

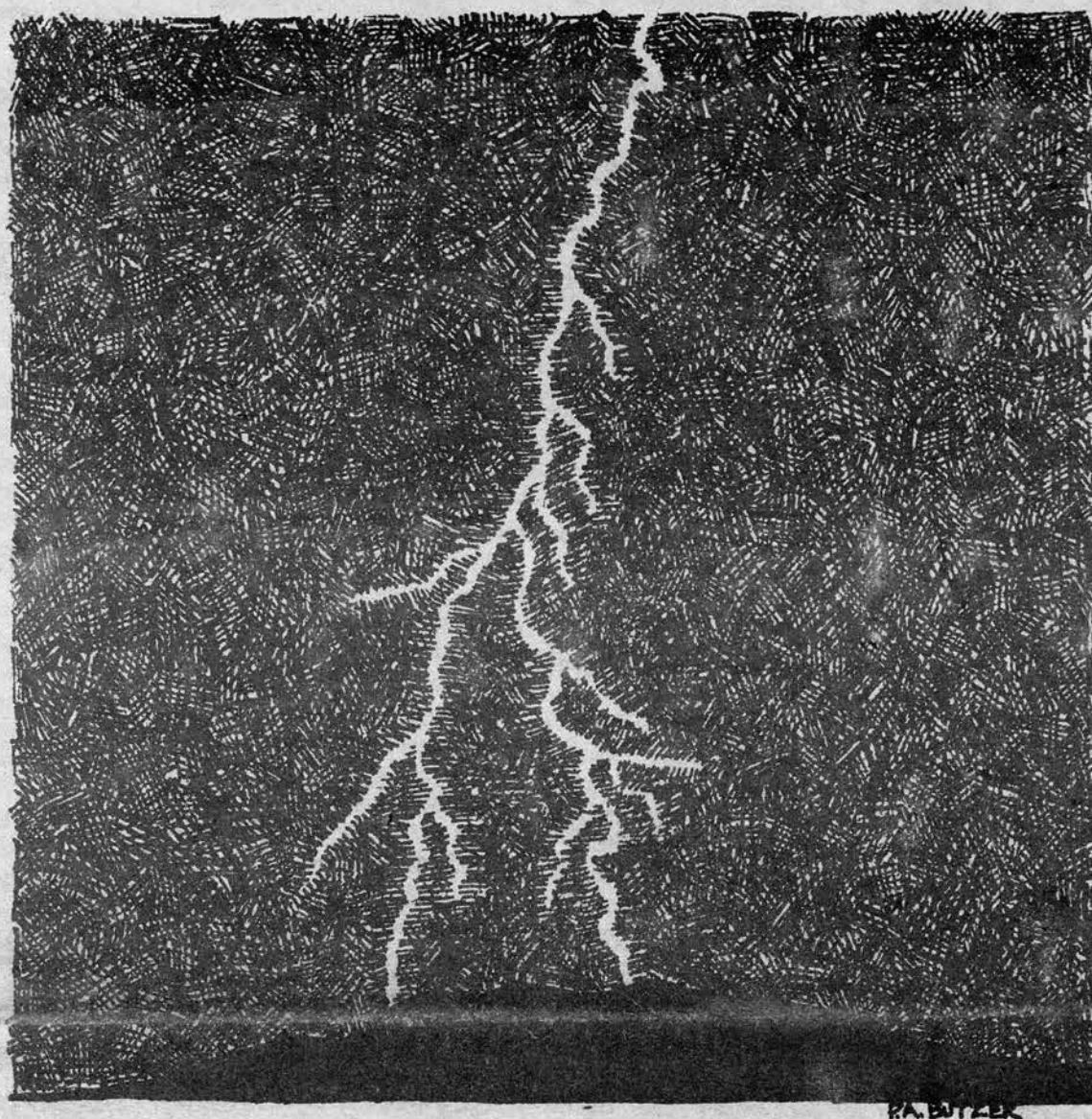
High Country News

August 19, 1985

Vol. 17 No. 16

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar



A fire lookout's job

How to articulate the delight?

Essay by Don Scheese
Illustrations by Peggy Butzer

"Don't you get lonely up here?" This is the question most often asked of me as the fire lookout on St. Joe Baldy in Idaho. It isn't posed immediately; typically, it follows a discussion of the weather ("Beautiful day!"), the view ("Great!"), and the game ("Seen any elk?").

Inevitably, though, it comes, often in the form of a declaration: "Yeah, must get awful lonesome up here after awhile."

To which I respond: "Nope." (Of course I don't tell them about my wife, who'll be joining me shortly.)

A few other inquiries, a few other laconic replies, ensue. Then my visitors conclude: "Geez, no wonder you're up here, you don't say much."

I smile, wave 'em off. Their rig rattles down the axle-busting, kidney-jolting rut of a road, and I'm alone again.

Thank Gawd.

How to articulate the delight which this job affords me?

Consider, first, the view. (It's hard to ignore.) To the east, nearly 50 miles away, Eagle and Ward Peaks, over 7,300 feet high, mark the Montana border. On the horizon east to south loom a series of protrusions, all over 6,000 feet: West and Middle Sisters, Snow and Twodot Peaks, and Marble, Lookout, Grandmother and Grandfather Mountains. Prominent to the southwest are Bald and Moscow Mountains, and for the sake of variety, due west is the farmland expanse of eastern Washington. My favorite view is to the north, for that direction allows for some imaginative geographical interpretation: on clear days with the glasses I conjure, out of the haze and clouds, apparitions of the craggy Selkirks, and when I'm feeling extremely optimistic I almost convince myself I'm gazing into another country.

I should also mention the various bodies of water visible from my perch. To the immediate south is the serpentine course of the lower St. Joe River, from here a plunge of 3,700 feet in two miles. Westward Benewah, Chatcolet, and Round Lakes vary in color during the day, their morning sky-blue surfaces transformed, by late

afternoon, to a shimmering silver. And corrugating the topography are the countless other drainages which feed the major rivers of the region -- the Joe, the Coeur d'Alene, and the Clearwater.

The evenings present a spectacle of a different kind. The lights of St. Maries glow like the embers of a giant campfire and suggest a small metropolis; farther west the lights of Plummer, Worley, and Rockford mark their locations. Sixty miles distant are the lights of Spokane. Seemingly as close is the panorama of night sky. Meteors sputter across the blackness, and the planets, constellations, and the various phases of the moon provide more light shows.

Yet working a lookout is so much more than pretty views -- after all, one can only take in the sights for so long. Some people believe poetry is "compressed thought"; so too is there a kind of poetry to this experience: the compression of time and events. "Things must get awful dull up here," say the tourists; little do they know how much happens in the short time I'm up here, for in two months I'm witness to four seasons. In early July the snowfields, still quite large on the

north-facing slopes, provide the runoff for the multitudes of wildflowers just now beginning to bloom; and after the dog days of mid-summer it will be time to pick huckleberries, before the late August rains extinguish the flaming autumn colors of the brush.

And there are the people, the 200-300 visitors each summer. Now don't get me wrong -- generally speaking, I like people. But, please, everything in moderation.

Forgive my misanthropic tendencies; I've always considered myself a loner. You must love yourself to enjoy this occupation. This is my fourth summer as a lookout, and the love affair continues, unabated.

Next time you visit, then, before asking me The Question, remember these words of the late great Southwestern naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch: You're never alone when you have yourself for company.

White Lightning, Rolling Thunder

5:55 p.m., July 28th. Just as we're sitting down to a dinner of spaghetti and meatballs, catching the last segment of National

(Continued on page 6)

WESTERN ROUNDUP



High Country News

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An Indian oil deal goes sour on James Watt

The Interior Department has announced that it intends to approve a controversial oil and gas contract between Conoco Oil and the Wind River Reservation tribes by mid-August. The approval was held up as the result of an alternative contract offered to the tribes in Wyoming by former Interior Secretary James Watt.

At the invitation of then newly elected Arapahoe Tribal Chairman Chester Armajo, Watt approached the Joint Business Council of the Arapahoe and Shoshone tribes last March. He proposed that the tribes hire Chuska Energy Co. to take over new and existing oil development. Chuska Energy had two owners, one of whom, George Bass, said his partner was a Navajo businessman.

Armajo subsequently wired Washington asking that the Interior Department withhold approval of the Conoco agreement, which had been negotiated over a 50-year period.

The Interior Secretary's deputy assistant reacted by withdrawing the authority of the director of the area Bureau of Indian Affairs, Richard Whitesell, to approve Indian mineral leases. Whitesell had recommended approval of the Conoco agreement.

Tom Acevedo, an attorney for the Arapahoe Tribe, said he believes Watt used his political influence and his

friendship with Interior Secretary Don Hodel to interfere with normal mineral agreement procedures. He said it is very unusual for Washington to take over evaluation of the economics of a mineral agreement, especially since the Interior Department's mineral experts are in Lakewood, Colorado.

Witt Field of the Interior solicitor's office said, however, that the Interior Secretary got involved in the decision because of Armajo's letter, not any pressure from Watt. Asked if there were any letter from Watt, Field refused to answer. Another Interior Department official, Carl Shaw, said it is not unusual for an area director's authority to be withdrawn when there is dissension within a tribe.

Interior compared a Chuska-type agreement with the Conoco agreement to determine which provided the tribes a better deal, Field said.

Whitesell of the Bureau of Indian Affairs said the Chuska deal offered considerable risk to the tribes. The tribes would pay Chuska 14 percent of the gross profits -- with operating expenses deducted. The federal analysis showed Conoco would net \$60-\$70 million in net profits over the life of the field while Chuska would yield \$45-\$50 million.

Faced with increasing tribal dissension over switching the con-

tract, Armajo withdrew his objection to Conoco. On July 12, the Interior Department said it would approve Conoco's renewed lease within 30 days.

Watt had touted the Chuska deal as a rare opportunity for the tribes. In a March 19 letter to Armajo, he said, "You'll go down in history as one of the leaders of your nation who made a difference and brought opportunity to your people... If we can take the personal insults, the ridicule and the demeaning attacks, the results will be worthwhile. I want to stand with you in fighting the major oil companies."

Although Watt was reported to be asking for 14 percent himself, the contract shows this is not true. Chuska president George Bass said Watt requested only a "modest fee," and Watt also insisted he be paid by Chuska, not by the tribes.

The Watt proposal exacerbated tension between the new Arapahoe Business Council and the Shoshone Business Council, which jointly rule the reservation. The Shoshone council steadfastly stood behind several oil and gas contracts the joint council had previously negotiated, and longtime Shoshone chairman Robert Harris told Armajo he should stop "listening to the whispers of a pot of 'gold' offered by Watt."

--Marjane Ambler

Dear friends,

We write this column with a feeling of expectation and regret. Expectation because it is time for HCN to skip an issue in honor of summer, and for the staff to recharge itself. Regret because of an embarrassment of riches -- more stories than will fit in this issue, aggravated by the fact that we will not appear again until Sept. 16.

This is also a time of change. In the population department, HCN board president Robert Wigington and spouse Nancy are parents of 8 pound, 5 ounce Timothy George. He was born on July 31. As a portent of things to come, the newborn timed his arrival so as to keep both parents up all night.

This is also the time of the quarterly changing of the intern guard and we wish Dan Cohen, who has filled that position for the past three months, farewell and best wishes.

Those who live in the northern tier of our territory should be on the lookout for HCN's director of development, Judy Moffatt, who will use her two weeks of leave to swing through Wyoming and Montana on behalf of the paper.

The extent to which HCN depends on the good will and generosity of others is legion, and we would like to thank a few of those who have been generous most recently. The Exxon Corporation sponsored an HCN staff member on a tour of Colorado and New Mexico energy and water facilities organized by the Colorado School of Mines Energy and Minerals Field Institute. Although no particular story will come out of that tour, it provided us with a wealth of stock photos -- including one of the entire tour group about to be swallowed up by a dragline shovel -- and valuable background on numerous issues.

Thanks are also due to the Colorado Water Workshop's Marlene



Energy tour group in a dragline shovel

Zanetell, whose hospitality at the recent water conference at Gunnison's Western State College has clearly resulted in a story. She was also good enough to provide mailing lists so that this copy of HCN can go out to several hundred people interested in water.

We are grateful to the Cloud Ridge Naturalists of Ward, Colorado, who are sponsoring a fall aspen ecology workshop, which will tour the Rocky Mountain National Park and several aspen forests in western Colorado. Proceeds of the Sept. 26-29 workshop will be divided between HCN and Western Colorado Congress. A Bulletin Board in this issue provides further information.

Subscription rates rise come September 1, so this is the last opportunity to renew at the old rates. Subscribers have been renewing in large numbers, for which we are also grateful.

Finally, we wish to bid goodbye for two years to friend and colleague Candi Harper. Candi was the producer, on air-host, fundraiser and everything else of *Colorado Speaks*, an environmentally oriented radio program sent free to 20 or so radio stations. Time permitting, she also wrote for *High Country News*, her most recent story appearing on our July 8 front page and covering the health dangers of the chemicals used in the fruit industry. She, her husband Paul Leiblich and son Harper have set sail for Athens, Greece, where Paul will administer a school and Candi will learn Greek, and probably start a few radio shows in her spare time. We wish her well, although everyone regrets the ending of *Colorado Speaks* with its August 9 program.

--the staff

Nevada protesters spike Navy's big guns

Surrounded by unexploded bombs weighing up to 2,000 lbs. and craters pockmarking the desert like a moonscape, 25 protesters camped out for days at a time this summer at a Navy bombing range in Nevada. They were protesting what one called the militarization of the West.

Bob Fulkerson, director of Citizen Alert in Reno, Nevada, was one of the first to camp at Lone Rock in the Bravo 20 bombing range some 30 miles northeast of the town of Fallon. The forbidding 40,000-acre alkali basin has been bombarded by Navy pilots since the 1940s. But Fulkerson charges that the range includes checkerboard parcels of Bureau of Land Management acreage that have never been transferred to the Navy.

Although the Navy cancelled strafing runs and sent in ordnance experts to teach "campers" which bombs might be live, the military's patience was finally exhausted and three people were arrested for trespassing. They were Fulkerson, Dr. Richard Bargan, who once ran a flying medical service for rural Nevada residents, and Joe Sanchez, a Western Shoshone Indian. Although the Navy later dropped charges, Bargan says he welcomed a trial and the opportunity to sue the Navy for false arrest. "No one can produce any evidence that the BLM transferred jurisdiction to the Navy," he says.

Dick Holmes, a Citizen Alert member and former TV repairman who lives in Fallon, says he thoroughly checked BLM files. The last legal Navy occupation was a lease in 1952, he says. After that all he found were repeated BLM requests to the Navy to make official their use of Bravo 20 land. BLM spokesman Bob Stewart, who thought he might unearth a document making the transfer legal, may have caused the Navy some embarrassment when he told a local newspaper, "It's always unfortunate when a file is misplaced."



Campers at Bravo 20 bombing range

Bob Burghardt, a Navy public affairs officer, says that the land exchange "might have been one of those things that falls between the cracks when employees transfer." Burghardt says a bill pending in Congress would straighten out the problem. Three previous bills have been defeated, however.

Long before Citizen Alert members, who were joined by members of the Washington, D.C.-based Rural Coalition, decided to camp out at Bravo 20, Bargan had taken the matter to court. He filed suit last June in Circuit Court in Reno charging that the Navy was illegally using BLM land at Bravo 20.

Bargan recalls, "The Navy brought in four attorneys -- big guns -- and asked the judge to throw out the suit. The judge refused the request for summary judgment and the case will go to trial." So far he has acted as his

own attorney, following Dick Holmes' advice to do his own research and "plug it in and see where it smokes."

Bargan says the hope is that national environmental groups with legal expertise will become involved in the case. Bargan, Fulkerson and others also hope to attract legal expertise to a more complex cause. That would be a legal challenge to the Navy's just-released final environmental impact statement on creating a 5,500 square mile Supersonic Operations Area in central Nevada (HCN, 3/4/85).

This air space withdrawal would allow Navy pilots to practise escape maneuvers by flying at speeds exceeding the sound barrier. The result, says Dick Holmes, would be an "intolerable 27 to 100 sonic booms a day -- too many for the area's people and wildlife to bear."

--Betsy Marston

Forest logging plan squashed from above

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has taken a giant step into the debate over below-cost timber sales in the Rockies and aspen cutting in Colorado. In a recent decision, the Secretary of Agriculture overruled Forest Service Chief R. Max Peterson by finding that two 50-year plans for four national forests in Colorado were inadequate. The decision could affect below-cost timber sales throughout the Rocky Mountain states.

The decision came on appeals brought against the two plans by the Natural Resources Defense Council on behalf of itself and a variety of other national and local environmental groups, including the High Country Citizens Alliance of Crested Butte, the Colorado Mountain Club and the Western Slope Energy Research Center.

The secretary's decision was based on technical and policy grounds. Technically, it said the San Juan National Forest, based in Durango, and the Gunnison, Uncompahgre and Grand Mesa national forests, based in Delta, did not do their cost accounting correctly. The decision said the plans did not properly justify the decisions to sell 73 million board-feet of timber a year from the four forests.

More broadly, the 13-page de-

cision warned that the days of federal subsidies for roading and logging are numbered, and that so-called dependent communities and mills should be weaned now:

"...increasing dependency upon submarginal timber sales would seem to result in potentially greater community instability due to uncertainties over continuation of a relatively high level of federal funding to support a timber program with costs greater than revenues."

In this case, the dependent communities are the towns of Montrose and Olathe. They host a Louisiana-Pacific mill which processes aspens into waferwood. The city and county of Montrose, L-P, and various industry groups intervened on behalf of the Forest Service 50-year plans. The groups were upheld by the Forest Service up through the chief's office, before being overturned on July 31 by the Agriculture Secretary.

The decision orders the Forest Service to justify the benefits it says flow from the roads to be built and trees to be cut under the 50-year plans. The plans say that the cutting and roading will lose money on a cash flow basis. But they also say that the loss is more than made up in public benefits roading and logging provide to tourists and wildlife. The Forest

Service attributes a dollar value to those activities -- so many dollars result from a drive through a forest, so many result from a herd of deer browsing in a clearcut.

The decision questions these assumptions. "Are the non-timber multiple-use benefits to be achieved through the timber program really needed?" If they are needed, can they be achieved in other, cheaper ways, such as burning?

What are the political implications of the Department of Agriculture overturning the chief of the Forest Service? Benfield saw it as a logical result of John Crowell's tenure, until this January, as Undersecretary of Agriculture. Crowell, Benfield said, believed that timber sales should pay their way. That view aligned him with environmental groups in states such as Colorado, Wyoming and Montana, where most sales lose money. But it put him in conflict with environmentalists in the Pacific Northwest, where the cutting of old growth timber shows positive cash flow, but, Benfield said, destroys important natural values.

A copy of the decision is available from: Deputy Assistant Secretary Douglas MacCleery, Office of the Secretary, Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

--Ed Marston

HOTLINE

A natural death

Not surprisingly, there will be at least a year's delay before any action is taken on the controversial 35 million acre public lands exchange between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The Director of the BLM, Robert Burford, said it would be next year before legislation is considered, and Congress has included an amendment to its supplemental appropriations bill that would prohibit either agency from spending federal money on the land swap proposal. Burford suggested that one way to make the plan more manageable would be to concentrate on two or three states at a time.

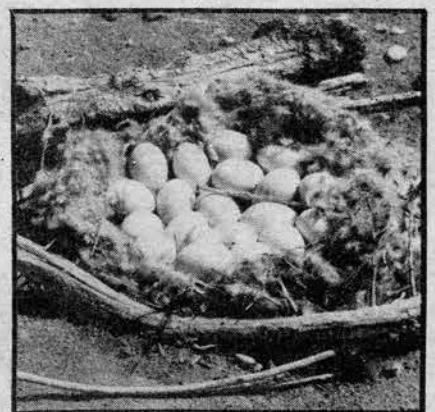
PCB cleanup

A Santa Fe, New Mexico, highway department building that housed 500 workers is still being cleaned up after a transformer overheated this June and spewed a mist of PCBs, dioxins and other cancer-causing agents. The transformer had been repaired for a leak last spring. The 4 a.m. accident in the building's basement contaminated several firefighters, police and a few workers who entered their offices before the severity of the accident became known.

Testing the waters

"We were hoping to get arrested," says Eric Leaper, director of the 6,000-member National Organization of River Sports, based in Colorado. This July Leaper and nine others were arrested at Dinosaur National Monument for rafting without a permit on the Green River. Leaper, who pleaded not guilty, says provoking the arrests was the only way to test the legality of the permit system used by the National Park Service. That system allocates permits to commercial rafting companies with slots filled by paying customers. "The rest of us (with boats) are subject to the whim of a lottery," Leaper says. "Some of us have waited for years." A National Park Service spokesman says the permit system for concessionaires was created legally and can survive a court test.

Ducks are depleted



The number of breeding ducks is lower this year than at any other time in the 31-year history of the Waterfowl Breeding Survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Breeding areas in the Dakotas, Montana and southern Canada have been unusually dry in recent years, causing marked declines this year in all game duck populations except the green-winged teal. The "fall flight forecast" of 62 million ducks is off 22 percent from last year, and represents a significant decrease from the 90 million duck years of the 1970s. Fish and Wildlife says it plans to curtail the 1985 hunting season to help the duck population recover.

HOTLINE

Groups challenge 1080



Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife

Although the EPA in July approved the use of controversial 1080 sheep collars, which would poison attacking coyotes, the agency has not ruled on a petition from ranchers for use of 1080 on "single lethal dose" baits of meat. Meanwhile, Defenders of Wildlife and other environmental groups have challenged the Environmental Protection Agency's decision in the Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, Colorado.

Hovenweep well proves dry

An exploratory oil well drilled less than a mile from Hovenweep National Monument in Utah has been abandoned and will be plugged. Transco Exploration Co.'s 6,100-foot well, which was controversial because of its closeness to Anasazi ruins in the park (HCN, 7/22/85), came up dry. State officials say Transco will reclaim and restore the drilling site as soon as possible.

Activists worship at A-bomb site



Valerie Kimble, Socorro Defensor-Chief

About 25 peace activists gathered July 16 at southern New Mexico's Trinity Site for the 40th anniversary of the first atomic bomb test. Hundreds of tourists and dozens of media representatives also visited the site in the White Sands Missile Range, a 51,000-acre portion of which was designated a national historic landmark in 1975. A small monument, built on ground zero, has become a favorite spot for family photographs when the U.S. Army opens the site to visitors once a year in October. The anniversary opening was a departure for the Army, which reports that radiation at the site is now only 10 times above normal background radiation. Armed military police observed the peace activists, who held an interreligious service.

Nuclear waste fight shifts to courtroom

The ongoing battle over the possible siting of a low-level nuclear waste dump in South Dakota has shifted to the courtroom.

Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc., the nation's largest low-level radwaste handler, has filed a legal challenge to negate the requirements of a citizens' initiative passed by a decisive 62 percent last November. That initiative says voters must decide whether South Dakota joins a radwaste compact with any other state, and also whether the state opens its own nuclear burial grounds.

Chem-Nuclear's suit challenging the initiative will be heard this month in a county circuit court. Whichever side wins, an appeal seems certain.

Since 1981, Chem-Nuclear has steadily pursued building a facility near the southwestern South Dakota town of Edgemont, in an economically depressed area. Town leaders welcomed the new industry, and the company mounted a costly campaign against the initiative, which got on the ballot by petition (HCN, 12/10/84).

After the election, initiative supporters said the victory clearly expressed the concerns of South Dakotans: they reserved a final say on any legislative decision. They also predicted the company would challenge the initiative in court. But Chem-Nuclear said it would abide by the initiative, which mandated seven hearings on any radwaste question before the people voted. What prompted the company to go to court?

"The company changed its mind because we have had indications from state officials and from state legislators that the initiative is unconstitutional,"

Peter Carrels



Billboard at Edgemont, South Dakota

says Paul Corpstein, site development manager for Chem-Nuclear. What may have prompted Chem-Nuclear to act, however, is this year's approval by both the state Legislature and governor of a "Dakota Compact," which opens the door to South Dakota hosting a regional or even national low-level nuclear waste repository. South Dakota now produces three cubic yards of waste yearly, the lowest in the nation. The Dakota Compact is now on the ballot for voter approval Nov. 12.

Nick Meinhardt, coordinator of the Nuclear Waste Vote Coalition, which put the initiative on last year's ballot, says, "Chem-Nuclear has concluded they could not win the election. It is in their best interest to have the waste dump decision made behind closed doors."

Gene Lebrun, an attorney representing both Chem-Nuclear and

Harold Wyatt, an Edgemont community leader, says the company does not want to inhibit citizens from pursuing initiated measures. He says the suit is narrowly focused on preventing the seven hearings before the Nov. 12 election on the Dakota Compact.

Although the court battle officials pits Chem-Nuclear against the state, Meinhardt says the coalition has hired attorney Larry Zastrow, who will try to enter the case as an intervening party.

Meinhardt agrees the initiative is unique but says that South Dakota has never been shy about setting precedent. "Our state was the first to allow its citizens to create laws through the initiative process. We view Chem-Nuclear's challenge as a direct attack on this heritage."

--Peter Carrels

1,250 loggers chopped down by economy

The Potlatch Corp. announced an indefinite shutdown of its Lewiston, Idaho, sawmill and Jaype plywood plant on July 23. That means by Sept. 27, 1,250 Potlatch employees and contract loggers will be out of work and the economies of Lewiston, Clarkston and a half dozen smaller communities along the Clearwater River will be hard hit.

Potlatch vice president James Morris blamed the shutdowns on continuing losses since 1980 in its wood products division. In the past five years, Potlatch has closed four other Idaho mills and laid off about 1,000 workers. The Lewiston sawmill was nearly 60 years old, and many of its 400 workers knew its days were numbered. "We're not trying to blame this decision on the Canadians or the environmentalists," Morris told reporters from local newspapers. He said the closure was based on "issues related to these two plants," rather than the depressed lumber market.

A plan to replace the old Lewiston mill with a modern, more efficient mill has also been shelved. Company spokesmen cited the depressed lumber market, Canadian imports and uncertainty about supplies as additional factors in that decision. If ever built, a new sawmill would employ some 40 percent fewer workers than the old mill.

The layoffs mean a \$20 million annual payroll loss. The Jaype plywood plant, near Pierce, employs 200 workers, and that mill plus contract logging for Potlatch is

virtually Pierce's entire economy. The closing also affects several hundred contract loggers scattered throughout Clearwater County, where unemployment hit 20 percent in May. It is possible the plants' official status -- "indefinitely shutdown" rather than "closed" -- will prevent use of federal funds for dislocated workers. Idaho Gov. John Evans and local officials have announced various response efforts, but there is little optimism Potlatch's decision can be changed.

Unlike Potlatch's Morris, Idaho Sens. James McClure and Steve Symms and Rep. Larry Craig all pointed to Canadian lumber imports as a primary cause. Craig is sponsoring legislation to restrict Canadian imports and has been discussing the issue with Canadian officials for several months. Privately, the delegation has contacted the Clearwater National Forest about boosting its planned annual harvest of 150 million board feet yearly for the next decade. Potlatch owns 615,000 acres of timberland in Idaho, but also relies on the Panhandle and Clearwater national forests for raw material.

Idaho Lt. Gov. David Leroy, a Lewiston native who is running for governor in 1986, placed blame as well on uncertain state policy and wilderness proposals. "As of this morning, I would favor no more additions to wilderness in Idaho," he told reporters after Potlatch's announcement. But former Gov. Cecil Andrus, who is running against Leroy

to return to his old office, said the wilderness issue had little to do with Potlatch's troubles.

Carol Kriz, a wilderness activist with the Idaho Conservation League, agreed. "The problems of Idaho's timber industry are basic and long-term," she said. "It's ridiculous to link this closure with wilderness."

The layoffs will certainly increase political and public support for limiting Canadian timber imports. They may also further polarize the already-polarized wilderness debate in northern Idaho. Led by the Wilderness Society, Idaho conservationists are intensively analyzing and organizing comment on the Clearwater Forest Plan. If the delegation's pressure to increase the Forest's timber harvest continues, a head-on political collision with well-organized conservationists and sportsmen will occur.

A day after the layoffs were announced, Potlatch said it was turning back to the Forest Service 180 million board feet of its timber under contract -- a buyout permitted by the recently passed Timber Sale Modification Act. The act allows companies that bought federal timber at high prices in 1980 -- before the market collapsed -- to return up to 200 mbf at a fraction of the original bid price. The 180 mbf is nearly half of Potlatch's federal timber under contract. The Forest Service will begin re-offering the rejected sales in October.

--Pat Ford

A Wyoming well is tenaciously opposed

Despite opposition that reached to the Supreme Court, Marathon Oil Co. began drilling an exploratory oil and gas well this August in Wyoming's Shoshone National Forest.

On July 16, Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White refused to block the start of drilling at the request of a Wyoming conservation group, the Park County Resource Council.

The council contends the drilling threatens grizzly bears and other wildlife in a 10,000-acre area surrounding the drilling site, some 30 miles west of Cody. They also charge an environmental impact statement was inadequate.

Earlier in July, U.S. District Judge Clarence Brimmer in Cheyenne denied the PCRC's request to halt the drilling, ruling that the group had failed to demonstrate it would be irreparably harmed by the project. On July 10, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver also refused to postpone the drilling. The group is still challenging approval of the drilling in the appeals court.

In one of the few operations of this kind in the lower 48 states, Marathon airlifted the drilling rig piece by piece to the drill site on a ridge between Grace and Pagoda creeks. The ridge is two miles south of a highway leading to the east entrance of Yellowstone National Park, and two miles north of the Shoshone's Washakie Wilderness Area.

Two bulldozers were also flown in for reassembly to complete work on the rig pad, and trash is being flown from the site daily in an attempt to avoid attracting grizzly bears.

Marathon Oil and its minority partner, Amerada-Hess, say they are prepared to spend more than \$3 million to drill the 5,016-foot well. Because of its unconventional preparation, Marathon spokesman Bill Ryder says the well, called the Wapiti Wildcat, will cost three times as much as usual. But he says the company volunteered to airlift all equipment and personnel to the site instead of building a road because "it is aware of the public interest in the well... and the area that it's in."

That public concern stretches back to May 1983, when Marathon applied for a drilling permit. A draft EIS issued in February 1984 by the Bureau of Land Management called the effects of the well "insignificant." The Park County Resource Council, formed at the same time, disagreed and prepared to fight. Council president Stan Siggins, a Cody-area

Dennis Davis



Marathon's drill rig pad

dude rancher, says an inadequate environmental assessment was done back in 1976 when the area was leased and the BLM's EIS on granting a permit to drill was also flawed.

Although the BLM agreed to do a second draft EIS focusing on the effects of a single exploratory well, PCRC took the issue to court. An ally was the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, which said the BLM study was inadequate and needed major revision. Game and Fish Department employees testified the well site was crucial habitat for elk and bighorn sheep, and several outfitters said drilling would disturb wildlife, cause tourism to decline and might damage the area's watershed if a well blowout occurred.

A \$35,000 donation from the Wyoming Outfitters Association bankrolled the PCRC's legal fight. The money originally came from the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, a group based in Cody.

Marathon has estimated its chances of hitting oil or gas at one in a hundred. Drilling by contractor Parker Drilling is expected to be completed by October, before wildlife herds move into the area.

Both BLM and Forest Service officials are making regular visits to the site. BLM inspectors plan to be on hand for blowout prevention tests, perforation and plugging, if needed.

--Dennis Davis

PCBs illegally dumped

Marathon Oil Company has been charged with illegally disposing of hazardous wastes near its Bryon field office in Big Horn County, Wyoming. The charge was filed after an anonymous source told the state's Department of Environmental Quality that an open pit dump had been dug for oil field wastes, including polychlorinated biphenyls, better known as PCBs.

When state officials investigated, some 200 barrels and 200 power transformers were found. Several had leaked liquid both into the pit and on the ground nearby.

The state is concerned not only about carcinogens seeping into the

groundwater but also about contamination of nearby Arnoldus Lake. The state agency has asked Wyoming to fine Marathon up to \$10,000 a day for each day of violation, to require the company to investigate the extent of the water contamination, and to submit a time schedule for the study and decontamination measures. DEQ has also requested a complete list of the hazardous wastes that have been dumped at the Byron field.

After meeting with state officials recently, the company agreed to clean up the toxic waste dump, but no schedule was set.

--Meredith Taylor

Teton County controls its yurts, tipis

After a year of debate, yurt and tipi owners in tourist-oriented Teton County, Wyoming, may soon pay property taxes on their dwellings, be required to meet health and safety standards and have a place in the local comprehensive plan.

Teton County, which includes Grand Teton National Park, has a small (11,000) but stalwart population which tolerates long winters where the temperature often hovers around -20 degrees. Some 18 residents of Mongolian-style yurts and tipis endure winter snows and high winds inside "walls" made of canvas (HCN, 2/18/85).

Public scrutiny is new for the yurt and tipi owners. In a community used to four million tourists each year, the dwellings had been simply part of

the landscape. But last September, county commissioners received complaints from two neighbors of the largest yurt and tipi community, located in the unincorporated town of Kelly next to Grand Teton National Park. That spurred a year-long moratorium on allowing new canvas dwellings and the formation of an advisory committee to report to county commissioners.

Last month, Teton county commissioners made their decision. They said newly constructed yurts and tipis must be located in "yurt parks" similar to mobile home parks. To develop a yurt park, health, safety and zoning requirements must be complied with and a public hearing must be held to gather comments from

neighbors. If many object, the application may be denied.

Commissioners also ruled that no new yurts or tipis will be allowed on single family lots, and that for all existing the future owners property tax will be assessed.

Although they accepted the yurt park concept and property tax assessment, yurt and tipi owners said they'd work to change the prohibition of yurts and tipis on single family lots.

Dail Barbour, an advisory committee member and landowner with tenants in two tipis and one yurt, said: "To try to limit lifestyle, especially as it relates to the home, is to rob ourselves and our community of what is considered a basic right in our country."

--Julie Holding

HOTLINE

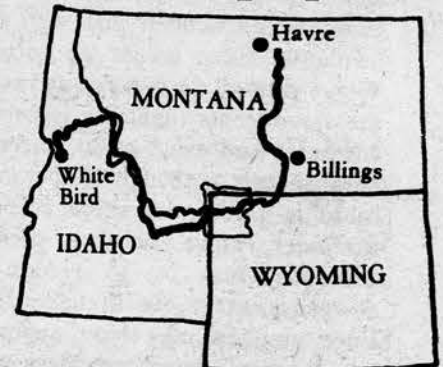
No more fire sales

The Bureau of Land Management is getting tougher on coal leasing. After the 1982 "fire sale" of coal leases in the Wyoming-Montana Powder River Basin, the BLM instituted fair market value guidelines for future leases. It was under these guidelines that the bid of Arch Mineral Corporation for a coal lease near Seminole Reservoir in Carbon County, Wyoming, was rejected. Arch was sole bidder in a sale held July 8, offering four cents per ton for over 12 million tons of coal at the 2,937-acre tract. Arch estimated the coal could be sold at about \$20 per ton. The company has a month to consider appealing the ruling, which was handed down in late July.

Burr Trail washed out

Flash floods this summer washed out large parts of the unpaved, 66-mile Burr Trail that connects Lake Powell with the town of Boulder, Utah. One crossing over Powell Creek 25 miles south of the switchbacks in Capitol Reef National Park is now part of Lake Powell, and landslides have turned portions of the road into streambeds strewn with rock. A family from Orem, Utah, was stranded in their truck during the worst of the rainfall, but managed to walk to a Capitol Reef campground. There they found 75 other people trapped by a road washout. The Burr Trail has been more controversial than usual lately because of pressure from southeastern Utah to pave the road to increase tourism. Conservationists oppose paving because of the ecological damage it will do to the remote area (HCN, 5/27/85).

Historic trail proposed



The route along which Chief Joseph led his band of Indians in 1877 has been proposed for historic trail status. The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail would wind 1,170 miles through Idaho, Wyoming and Montana to the Bear Paw battleground near present-day Havre, Montana. The trail follows the route of Chief Joseph after his tribe killed some 30 U.S. Cavalry troops at White Bird, Idaho, during a forced relocation march to reservation lands. The proposal was introduced July 31 by Sen. James McClure, R-Id., and is expected to be approved by Congress. An aide to McClure said establishment of the trail would cost \$550,000 with annual maintenance estimated at \$65,000.

BARBS

Sometimes, the papers tell us more than we wish to know.

In a July 19 article on colon cancer, *The New York Times* reported that the stool of an average Finn is three times larger than that of an average New Yorker.

Fire...

(Continued from page 1)

Public Radio's "All Things Considered," I notice to the southeast legs of light dancing on the horizon. Downstrikes. They come as no surprise, for earlier in the afternoon thunderheads had darkened that part of the country, followed by virga -- wispy, pendant rain clouds falling short of the ground -- and a soft gray curtain of rain.

I radio Bald Mt. lookout; they've seen the strikes too. Between forkfuls, we see the flashes of several more downstrikes in the St. Maries River Valley. The storm appears to be sweeping westward, towards Emida and Bald Mt.

7 p.m. I radio Bald Mt. again but no answer -- the storm is pounding that area, so it's not safe to respond to my call. New cells develop over Beaver, Moses, and Benewah Mountains; to the south the sky scintillates as intense bolts of light plunge into the forest. Soon the undulating terrain south of the lookout is obscured by mist and groundfog.

7:30 p.m. Fat drops splatter on our north-facing windows. Suddenly too the wind speed accelerates, sending our rainbow windsock into paroxysms. I dart inside the cabin as the lightning rods overhead begin to fizz and sputter -- static electricity in the air -- and rain drapes St. Joe City. The clouds, roiled by the wind gusts, darken and swirl in our direction. Then faster than thought appears a flash! -- a strike in the valley below not quite stretching to the river -- followed by a seven-second count and pow! -- the rumble of furniture being moved upstairs.

Inside the lookout Peg and I vie for space on our "electric chair" -- a cumbersome wooden chair with glass insulators fixed on its leg bottoms. We've shut all the windows and closed the stove vents (lightning follows air currents) and avoid metal objects as best we can -- though of course the cabin is filled with metal objects: firefinder, stove, hotplate, utensils. Our job now is to record the downstrikes on the firefinder map, since smokes may later appear in these areas, sometimes days afterwards. So we sit impatiently, waiting for a flareup, hoping to earn our pay, get in some OT.

7:45 p.m., The storm roars. Downstrikes zap the Rochar, Canyon and St. Joe drainages, and across the sky more lightning, white and pure, blinds us momentarily. For over two hours we sit on the electric chair, alternately hugging and shoving each other, bracing for the roll of thunder that follows each flash. No flareups appear, though; too much rain falls, waves of rain crashing on the windows -- a deluge, it seems, after nearly a month of no precipitation.

Three times we believe the worst is over; three times the storm doubles back, pelting the windows with hail and rain. Scud sweeps by, glowing eerily in the light cast by the lamp below the cabin, and then we're whited out for half an hour, the cloud cover occasionally illuminated by more lightning. The thunder booms and rolls, booms and rolls.

10 p.m. The storm has swept to the northeast. Behind the hulking silhouettes of Pearson Point and Reed's Baldy the sky is sporadically lit by flashes of light. No longer prisoners of the storm, we venture out on the catwalk, stepping gingerly since it's slick with puddles, and inhale the air cleaned by the rain and lightning. The country is crawling with groundfog, fingers of clouds creeping up the drainages, spilling out over the saddles. Glamorously, St. Maries reappears, an island of embers twinkling in the sea of blackness. Then we retire to the cabin and collapse on the bed, exhausted from fear and excitement.

The Last Snowfield

Early evening: the time of the long shadows. Feeling antsy, I tell Peg, who's polishing off yet another gripping paperback tome, that I'm taking a short walk, be back in a bit. She nods vaguely, her eyes still fixed to the page.

Clanking down the lookout trail on the volcanic talus, I've vaguely in mind a destination: the last snowfield in the area, hanging like a white lip just on the other side of the ridge overlooking the Latour drainage.

As I round the first bend in the trail the quiet envelops me, and I'm able to put the lookout -- and much more -- behind. Good Gawd, I think, what a relief to be rid of that squawk box of a radio, the ceaseless staticky chatter about fires and weather, a jumble of numbers all adding up to zero.

Did I mention fires? Not a smoke in sight as I begin ascending the Crystal Lake Trail, stomping up and over the kelly-hump at the trailhead and past the spot where the BLM signpost used to stand that read "Motorized Vehicles Prohibited."

Everywhere are unmistakable signs of fall. The cold air bites my naked arms, though just yet I don't want to interrupt the momentum of my walk by donning my chamois shirt. Along the trail the brush, yellow and dry, crackles like paper in the wind. Yet signs of life remain. The branches of elderberry and huckleberry bushes sag with purple fruit; and though the floral solstice is over, some late bloomers still flourish on the dry ridges: fireweed, pearly everlasting, paintbrush, harebell, leafy-headed aster, yarrow, hawkweed.

The trail follows the spine of the ridge, climbing gradually like an



P.A. BUTZER

escalator. Occasionally I have in view the weathered, venerable snags which mark my goal -- the summit of the mountain.

Mountains. Why this irresistible attraction to these humps of earth? Never mind the masochistic affinities of us hikers and climbers; even the flatlanders want to be able to at least see them. A couple of weeks ago a couple from the Palouse country visited the lookout, complaining about a neighbor's construction of a house that blocked their view of Baldy. "We miss seeing the mountain," they told me.

I'm sure they do. For mountains are poems of geology, alluring undulations and upheavals which strike in the heart of the most unappreciative spectator some romantic, primeval instinct. As for me, a born-again Westerner, I experienced a geographical epiphany one afternoon in late August 1976 when I desecrated, from 60 miles away, the Front Range of the Rockies, still snowcapped in the searing white light. Fellow Pennsylvania expatriate and Southwestern writer Ed Abbey comes as close as anyone to articulating what I have since viewed as a mystical experience: "An impossible beauty, like a boy's first sight of an undressed girl, the image of the mountains struck a fundamental chord in my imagination that has sounded ever since."

Finally, breathing hard and steadily, I crest the ridge, noting the small cairn marking the summit. Just below the top of the north-facing slope the snowfield lingers, but only tenuously, reduced by the wilting summer sun to a ten by ten patch. The gibbous moon, having emerged over Middle Sister, bathes the gritty, dirty ice in a soft light. As I try to put on my shirt the wind fights me, blasting at my body in short gusts. After a minute of struggling I wise up and drop below the ridgetop, hunkering next to the snow. Looking up I'm dazzled by the depthless twilight sky. It's a lovely night.

But, experienced on a mountain-top, aren't they all? Have we taken for granted the grandeur of mountain scenery? I wonder about that as I grab a handful of snow and swirl it around my mouth. Maybe to settle the Idaho wilderness debate we should change its venue, gather all the interested parties and send 'em off on a

four-week pack trip to the heart of the Idaho backcountry, and let 'em do their arguing, over beer and bacon and beans, amidst the crags and summits and tarns and scrubby alpine fir. If nothing else, the trip will improve the mood of the squabblers.

Then suddenly I recall, of all things, the ending of *The Great Gatsby* -- you know, where the narrator imagines the reaction of the Dutch sailors as they first beheld America: "For a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder."

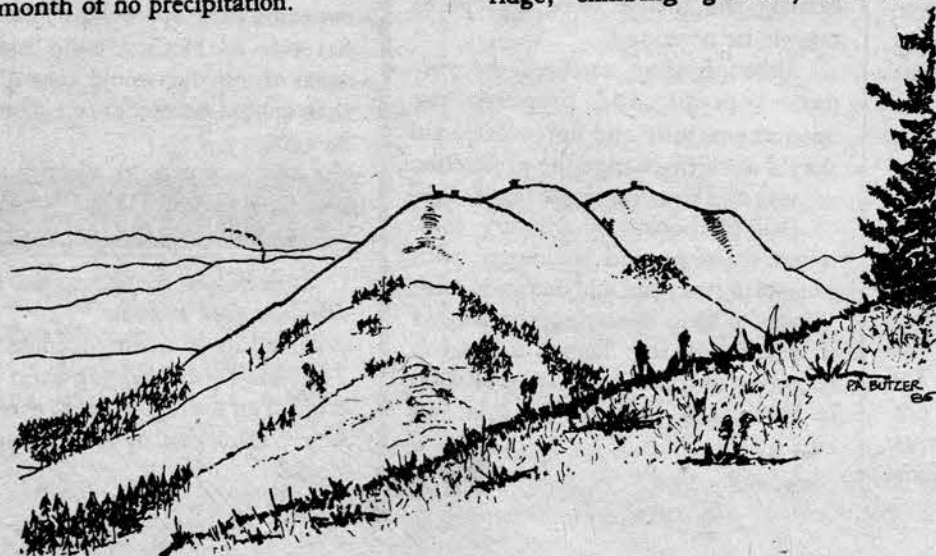
Except that the narrator was wrong. For we in the West remain face to face with scenery far exceeding our capacity for wonder. That is why I love the West, why it has become my new (if not yet permanent) home: because it remains, for all our desecrations, the New World. "In the beginning," John Locke once said, "all the world was an America." The West, I say, is still an America -- the *terra incognita* of our hearts and minds.

I happen to turn westward and notice the light in the lookout, jolting me out of my mental monologue. Time to descend. (That's one of the appeals of mountains: since we can only visit them, there persists the lure of a return visit to recapture the moment.) Clutching one final handful of snow (snow in August! I still exclaim) I begin to wade through the knee-high beargrass, the route well-illuminated by the sky-climbing moon.

Muttering to myself, contemplating the forlorn prospect of nine months' exile from the north country, I'm hardly aware of the return hike. But rounding the final bend of the lookout trail I encounter a lovely sight: the lookout silhouetted against the black-blue evening sky.

At the doorway Peg greets me, shaking her head, grinning a smile which represents all of women's wisdom in the world. I know what she's thinking: That's your trouble -- you never know where you're going until you get there.

(Continued on page 7)



Mountain Residents

Delightedly, I descend the mountain each morning for a walk in the woods. Ostensibly, my purpose is to check out the territory not visible from the lookout; but the real motivation for this daily saunter is to glimpse the mountain residents -- the various forms of wildlife which make this alpine setting their home.

Early one morning a mule deer, gaunt and dazed, almost collided with me at the first switchback on the road. Recovering, I raised the glasses, then whistled. Freeze: its foot-long ears stiffened, the head shot in and out, the legs quivered with that ancient fear time can't erase. *The enemy*. Then it angled down the rocky point, quiet as a cloud, confident of the season and its safety. For half an hour I watched it browse, then continued down the road.

The white-tailed bucks I've spotted bask in the waist-deep, lush growth along Tingley Spring, their velvet antlers resembling branches. I can sometimes spook these bambis by approaching the spring from the campground below. They arise reluctantly, shaking off their lethargy and the flies, then build a quiet momentum before crashing through the forest understory.

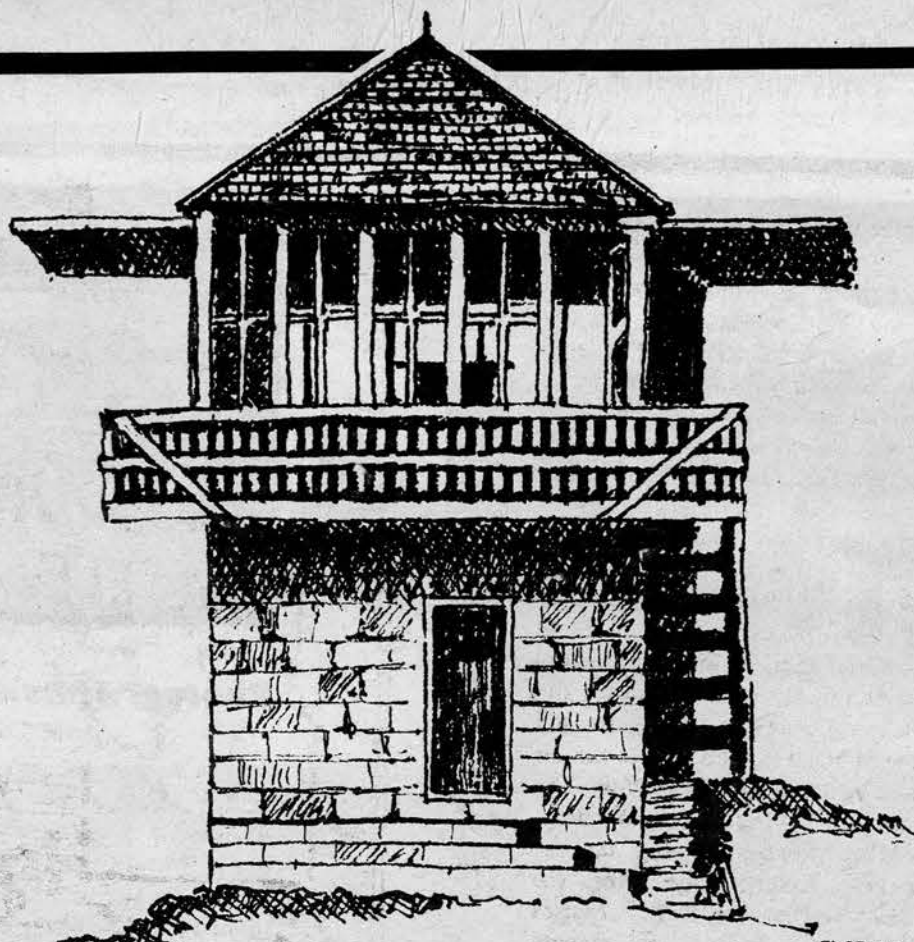
Poised on the rocks are the mountain ventriloquists -- pikas, or conies, short-legged, skittish, gray-brown critters that hurdle themselves forward as they bleat, thus concealing their whereabouts. Occasionally I'll see one scampering over and under the rocky debris, a small bush in mouth. They're easily distinguished from the other resident rock rodents, the red-tailed chipmunks and golden mantled and columbian ground squirrels, who also chirp wildly and scam when approached.

At timberline a Steller's jay, indigo-crested with a deep blue body, squawks as it treehops. In the scattered hemlock snags above and below the road there frequently perches a sharpshinned hawk, and keeping their distance in the subalpine fir and mountain hemlock flit various l.g.b.s -- what ornithologists refer to as "little gray birds."

From the lookout we often hear the plaintive, asthmatic *keer-r-r* of a red-tailed hawk, then spot it hovering over the river valley, talons extended. An osprey once permitted us an unforgettable sighting of its under-features as it soared 30 feet above -- the craning neck, the tan belly, the dark-tipped wings and tail. Less formidable are the mountain bluebirds who fly in loose formation about the summit. Four years ago they nested under the roof of the outhouse; where they live now I'm uncertain. And our glass house served briefly as an aviary when a female calliope hummingbird trapped itself within the cabin. Despite its panicky fluttering and pattering against the windows, only after consulting Peterson's *Guide to Western Birds* did we allow it to escape.

Late afternoons the turkey vultures -- swooping, red-headed, forbidding birds -- speck the western sky as they soar on the thermals. For their evening convocation they choose an ancient snag to roost in, their greasy hooded wings lending an ominous note to the gathering.

Come berry season, piles of purple scat will mark the road and trail, yet only once have I seen a black bear in



the vicinity -- on an open slope opposite the mountain, gobbling up turf with those massive legs. Of course during late evening walks those mysterious crashing sounds in the brush below assure us we're never completely alone. Bears loom large in our consciousness, especially when no climbable trees are in sight.

Full moons evoke the primeval wails from coyotes in the surrounding draws. Furtive creatures, they are as plentiful as the mountain lion, but rarely seen.

Fire Lookout

"St. Maries, this is St. Joe Baldy, 4-16."

So begins, officially, another day in the summer of a fire lookout -- with a routine 8 a.m. check-in with the dispatcher of the ranger station. Unofficially, though, the day begins several hours earlier, with the sunlight flooding the glass-walled cabin to mark the start of a new day on the mountain.

The morning star, ascending the western sky, dims in the morning light. After knuckling the sleep from my eyes I crawl out of my sleeping bag, tug on some socks and hiking boots, shorts and t-shirt, then mount my backpack with an empty six-gallon plastic water container secured to it, and trudge down the two-mile trail to the spring.

The fire danger is usually low during the early morning, so it's ok then to leave the tower to dispel the claustrophobia that has accumulated during the previous day. Maybe it's for this reason that the morning is my favorite time of day; I can stretch my legs, check out the flowers and game, think clear morning thoughts. There's a general quietude in the air, a sense that the world -- at least the world defined by my horizons -- is at peace.

But duty calls. Following a slow return to the lookout (50 pounds of water sloshing around on a backpack makes for an unwieldy load) and then breakfast, comes the time for the first of 30 or so daily check-looks of the country, in my case an area of about 50 miles in diameter. The standard procedure is to gaze up and down all the individual drainages, first with the

naked eye, then with binoculars to see if anything looks "different." The idea is to become so familiar with the territory that a smoke -- usually, if the fire is burning in timber, a thin column with a blue-gray tinge -- will be instantly recognizable.

I'm often asked by visitors: "What does it take to be a fire lookout? A degree in forestry?" Trying hard not to laugh, I tell them: not much. As Ed Abbey has written (in typical hyperbolic fashion), "The technical aspects of a lookout's job can be mastered by any literate anthropoid with an IQ of not less than 70 in about two hours."

There really isn't that much to the job. Staying alert and warding off loneliness are its two greatest challenges. "Hope you don't have any fires this summer," people usually remark. Hell, lookouts (and fire management personnel in general) want fires -- at least some. They're good for the forest ecology, and they make for an exciting summer.

For those interested in working a lookout, you should know that it has become increasingly more difficult to land such a job -- especially of the kind that pays. Lookouts are on the decline, in fact have been for quite some time, ever since their heyday during the Civilian Conservation Corps years of the 1930s. Very recently, however, the likelihood of their extinction has diminished. For with reduced budgets the Forest Service and its equivalent state agencies looked hard at the sizable costs of keeping daily patrol planes in the air and then came up with a brilliant solution: to contract lookouts out to the lowest bidder, and (worse yet) to advertise for volunteer lookouts.

So there are more lookouts, perhaps, than a few years ago, but fewer paying decent wages. Why anyone would volunteer for such maddeningly monotonous work is beyond me, but for those undaunted souls who naively believe that it's romantic and exciting work, here follows a primer on spotting smokes.

Much of a lookout's time is spent simply studying the countryside, memorizing the names of drainages and peaks, and the locations of mills and quarries and isolated cabins whose activities sometimes produce

what could be mistaken for an "illegitimate," i.e., real smoke. When the time arrives that you think you're looking at an illegitimate smoke, the next step is to check the list of legal burning permits to ensure that this fire isn't the result of authorized burning on the part of a landowner.

Having assured yourself that the smoke is in fact illegitimate, you now have to locate and report it -- and quickly. This is the single most difficult task of a lookout. You have to know the country and be able to relate what you see to your map on the firefinder, a cumbersome device mounted on tracks atop a wooden stand in the center of the cabin. On the firefinder is secured a circular map of your turf, with the lookout at its center. Stretched taut across the map is a 20-inch metal band, forming the diameter of the circle; with a scale of one-half inch to the mile, the radius -- and the lookout's approximate range -- is 20 miles. Also around the map are the degrees of the compass, which you read off after lining up the sights of the firefinder with the base of the smoke. The process of sighting the smoke and reading the degrees is no problem; locating the smoke within one-quarter mile of its actual ground location -- the standard for accuracy -- is.

Complicating the process is your emotional state following the initial sighting of the fire. When you realize how relatively infrequent it is that fires occur, it becomes easier to imagine a lookout's frenetic behavior during the moment of truth: You're looking through binoculars, lining up the firefinder, and jotting down the necessary information all at the same time. And all the while you're hoping desperately that a civilian, fire crew member, or another lookout hasn't also seen this same smoke.

Finally, info at hand, in a tone which masks the hysteria of your voice, you radio the dispatcher with something like the following:

"St. Maries, this is St. Joe Baldy, I have a smoke for you."

"Go ahead, Baldy."

"Location by landmarks: Sly Meadows. Azimuth: 167 45'. Township: 45 North 1 East, in the southeast corner of the southwest corner of section 6. We have a single snag on fire sending up a small blue-gray plume. No spread to the forest at this time. I recorded several downstrikes in that area during the storm a couple days ago."

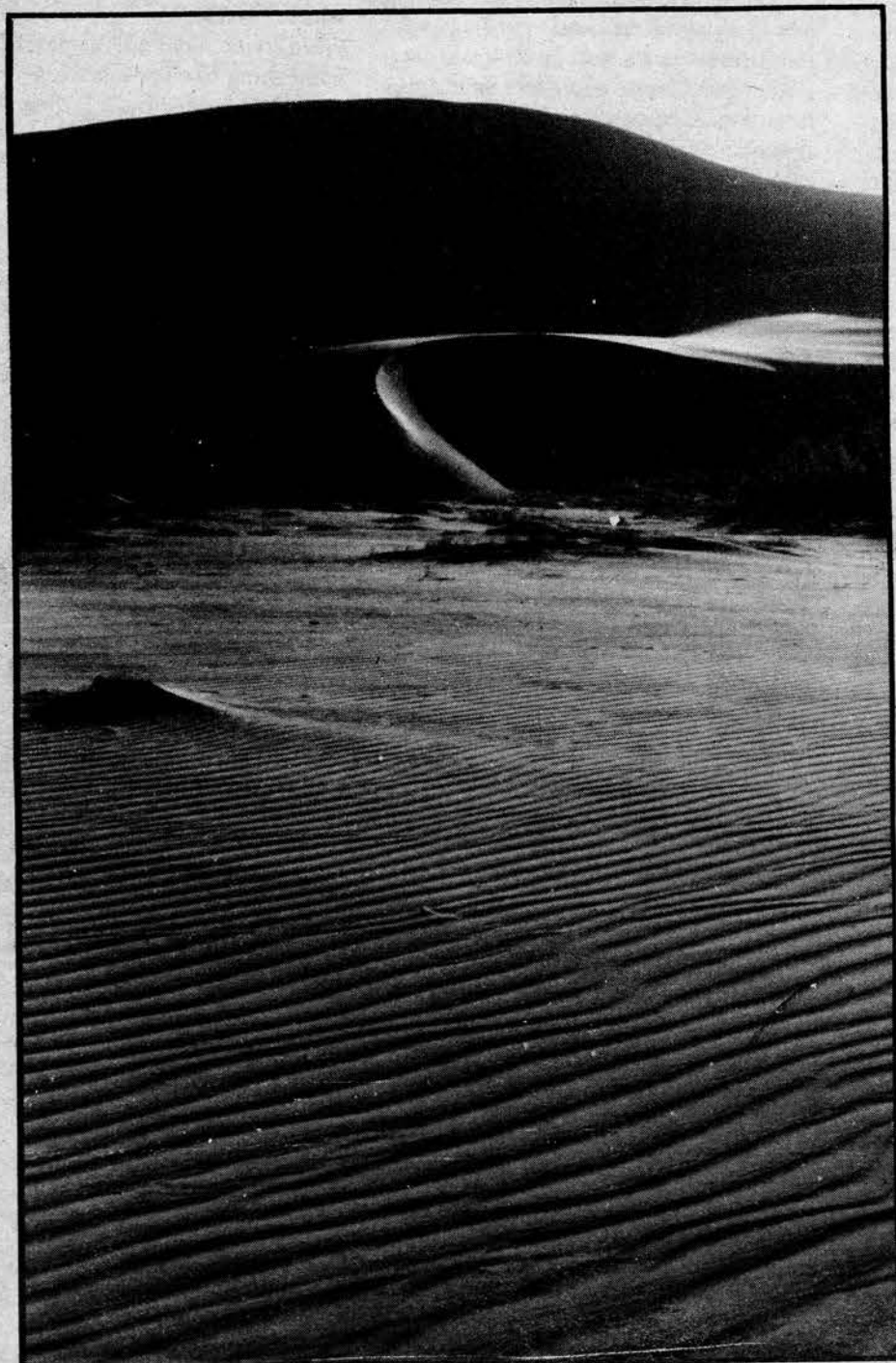
"10-4, Baldy. A crew is on its way to check it out."

And that's that. From this point on you stay off the air, unless to report a significant change in the smoke's condition, or another smoke, or to relay messages, or to respond to an incoming call. Hopefully the fire will persist until the crew verifies its existence, at which time it becomes official: You've turned in a fire.

A certain kind of personality is necessary to be happy at the job, to consider it a summer vacation. The problem is that this is something which isn't knowable until after the baptism, not by fire, but by waiting. Hence the saying about the job: You work a lookout once and never again, or you do it once and then again and again.

□

Don Scheese and Peggy Butzer, who are now doing graduate work at the University of Iowa, were fire lookouts for four summers.



Photographs and text by Tom Jenkins

The Great Sand Dunes National Monument is on the eastern edge of south-central Colorado's arid San Luis Valley, caught in a natural wind-trap formed by a sweeping-inward curve of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Great Sand Dunes cover over 100 acres and are among the tallest inland sand dunes in the world, piled in places to heights of 700 feet. The high, cool, sand desert was formed over a period of 35 million years by the combined forces of erosion, glaciation and the relentless wind.

Sculpted dune crests are constantly shaped and reshaped by the tides of the winds. The prevailing southwesterlies blow across the San Luis Valley for 50 miles, bouncing each grain of sand, inches at a time, toward the Sangre de Cristos. Eventually, when the wind hits the rocky wall of the mountains towering 5000 feet above the valley floor, it is funneled through three passes (Music, Medano and Mosca), and escapes with a rush of turbulence. Here the wind loses most of its energy and its load of sand, and the dunes collect.

Various dune patterns exist, primarily reflecting the force of southwestern winds. Barchan dunes have a crescent shape, with their tops tapering downwind; parabolic dunes are u-shaped scoops of sand with points tapering upwind; and climbing dunes form when turbulent winds rise over obstacles, piling sand in loose masses.

Storm winds from the northeast create some of the world's most spectacular reversing dunes and contribute to holding the dunes to a relatively stable position on the valley floor. The reversing dunes have overall shapes reflecting the dominant southwest winds but crests that change shapes and configurations with the alternating winds. Storm winds can move dune crests to the west as much as 18 feet in 24 hours, building up impressive heights. The downwind sides (called slip faces) of these dunes face west along each storm-shaped crestline. The slip faces form at angles near 31 degrees from level ground, the steepest angle dry sand grains can hold.

The sand dunes are a world of contrasts -- a stark microcosm of the living and the dead. It is an ecosystem of extremes, with excruciatingly high daytime summer temperatures (the surface of the sand can reach 140 degrees) and raw-cold winter nights. Food is scarce and water is scarcer; less than eight inches of it falls each year, most of it in July and August afternoon thunderstorms. Only wild creatures benefitting from the fringe areas of grassland, or with their own adaptive strategies, survive.

The kangaroo rat, an active little

rodent, has so adjusted its metabolism and life pattern that it need not drink at all. It does not perspire and has such efficient kidneys and intestines that it loses minimal water through its skin and by excretion.

Its food source is almost exclusively seeds, which it stores in its burrow where the air is more humid. As it digests the seed, water is formed as a byproduct. Although coyotes, great horned owls and other animals prey on the rat, its keen eyesight and hearing aid its survival chances. Stephen Trimble, author and former National Park Service employee at the Great Sand Dunes, explains that, "when danger approaches, the kangaroo rat kicks sand in the face of the enemy, then jumps away full speed on its strong hind legs, using its tail as a rudder. Its great leaps and skillful dodging make it a difficult target."

But the monument is not a wildlife wasteland. One hundred fifty species of birds are found there. In the arid grasslands adjacent to the active sand dunes, dunes are stabilized by grasses and desert shrubs, from which green-tailed towhees and vesper sparrows sing. Bison are long gone from the grasslands, but a small herd of pronghorn (reintroduced in the early 1960s) range through wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, blue gamma grass, sage, greasewood and snake-weed.

Herds of mule deer come down from higher elevation ecosystems into the grasslands, usually at dawn, foraging everywhere, sometimes almost to the edge of the dunes. They are notorious for nosing picnic tables and pawing trash cans in the three managed campgrounds.

Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and a few white fir and blue spruce grow on two ridges that extend down into the monument. In the wintertime, the trees shield the movements of elk and occasional Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

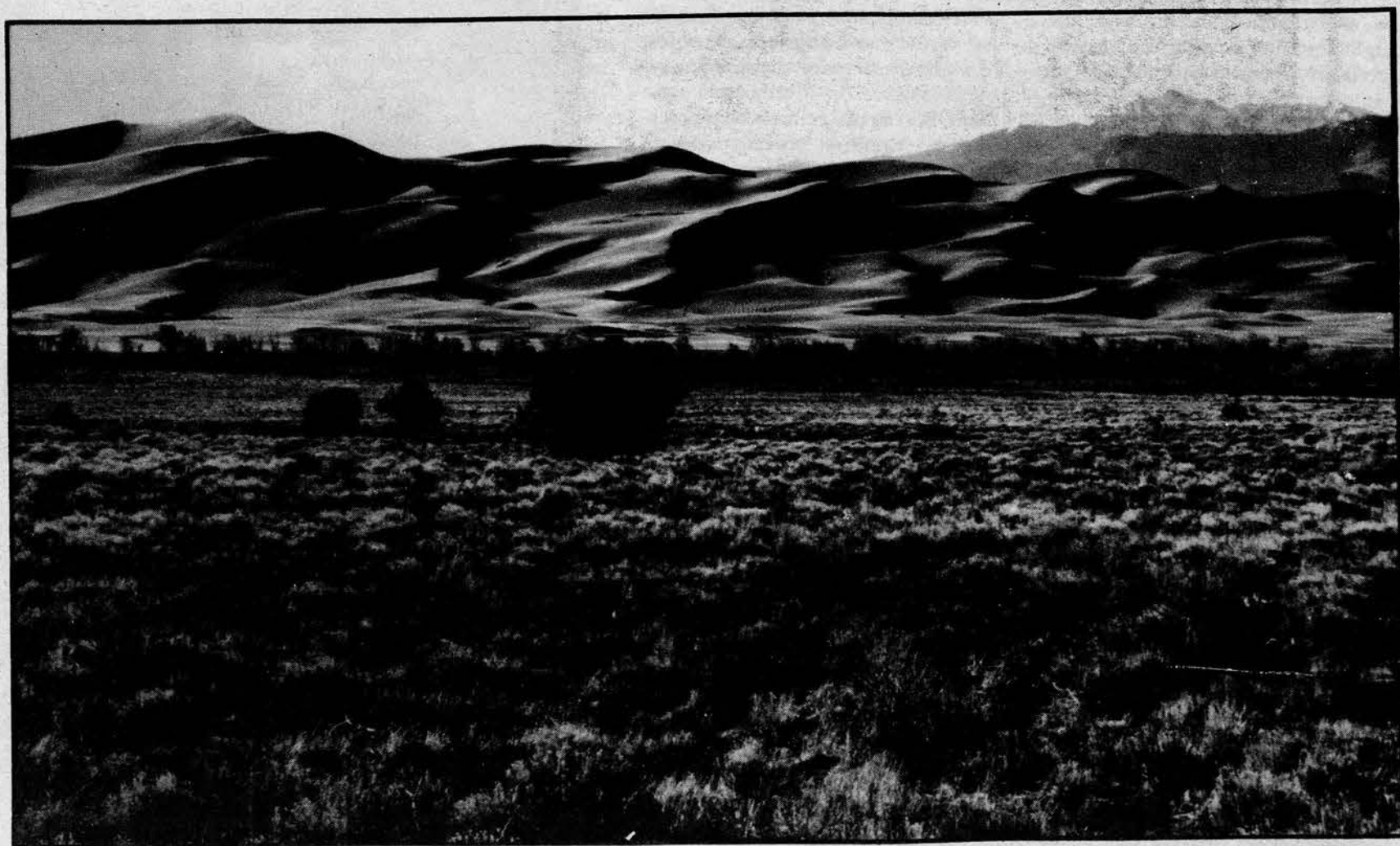
Cottonwood trees line the monument's Medano Creek. It is a wide and pulsating stream in the early summer, but is usually dry by the middle of July.

The dunes have been a national monument since 1932. Tourism is steadily increasing, mostly in the form of quick visits and one-night camping. Some four-wheelers use Medano Creek, before it completely dries up, as a jeep trail. Others come to climb on the dunes and watch the shifting patterns, moods and colors of the sands.

□

Tom Jenkins is a freelance writer and manager of corporate communications at the Kellogg Corporation in Littleton, Colorado.

Life of the sands



When it comes to water:

Colorado is the Appalachia of the West

by Ed Marston

"Who invited Charles Wilkinson?" asked water attorney James Lochhead. "I thought this was going to be a mutual self-congratulatory meeting."

Lochhead was commenting on expectations that a three-day August conference on Colorado water had been misnamed. Rather than "Water at the Great Divide," the Tenth Annual Colorado Water Workshop was expected to be a summit of Colorado's Water Boys. After self-congratulatory speeches, they were to get down to the real business: "Dividing the State's Water and Tax Money," allocating so many projects, and billions, to the Front Range, and so many to western Colorado.

Possibly that agenda went on in a back room. But it wasn't reflected at the podium. Wilkinson, a professor of law at Oregon University who has taught for the past year at Colorado University, spent much of his talk the first morning of the conference blasting the way Colorado makes its water decisions:

"Classic Western water law, born in the mid-19th century, is radical by today's standards. It leaves use of a major public common-pool resource solely to the individual discretion of private developers. The heart of the prior appropriation doctrine is the extremist, laissez-faire notion that anyone ought to be able to divert water from a stream or a lake at will," without regard for the broader public interest.

At one time, all Western water states had a similar approach to water. But Wilkinson indicated that in water matters, Colorado was now the Appalachia of the West, lagging states such as Montana, Arizona and California when it comes to building the public interest into water matters.

Wilkinson spoke just an hour or so after Gov. Richard Lamm, D, who had opened the conference by suggesting changes in water policy -- democratization of water conservancy boards, rural and urban conservation, subordination of water needs to other needs

-- that the most fervent reformer might have hesitated to voice.

The meeting was well located for its subject. It was held on the green and well-watered campus of Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado. Although one local wag told the audience the main recreation in town was watching Velveeta cheese in the gourmet section of the supermarket, conferees found other activities to occupy them, including a tour of the Curecanti Project's dams and raft trips on the nearby Gunnison River.

The quiet and neat town, an irrigated oasis set among brown dirt hills, focused the mind on water. Gunnison is four hours from the Front Range, over Monarch Pass, and appears to be far enough from Denver for "its" water to be safe. But the Continental Divide jogs to within 30 miles of Gunnison, and a speaker warned, in a tone usually reserved for the Red Menace, that there are plans to divert the area's water.

About 300 people came to the conference, many of them state legislators, water attorneys, members of water conservancy districts, Army Corps soldiers in beribboned uniforms, Bureau of Reclamation officials in suits, engineers, officials of Front Range cities eyeing western Colorado water, western Colorado officials seeking to thwart the water diverters, a spy from California's water bureaucracy, and a rancher or two seeking a market for the water they could no longer afford to spread over grass and alfalfa fields.

In other words, the conference attracted that array of people and institutions known as the Water Establishment. It brought them together at a crucial time. For once, a conference title was not overblown. Colorado water is at a divide, as the growing Eastern Slope and the shrinking Western Slope of the state spar with each other while casting anxious looks downstream, to the starting-up Central Arizona Project, to thirsty and powerful California, and to the Congress and U.S. Supreme Court, which are changing the rules of the water game at a dizzying pace.

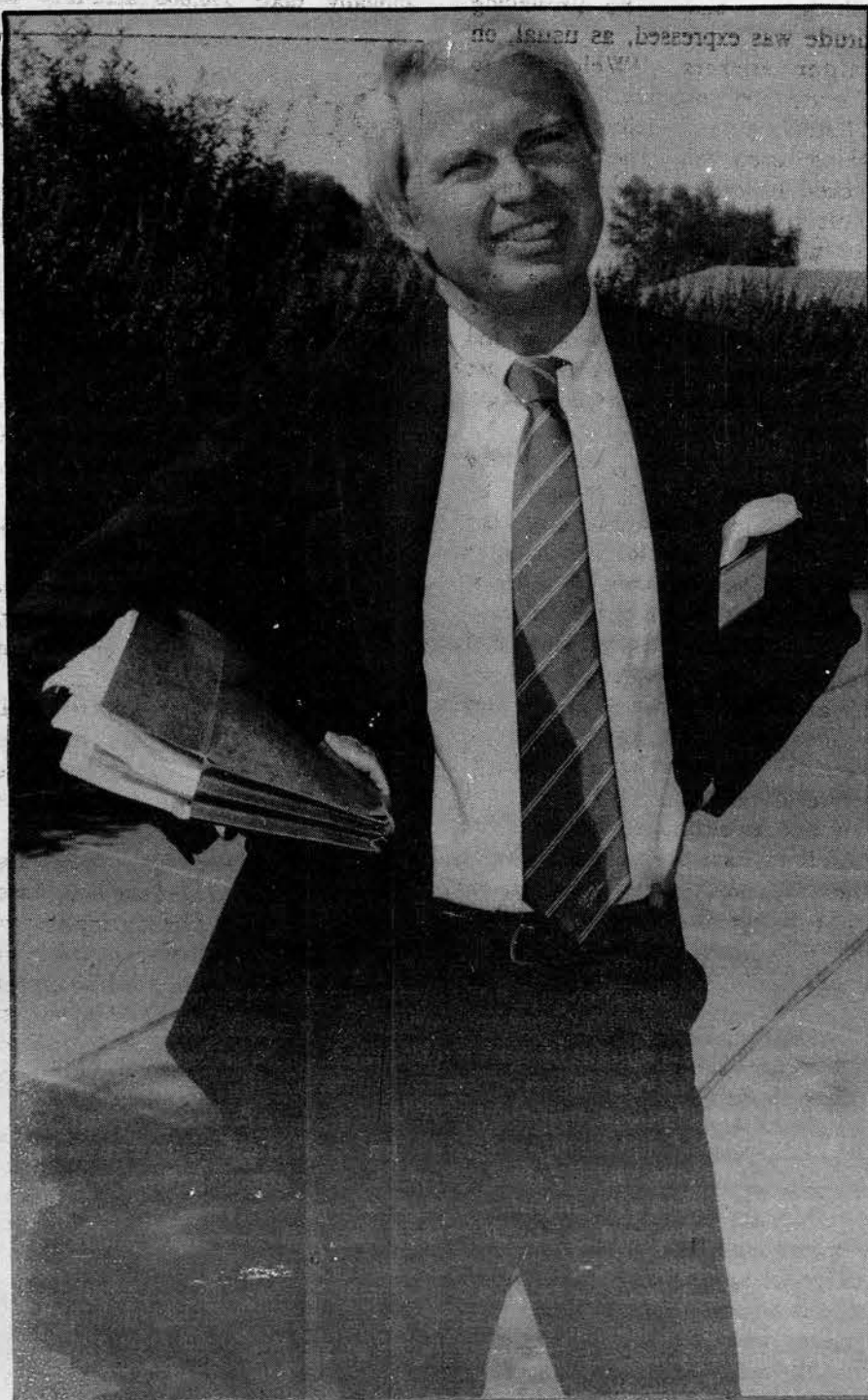
Not only the Water Establishment

found its way to Gunnison. Also present, in smaller numbers, were members of Colorado's environmental and public interest community -- Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club, the Front Range's Environmental Caucus, the League of Women Voters, Western Colorado Congress, the Wilderness Society, Colorado Mountain Club and grassroots opponents of assorted proposed dams.

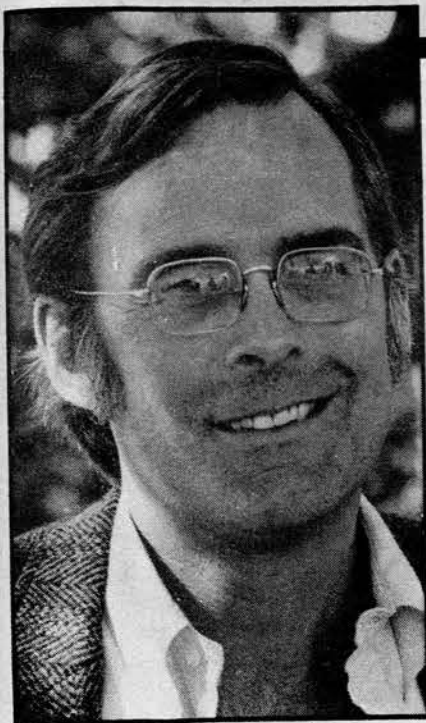
The opening session set the tone.

Lamm, who will not run for re-election in 1986, used his strategic position as opening speaker to trounce on dearly held tenets of Colorado water policy, and to lay out a program of reform and democratization. The audience, which greeted the governor with a standing ovation, ushered him out with tepid applause. The experience is not new to Lamm -- he has had the same effect on meetings of doctors, attorneys, the handicapped and others.

Gourds



Colorado Governor Richard Lamm



*Charles Wilkinson: 'Classic Western water law
leaves uses of a major public resource
solely to the individual discretion
of private developers.'*

Although the subject of the conference was water, it is possible that its major effect will be on the Rocky Mountain High mindset. The image of Colorado is that of a state with scores of 14,000-foot mountains, a real-life Shangri La in Aspen, a Queen of the Plains in the Mile High City and an avant garde capital in Boulder. Because of its rejection of the 1976 Winter Olympics and such elected officials as Lamm and Sen. Gary Hart, Colorado is also seen as a bastion of environmental protection.

In a world where image shapes reality, that view of Colorado has had enormous impact. All through the 1970s, people and businesses moved to Colorado as though it were the last state on earth. The economy boomed and the only challenge appeared to be accommodating the growth without trashing the state. The prevailing attitude was expressed, as usual, on bumper stickers: "Welcome to Colorado; now go home."

Lately, a new reality has been making itself felt. The state was shocked to learn recently that more people are choosing to leave Colorado than migrate to it. Speakers said that individuals and institutions are shunning or fleeing Colorado because it lacks first-rate higher education and its roads and public buildings are decaying, even as other states get their acts together.

There was something approaching consensus on Colorado's troubles. But speakers differed radically on the cure. Some called for an end to "paralysis," to the state's failure to "move ahead" with water development. That paralysis started with President Jimmy Carter's 1976 Hit List attack on federally funded water projects. In Colorado, the paralysis has been abetted by an uneasy alliance between western Colorado and Denver-area environmentalists. These bedfellows have made life difficult for cities that would divert water to the Front Range from the well-watered but ever less populated Western Slope.

Front Range speakers who decried the paralysis called for cooperation between the two slopes in the form of construction of a reservoir both could use. They said that Front Range development means more people to buy vacation condos, patronize ski areas and consume commodities produced in western Colorado.

The hardliners spoke out against Lamm's Reformation, and reaffirmed orthodoxy: the state's doctrine of Prior Appropriation (first in time, first in right), which allows water to be

transported hundreds of miles away from its streambed if the funds are there to build the pumps, tunnels and reservoirs (the unofficial doctrine that water flows uphill to money).

Since the Colorado constitution says that the state's streams belong to the entire state, and can legally be diverted anywhere by anyone who can put them to "beneficial use," the Front Range said it is false to accuse the East Slope of stealing the West Slope's water. It is also, they said, unconscionable of the West Slope to demand reparation for the diverted water in the form of "compensatory storage" reservoirs built by the East Slope on the West Slope.

In obedience to the state's economy and law, Colorado's cities and water districts have constructed 31 transmountain diversions, which annually take 500,000 acre-feet of

water out of the Colorado River basin and send it east into the Missouri River basin.

This is water which would otherwise flow down the Western Slope of the Rockies, first through its national forests and wilderness areas, then across the broader valleys where the cattle ranches, fruit orchards and small towns are, and finally on to Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

The economic might of Arizona and California, with their ability to drink all of the Colorado River dry -- not just that part allocated to them by the 1922 Colorado River Compact -- led to appeals by the Front Range for Colorado patriotism. Depressed western Colorado, with its oil shale, coal and agriculture, cannot even use the water now stored in Blue Mesa, Ruedi and Green Mountain reservoirs.

Therefore, the transmountain diversers say, to keep California and Arizona from getting "our" water, it should be diverted to the Front Range.

The Western Slope replied that California gets the water, "At least we can watch it flow by." It can be rafted on and fished in. It can help support the state's multi-billion-dollar tourism industry -- one based on the Rocky Mountain High image.

The fight between the two slopes is a sincere one. The hot rhetoric backed by millions in legal fees and decades of litigious history which has enriched generations of lawyers and clogged court calendars all the way to the Colorado Supreme Court.

But the fight is not all-out; each side obeys unspoken but understood boundaries. The water establishment

(Continued on page 12)

Other voices on the arcane world of water

Most of the attention at the conference went to those willing to go out on a limb: Gov. Richard Lamm, Prof. Charles Wilkinson, attorney Glenn Saunders and Eagle County Commissioner Dave Mott.

But the conference also had a large technical element: speakers who approached their talks with a minimum of speculation and a maximum of more or less objective information. One of those talks was so technical it should have been presented at the 7 a.m. session of the American Waterworks Association. U.S.G.S. hydrologist James E. Kirchner spent his 25 minutes telling the audience where the measuring stations were that would some day tell something about salinity in the Colorado River.

Another federal employee, attorney John Linskold of the U.S. Justice Department, had interesting things to say about lawsuits to establish federal reserve water rights. But he gave the impression of being Daniel in the state water rights Lions Den, -- a Daniel determined to say nothing that might provoke the lions.

Denver water attorney John Carlson's talk focused on the deep roots of Western water law. He first spelled out the three foundation stones of Colorado water law: The right to beneficially appropriate water "shall never be denied, shall never be denied, shall never be denied."

Carlson made it clear that he believes beneficial appropriation and the "first in time, first in right" rule are the basis of everything good in the

West. He recounted for the audience the string of legal decisions which have established current water law practice. He also praised the doctrine of conditional water rights, which gives water claimants time to actually put their water to use.

Carlson was followed by another noted water attorney, Raphael Moses, who confronted the question of how a Western state can allow water to be diverted freely within its boundaries without also allowing it to be exported to another state. The question has become especially important recently as a result of the *Sporhase* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down an arbitrary ban on water exports by states. Interest has been heightened by the Galloway proposal, under which a private company proposes to build a dam in Colorado in order to sell water to San Diego, California.

Moses recited the history of the struggle over water exports, but would predict only that resolving the issue would take a long time.

Andy Williams, a Grand Junction water attorney, discussed the "compact call" dilemma western Colorado believes it faces. Under the 1922 interstate Colorado River Compact, the upper basin states must deliver an average of 7.5 million acre-feet per year of water to California, Arizona and Nevada. In normal years, that is not a problem. But in drought years, Williams said, it could be a very serious problem. Transmountain diversions increase sharply in dry years, and diverted water cannot be pumped back through the mountains

to help Colorado meet the lower basin's legal demands. Western Colorado has been urging the Front Range to acknowledge the problem and Williams repeated that request.

Colonel John Coats described how his Army Corps of Engineers was spending \$25 million to help the Denver metro area meet its water needs for the next 50 years with minimum of impact on western Colorado. Their environmental impact statement is examining the metro area's likely population growth, its likely demand for water, and the extent to which conservation, local groundwater supplies, and diversion from the West Slope will be necessary to meet the demand.

The struggle over the shape of the study has been long and bloody, with Denver real estate developers, the area's water suppliers, the Front Range environmentalists and the West Slope all participating in the war.

A forceful speaker on the third day was Austin Koenen of the Shearson, Lehman Bros. financial house. He told the audience how Wall Street would approach a request to finance a major water project with private money very carefully.

It's a new area because, until now the federal government has financed irrigation projects, collecting, as a speaker said, eight cents on every dollar it invested. Koenen made clear that Wall Street would expect a better return.

--Ed Mars

Water...

(Continued from page 11)

on the Western Slope shares the values of its opponents on the Eastern Slope. The West Slope establishment backs the doctrines of prior appropriations and beneficial use; it abhors and sues against the protection the Endangered Species Act gives to stream habitat; it fights instream flow; it litigates against attempts by the federal government to use its reserve powers (the doctrine that the establishment of national forests and national parks also established water rights) to keep water flowing through public lands; it sees wilderness and wild and scenic rivers as plagues on the land.

At present, then, the argument as defined by the two establishments is not whether the West Slope should be preserved intact and more or less natural, but whether the streams should be dammed or dewatered for Denver metro growth, or dammed today in anticipation of the eventual, inevitable population growth that will occur when western Colorado develops its coal, uranium, molybdenum, oil shale and scenery-as-back-drop.

Given that consensus, the extent to which the conference was dominated by broad calls for reform and by predictions that the water genie was out of the bottle, once and for all, was striking. If the conference correctly reflects the present thinking on water policy making, then sharp changes are likely.

Reform was not the only theme of the conference. Just as fierce as the struggle between water developers and environmentalists, and between the slopes, is the battle among cities and counties in the metropolitan Denver area. Denver has the water system, the water rights and the water expertise. But it is barred from expansion by a constitutional amendment powered through by its neighbors. As a result, its population has been stuck at 500,000. In the past, it reflexively sold water to the surrounding, booming suburbs, assuming that its skyscrapers would grow higher as Englewood, Littleton, Aurora and others sprawled out around it.

But under Denver Mayor Federico Pena, and as a result of suburban reluctance to help support such metropolitan institutions as Denver's library and hospital systems, Denver has gotten tougher. No longer will it be the single-handed provider of the metro area's water. Instead, it forced the surrounding entities to finance 80 percent of a \$25 million Army Corps study (the Systemwide/Site Specific Metropolitan Denver Water Supply EIS) of the metro area's water needs, even as it kept control of that study. In the same way, it is looking to a metro-wide consortium to finance most of the next project it is interested in building: the one million acre-foot Two Forks Reservoir on the South Platte.

The metro tensions were not as clearly developed at the conference as the East Slope - West Slope tensions. But they were there. Denver Water Board member Monte Pascoe called on the surrounding suburbs to recognize their responsibility in providing water. And Bob Weaver, a member of the Front Range's Environmental Caucus, angered Den-

Glenn Saunders: 'The highest value of Western Slope water is in developing the Front Range... Denver is one of the great cities of the world.'



ver's representatives by praising Aurora for having a much more progressive attitude toward conservation and water use than Denver. The praise hurt, especially because Denver must sit static while astronomically growing Aurora, the joke is, will someday be annexing land in western Kansas.

So the conference was pulled in a variety of directions by a variety of issues. Colorado Springs Mayor Robert Isaac, whose city is preparing to tap streams within western Colorado's Holy Cross Wilderness above Vail, called for a statewide sales tax to fund water projects. Roland Fischer, head of the Western Colorado Water Conservation District, the head of the West Slope's water establishment, rattled the stick of keeping water in the streams so the West Slope can watch it, but called for an intra-state compact to end the feuding and get on with water development.

Marcia Hughes, attorney for the 44 Metropolitan Water Providers who are paying for the Army Corps water study, predicted that the metro area's current tap gap (Denver will stop selling taps at the end of 1986), will not stop growth, but merely create chaos. She, like Isaac, spoke surprisingly softly, calling for cooperation and heralding the creation of a unified metropolitan area which would act together in its and the state's interests.

By comparison with these Establishmentarian talks, Lamm was the bull in the china shop, saying that water law and practice had to be reformed before progress could occur. Not only did he back western Colorado against the Front Range, but he called for election of the boards of conservancy districts -- the taxing bodies which build (usually with federal dollars) and operate irrigation systems; for conservation of both urban and agricultural water use to make additional transmountain diversions and stream-dewatering unnecessary; and, sacrilegiously, for an end to "waste" by farmers and ranchers.

As ammunition, Lamm cited statistics which said the raising of alfalfa for cattle took 28 percent of the state's water but produced only \$156 million. By comparison, Colorado recreation and hunting economies consume a minute fraction of the state's water, but produce \$4 billion in revenue.

In contrast to Mayor Isaac's statewide tax, Lamm warned that the death of federally funded projects did not mean water projects could dip into

the state treasury. It was all very well to squander free federal money. But he said the spending of state money on water must be weighed against competing needs for education, highways, prisons, and so on.

Lamm's talk was blunt, but not nearly as blunt as CU and Oregon University law professor Wilkinson's: "The water establishment has a virtually unparalleled ability to define the issues, to set the agenda, to mold public opinion. Ultimately, your statutory system lacks the balanced toughness bred by open and informed debate."

Citizens, he said, must take the debate away from the attorneys and engineers and appointed officials who define water as a matter of survival. No one, he said, is dying from lack of water. The question is water for expansion and development, which is different from water for survival.

The significance of the shift in position by Lamm, who in 10 years as governor had never directly attacked Colorado's water policies, was underlined by Wilkinson's conviction that this is a historic period. "This is the first time of real ferment in Western water law, even though the prior appropriation doctrine is older than the hardrock mining law, older even than the Homestead Law."

But it will not be simple to change the law so that developers can no longer dewater or plug streams without regard to the public interest, Wilkinson said. Those practices are "entrenched in the West because so many financial interests have a vested stake in the traditional system. The beneficiaries of the policies have organized to shut off, slow or stunt various attempts to infuse a broader range of concerns into the system."

In Montana, the Pacific Northwest, California and Arizona, he said, broader interests were being built into traditional water law. "But Colorado has not much participated in these progressive developments." Even its instream flow program is neglected and underfinanced and forever in danger of repeal due to pressure from developers.

While other states build the public trust doctrine and conservation into their water laws, "Colorado, the state with the most wonders of all, is not."

With Lamm a lame duck, the water conference provided fertile ground for gubernatorial hopefuls to sniff the wind and maneuver for position. At lunch on the first day, Democrat Morgan Smith, the head of Colorado's Department of Local Affairs and a possible candidate, went at Wilkin-

son's theme of backwardness in a gentler way. He said he disagreed with John Naisbitt, author of *Megatrends*, that Colorado was a trend-setting state. Smith said Colorado had neglected its human resources and its physical infrastructure during its boom days.

"We felt superior to the Eastern states (in the 1970s). We didn't realize we were coasting and they were rebuilding." And despite today's apparently healthy Front Range economy, Smith said he believes things are deteriorating. "The drop in in-migration indicates Colorado has lost some of its attraction. It means other places have caught up." People don't feel the need to leave where they are, or to come to Colorado, and that includes the people who decide to move businesses and factories. He also warned against present trends, saying there is a danger that the state's water, human resources and financial capital will all be pulled to the Denver area.

A second gubernatorial candidate, Roy Romer, a Democrat and the State Treasurer, talked about the need for organized decision-making, and appeared to imply that water decisions should be made by the state rather than by the unofficial water groups, such as the Colorado Water Congress, which now wield enormous power.

Neither Smith nor Romer spoke directly to the East Slope - West Slope question. But a Republican candidate, Pueblo legislator Bob Kirscht, did. He said the continued growth of the Front Range was hurting that area by creating overcrowding, even as it damaged economically depressed rural Colorado by removing its water. Kirscht appears to be aiming his strategy at an alliance between urban people who think the Denver area is large enough, and rural people who wish to see an end to transmountain diversions.

Bringing a national perspective to the conference, Christine Olsenius, head of the Freshwater Society in Navarre, Minn., told the audience how East sees West. The East says, "We subsidized your development. Now you're the fastest growing region. So get in line with the rest of us" for federal money.

She suggested that neither Colorado nor the nation could expect elected officials to make tough decisions. "Politicians are good at distributing pleasure; not allocating pain." The allocation of pain and reform, she said, would have to flow from the bottom to the top. She cited work in the Great Plains' Red River Valley of the North as an example of

how that grassroots process works. "How do you get water policy planning? You get everyone in the act."

Those in favor of reform did not have it all their own way. Several speakers reacted sharply to the attacks on water lawyers and water law from Lamm and Wilkinson.

Andy Williams, a water lawyer from Grand Junction, reminded the audience: "Lawyers don't work for lawyers. They work for you, and do what you want them to do. If you've been letting your lawyer drag you around by the nose, stop doing it."

Glenn Saunders, a Denver water attorney who for many decades spoke for the Denver Water Department and who remains influential, said of the governor:

"You have to have your facts straight before you can progress. Lamm, whose speech was probably written by Getches (David Getches, head of the Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources), had only one fact right: federal subsidies are gone."

Saunders then turned on his tape recorder -- "If I'm going to get sued, I'd better know what I'm saying" -- and continued: "Let's take one of the shibboleths of the governor and others who don't know what they're talking about: Ranchers and farmers never waste water." And nor do city people, he said, in response to long-standing demands that Denver meter 88,000 unmetered homes. "We don't need metering. It doesn't save water... people are natural water savers. I'm

talking facts. I don't know what these school teachers and governors are talking."

Saunders, who gave the audience an insight into how the Denver Water Department at least used to view the world, said, "The highest value of Western Slope water is in developing the Front Range. It takes comparatively little water to create a great economy and Denver is one of the great cities of the world."

He continued, "Recreation doesn't take much water. Only river rafters need water in streams and they don't produce much." He said people at one time liked to fly fish. "Now they're flat water fishermen... These environmentalists can holler all they want, but people want lakes."

In an emotional sense, Saunders' counterpart was Eagle County Commissioner Dave Mott. Eagle is home to the Vail and Beaver Creek ski areas, and Mott, a Cornell University graduate, is a former Vail Associates executive.

The ski industry he is associated with has suffered most from Denver's diversions. Summit County's ski towns of Breckenridge, Silverthorne, and Dillon, which are home to Keystone, Copper Mountain, and other ski areas, can no longer grow because of a lack of water. In fact, Summit County, which is in western Colorado, is close to signing a peace pact with the Denver Water Department so it can get a few thousand additional acre-feet of water for development. At present, much of

the water in its Blue River goes to Denver. And Vail is blocked from building a small reservoir it needs by undeveloped water claims Denver holds in the Eagle River basin.

Mott's talk probably produced the tensest moments of the conference. Standing at the podium, with Denver Water Department head Bill Miller on one side and Denver Water Board member Monte Pascoe on the other, he said:

"The perception of the Denver Water Department is that of an arrogant, domineering and inconsiderate bully, with vast resources and cavalier attorneys capable of manipulating people, situations and the law to gain whatever their objective is."

The test of whether that continues to be the West Slope's perception depends on "a real and tangible commitment by the Front Range to practice effective conservation and mitigate the impacts of transmountain diversions... There is a high country suspicion that the Denver Water Department grossly exaggerates its needs, while failing to take what are viewed as relatively simple steps to meet realistic water requirements by measures short of transmountain diversions."

He said the need for cooperation was obvious but ended his talk with the story about the scorpion and the frog, in which the scorpion first convinced the frog to ferry it across the stream, and then



Rolly Fischer

strung it in mid-stream. "Why did you do that?" moaned the expiring frog. "now we will both die." "Because," said the drowning scorpion, "that's my nature."

Miller, who was moderating the panel, said Mott's talk made him wonder why he attended conferences

Tapes of the entire three-day conference are available for \$56, or individual days for \$20 each. To order contact conference organizer Marlen Zanetell at 303/943-2082.

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BOOK NOTES

A provocative dialog on national parks

Views of the Green

Paul C. Pritchard, editor. Washington, D.C.: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1985. 154 pages. \$9.95 postpaid, paper.

Review by Betsy Marston

The way in which different cultures approach the challenge of preserving national parks was explored by 40 representatives from Europe, America and Canada at a 10-day conference held in West Germany two years ago. Excerpts from that dialog, which was sponsored by this country's National Parks and Conservation Association, have just been published as *Views of the Green*. The book contains some thoughtful nuggets.

Not surprisingly, a common theme that emerged was the many threats to parks; ranging from too many visitors turning natural areas into replicas of urban sprawl, the power of timber, hunting and farming interests to shape resource decisions, the jurisdictional puzzle that occurs when park boundaries are drawn without regard for an ecological whole, and the dismal educational systems that fail to prepare people for parks that cannot provide Disneyland-like entertainment.

Basic differences also emerged. Because Europe is long on history and short on land, many parks there are one-tenth the size of America's. And what once was wild is intensively managed. America is blessed by having millions of acres of wild lands

left to preserve. Michael Frome, a conservationist at the University of Idaho, summed up for the group what has become an emotional drive to preserve wilderness in America:

"We are not adding any wilderness. God gave us a planet of wilderness. All we are trying to do is to save a little bit. But when we set up a park or a wilderness, it implies 'you can have all the rest.' And yet we find that if we don't save the rest, we can't save the park."

Frome's remarks were especially relevant to conservationists from European countries. As a Polish park curator pointed out, acid rain has already destroyed the ecosystems of numerous parks. The phenomenon of acid rain striking Europe more intensely than America is new, a West German pointed out, because usually American leads the way and Europe follows 10 years later. "We fear the movements coming over from America," he said.

Yet one movement that is particularly American turned out to be of help to representatives from Denmark, Poland and other countries. They said they plan to encourage at home our tradition of respect and use of volunteers -- those people of all ages who do for free what government says it cannot afford.

The conference revealed, however, that what doesn't translate well is the American penchant for getting exercised about one issue, such as preserving wilderness, and forming or joining a group dedicated to that cause. Americans like to belong to

groups and they like to tangle politically without becoming enmeshed in ideology, said Joseph Sax, a law professor at the University of Michigan.

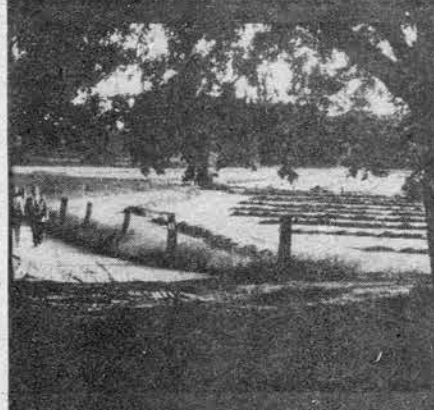
European representatives noted that while there is growing concern about acid rain there is little or no constituency for the single issue of protecting national parks. A Canadian representative added a different point of view. "We have more of a commitment to bureaucracy," he said. "We don't tend to harass people who are in government."

Calling himself a revolutionary, Michael Frome told the group he was committed to watchdogging bureaucrats whose decisions affect public lands. Individuals can make a difference, he said, but preserving wilderness will take a movement that can equal the "powerful vested interests inside and outside the government."

Editor Paul Pritchard leaves some of the more provocative voices from Europe to the last. Briefly, Matti Helminen, chief of Finland's national parks, explains that the notion of protecting what is natural has been spurred by intensive management which leaves forests bare, then reborn with mechanically planted trees. But unlike this country, with its vast acreages of public land, the natural areas left in Finland are privately owned and extremely expensive for the government to buy, he said. The most beautiful natural areas are now awash in vacation cottages, he added.

One of the last sessions took up the

VIEWS OF THE GREEN



Presentations from
New Directions for the
Conservation of Parks

subject, "The failure of established institutions," with the moderator urging real disagreement and "a lot of shouting at each other." It didn't happen.

But there was a wistful, almost painful resonance to the conclusion of Hanno Henke of West Germany. A volunteer in the conservation field, Henke said he has not yet developed a clear understanding of what unites conservationists philosophically. And change, he said, will come only when people propelled by a new, deeply held belief alter institutions. Henke said a new "philosophical anthropology" is needed that places man in nature as well as apart from it. "We need a new understanding, not only of nature but of biosphere and the universe..."

"The feeling prevails in Germany that man is living in a world in which he is not at home," Henke said. "This is destructive because it makes us helpless and weak. Only when we feel strong are we able to greet our fellow creatures with peace."

LETTERS

DISGUSTED

Dear HCN,

The *Denver Post* lead staff editorial, "Reform our water policy," on Friday, Aug. 2 leaves me speechless -- almost. The editorial cites examples of wasteful water usage resulting from horribly misguided water storage projects, both actual and proposed. And it praises Gov. Richard Lamm for his thoughtful sermon on the same subject at the recent water conference in Gunnison, Colorado. It was Lamm's speech, in fact, which triggered the editorial.

Both the *Post* editorialist's and Lamm's startling change of philosophy about water bring back a host of memories of one of the first really big water issue debates in 1977 in Grand Junction, Colorado. It was here that a huge public hearing was staged by President Carter's newly appointed deputies in the Department of Interior to listen to public reaction to the president's recently announced non-support for several Western Slope Bureau of Reclamation water projects (Carter's infamous hit list).

At that time, Lamm and several members of his staff testified vehemently against the president's intention to reject the projects. The governor, Department of Natural Resources Director Harris Sherman, Water Conservation Director Larry Sparks and many of Lamm's close private advisors, including Monte Pascoe and Jim Monaghan, second

only to Lamm as the state's most adept political chameleon, were all there, full of righteous indignation over the president's unjust treatment of the poor cattle feed irrigators on the Little Snake River north of Craig, on Fruitland Mesa above the town of Crawford and in the Dolores River valley.

A handful of us were also there saying *exactly* the same things the *Post*'s editorialist and the governor are saying today. Somewhere, deep in the heart of Washington, is a tape which recorded my statements that the cattle growers' chronic problem was one of over-production, that it was ridiculous to store more irrigation water to increase the production of livestock feed and therefore livestock.

We also testified that an unaltered, free-flowing stream in an unflooded valley is a tremendously beneficial use of water for both recreation and wildlife.

I wish I had known enough then (as I do now) to testify that the water was never really intended for irrigation; that it would shortly be sold for enormous profits by the irrigators to the booming energy mineral producers and to allow municipal growth in Grand Junction with no intention of ever repaying the taxpayers. No one, of course, could have possibly predicted the short life of the energy boom in those days.

Not only were Colorado elected officials rabid against the Carter administration, but the *Denver Post*, through writers Lee Olson, Bill Hornby and Buzz Larsen, carried on a livid campaign for continued federal

water subsidies until this most recent editorial, which is certainly a benchmark of changed opinion. I tend to feel the *Post* is sincere in opinions it holds, and I am giving it the benefit of the doubt that it would not be unpatriotic or hypocritical enough to label a water project financed by the feds as justifiably beneficial, but wasteful if it must be state financed.

But Lamm's diatribes are another matter. He is a straw in the wind looking for publicity however it can be gained. His fickleness seriously injured the environmental movement in Colorado for years. He owes a multitude of apologies to scores of his 1974 supporters who were left without a leader when he gained the governorship. It is disgusting to see the *Post* giving him all this credit today for the same policies he knew were correct years ago, but when he lacked the dedication or courage to

TOUCHE

Dear HCN,

Jack de Golia, are you kidding (letter, HCN, 7/22/85)? The photo of Kathleen Ferris, Arizona's new water czar, made you question her knowledge of water due to her youth and modeling agency head-shot. I have a suggestion. Why don't you send a head (or body) shot of yourself to HCN so that we readers can reach a conclusion as to *your* expertise and intellectual capacity?

Susan Brater
Paonia, Colorado

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OPINION

Watery winds of change

Elsewhere in this issue is an indignant letter to the editor from Robert McPhee of Denver. McPhee, a former member of the three-person board which oversees Colorado's public lands, is disturbed that it took Gov. Richard Lamm almost ten years to join President Jimmy Carter's attack on Western water projects and policies.

McPhee, we think, misses two points: one trivial, one significant. The trivial point is that Carter was defeated in his attempt at re-election. Lamm was re-elected twice and could win easily in 1986 if he wanted a fourth term as governor.

More significantly, the governor has shown an uncanny ability to climb on the crest of each new wave as it curls toward the shore of public opinion. His recent strong espousal of reform of water law and practice means this is an issue whose time has come.

If you do not believe in the Colorado governor's infallible political instinct, you can find evidence of imminent change by looking toward Glenwood Springs, a resort town on the mainstem of the Colorado which plays the Vatican to western Colorado's High Church of water, the Colorado River Water Conservation District.

The River District is one of those obscure agencies that wields more power than many governors. It is directed by a 15-person board appointed by 15 counties whose water the River District is legislatively charged with protecting, and whose 29,000 square miles it taxes.

For much of its 48-year history, the River District has been immune from criticism. When someone dared attack it, western Colorado's establishment was quick to jump to its protection. That loyalty was part of the automatic fealty Western areas pay those who oversee water.

The River District proves just how automatic that loyalty is because it has rarely done anything substantial. In its nearly 50 years of existence, it has levied millions in taxes but has never poured a yard of concrete or dug a mile of irrigation ditch. All the tax money has gone to lobbyists, engineers and attorneys to influence legislation, study water projects and attack Denver's claims to West Slope water.

Surprisingly, the River District's charmed life appeared to end several weeks ago, after its board

approved a 26 percent increase in the 1986 budget, including a \$5,000 raise (to \$85,000) for Secretary-Engineer Roland Fischer. The attack on the budget came from all quarters: the county commissioners in the district's own Garfield County, the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel*, six member of its historically passive board and various leading citizens.

The district was attacked as insensitive to western Colorado's present plight -- its economy will have to improve markedly to be in the pits. But that alone doesn't explain the present anger. The district was profligate and insensitive before without being attacked. In fact, it is being attacked for doing exactly what it has always done.

What may have changed after nearly a half century is the realization that the region's water policy is bankrupt. That water policy, as established by the River District, has two parts. Offensively, it consists of beating on the federal government to build the so-called participating projects western Colorado was "promised" by Congress when the Central Arizona Project was authorized in 1966.

Defensively, it consists of fighting Denver's attempts to divert additional water through the Continental Divide and environmentalists' attempts to keep streams unplugged and full of water.

These strategies are in the service of the district's historic goal: to build projects to raise alfalfa and grass hay to feed to cattle. The raising of hay is seen as a stopgap, meant to put the water to use until energy and mineral production allow western Colorado to urbanize.

At root, the River District adheres to an approach embraced by many Third World nations: an almost violent rejection of a rural lifestyle and economy in favor of one which is industrialized and urbanized. In pursuit of this urbanized, industrialized future, the River District has neglected western Colorado's only consistent economy, recreation, and has fiercely opposed anything which could preserve the region as a rural place based on a rural economy.

In the name of this urban future based on energy and mineral development, the River District has fought instream and minimum stream flow; it has fought in the courts and the Congress

against the protection the Endangered Species Act offers stream habitat; it has fought wild and scenic protection for rivers; and it has fought the exercise of federal reserved rights to keep streams flowing through public lands.

All of the things it has fought are part of a general public trust doctrine, which together would limit the damming and diverting to the Front Range of western Colorado's rivers and streams. But the River District refuses to use these prime weapons to fight transmountain diversions because they would weaken western Colorado's dream of future urbanization. In other words, the River District prefers to see its region dewatered, rather than have it remain intact and rural.

It is not just the River District which is at blame. It is part of the mentality in much of the rural Rockies to lust after growth and urbanization.

The hope, and it is a slim one, is that the economic disaster visited upon the rural Rockies by its most recent headlong pursuit of an urban economy will lead to new approaches -- ones which will encourage an economy based on agriculture, recreation, retirement and the kind of mining and logging which do not interfere with other rural activities.

The River District is probably too much a victim of its past rhetoric and disastrously wrong-headed policies to now spend its tax money in support of wild and scenic river creation, instream and minimum stream flows, federal reserved rights, and wilderness areas. Nor do we expect it to abandon its obsession with "broken federal promises" to build white elephant dams, and instead seek to construct small, strategically-placed reservoirs in support of recreation.

But it is interesting to note that western Colorado's conservative congressman, Mike Strang, a fierce opponent of wilderness, is attempting to create a national park and a protected river segment centered on the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. If the River District ever becomes politically accountable to the people who pay it taxes, it also may take a new look at the world. What surprises will greet it on that day.

--Ed Marston

BOOK NOTES

Sometimes, no decision is right

Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance

Stephen Herrero. Piscataway, New Jersey: Winchester Press, 1985. 287 pages. \$14.95, cloth.

Review by Michael L. Smith

A fatal bear attack in the Lower 48 is almost sure to receive national media coverage, particularly if it occurs in a national park. Because of their rarity or perhaps because they stir something deep within the human consciousness, bear attacks inspire headlines. In this book -- a big seller at Yellowstone National Park -- they have inspired fascinating first-person accounts and thoughtful analysis.

Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance is the result of some 17 years of bear research by Stephen Herrero. Trained in animal behavior, Herrero has compiled a data base covering more than 400 incidents ranging from brief and harmless encounters to death. Some grizzly and black bear accounts are examined in depth.

These stories are spellbinding. The

reader comes away with awe both for the power of the bear to inflict injury and for the power of restraint -- its ability to choose some option other than pressing an attack. We see that a bear surprised at close range may flee, stand its ground, bluff charge one or more times or charge full speed to attack.

Herrero tells us that when bears do attack it is usually because they feel threatened. Surprising a bear at close range, failing to give a wide berth to a mother grizzly with cubs or blundering across a grizzly's food source are all examples of triggers for attack. The common thread is a breach by humans of the well-defined rules of bear etiquette. The author discusses in great detail what can be done to avoid such attacks or, faced with an imminent attack, what can be done to minimize its effects. Prevention is, of course, the key, and such attacks can almost always be avoided given a degree of human awareness when traveling in bear country.

In a second kind of attack, however, the bear is a predator. Because of their rarity, predation attacks are more difficult to character-

ize, Herrero says. These attacks have usually occurred after a bear has become habituated to humans, sometimes after feeding on garbage or entering campsites in search of food. In a very small percentage of these incidents, the human becomes the prey. Herrero says instinctive predatory "programming" in the bear can be triggered by flight or struggle on the part of the human. In such cases, the bear's learned caution gives way to an instinctive pursuit.

The last half of the book includes chapters on avoiding encounters, bear behavior, learning patterns and evolution, as well as bear management.

A weakness of this book, admittedly minor, is a tendency to over-prescribe in the "what to do if..." department. I recall a suggestion to climb 33 feet up a tree, the reasoning being that the highest a grizzly has been known to climb is slightly less than 33 feet. What if the measuring tape is buried in the pack left on the ground to distract the bear? What to do if this particular bear thinks metric?

The extreme rarity of bear attacks

Bear Attacks Their Causes and Avoidance



STEPHEN HERRERO

and the unique nature of each situation probably renders exact prescription less useful than generalities.

□

Michael L. Smith works with natural resources consulting firm Boulder, Colorado, and serves on the Division of Wildlife Bear Management Advisory Task Force.

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BULLETIN BOARD

RURAL PHOTO CONTEST

The environmental coalition Western Colorado Congress is sponsoring a photography contest on rural Colorado for amateur photographers. Entrants need not be from Colorado, but pictures must be taken in the state. There are nine different categories and winners will be chosen for both black and white and color photos. Entries must be postmarked no later than Oct. 9. For more information, contact WCC, attn.: Rural Colorado, P.O. Box 472, Montrose, CO 81402 (303/249-1978).

WYOMING GEOLOGY STUDIES

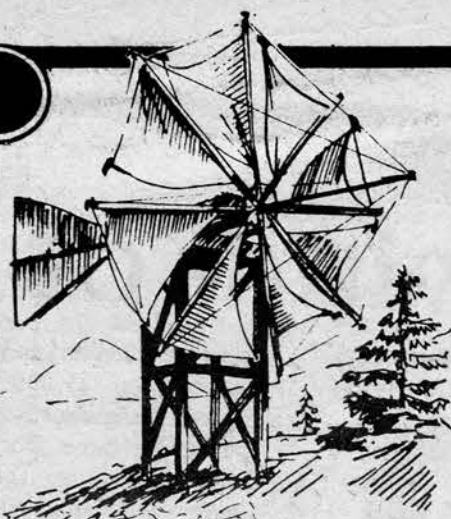
The Geological Survey of Wyoming has a bibliography available containing 811 graduate theses and dissertations on the geology of Wyoming. The report is an update of the earlier 1974 edition, and includes theses written from 1899 to 1984. For a copy, send \$6 to Geological Survey of Wyoming, Public Information Circular 24, Box 3008, University Station, Laramie, WY 82071.

FEDERAL COAL REPORT

The Bureau of Land Management has released its 1984 Federal Coal Management Report, the eighth annual summary of coal leasing and production on 75.6 million acres of publicly owned coal. We're told that although coal production on federal leases was down last year, royalties increased. Utah had the highest number of producing coal leases with 33, followed by Wyoming's 31 and Colorado's 28. Production from federal leases accounted for 11.6 percent of the 899.5 million tons mined last year. For a copy of the 70-page document, contact the BLM Utah State Office, 324 State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

LEAVE NO TRACE

The Forest Service has a new brochure designed to help people practice minimal impact camping. The publication is called "Without a Trace," and is available from Bridger-Teton National Forest, P.O. Box 1888, Jackson, WY 83001 (307/733-2752).



WINDPOWER '85

The Solar Energy Research Institute is co-sponsor of Windpower '85, a convention on wind energy to be held in San Francisco August 27-30. The convention will cover such topics as the design and construction of machines, system performance, technological innovation and legislative issues. There will also be an exhibit of wind energy equipment and a tour of a wind farm. Other sponsors are the Department of Energy and the American Wind Energy Association. For more info, write the latter at 1516 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (703/684-5196).

MEDICINE WHEEL GATHERING

Classes and ceremonies "for the healing of the Earth Mother" will be sponsored by the Bear Tribe Medicine Society Sept. 6-8, when a modern-day medicine wheel gathering meets in Granby, Colorado. Activities include everything from hula instruction to a "crystal rainbow healing ceremony." The cost is \$105 prepaid for adults and \$28 for children 2-11. Contact Dave McCart, 11301 Chambers Rd., Brighton, CO 80601 (303/286-1435).

WATER STUDIES

A set of four studies of Western water issues are available from the Western Governors' Association in Denver for \$50. Individual titles and their costs are: *New Challenges, New Directions*, \$18; *Indian Water Rights*, \$18; *Interstate Allocation and Management of Non-Tribal Groundwater*, \$18; and *Water Conservation and Western Water Resource Management*, \$18. For further information, or to order (prepaid only), contact the association at 600 17th St., #1205 South Tower, Denver, Colorado 80202 (303/623-9378).

KOOTENAI OVERVIEW

Montana's Kootenai National Forest has published a newspaper tabloid-sized overview of its draft environmental impact statement and proposed Forest Plan. The overview highlights 15 alternatives considered for managing the forest for the next 10 years. Review copies are available at all Kootenai National Forest offices and area public libraries. For a copy, write Forest Plan, Kootenai National Forest, Rt. 3 Box 700, Libby, MT 59923. Comments are due by October 15.

WYOPASS CONFERENCE

The Wyoming Planning Association is co-sponsor of the 1985 Wyopass conference, which will focus on "New Directions for Wyoming." There will be workshops and talks about Wyoming resource issues, state and local legislative planning and economic development. The Sept. 24-27 conference, which costs \$90 total or \$45 per day, convenes at the Hitching Post Inn in Cheyenne. For more info, contact the Cheyenne Laramie County Regional Planning Office, 2101 O'Neil, Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307/632-1561).



NOLS CELEBRATES 20

The National Outdoor Leadership School will celebrate its twentieth year by holding a conference on wilderness and conservation issues. Speakers include NOLS' founder Paul Petzoldt, and topics range from mountain medicine to public land management. "Wilderness Education and Leadership... a 20/20 vision" will be held August 23-25 at the NOLS headquarters in Lander, Wyoming. For information or registration, write NOLS, Box AA, Dept. 20/20, Lander, WY 82520.

BLACK CANYON MEETINGS

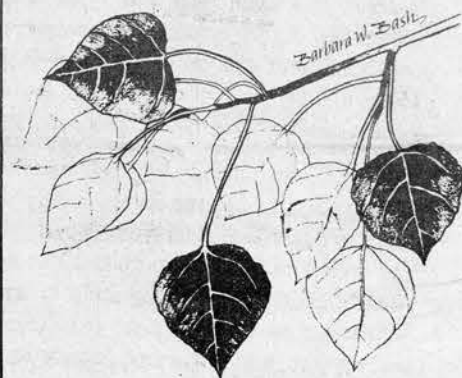
Public meetings on western Colorado's proposed Black Canyon National Park and Scenic Recreation Area will be held later this month. The proposal would give national park status to the Black Canyon National Monument, retain or give recreation area status to the surrounding areas, and possibly designate the Gunnison River below the monument as the state's first wild and scenic river. The 15-member advisory committee appointed by Rep. Mike Strang, R-Co., to study the proposal will open the public meetings at 7:30 p.m. at the Delta courthouse annex on Aug. 19 and at the Montrose city council chambers on Aug. 23. The panel plans to hold at least two additional meetings before it issues its findings at the end of September.

GUNNISON GORGE PLAN

The final management plan for the Gunnison Gorge Recreation Area is out. The BLM recreation area is next to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument in western Colorado, and both are part of the area now being considered for national park and scenic recreation area status. For a copy of the plan, call John Sering, 303/249-2244, or write Bureau of Land Management, 2505 S. Townsend, Montrose, CO 81401.

UTAH WILDERNESS DEDICATION

Utah legislators and conservationists will be on hand at the dedication of wilderness areas created by the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. Sen. Jake Garn, Reps. Jim Hansen and Howard Nielson, Dick Carter of the Utah Wilderness Association and Forest Service Chief Max Peterson will all be at the long-awaited dedication, scheduled for 10 a.m. August 28 at the Mirror Lake Campground, 27 miles east of Kamas on Highway 150. For directions or carpool information, call the Utah Wilderness Association at 801/359-1337.



ASPEN ECOLOGY WORKSHOP

Cloud Ridge Naturalists of Ward, Colorado, are sponsoring a fall aspen ecology workshop. Proceeds from the workshop will be split between *High Country News* and Western Colorado Congress, a ranching and conservation coalition that recently appealed a third aspen cut proposed by the U.S. Forest Service. The four-day workshop will look at the life history of aspen and their place in the ecological development of mountain forests. The first day will begin in Rocky Mountain National Park, in a burn area where both aspen seedlings and suckers are becoming established. Several aspen forests on Colorado's Western Slope will be visited, including some of those in the Uncompahgre National Forest that have been targeted for clearcutting. The instructors will be botanist Dr. Joyce Gellhorn-Greene of Boulder and Kevin Williams, a forestry-educated staff member of WCC. A price of \$100 includes instruction, instructional materials and some meals. The dates are September 26-29, and the address to contact is Cloud Ridge Naturalists, Overland Star Route, Ward, CO 80481 (303/459-3248).

IDAHO CRACKS DOWN

On July 1st it became a lot more expensive to violate Idaho hunting and fishing laws. New penalties went into effect that increase the maximum fine from \$300 to \$1,000, and make it a felony if a person is convicted twice within five years for illegal sale of certain wildlife species. Bighorn, mountain goat and moose carry the largest fines, but measures include increased fines for violators taking wild turkey, whistling swan, and chinook salmon. For a complete schedule of fines and penalties, write Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 600 S. Walnut, Box 25, Boise, ID 83707.



Lynne Bama

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