

High Country News

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Vol. 19, No. 4

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar



The Hanford Nuclear Reservation

Poor engineering, worse PR

by James Baker

"It sucks" is what an unidentified staffer for the U.S. Department of Energy concluded about his agency's choice of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation as a candidate for the nation's first high-level nuclear waste dump.

The blunt if indecorous comment showed up in the margin of an internal memo obtained by a House committee -- obtained despite testimony from Energy Secretary John Herrington that all such working documents had been shredded -- presumably to protect DOE credibility.

The memo snafu and the unknown official's comment jotted in the margin were just two in a long string of

embarrassments for the federal agency during 1986. And as the 100th Congress began this year, the DOE came into the gun sights of a half-dozen inquiries by hostile congressional committees. Most of the questions will focus on the DOE's management, or mismanagement, of Hanford.

Located in south-central Washington state, Hanford is by far the largest of DOE's facilities, and arguably the most important. Within its 570 square miles and some 780 buildings, the reservation contains the gamut of nuclear installations: the plutonium-uranium extraction (PUREX) plant, the plutonium finishing plant, the so-called N Reactor for producing plutonium in uranium fuel rods, a defense waste dump, various research labs, several decommissioned military reactors and much more.

For full measure, there are three civilian power plants -- one operating, one mothballed, and one cancelled -- owned by the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS, pronounced "whoops"), which in 1983

defaulted on \$7 billion worth of bonds. Since its creation in 1943 to develop plutonium for the Nagasaki and post-World War II bombs, Hanford has progressively molded the Tri-cities of Richland, Kennewick and Pasco, currently pumping an annual \$1 billion and 14,000 jobs into the local economy.

On May 28 of last year, the DOE chose Hanford along with Yucca Mountain in Nevada and Deaf Smith County in Texas as finalists for the high-level nuclear waste dump. Public and private citizens across Washington state immediately cried, "Politics!"

The DOE memo subsequently obtained by Congress conceded that, on purely scientific grounds, Hanford should have been rejected outright. According to the DOE's own data, of the seven sites under consideration, Richton Dome in Mississippi should have been the top choice for the dump. But that candidate site falls within the district

of House Minority Whip Trent Lott, R, a close ally of President Reagan.

While it forged ahead with Hanford and the other two finalists, the DOE also called off its search for a second high-level nuclear waste dump somewhere in the East. The decision meant that, while the vast majority of nuclear waste is generated in power plants east of the Mississippi River, all of it would be buried in the West.

Up and down the east coast, the Reagan administration faced tough Senate elections in the fall and didn't need another hot issue. In fact, one second-round candidate site happened to fall in New Hampshire where heir apparent Vice President George Bush faces a primary showdown in 1988.

Throughout 1986, the DOE found itself in more controversies than the nuclear burial ground issue. News reports revealed in August that before Washington Gov. Booth Gardner, D, paid a 1985 visit to Hanford, workers removed warning signs around a small site where radioactive materials had

(Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,



High Country News

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This newspaper's annual fund-raising appeal usually has a sentence that reads: "Without the Research Fund, there would be no *High Country News*." The corollary to that sentence is: Without HCN's non-profit 501(C)(3) status under the tax laws, there would be no Research Fund. It is the paper's non-profit status that allows individuals to deduct contributions to the Research Fund and permits foundations to give grants. The contributions and grants are half of the paper's income; subscriptions are the other half.

So staff and board were, to varying degrees, rattled when we were informed in January that an Internal Revenue Service agent would travel from Salt Lake City to Paonia to examine the paper. Reactions ranged from "This is going to be a pain" to "They're after us."

The paranoid reaction has basis in past events. The IRS attempted to lift the non-profit status of the muckraking *Mother Jones* in what was generally felt to be a politically motivated action. It has been frequently alleged that IRS audits are used against those who choose to question the wisdom of the administration's Latin American policy. The fact that the agent was coming all the way from Utah -- a state whose senators have not always fared well in the pages of this paper -- was not reassuring.

The agent turned up on Thursday, Feb. 19, precisely at 10 a.m., and it was immediately apparent that the examination was a routine carrying out of regulations. He sat down in front of the foot-high stack of files, and at the end of six hours had uncovered the problems we ourselves had found in preparing for the audit.

The main problem was our failure to report our advertising dollars as taxable income. So the examiner toted up our advertising (pitifully small in 1984, which was the year examined), figured the off-setting expenses and determined that we did not owe any taxes. He made a few other minor corrections and was gone, on his way to do other audits in western Colorado.

The six-hour visit was anticlimactic. In the three weeks prior to the visit, staff, board members Robert Wigington, a water attorney, Adam McLane, a CPA, and Tom Bell, the paper's founder, as well as numerous people associated with the paper in the past, ransacked old files and their memories to recreate the corporate history of HCN.

It was difficult. When the paper moved from Lander, Wyo., to Paonia in August 1983, files were scrambled and institutional memory was lost. Moreover, no written corporate history or single collection of files existed. So in preparation for the examination, we first had to construct an oral history of the paper, and then find documents to support that history dating back to 1969.

It was in 1969 that the Wyoming Outdoor Foundation was established as a not-for-profit corporation. In 1974 or so, the WOF changed its name to the Wyoming Environmental Institute. By 1978, the organization was largely inactive, although long-time readers will remember that contributions to the HCN Research Fund were at that time made

through the WEI. HCN Inc. itself could not collect contributions because it was a for-profit corporation owned by Tom Bell, although the "for-profit" was true only in a legal sense; the paper always lost money.

If we read the files correctly, Joan Nice and Bruce Hamilton, who ran the paper in the mid-1970s, incorporated a High Country Foundation Inc. and attempted to obtain non-profit status. The effort did not succeed, however. (We're not sure what happened to that High Country Foundation.) So in 1981, under the leadership of Geoff O'Gara at HCN and Leslie Peterson at WEI, the decision was made to have WEI acquire the assets, but not the stock, of HCN Inc. The assets were bought from founder Tom Bell for \$11,500 (that fall's cache of Research Fund income), and Bell promptly turned around and loaned the \$11,500 back to WEI.

WEI then changed its name to High Country Foundation, the corporate body which today owns and operates *High Country News*. Since WEI had non-profit status dating back to its 1969 origin as the Wyoming Outdoor Foundation, High Country Foundation was now a non-profit foundation, and could solicit grants and contributions.

The story seems simple enough in the telling, but it took some time to assemble, and to then find all the documents to show that the various name changes, asset buyouts, note signings and cancellations, and notifications to the IRS had been properly done.

The present staff and board are grateful to those who ran both High Country News Inc. and the Wyoming Environmental Institute for having dotted i's and crossed t's with such diligence in the past. Had they, at any point in the last 18 years, said, "To heck with it," and cut corners we would have been in deep trouble on Feb. 19.

Instead, when the assembling was completed, we found ourselves with a chain of documents that proved that HCN is a valid non-profit organization that has filed tax returns every year, has made its various name changes in a legal and proper way and has kept the IRS informed of each change. We are also grateful to subscriber Walter Kingsbery in Denver, a tax attorney who was generous enough to look over our files and point out to us how they would look to the IRS examiner and to suggest ways in which we can do a better job in the future. In the aftermath of this paper hunt, Robert Wigington has volunteered to write a corporate history of the paper. It will be attached to the single file we now have labelled "genesis," which traces the paper back to 1969.

The major story this issue is about Washington state's embattled Hanford Nuclear Reservation, and we asked writer Jim Baker to tell us about his visit there last June.

"Out through the heat waves, across the sagebrush and next to the Columbia River," Baker writes, "you can see the rusting hulks of reactors built 40 years ago at the dawn of the nuclear age. All is peaceful, silent..." Hanford sits in the midst of high desert, he continues, and "the world's largest sagebrush are found here. The desert's quiet hangs over the place."

"So does national security," Baker adds. "Two public highways cross portions of Hanford. But you better stay on the roads. Barbed wire fences with curt warning signs line the highways. The signs imply 'shoot to kill' orders. For the first 10 yards beyond the fences, the sagebrush has been meticulously plowed under -- to plant land mines, to give the guards a better target, to install detection devices -- take your pick. Your paranoia can run riot."

"The proposed waste dump site and the weapons plants such as PUREX and the N Reactor are located behind military guard posts. However, the public can visit the WPPSS nuclear power plants. As I took some photographs of the mothballed WPPSS #1, a civilian armed guard drove up on the other side of another barbed wire fence and asked what I was doing. Since I was on the correct side of the wire, he wouldn't force me to leave, he said, but he advised me to take my pictures and scam. He confessed to a little paranoia in the ranks of his fellow guards. After all, they had to worry about terrorist attacks."

A letter from rancher-writer Heather Thomas, who lives in Salmon, Idaho, reminds us of the many landowners who board wildlife for the winter. Last year she says "more than 60 deer lived on the place, 40 to 50 antelope spent the summer in our alfalfa fields, and this fall five elk moved into the alfalfa as well."

Some of the wildlife also made it into the house, such as an almost-frozen snake. Her daughter Andrea took pity on it and brought the snake inside, where it promptly warmed up and disappeared for five days.

Former HCN staffer Mary Moran in Tucson, Ariz., tells us spring is coming to that desert city "although I have trouble interpreting the seasons here." She went hiking a few days ago in a little mountain range called Ragged Top, where eight desert bighorn sheep were walking among plants beginning to flower.

--the staff

BARBS

What an educational surprise!

National Guard soldiers dressed in camouflage uniforms recently stormed several Tennessee high schools firing blank ammunition. The program to "promote patriotism" was carried on during school assemblies, but it scared and surprised the teenagers who had no warning of the mock attack. After patriotic speeches from the guardsmen, students were treated to pin-on American flags, and all were asked to raise their fists and shout, "Hooray," AP reports.

Anybody see Rover today?

Brazos County, Texas, officials recently voted to stop paying bounties of \$7.50 to hunters who bring in wolf ears. County Treasurer Sandie Walker had already paid \$225 for 30 sets of wolf ears this year, when state wildlife officials notified her there are no wolves either in Brazos or in surrounding counties. Walker says she believes the ears she paid for came from coyotes or wild dogs mistakenly identified as wolves, according to AP.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

A Forest Service study sheds little light

An Idaho timber supply study, which has delayed National Forest plans in the state for eight months, was released Feb. 9 by the Forest Service. Conservationists and timber spokesmen interpreted it much differently, while Idaho Sen. Jim McClure expressed disappointment in its unremarkable and carefully hedged conclusions. National Forest planning in Idaho will now resume its ponderous march toward the courts.

Seven of Idaho's ten National Forests released draft forest plans early last year. The plans proposed a slight increase in allowable timber harvest statewide over the past decade's actual harvest. But the timber industry charged the proposed levels, particularly in north Idaho, were much too low to sustain their operations. Industry leaders talked to Sen. McClure and the administration, and shortly afterward the Forest Service was ordered to analyze the industry charge. Eight forest plans were put on hold until the analysis was done.

The Forest Service was not pleased with the directive, since it meant yet another delay in forest plans and may increase the plans' legal exposure. The study, called "A Report on Idaho's Timber Supply," indeed reads like a document reluctantly prepared and calculated to have little effect.

Jim Caswell, deputy supervisor of the Boise National Forest, summarized the study's conclusions in a briefing for state legislators: "South-east Idaho really doesn't have much of a (timber supply) problem. In northern Idaho the picture is fairly bright. In southwestern Idaho we face an immediate decline of 31 million board feet (from the past decade's median harvest level on all ownerships), which can be overcome if all (landowners) work together." The study projects 682 direct and indirect jobs could be lost in southwest Idaho over the next decade if the landowners don't work together, but Caswell said that job loss "is not likely to happen in the real world."

There is consensus that the study ignores most of the factors that govern Idaho's timber industry. "The study is solely based on the least determining factor in the real Idaho -- supply," says Tom Robinson of The Wilderness Society. "A study of biological potential to grow trees is just not useful. The policy decision of whether or not to increase National Forest harvests still has to be made, and this study doesn't help make it, legally or technically."

From a different angle, Sen. McClure agreed. "What we have is basically a forecast of timber supply over the next 50 years, with no discussion of how communities might be affected," he told the Idaho Falls *Post-Register*. McClure said the Forest Service had been directed to analyze the economic impact of forest plans on timber-dependent communities, but did not do so.

Joe Hinson, of the Idaho Forest Industry Council, faulted the study's north Idaho analysis: "It says we need to cut 1.3 billion board feet a year in the north to sustain the industry, but that ignores the fact



Pack trip in an Idaho national forest

that we've got 200-250 million board feet in new mill capacity on the drawing boards." But Hinson did feel the study "confirms our contention that our company lands can't sustain their present harvest, and that to make up the shortfall we can't rely on state or other private lands alone. We'll need more Forest Service timber than the draft plans propose."

In fact, the study does not say that. It concludes that harvests from timber company lands will either end in 20 to 25 years (at present cutting rates) or can continue indefinitely at about 40 percent of the present harvest. In either case, the study concludes the decline can be made up from Forest Service lands alone, state lands alone (in north Idaho), a combination of state, BLM and private non-industrial lands or a combination of all four.

Hinson said which route the industry takes on its lands -- liquidation or a sustained but lower harvest -- will depend primarily on what the Forest Service does. "If there's adequate supply available elsewhere, that will be harvested and you'll see a decline in company land harvest," he said. "Companies use their lands sort of like an insurance policy." One Forest Service official guesses Boise-Cascade, in southern Idaho, will choose lower harvests, while most north Idaho companies may liquidate.

The eight affected National Forests all plan to review their proposed

timber harvests in light of the study, but it's thoroughly unclear what effect it will have. "Whatever it's used for in the final plans," Tom Robinson says, "there will have to be full display and consideration of all the real issues ignored in the study -- resource tradeoffs, cost, compliance with law and so on." The Forest Service officially agrees.

The study is an equivocal counter in a political contest. There is heavy pressure from Sen. McClure, the timber industry and timber communities to increase harvests proposed in the forest plans. On the other side is most public comment on the plans, Congress' growing impatience with the timber program's cost, and legal mandates to sustain or enhance other resources. (Gov. Andrus has not yet made his opinions known.) Even before the supply study, Idaho's major timber forests were planning slight increases in their proposed harvests.

Two Idaho forests have issued final plans; one has been appealed by a timber company. Whether the supply study changes the remaining eight or not, all are certain to be appealed from all sides. Only the Payette Forest is trying to achieve consensus on a final plan, but some groups intending to appeal are deliberately avoiding the consensus process. It is a good bet that half of those eight plans will end up in court.

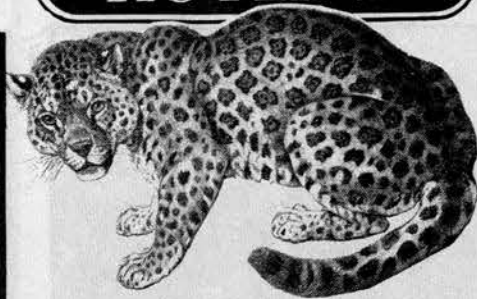
--Pat Ford

Utah vulnerable to acid rain

Utah's mountain ranges may be particularly vulnerable to damage from acid rain, according to a study by the Utah Bureau of Air Quality. The report, *Acid Deposition in Utah*, concluded that if levels of atmospheric acid were to rise, acid rain and snow could begin killing Utah lakes. Gases such as sulfur oxides from industrial plants react with moisture in the air to produce acid that can be carried thousands of miles by winds before falling in forests and lakes. Utah ranges at risk are the Wasatch, Uinta and Boulder mountains, and seven others are listed as "suspected as being sensitive," including the

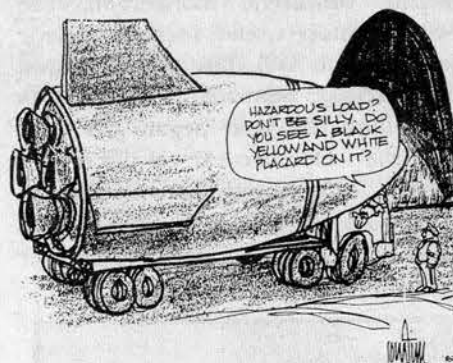
Raft River, Deep Creek, Tushar, Thousand Lake, Henry, LaSal and Pine Valley mountains. The report compiled existing research and was analyzed by a technical committee appointed by Gov. Norman Bangerter. The committee determined an area was sensitive to acid deposition if water in streams or lakes contained low amounts of alkalinity. High alkalinity buffers acid, reducing its effects. Sources of acid pollution within Utah include cars, coal-fired generators, copper smelting plants, and the oil and gas industry. The committee recommended that sensitive areas as well as pollution sources be monitored.

HOTLINE



Jaguar assassin sought

The Arizona Game and Fish Department would like to receive information but is not giving much out about the illegal killing of a jaguar in the Dragoon Mountains, about 50 miles southeast of Tucson. The department hopes to make an arrest soon and won't comment on the details of the case. It is offering a reward for information, however, and the total has grown to close to \$5,000. The *Arizona Daily Star* reports that several people saw the dead jaguar and that pictures were taken of it, but no one has come forward with evidence. Jaguars are spotted, tropical cats larger than mountain lions that live mainly in and south of Mexico. According to Jerry Perry of the Game and Fish Department, jaguars are endangered in Mexico and protected in this country under state and federal law. Sightings of the cats are rare, and Perry says the last recorded killing of a jaguar was in 1971 in Nogales, close to the Mexican border. If you can help track down the killer of the jaguar, call the Arizona Game and Fish Department at 602/628-5376.



Camouflaged trucks

The transport of hazardous materials on busy highways continues to cause problems for state and county governments. Colorado's State Patrol reports that a private contractor carrying 10,000 pounds of cruise missile parts for the Department of Defense illegally passed through the Eisenhower Tunnel on I-70 late last year. State patrolman Bob Parish said the truck carried rocket motors, not warheads, but by state law would have been required to use Loveland Pass. Instead, the driver obscured the hazardous-material placards marking the truck and travelled through the tunnel. Colorado highway officials say illegal transport of hazardous materials is a common problem, and that in the case of what it calls "national security activities" the Defense Department regularly moves unmarked shipments of hazardous and explosive materials across the country.

BARBS

Maybe they're using the wrong needle.

An entrepreneur, deploring the negative attitude of western Colorado residents, told the *Glenwood (Springs) Post*: "You do reap what you sew."

HOTLINE



Jim Laurie

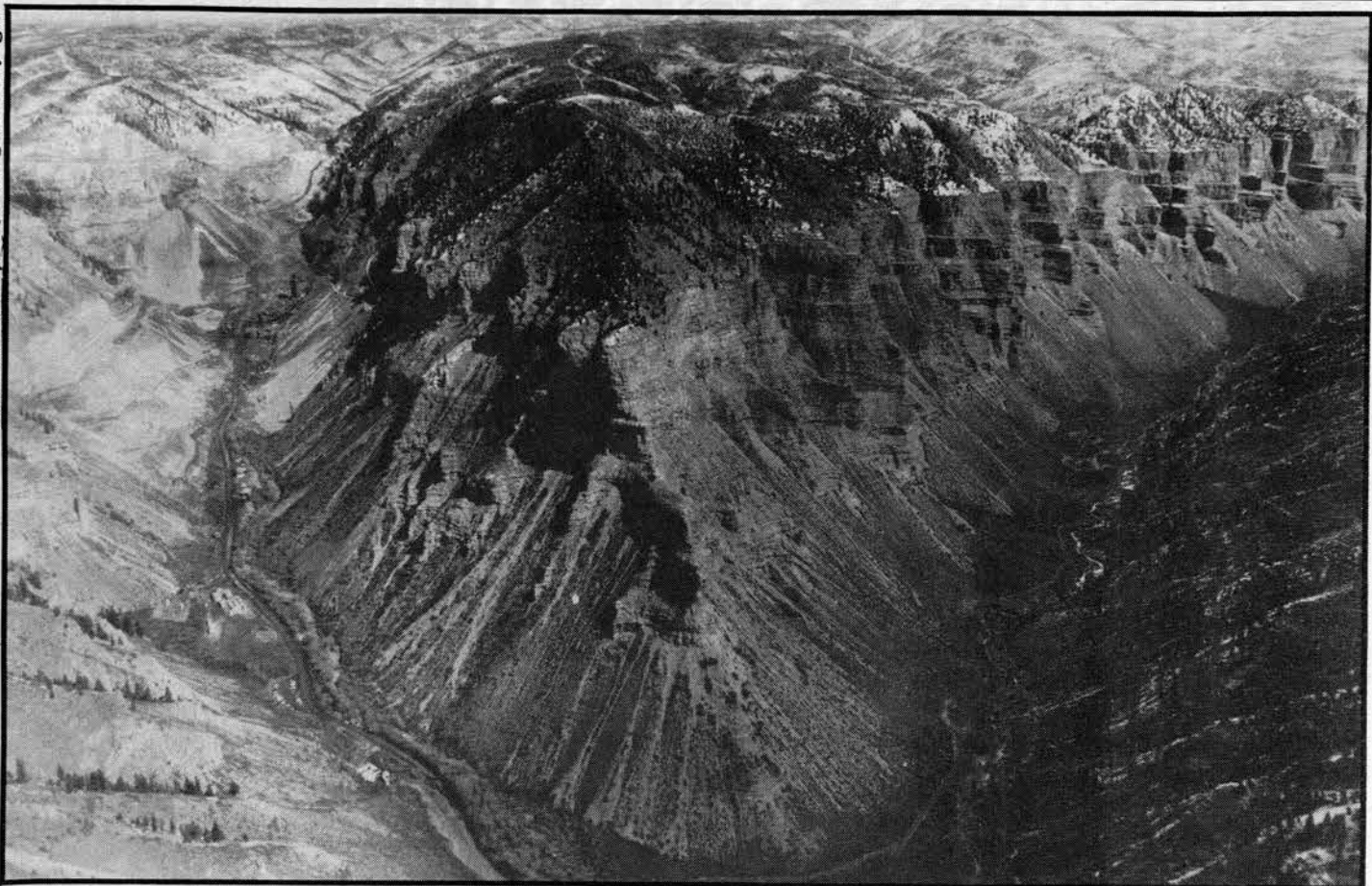
A nuclear protest

Feb. 5 marked the best-attended nuclear protest in the history of the Nevada Test Site facility 60 miles north of Las Vegas. Arriving in 20 buses and 50 cars, 2,000 demonstrators gathered at the test site where nuclear bombs are tested underground, chanting, "Just say no to nuclear arms." The demonstration was peaceful, according to press reports, and all but one of 438 arrests were for trespassing. Several congressmen spoke to the group, including Pat Schroeder, Colo., and Mike Lawry, Wash. Celebrity arrests included Kris Kristofferson, Robert Blake, Martin Sheen, Carl Sagan and Daniel Ellsberg. Recently, the Kremlin announced that after an 18-month, unilateral moratorium, the Soviet Union would resume nuclear testing. The U.S. has already tested two nuclear weapons at the Nevada site since the year began. On Feb. 17, the Department of Energy's Nevada office announced it will no longer issue permits for demonstrations of any kind at the Nevada Test Site.

**Less SO2 in Arizona**

Since the closing of the Phelps-Dodge copper smelter Jan. 14, sulfur dioxide levels in the air over Douglas, Ariz., have dropped to practically zero. That was "obvious and expected," says Jim Guyton of the state's Department of Health Services. "Mexico is the nearest source, and most of the sulfur dioxide from there gets oxidized to sulfuric acid or sulfate by the time it reaches Arizona." Guyton says it is still too early to tell if particulate levels have also dropped; it will take two to three months to identify a trend. The smelter finally closed after years of dispute among conservationists and state and federal officials over the enforcement of clean air regulations (HCN, 2/2/87). When the smelter shut down, Douglas lost a \$9.5 million payroll.

Bob Anderson, Project Lighthouse flight



Piceance Basin in western Colorado

Congress to look again at oil-shale lands

A bill to prevent further transfer of federal oil-shale lands to private hands was introduced in Congress last month, marking what its co-sponsors say is a renewed effort to end the Reagan administration's policy of privatizing federal lands.

The oil-shale bill comes in the form of amendments to the 1920 Mineral Lands Leasing Act. It would require congressional approval before any federal oil-shale lands located in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah could be transferred to private ownership.

Newly elected Colorado Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Democratic co-sponsor of the bill, says a congressional review of proposed sales would end transfers "in the dark of night" and safeguard the remaining 270,000 acres of privately claimed oil-shale lands.

In a controversial move last summer, the Department of Interior sold 82,000 acres of oil-shale rich lands in northwestern Colorado to claimants holding mineral rights dating back to 1920 or earlier. The claimants, mostly oil companies, had brought the federal government to court more than 25 years ago, saying they had the right to convert their mining claims to deeds under the provisions of the 1920 minerals

law. Interior settled the case out of court and the sale proceeded for \$2.50 an acre. Campbell calls the deal a land giveaway and says it was never opened to public scrutiny.

Interior officials defended the settlement, which retained federal non-shale mineral rights, limited grazing rights and state water rights, as the best deal they could get.

Opponents of the sale, who ranged from district and state Bureau of Land Management officials to national environmental groups, criticized the settlement for setting a precedent of privatizing public land at bargain-basement prices. Campbell, who says he thinks the lawsuit could have been won on technicalities, adds that the basic requirement for land transfer under the Minerals Act was never considered. The requirement is that applicants for mining claim deeds must prove they have discovered a valuable mineral deposit. Campbell says that requirement is hard to fulfill in an area where none of the oil-shale claims have been developed commercially in the 67 years since the act was passed.

The end result, Campbell says, is that valuable resources and future oil reserves have been taken out of the

public domain. The new owners have to wait only 20 years before developing the land for any purpose, not just oil shale. "They could put condominiums on it if they wanted to," Campbell says. The oil-shale bill would ban private patenting of oil-shale claims and convert the remaining 270,000 acres of claims held since before 1920 into modern oil-shale leases.

The bill is not the first attempt from Congress to restrict land transfers, but with a new Democratic majority, it may be the first time during the Reagan administration that changes to the 1920 Mineral Lands Leasing Act have a chance of passing. Last summer's sale raised the ire of a number of lawmakers, but a delay was blocked by then Colorado Rep. Mike Strang, a Republican.

Strang's move guaranteed the sale, but may have cost him his job. "To a lot of people it seemed outrageous," says Campbell staffer Dee Jacobson, who is based in Colorado. "It turned out to be too hot to handle in an election year." Strang narrowly lost the election to Campbell.

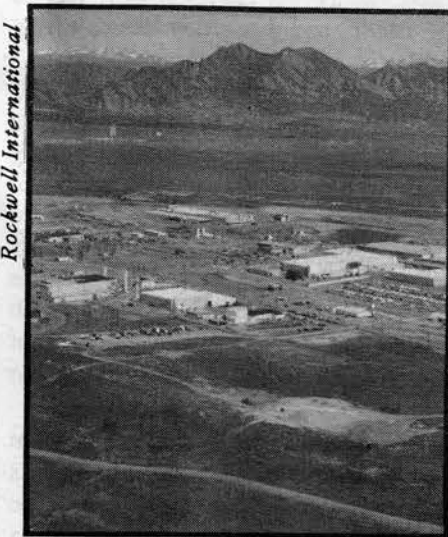
--Steve Hinchman

A plan to burn wastes arouses suburb

The Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Denver, Colo., has announced it will conduct a test-burn this spring of 3,100 pounds of combined low-level nuclear and hazardous chemical wastes. It will be the first time in the U.S. that such mixed wastes are incinerated rather than permanently stored and buried. Some residents of the suburban neighborhoods bordering the plant have protested, saying they don't want to become guinea pigs in the test. Rosemary Heim, who lives less than two miles from the plant, told the *Denver Post* at a meeting between residents and plant officials, "We don't know what the risks are, no one has done this before and there is nothing that we as citizens can do about this." Rocky Flats officials said incineration is a proven technology that has previously been used at the facility for both types of

waste separately, and that the new disposal method will reduce the volume of wastes by over 90 percent. If the test-burn meets state and federal air quality standards, it will open the way for Rockwell International, which operates the plant for the Department of Energy, to burn thousands of pounds of mixed wastes on a regular basis. The plant has about 40,000 cubic feet of the material now on-site. Until three months ago, Rocky Flats shipped its mixed wastes to the Nevada nuclear weapons test site for disposal. Because the Nevada site is not licensed for disposal of mixed radioactive and hazardous wastes, officials there recently told Rocky Flats to cease shipments. At present there is no site in the U.S. licensed to handle mixed wastes. As a result of public concern over Rockwell's burn plans, the state Health Depart-

ment has made copies of the burn permit application available at Denver public libraries and will accept public comment until March 6.



Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant, Colo.

Proposed Grand Canyon bridge stirs debate

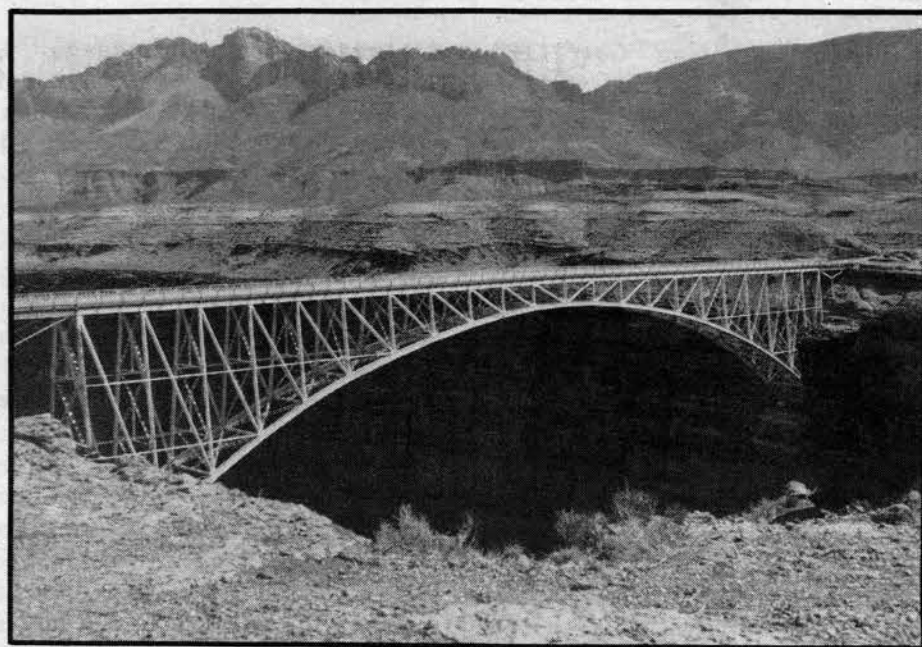
HOTLINE

For nearly 60 years Navajo Bridge four miles downstream from Lee's Ferry has served as the last glimpse of civilization for river runners about to travel the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. But the lone arch stretching 467 feet from rim to rim may soon undergo a dramatic change.

The Arizona Department of Transportation has initiated the study of proposals to renovate or replace the landmark bridge that they say has become a traffic bottleneck and safety hazard. Several of the proposals, which would provide for the construction of a new bridge and access highway at a number of sites much deeper inside Grand Canyon National Park, have already drawn opposition from environmental groups, river runners and the Grand Canyon National Park. The result is that the most controversial alternatives may be dropped before they ever get to generate any fireworks.

According to the department, the bridge built in 1928 is inadequate to support present traffic needs on Route 89A, the Bitter Springs to Fredonia highway. A study by a Tucson consulting firm, Cannon & Associates, shows that trucks and tour buses regularly using the bridge surpass the load-carrying capacity of its floor beams. The study also shows that many of these same vehicles are too wide for the bridge's narrow lanes, designed in the late 1920s to accommodate Model Ts rather than today's 18-wheelers. The low-visibility access at both ends of the bridge and its 15 mph speed limit were also cited as safety hazards.

Sites proposed for a new bridge, if the decision is made not to strengthen the present one, include two locations near the current crossing as well as three much deeper in the canyon. Of those latter



Navajo Bridge

sites, collectively labeled as alternative 4 in the Cannon study, one is just above Badger Rapid at river mile 7; two more, at miles 11 and 12.5, are within sight of Soap Creek Rapids; and the last is directly upstream of House Rock Rapid, 16 miles into Grand Canyon National Park. Each of the proposals in alternative 4 would require the building of a large suspension bridge to span the canyon.

Dawson Henderson, chairman of the Flagstaff group of the Sierra Club, said he "opposed any intrusion into Grand Canyon National Park to save a few minutes of travel times for tourists." The administration of the Grand Canyon National Park has also expressed its opposition to moving the bridge and highway any deeper into the park. "They've made us aware of that in no uncertain terms," said Jerry Cannon of Cannon & Associates.

Cannon added that his firm was recommending that all of the proposals in alternative 4 be dropped from

further study. "The costs (both monetarily and environmentally) for these solutions would be too high," he said. According to his firm's study, a bridge near House Rock Rapid, the most expensive of the new construction alternatives, would cost a total of \$63.6 million, while renovating the old bridge would cost \$3.8 million and building a new structure just upstream of the existing one would cost \$5.9 million.

Recently, Thomas Schmitt, deputy district engineer for Arizona's Highway Department, was more definite about expensive proposals: "Alternative 4 is dead as far as the purposes of this study are concerned," he said.

The Cannon study is scheduled to be completed on April 3. For more information or to send comments, write Thomas G. Schmitt, Deputy District Engineer, Arizona Department of Transportation, 1801 S. Milton Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001.

--Dan Dagget

Peterson leaves behind a logging legacy

Just before stepping down as head of the Forest Service, Max Peterson set the agency on a course that could lead to large increases in logging in the national forests.

In a Jan. 12 memo to the 10 regional foresters, Peterson set out "guiding principles" to make Forest Service planning "reflect the current situation and provide adequate flexibility in responding to future changes in timber demand."

Current national forest plans may underestimate future timber demand, since conditions have changed since the plans were written, Peterson says.

The timber industry has taken the same position, saying many plans either reduce logging too much or do not increase it enough.

Only 17 plans remain to be released. Sixty-three plans are out in final form and 43 have been released in draft form. The "guiding principles" are to apply to the 60 plans not yet in final form, Peterson says.

The memo lays out three factors that are to be considered in assessing the demand for national forest timber.

Peterson says the Forest Service should be guided by the latest program set forth under the Resource Planning Act. It was sent to Congress late last year, more than a year behind schedule.

"The objective is to achieve the RPA program multiple-purpose high-bound targets, tempered by local issues, concerns and conditions," the memo says.

The high-bound target in the latest RPA program calls for a 79 percent increase -- from 11.2 billion board feet (bbf) to 20 bbf -- in annual logging in national forests over the next 43 years.

A second factor to consider in evaluating timber demand, Peterson says in the memo, is "the recent decrease in interest rates and a tax on softwood imports" from Canada.

Recent "poor (timber) markets resulted from high interest rates and imported wood sold at subsidized timber prices," Peterson says.

Conservationists and other critics charge the Forest Service itself has been subsidizing the domestic timber industry by selling national forest timber at far below the cost of administering its timber sales.

Third, Peterson says the Forest Service should consider the prospect that there will be less timber available from private lands. That could cause problems for towns dependent on the timber industry, he says.

If the logging program meets the immediate needs, but does not take advantage of all of the available timber, the plans should include

ways "to respond to increases in demand by future adjustments," Peterson says.

On the other hand, if a national forest plan does not meet anticipated timber demand and logging is not limited "by other resource objectives," the plans should be changed, Peterson says.

"Where the original assumptions regarding timber demand are no longer applicable, consider a different (plan), design a new (plan), or modify the (plan) to satisfy the projected demand," the memo says.

The plans should be modified "in the manner that maximizes net public benefits including an evaluation of the needs of dependent needs and communities," Peterson says.

If demand for timber is "temporarily" low, the national forest plans are to assume that it will rebound to projected levels, the memo says.

In any case, all land "tentatively suitable" for logging, but not needed now, should be managed on the assumption that it will be logged in the future, Peterson says.

Peterson says that "concerns for economic efficiency must be recognized." But timber demand must be recognized and considered, he says.

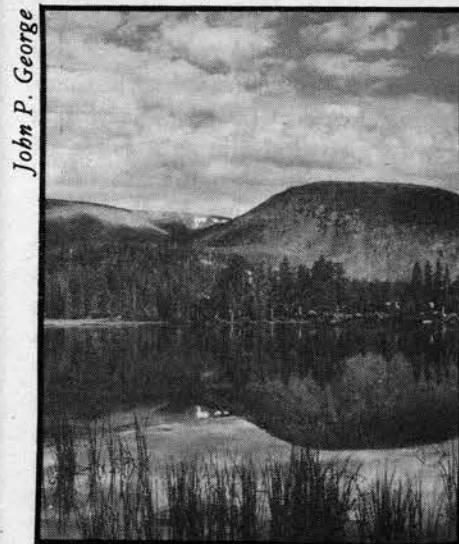
--Andrew Melnykovich
Casper Star-Tribune



Chokecherries

Deadly plants

Noxious plants cost ranchers in the 17 Western states an estimated \$107 million each year in livestock deaths, birth defects, abortions or emaciation. Agriculture Department researchers at the Poisonous Plant Research Laboratory in Logan, Utah, say losses to ranchers from poisonous weeds are compounded by increased costs for fencing, changes in grazing patterns and losses of forage. The Department of Agriculture lists hundreds of plants toxic to livestock, many of which are common throughout the West. Some of the most poisonous are arrowgrass, bitter rubberweed, chokecherry, deathcamas, greasewood, groundsel, halogeton and hemp dogbane. A few ounces of arrowgrass, which contains deadly hydrocyanic acid, can kill a 600-pound animal, and as little as a half-pound of deathcamas can kill a 100-pound sheep.



Swasey Lake in the Uinta Mountains

On the pH brink

A survey of Western lakes by the Environmental Protection Agency concluded that while almost no Western lakes are acidic now, nearly two-thirds of those studied have little capacity to neutralize additional acid. Out of 716 lakes surveyed, only one was already acidic -- a lake in Yellowstone National Park that is fed by an acidic hot spring. The EPA found that 27 percent of the lakes had low buffering abilities, low enough to "show biological changes with the current acid input," AP reports. Sixty-seven percent have the potential to be acidified. Acidification has been linked to forest destruction and loss of life in lakes, rivers and streams in the northeast. EPA's research, which is part of a national surface water study, will attempt to estimate the rate at which acid rain is changing lakes.

HOTLINE



Terri Martin

Part of the Burr Trail, Utah

A legal burr on

Utah's Burr Trail controversy is back in the news again, with Garfield County officials accepting contract bids for the proposed road upgrade and environmentalists filing a lawsuit to prevent it. The 66-mile road winds through desert terrain, crosses Capitol Reef National Park, borders several BLM wilderness areas and ends in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. It is largely a rugged, primitive route, prone to frequent washouts. County commissioners hoping to lure more tourist dollars to the area have long battled environmentalists for the right to upgrade the route to allow access for ordinary cars in all weather conditions. A compromise solution arrived at by the National Park Service in 1985, in which the Park Service would have assumed control over the road and paved only switchbacks and sections that wash out, was itself washed out when Congress declined to fund the project. Garfield County officials pursued the project in the state capitol and were recently awarded \$2 million by Utah's Community Impact Board. The funds were to gravel the first 28 miles of the road, but last month four environmental groups filed a complaint in federal court in Salt Lake City. The groups, the National Parks and Conservation Association, Sierra Club, Southern Utah Wilderness Association and The Wilderness Society, sought an injunction barring Garfield County from doing any work on the Burr Trail. NPCA staffer Terri Martin says the groups asked the court to require proof that the county has right-of-way. They also asked the Bureau of Land Management to determine whether a valid right-of-way exists, as well as asking the agency to comply with federal law by doing an analysis of environmental impacts before any work begins. Because the region is significant for the whole nation, Martin says, "We want to be sure proper procedures are being followed." What conservationists fear, she adds, is that the county's work is just the prelude to major development of the Burr Trail.

BARBS

This is the man who engineered the vast WPPSS power plant fiasco so that we wouldn't have to take turns plugging in our toasters.

Interior Secretary Donald Hodel wants to open the California coast to off-shore oil and gas drilling to avoid a gasoline shortage in the 1990s.

Gov. Andrus returns to a changed Idaho

Eleven years ago Gov. Cecil Andrus delivered his sixth "state of the state" address to the 1976 Idaho Legislature. The people of Idaho, Andrus said, "would protect our wilderness areas. They would not sacrifice our natural resources for mindless economic development... They ask that new industries be non-polluting and frugal in the use of energy... They want limited population growth."

After the rhetoric came substance: three land-use planning bills, energy conservation and alternative energy tax credits, a minimum streamflow bill, increased penalties for polluters, and protection of the Idaho Primitive Area. The speech made one Republican leader wonder if Andrus "was the Jerry Brown of Idaho."

In 1987, back in the governor's office after a 10-year hiatus, Andrus delivered his seventh "state of the state." The message had changed: "I will form an economic development cabinet... establish a 'one-stop' regulatory clearinghouse to minimize regulatory delays and assist developing businesses... better coordination of the state's promotion and marketing... build a truly effective Department of Commerce as an effective, energetic, enthusiastic advocate for business..."

There was not a word about conservation, quality of life, water or wildlife. A new Republican leader rather smugly noted the contrast with Andrus' 1970s speeches. He called it a sign of the times.

A very different sign came a week later, as the 1987 Idaho Legislature settled to work. At a hearing on the Henrys Fork of the Snake River, a county commissioner from rural, conservative Fremont County -- where "environment" is said with an edge -- joined conservationists and fishermen to urge creation of a state natural rivers system, including Henrys Fork. And a respected Republican farmer-legislator from Idaho Falls said he could sponsor a suitable bill.

The Legislature has changed as much as the governor over the past 10 years. Environmental issues, once a red flag to the very conservative Legislature, are now mainstream -- woven into the day-to-day life of the state. Conservation issues, helped by the economic prominence of recreation, have become a mainstream issue.

In the past, efforts by rafters and other river users to create an Idaho National and Recreational Rivers system were beaten by conservative Republicans representing traditional water users.

This year a middle group of "moderate Republicans" is emerging. "I support the concept (of a state system)," Idaho Falls farmer-legislator Reed Hansen said at the Henrys Fork hearing. "We need to demonstrate that Idaho recognizes its values and will take steps to preserve them." Fremont County Commissioner Weldon Reynolds argued a state system would increase local control of the Henrys Fork by discouraging efforts to put it in the National Wild River system. These statements reflect the growing respect legislators must accord the only resource industry in Idaho that is expanding: recreation.

One key for legislation this year or next is whether conservationists and fishermen can reach agreement with

this middle group on language. "I think we can compromise on the number of instant rivers," Jack Trueblood of the Sportsman's Political Action Committee said after the hearing. "But if there isn't a decent funding source and strong administration, I think we'd rather see nothing for now." The option of creating a system through an initiative campaign in 1988 is a part of their thinking.

There are other water issues. After acrimonious meetings last year, a citizen-industry-agency task force reached a tenuous agreement on language to regulate non-point source pollution. The timber industry got reliance on "best management practices" as the tool to protect beneficial uses of water. Conservationists and Indian tribes got a "feedback loop," whereby stream monitoring will trigger tougher measures if beneficial uses are being harmed.

The Legislature will ratify the agreement, but the real issue is dollars. "Without the feedback loop this agreement is unacceptable," says Idaho Conservation League lobbyist Tim Crawford. "And to make the loop work, the Bureau of Water Quality needs the resources to do the monitoring." Gov. Andrus hasn't yet endorsed the extra \$146,000, and the timber industry will be happy to see it fail.

Two groundwater bills reflect how limits and conservation are themselves a sign of the times. The bills require state permitting for warm-water wells, with penalties for wasting warm-water resources. The impetus comes from Idaho fish farmers, who produce nearly all U.S. commercial trout. (When the menu says "Rocky Mountain spring trout," it means the trout were raised in a concrete raceway filled with water from a warm Idaho spring.) In places where aquacultural, geothermal, and/or irrigation uses of groundwater come together, their effects on each other's water are increasing. The bills seek to impose order and conservation.

In 1980, Idaho's Hazardous Materials Bureau had five employees; today there are 20. In that time, the

Legislature has passed a substantial number of hazardous waste and materials bills, most driven by federal law. This federally mandated, minutely detailed, steadily growing extension of government into business has caused few howls and little resistance. Three more laws will probably pass this year.

Toxics issues cut across economic, occupational and party divisions. The strongest opposition to Idaho's only hazardous waste dump is from nearby farmers and ranchers. A proposed PCB incinerator in north Idaho's Silver Valley, offering jobs in an area with 20 percent unemployment, galvanized overwhelming local opposition. The same opposition faces two PCB treatment facilities proposed for conservative Canyon County. Caught between federal imperatives and popular feeling, Idaho's affected industries have chosen a strong role in consensus lawmaking rather than resistance.

A state "Hazardous Waste Management Plan," drafted by a citizen-industry-agency committee, will be ratified by this Legislature. Accompanying legislation to extend state control of PCB wastes, impose a fee on toxic waste handlers and authorize permitting for experimental waste treatment technologies has unified support and will probably pass. In response to a popular feeling in the Panhandle that the state's permitting is not sufficiently sensitive to local opinion, Democratic Sen. Mary Lou Reed of Coeur d'Alene is drafting a bill to extend local control over toxic facility siting.

These conservation issues are not at the top of the agenda. The lawmakers' treatment of conservation is more sensitive now than 10 years ago, but the subject is also less important to them and the people. Economic development, education, taxes and social issues have the spotlight. "Environmental issues won't get much attention this year unless the folks who care around the state get personally involved, face-to-face and on the phone," says Idaho Conservation League lobbyist Lill Erickson.

--Pat Ford

Lamm looks back on 12 years

Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus, D, is not the only 1970s era Rocky Mountain politician who sees a different environmental landscape (see accompanying story). Richard Lamm, who just ended 12 years as governor of Colorado, told *Vail Trail* reporter Allen Best: "Environmentalists just aren't a major constituency group any more. It's not that they don't support me; it's just that they are not there."

Lamm was elected to his first term in 1974 as a result of his leadership of a successful state-wide campaign against bringing the winter Olympics to Colorado. Lamm recalled in the interview:

"There was an incredibly powerful environmental lobby that helped in the Olympics and helped me get elected, and I think that one of the tragedies of Colorado is that the environmentalists just don't have -- they at one time had seven or eight lobbyists up in the Legislature. Now they have only one."

Lamm said environmentalists were "my shock troops" in the 1974 election, but in the 1986 Colorado elections, both U.S. Senate candidate Tim Wirth and gubernatorial candidate Roy Romer "had to pay workers to man the phone. The environmental movement manned hundreds of phones for me."

Lamm said he may have disillusioned some environmentalists. "But what I think we're seeing is a whole nation in which the environmental movement has shrunk... no reform like this is forever. Society gets busy on other concerns and moves on to other things."

Lamm did say he expects a rebirth of environmentalism in Colorado, partly in reaction to the sprawling nature of Denver area development, and to the kind of growth he sees around the ski town of Vail. "I think we're building a Los Angeles of the Rockies here."

Agency doesn't bother to lock its gates

Forest Service negligence is cited by a recent report as the greatest single reason that road closures on the Flathead National Forest in northwest Montana fail to restrict undesired motor vehicle use.

This failure could have "disastrous" effects on grizzly bear and other wildlife populations, according to Keith Hammer, chairman of the Swan View Coalition conservation group that sponsored the study.

Nearly half the miles of road deemed "closed" for wildlife protection in portions of the Flathead's Swan Lake Ranger District -- an area considered by the Forest Service as "needed for the survival and recovery of the grizzly bear" -- were not effectively closed.

Thirty-eight percent of the gates inspected (53 of 62 in the study area were examined) were found to be ineffective in fully restricting passenger-type vehicles. Of these, half were not closed or locked, and another 25 percent could easily be driven around.

Contrary to Forest Service reports of major problems with gate vandalism, Hammer found "not a single gate that evidenced attempts to pull it from the ground or that showed significant disruptions in the surrounding terrain to detour around it. Three-quarters of the ineffective closures resulted from either poor placement of the gate or the simple fact that the gate was not closed and locked."

Forest Service road closures are intended to restrict trail vehicles, such as motorbikes, on a year-round basis, and snowmobiles from Nov. 30 through April 1. None of the closure devices were capable of accomplishing this. Nine out of ten gates did not have a sign indicating vehicle restrictions.

Wildlife biologists consider road closures to be a good method to ease impacts and minimize disturbances to wildlife in commercial (timber-harvesting) areas. The Flathead Forest Plan calls for the doubling of road miles during the next 50 years.

Open-road mileages in portions of wildlife habitat on the Swan Lake district have "more than twice the road density allowable under inter-

agency grizzly bear management guidelines," said Hammer.

This density also reduced by over 50 percent the ability of elk to use the area, according to the Montana Co-operative Elk-Logging study.

The inventory Hammer used for the study was a computer-generated form he obtained from the Forest Service, and several gates on the list had not been constructed when the study was completed in October 1986.

Even with the deletion of these

gates from the analysis, the percentage of "ineffective closings" is reduced by less than three percent.

"The study is truly representative of what is going on out there," said Hammer. "The Forest Service should be getting the current forest-wide road system and off-road vehicle use under control, rather than planning and building more roads into already stressed big game and critical wildlife habitats."

--John Holt

Recreation makes money

Recreation-tourism and not timber harvesting is the leading money-maker on the Flathead National Forest in northwest Montana, according to a recent review of the Flathead Forest Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The analysis was done by Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants of Eugene, Ore., which says the forest lost anywhere from \$764,219 to \$4.8 million in deficit timber sales during 1986.

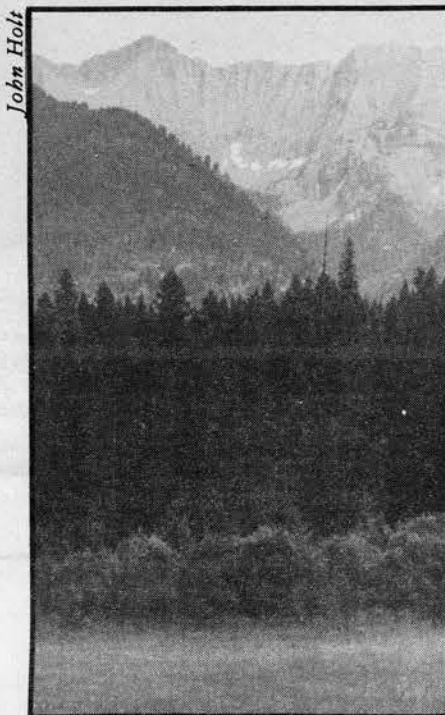
CHEC based its figures on several methods of timber-management accounting, including simple cash flow, the draft Timber Sale Program Informational Reporting System designed and used by the Forest Service, and effects on the U.S. Treasury -- the highest negative result.

CHEC also found that if present management policies continue, the Flathead could show a net negative cash flow exceeding \$20 million per year by the fifth decade of its management plan.

While figures for timber were gloomy at best, current and future pictures for the forest's recreation industry were bright, the CHEC study reported. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce found that tourism generated \$95 million in 1985.

In an economic assessment of the Flathead Basin completed in 1982, jobs related to travel and tourism increased 70 percent in 10 years.

The CHEC study also found that as many as 176,000 acres could be withdrawn from the Flathead's tim-



Swan Peak in the Flathead National Forest

ber base while greatly increasing the plan's cost efficiency. If wilderness values do not grow as expected or if developmental values grow faster, the withdrawal decision could still be reversed. CHEC says by including those acres in the timber base now, "The Flathead Forest may be taking irreversible actions that affect roadless areas, old-growth and other resources."

CHEC summarizes its report by saying, "Timber management on the Flathead Forest will provide no side benefits for recreation for at least 30 years."

--John Holt

Colorado may get a large, new ski area

The San Juan National Forest in southwestern Colorado has approved the development of a new ski area in Wolf Creek Valley.

In the final environmental impact statement, Forest Supervisor John Kirkpatrick allowed a capacity of 10,000 skiers at one time, 519 acres of ski trails and 10 chairlifts. He did not permit Westfork Investment Ltd. to develop the ridgeline between the east and west forks of the San Juan River known as the back bowls. Wolf Creek Valley, distinct from the Wolf Creek Pass ski area, is one of two new four-season resorts proposed for the San Juan forest. (See Hotline this page).

The Wolf Creek Valley project aroused local concern when developer Harvey Doerring, a Californian whose business was creating limited partnerships, ran afoul of the Securities and Exchange Commission (HCN, 9/1/86). In 1985, Doerring was charged with misappropriating

\$3 million and misrepresenting several partnerships. After a San Diego district court froze Doerring's assets, Westfork's 250 investors, who had collectively put up \$14 million, were left with an unpaid-for, partially begun project.

Local critics of Wolf Creek Valley were concerned that wildlife would suffer if the back bowls were developed. They also questioned the need for a new ski area given the industry's flat national market.

Utah's bankruptcy rate is high

The rate of bankruptcy filings in Utah was three times the national average during the 1980s, according to a University of Utah business school report, and the state bankruptcy clerk is expecting the number of cases to increase. While the national filing rate for the combined years of 1980-1985 was 3.4 percent, Utah's was 10.3

percent, reports the *Deseret News*. Rates were higher in only seven other states including Washington (11.8), Alaska (13.3), and Wyoming (10.8). The report says that Utah may be predisposed to more bankruptcies because it has a high degree of entrepreneurship, credit is readily available, and the population is disproportionately young.

--Becky Rumsey

HOTLINE



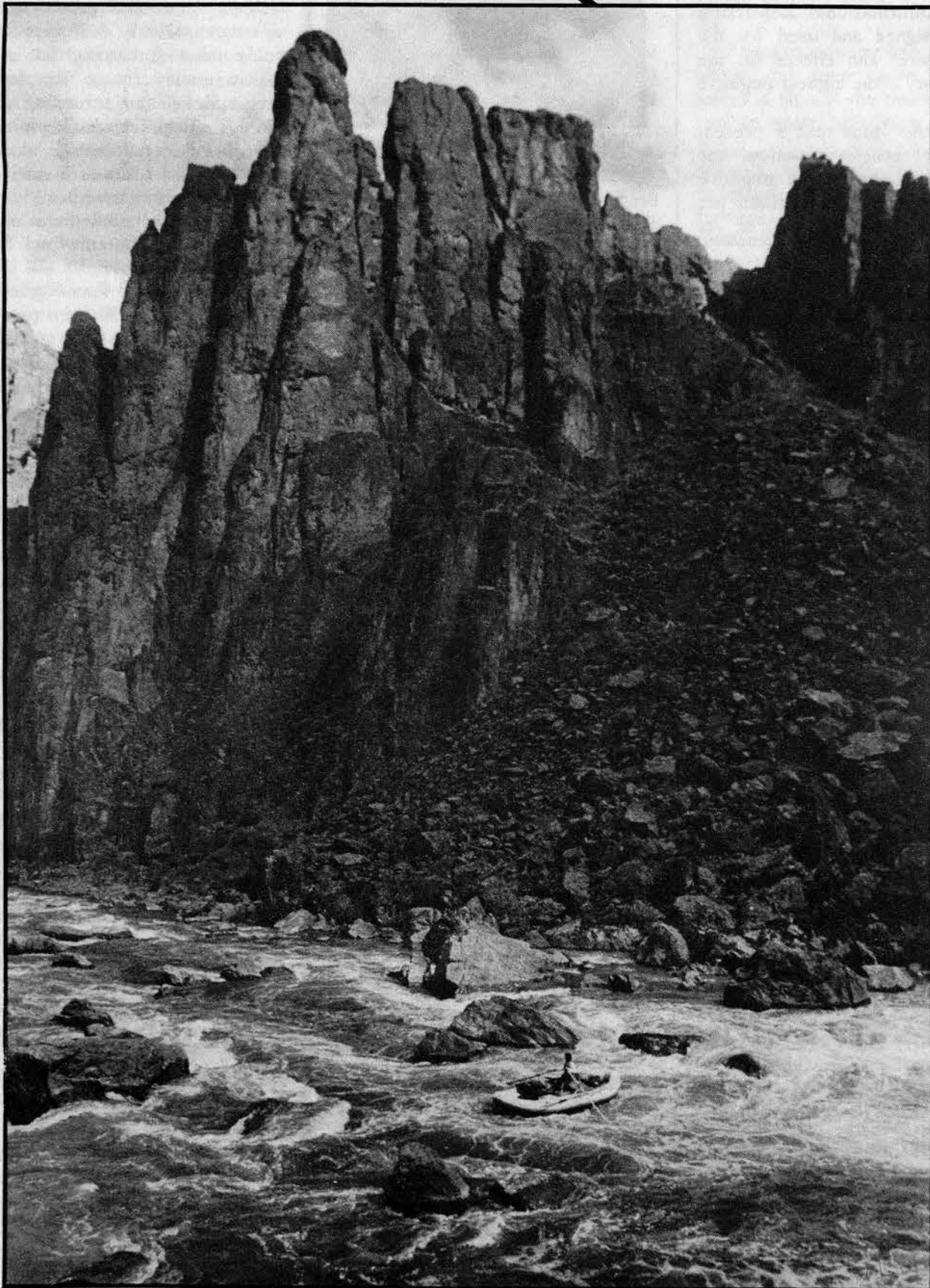
Expanding a scenic road

The Utah Department of Transportation is preparing an environmental impact statement that could recommend the building of a larger and faster highway through northern Utah's scenic Logan Canyon. A local group, Citizens for the Protection of Logan Canyon, opposes the highway expansion on the ground that the existing highway should be named Utah's first National Scenic Highway. The road borders the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and provides access to recreation sites. A Forest Service study indicated that highway modifications could damage irreplaceable scenic views, and according to the citizens' group, the traffic projections have been overestimated while the accident data used to justify an expansion is incomplete. "Scoping" hearings are scheduled for 7 p.m. March 3 at Mountain Fuel Supply Co. Auditorium, 45 E 200 North, Logan, and March 4 at Garden City Hall, Garden City. Written comments will be taken until April 6 and should be addressed to Clifford Forsgren, Project Manager, CH2M Hill/Salt Lake City Office, P.O. Box 2218, Salt Lake City, UT 84101 (801/363-0200).

Room for 13,500 skiers

A draft environmental impact statement for the proposed East Fork ski area in the San Juan National Forest in southwestern Colorado is now out. Its preferred alternative matches the proposal of the developer, East Fork Joint Venture, in calling for the "full build" proposal: 18 lifts and one gondola on 7,070 acres of public land for 13,500 skiers at one time. There are also two limited building scenarios as well as the no action alternative. The Forest Service says the new ski area is needed, noting that the agency expects skier use on the San Juan forest to double by 1995, then double again by 2015 as long as capacity is available. The draft also cites the Forest Service's 1983 *Rocky Mountain Guide*, which predicts a 7-10 percent annual growth rate over the next five years for the 5-state Central Rockies region as a whole. The draft also notes that all three levels of development would create adverse impacts on water, air, wildlife and the social and economic environment. The 450-page volume is available from John Kirkpatrick, Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest, 701 Camino Del Rio, Durango, CO 81301. Send comments by April 14 to the same address.

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Between spires of rhyolite and cliffs of basalt the Owyhee (pronounced Oh-wah'-he) River flows 200 miles from northern Nevada across southwest Idaho and into eastern Oregon. It enters the Snake River just as that river flows west out of Idaho and turns north to form the Oregon-Idaho border.

The Owyhee is a river of extremes: of calm and placid water punctuated by explosive rapids. It is a 200-mile oasis running through sagebrush/bunchgrass desert, a 1,000-foot-deep gash carved in a plateau. Drawn to it are geese and ducks, mule deer and antelope, otter and raccoon, songbirds and raptors. And boaters.

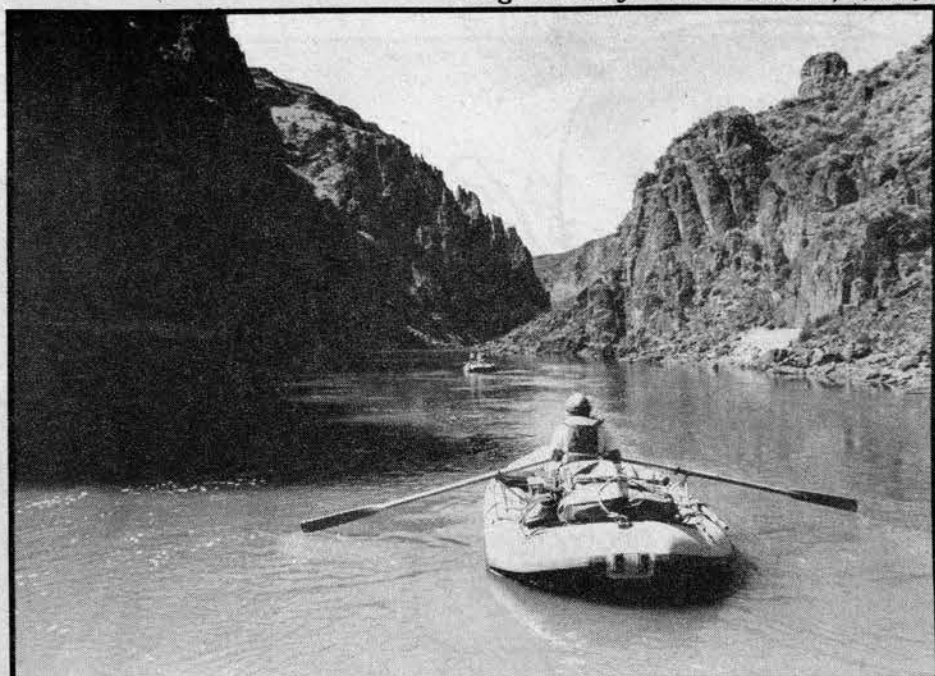
From mid-March into June the river draws a handful of rafters and kayakers who have discovered this hidden desert gem. The road access is limited and poor; the spring weather and the water flows unpredictable. But the river has its rewards.

The Owyhee River is primordial. Cliffs descend to the water's edge, echoing the shrieks of falcons and the rush of water. In spring, steep slopes are ablaze with the bright yellow of balsam root flowers. Sagebrush scent fills the air.

The Owyhee Canyon complex, including the plateaus that extend from the rims, is the gem of the Bureau of Land Management wilderness study areas for the region. Now just simmering, the battle over wilderness designation is certain to boil in the coming years. The livestock industry, which grazes the plateaus, opposes any new wilderness designation in Idaho. The Republican-dominated congressional delegation generally concurs with that philosophy. The biggest obstacle to wilderness designation for the Owyhee -- as with many of the BLM wildlands -- has been its obscurity. Few residents of southern Idaho have ever even seen it.

The Owyhee country was named for four Hawaiians who ventured into the land of high dry mountains, rolling plateaus and sudden canyons -- and never returned. Anyone driving the few long, confusing, dirt roads in the Owyhee country comes away with the feeling that disappearing without a trace is still likely.

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OWYHEE

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY GLENN OAKLEY





Hanford...

(Continued from page 1)

been accidentally spilled. The signs went back four days later, and Gardner was in no danger. But the governor, the Congress, and the press enjoyed a field day at DOE's expense.

To appear more forthcoming, the DOE last spring declassified and released some 19,000 pages of records from Hanford's first two decades. The documents were lined with shockers. During the five years following World War II, Hanford had accidentally let escape into the atmosphere about 335,000 curies of iodine-131. Then in 1949, 5500 curies of iodine-131 were intentionally released across eastern Washington and Oregon in a secret experiment to test monitoring equipment. By comparison, fewer than 15 curies of radioactivity were released during the Three Mile Island accident in 1979.

For reasons of "national security," the DOE refused to declassify over 60,000 additional pages of records. But the story did not die that easily. The Hanford Education Action League, a citizens' group based in Spokane, filed a request for the documents under the Freedom of Information Act. In addition, a blue-ribbon panel of scientists is tackling the formidable task -- given the passing of so much time, and the keeping of so few records -- of determining health effects caused by the massive radioactive releases. Whether successful in its purpose or not, the scientific panel will undoubtedly generate more headlines about DOE.

The Chernobyl meltdown in April put Hanford's N Reactor on center stage. Like the ill-fated Soviet facility, the N Reactor uses the dubious graphite core design. Moreover, the 23-year-old plant was built without a containment vessel. A red-faced DOE admitted that the N Reactor is the only one of its kind in the United States.

Charges and countercharges flew. The DOE declared the plant 100 percent safe. But pressured by Congress and citizen groups, the agency agreed to special inspections. When the inspectors' reports emerged

this December, they raised a number of safety worries. The result was that the DOE ordered the N Reactor shut down for \$50 million worth of renovations.

Officials said that, due to its vital role in nuclear weapons production, the N Reactor could not be closed permanently. Not so, declared the Natural Resources Defense Council in a letter to Secretary Herrington, threatening to sue in federal court if DOE ever restarts the N Reactor.

After creating small amounts of plutonium and electric power during nuclear fission, the N Reactor's spent fuel rods are shipped to two even more aged operations at Hanford: the PUREX and the plutonium finishing plants. Both are operated by Rockwell, DOE's prime contractor at Hanford.

Last October, exposes in the *Seattle Times* and subsequent con-

gressional hearings revealed that a Rockwell auditor, Casey Ruud, had ordered the shutdown of both plants due to design irregularities, poor accounting for plutonium production and flawed safety procedures. Contrary to regulations, Rockwell did not close the plants and did not notify DOE of the Ruud audit.

Because of an unrelated safety violation, Rockwell stopped operations at the plutonium plants on Oct. 8. But it could not halt further revelations. Allegations broke out about drug abuse by Rockwell workers. The DOE issued a new report skeptical of the elderly plants' ability to withstand an earthquake, and a new audit discovered that over a 30-year period Rockwell could not account for over a ton of plutonium. Congress hauled DOE back in for more questions.

Attempting to control the damage,

Rockwell fired some top managers. But this December the DOE fired Rockwell in favor of Westinghouse, which will take over Hanford operations in the fall of 1987. Despite the change in contractors, it is not clear when the DOE will be able to restart the N Reactor or the plutonium plants.

Before any restarts, the DOE must convince the Congress that things have changed. That will not be easy. "What we see -- and we have seen it repeatedly -- is selective use of the truth," said Oregon Rep. Ron Wyden, D, to the *Seattle Times*. "If there are five things we need to know to get a completely

(Continued on page 11)

Quake would finish a Hanford plant

Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant would collapse during a major earthquake, but repairs and reinforcements have been rejected as too expensive, according to reports published in the *Seattle Times*.

Previously unreleased Department of Energy studies from 1984 and 1985 reveal that most of the 36-year-old finishing plant fails to meet current earthquake safety codes, and the walls and ceilings would collapse in a major quake. The last such quake in the area occurred in 1936 in Milton-Freewater, Ore., 50 miles southeast of Hanford.

A third unreleased study, conducted by Rockwell Hanford in 1986, and recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, says a major quake would also crack open heavily shielded cubicles called gloveboxes, where plutonium is handled with gloves or by remote control. According to the report, the gloveboxes can contain up to 300 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium, and if cracked open, could release plutonium into the environment.

In a worst-case scenario, the DOE believes no more than six-tenths of

an ounce of plutonium would escape the plant, and most of that would stay on the 570-square-mile reservation, according to David Simonson, director of defense production for DOE at Hanford. The Rockwell report says the potential radiation dose from such a release would exceed Rockwell's own guidelines but be within Energy Department standards and present no serious threat to the general public.

The *Seattle Times* said that reports indicate that Hanford officials decided the risks were too low to justify the expense of meeting earthquake standards. Reinforcement of the building would cost over \$100 million, earthquake-proof shells around the plutonium, \$50 million, and a new structure, nearly \$400 million.

The finishing plant is the oldest structure in the Hanford complex, built in 1951 before modern earthquake codes went into effect. According to the 1985 report, if a quake hit during the plant's day shift, 350 workers and visitors could be killed or badly injured by falling debris. In comparison to the commercial react-

ors on the site, which are built to sustain lateral stress up to a quarter of the force of gravity (.25 g), the finishing plant probably could not withstand lateral forces resulting from an earthquake above .05 g, the report says. The chances of a .05 quake at Hanford in any given year are listed as about 1 in 66.

Hanford officials say they did not inform Washington state officials or local communities about the earthquake analysis. Hanford's Simonson told the *Associated Press* that even though state and local people might be interested, "I doubt they have anybody with the capability to review our safety analysis report."

The Plutonium Finishing Plant and its companion Plutonium-Uranium Extracting Plant will go back on line in April, says Simonson, after audit problems discovered in October are resolved. The repair work generated by last year's audit included problems with welds, design work and plutonium storage equipment, but not earthquake work.

--Steve Hinchman

Hanford...

(Continued from page 10)

accurate picture, the (Energy) Department will tell you three things that are favorable to their point of view and you won't get the other two."

If last year is any indication, Wyden (whose district is located downstream from Hanford on the Columbia River) will continue to join Rep. Al Swift, D, of Washington state, and Rep. Edward Markey, D, of Massachusetts, on the House Energy Committee in pressing investigations of DOE.

If some congressmen are angry, voters aren't far behind. Hanford became issue number one for Washingtonians in the November elections, and by an overwhelming 84 percent last November voters passed an initiative question directing the state to fight by all legal means a high-level dump at Hanford. The Tri-cities voted heavily against the measure, but in a surprise move, the Pasco City Council broke ranks and passed a resolution demanding a new site-selection process. Pasco farmers said they had become concerned that Hanford's reputation might cause buyers to shy away from locally grown wheat.

Hanford was the only substantive issue in the Senate campaign between incumbent Slade Gorton, R, and Brock Adams, D, a former representative from Seattle. Throughout a tight, bitter race, each tried to show how he had done, and would do, more than his opponent to keep the Department of Energy from putting the high-level waste dump at Hanford.

On Nov. 2, President Reagan, campaigning for the front-running Gorton in Spokane, would not make

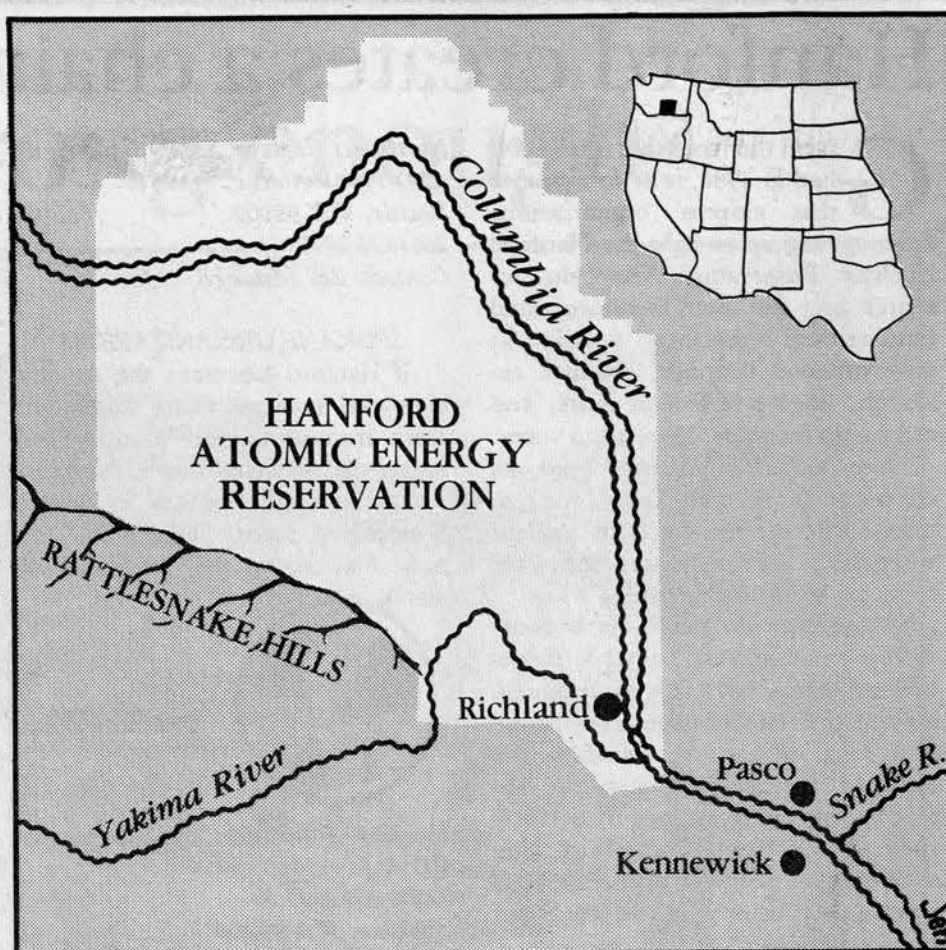
any promises to revise the DOE site-selection process. On Nov. 4, when Gorton lost the election, polls indicated that the public turned to Adams because Gorton could not "deliver" the president.

Adams may find it equally difficult to deliver on the Hanford issue. Throughout the fall, DOE critics in Congress from both parties failed in numerous attempts either to remove Hanford as a finalist for the waste dump or to cut funding for the Department of Energy. At the eleventh hour in the budget process, Oregon Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R, exercised his considerable clout as chairman of the Appropriations Committee and temporarily removed funding for DOE's site-selection program during fiscal year 1987. But in the Democratic 100th Congress, Hatfield no longer chairs the Appropriations Committee.

It is no secret that no one wants the nuclear waste dump in his or her backyard. Therefore, nobody in Congress (except the delegations from Washington, Nevada and Texas) wants to interfere in DOE's program for fear that the dump might land in his or her backyard on the ricochet. Consequently, such solutions as starting the site-selection process over again, or handing the program over to an independent body like the National Academy of Sciences, spark little enthusiasm lest the supporters wind up like Slade Gorton -- unemployed.

Because the Energy Department has done a fine job of shooting itself in the foot, Hanford opponents say their challenge in Congress is not to discredit DOE. Instead, they must find some formula that wins sufficient votes. In his Senate race, Brock Adams talked about forging a "transportation coalition" of states through which the nuclear wastes must travel to a dump at Hanford. Only time will tell whether Adams has the winning political solution.

Clearly the DOE does not. Among other offensives in Congress, Rep. Wyden plans legislation to limit



exemptions for DOE from federal, state and local environmental laws. Rep. Norm Dicks, D, of Washington, who sits on the key House Appropriations Committee, intends to introduce a bill that would place all of DOE's nuclear weapons facilities under a new, independent federal agency.

In a move either to hoist a white flag of defeat or to gain more funding from Congress or both, the DOE announced last month its intention to slow down the siting process for the high-level nuclear waste dump by five years. Brock Adams said, "Even the DOE now recognizes that the system has collapsed."

In one further irony, several large petroleum companies including Chev-

ron, Exxon, ARCO, and Shell, revealed last month that they would like to explore for oil and gas on the Hanford Reservation. The DOE, which was created in the 1970s to solve the "energy crisis" set off by the OPEC oil embargoes, said it would look into any oil and gas potential at Hanford. However, the agency would not permit any exploration by the companies or other outsiders. Any demonstrated potential for oil and gas would immediately disqualify Hanford as a site for the waste dump.

A free-lance writer in Seattle, James Baker frequently contributes to *High Country News*.

BRIAN BASSETT THE SEATTLE TIMES 3/8/86



Hanford creates a chain reaction of opposition

Given the year that the DOE had in 1986, it is no surprise that citizens' organizations have sprung up to fight the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. They do research and distribute literature, hold educational meetings, testify at governmental hearings, conduct research, litigate in federal court, and campaign for public opinion and votes.

Because Hanford has been in operation for so many years, with so many different facilities from nuclear weapons to civilian reactors, the place collects critics like fly paper.

Some activist groups have roots in the environmental or peace movements; others have sprung up solely around the Hanford issue. They range from local *ad hoc* groups such as the Hanford Oversight Committee to traditional, national organizations such as the Sierra Club. With due apologies for any unintentional omissions, here is a directory of Hanford critics.

SEATTLE ORGANIZATIONS

If the Tri-cities of Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco are the home base of Hanford's supporters, the hotbed of opposition is certainly Seattle, the center of Washington state's population, economy, and politics. Among other accomplishments, Seattle-based groups piled up the big vote in the statewide referendum last year opposing a high-level nuclear waste dump at Hanford.

WASHPIRG

Washington Public Interest Research Group

Washington Public Interest Research Group [WashPIRG]
5628 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
206/526-8843
Contact: Gerald Pollet

Hanford Oversight Committee
512 Boylston Ave. E, #106
Seattle, WA 98102
206/322-3041
Contact: Hazel Wolf

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
4534 1/2 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
206/547-2630
Contact: David Tauben, M.D.



Puget Sound SANE
5516 Roosevelt Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
206/527-8050
Contact: Janet Miller

Inland Waters Coalition
1438 20th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98122
206/329-3839
Contact: Tom Buchanan

Washington League of Conservation Voters
1406 NE 50th St., Suite 201
Seattle, WA 98105
206/524-6554
Contact: Mike Leland

Northwest Nuclear Safety Campaign
2345 Franklin Ave. E, #4
Seattle, WA 98102
206/324-2497
Contact: Bill Mitchell

SPOKANE ORGANIZATIONS

If Hanford becomes the nation's high-level nuclear waste dump, the main transportation corridor will funnel the majority waste shipments straight through Spokane in eastern Washington state. Some in the city have reacted to the prospect with alarm.



HEAL
Hanford Education Action League

Hanford Education Action League [HEAL]
South 325 Oak St.
Spokane, WA 99204
509/624-7256
Contact: Tim Connor

Spokane Physicians for Social Responsibility
South 325 Oak St.
Spokane, WA 99204
509/624-7256
Contact: Amy Mickelson

PORTLAND ORGANIZATIONS

Downstream from Hanford on the Columbia River, citizens in Portland, Ore., have a direct interest in what happens at the DOE reservation. And it shows in a phalanx of watchdog organizations.

Hanford Clearinghouse
408 SW 2nd Ave., Room 408
Portland, OR 97204
503/295-2101
Contact: Joanne Oleksiak



Hanford Oversight Committee

Oregon Hanford Oversight Committee
P.O. Box 2748
Portland, OR 97208
503/246-3708
Contact: Jackie Kling

People Against Nuclear Dumping at Hanford [PANDAH]
P.O. Box 12051
Portland, OR 97212
503/224-3380
Contact: Drew Gardner

Portland SANE
408 SW 2nd Ave., Room 430
Portland, OR 97204
503/242-9360
Contact: Lou Stagnito

Coalition for Safe Power
408 SW 2nd Ave., Suite 406
Portland, OR 97204
503/295-0490
Contact: Eugene Rosolie

Oregon League of Conservation Voters
506 SW 6th Ave., Suite 1004
Portland, OR 97204
503/224-4011
Contact: Kathy Maloney

Oregon Environmental Council
2637 SW Water Ave.
Portland, OR 97201
503/222-1963
Contact: Betty McArdle



IDAHO ORGANIZATIONS

If Hanford ever experienced a Chernobyl incident, Idahoans would be among the first victims as the prevailing winds spread radioactivity eastward.

Palouse Clearwater Hanford Watch
Box 8582
Moscow, ID 83843
208/835-6125
Contact: Mary Butters

Snake River Alliance
P.O. Box 1731
Boise, ID 83701
208/344-9161
Contact: Lisa Schultz

CANWE
West 2535 Riverview Dr.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208/667-9389
Contact: Gertie Hanson

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Since the Hanford Nuclear Reservation is a big cog in larger programs by a huge federal agency, national organizations play a major role.

Juggling the nuclear hot potato

Energy Department Secretary John Herrington told a House of Representatives committee last month that if Congress asked him, he would resume the search for a second nuclear waste repository in the East.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 directs the DOE to develop two underground facilities for high-level radioactive waste, the first to be located west of the Mississippi River and a second in the East, where most of the nation's commercial waste is produced. Several congressmen protested that Herrington's plan to drop an Eastern site violates the 1982 law, and Arizona Rep. Morris Udall, who helped draft the act, has charged that Herrington was trying

Natural Resources Defense Council
1350 New York Ave. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
202/783-7800
Contact: Dan Reicher

Sierra Club
1516 Melrose Ave.
Seattle, WA 98122
206/621-1696
Contact: Anne Bringloe or Barb Boyle

Greenpeace
Good Shepherd Center
4649 Sunnyside Ave. N
Seattle, WA 98103
206/632-4326
Contact: Jim Beard

Environmental Policy Institute
218 D St SE
Washington, DC 20003
202/544-2600
Contact: Robert Alvarez

Southwest Research Center
2001 O St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202/457-0545
Contact: Caroline Petti

The Southwest Research Center publishes a newsletter covering the nuclear waste issue from soup to nuts. Also watching Hanford with very wary eyes are three nearby Indian nations: the Yakima, Nez Perce and Umatilla.

--James Baker

to quell Eastern opposition to the dump in an election year.

Herrington defended the move as a business decision, enacted because the repository will not be needed as early as had been believed. *The New York Times* reports that Udall is now considering drafting new legislation "that can't be manipulated for expedience or short-sighted political reasons." The DOE has also proposed, subject to congressional review, delaying the opening of a Western repository by five years, until 2003. In the meantime, the department is proceeding with plans to build a \$3 billion facility in Tennessee to store wastes until a permanent repository is ready.

--Steve Hinchman

Sloppy practices at Hanford

Nuclear Waste: Unresolved Issues Concerning Hanford's Waste Management Practices is the title of a November 1986, General Accounting Office report. It concludes that the U.S. Department of Energy's Washington facility has been slow to implement waste management requirements, even though Hanford has produced plutonium for nuclear weapons for more than 40 years, generating radioactive, hazardous and mixed waste, most of which is stored or disposed of on-site. In 1985, Oklahoma Rep. Mike Synar, D, and Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, asked the GAO to review Hanford's compliance with the two statutes governing waste management: the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and the Comprehensive Environmental

Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. The GAO found that Hanford cannot know or ensure that its waste management and disposal is adequate because it has not identified all active and inactive sites in need of regulation. Hanford continues to dispose of low-level liquid waste directly into soils, a practice opposed by the Environmental Protection Agency because of possible groundwater contamination. The report also said Hanford fails at at least four sites to meet groundwater monitoring requirements. To receive a free copy of the report, write to the U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (202/275-6241).

--Becky Rumsey

Are the caskets strong enough?

Federal scientists say their plan to build a giant underground repository for the nation's high-level nuclear waste is the "ultimate solution." Nuclear boosters call it "closing the circle" -- putting the radiation back in the ground from which it first emerged as uranium ore.

But even though the Department of Energy says it has found at least three suitable sites for the waste -- Yucca Mountain in southern Nevada, Gable Mountain near Hanford, Wash., and the Texas Panhandle near Amarillo -- the question of how the government will transport waste from a nuclear power industry based in the East to a repository located in the West remains one of the government's thorniest problems.

When the nation's first repository opens sometime around the turn of the century (if the DOE can stick to its schedule), the number of shipments of high-level waste in this country will increase 100-fold. Although the government has been safely shipping nuclear wastes for decades, the chances of an accident will increase dramatically, and the same highways used by the nation's vacationers and commuters will become delivery routes for still-simmering fuel rods mounted on the back of trucks.

The radioactive rods won't be packed away in a mountain or fortress-like reactor, but in casks critics believe could leak or burst open in a high-speed accident. In addition, when trucks are idling at a stoplight, or laid up in a truck stop while highway crews clear an unexpected late-spring snowfall from Interstate 80, their cargo will be spitting off low-level radiation.

While the Department of Energy estimates the chances of an accident are one in 25 million, others say even one mishap could be devastating. One federal report indicated that an accident in an urban area could cause hundreds of latent cancer deaths and cost more than \$2 billion to clean up. And the risk touches millions: If all shipments moved by truck, nuclear waste transportation routes would run through all but five of the 48 contiguous states. The traffic would be particularly heavy in the West, even though it has relatively few nuclear power plants.

The shipping containers in use today have never been tested to show their weaknesses. And even though none has ever failed during a shipping accident, nine of those 17 massive casks have been taken out of service at least once for various flaws.

DOE officials say the casks, which will make way for a "new generation" of containers now being designed to meet the extraordinary need that will accompany the opening of a new waste dump, have been put through the wringer and are perfectly safe. They've crashed cask-bearing railcars and trucks into concrete walls at 80 mph; they've engulfed them in jet fuel fires for more than an hour; they've dropped them onto the desert floor from a helicopter; and they've immersed them in water for hours. There have been a few cracks and



Loaded transport vehicle enroute to the DOE's Nevada nuclear test site.

scratches, but the radiation stays inside.

But a recent study by the Western Interstate Energy Board in Colorado found that some of the tests were actually done on beefed-up containers no longer in use. One cask contained "fresh" radioactive fuel, instead of the "spent" fuel that is a million times more potent and will be the standard cargo headed to the dump. Outside experts also said the train crash was actually only 30 mph, and that a cask would crack when struck by an unyielding surface at only 12 mph.

"Transportation is the neglected stepchild of the entire waste program," says Fred Millar, director of the transportation and hazardous waste program for the Environmental Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. "Here we are spending millions studying what state to build a dump in... and we're moving the waste with outmoded technology that's never been crash-tested. It's ludicrous."

Many local officials share the critics' concern about the transportation program. In the last decade, some 200 cities have passed local bans on nuclear shipments. Although those bans are probably meaningless in the face of federal transportation laws, the bans could force the DOE into court over and over again. The DOE recently rerouted one spent fuel shipment 200 miles from the Nevada Test Site to avoid a legal confrontation over a shipping ban in Las Vegas.

Right now, the DOE's "preferred routes" for moving the waste are the

nation's interstate highways. One of those is I-70, which crosses some mountain passes in Colorado and can be treacherous in winter. I-70, like portions of I-80 in California and Nevada, passes through steep, rocky canyons that lack the access roads an emergency crew would need to reach a leaking cask.

The DOE will also rely on states to be the first to respond to an emergency. Some states have response plans, but since rescue crews don't have much experience with ruptured fuel rods, some are concerned states won't have the expertise needed. Critics remember how a trailer hauling 20 tons of uranium ore crashed in Colorado in 1977, spilling five tons of radioactive "yellowcake." It was three days before cleanup began.

Although the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be closely involved in licensing new transportation casks, many worry NRC's review won't be objective. The commission has been accused of being increasingly pro-nuclear.

DOE officials say the chance of the public being exposed to radiation would be "insignificant." That includes the low-level gamma radiation that slips through even the most heavily shielded cask. One DOE report said if 1,000 casks carrying nuclear waste passed within 100 feet of the same house every year, the exposure to inhabitants would be less than 1 percent of what they get from background radiation. But, according

to Joe Strolin, a planner with the Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office, even that kind of radiation adds up. "I'm not sure I'd want to drive one of those trucks for very long," he said.

Nevada and other state officials who worked with the energy board feel the DOE needs to carry its cask tests further -- put them through hotter fires and drop them from greater heights. They need to know at what point the containers will fail, so that when a cask lands in a searing fuel fire, emergency crews will know if radiation is likely to escape.

The DOE has balked at full-scale tests on full-sized casks, though, and critics say that's because DOE officials don't want to know if a cask can fail. If a container breaks, even if it's only under intense abuse, the government would no longer be able to say that the casks are indestructible.

But DOE officials say the real reason is cost.

"It costs millions every time you whack one of these things," said Lake Barrett, the head of DOE's transportation division. "You learn very little. When you build a building, you don't put simulated earthquakes through it to the point where it topples over."

But there is still a chance the breaking-point tests will be made. "If it makes people breathe a little easier, I may decide these tests are worth the cost," Barrett said. "The only advantage is the public perception."

--Jim Sloan

14-High Country News -- March 2, 1987

LETTERS

FIGHTING THE RANGE WAR

Dear HCN,

The letter from Marj Perry in the Oct. 27th issue brings up some issues that I think need further attention. As she states, many of the references to commercial livestock grazing presented in *High Country News* (and in many other publications, for that matter) have "negative connotations." Well, what does she expect? The grazing industry has undoubtedly done more to degrade our public lands than any other single cause. I commend HCN and other periodicals for having the courage and concern to speak out on this very important issue.

As for the ranching community being "all-powerful," it is close to that in many rural areas, as many of us non-rancher rural folks have experienced all too frequently.

As for public lands livestock grazing being heavily subsidized, it obviously is. A federal study has shown that the government spends about \$10 on range "improvements" for every dollar it collects in grazing fees. These grazing fees (which average only one-fourth of the true value of the forage they represent) should be collected as payment for forage utilized and deposited in the federal treasury, not used as financing for range "improvements" and management programs to help public lands ranchers.

If all direct and indirect costs for range "improvements" such as ranching roads, "pest," competitor, and predator control, disease control, erosion control, destroyed animals and animal habitat, loss of topsoil, etc., are considered, the financial cost to the public is greater than the total value of the livestock produced on public lands.

Marj Perry argues that one reason grazing fees collected by the Forest Service don't begin to cover outlays for range management is because the Forest Service is a "huge, inefficient

bureaucracy." While this may be true to a limited degree, it is this bureaucracy that keeps her and most other public lands graziers in business. This is something I have been told many times by public lands ranchers themselves.

It is also true, to a limited degree, as she states, that in some respects it is somewhat more expensive to graze public than private rangelands. But this difference is not anything like she implies. It's certainly nowhere near four times as expensive to graze public as private lands. This also brings up this question: If it's so financially difficult to graze public lands without giveaway grazing fees and massive subsidies, why are they being grazed in the first place?

She goes on to state that "most private lands grazing is on prime land" and that this land is often "irrigated by the landowner." This is misleading. In the first place, most private rangeland is in such poor condition from many years of overgrazing that it could hardly be said to be in "prime" condition even compared to public lands. Also, when comparing fees charged for public vs. private rangelands, we are not talking about irrigated pastures. Private lands under irrigation are not considered "grazing land" by the government when figuring grazing fees and such. Private rangelands may be somewhat

more productive in most cases than public, but the grazer is charged for amount of forage, not a set amount per acre, and this does not include irrigated pasture.

To say that riders must be employed much more often on public than private lands is also misleading. Private grazing lands are spread out over thousands of acres, just as public lands are. There may be a few more miles to cover in some cases, but in general, the difference is just not that great.

"The Forest Service tells permittees where to fence and when, and the permittee pays for the fencing." This is simply and totally untrue. More often than not, it is the local advisory boards (composed of ranchers) and individual permittees that "advise" the Forest Service where they think fences should go, and when. The Forest Service then usually OKs them and pays for the materials, while the permittee supplies the labor.

I agree that most of the large-scale water projects in the West are the result of political pressures by large cities, developers and those who believe in growth. But then she offers us the well-worn argument-threat that if we don't keep public lands ranchers in business, the developers and land rapers will take over and destroy the West.

Are these really our only two choices? What about buying the base properties from public lands ranchers outright and returning the land to public ownership? Wouldn't this do more to protect our public lands than almost any other action we could take? This would surely be cheaper in the long run than supporting the environmentally, politically, and economically unjustifiable public lands grazing industry. If you think this sounds like communism, how do you like the welfare-grazing system we have now?

As for cattle (or sheep) not competing with wildlife in the mountains, anyone who would believe this ridiculous statement probably hasn't spent much time in the mountains or has some vested interest that prevents him or her from seeing the obvious.

The West may be beautiful, as Marj Perry writes, but how much more beautiful and healthy would it be if not degraded by cattle, sheep, barbed wire, ranching roads, predator and competitor slaughter programs, livestock water pollution and riparian degradation, herbicide sprayings, grasshopper pesticide sprayings, brush removal programs, water diversions, monoculture seeding programs.....?

Lynn Jacobs
Cornville, Arizona

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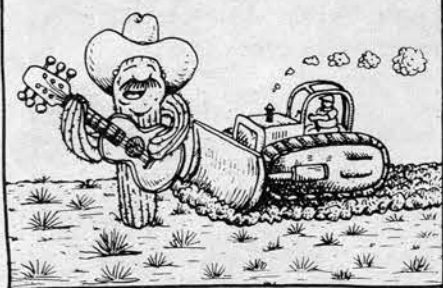
A COLORADO SOS

Save Our San Juan, whose acronym is SOS, a southwest Colorado citizens' group, is one of 10 groups of individuals to file appeals of the Wolf Creek Valley ski area record of decision and final environmental impact statement issued by the San Juan National Forest Dec. 8. Joining with SOS in its appeal were the American Wilderness Alliance and the San Juan chapter of the Audubon Society. The decision would allow Westfork Investments to develop a ski area for 10,000 skiers on Windy Pass 12 miles northeast of Pagosa Springs on U.S. Highway 160. SOS lists 13 issues as the basis for its appeal, including the current slowdown in demand for new skiing capacity and the inadequacy of the environmental impact statement for the proposed ski development. For information about the appeals, contact the San Juan National Forest office at 701 Camino del Rio in Durango or the Save Our San Juan Committee at St. Rt. 2, Box 1125-S, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147.

LIMITED EPA PROGRESS

The Environmental Protection Agency's progress in determining what wastes are hazardous has been slow, reports the General Accounting Office. At the request of Rep. James Florio, D-N.J., the GAO reviewed the EPA's approach to listing chemical and industrial wastes, its progress in completing five congressionally mandated large-volume waste studies, its "delisting" of some waste handlers from regulation, and its efforts in issuing a nationwide, biennial report. The GAO concludes that the EPA has not been prompt because it has lacked a consistent plan. It has taken the EPA six years to add five new hazardous materials to the original 1980 list of 450, and additional studies of four industries that began in 1981 will not be completed until 1990. Potentially, there are large numbers of unidentified hazardous wastes. The GAO recommends that the EPA develop a plan of action, assess impacts of delistings and make an effort to acquire complete and accurate information by increasing the frequency of site visits, as one example. The EPA cites competing priorities and a lack of resources as reasons for its poor progress. For a free copy of *Hazardous Waste: EPA Has Made Limited Progress in Determining the Wastes to be Regulated* write to the U.S. General Accounting Office, Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877.

The Earth First! Li'l Green Songbook



Johnny Sagebrush and Friends

SONGS YOUR MOTHER DIDN'T TEACH YOU

The action-oriented group Earth First! has published its fifth edition of the *Li'l Green Songbook*, an outlaw hymnal specially designed for political rallies and campfire choruses. Many of the songs by Johnny Sagebrush and Friends were featured at last summer's Round River Rendezvous, and include classic ditties such as "Amazing Waste," "The Snail Darter March," "Fossil Fuel Cowboy" and that slightly altered favorite, "They'll be Tearing Down the Mountain." Guitar chords are listed for most songs.

Ned Ludd Books, P.O. Box 5871, Tucson, AZ 85703. Paper, \$5 plus \$1 postage, 102 pages.



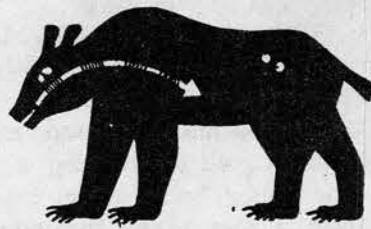
Smooth broome

Sharon Glichtist

PRAIRIE PATTERNS

Woodlands resembling buffalo fur and grasses reminiscent of galaxies characterize the photographs of Terry Evans in *Prairie: Images of Ground and Sky*. The book is a collection of 60 color and nine black-and-white photographs of the Kansas prairie, with introductory essays by the late anthropologist Gregory Bateson and Wes Jackson of the Land Institute in Salina, Kan. A list of common prairie plants is included and accompanying the photos are quotes from author Willa Cather and naturalist Aldo Leopold. In her introduction Evans describes how she suddenly came to see the ground while doing survey work. As she learned the names of plants such as silverleaf scurfpea and mugwort wormwood, she says she was drawn into an investigation of prairie patterns.

University Press of Kansas, 329 Carruth, Lawrence, KS 66045. Hardback, \$19.95, plus \$1.50 postage, and 4.5 percent sales tax in Kansas. 72 pages.



A BEAR BOOK

Erwin Bauer's book, *Bear: In Their World*, is the product of a lifetime's fascination and study of North America's bears. With his wife Peggy, Bauer has filmed the bear in its home environment from Florida's Everglades to Alaska's North Slope. This is a collection of 150 color photos combined with folklore and anecdotes about the life and habits of America's black, brown, polar and grizzly bears. This is a coffee-table book that will get read.

Stackpole Books, Cameron and Kelker Streets, Harrisburg, PA 17015, oversize, hardcover, 150 illustrations, 254 pages, \$32.95 plus \$3 shipping.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS

The first-ever conference on the conservation and management of rare plants was held in early November 1986 in Sacramento, Calif. Hosted by the California Native Plant Society, the four-day conference was co-sponsored by state and federal agencies, utility companies, academic societies and The Nature Conservancy. Speakers included Paul Ehrlich of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University and Faith Campbell of the Natural Resources Defense Council. The conference served as an information exchange presenting both problems and solutions related to rare plant management and attracted a diverse group from several states. The most widely discussed topics were legal and bureaucratic concerns and case studies of rare plant monitoring, management, mitigation and conservation success. The California Native Plant Society will publish proceedings that should be available in June 1987. For more information, contact The California Native Plant Society, 909 12th Street, Suite 116, Sacramento, CA 95814.

CITIZENS' LAW CENTER

A new group has formed in South Dakota to lobby for stricter hazardous-waste laws in that state. The Citizens' Law Center of Rapid City says it will follow in the steps of the South Dakota Nuclear Waste Vote Coalition in drafting legislation and referenda to change the state's hazardous-waste laws, a task that the state Legislature has so far been reluctant to do. Law Center head Nick Meinhardt is the former coordinator of the Waste Vote Coalition. The grass-roots organization stopped the 1985 proposed siting of a low-level nuclear waste dump in South Dakota through a referendum on the issue. The Law Center says it will pursue legislation to upgrade hazardous materials regulations; stop proposed and existing importation of hazardous wastes into the state; and require companies to file complete reports with public officials on storage, use and transport of hazardous materials. The Center also plans to put a referendum on the 1988 state ballot to ban heap-leaching mining activity in the Black Hills. Although the center will restrict itself to environmental issues for the present, it plans to expand its efforts to other issues, based on the premise that "to the extent that we bring more citizens into the lawmaking process, we have a society in which people have control over their own lives and living conditions," Meinhardt says. The Citizens' Law Center is at P.O. Box 9084, Rapid City, SD 57709 (605/341-4609).

A REVISED GARRISON DIVERSION DRAFT

The draft supplement to the environmental statement on the Garrison Diversion Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program in North Dakota is now out. The proposal (HCN, 10/27/86) provides for irrigation, recreation, and municipal, rural and industrial water development. It maintains a minimum flow in the James River at the North Dakota - South Dakota border and details a wildlife plan. Changes in the plan include: alterations in the size and location of some irrigation areas, though the total number of acres to be developed remains at 130,940; reduced capacity of the Sykeston Canal; reduced capacity of the James River Feeder Canal; increased wildlife refuge acreage; conditional authorization of Lonetree Dam and Reservoir; a water treatment facility for the Sheyenne River; a cost share program among rural, municipal, and industrial entities in the state of North Dakota; federal contributions for a wetland trust not to exceed \$12 million; and a comprehensive report on impacts associated with the James River to be submitted to Congress by Sept. 30, 1988. For information contact Timothy Keller, Chief, Technical Support Division, Missouri-Souris Project Office, Bureau of Reclamation, P.O. Box 1017, Bismarck, ND 58502 (701/255-4011, ext. 541).

CALIFORNIA CONSIDERS LION HUNTING

The California Fish and Game Commission is considering reinstating a trophy hunting season on mountain lions, and a California organization is urging the public to oppose it. The Mountain Lion Coalition, a political action group, says that trophy hunting is "senseless and needless killing for fun." A 15-year moratorium on the hunting of mountain lions expired in 1986, and Gov. George Deukmejian vetoed legislation last year to extend it. Despite the lack of a ban, the Fish and Game Commission did not open a sport hunting season that year because of public opposition. The commission is holding a series of hearings on this year's proposed trophy hunting season, with the next one set for March 6 in Redding at City Council Chambers, 1343 California. A third meeting is scheduled for April 13 at the Resources Bldg. Auditorium, 1416 9th St., Sacramento. Both meetings begin at 9 a.m. For more information call 213/457-LION or contact the Mountain Lion Coalition, P.O. Box 1896, Sacramento, CA 95809. Letters regarding the hunt can be sent to the California Fish and Game Commission, 1416 9th St., Sacramento, CA 95814, or to Gov. George Deukmejian, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

PLAN FOR THE AREA

The Bureau of Land Management has just released a draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement for the Pocatello Resource Area in the southeastern corner of Idaho. The plan covers 264,000 acres of public lands that contain two wilderness study areas and three major rivers: the Portneuf, the Blackfoot and the Bear. The BLM's preferred alternative calls for increased grazing allotments, high levels of mineral leasing and exploration, improved big game winter and spring range, several multi-use recreation areas including off-road vehicle use, and designates three areas of critical environmental concern. Written comments on the draft plans will be accepted until April 30, 1987, and two public hearings will be held: one at the Federal Courthouse in Pocatello at 7 p.m., April 15, and the other at the Caribou County Courthouse in Soda Springs at 7 p.m., April 16. The document is available from the Idaho Falls BLM District Office, and written comments should be mailed to the BLM, Idaho Falls District Office, RMP/EIS Team Leader, 940 Lincoln Rd., Idaho Falls, ID 83401.

ACCESS

NEAT STUFF

LEARN SOLAR RETROFIT: Colorado Mountain College's next "hands-on" Solar Training Program begins late August. Fully accredited. CMC Admission, Box 10001 HN, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602. Call 800/621-9602 or 945-7481. (mamj, p)

RECYCLED PAPER. Free color catalog of environmental notecards and recycled office and printing paper. Samples enclosed. Earth Care Paper, 325-146 Beech Lane, Harbor Springs, MI 49740. (1xp)

SINGLE? ENVIRONMENTALIST? PEACE-ORIENTED? Concerned Singles Newsletter links unattached like-minded men and women, all ages, all ages. Free sample. Box 7737-B, Berkeley, CA 94707.

CLASSIFIED ADS cost 20 cents per word, pre-paid, \$5 minimum. General rates for display are \$6/column inch camera-ready; \$8/column inch if we make up. For ad rate brochure, write HCN, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428 or call 303/527-4898.

WORK

DIRECTOR wanted for Wyoming-based conservation, agricultural organization. Issues include coal mine reclamation, water development and agricultural issues. Fundraising experience and good writing skills are required. \$10,500 per year plus medical insurance and 30 days paid vacation. Interested persons should submit resumes, writing samples and references to: Powder River Basin Resource Council, 23 N. Scott, Sheridan, WY 82801 (1x4b)

INTERN POSITIONS: Canyonlands Field Institute is seeking energetic students to assist with management research and program development. Box 68, Moab, UT 84532 (801/259-7750). (1xp)

STAFF DIRECTOR, DICKINSON, NORTH DAKOTA: The Dakota Resource Council (DRC) is a nine-year-old grass-roots community organization operating throughout North Dakota. DRC is dedicated to organizing farmers, ranchers, rural people on issues of local concern, including coal strip mining, groundwater protection, air quality, oil and gas development, farm credit and federal farm policy. The position of Staff Director will be open in May 1987. Responsibilities include staff recruitment, hiring, training; leadership development; raise and administer annual budget; coordinate coalition; coordinate issue campaign development and implementation; long-range planning and evaluation. Salary is \$12,000 - \$18,000 per year, depending on experience, qualifications. Health insurance, four weeks annual vacation, holidays included. Application deadline is April 1, 1987. Send resume, cover letter, writing samples, list of three references to: Theresa Keaveny, Dakota Resource Council, 29 7th Ave. West Dickinson, ND 58601 (701/227-1851). (1x4p)

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Ruminations on the ecology of wilderness trash

by Bruce Farling

Nighttime skies in Idaho and Montana's Bitterroot Mountains evoke big questions. From the cozy confines of down-filled cocoons, inspired hikers stare into a crystalline, star-pocked void and ask: Why? The serious contemplative types recall Blake and Jeffers; those scientifically prone question relativity, quasars, the extraterrestrial. The more earthbound analyze Gaian philosophy and look for the answer to the human role in nature. Myself, I think of garbage.

It hasn't always been this way for me. It started some years ago when I first took a job in the backcountry. Given the opportunity to collect a modest paycheck for spending months exploring remote country while performing "natural resource management" and avoiding a real job, I became sensitized to backcountry refuse and the refuse-niks who leave it, emerging finally as a wilderness garbageman. Thus, gazing into beautiful, distant constellations, I may grapple with existentialism, but my mind's eye conjures up mounds of squashed beer cans along the Selway River. The great wilderness experience, at times, becomes a continuing obsession with inappropriately placed pop-tops, cigarette butts and Jiffy Pop tins. I am hopelessly addicted to collecting wilderness trash.

There is an ecology to wilderness trash. It has preferred habitats and is part of a larger system. In the Selway-Bitterroot, where I work, trash has a symbiotic relationship with hunters and stock packers. My most prized and disgusting finds are inevitably spore left behind by these two groups. Now, hunters and packers out there will cry foul, but there's no sense being nice here. Sure, some are clean wilderness visitors, but in my experience they are a minority. I hunt and pack and I notice who leaves the most trash. It is not backpackers (though this group has its problems).

There are cultural differences you notice about trash too. For example, you are never far from a flip-top pudding can in the wilderness (it's the Idaho State Wilderness Can). Granola is apparently gaining wider acceptance with conservative southern Idahoans, as evidenced by the granola bar wrapper scat that follows their pack strings. By far the largest number of expired beer cans left in the Selway come from Colorado's most environmentally minded company -- Jim Watt's pals at Coors. My research also indicates that Vienna sausage cans, which contain those hideous, pink, mucilaginous cylinders, seem to be a favorite of southern hunters. They pronounce this fare with a long i, smack their lips as they slide the last cylinder of mystery meat into their gullets, then flip the can into the brush.

In the Selway country, we pride ourselves on discovering strange wilderness garbage. This summer a co-worker of mine found an abandoned camp complete with an electric frying pan. The kind with plastic legs and the little dial that tells you at what temperature to cook your lamb chops. This find was several days walk from the nearest utility line.

A few falls back I uncovered an eight-inch wide vacuum cleaner hose

on a high pass. Puzzlement. Speculation suggested it was part of an elk bugle. Which, if true, meant its owner had lips the size of a truck-tire inner tube. I suspect someone just packed in the old Hoover to keep camp tidy and forgot the hose. I once found the decrepit remains of an automobile radiator on a remote ridge difficult to reach by foot, let alone by vehicle. I've never figured that one out.

Over the years you expect to see certain items regularly: buried dumps of old cans, old Forest Service #9 telephone wire (until the seventies, the Service was one of the worst garbage dumpers), burned pots, blown-out cowboy boots, wads of charcoal-encrusted aluminum foil (it does not burn), an occasional used prophylactic and rusty wood stoves. You've probably seen the stuff, perhaps even left some of it. I've packed out trash left by doctors, lawyers, little old ladies, Boy Scouts, priests, Forest Service officials and many, many self-proclaimed "ecologists." It wouldn't surprise me if even the Pope leaves his gum wrappers on the trail.

In the Selway, a friend and ex-cohort of mine (better left unnamed -- he lives too close to me) is a legend. He has a sixth sense -- not for finding elk, good fishing or attractive female hikers -- but for locating garbage. He is maniacal about removing wilderness trash. Like an urban drug addict who scours alleyways for the next fix, he would lurk in the shadows of great cedars and plow through brushfields to exhume old dumps in search of another garbage lode.

If he came back from his rounds without a pack full of trash or a rusted stove on his back, he would be miserable. He'd grumble for days, snap at everybody. But if he packed out an old dump, or even just a beer can from my area or another



wilderness ranger's, he'd gloat. T.S. Eliot once said: "Birth, copulation and death, that's all the facts when you come to brass tacks." My friend the garbage junkie would surely add wilderness garbage hunting.

It's true that people now litter less in the backcountry. This is good not only for the landscape but also for me. It allows me more time to pursue my professional goals of snoozing in the sun and fishing. Still, I never expect miracles. I know when the glacier

lilies and shooting stars emerge from the receding snow next spring, they will be accompanied by a Twinkies wrapper here, a Bud can there, and of course, the ubiquitous aluminum foil. It's a matter of ecology.

Bruce Farling, a former HCN intern, emerges from the backcountry every now and then to go to the post office.

LETTERS

GROWS FREELY

Dear HCN,

In reading what landowners want to do, keeping hunting on private land in their control, I really think this is wrong. (HCN, 2/16/87).

First of all, they would have to put up an 8-foot fence to keep game on their land. Would they brand them? I'm afraid it would end up in a range war, trying to control drifting herds.

They say they would feed and care for the herds. Why are they complaining now of the cost to feed them what grows freely from the earth? I'm sure they get a good amount for hunting now, plus compensation for damage done by the herds.

I was looking into finding a place to hunt this year and I'm told it would cost up to or better than \$2,000 on private ground to hunt elk.

You can't stop rivers from flowing, herds from traveling around, fish from swimming in different water, or birds from flying from one place to another.

I will continue to pray that all animals, birds and fish will remain free to produce as the Lord wanted

them to. After all, with so many people on this earth, it is impossible for all of us to own large lands to hunt and fish on.

I'm willing to buy licenses or pay a small fee to hunt on private land, but before I spend \$2,000 to hunt our animals for food, I'd buy a cow or pig and be further ahead.

Raymond S. Joreski
Glenrock, Wyoming

The writer, who is 62 and retired, tells us he moved to Wyoming for the hunting, camping and fishing.

TOXIC MESS

Dear HCN,

I did a little work in the Grants District for Homestake in the late 1950s. I do not see how this mess can ever be contained without the expenditure of at least \$2 billion. The companies -- Homestake, Anaconda, United Nuclear and Gulf Minerals -- probably won't do it. It really is a shame that this was ever permitted, but at the time the toxicity of radon, selenium, etc. was not well understood. Grants will never operate again because cheaper uranium can be obtained from Canada, the Cameroons and Australia. (HCN, 1/19/87).

As to Crested Butte, the town did not win the battle. The property was sold by AMAX back to the people from whom it had been bought, and they received permission to operate. But nothing will happen. There is such an oversupply of molybdenum in the world that this mine could never break even...

Manning W. Cox,
Friday Harbor, Washington

CLEAN AIR AGAIN

Dear HCN,

Congratulations on the coverage of the closing of the Phelps Dodge smelter in your recent issue (HCN, 2/2/87). We learned a lot of things we didn't know -- you had some good sources. It was really interesting to see how far beyond Douglas this problem had reached and how many people were involved.

The difference in the air over Douglas, so evident to us as we drive down the long hill into the city, is remarkable. The only pollution one can see now is from the wood-burning stoves in Agua Prieta.

Sally Hoyt Spofford
Portal, Arizona