it with phone calls, coalitions with sportsmen, the whole thing." Mallett says it was a time of skilled, grassroots organizing by good-old-boy environmentalists who happened to have degrees in natural resource management.

"I remember on the Flat Tops (a then wilderness candidate in Colorado), we had a problem with Allott (former Colorado Sen. Gordon Allott). So we cranked up several hundred letters to him from his voters. Then, after a couple of weeks, we went to see him. He told us: 'Boys, I'm glad you're here. I have a real problem back home. What can I do about the Flat Tops?' He'd gotten letters from sportsmen, county commissioners, people like that."

The good-old-boy environmentalists worked for the Wilderness Society. Clif Merritt, who put the 19-person field staff together, says he looked for knowledge of resources, ability to talk to all sorts of people, and dedication. Mallett recalls how that worked in practice:

"Bart Koehler would spend all night driving to a hearing to save on a motel. Dave Foreman once sold his

mule so he could do a mailing." Mallett suggests that the grassroots work done in the 1970s helped lead to 1984, when Congress created 8.6 million acres of wilderness, most of it in the West.

Ten years later, that staff is in large part still doing grassroots wilderness work in the West, but not for the Wilderness Society.

Best known of the alumni is Foreman, a founder of Earth First! and its current head. Another founder, Bart Koehler, is with the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council in Juneau. Sally Ranney founded and is president of the American Wilderness Alliance. Merritt is the Alliance's executive director. Jerry Mallett is head of the Western River Guides Association. Jim Eaton heads up the California Wilderness Coalition. Dick Carter founded and leads the Utah Wilderness Association. Bill Cunningham directed until recently the Montana Wilderness Association. Roger Scholl works with the Nevada Wilderness Association.

Jim Eaton, speaking from California, says Earth First! "came out of the Wilderness Society staff sitting around the campfire talking about being reasonable and losing wilderness. We talked about what we really wanted to do."

William Turnage, who came in as president of TWS in 1978, gave them their chance. According to Eaton,

A SPECIAL ISSUE

The Wilderness Society, whose former staffers spawned everything from Earth First! to the Utah Wilderness Association, recently announced it's getting into the trenches. A new \$4 million program, unveiled by Executive Director William Turnage in Jackson, Wyoming, aims at preserving de facto wilderness by challenging national forest plans that emphasize roads and timber cuts.

Depending on your point of view, it is either a return or a departure for the Influential Washington, D.C.-based organization. In this Special Issue, Ed Marston looks back to the 1970s when Dave Foreman of Earth First! and 18 others left the Wilderness Society to go their own ways; Betsy Bernfeld outlines the new Wilderness Society approach; and Pat Ford writes about battles in Idaho, joined by the Wilderness Society, over logging plans for national forests.

--the staff

"Turnage was the first of the conservation leaders to not come from conservation ranks -- he came from business. He liked the appearance" of his fellow Yalees. "He was very much into media. He saw an opportunity to raise money in California, as opposed to Rocky Mountain states, where flash might be detrimental."

Mallett adds, "Turnage didn't feel comfortable with the field reps. They were all personable and down home, sleeping on people's floors while travelling, grateful for a meal, and working 60 hours a week for \$400 a month."

Whatever the reason, within 18 months of Turnage's arrival at TWS, the 19-person field staff was essentially gone. Merritt, who had put the 19 together, says today: "Bill Turnage decided to scuttle the strongest field force for wilderness" this country ever had.

Earth First!'s Dave Foreman, famous for his lambasting of three-button-suited professional environmentalists, is most positive on the results of Turnage's action. "I

think it was a good thing, the way we spread out and did things."

The firings and resignations had meaning apart from the creation of the Utah Wilderness Association and Earth First! and the strengthening of existing groups such as the Montana Wilderness Association and the Oregon Natural Resource Council. Foreman says there was a certain internal logic to the transformation of TWS from a grassroots group based on a national membership to a centralized group lobbying in D.C. and raising money from a big-city constituency.

"Everyone after RARE II (the Forest Service's 1970s wilderness planning effort) was burned out. So we let the pros take over." The change may also have been related to the size of TWS. Mallett says, "It's inevitable that a group, at a certain size, will abandon the grassroots -- look at the National Wildlife Federation or Audubon."

Plus, the alumni agree, a presence in Washington, D.C., is necessary to the wilderness movement. And under Turnage, TWS has become numeri-

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Dear friends,



High Country News

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One of the pleasures of an HCN summer is visitors. They are especially welcome in Paonia, which isn't on the way to anywhere, except, perhaps, the West Elk Wilderness.

The main route through the Rockies is north of the North Fork Valley, in the I-70 corridor which runs from Denver to Grand Junction.

But this summer people are either avoiding I-70 or seeking out Paonia. The visitors started in June, when Michael Scott and Darrell Knuffke of the Wilderness Society stopped by to say hello and have lunch. Before being transferred to Washington, D.C., Michael had run, with Chris Sanborn, the Society's Denver office for several years, and the two came through Paonia as part of an introductory swing for Darrell.

The Wilderness Society was followed by two subscribers -- Phil and Mary Stern. In addition to being a subscriber, Phil is a consultant and long-time member of the Boulder City Council. They came through a day or so before Bruce Adams of Maryland, who was visiting the West on behalf of a foundation interested in weekly newspapers and their effects on communities.

Two weeks ago, the pace of visitors quickened. Carolyn Johnson, a subscriber and Denver-based expert on coal mine reclamation, came through in search of scenery, sweet and sour cherries, and a look at the North Fork Valley's several underground coal mines. That evening Rose Houk and Michael Collier drove up from Grand Junction to have dinner. Rose is a freelance writer and editor on environmental and natural history subjects. Her husband is a geologist and M.D., who is serving his Family Practice residency in Grand Junction.

They were followed by Elizabeth and Nelson Perdomo of Atlanta, who gave a slide presentation on behalf of the Eleventh Commandment Fellowship, a new movement concerned with environmental ethics.

All the visitors were welcome, but perhaps most helpful was Stuart Ambler, a subscriber and computer programmer from Boulder. He came through around noon on July 19, and by 3 p.m. that day we had had lunch and he had our computer modem transformed from the useless dust-gathering mode to an operational mode, ready to receive 300 bands a second (a minute?). We think we are now set to take stories from distant writers who miss their mail deadline, and who also have a modem and someone like Stuart Ambler to hook it up.

In addition to visits, we receive mail. A recent letter from Recreation Equipment, Inc., was especially welcome: it contained a generous contribution to our drive to build circulation. The staff thanks the Seattle-based outdoor equipment firm for its help.

The story that Jim Carrier wrote recently on HCN for the Denver Post was picked up by newspapers around the nation, and we are receiving some interesting letters. Thanks to the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Citizens' Voice, an inmate in the penitentiary at Dallas, Pa., wrote us a six-page letter. He thought that HCN's presence in a coal town would help us understand why he is serving seven to 15 years in jail for third degree murder.

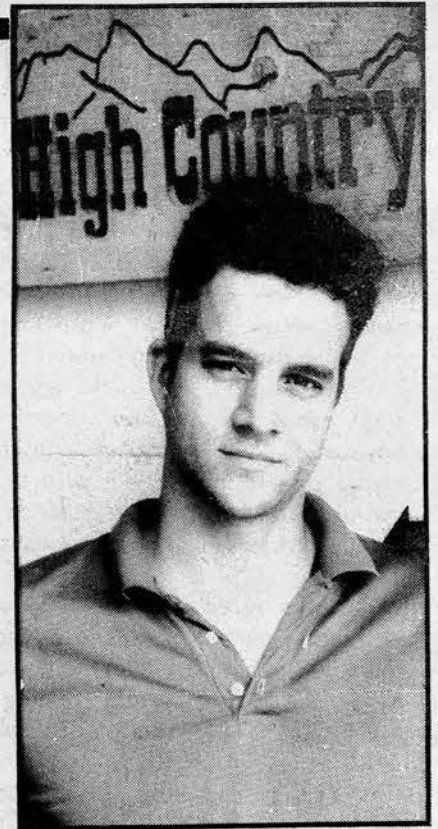
The man he killed was a local political boss in Hazleton, a town

whose economic roots lie in its anthracite coal fields. He shot the boss in a moment of rage, but it was the culmination of a long conflict between the inmate, who ran a garage in Hazleton for years, and what he saw as corrupt local government. The shooting took place, so near as we can tell from the letter, on the day officials were about to sell his property at a sheriff's sale. He wrote to explain that his disgust with the political system in Hazleton, the local press and the courts has led him to decide to renounce his citizenship. In his letter, he seemed most angry with the police, and writes of "the coal and iron cops: they didn't give a damn about democracy -- their only concern was to do the will of the coal barons." That legacy, he writes, continues although the barons of the anthracite fields are gone.

Anyone in public life -- whether as a citizen activist, as a candidate for public office, or as a reporter -- can understand our correspondent's disgust. The emotional effects of exposure to the real workings of our system is especially hard to withstand if you come to it innocent and out of idealism; if you come expecting justice from the courts, fairness from the press, or rationality from a bureaucracy or legislature.

The theme of lost or threatened innocence was repeated in another recent letter, this one from Tulsa: "Please cancel our subscription to your publication. Please understand that we love the Rockies and the West, and we appreciate that you are looking out for the future, but it's much too depressing a viewpoint for our tastes."

Both letters made us ask again about the nature of HCN and its readers. For the most part, we probably see ourselves as rational, pragmatic people who wish to make government work. But if we were really rational, as rational as the couple from Oklahoma or perhaps



Dan Cohen

even as rational as the inmate, the staff would stop reporting on these matters and readers would stop reading about them. For as our ex-subscribers quickly learned, much of the news from the Rockies is grim.

Why don't we stop reporting, reading, voting in November? Whether we wish to admit it or not, environmentalists and reformers of other stripes proceed as much on blind faith as the most fervent believer in the Bible as literal truth.

Our latest intern is Dan Cohen of New York City, who was surprised last week when this usually arid valley was hit with a downpour so intense his basement apartment was flooded. You could actually notice humidity, he tells us. Besides learning about environmental issues in five states, Dan has also become a volunteer disc jockey at Paonia's public radio station. In the fall, he'll be back at New York University studying English literature.

--the staff

BARBED WIRE

Russia may be more of a threat to the American way of life than we thought.

The New York Times reports that five Soviet officials received jail sentences of up to five years because a dam collapsed in the Ukraine, releasing liquid wastes which polluted a water supply and killed fish.

We believe it.

Due to a clerk's error, a \$27,000 seven-ton anchor was shipped from California to a Colorado Army base instead of a \$6 headlight. The event made Ripley's Believe It or Not.

He needs an audience.

A Disneyland employee who makes his living climbing an imitation Matterhorn for admiring crowds was hurt when he slipped and fell on the way up Mount Whitney.

It's nice to know the criminal justice system works the way we thought it did.

The "Mayflower Madam," the head of a pricey New York prostitution ring, told reporters she was able to plea bargain her way to only a \$5,000 fine because Manhattan D.A. Robert Morgenthau had received "a lot of phone calls from a lot of very concerned and prominent people" who feared that in a trial she would reveal their names and sexual tastes.

Shouldn't she have used an aerosol air freshener?

Wyoming's Jackson Hole Guide reported the arrest of Carolyn W. Smith, 35, of Wilson, for allegedly spraying two children with Raid at a motel in Jackson. Smith explained that she wanted to "get rid of the little kid stink."

And a plague of crabgrass upon them.

Naturalist Steve Kenney, whose refusal to cut his wildflower lawn in Kenmore, New York, landed him in court, says he hopes neighbors charged with illegally mowing his yard get stiff fines and maybe a couple of nights in jail. Pending fines against Kenney and his landlord, however, have mounted to more than \$25,000.

Ten heads are better than one.

Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson, well known for excoriating bureaucrats of every persuasion, said in a news release recently that in the case of the Yellowstone ecosystem, management should continue by officials at two national parks, six national forests and two national wildlife refuges. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, which supports an integrated management of the Yellowstone area, just wants to stop "unpalatable" activities, Simpson said.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

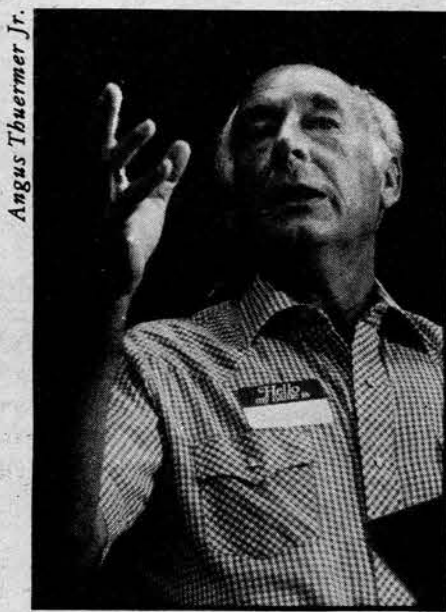
Earth First! is put last by Cecil Andrus

JACKSON, Wyo. -- Former Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus offered an upbeat vision of the future of the conservation movement at a seminar here July 21. The seminar was sponsored by the Northern Rockies Action Group, a nonprofit group established in 1973 to provide training and technical assistance to citizen groups in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

Andrus received an enthusiastic welcome from the audience of more than 200, many of whom remember his attack on molybdenum mining in the White Cloud Mountains during his 1970 campaign for Idaho governor. Now a private consultant, he said he is considering running for governor again.

Despite the current economic depression, environmental protection is as popular as ever, Andrus said. "The outrage that greeted Jim Watt's and Anne Gorsuch's campaigns to gut federal environmental management programs showed just how much a part of the mainstream the values of the conservation movement have become."

Panelists Dave Foreman, founder of Earth First! and Bill Bryan, an NRAG founder, were more pessimistic. With evangelistic passion, Foreman said, "Ecocatastrophe is happening now. Ethiopia is only the



Cecil Andrus

beginning." Comparing the environmental movement to an ecosystem, he said the movement, too, needs diversity to be able to respond to challenges. His organization, which criticizes national groups for their willingness to compromise, is criticized in turn for advocating "ecotage," such as sabotaging construction equipment or driving spikes in trees to disrupt timber sales.

Although impressed by Foreman's ability to move an audience, Andrus said Earth First!'s tactics hurt other conservationists. "I have to spend all

my time explaining I'm not one of those kooks; I'm one of these kooks."

Bryan said that although he disagrees with ecotage, he respects Earth First! for raising issues creatively. He criticized the lack of innovative thinking and the lack of strategy amongst the national conservation groups. "The environmental movement has taken some strong sleeping pills." He said they are too concerned with fundraising and disagreements with other groups.

Louise Dunlap, president of the Environmental Policy Institute, a 13-year-old lobbying organization in Washington, D.C., agreed that the different groups often have trouble talking with one another. "Diversity is the key to our strength -- and to our weakness and frustration," she said.

Leslie Petersen, a commissioner of Teton County, Wyoming, said people are foolish if they think the environmental movement has faded away. Petersen, who is expected to be a candidate for statewide office in 1986, said, "There is a great power in saying what we collectively want." What most people want for their future and for their children's future, she added, is "to live in a clean, healthy environment and in a strong, vibrant economy."

--Marianne Ambler

HOTLINE

EPA sets NOx precedent

In a precedent-setting decision, the Environmental Protection Agency ordered a proposed oil shale project in western Colorado to install nitrogen oxide pollution controls. It is the first time the EPA has mandated control of NOx, a contributor to acid rain, under any permit. The required reduction is 80 percent more than proposed by Chevron Shale Oil Co., and is based on technology used successfully in Japan. Bob Yuhnke of the Environmental Defense Fund, who has been active in the three-year review of Chevron's project, said the EPA deserved praise for taking steps to halt the threat of acid rain in the West. Chevron, however, may appeal the EPA decision.

Union Pass road upgrade is delayed



Union Pass road

A controversial upgrading of the scenic Union Pass Road through Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest will be delayed until at least three appeals can be heard. Regional Forester Stan Tixier made his decision last month. Louisiana-Pacific has offered to pay for the 3.8 miles of improvement to shorten the haul for lumber trucks over the Continental Divide (HCN, 7/22/85). Conservation groups such as the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Wyoming Outdoor Council say improving the dirt road would increase traffic, harm wildlife habitat and open the upper Green River basin to heavy logging.

Mott gets new boss

William Penn Mott, the widely acclaimed new chief of the National Park Service, may not have the freedom to make the type of resource decisions the conservation community expects of him (HCN, 6/24/85). According to the Public Lands Institute, his new boss, William P. Horn, is a strong fan of development. Horn was recently appointed Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and is therefore in charge of the National Park Service. In the past, Horn has been assistant to Alaska Congressman Don Young, who was a bitter opponent of the 1980 Alaska Lands Bill. Horn was also deputy undersecretary to former Interior Secretary James Watt on Alaska issues. According to the Institute, Horn engineered an exchange that would have let Atlantic Richfield build a base on the St. Matthews Island Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness in Alaska. The courts found it illegal.

Utahns ante 5 million acres for wilderness

Three proposals are now on the table in Utah for designating wilderness on some of the 22 million acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The latest proposal, from a coalition that includes the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, calls for more than 5 million acres of new wilderness -- nearly three times the BLM's preliminary recommendation of 1.8 million acres.

The Utah Wilderness Coalition's proposal is also more than the 3.8 million acres recommended by a different environmental coalition within Utah. That coalition includes the Utah Wilderness Association and Utah Audubon Society (HCN, 5/13/85).

Jim Catlin of the Sierra Club says, "No one should be surprised by the lack of unanimity on specific legislative proposals among wilderness advocates. Not proposing wilderness for an area doesn't mean it doesn't deserve designation, Catlin added.

"According to Rich Warnick of the Utah Wilderness Association, their wilderness proposal was not a 'wish list...' We're asking for what we are serious about getting." Dick Carter, another member of the group, said the 3.8 million-acre proposal on 69 tracts reflected "legislative realities."

The Sierra Club's Catlin said the new coalition's recommendations emerged after nine workshops were held throughout Utah during the last seven months.

"Our proposal is comprehensive. It includes all the acreage in Utah that is, in fact, wilderness and deserves to be protected as wilderness." If Congress accepts the coalition's proposal, he added, 85 percent of the state would still be open "and



Labyrinth Canyon, Canyonlands

vulnerable" to commercial, industrial and military development.

The coalition proposes wilderness for 141 BLM roadless tracts in eight areas, including:

- The West Desert region, 534,867 acres, including the House Mountain Range, Wah Wah Mountains, Granite Peak, Rockwell sand dunes, and Great Basin roadless areas;

- Zion and Hot Desert region, 239,119 acres near Zion National Park and Moquith Mountain containing part of the Coral Pink Sand Dunes. Hot Desert region includes desert tortoise habitat in the Joshua Tree area;

- Escalante-Kaiparowits region, 1,163,021 acres, including 29 roadless areas that reach from Bryce Canyon to Capitol Reef National Park;

- Canyonlands, 392,780 acres, includes many areas along the Green, Colorado and Dolores rivers;

- Cedar Mesa region, 689,740 acres, protecting archaeological areas

in Grand Gulch, Fish Creek and Dark Canyon;

- San Rafael Swell, 644,890 acres, including Muddy Creek - Moroni Slopes - Factory Butte complex of desert badlands;

- Book Cliffs and Uinta Basin, 619,000 acres, includes Desolation Canyon of the Green River;

- Henry Mountains and Dirty Devil region, 750,580 acres.

Jim Catlin, who called the BLM's preliminary wilderness recommendations "seriously flawed," said the coalition's approach was designed to protect natural river systems, a wide diversity of bioregions and critical wildlife habitat. Other members of the Utah Wilderness Coalition include the Friends of the Earth, National Parks and Conservation Association, Colorado Open Space Council, Colorado Mountain Club and the Wasatch Mountain Club.

--Betsy Marston

HOTLINE

Groups appeal clearcut



David Sumner

Two western Colorado conservation groups have appealed a third planned aspen cut, this one of 225 acres on the Colorado Plateau. Western Colorado Congress charges that the clearcut is another attempt to "avoid a forest-wide approach to aspen management which is sound, thorough and defensible." Conservationists, who have urged the Forest Service to do an Environmental Impact Statement on the aspen cuts, found an ally in the Environmental Protection Agency. Dale Vodehnal, chief of the EPA's environmental assessment branch, wrote the Forest Service that its 50-year management plan, adopted last year, failed to address impacts on air quality from Louisiana-Pacific's aspen Waferwood plant in Olathe. L-P is now struggling to bring both its Olathe and Kremmling plants into compliance with Colorado air quality standards. Vodehnal also wrote that impacts on water quality from aspen clearcuts were ignored. The Forest Service says it is amending the management plan on just these points.

Sen. Garn is displeased



Scott Smith

The Burr Trail at Long Canyon

Republican Sen. Jake Garn of Utah was not pleased when regional officials of the National Park Service recommended against paving the 66-mile Burr Trail (HCN, 7/22/85). The recommendation was sent last month to Park Director William Mott, who has said he will drive the scenic route that winds through Capitol Reef National Park in Utah before making his final decision. Meanwhile, Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., who is chairman of the House Interior subcommittee on national parks, said he opposes paving the Burr Trail on environmental grounds. He called the proposal an attempt "to sacrifice a unique national resource for the private gain of a concessionaire (Del Webb Recreation Properties) and the local economies of Boulder and Garfield counties."

Outfitters chew on Forest Service policy

Jackson Hole outfitters told Bridger-Teton National Forest officials recently that interagency grizzly bear management policies are alienating wranglers and cowboys.

Jackson Hole Outfitters and Guides Association spokesman Don Randle complained that the Forest Service is insulating itself from liability while it and other agencies create dangerous situations with their grizzly policies. The guide made his charges at a hearing in Jackson which was called for comment on grizzly bear management guidelines written in 1979. The guidelines are undergoing public scrutiny at the insistence of Sen. James McClure of Idaho, who recently tied continued grizzly management funding to a public airing of the old policy.

At the hearing Randle said all outfitters on the Bridger-Teton are being required to sign an amendment to their special use permits which releases the Forest Service from liability in the case of accidents. At the same time, he said interagency grizzly management has created at least one dangerous situation.

That happened when grizzly bear 120, a two-year-old female, was trapped and released in the vicinity of Togwotee Mountain Lodge May 24. It was the fourth time the bear had been trapped. According to the management guidelines, after three trappings a "problem" bear should be removed from the ecosystem.

"To turn a four-time offender loose is just doubling your chances of trouble," especially when the release is within a mile of a resort, as this one was, Randle said. He said if bears continue to be released within a mile of resorts "eventually there's going to be a liability there."

The release near Togwotee Mountain Lodge was made with the cooperation of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, which had hoped to use aversive conditioning to train the bear to stay away from people. Specifically, officials wanted to play tape recordings of human voices, then fire plastic bullets at the bear.

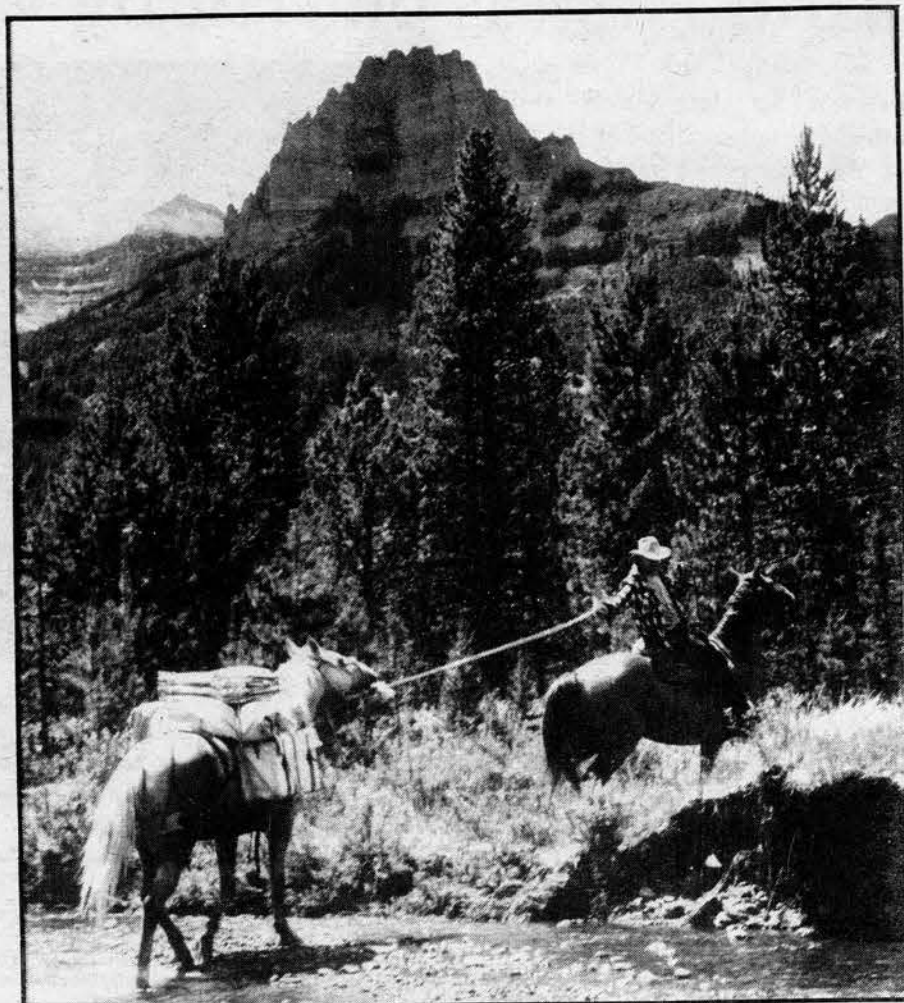
The plan was foiled when grizzly 120 moved out of the area. Ten days after it was released, it was mistakenly shot for a black bear 35 miles south of Togwotee Mountain Lodge.

Bridger-Teton fisheries and wildlife staff officer Al Boss explained later that there was a fourth release, despite the guidelines, because the bear was a young female capable of reproducing. Boss said he expects the guidelines will be amended to include a scenario for aversive conditioning -- a practice which is currently excluded from the management scheme.

Randle also questioned why, when bear managers are attempting aversive conditioning, hunters and guides cannot scare grizzlies away from camps with warning shots and flares. Harassing a threatened species, such as a grizzly, is illegal.

"We know so little about aversive conditioning we want to keep it in the hands of trained personnel," Boss explained later. "It may be that the bear will simply turn on the person (who fires a flare or shot). We don't want to put anybody in jeopardy by doing something like that."

Randle also said people in his organization are not reporting grizzly



sightings, fearing additional restrictions on their operations.

Bridger-Teton Supervisor Reid Jackson told Randle that the cooperation of guides and outfitters is still needed. Jackson chairs the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee's Yellowstone subcommittee -- Jackson also reassured Randle that recent increases in insurance rates are affecting all guides and suggested they should not be blamed on grizzly policies.

Despite the outfitters' reticence on grizzly sightings, the Bridger-Teton expects to issue new stringent regulations this fall which would affect

all backcountry users in critical "situation 1" grizzly habitat. Boss said those regulations will require all food -- including horse feed and wildlife carcasses -- to be stored in places inaccessible to the bear.

"We still have considerable storage of food in the backcountry that the bear is getting into," Boss said. "We feel it's extremely important to turn this situation around. In fact we feel this is the key to keeping human use in grizzly bear country in the future."

--Angus M. Thuermer, Jr.

Ferrets face indirect threat

Along with the threat of extinction because of their small population, the only black-footed ferrets known are now faced with bubonic plague.

In July, five prairie dogs, their food source in the Meeteetse, Wyoming, colony, were found to have died from plague. Five of seven flea samples tested for plague in late June also turned out positive.

Plague, often present in low levels in Western rodent populations, is not considered a direct threat to ferrets or humans. But it could wipe out prairie dogs. Some populations have been virtually ended by plague while other species of prairie dogs are resistant.

"No one knows the resistance level of the white-tailed prairie dogs at Meeteetse," says Dick Randall of Defenders of Wildlife.

From July 6-8, the federal Center for Disease Control dusted some prairie dog burrows at Meeteetse with Sevin, an insecticide containing carbaryl, which kills fleas. Center staffers also trained people from other agencies to take over the laborious job.

Dave Belitsky, ferret recovery coordinator for Wyoming, said by August 9, eight to 10 people working every day will have finished dusting 100,000 burrows. Insecticide dusters have a huge territory to cover, since the dog town extends over 6,000 acres.

Agencies cooperating in the plague

dusting include Wyoming Game and Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, University of Wyoming and Biota. Testing for plague was first done six months ago by Sonia Ubico, a graduate student from Guatemala who is working with the Center for Disease Control.

--Betsy Marston

BLM criticized

Although the Bureau of Land Management has identified some 25 million acres as potential wilderness that must be protected, the agency has allowed 1,955 disturbances, say the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club. These disturbances, the groups said to a House subcommittee on public lands, range from off-road vehicle racing to road building, oil and gas exploration and the construction of water pipelines. Testifying July 18 before the same subcommittee, Interior Secretary Donald Hodel said the Reagan administration strongly supports the creation of BLM wilderness and that stricter guidelines had gone into effect to protect study areas from "alleged impairment." Those measures include a monthly inspection and requests for public comments 30 days before the BLM authorizes "non-impairing activities" within a wilderness study area.

Canadian mine threatens northern Montana

KALISPELL, Montana -- When 150 people gathered in Kalispell July 9 to speak their minds on the proposed Cabin Creek coal mine near the northwest tip of Glacier National Park, their unanimous opposition came as no surprise.

"I don't think there's any question on how Montanans stand on the issue," said John Gatchell, program director for the Montana Wilderness Association.

The Cabin Creek mining project is in British Columbia about five miles north of the U.S.-Canadian border and just off the North Fork of the Flathead River. It would span 6.5 square miles and include two open-pit mines, tailings, waste dumps and a processing plant. It has been roundly assailed as a potential environmental disaster for the northern Flathead Valley, which boasts some of the most pristine country in the Northwest, including Glacier and Waterton national parks.

During the past decade more than 10,000 people in the Flathead Valley have signed petitions opposing the mine. In addition, millions of dollars recently were spent to upgrade sewage treatment plants in the region. If the Cabin Creek developers don't have to meet the same wastewater standards in Canada, local officials say Flathead Valley taxpayers will have wasted their money.

If Cabin Creek adheres only to Canada's environmental standards, dirty water will flow into Montana. So opponents have turned to the International Joint Commission, whose responsibility it is to determine whether the proposed mine violates the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty. The 1909 agreement says that neither nation shall pollute water "to the injury of health or property" of the other nation.

The July 9 hearing in Kalispell was held by the commission, which will base its finding on a number of studies examining environmental impacts from the proposed mine. The studies will be conducted by a board composed of three Americans and three Canadians. The studies are due by May, 1986.

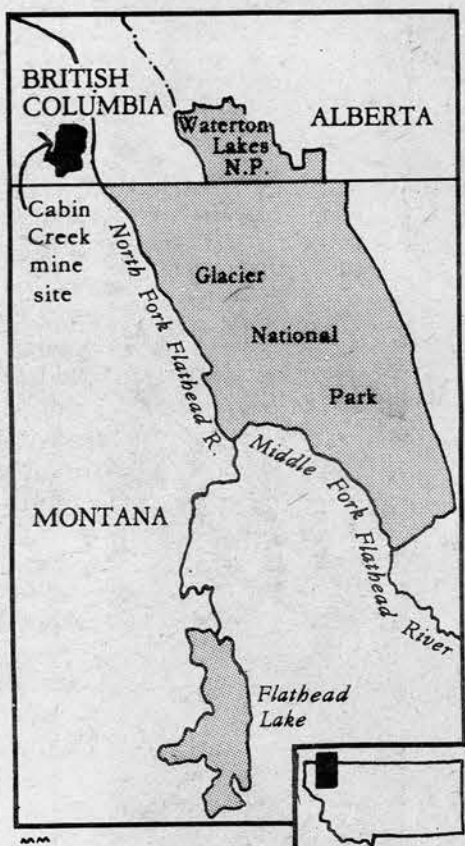
Gatchell said a key question is whether the studies will examine air quality as well as the mine's effect on regional water quality. So far, commission members have said they are bound to examine only the water issues.

At the hearings, mine opponents pointed out that the North Fork of the Flathead River and surrounding area is already protected by classifications as a wild and scenic river and international biospheric reserve. It has been nominated as a world heritage site.

J.A. Posewitz, chairman of the U.S. delegation on the Flathead River International Study Board, said the group was not aware of the classifications and would incorporate them into the studies.

Gatchell said that's good news for mine opponents, for it means the study group can't help but examine the mine's potential effect on both air and water quality. Because the Cabin Creek project calls for burning coal at the site, the Class 1 pristine air standard for nearby Glacier National Park would be violated, Gatchell maintained.

He also said waste from the mine



would be stored in two settling ponds dammed by earth dikes. If severe flood conditions were to occur, those dikes could break, causing wastes to stream into the North Fork. "It would be like a time bomb sitting at the top of the Flathead drainage."

Gatchell said the proposed mine site also sits in the middle of popular hunting grounds, prime grizzly bear habitat, and is part of an important wildlife ecosystem for the United States and Canada. "It's an extremely rich area for wildlife. It's a remote area, even for British Columbia."

Even if the commission decides the mine would violate the Boundary Waters Treaty, its word is not final. The British Columbian provincial government has already given the

mine preliminary approval, which means Sage Creek Coal Ltd. can seek final approval through the provincial coal development review process. However, that review process most likely will consider the IJC's findings.

"I would assume British Columbia would review the IJC rulings and we'd probably have to respond to them," said Ken Culver, director of public relations for Rio Algom Ltd. in Toronto. A multi-national firm, Rio Algom owns a controlling interest in Sage Creek Coal.

Culver said he understood the concerns of Montanans opposed to the mine, but said the company would probably build the mine if Canadian standards are met.

"Obviously you can't build any project without affecting the environment," he said. "But as long as we can comply with the British Columbian standards, then we are meeting the legal requirements."

Some opponents disagree. Jon Heberling, a Kalispell attorney representing the Flathead Coalition, said if Sage Creek Coal proceeds with the mine, it will be sued in Montana courts. The suit would be filed under a 1975 Montana law that provides for legal action against Canadians who pollute Montana waters.

For now, the ball is in the commission's court. Although the commission has no legal authority to enforce the treaty, Posewitz said he was optimistic the group could work out a solution.

"There's not a lot of authority in that treaty," he said. "But the joint commission has a pretty good track record for working out knotty problems... and this is a knotty problem."

--Mike Dennison

Water body roiled by dispute

A shakeup may be imminent for western Colorado's major water district. The board of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, which looks after water rights in 15 counties and encourages construction of dams, recently approved a 1986 budget which is 26 percent higher than its present budget. If approved by the state, the increase will cause a mill levy increase in the 15 counties.

It includes a \$5,000 salary increase, to \$85,000, for Secretary-Engineer Rolly Fischer, and a \$5,000 increase, to \$30,000, in Fischer's expense allowance. Other jumps are for legal fees to contest Denver's claim to 200,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water.

In a rare split vote, the budget squeaked by the board 8 to 6. But a public outcry arose after Friends of the Earth representative Connie Albrecht, who was the only observer at the mid-July meeting, told the press of the increase. The reaction has been surprisingly harsh in a region that worships water.

The Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* referred to Fischer as a "water czar" in a front page story and wrote an editorial on the increase titled, "It still stinks." County commissioners in Fischer's home base of Garfield County are talking of pulling out of the district.

The ruckus comes at a critical time for the district and its appointed

board. For decades, the river district has dealt with Denver in the courts. But now it is edging into negotiations with the Denver metro area over future diversions of Colorado River water to the Front Range. The anger being expressed about the budget and Fischer's salary may reflect anxiety over the negotiations as well as long-term frustration with the district's apparent inability to get water projects built.

--Ed Marston

Park proposed

William Penn Mott has taken his first major step as head of the National Park Service (HCN, 6/24/85) by proposing that a Tall Grass Prairie national preserve be created in north-central Oklahoma. The approximately 50,000-acre chunk of land in Osage County would preserve prairie land that has been grazed but never plowed. According to *The New York Times*, Mott's proposal has both local support and backing from Interior Secretary Donald P. Hodel. Until now, the Reagan administration has opposed acquisition of new park land. The land would be obtained with the help of the Nature Conservancy and the National Parks and Conservation Association. Cattle grazing, oil and gas production, and hunting would continue.

HOTLINE

Peregrine falcons at risk

Joe Keller, USFWS



The National Parks and Conservation Association and Sierra Club have filed suit in Denver to block pesticide spraying around Dinosaur National Monument, which straddles the Utah-Colorado border. The groups say that the spray program aimed at a Mormon cricket outbreak could harm endangered peregrine falcons whose aeries are located within the National Monument boundaries. Though the falcons feed primarily on small birds, it is these birds that ingest the contaminated crickets and could pass the chemicals on to the falcons. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been spraying Sevin 4 oil. Biologists concerned about the spraying have postponed the release of five young peregrines into Dinosaur, fearing a repeat of a 1982 incident when six falcons disappeared after the pesticide was sprayed on lands five miles from the nest site. APHIS now proposes to spray up to one mile from the aeries.

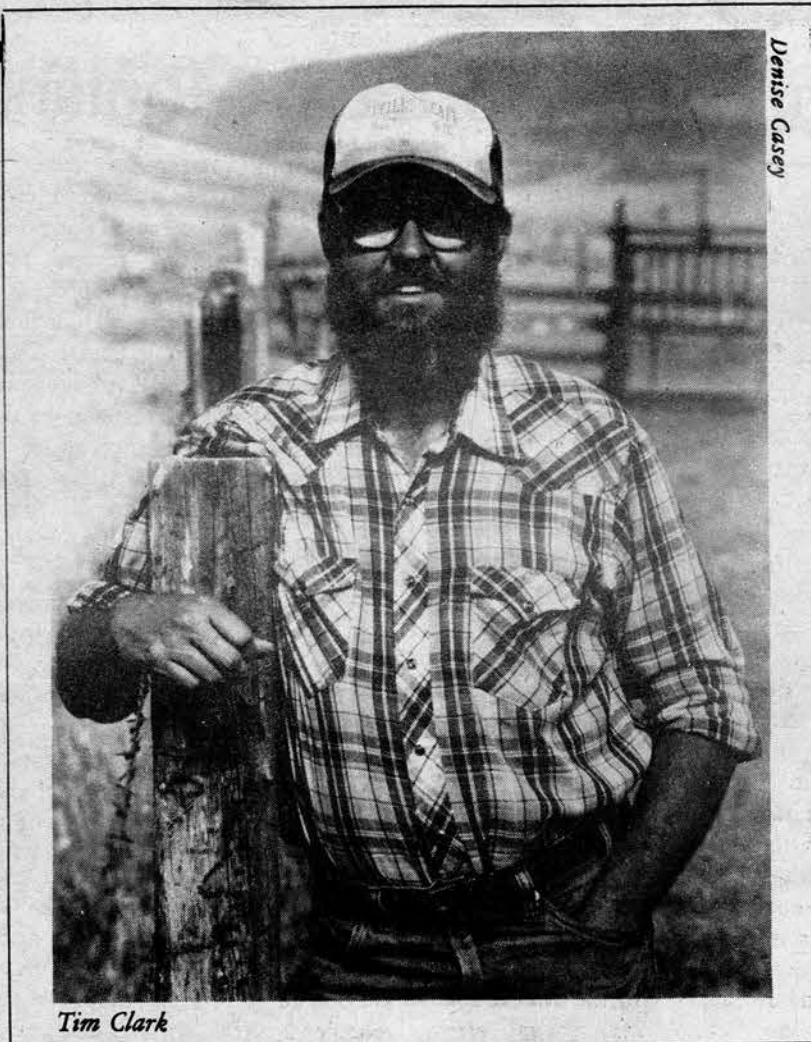
Planting bugs on eagles

Stowffer Productions, Ltd.



Using radio transmitters, the Wyoming Department of Fish and Game has begun monitoring bald eagles in an effort to determine where they go when they leave Yellowstone National Park and what areas are critical to the survival of young birds. The transmitters are attached to the birds when they are six to nine weeks old, before they are able to fly, and are solar powered to provide long-term information about migratory patterns. The largest nesting population of bald eagles in the Rockies includes 10 pairs within park boundaries, and 13 more just outside the park.

HCN Profile



Tim Clark

Will politics doom the ferret?

by Tom Wolf

Tim Clark has chosen to occupy a world rife with contradictions, politics and emotion. As a scientist, he seeks clear-cut distinctions and categories. But as an endangered species biologist, he is also in a political arena prone to subjective judgments, as we seek to protect ourselves from the knowledge of what we may have done.

For example, the black-footed ferret, which is Clark's personal challenge, has been called a "marginally competent predator," and those who think it should be allowed to fall onto the ash heap of biological history seize on that description as an excuse for neglect, or even for further abuse.

From the other direction are those taken by its cuteness -- some find it the most appealing of all the endangered species -- raising the possibility that the prime requirement for survival in today's world is that a species be photogenic.

Tim Clark's devotion to the cause of the ferret exceeds simple explanation. There is, of course, the thrill of helping find a "vanished" species. But he may also be drawn by the ferret's reputation for solitude, for Clark is a loner in a world where most biologists run in government packs.

He is a large, owlish, soft-spoken man who is both conceptual and pragmatic. The author of more than 100 scientific and popular articles on ecology, representing more than 20 years of field studies, he knows as well as anyone how to turn ideas into action. But he also prizes his ability to think abstractly, and in directions opposite to those taken by other biologists.

"Some people call me too conceptual, as if that were a failing, a derogatory charge. It's just the way I am. What they really mean is, 'You are not like us.' They fail to understand why. Emerson said that an innovator must be a nonconformist. That's me."

Tucked away in the remoteness of Jackson, Wyoming, he compensates for physical isolation through a remarkable cross-disciplinary network of friends and scientific associates, as well as through extensive travel. For more than 10 years, Clark has been adjunct professor at Idaho State University, while also conducting conservation studies with his colleagues at BIOTA, a consulting firm, with the financial support of national environmental organizations. Recently, he spent a year at Yale on a prestigious Mellon Fellowship.

Clark's self-built log house in Jackson suggests order, thought, and a sense for setting and materials. Built next door as a kind of tower, his study, glassed in on three sides, overlooks the National Elk Refuge, which is an attempted solution to the clash between our human rage for order and the instinctual demands of wildlife for the freedom to flow with the elements and seasons. Like so many others, Clark lives in prime elk winter range.

The solution to Jackson's man-nature conflict follows the traditional model of wildlife management: massive intervention to preserve critical habitat (or a semblance thereof) and to keep population levels high. Feed the wintering elk alfalfa pellets rather than have them browse your ornamental shrubs and devour your lawn. Protect them from outside forces with an eight-foot-high fence. Then watch them.

To some, such management smacks of farming, or manipulating the wildness out of wildlife, as in "zoo." But such artifice bothers Clark not at all. "The elk issue is just one of a long list of complex wildlife conservation challenges, all begging for comprehensive long-term solutions."

Those long-term solutions require confronting what he calls "the morass -- the process and products we know as 'wildlife management,' the management of nature itself." Clark's morass is not a cheerful place. But if a morass can have a focus, for Clark it is the black-footed ferret.

After searching for most of his adult life, seeking North America's rarest of rare creatures, Clark was early on the spot in 1981 when a report came in from Meeteetse, Wyoming, near Clark's home, that a ranch dog had killed a black-footed ferret.

Landmark discoveries in science sometimes come about through chance, but rarely does chance strike the unprepared. Seizing opportunity requires years of poisoning oneself for the leap that makes science human and intuitive as well as godlike and logical.

Clark, confronted with a dead ferret, was quick to act. He deployed a team of fellow scientists who ultimately discovered a ferret population scattered over a

37-acre prairie dog town. But the discovery came only after the team first fumbled for a needle in a haystack. They initially surveyed a 5,000 square mile area, which is a patch of land 70 miles by 70 miles, then narrowed the search to 8,000 acres, and finally came to the living center, the elusive ferrets.

Subsequent work at the site and elsewhere throughout the ferret's 12-state range has propelled Clark into a pre-eminent position, a strange spot for an independent in a world where we have chosen to institutionalize our relations with nature by declaring wild animals the property and responsibility of the state, and its various bureaucracies.

Clark is not always satisfied with the arrangement, especially when it leads to what he considers poor performance in the conservation of endangered species, where mistakes are eternal in their consequences. He compares the behavior of his fellow biologists with the remarkable cooperation local ranchers have given ferret researchers. He reminds you that much of the known ferret habitat is on private land, where the owners are foregoing significant income from oil and gas potential to protect the ferret.

Clark is fond of pointing out that the local women's softball team calls itself "The Ferrettes," and he lists many examples of community pride and support for the ferret. This he contrasts with the disarray and infighting so common in the community of biologists studying the ferret.

Having played a major role in the discovery of the only known black-footed ferret population, Clark naturally has definite ideas about how work with the species should proceed. "With the Meeteetse ferrets in hand, we have something more valuable than the mere possibility of other populations out there somewhere. The ferrets we have could be models for a successful recovery effort. We need to



act now on artificial breeding and translocation.

"If we instead spend too much time and money on searches for new populations, we will bog down in the bureaucratic morass. If anyone understands the allure of further search, it should be me. You might call it 'the romance of the Endangered Species Act.' For now, however, further search at the expense of other, more urgent initiatives, is the wrong direction. We have an urgent need to act now to save the ferret."

Clark is not the only person with views on the breed versus search question. It was hotly debated last fall at a University of Wyoming conference, where over 250 people gathered to discuss the fate of the ferrets. With hundreds of thousands of dollars potentially at stake, the conference-goers displayed an interesting mix of motives, ranging from the pure delight of those who seek for the joy of seeking, to those earnestly attending to the known population's needs, on down to those for whom the value of the rare means the value of dollars.

Clark's own conference contribution, one of more than 30 of his papers on the subject, shed as much light on his values as on his scientific discoveries. In contrast to those who claim the ferret has always been rare and always endangered, he made it clear that in the earliest reliable reports, ferrets were not considered rare. Man, through his actions, has made the ferret rare, and thus determined its value.

What should be done now? A group called the Black-footed Ferret Advisory Team is officially charged with answering that question. Comprised of scientists, administrators and landowners, the team is hesitating, stymied, unsure of how to act.

When Clark looks at the team, he remembers a common organization saying about the way to avoid action on a problem. First, reject the problem and the solution intellectually, saying it won't work. Second, attempt to force the problem into existing processes in a mechanical way. Third, slice the problem into pieces and allow people's natural tendencies toward territoriality to take over.

Clark's own approach to the ferret starts with his science. From computer modeling, Clark and his BIOTA colleagues know ferrets will eat mice and even carrion, but prefer prairie dogs. His model tells him that a wintering ferret requires at least one prairie dog every five days. This seems like a simple guide to find more ferrets -- simply find more prairie dogs.

There are around 250 prairie dog colonies in Wyoming's Bighorn Basin near Meeteetse, the epicenter of the known ferret world. Night after night, working in the dead of winter, using the most rigorous survey and census techniques known, hoping snow tracks will tell the tale, Clark has exhaustively checked these sites. He has found no other ferret colonies since 1981.

Fully 21 percent of Wyoming has been mapped for prairie dog towns and surveyed for ferrets. Since 50 million acres of Wyoming are grazed and therefore good prairie dog habitat (the more overgrazed the better), this is the kind of huge sample that starts tears of joy in statisticians' eyes. "But no more ferrets," says Clark, "at least not yet."

As astonishing as it might seem to

those who know what the West was in the days of the buffalo, Clark claims that even the persistence of individual prairie dog colonies is not certain. Research shows that prairie dog populations experience aperiodic crashes no one can explain, although sylvatic plague is a possible cause. So the ferrets and their hosts cannot be taken for granted; cannot be left to their own devices. We cannot be confident, he claims, that those ferrets will always be there.

An ominous presence in this debate is the poison 1080, whose re-entry onto the ferret scene seems imminent under newly relaxed government guidelines. Used as a prairie dog control device in the past, 1080 quickly passes up the food chain to concentrate in ferrets. It may have been the major force in making the ferret endangered.

Tim Clark's solution to these problems is neither simple, popular nor nationalistic. "The survival of our one existing population is not assured. We need to begin to captive-breed ferrets immediately. We need to find suitable transplant sites immediately. Odd as it may seem, the Meeteetse site may not be the optimal site; Wyoming might not be the optimal site."

Clark is not sentimental about the ferret. His warning derives from hard scientific data. The 1984 Meeteetse census showed 43 adults and 86 juveniles. "We know enough to save the animal," Clark says, but "enough" is based on projections from limited knowledge. Take, for example, the ferrets' presumed relation with prairie dogs. In three years of observation, researchers can document only 10 ferret-prairie dog interactions.

"For all we know," Clark says, "the ferret may not be an efficient predator. It may suffer wounds from prairie dog defense." There's not necessarily shame there. "Prairie dogs are often twice as big as ferrets," and the ferret must invade the prairie dog's hole. Clark has photos of ferrets, especially breeding females, with neck and facial wounds, prompting some sceptics to wonder why we are so interested in saving an animal that cannot -- or will not -- save itself.

But while some may call the ferret's competence into question, the ferret could do the same toward humans. In this century's other human-ferret encounter, nine individuals were removed from the then only known population in South Dakota to a special federal endangered species breeding center near Washington, D.C. After years of failure ended in complete loss, the biologist in charge summed up his frustrations only half-jokingly: "They were unfit mothers."

It is possible neither the biologists nor the ferrets were unfit. Clark says

'The buck stops with me, not with Tim Clark. We are finally responsible for the ferrets.'

We are not going to ship buckets of ferrets around to just anyone.'

the genetic makeup of the South Dakota sample may have been flawed, since cancers were present in a number of individuals.

The rate at which species come into jeopardy is increasing. Thanks in part to the Endangered Species Act and in part to conservation groups and state and federal wildlife agencies, there is some money to deal with the most extreme cases. But the money is so limited it can turn cooperators into competitors, especially because the stakes are not just money, but also power and prestige.

Clark finds himself both within and outside the resulting morass. As a scientist, he is concerned with scientific integrity. As a professional biologist, he has a living to make and a set of relations with the various agencies to nurture. It is a delicate balancing act.

Clark is not always diplomatic. He turns his concern for intellectual rigor and effective performance on his colleagues. Not surprisingly, they return the favor. Many of Clark's agency counterparts feel they cannot trust him because he is subject, they claim, to none of the usual organization checks on behavior. One says of him:

"Tim Clark is too quick to blow the whistle if he doesn't get his own way. He is one hell of a good biologist -- maybe the best there is -- but when he runs crying to the press or to the environmentalists, we are left to defend our own actions and the ferrets at the same time. The buck stops with me, not with Tim Clark. We are finally responsible for the ferrets. We are not going to ship buckets of ferrets around to just anyone. Maybe the best thing for the ferrets would be for all the researchers to clear out and leave them alone."

Clark acknowledges such criticisms in various ways, some graceful, some not. "In the West, most people who deal with natural resources live within the agencies. Outside the agencies' rigid structures and cultural norms stand a few suspicious-looking freelancers like myself. Explicit or not, agency norms can make agency people see 'danger' beyond the boundaries of

their organizations. Within these organizations, dissent can be difficult. One writer on the subject has said, 'Bureaucracies resemble authoritarian states because they do not provide for legitimate and institutionalized opposition.'"

Speaking more sardonically, Clark quotes former House of Representatives Speaker Sam Rayburn: "Son, if you want to get along, then just go along."

Wisely or not, Clark goes further: "The profession of wildlife conservation often lapses into a trade-school mentality that cuts down on the quality of performance and the integrity of the science. I do not knock the need for systems and organizations, but I insist that they be well-organized and effective. Wildlife programs in the West are often defined and shaped within bureaucracies so that the range of plausible solutions to problems like ferret recovery is severely limited."

But he also says, "In no way am I indicting my co-workers in applied science just because they are associated with other organizations. You do not achieve the changes needed by beating on people. We do need, however, to open up our public agencies more, so we can have more creative and diverse solutions."

The professional infighting sometimes leaves Clark angry, obviously sick of the whole thing. What keeps him slogging along? He volunteers much of his time during those long winter nights spent on ferret search and research, so it is not for money. Why bother?

He first bristles at the question, and then says: "There is simply more reality in dirt and rock -- in nature -- for me. More life and permanence than in the human-dominated world. It is worth identifying with nature, trying to understand it. The terms of that understanding require attention, poise, preparedness: the use of all my faculties, rational and aesthetic."

Clark's interest in nature has drawn him to the ferret. But the ferret, in turn, yanks him back into the world of humans. Clark tells of a prominent Wyoming politician who in a sense sits atop the hierarchy engaged with the ferret search and rescue mission. At a banquet, the politician asked Clark what he did for a living. Clark said he was a ferret biologist. Then the politician said: "Keep up the good work, son. Before I came on the scene, there weren't any of these here ferrets. Now look at how much better off we are."

Tom Wolf works for the Nature Conservancy and lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Tim Clark





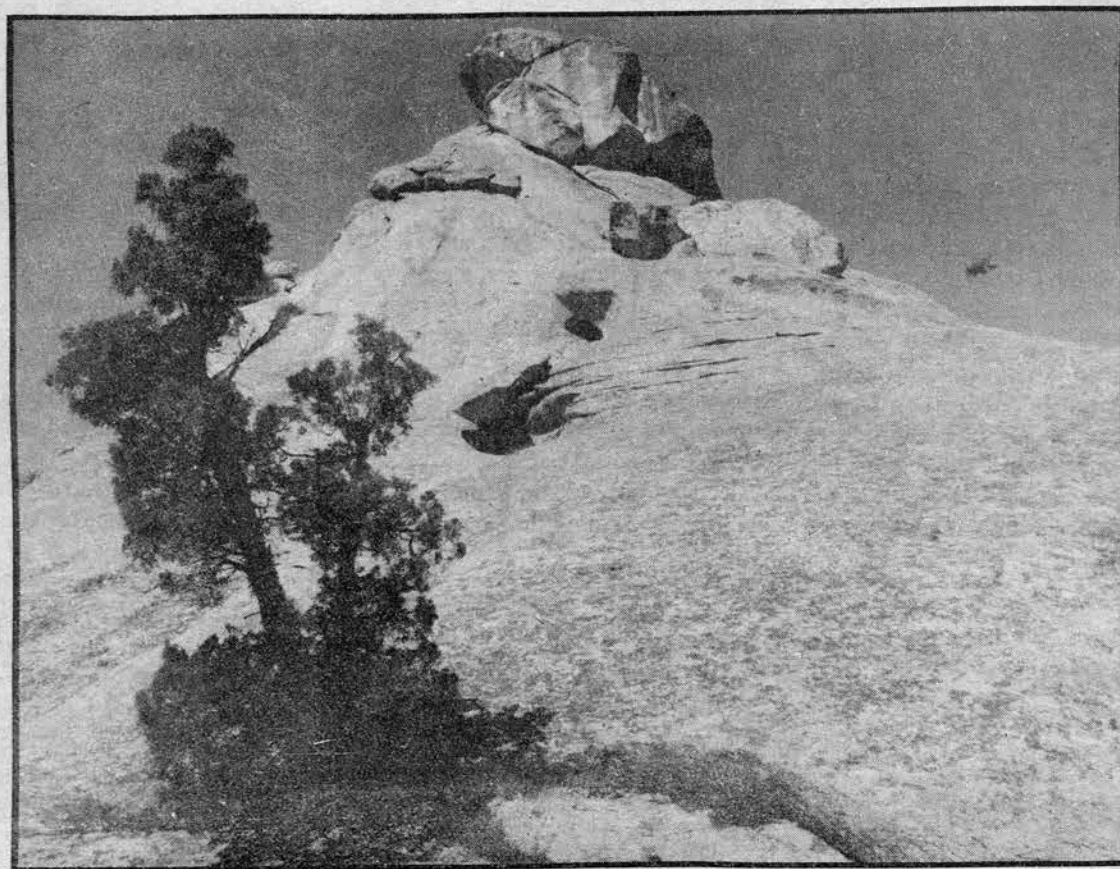
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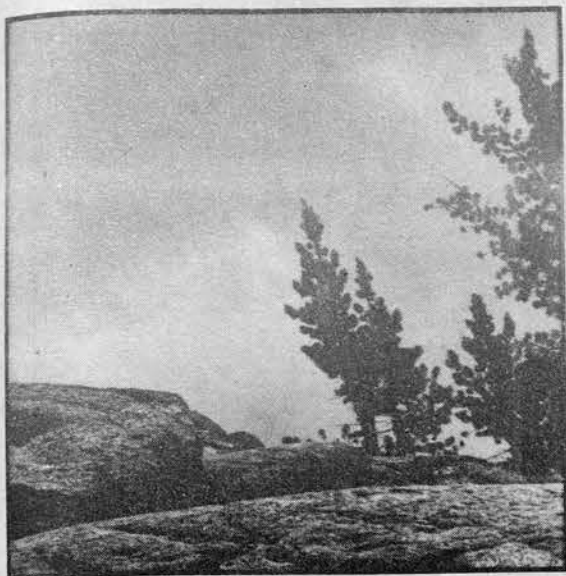
by

C.L. Rawlins

Wood an



Photos upper middle and right, Wind River Range, Wyoming; all others City of Rocks, Idaho



nd Stone

In the closed forest, sheltered from the wind and rooted in deep soil, trees grow abundantly and resemble each other, as affluent business-suited men or college students share a set of characteristics.

On the ridges and windspills, trees grow in fissures and pockets in the parent rock, exposed to sun, wind and blowing snow. It's a tough life, even for tough trees like limber pine and juniper. The cutting edges of windborne snow crystals can kill foliage and abrade bark until a tree is literally dying on one side almost as fast as it grows on the other, the new growth on the lee side protected by deadwood on the windward. In this circumstance, a tree appears to flow with the wind, like a banner.

The severity of exposed places characterizes a tree: the message in its genes -- grow straight and tall -- is subject to harsh influences. The eddy of wind around a huge boulder or winter protection from a deep drift can create a tree shaped to grow in only that particular spot. The set of the needles and the compound curves of a gnarled trunk reflect the form of the rockscape and the prevailing wind: trees of different species on a high ridge often resemble each other more than they, without a close examination, resemble their genetic relatives in the closed forest.

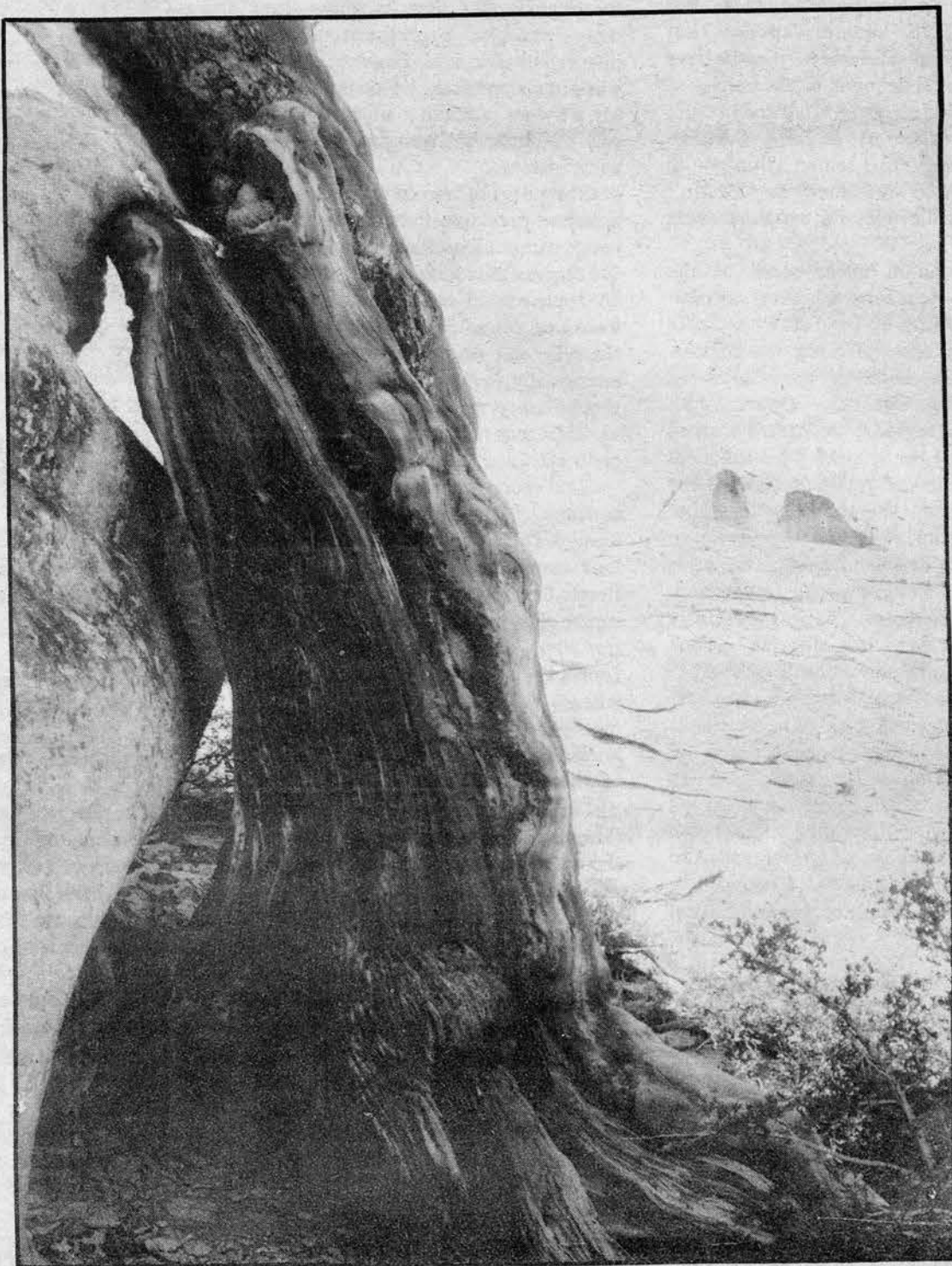
Trees are part of the vast class of things we call "inanimate," or literally "without breath or soul." The religions which recognize souls in trees and rocks are termed animist and regarded, by many, as primitive. We have largely replaced the patient observation of people who lived with trees and animals with the structured examination of science and a focus on specifics, as well as a taste for manipulation and exploitation.

Ironically, that in a time when we claim to know more about the natural world than ever before, we also routinely do monstrous damage to it. If only we are in possession of souls, and hungry, why not?

But if there are souls, breathless but awake, in trees and rocks, what witness will they bear to humanity? What tales out of the wood and the stone?

□□□

C.L. Rawlins is a freelance writer and recently received a Wallace Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University.



10-High Country News -- August 5, 1985

Alumni...

(Continued from page 1)

cally strong. It has gone from about 40,000 members when he took over to some 140,000 today. Its budget is \$6 million and its staff numbers 85, including six regional representatives in the West.

That kind of a rich, large, centralized operation lends itself to Turnage's approach to conservation. In the summer 1985 issue of *Wilderness*, in a lavishly illustrated article typical of those about chief executive officers of large operations, Turnage said:

"A vital part of the job is a willingness to aggressively sell, to sell ideas, to sell the organization, and that relates to everything. It relates to persuading a donor to support the organization, persuading a reporter to do a story about an issue about which the public should learn.

"It involves a willingness to go out and vigorously advocate and sell our point of view to corporate leaders and opinion-makers, a willingness to sell ideas and ask for help from members of Congress and other government leaders important in the decision-making process."

It's an approach that requires well-paid expertise, a lifestyle that at least approximates that of congressmen and corporate heads, and presence in the power centers. But while TWS alumni agree that Washington is necessary, they believe that the real action is in the field.

Mallett recalls, "Clif and I just laughed when we realized Turnage was going to center things in Washington. We knew he couldn't touch Laxalt (Nevada senator) from there."

The alumni praise some of the Society's field reps, but they say that a centralized, top-down style dominates other TWS regional offices. Eaton, the head of the California Wilderness Coalition, says: "The California regional rep hasn't worked with the grassroots. She talks to legislators, she gets editorials in the paper, but she doesn't use her membership at all. Their style is to meet with decision-makers. Our style has been to have people meet with decision-makers. That's especially important here in California -- one person can't know 43 congressmen."

What's wrong with working the media and Congress? "The media is fine, but you have to have folks out there working on the issues. Even in California, most potential wilderness is in rural, conservative areas. You have to get those congressmen. And you can't do it from San Francisco or Los Angeles. You need to have local people."

Another product of centralization is a staff of lawyers. But Eaton says court victories are also of limited use: "They stopped the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and clear-cutting with lawsuits, and only gained a year or two. It's not a solution if you win without popular support."

How does one use the grassroots? The alumni have different approaches. Mallett's is political. He recalls coming to Washington, D.C., a few years ago with a group of guides and outfitters -- men of no particular polish or apparent connections with the power centers. "Within a half hour we had an appointment with George



Most of the Wilderness Society staff, 1978, from left to right: Bill Cunningham, Clif Merritt, Randy

Snodgrass, Richard Krayjack, Jim Eaton, Bob Langsenkamp, Dave Foreman, Bill Turnage, Dick Carter,

Perry Moyle, unidentified, Joe Walicki, Bart Koehler, Stan Senner, Roger Scholl and Steve Payne

Bush. And before we left, we had what we wanted out of the Forest Service." The guides and outfitters, he says, are incredibly well connected because their work brings them into intimate contact with the wealthy and powerful.

How did he work in the 1970s as a TWS rep? "I would go into a town with a list of members. If it was Escalante, Utah, and there were no members, I'd go to the local newspaper and ask who's interested in resource issues. From there I'd go to the local doctors and lawyers -- they were usually prominent people involved in civic and resource issues. I was after somebody we could talk to. My job was to build coalitions. But I was an outsider. I couldn't go to a congressman."

The point of the coalitions was to generate pressure from home on the congressmen. Dick Carter of the Utah Wilderness Association had a different approach. "I'm still of the school -- I can't be convinced otherwise -- that the way you do it is to get people emotionally involved in their on-the-ground concerns. Get people who have an attachment to a free-flowing river, or an elk band, or a stand of trees."

That concern, in Carter's view, should not lead only to pressure on Congress. He prefers to work with the land managers. "Sit down with the Forest Service and see if the conflict can be resolved. We have to go back a few steps -- we have to get back to Leopold's land ethic -- what the land tells you you can do with it. Then you meet on this common ground with the Forest Service -- the common ground of what the land can do."

Carter thinks those who try to match wits with the Forest Service's computer jocks and economic analysts are heading in the wrong direction. "You can't put a piece of land into FORPLAN (the agency's land-planning computer program) and have it mean anything. It takes the public out of the planning process."

The recent involvement of TWS in 16 forest plans (see accompanying stories) has been seen as a possible return by the Society to the grassroots. But Carter, who is negative on the analytic approach the Forest Service is taking toward planning, doesn't see much point in the Society's meeting them on their own turf:

"What I see is a very centralized Washington, D.C., effort -- the Society is going to out-plan, out-computer, out-spend the Forest Service. They'll provide a bit of information to the grassroots. But it won't even approach what the Utah Wilderness Association

provides to local people" at a fraction of the cost.

Earth First! head Foreman is more positive. "I'm encouraged by their forest planning effort. It is something of a return to the grassroots. And I've been quite surprised that Turnage has been able to hire good people. But there's still a tendency to think the real action is in Washington, D.C."

Foreman, who traces his organization's roots back to the Luddite machine-smashing movement in England, thinks in historic terms. TWS, he says, is responding to a shift in the forces that in the late 1970s pushed it toward a centralized existence in the urban centers. In his view, the grassroots activists were burned out and discouraged in the aftermath of RARE II. They needed time to catch their breath and recruit new people.

"Now the committed people are recharged. TWS was sort of forced into making forest planning more grassroots because the grassroots were taking over. There have been little Sagebrush Rebellions within the national environmental groups -- it's caused lots of state and local groups to form and to take action. TWS may be hustling to get in front of the parade.

"But it may be a good thing --

more of a relation between equals because the Society needs the local people -- they're the ones that know the forests."

Eaton, however, wonders how much attention the Society will pay to the grassroots, even on forest planning. "I suspect they'll work directly with the Forest Service."

Eaton says it is not only TWS which is neglecting the ground. "There is less and less grassroots organizing going on. Only a few groups are working in the old style." He thinks environmental causes may still be getting a free ride on past efforts. "I'm afraid people may perceive we're stronger than we are. Media coverage is fine. But there have to be folks out there working on the issues."

Do the alumni ever question their approach to the issues? Only Eaton admitted to a bit of doubt. "I have very fond memories of working for the Wilderness Society in those days. But it was a shock to be fired while earning \$12,000 a year and have your replacement earn \$43,000. It made me wonder what I'd been doing all those years."

Eaton's wondering apparently didn't last long. Today he says he earns less as head of the California Wilderness Coalition than he did in his Wilderness Society days.

To save the Yellowstone

by Betsy Bernfeld

The biggest threat to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is the combined effects of six 50-year national forest management plans, says Bill Turnage, executive director of The Wilderness Society.

"If the forest plans are implemented, the ecosystem is gone," Turnage said during a recent tour of the Yellowstone area.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, depending on whom is measuring, consists of six to 10 million acres of land in and around Yellowstone National Park. The land is administered by five or six different national forests answering to three different regional offices, two national parks, two national wildlife refuges and three state governments.

According to Turnage, "The nub of the issue is the... national forests. That's where the real problem is. We could protect the ecosystem if the

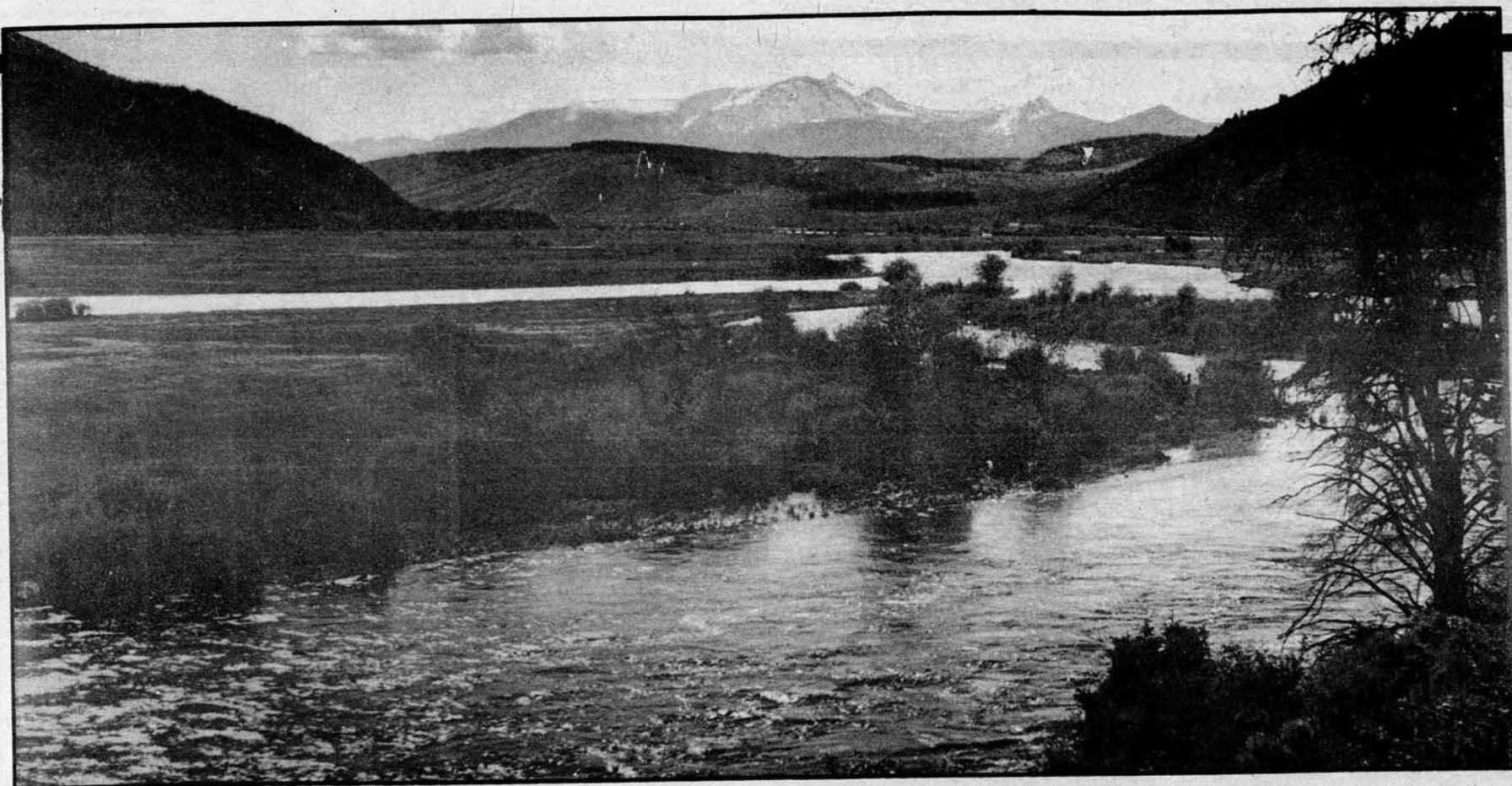
national forests were properly managed."

To influence the Forest Service's management process, the Wilderness Society is spending \$4 million on critiques of the 50-year management plans of 14 national forests.

Turnage said his organization will have 18 staff members, including economists, ecologists and lawyers, working full-time and 12 working half-time on the critiques.

According to Society staff member Maggie Coon, the Bridger-Teton National Forest Plan in Wyoming is "the most complex and significant in the entire nation." Coon said the three million acre Bridger-Teton is the "central element of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem" and its plan, due in October, is critical in the context of the ecosystem.

In addition to a critique of the Bridger-Teton plan, Turnage said his group will open a one-person regional office in Jackson this fall to focus on



The Big Hole Valley, surrounded by Beaverhead National Forest

Montana debates: To road or not to road the Big Hole?

by Pat Ford

The Montana-Idaho border twists and turns, following the Continental Divide. On the Montana side of the southernmost 150 miles of that border ranges the Beaverhead National Forest -- 2.1 million acres in seven chunks separated by broad valleys and rangeland, ranches and a few small towns, with Dillon the largest at 4,000. The Beaverhead is headwater for rivers, summer range for big game and cattle, and home to lodgepole pine and Douglas fir in scattered but substantial forests.

How and for what purposes should the Beaverhead National Forest be managed? Over 80 percent of 780 respondents to the Beaverhead's draft management plan rejected the Forest Service's proposed answer. Area ranchers as well as sportspeople and conservationists asked for less emphasis on timber and many fewer roads.

The Beaverhead's plans for the Big

Hole River watershed galvanized opponents. "The most amazing aspect of the Beaverhead's plan," says rancher Jim Welch, "is their contemplation of a complete alteration of the Big Hole ecosystem over the next 30 years at great expense to U.S. taxpayers." Nearly all the Big Hole's headwaters are on the Beaverhead, and nearly all of it is roadless.

"The Big Hole River is one of the finest trout streams in the country," says Bob Martinka of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. "And the drainage probably has the highest-quality elk hunting in Montana."

The plan proposes building 2,925 miles of new roads over 50 years, nearly tripling the forest's road network. It proposes an average annual timber harvest of 23.8 million board feet for the next decade -- below average offerings, but above average sales, in recent years. But the logging isn't concentrated. About 60 percent of new road mileage and two-thirds of the timber harvest over the next decade is planned in the Big Hole.

"If this happens, the limited elk security cover will be further reduced... habitat will decline," Martinka says. "We want to see much more of the Big Hole drainage left roadless than the Forest Service is recommending."

The Montana Wildlands Coalition's statewide wilderness proposal includes some 331,000 acres in the drainage, and 457,408 total acres on the Beaverhead -- 37 percent of the Forest's eligible roadless lands. A few ranchers, like Welch, have endorsed wilderness for one area -- the North Big Hole, adjoining the Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness. But most favor leaving the land as it is, without roads or special designation. The Beaverhead Forest has recommended 123,000 acres of wilderness in the Big Hole drainage, and 156,000 (13 percent of eligible land) for the entire forest.

Ralph Nichols has been ranching in the Big Hole Valley, about 17 miles north of Wisdom, for 35 years. "I don't have any grazing on the

Beaverhead Forest," he says, "but I depend on the water draining off. Clearcuts are about the only harvest method used up here, and they lead to earlier runoff so you don't have water late in the year. And the roads spoil the scenery." Welch has another concern, "This is a high-alpine valley, largely weed-free," adds Welch. "Roads will introduce knapweed," which reduces forage for wildlife and cattle.

Opponents have had a ready weapon to combat roading and logging in the Big Hole -- its economics. "We started to talk about below-cost sales on the Beaverhead in 1979," says Al Luebeck of Beaverhead Forest Concerned Citizens, a grassroots wilderness group with members in five counties. "The forest planners got angry then when we raised it." One of the first studies of the issue, the Natural Resources Defense Council's 1980 *Giving Away the National Forests*, found the Beaverhead's timber program lost money even

(Continued on page 12)

ecosystem

the management of the Yellowstone ecosystem.

Turnage called the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem "probably the most environmentally sensitive area in the United States." On the positive side, Turnage said the ecosystem is "still the largest essentially wild area in the temperate part of the world." And he said several million acres of "absolutely wild" lands are still unprotected there.

But Turnage said that forest plans within the area call for increasing road mileage by at least 50 percent in 50 years and overall timber harvest levels are expected to double.

"To add insult to injury," Turnage said U.S. taxpayers are "losing money hand over fist" on the timber sales. Society statistics reveal that over the past six years on four national forests in the Greater Yellowstone Eco-

system, between 29 cents and 69 cents has been lost on every dollar invested in timbering programs.

Turnage said other threats to the ecosystem include lack of cooperation between management agencies, Wyoming and Idaho congressional delegations which are "not protective" of the area, acid rain and plans for geothermal development.

He said the only way to protect the area is to "make it a national issue and campaign."

With an office in Jackson, Turnage said the Wilderness Society would have a person to serve as a liaison between local groups and Washington, D.C., bringing his group's national media contacts and lobbying capabilities to the issue.

According to Turnage, the goal is to "take the Forest Service out of its current obsession with commodity production," and try to "make it into a resource management and resource conservation organization."

Of upper level Forest Service officials, Turnage said, "History has passed them by." They have been

trained for 20 to 30 years to cut timber and build roads, but the demand no longer exists, according to Turnage.

He said that in the 21st century, the national forests are not going to play a critical role in timber production because there will be a surplus of timber in the nation. But they will play an absolutely vital role for providing water, gene diversity, wildlife and recreation, he said.

Turnage had some general recommendations for management within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. "In the long run there should be very, very little timber cut on these forests." Oil and gas development should be "minimal" and only where the activity is clearly not in conflict with the environment. With 11,000 miles of forest roads already in the Yellowstone ecosystem, the Forest Service "shouldn't ever build another."

"These forests are too precious and biologically too important to this country to be using them for sticks of wood or an itty-bitty bit of oil," Turnage said.



William Turnage

12-High Country News -- August 5, 1985

The Beaverhead...

(Continued from page 11)

during times of high demand in the 1970s.

"They're spending way more than what the timber's worth," says Ralph Nichols. "All the sales are deficit sales. I can't see the sense in selling it for a loss, especially when it hurts watershed and wildlife." A 1984 Wilderness Society study, employing the Forest Service's own data, found the Beaverhead timber program returned just 11 cents on every dollar spent in the last six years.

The Beaverhead's draft plan was released in February 1985, with a public comment deadline of June 1. Opponents generated over 600 written responses. "Beaverhead Forest Concerned Citizens has been active for eight and a half years," says Luebeck. "Our machinery was in place to organize comment. We alerted our members and they wrote letters." Concerned Citizens, local sportsmen's organizations, and Trout Unlimited also formed the Big Hole Watershed Coalition, which publicized the Big Hole and generated letters.

As part of a major new program to analyze and organize on national forest plans (see related stories), the Wilderness Society sent an alert on the Beaverhead plan to some 2,500 Montanans. In mid-May, it held four public workshops on the plan and other Montana wildlands in Butte, Missoula, Great Falls and Billings.

In the Big Hole itself, Jim Welch organized ranchers against the plan: "The Forest's own workshops on the plan were misleading. So I started a public information campaign. When ranchers saw maps showing the proposed roads and logging, they started to realize the impact to their operations." Welch, who bought his ranch in 1981, estimates 75 percent of the ranchers in the Big Hole oppose the planned roadbuilding. "An awful

lot of public opinion here is against this roadbuilding," is how Ralph Nichols puts it. "A lot of ranchers don't like the word 'wilderness,' but they don't want the development either. We want to see it left as it is."

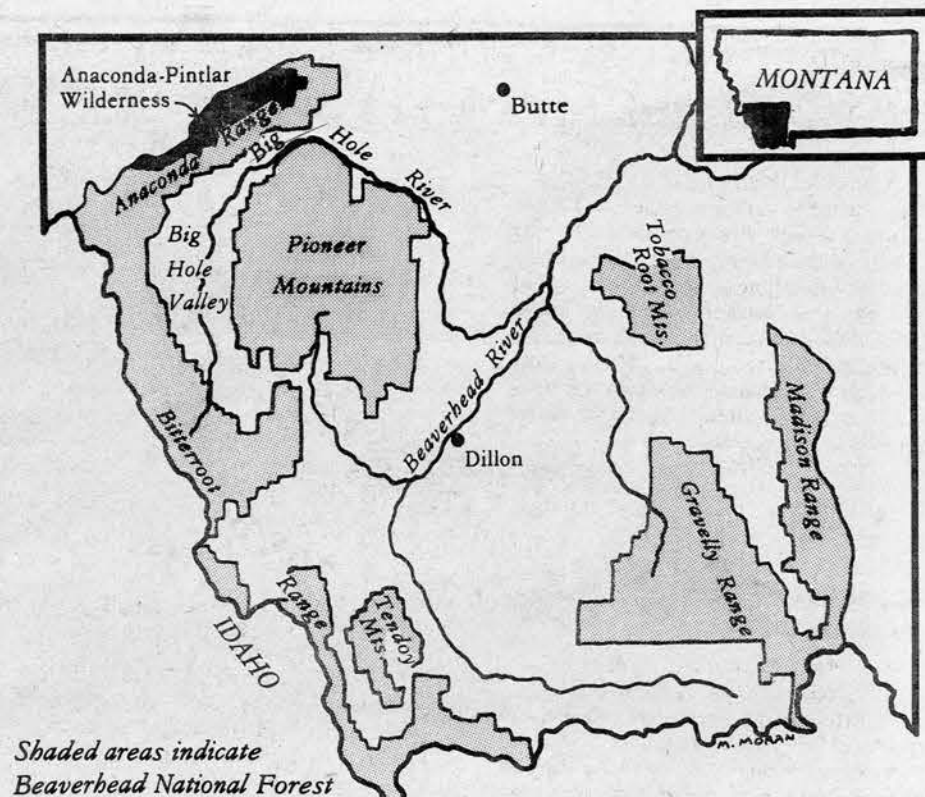
The organizing succeeded. "We're right in the middle of summarizing public comment now," says Beaverhead public information specialist Sherry Milburn. "...we received about 780 comments, with about 80 percent of them from conservation groups or individual conservationists."

"It's clear that public emphasis has shifted some towards preservation of the Big Hole Valley in its present state," concludes Beaverhead planner Susan Giannettino.

The size of comment is only part of the story. The Wilderness Society submitted a 55-page critique of the Beaverhead Plan. It contains long sections on watershed fisheries and uneconomic timber production. "We think we've laid the basis for successful legal challenge if the plan isn't changed," says regional representative Tom Robinson.

The Wilderness Society response also contains a positive alternative. "The Conservationists' Alternative for the Beaverhead essentially just pulls together the ideas and agreements of local conservationists over the last 10 years," says veteran Montana wilderness leader Bill Cunningham. "It's a grassroots alternative that TWS has written up in Forest Service nomenclature." The alternative includes detailed descriptions and maps of the six areas totalling 457,408 acres conservationists support for wilderness, and six other areas totalling 225,251 acres recommended as "areas of special concern" to be managed primarily to retain natural values.

In addition, it proposes strengthened language in the Beaverhead's



Shaded areas indicate
Beaverhead National Forest

prescriptions for managing roadless land. "The present prescriptions are so loose and weak that there's really no such thing as roadless management on the Beaverhead outside of wilderness," says Tom Robinson.

In addition to detailed comments on the fish and wildlife impacts of the plan, the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department hired forester John Grove to analyze the economics of the Beaverhead's timber program. "My major conclusion was that practically all their sales planned for the next 10 years are below-cost sales," Grove says. "Including road costs, the Beaverhead will lose about \$1 million a year on their timber program. For every dollar invested, 9 cents will be returned."

The strongest critique came from Randal O'Toole, founder of *Forest Planning* magazine based in Portland, Oregon, whom Jim Welch hired to analyze the Beaverhead plan. O'Toole's command of FORPLAN -- the computer program used to prepare all national forest plans -- produced what Welch, Cunningham and

Luebeck called a "devastating" 25-page report.

O'Toole found that Beaverhead timber values used in FORPLAN were nearly triple the forest's own estimates. When he corrected them to reflect bid prices received on the forest since 1981, the land the forest could afford to cut had shrunk from 730,000 to 153,431 acres. O'Toole also found that the Beaverhead plan assumes timber prices will rise over the next decade, even though the Forest Service's own most recent official forecast predicts they will fall. In the North Big Hole roadless area, he found that sales will have to be purchased for three to 13 times as much as present average bids just to break even.

His analysis of the forest's sediment yield estimates concludes that sediment yield forestwide is underestimated by a factor of six, and in parts of the Big Hole by a factor of 15.

O'Toole's conclusions are based on the Forest Service's own computer

(Continued on page 15)

Wilderness Society aims its big guns at 14 forest plans

The Wilderness Society's extensive work on Montana's Beaverhead National Forest Plan is part of its new program to radically alter Forest Service economic practices. A professional staff of economists, foresters, attorneys, lobbyists and media specialists will analyze, publicize, organize, and if necessary sue, on 14 national forest management plans. Although the program is nationwide, five national forests in the Northern Rockies are getting particular attention -- the Beaverhead, the Bridger-Teton in Wyoming, and the Clearwater, Payette, and Boise forests in Idaho.

This national forest planning program is the centerpiece of the Society's new resource and economics department. "We decided to focus on national forest plans because so many are imminent," department head Pete Emerson says. "And it fits right in with our broader goal of changing the way the Forest Service does business."

For each forest, the Society will produce a detailed economic and resource analysis of the forest plan, and in most cases a positive alternative to it. A brochure and/or alert on the plan will be mailed regionally to the widest list of

conservationists and sportsmen TWS can assemble. Educational workshops for activists and the public will be held in major cities near each forest. A thorough media campaign -- press conferences, radio and TV appearances, editorial board visits -- will occur simultaneously. And department attorneys will be prepared to appeal any of the 14 plans judged legally wanting.

Tom Robinson heads the Society's Northern Rockies field office in Boise. "Over five million acres of de facto wilderness will be allocated in these five forest plans," Robinson says. "If the plans really comply with the National Forest Management Act -- with its timberland suitability, economic, water quality protection, and fish and wildlife provisions -- leaving most of those acres roadless will be the natural result."

"We intend to assure compliance -- by detailed resource and legal analysis of each plan, backed by our commitment to take each one to court if necessary."

With the Beaverhead public comment complete, Robinson's office is now focusing on the Clearwater National Forest Draft Plan, released May 15. Robinson has hired Craig Gehrke, former public lands coordin-

ator with the Idaho Conservation League, to assemble TWS' critique and alternative to the Clearwater Plan.

"The Forest Service has a mistaken impression that the Clearwater is a timber forest," says Gehrke. "But their harvest plan requires a huge taxpayer subsidy. I expect we will strongly emphasize timberland and economic suitability."

"The Clearwater is the best example in my region of sharp conflict between timber and wildlife values," adds Robinson. "The Clearwater's roadless areas are crucial to Idaho outfitters. And it is Idaho Fish and Game's top priority forest -- they recommend even more wilderness on the Clearwater than Idaho conservationists do."

Robinson and Gehrke will then undertake the same effort on the Payette and Boise Forest Plans, scheduled for release in late summer. The Bridger-Teton Plan, due out in October, will be analyzed by Barry Flamm, a former supervisor of the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming, now chief forester for the Wilderness Society in Washington, D.C. The media campaign for each forest will be organized by the Society's public affairs specialist, Deanne Kloepper, a native Idahoan.

The department has also begun a grassroots bulletin covering all forest plans nationwide and national forest policy and budget action in Washington. It will announce and cover congressional actions and hearings on Forest Service budgets and policy, court cases and decisions affecting national forest roadless areas, and the progress of forest plans. Those wishing to receive the Forest Plan Bulletin can do so by writing Denise Hayman, TWS, 1400 Eye Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Tom Robinson has an additional goal for the new resources now available in his office. "I want all this expertise and organizing to substantially strengthen the grassroots wilderness forces in my region."

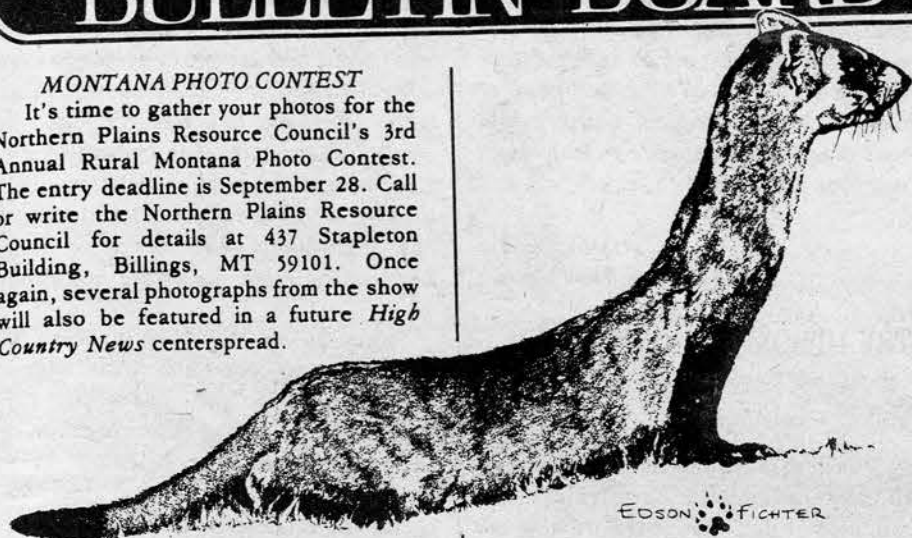
Grassroots conservationists in the West remember the almost total elimination of TWS' experienced field staff by incoming president Bill Turnage five years ago. The TWS field program has been rebuilt since then, but Western wilderness activists have remained somewhat wary of the grassroots commitment at the Society's top levels. Robinson intends to use his new resources to end those doubts.

--Pat Ford

BULLETIN BOARD

MONTANA PHOTO CONTEST

It's time to gather your photos for the Northern Plains Resource Council's 3rd Annual Rural Montana Photo Contest. The entry deadline is September 28. Call or write the Northern Plains Resource Council for details at 437 Stapleton Building, Billings, MT 59101. Once again, several photographs from the show will also be featured in a future *High Country News* centerspread.



VOLUNTEERS FOR OUTDOOR COLORADO

While 72 percent of Colorado residents participate regularly in outdoor recreation within the state, only six percent have ever been involved in an effort to maintain a local or state public area. But 58 percent said recently they'd like to help. The statistics were gathered during a public opinion poll conducted by Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, a recently formed Colorado group which organizes local volunteers to perform outdoor improvements on Colorado public lands. They are organizing several projects for the summer and early fall, and if you'd like to participate, contact VOC at 1410 Grant St., Denver, CO 80203 (303/830-7792).

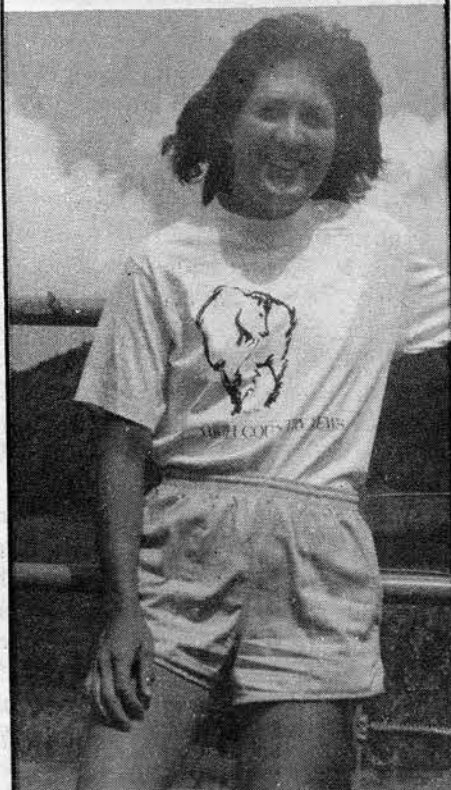
IDAHO FARM HOTLINE

A hotline has been set up for Idaho farmers troubled by financial and personal problems. Economically strapped farmers can use the service for food relief and to find out what financial support is available. The service itself, however, is also financially strapped. For information or to make a donation, call 1-800-257-3276.

MONTANA WALKS

The Montana Wilderness Association is offering a series of day and overnight hikes during August and into September as part of their Wilderness Walks Program. Walk areas include the Cabinet Lake Country and the proposed Ski Yellowstone area of Mt. Hegben in the Gallatin National Forest. For a copy of the hiking schedule contact the Montana Wilderness Association, Box 635, Helena, MT 59624 (406/443-7350).

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ENDANGERED SPECIES BULLETIN

Thanks to the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources, a government bulletin on the endangered species program is available to a wider audience. In 1981, budget cuts limited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bulletin to federal employees only. But the university stepped in to offer the reprinted bulletin -- plus additional endangered species news -- for \$12 a year. *The Endangered Species Technical Bulletin Reprint* is available from the Wildland Management Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Checks should be made out to the university.

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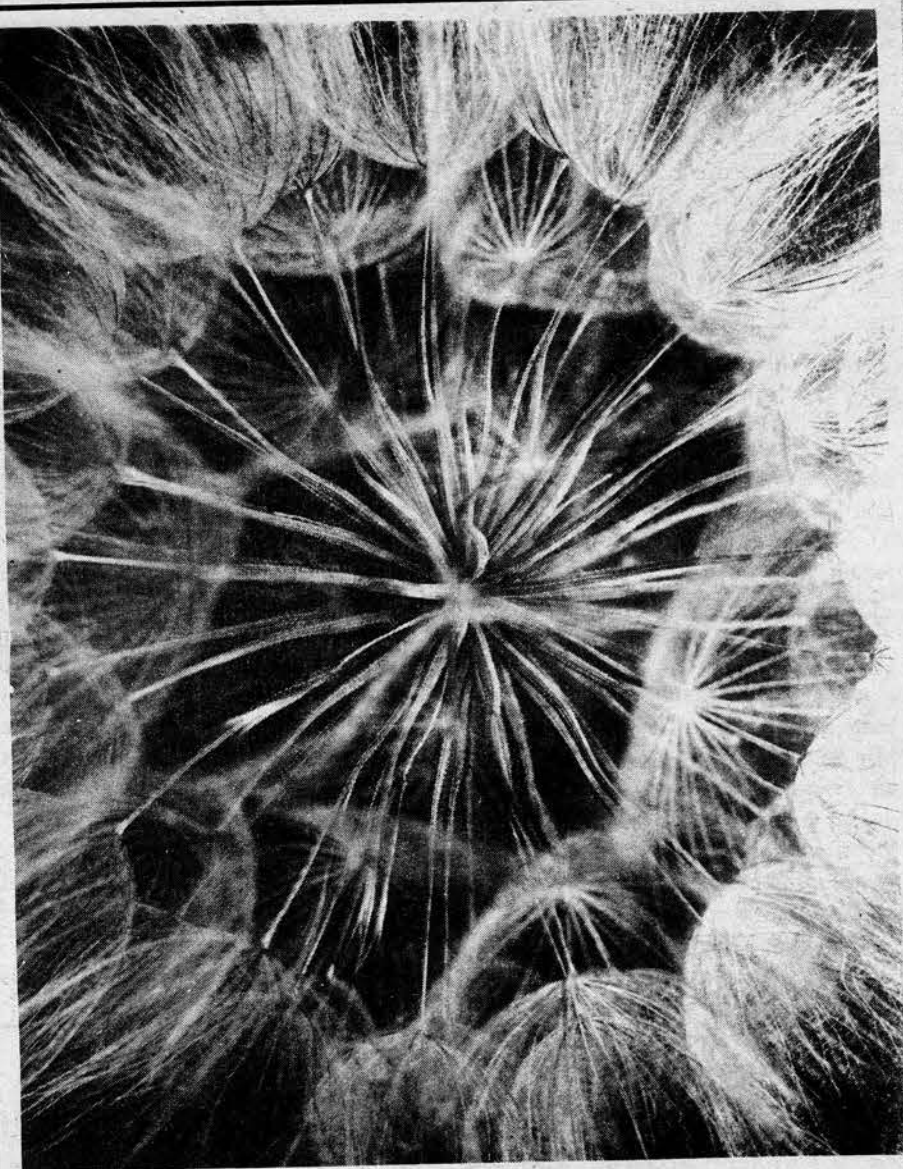
Meeteetse, Wyoming, residents haven't taken the discovery of black-footed ferrets lightly, reports *The Black-footed Ferret Newsletter*, published by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. "In fact, you might say they are all ferret-crazy." A major booster is Lucille Hogg, proprietor of Lucille's Cafe. It was Hogg's dog, after all, who rediscovered the ferret colony in Meeteetse by killing one of its inhabitants. The cafe features a special room called the Ferret Den where ferret nuggets (chicken) are served, and ferret-imprinted t-shirts are for sale at the cafe. When not at the cafe, Mrs. Hogg plays for the Ferretes softball team. The newsletter also reports that a Star Valley, Wyoming, high school student has attracted 25 members to a Ferret Fan Club. And coming soon is a sign at the Meeteetse city limits proclaiming the town the "Ferret Capital of the World." If you'd like to receive the newsletter, write: Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 5400 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82002.

WAR AND ECOLOGY

The Rocky Mountain Peace Center in Boulder, Colorado, sent us a provocative article by Eric Holle titled "Ecological Decay as a Contribution to Political Violence." Its thesis is that ensuring a sustainable resource base in areas such as Latin and Central America can help prevent wars. The Peace Center, which distributes regular newspaper commentaries and offers workshops, study groups and nonviolence training, can be reached at Box 1156, Boulder, CO 80306 (303/444-6981).

SAWTOOTH PLAN

The Sawtooth National Forest in central Idaho has released its 50-year Draft Forest Land and Resource Management Plan outlining 12 options for management and proposing a recreational emphasis as the preferred approach. A public review period ends October 5. For a copy of the draft plan and a schedule of public meetings in August contact the Sawtooth National Forest, 1525 Addison Avenue East, Twin Falls, ID 83301 (208/737-3200).



RENEW YOURSELF

There is still time to renew your subscription to *High Country News* at present rates and thereby stave off our September 1 increase of \$2 a year for individuals and \$3 a year for businesses and institutions.

If you are wondering when your present subscription ends, consult the mailing label on this paper. The number on the bottom line, far left, is the expiration code. The first letter is the month -- 1 through 9 for Jan. through

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14-High Country News -- August 5, 1985

LETTERS

DIVIDES VERSUS PASSES

Dear HCN,

A lot has been heard from special interests on the possible improvements of a marshy stretch of road in the Bridger-Teton National Forest (HCN, 7/22/85). I would like to speak for the general interest on behalf of my forebear, Capt. William F. Reynolds, who named Union Pass. He crossed it on all fours, breaking trail through the snow while leading an Army exploration party on May 31, 1860. This was the famous time his guide, Jim Bridger, got lost.

Capt. Reynolds called it Union Pass because he and others in his party feared the oncoming Civil War. They hoped that knowledge of this splendid part of the country might pull the nation together. Unfortunately, it was not enough.

Divides keep people apart; passes are intended to bring them together. I see no harm in hardy travellers from Sublette County visiting upper Fremont County without passing through Jackson Hole. Nor do I see much problem in Dubois people visiting Pinedale. If a boggy stretch of road gets improved, a few rugged vehicles might make it a few months in the year. People who work on the land, like ranchers, can't vacation in the summer, but maybe the vacationers would be school teachers or retired folk.

As for the trees, our choice in the forest is between the axe and fire. Down in the Lander area the choice was made for fire. Last summer a careless vacation fire blazed the forest a mile from our ranch. It's scary to see your animals, your fields, your home put to risk. Once the bark beetle is well established, lightning can be just as dangerous as hikers. Where there's a chance to thin some trees and make houses for people instead of beetles, perhaps we should try.

Sublette and Fremont -- Capt. Reynolds and Jim Bridger. Let's not be too selfish as we recall their dreams. Let's keep it Union Pass and not turn it into Union Divide.

Dave Reynolds
Lander, Wyoming

(The above letter is adapted from remarks offered at a public meeting on the Union Pass road in Dubois on July 12.)

ELECTORAL ECOTAGE

Dear HCN,

Have we become so identified with machines that we can't talk about their destruction without thinking of it in terms of violence against people? Unfortunately, Chip Rawlins' review of *Ecodefense* perpetuates this confusion.

The real issue is not morality, but pragmatics. Ecodefense sabotage will work if contractors and corporations get the message that a project will cost more than it pays if their machinery gets trashed. Machines don't have "rights" -- but they do have replacement costs. When money buys legislators and big business sabotages the environment, then monkey-wrenching is just another way to cast your vote for the Earth.

Robert Brothers
Williams Valley, Oregon

APPALLED

Dear HCN,

In response to Jean and Dewey Radcliff's letter in HCN July 22, their method of escaping the issues is appalling. To claim that overpopulation is the problem in Denver and not bluegrass lawns, is obvious. But people such as the Radcliffs, who move on to a less populated area to escape the hordes, only add to the problems of the new area they've settled. Their attitude needs some help. As we sit here in "water country" with the worst drought in 25 years, Los Angeles and Denver are sucking our rivers dry. I can only hope that some people in those areas will do their part to conserve the precious fresh water that they receive so cheaply.

We all live in a world of rapid overpopulation, and we will all suffer the consequences. It's up to us to take responsibility now for the present and the future.

Martha Wood Colling
Driggs, Idaho

TRASHING BANDELIER

Dear HCN,

A few weeks ago a couple of us powerboated quietly up to the headwaters of the Cochiti Dam (HCN, 7/22/85). We passed the eagle trees, went into all of the side canyons, saw the old abandoned pumping station and finally arrived at the end of the lake where the river was running into the backwater. Our map indicated that we were about six miles below Otowi Bridge. Who says that the Rio Grande is not a navigable stream?

When the water level recedes, a vast amount of trash will be left on the banks. Old tires, beverage cans and bottles, styrofoam pieces, and all manner of floatable junk will remain behind, not only on the Bandelier Wilderness shores, but along the whole high-water line.

We should be proud that we have

managed to turn our vital Rio Grande into a public dump. The canyons into which the high water has invaded now have a turbid mash of black goop at their innermost flooded ends. It will take many cloudbursts to clean them out over the years.

Corry McDonald
Albuquerque, New Mexico

THE UTMOST ASSAULT

Dear HCN,

I wish to compliment C.L. Rawlins on the admirable restraint he exhibited in his thoughtful review of *Ecodefense* (HCN, 7/8/85). However, my compliment to Chip (I won't pretend that C.L. isn't a friend of mine) has at its core a polyp of contention. To a great extent, the urge for revenge, whether motivated by personal or environmental attack, is a function of the endocrine system and its results are usually counterproductive, unless the desired product is continued hostility (the Reagan administration's foreign policy is a perfect example). Yes, Chip, better to cool off and seek a more logical, systematic solution.

The analogy used by both Chip and Abbey (in his Forward! to the book) of personal victimization from burglary mirrored by corporate pillage of wilderness is a powerful emotional statement. Chip's civilized, community-oriented reserve seems, on first appraisal, to be more rational and impeccable than Abbey's bombastic vendetta. Chip leads us to believe that the honorable "code of the West" lives on. "Most people refrain from kicking ass, even though their personal conviction may be toward ass-kicking with spurs on. Without this restraint a community, especially a diverse community, becomes a struggle..."

Let us pretend for the moment that the code of the West was ever anything other than a function of wishful mythology and we will envision a community of "God-fear-

ing" individuals who coolly settle their problems without violence (perhaps with Matt Dillon waiting in the wings to enforce the code). Facetiousness aside, perhaps this was the case in some Western frontier communities. But what cannot be denied is this: anyone who was not considered part of the community was open to fatal ass-kicking from the entire community.

This, as you may have guessed, is my point of contention with Chip's argument. In the case of the "Indians" it was the ethnocentrism of the community that justified their victimization. Chip argues that the means of ecodefense are not justified by a situation that he supposes is not yet critical. "The fact that Dave Foreman is, as far as I know, walking around loose after having published this book persuades me that the utmost is not yet." The publication of *Ecodefense* is not, as enemies of environmentalism will assume, motivated by the self-interest of back-packers who want to hoard pristine wilderness for their exclusive use. It is motivated by the absolute necessity of preserving habitat for living creatures besides mankind. Detractors of the environmental movement are as blinded by anthropocentrism as the members of our Western community were blinded by ethnocentrism. The "Indians" aren't us so it's all right to slaughter them and steal their land. Tell me, Chip, has the situation of Griz, Cougar, Wolf, or Coyote reached "utmost"?

If we, in the enlightenment of the late 20th century, are really going to embrace a deeper sense of ecology than our forefathers, one that encompasses an us greater than a single ethnic group or a single species, then we must realize that unarmed nature is at war. And we who defend nature are at war with the perpetrators of an unconscionable genocide. Extinction is the "utmost" assault. Earth First!

Jose Knighton
Salt Lake City, Utah

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All conference registrations include two lunches, breaks, banquet, and conference materials. The Hitching Post Inn is the host hotel: 1700 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne WY 82001. All conference sessions are there. The hotel has blocked out 30-60 rooms until September 13th. Rates: \$39.00 single, \$45.00 double, extra person - no charge. Please use a card to confirm.

Make registration checks payable to: 1985 WYOPASS CONFERENCE
Mail this form with payment to: 1985 WYOPASS Conference, Cheyenne-Laramie County Regional Planning Office
2101 O'Neil Avenue Cheyenne, WY 82001 for further information call: (307) 632-1561.

OPINION

We are the prey

The grizzly bear occupies center stage among species which are threatened or endangered by man's activities. The reason is simple: it is the only animal which shares dominance with us and treats us as its prey.

Those who shiver at the idea of themselves as prey may want to read four articles by Paul Brodeur titled, "The Asbestos Industry on Trial," in the June 10, 17, 24 and July 7, 1985, issues of *The New Yorker*.

Those articles, no doubt to soon be issued as a book, describe how the asbestos industry, in league with many other institutions in American life, hid from the public the mineral's ability to kill and maim those who come in contact with it.

Workers who mine, manufacture and install asbestos products are most at risk. But so are the rest of us, whether we are students in schools or workers in office buildings insulated with asbestos, are mechanics who work on auto brakes, or are married to or the children of those who work with asbestos.

By this time, of course, we are, necessarily, inured to environmental horror stories -- whether it is Bhopal, toxic waste dumps, or nuclear tailings piles drifting into rivers or seeping into underground water supplies. Almost of necessity, those who do not totally shut out such information are forced to specialize: some of us are interested in pesticides in food, some in clean air, some in preserving islands of relative purity in the surviving wilderness lands.

All of us specialists, however, should be interested in Brodeur's articles because he achieves a certain universality. He shows how society's power centers -- not just the Manville Corporation and its lawyers, but also the insurance firms, *The New York Times*, U.S. Senator Gary Hart (whose aide says he may "call the *New Yorker* editor about the articles"), state legislatures and the medical and industrial health establishments -- conspired over a period of 50 years to conceal the effects of asbestos on our health, and then to protect the asbestos industry from punishment once the coverup was exposed.

Brodeur proves, as much as can be proven, that the asbestos industry, led by Manville, knew in the early 1930s that asbestos kills and cripples. That information was concealed until the 1960s, when the only heroes of this dismal tale -- attorneys in small firms who specialize in workmen's compensation and personal injury cases -- undertook to sue the asbestos manufacturers on behalf of the dying workers.

In the course of these trials, through diligent research and discovery, aided by some luck and guilty consciences among retired asbestos executives, they uncovered the plot and obtained tens of millions of dollars for their clients and themselves in the form of damages and punitive damages. The latter represented judgements by juries that Manville and other firms had deliberately concealed the truth about asbestos, and thus recklessly endangered their workers.

The first two articles are historic. The second two describe efforts by Manville, its insurers, and those relatively disinterested persons and institutions who identify the health of America with the health of its large industrial companies, to prevent the victims from getting their day in court and their just compensation. Of course, even when

the victims "win" there is the question of whether creatures of flesh and blood can be compensated for asbestosis, which leads to suffocation, or for malignant mesothelioma, which is cancer of the membrane that encases the lung or of the membrane that lines the abdominal cavity.

Industry's attempt at damage control had several aspects. According to Brodeur, it included almost deliberate downplaying or distortions of the asbestos situation by major media such as *The New York Times*; a war of words against the attorneys representing the asbestos victims by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren Burger and other pillars of the legal establishment; a bill introduced by Sen. Hart on behalf of Colorado-based Manville Corporation to transfer liability to the federal government; stonewalling in court; and finally, Manville's bankruptcy ploy, which has shielded the firm from lawsuits for several years now while those who need and deserve compensation die or suffer by the tens of thousands.

The scope of the problem is enormous. About 20 million people have been exposed to the mineral, and roughly 20,000 will die yearly as a result. In addition to these individual victims, the bankruptcy has stymied thousands of institutions such as school districts, which are saddled with the cost of removing asbestos from their buildings or encapsulating it.

The problem is important for reasons that go beyond the incredible havoc wreaked by asbestos. It is almost certain that asbestos will set a precedent for the other, later poisons that the chemical industry has been releasing into the environment in large quantities since the end of World War II. Which of these many substances will explode on the scale of asbestos is not yet known, but it is statistically probable that one or more will.

Brodeur's conclusion is that the asbestos mess, and by extension the toxic substances mess is a result of our original callousness toward workers. In the case of asbestos, that callousness was shown in the 1930s not just by the asbestos and insurance companies (the latter knew enough to not insure asbestos workers back then), but also by state legislatures, which passed workmen's compensation laws to shield employers from the full costs of the damage they were doing. Compensation laws, he writes, made the cost of occupational disease calculable and manageable. Just another business expense.

In Brodeur's view, had society -- the courts, legislatures, insurance companies, even the asbestos firms -- cared about workers, asbestos would not today be in the air of our schools, offices, and factories. Nor would its particles be embedded in the lungs, the lung linings, and the abdominal linings of millions of Americans.

It is difficult to argue with Brodeur's interpretation of the larger meaning of the asbestos calamity. But there is another way to look at asbestos -- one Brodeur avoided in his quest to show the workers as helpless victims, the well-coiffed executives as villains, and the personal injury attorneys as heroes.

The ideology of the piece is that of liberal reform. Society's institutions are rotten, and must be reformed. But another theoretical framework

THE NEW YORKER THE ASBESTOS INDUSTRY ON TRIAL

WHEN the Manville Corporation, the world's largest asbestos company, with twenty-five thousand employees and more than fifty factories and mines in the United States and Canada, filed a debtor's petition for reorganization and protection under Chapter 11 of the federal Bankruptcy Code, on August 26, 1982, it did so in order to force a halt to thousands of lawsuits that had been brought against it by workers who claimed that they had developed lung cancer and other diseases as a result of their exposure to asbestos in Manville's insulation products, and were alleging that the company had failed to warn them of the dangers involved. The story made the front page of virtually every major newspaper in the country, because Manville (for-

suggests itself; that typified by Yellowstone and grizzlies.

What we see in the asbestos case is the preying of the weak on the strong. The hierarchy of executives, of insurers, of company doctors and attorneys fed off the workers. And the workers, although they had their unions and camaraderie, also had an interest -- until they were at death's door, until they could actually see the grizzly churning after them -- to ignore the fact that they were prey.

What does such a bleak social Darwinism add to Brodeur's focus on institutions. Strangely enough, I think it should remove some of the helplessness we feel when confronted with industry's multi-pronged assaults on the air, soil and water we depend on.

It is both humane and understandable to try to excuse the workers from any responsibility for their plight. We live in an age when "helpless victim" has almost become one word. But it didn't help the victims of Manville and its allies to ignore what was happening to them. And it won't help us to pretend that hosts of predators -- well coiffed, often from good schools and with fine training in the humanities and arts -- are even now in the underbrush, snuffling around, making a good living and fully prepared to kill if that's what it takes to protect the living.

It is, of course, nothing personal. The men and women at Manville, or Metropolitan Life, or Union Carbide, or Philip Morris, don't want us dead. But if continuation of their industry, their profits, their jobs, requires the sacrifice of even hundreds of thousands of human lives, they will not shrink from those deaths. These articles on the asbestos industry, and the continued existence of the cigarette companies make that clear.

It is not comfortable to realize that we are prey. We would all rather feel secure than threatened. No one wants to know there are two-legged creatures, apparently of our own species, stalking us. But until we become conscious of their stalking, their willingness to kill, we can't begin to protect ourselves.

Fighting back does not guarantee survival. But it does guarantee self respect. And that is no small thing.

--Ed Marston

Beaverhead...

(Continued from page 12)

program and data; that's why it's so powerful," says Tom Robinson. "I'm delighted with O'Toole's study," says Al Luebeck. "We feel he's vindicated our concern for below-cost sales the last five years."

How will the Beaverhead Forest

respond? "We are open to making major changes," says planner Susan Giannettino. "What we gave the public was just a proposal." Decisions will be made in August, and the final plan is scheduled to be released in late September.

"I anticipate important changes," says Bill Cunningham. "We are seeing a change in the Forest Service, akin to their promotion of wilderness in the 1960s to counter national park

expansion. The same thing is happening now with the below-cost issue; they're scared. The recommendations in the Conservationists' Alternative are a graceful way for the Beaverhead to get off that hook."

"There's been a real strong reaction to O'Toole's study in the Forest Service," says Luebeck. "I'm not sure their wilderness recommendations will change much, but I think the road plans will."

"From conversations I've had," adds Welch, "my opinion is that the cut will be reduced to eight or nine million board feet and they'll adopt a program to build roads only where they'll pay for themselves and have demonstrable public benefit. I'm not sure the plan will come right out and say these things; they may just informally do them in some way. But if the plan itself isn't changed they'll be sued."

16-High Country News -- August 5, 1985

BOOK NOTES

WPPSS: A massive fiscal meltdown

The Fall of the House of WPPSS

Daniel Jack Chasan. Seattle, Washington: Sasquatch Publishing, 1985. 116 pages. \$9.95, paper.

Review by James Baker

The two worst blows to public confidence in the nuclear power industry are known by acronyms. TMI for Three Mile Island, where the core of a civilian reactor underwent a dreaded "meltdown," and WPPSS, aptly pronounced "whoops," for the Washington Public Power Supply System, which went bust in a massive "fiscal meltdown," as Daniel Jack Chasan calls it in his new book.

The fall of the house of WPPSS ultimately resulted in the largest municipal default in American history -- to the tune of more than \$7 billion.

Between 1971 and 1983, WPPSS, an umbrella agency composed mainly of small-town public utilities and rural electric co-ops throughout the Northwest, dreamed big and lost bigger trying to build five huge nuclear power plants. Gross mismanagement caused countless delays and foulups in construction, and eventually a projected cost overrun of no less than \$20 billion. As one extreme example among many, Chasan cites: "The single most highly publicized part of the whole construction process, probably, was the pipe hanger that had been put in, taken out, and put in again a total of 17 times."

Only one reactor ever went into operation. Two were mothballed indefinitely and two were cancelled outright in 1982. The latter two reactors had been financed entirely on municipal bonds issued by WPPSS. When electricity consumers were asked to pay up on bonds that had never generated a kilowatt and never would, they refused. Soon enough WPPSS defaulted on bonds carrying a face value of \$2.25 billion, which with interest would have paid a total of \$7.2 billion. The bonds' buyers were left holding a very large, very empty bag.

In untangling how and why WPPSS became synonymous with fiscal disaster, Chasan concludes: "Obviously, there was more than enough blame to go around. The scene of the crime had more fingerprints than a pay telephone." He points to the WPPSS Board's incompetence, its staff's mismanagement of construction, the contractors' greed, the bond merchants' calculated indifference to the growing catastrophe, the experts' blind faith in high technology and unending economic growth.

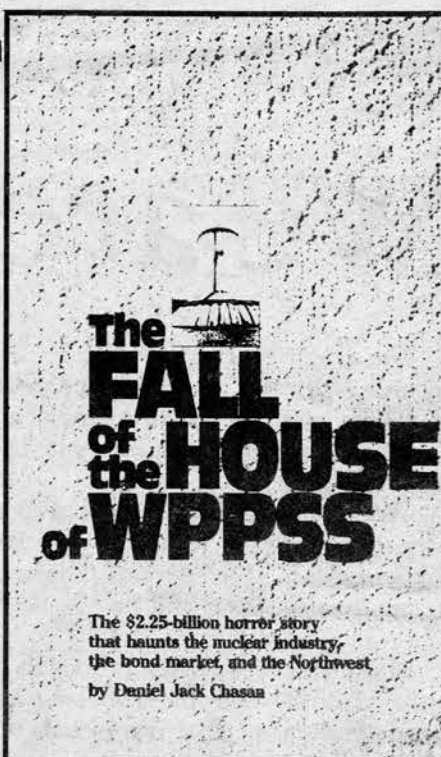
Chasan deals his harshest judgment to Donald Hodel, for whom WPPSS "was the perfect crime." As chief of the federal Bonneville Power Administration in 1976, Hodel personally crusaded for the WPPSS reactors, persuading -- "browbeating" may be a more appropriate word -- 88 public utilities to sign up for the two plants that ultimately precipitated the big default. But while WPPSS' star

flamed out, Hodel saw his own fortunes rise to Secretary of Energy, and now Secretary of the Interior in the Reagan administration.

Daniel Jack Chasan, a business editor in Seattle, must be congratulated for bringing a fair amount of wit to what could have been a dreary, infuriating tale. An example: "(WPPSS) was not the worst nuclear plant builder in the country. But -- with the exception of TVA, not just coincidentally another public agency -- its competitors didn't have the chutzpah or naivete to multiply their problems by five."

I have two criticisms of Chasan's book, both attributable to its origin as a seven-part serial in a weekly Seattle newsmagazine. First, while each of the seven chapters stands well on its own, the book reads disjointedly and lacks a strong narrative thread. Too much material is repeated. Clearly, Chasan should have reworked his magazine articles instead of just putting them between the covers of a book.

Second, *The Fall of the House of WPPSS* is journalism, not history. Concentrating on what it all meant and why it happened, Chasan fails, except for a sketchy timeline, to lay out chronologically the basic facts and flow of events in the WPPSS saga. Moreover, because he was writing his original magazine articles just for Washingtonians, who had been reading the headlines for years, Chasan assumes too much knowledge on the part of his reader, particularly



anyone who did not live in the Northwest during the last three or four years. For instance, the book does not explain until page 31 what the acronym WPPSS stands for.

However, readers everywhere should bear with the book's weaknesses because *The Fall of the House of WPPSS* is our first in-depth look at a blunder that nobody would want repeated anywhere, anytime. Unfortunately, it is already too late. As Chasan notes with a veritable catalog of examples, WPPSS was not the nuclear industry's only financial catastrophe -- just the biggest.

□

A freelance writer in Seattle, James Baker serves as associate director of the Washington Wilderness Coalition and frequently contributes to *High Country News*.

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WORK

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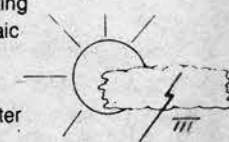
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