

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar

Wyoming's vast, scarred Red Desert

by Ed Marston

The Red Desert would be accurately named but for two facts: in the spring it is neither red nor desert. Right after the snowmelt, it would be better called Wyoming's Green Ocean. The 55-mile-long belt of sand dunes stretching across it, the sage-covered plain and the vast size speak more of sea than land.

That is especially true this year. Although the snowpack was light, the spring rains came at exactly the right time. The grass and other vegetation will be high and nutritious this summer, and the desert's wildlife will go into the winter fat and happy.

If the West's climate turns wet again, the Red Desert will literally become an ocean, or at least a large, inland lake. It is in the Great Divide Basin, formed by the splitting of the Continental Divide near Rawlins to the south and east, and near the Lander-Farson Highway, at Pacific Springs, to the north and west. As a result of this division, even if the climate and soil permitted, water could not flow to either ocean.

The Red Desert starts east of Rock Springs and stretches to Rawlins in the east-west direction, and from Interstate-80 toward Jeffrey City in the north-south direction. Its 1,100 square miles are filled with curiosities: summer-time ice caves near the town of Superior, formed when Wyoming's formidable winter winds pack snow into them; snow cells found in the Red Desert's dunes in August, formed in the winter or spring by winds blowing a thick, insulating layer of sand over broken snow cornices; and low mountains dotted with small, green forests kept alive by springs seeping out of nearby buttes.

In the booming 1970s and early 1980s, it appeared that this wild land would be civilized. Helicopters,



Dune trek in the Red Desert

searching for oil, gas and uranium. Other quarry were the vast trona beds, coal, leucite for fertilizer, and even the silica in the sand dunes.

The desert is quiet now, but the marks of that period remain. The demise of the yellowcake market stranded Union Oil's Mineral Exploration uranium project -- a beached industrial whale that once employed 200 in the middle of the desert. Its enormous open pits, office building, mill and mounds of tailings make one wonder how much capital capitalist America has to throw away. The only piece of surviving "economic development" at the ghostly Union facility is the caretaker's trailer and carefully tended lawn and garden. His rhubarb and onions are

thriving in the desert soil and cold spring nights.

For the most part, industrial, extractive America has wandered out of the area. But the state of Wyoming hopes to attract this decade's Marilyn Monroe of economic development -- the \$4.4 billion, 52-mile circumference super collider -- to the Red Desert. The proposed site for the collider overlaps Union's beached whale.

However, the chance of larger states or of the Mandarin elite that run the nation's high-energy physics establishment allowing the collider to be located in Wyoming are as close to zero as anything can be.

Although there are no large-scale threats today, the area is no trackless desert. Where graders haven't scraped the ground bare for makeshift roads, the land is cut by the numerous 'two-tracks', which are as useful to those who know them as the graded roads.

The withdrawal of development doesn't mean the Red Desert is being left to itself. The armies of sheep have receded, but in many places their permits and places on the land have been taken over by cattle. The graders, dozers and helicopters have been replaced by ORVs -- fleets of four-wheeled vehicles which cut tracks into the shallow bodies of water which dot

the desert, buzz along the riparian zones, and achieve their highest use in pursuit of desert elk.

So the Red Desert is a roaded, graded, drilled, scarred land. Nevertheless, it is far wilder and more deserving of the term "wilderness" than many areas which technically qualify for that designation. Its wildness comes from its size, from the small imprint roads and two-tracks and even Union's pits make on the land, and from the presence of the ubiquitous, curious, fleet antelope and bands of wild horses.

Much less obvious forms of life are indicated by the squadrons of raptors -- after a while, even a golden eagle gets only a glance. The raptors live off the area's populations of mice, voles, ground squirrels, prairie dogs and other burrowing creatures. In 1969, even a blackfooted ferret was sighted on the Red Desert.

The region is largely unfenced -- one can walk almost from Lander in central Wyoming, on the northeast flank of the Wind River Range, into northern Colorado without climbing a fence. The sense of open, unbounded space is reinforced by the drama played out minute by minute in the sky. Wherever you move on that plain, you are at the center of a ring of storm clouds dumping rain on some distant area.

It is both exciting and wise to watch those clouds. If one approaches, it is best to take a road or

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One of the open pits where Minerals Exploration mined uranium

Dear friends,



High Country News

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Tom Bell
Editor Emeritus

Ed Marston
Publisher

Betsy Marston
Editor

Judy Moffatt
Development

Rocky Barker
Craig Bigler
Katharine Collins
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Regional Bureaus

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Change in Idaho

In the last issue, we introduced Pat Ford as the new Idaho microbureau, but warned that he might take the summer off to help negotiate an Idaho wilderness bill. This week, we introduce his summer replacement:

Rocky Barker is energy and conservation reporter at the *Idaho Post-Register* in Idaho Falls. Before coming to Idaho Falls two years ago, he spent 12 years with a small daily in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. He has a degree in environmental studies from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, is a faithful reader of *HCN*, and says he is pleased to substitute for, and report on, Pat Ford while he negotiates Idaho's next large chunk of wilderness.

Savory is OK

Allan Savory, the "grazing guru" and subject of two stories (*HCN*, 4/27/87) is up and about after a harrowing nighttime attack in mid-April. While camping with an 11-person training group in the Santa Fe National Forest, three men carrying weapons barged in, demanded beer, bullied several of the foreign visitors and then sprayed bullets from a high-powered rifle as they left. Allan Savory was in a sleeping bag by the fire and ducked as the bullets came his way, says his wife, Jody, but shots shattered his shoulder blade and clavicle, requiring four operations over a two-week period.

Mrs. Savory says the area of forest near Cuba, New Mexico, has become dangerous because local people consider the public land theirs to control. She does not have high hopes that her husband's attacker will be identified and arrested. "The police say they are afraid to go up there." After a sheriff gave one local a speeding ticket, she adds, "the sheriff was shot."

Since the shooting, many people have called Allan Savory's Center for Holistic Resource Management in Albuquerque to agree that this was the final straw. "It's got to stop," says Jody Savory.

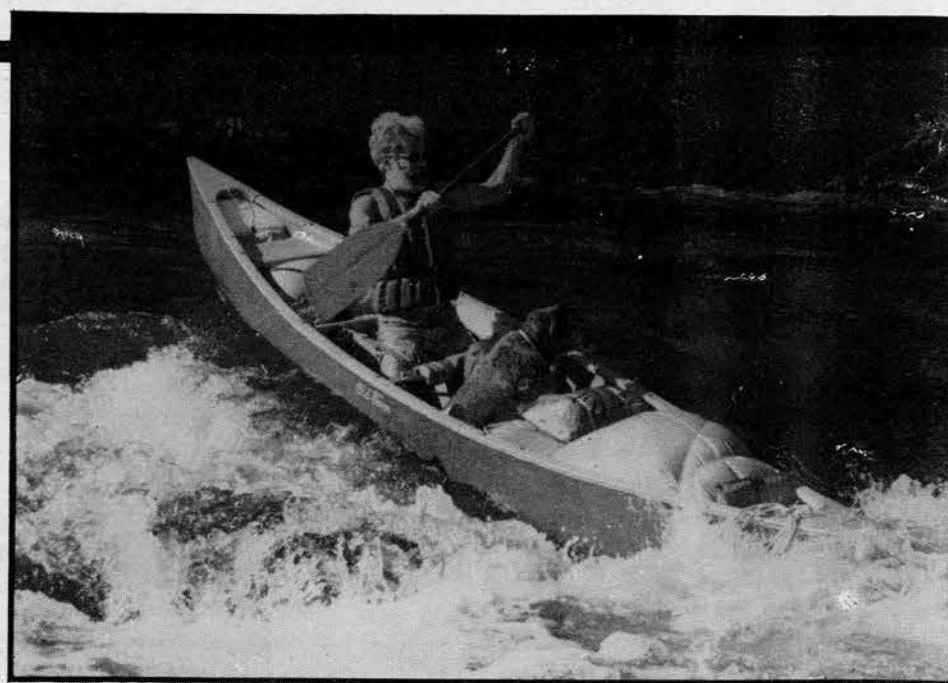
A \$900 investment

You may remember that while we were publishing last fall's water issues, we lamented the many stories that were backed up, awaiting space in the paper. The surplus made for a relaxing winter, but this issue we hit the wall -- no major story was on hand. We had planned long ago to mail this *HCN* as a second sample to 3000 or so lapsed subscribers, but decided that "a special issue on frou frou" was no way to recover them for the paper.

Then, in the last day or so of production, the editorial situation began to change, and we debated whether to invest \$900 in sending it to former subscribers. The decision was made for us when a four-page manuscript arrived from Moab resident Craig Bigler, our new microbureau in Utah.

We had asked Craig to write both an overview of southeastern Utah and a brief biography of himself for *Dear Friends*. He combined the two in the following first-person article. It doesn't fit precisely in *Dear Friends*, but it certainly belongs in *High Country News*:

Craig Bigler



Craig Bigler

I have spent 20 years as a government employee or contractor analyzing, formulating and coordinating rural development policies. At the same time, I have observed the social and economic issues of the part of the country I love as much as life itself -- the Canyon Country of the Colorado Plateau. The following observations are part self-introduction, but their real purpose is to describe America's last frontier.

Canyon Country, a.k.a., southeastern Utah, was the last region south of the Canadian border to be tamed by white people. Isolated from the great cattle drives and from the first wave of Mormon colonization by the rugged canyons of the Colorado, Green and San Juan rivers, it was a refuge for Navajos who had escaped Kit Carson's infamous roundup. It was also occupied by nomadic bands of Utes who refused to stay in their designated place until "the last of the Indian wars" culminated with the killing of Paiute chieftain Posey in 1923.

The country had been explored much earlier by fur trappers and before that by Spanish traders -- the Old Spanish Trail winds from Santa Fe around the La Sal Mountains, across the Colorado River at Moab, and on to California -- but it wasn't until 1880 that Mormons established a permanent settlement. Their choice of Bluff, on the flood plain of the San Juan River, for their settlement site was as ill-fated as their choice of route.

The route, the "Hole in the Rock" blasted down through cliffs rising above the Colorado River, and partially inundated by Lake Powell, subjected them to extreme hardship and sacrifice. This still sets their descendants apart from other Utah Mormons.

At the same time, independent cattlemen, prospectors, fugitives from justice and other rugged individualists moved into the area seeking their fortunes. The great cattle empires and the range wars described by Zane Grey and portrayed by John Wayne were set in Canyon Country.

The cattle and sheep empires did exist, posses were mounted to chase rustlers, and battles were fought over grazing lands until the 1930s, when the Federal Grazing Service permit system was established. Then, instead of fighting among themselves, the stockmen fought the federal government.

John Wayne to the contrary, very few people were actually killed. Most violence was committed against property, usually cattle and sheep, rather than against persons. (See *Horse Thief Ranch, An Oral History*,

by H. Michael Behrendt, for fascinating accounts of violence and cattle rustling.)

Failed efforts

Initially, the settlers of Bluff attempted to follow the pastoral pattern that had worked so well for Mormon colonies in the rest of Utah, southern Idaho, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada. Floods, infertile soil, unaccommodating Indians, and bickering among factions borne of Hole in the Rock turmoil forced the church to allow colonizers to return home or to move on. Some, like my father's mother and her parents, returned to Nephi, Utah. Others moved north a few miles to settle the towns of Blanding and Monticello.

Different factions moved to different towns and the tensions among them remain to this day. These tensions were exacerbated by the arrival of a new faction chased out of Mexico by Pancho Villa, descendants of polygamists who moved to Mexico when polygamy was outlawed in Utah. A few Mormons trickled into Moab from north and south, but Mormons remain a minority here.

The settlers of Blanding and Monticello forsook the communal farming and stock raising attempted in Bluff and adopted the large-scale ranching approach of the cattlemen who got there before them. By the time they quit fighting among themselves and joined forces against the federal government, there was little to differentiate between Mormon and gentile stockmen.

By the time of environmental legislation and the creation of Canyonlands National Park in the 1960s, the descendants, whether genetic or spiritual, of these tamers of the last frontier had come to believe more in the rugged individualistic heritage of John Wayne than in the cooperative heritage of their grandfathers. My first encounter with people of this nature came in the town of Escalante in Garfield County.

In spring 1971, my duties in the Utah State Planning Coordinator's Office were expanding to include environmental affairs as well as economic development. I went to a hearing in Escalante called by the Division of Water Resources to discuss disposition of several thousand acre-feet of Escalante River water. The division wanted to hold rights to this water until a project to develop it could be economically justified.

The townsfolk were adamant.

(Continued on page 11)

WESTERN ROUNDUP

A plume of gasoline seeps through Moab

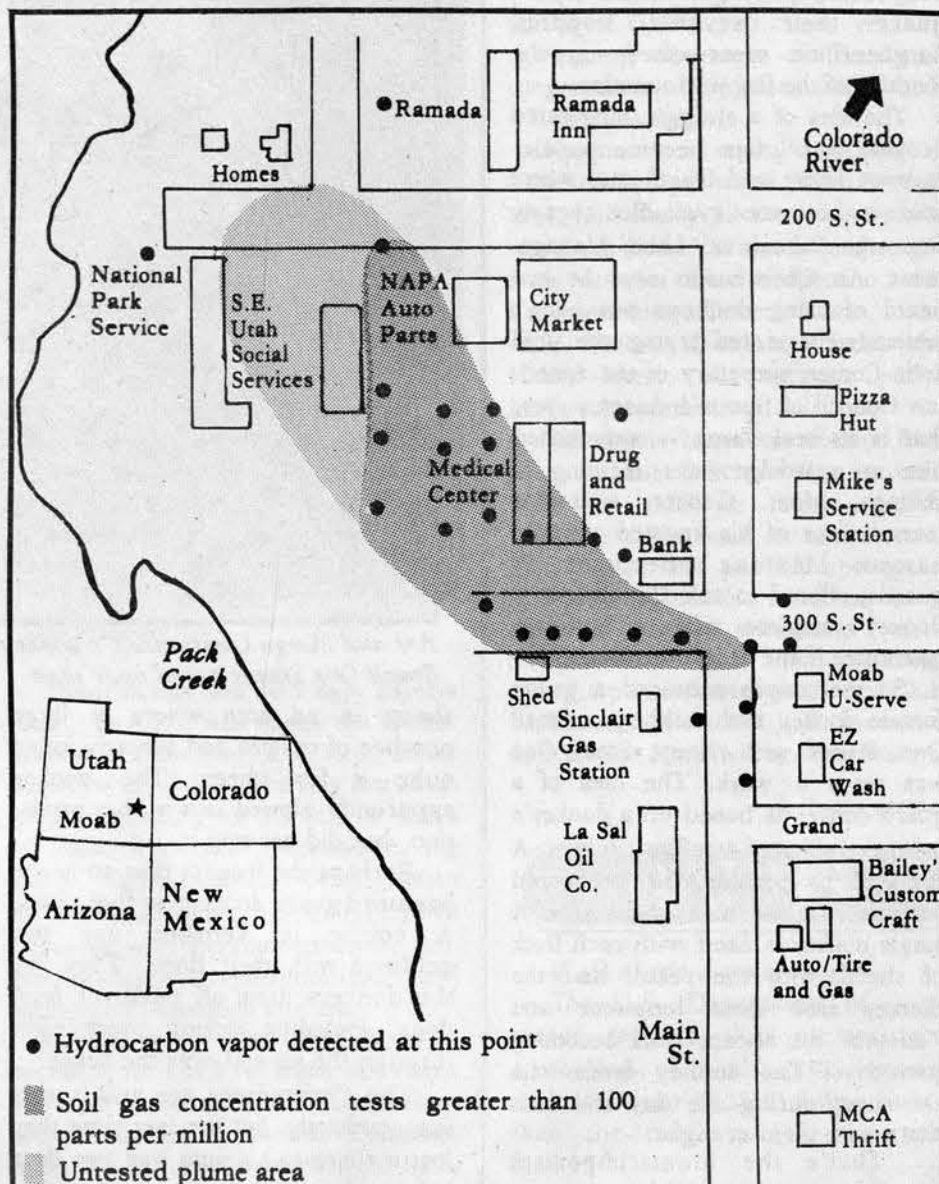
A seven-acre plume of underground gasoline is moving under the town of Moab in southeastern Utah. The plume is apparently 22 feet down in sandy soil and covers the groundwater to a depth of 3 1/4 inches. No one knows if an underground gasoline storage tank continues to leak.

According to Mike Holmes, an on-scene coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency, a series of test holes point to more than one gas station as the source. Under federal law, those businesses can be required to pay for the cleanup, either through cooperative agreement or litigation. This can take time and bureaucratic haggling, Holmes says.

In the meantime, vapors from the gas plume must be kept away from people inside a medical center, drug store, two homes, National Park Service offices and a social services building, Holmes says. An analysis by the federal Centers for Disease Control in April found unacceptable levels of benzene, a known carcinogen, and toluene and xylene, suspected carcinogens. All were in vapor emanating from the plume. Holmes said the centers directed his agency to take action to "mitigate the vapors as soon as possible."

Jim Adamson, a state sanitarian who covers the Moab area, says the strong petroleum odors were first noted in 1985, in the medical center and drug store. "People told me they had headaches and were nauseated, and some would actually vomit from the smells."

But when hot weather arrived, Adamson says, people ran swamp coolers continually and the odors were blown away. It was not until November 1986 at 4:30 p.m. that "someone saw the vapors coming out of an electrical outlet," he says. Adamson called the EPA's Region 8 in Denver and an "environmental response team" in December 1986



Gas plume in Moab, Utah

Source: EPA

sank a series of bore holes through the streets into Moab's groundwater.

What they found was that the plume is fast-moving and is now close to Pack Creek, which is less than three miles from the Colorado River. As soon as any petroleum products are detected in the creek the EPA can clean up that water immediately under the provisions of the Clean Water Act. Superfund law, however, bars any cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks of gas.

That cleanup is funded through a \$5 billion trust fund administered by the EPA, which gives grants to states in need.

Adamson estimates the groundwater cleanup at several million dollars. According to Holmes, however, the vapor diversion work will not be costly as it usually involves building trenches along the water table to draw vapors from the soil.

--Betsy Marston

Montana faces dry summer

Summer has arrived early in Montana -- a situation that could create problems for the state's irrigators and recreationists in the upcoming months.

According to the Soil Conservation Service, five straight months of below-normal precipitation and record-high spring temperatures have decimated the state's snowpack. Phil Farnes, of the SCS's Bozeman office, said more than half of the agency's 240 snow survey sites were at record lows for water content when measured around May 1.

Montana's south-central, central and southwest regions are the hardest hit, as they came in with snowpack levels just 20 to 30 percent of normal. The average snowpack statewide is 36 percent and snow levels are at normal early- or mid-June levels.

Already some state conservation districts are encouraging water rationing, while the state's hard-hit agriculture industry braces for irrigation water shortages. Many of the state's large streams crested by early May, some a month earlier than normal.

Trout were dying in overheated pools in southern Montana this month as the Ruby River ran dry from farmers taking out water for crops. The hot and dry spring prompted farmers to start irrigating earlier than usual, and state and federal agencies conserved more water in reservoirs. The result was a dry mile in the Ruby River and record lows elsewhere. While the trout struggled, grasshoppers thrived. The worst areas of infestation were in the central and eastern parts of the state, and state officials predicted that about one-third of the counties in Montana would be seriously affected this summer.

The state's fire season is also early this year. According to the Forest Service's regional office in Missoula, 66 forest fires, an abnormally high amount for early spring, had burned in the region by mid-May. The early fire season has prompted agency officials to request special funding to bring on some fire crews a month early.

--Bruce Farling

HOTLINE

A classic confrontation

A clash between new and old in the rural West is taking place over the nomination by Gov. Roy Romer of a former college professor for Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture. The nominee is Peter Decker, 52, a Ridgway area rancher. In his first career, he taught at Duke University, earned a PhD in history at Columbia University, wrote several books, was a campaign staff member for the late Sen. Robert Kennedy and was an AP correspondent in Vietnam. He has spent the last 12 years running his 500-head cow/calf operation. He has also headed the Ouray County Planning Commission and the Ouray County Democratic Party. Those credentials are too much for the ranching community. Colorado Farm Bureau manager Buford Rice told the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel*, "You can't get a feel for rural Colorado in a few years." Rice and others say there are too many issues Decker won't have a good feel for, like water rights, land conservation, chemical use and public lands. That is probably code for their distrust of Decker's positions on issues such as in-stream flow and wilderness water rights. A vote on the nomination by the state Senate was expected the week of June 1. If approved, he will replace Tim Schultz, named by Romer to head the Department of Local Affairs.

BARBS

It sounds as if the thirteen original colonies have forgotten what freedom is all about.

The Free Weekly of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, warns its readers that if they plan to travel east, "Think twice before you pack a piece." The paper said that in some states you can't even drive around with a .30-30 in your pickup gun rack. And "get caught with a .357 under your seat and you'll spend part of your vacation in the Cross-bars Hotel."

HOTLINE

Wilderness insensitivity

In September last year national forest crews thinning timber cut several acres inside the boundaries of Montana's Mission Mountain Wilderness. Using chain saws in a wilderness is a direct violation of the 1964 Wilderness Act, but the trespass went unreported for four months. The Montana regional forester then received a letter of inquiry from Sen. John Melcher, D-Mont. During the investigation, the Forest Service said the cutting was an honest mistake that occurred on an unmarked boundary. Montana environmentalists responded that the cuts and delayed reaction showed the Forest Service is more concerned with cutting trees than protecting wilderness. A forest review committee concluded that there is an agency problem of insensitivity toward wilderness. Committee member Jim Dolan, who is also with the Forest Service regional office in Missoula, said the agency is taking the matter seriously and that in the future, forests "must regard wilder-

ness boundaries like private property boundary lines."

Leaking cyanide

Since last October cyanide has been leaking beneath a heap leach pad at Wharf Resource's surface gold mine in South Dakota's Black Hills. At one point last fall, cyanide escaped at a rate of 11 gallons per hour (HCN, 4/13/87). The information was made public May 21 at a hearing where the South Dakota Board of Minerals and Environment voted to allow Wharf to double the size of its operation. Apparently, only Wharf and state officials knew about the leak. It is not known whether any groundwater was contaminated. Wharf opponents say the operation should be suspended instead of expanded. A minerals and environment board member said, "Denying the permit is only going to deny someone monetarily." The board put off a decision when it agreed not to approve any new mining applications for six months. During this time new mining regulations will be investigated.

HOTLINE

Thieves
on the range

Cattle rustling is still a problem in the West. Three men in southern Utah this month were caught rustling by a lone hiker and a National Park Service ranger. The thieves didn't steal a herd with a gang of bandits on horseback; instead they shot two 45-day-old calves and put the meat in the freezer. Cattle rustling is so serious an offense that it is a third-degree felony in Utah, punishable by up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fines. The Utah Cattlemen's Association and Utah Farm Bureau gave the informant in this case a \$400 reward -- equal to the calves' value. Farm Bureau director Stan Bell told the *Deseret News* that his organization will award up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of rustlers. "The livestock industry is depressed enough," he says. "The last thing we need is losing calves to two-footed predators."

BARBS

Could be they're both right. United Airlines is criticizing Continental for its poor service, and Continental is charging that United gouges its customers, according to the *Denver Post*.

Coyotes get a kick out of this shepherd

Montanans Marge and Art Christensen are trying a new method to protect their sheep from coyotes. They recently bought a donkey to guard their several hundred Targhee/Finn cross sheep in the foothills of the Ruby Mountains.

The idea of a shaggy, long-eared "coyote cure" has become popular in west Texas and Oklahoma, where wild burros are available cheaply from the Bureau of Land Management. Art Christensen says he had heard of using donkeys but hadn't seriously considered trying one until John Conter, secretary of the American Council of Spotted Asses -- yes, that is its real name -- approached him at a woolgrowers meeting in Billings, Mont. Conter, who has loaned some of his spotted asses to eastern Montana sheepmen as guards, offered to sell Christensen a donkey complete with a buy-back guarantee if she didn't work out.

So the couple acquired a young female donkey and dubbed it Small One. Raised with sheep, Small One was ready to work. The idea of a guard donkey is based on a donkey's natural dislike of strange canines. A female, or jennet, is preferred because it is the most protective. A single donkey is used with each flock of sheep, with the result that the donkey soon gets lonesome and "adopts" the sheep, thus becoming protective. The donkey feeds with the sheep during the day and beds down with them at night.

"That's the most important part," says Art. "Most coyotes attack at night and the donkey is right there to chase them off."

According to Conter, the donkeys rarely kill a coyote but they will bray, chase after and strike at them with their front feet. That can be enough to discourage the coyotes.

How effective are guard donkeys? Their use is so new, research is sparse. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at San Angelo did a "study" with one donkey. In this case, they turned a donkey out with

Judith E. Strom



Art and Marge Christensen's donkey Small One stands guard over their

sheep in an area where a large number of coyotes had already killed quite a few sheep. The donkey apparently slowed down the predation but did not stop it.

Perhaps the longest that someone has used guard donkeys is five years. A couple in Vermont use two geldings with their flock. They say the donkeys drive off packs of feral dogs, including kicking them right through the air and over the fence.

The Christensens are still speaking cautiously, but the last time they lost a sheep to a coyote was two days before Small One went to work. "The coyotes are still there," says Marge. "The government trapper was out after the last snow and he saw plenty of tracks. We still hear them yipping too, but so far they haven't bothered our sheep."

Small One is proving her value in other ways. Art says they went to gather the sheep and bring them back to the ranch. The donkey was nowhere to be seen. They figured she was off eating somewhere instead of staying with the flock as

sheep in the Ruby Mountains near Dillon, Montana

she should. After separating out the ewes they wanted, they took the rest of the sheep back to the pasture. Then the couple spotted Small One off on a hillside. When they went to investigate they found her standing over a sick ewe that had aborted her lambs. Marge says the donkey doubled in value in their estimation after the incident.

A few days later her value doubled again. On a routine check of the sheep, Small One was again absent. A look around soon revealed her standing guard over a ewe with a newborn lamb.

For more information about guard donkeys write: American Council of Spotted Asses, John Conter, Secretary, 2216 Fairview Place, Billings, MT 59102; American Donkey and Mule Society, Betsy Hutchins, Secretary, 2901 N. Elm, Denton, TX 76201.

--Judith E. Strom

The writer is a freelancer in Whitehall, Montana.

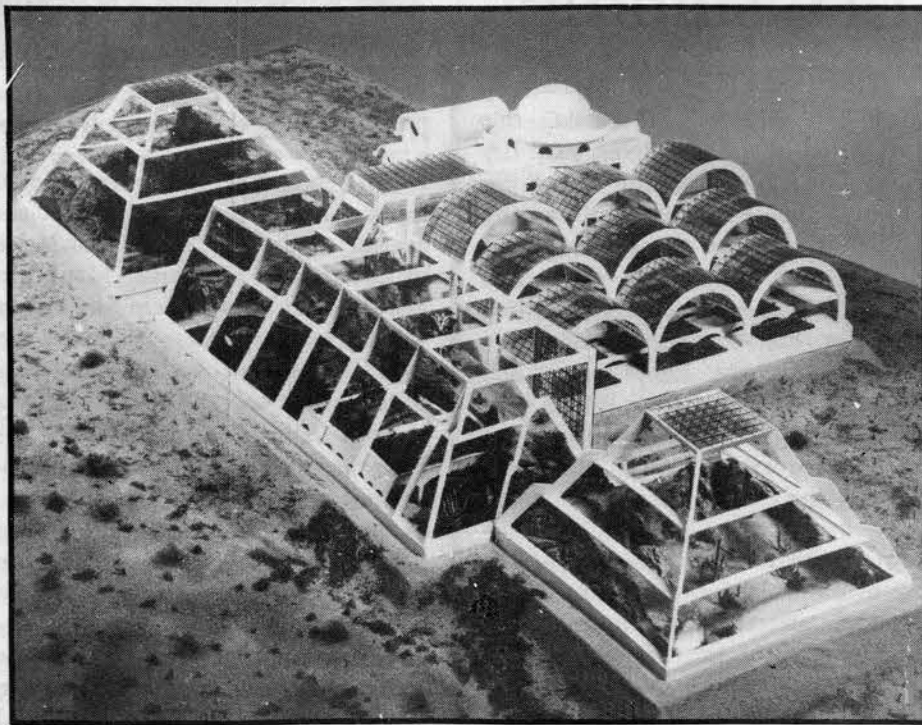
A port-a-planet is under construction in Arizona

In the mountains an hour's drive north of Tucson, Ariz., a new world is under construction.

Called Biosphere II, the glass and steel complex will enclose three acres of rainforest, savannah grassland, marsh, "ocean," cropland and living quarters for eight people. Now being selected, the eight are expected to move into the biosphere near the town of Oracle in late 1989. If all goes as planned, the human participants will not emerge until two years later.

This is more than a greenhouse with human inhabitants. Tony Burgess, an ecologist at Tucson's Desert Laboratory who is designing the desert for the project, says the structure's atmosphere will be sealed from outside air. Vents and fans powered by the sun will ensure breezes over a living coral reef and wind-pollinated plants, Burgess says, but all living things will have to depend on resources generated within the enclosure.

What's the purpose of all this? Kathy Dyhr, who handles media relations for the project, says that the international corporation backing Biosphere has two goals. One is to



Biosphere II model

create a prototype of a Mars colony, and the other is to mirror and better understand the earth. Dyhr says investors in the privately funded project hope someday to sell the working concept to recoup their \$30 million investment.

Meanwhile, biologists and ecologists responsible for designing the various ecosystems are doing basic research on Biosphere I -- the earth.

An example, Burgess says, is the hummingbird research of Dr. Peter Warshall, a Tucson ecologist, writer

and environmental activist responsible for designing the savannah and choosing the vertebrates to go into Biosphere II.

An aesthetically pleasing feature of the enclosure, hummingbirds are also pollinators of many of the plants. But hummingbirds can't get along without food, so Warshall and other planners are making sure there are appropriate flowers blooming somewhere in the enclosure. And there must be enough flowers blooming for the birds all year.

Reaction to the Biosphere II Project as a prototype for a Mars colony varies, Burgess says. Some are thrilled with the idea of spreading or preserving the Earth's biosphere by sending it out into the cosmos. Others are repulsed and argue that the money and effort would be better spent figuring out the real Earth. Burgess says still others hope that this might replace research on space weapons.

Regardless of the reactions, Burgess says, "We're already learning a lot about the earth from this project."

--Mary Moran

Idaho closes in on a wild lands decision

Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus has begun working on boundaries for the wilderness areas he will propose for national designation later this summer. Meanwhile, state and national conservationists wrestle with what strategy they will take into the Idaho wilderness negotiations.

Two national leaders offered different paths at the Idaho Conservation League spring conference earlier this month. David Foreman, a founder and spokesman for Earth First!, said that environmentalists should not make it easy for politicians to deal away the state's more than nine million acres of roadless forest lands.

"Politicians are supposed to be the problem solvers," said Foreman, of Tucson, Ariz. "They won't respect us if we wimp out and make too many compromises early on."

In contrast, Andy Wiessner, former aide to retired Rep. John Sieberling, D-Ohio, said conservationists should take an active role in helping Gov. Andrus resolve the wilderness issue.

"You couldn't possibly be in better hands than with your own governor," said Wiessner, who has worked on every wilderness bill approved in the past decade. "I think if the governor would like to do a wilderness bill, your job is to get with him." Foreman disagreed.

"Don't trust Cecil Andrus as far as you can throw him," he said.

Andrus said he would conduct field tours of areas with which he is not familiar. But he does not plan to do a statewide tour of proposed wilderness areas or hold any hearings on his plan.

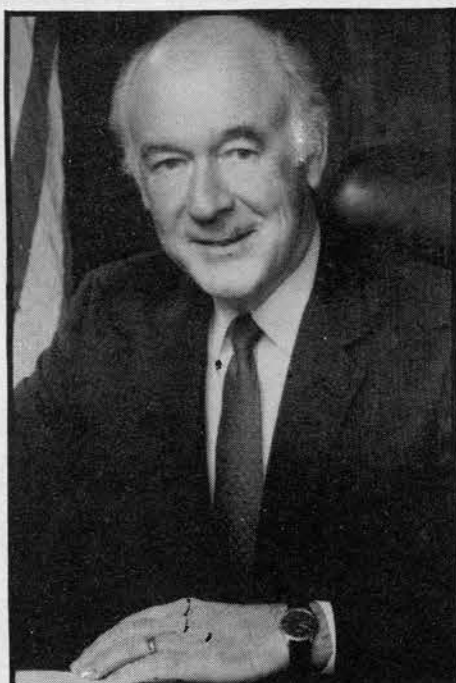
Proposed wilderness areas in the Boise and Payette national forests and the White Cloud Mountains were some of the areas Andrus said he already knows much about. But the Pioneer Mountains near Sun Valley and several eastern Idaho roadless areas are on his list for closer looks.

"I've got to get into the Lemhis again," Andrus said. "The Palisades I haven't been in for a long time. I haven't been in Mink Creek."

Controversy over the proposed North Lemhi wilderness, near Leadore, has revolved around logging. Oil and gas exploration is the major issue in the Palisades north of Swan Valley, while debate over motorized use of the Mink Creek roadless area near Pocatello has pitted off-road vehicle users against environmentalists.

"I've got to get into the controversy," Andrus said of Mink Creek. He said off-road riders have a "legitimate claim" that the area already has roads. Andrus said he has been going over maps of proposed wilderness areas and preparing for field work this summer. He said previous debate and knowledge of many areas makes some of his decisions "cut and dried."

Idaho has more than four million acres of designated wilderness in its national forests. Another nine million acres of roadless lands cannot be developed until either a wilderness bill is approved by Congress or all 10 national forest plans are completed. Andrus said he has been deluged with letters from friends asking him to "let us show our special place." He said if he did it for conservationists, he would have to do it for all groups.



Cecil Andrus

Andrus has met with Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., who chairs the House Interior Committee, and Rep. Peter Kostmayer, D-Pa., who has introduced a bill calling for 3.9 million acres of Idaho wilderness. Meanwhile, the other major player, Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, has quietly been meeting with environmentalists, timber industry representatives and motorized recreation interests.

"McClure is just waiting on a signal from Cecil on when he wants to start moving," said Carl Haywood, McClure's natural resources aide. Andrus said he expects to have

a proposal together by late summer or fall. Then he plans to negotiate with McClure on a wilderness package. Once they have reached agreement, the rest of the Idaho congressional delegation and others will be consulted.

Kostmayer is trying to arrange a field tour of potential Idaho wilderness, said Cindy Jackson, his natural resources aide. "We're hoping to get some sort of field inspection with Representative (Bruce) Vento," she said. Vento, D-Minn., chairs the House Interior Committee's public lands subcommittee.

ICL public lands coordinator Rick Johnson caused a mild flap in April when he said he feared Andrus would turn his back on environmental interests. He publicly apologized to Andrus. Johnson, who has been the ICL's main wilderness voice, announced recently that he was taking a position with the Sierra Club in Seattle. Former ICL executive director Pat Ford will replace him.

--Rocky Barker

BARBS

Well, that's a great relief.

The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that an accurate accounting puts the 1986 federal trade deficit at \$153.33 billion rather than the more widely reported \$166.33 billion.

HOTLINE



**Income up,
net worth
down**

Nearly two-thirds of the North Dakotans who gave up farming in the early 1980s believe they are now better off financially, and 83 percent have found new jobs according to a recent North Dakota State University survey. The survey polled 169 farmers who quit the land since 1980, 94 percent for financial reasons. Many respondents said the one thing they would do differently is get out sooner, survey director Arlen Leholm told AP. The median income for the former farmers is \$18,000, compared to \$15,400 for those who stayed on the land. But the net worth of the former farmers averages only \$11,000 while their farming colleagues had a median net worth of \$164,000. The survey also found about 30 percent of the ex-farmers now live at the poverty level.

Nebraska wants another straw in the Platte

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. -- The Platte River -- once literally a mile wide and an inch deep -- would run dry if all the diversions proposed for it and its Rocky Mountain-fed tributaries were constructed.

That may be why two municipal supply projects, Two Forks Reservoir near Denver, Colo., and Deer Creek Reservoir near Casper, Wyo., have generated so much controversy.

Downstream in Nebraska, however, another project appears to be moving more quietly on a fast track toward congressional authorization.

That project is the Bureau of Reclamation's Prairie Bend Unit. Prairie Bend would divert up to 102,000 acre-feet annually from the Platte to "recharge" over-exploited groundwater supplies and sustain irrigated corn production in central Nebraska.

The twist is that Prairie Bend is also being promoted as a benefit to the same endangered birds that have blocked other Platte River water projects.

Prairie Bend would draw water from the Big Bend stretch of the Platte. Millions of ducks and geese and the world's largest concentration of sandhill cranes use Big Bend, as well as the federally protected endangered whooping crane, least tern and bald eagle.

The Bureau of Reclamation contends it can provide flows necessary to maintain river habitat for the endangered birds by building a 250,000-acre-foot storage reservoir to release water during low-flow periods.

Environmentalists are skeptical.



Endangered Least Tern

Kenneth Strom, manager of Audubon Society's Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte near Kearney, Neb., agrees that some appealing features are wrapped up in the Prairie Bend proposals, including acquisition of wildlife habitat along the Platte and instream flow protection.

But he objects to the need for a tradeoff. "All those aspects which have positive benefits for wildlife could be done totally independent of the Prairie Bend diversion," he says.

Diversions have already reduced the Platte to one-third its historic size and flow, he points out. One result is that dense vegetation has sprung up in the river channel, destroying the open habitat favored by cranes, terns and waterfowl. One conservation group has even resorted to using tree-eating machinery to restore habitat.

"Any further removal of water from the Platte River is only going to cause further deterioration of the habitat," Strom says.

The bureau's claims of wildlife benefits are weakened by its failure so far to complete detailed biological and hydrological studies. Meanwhile, the bureau has asked for \$500,000 in fiscal year 1988 to proceed with pre-construction studies.

Despite a zero-funding request in the Reagan budget, the appropriation seems likely because of Nebraska Rep. Virginia Smith's support. Smith, a Republican who serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, has vowed to "convince the administration they're wrong." Smith says she will proceed with an authorization request as soon as possible.

For more information about the project, write Robert Kulz, Bureau of Reclamation, 203 W. Second St., Grand Island, NE 68801.

--Kathryn Ziewitz

The writer is program coordinator for the Nebraska Water Education Project, 808 P St., Ste. 210E, Lincoln, NE 68508.

HOTLINE

Alar-gic

The Natural Resources Defense Council and Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group, recently sued the EPA to ban the pesticide daminozide. Usually known by the trade name Alar, the chemical is used on 40 percent of all apples grown in the U.S. to produce a deeper red color and prolong shelf life. Since 1977, however, the Environmental Protection Agency has suspected that Alar residues left in apples are carcinogenic. In 1985, the EPA proposed a ban on Alar until manufacturer Uniroyal could produce conclusive evidence that it was safe. The agency later reversed its opinion and asked Uniroyal to conduct further tests, the results of which will not be available until 1991. Because the public health is still at risk, says the New York-based Natural Resources Defense Council, the chemical should be banned now. Last year several nationwide food companies and supermarkets voluntarily boycotted apples treated with Alar (HCN, 11/10/86).



Along the Colorado River in Grand Junction, Colorado

Reclaiming the Colorado

One of the most polluted stretches of the Colorado River, an eight-mile segment that runs through downtown Grand Junction, Colo., was recently rafted by Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth, and a host of others interested in reclaiming the riverfront. The Grand Junction City Council and local environmental groups hope to create a greenbelt along the river complete with parks, picnic areas, trails, and raft and canoe areas. The problem is coordination of nearly 30 different entities that share jurisdiction of the river and its banks. Wirth, a Democrat and an avid river runner, organized the networking raft trip, and the only rules were that staff from federal, state, county and city agencies had to ride in separate boats, no family members could ride together, and only one reporter per boat. Grand Junction officials said they had tried and failed in the past to coordinate river restoration and that the project has to happen now or never. The city wants to come up with a master plan before next fall when the Energy Department begins a \$65-million effort to remove uranium tailings that lie along the river bank in town.

Access versus salmon in central Idaho

It's one of the more embattled stretches of Forest Service road in central Idaho: a 33-mile route that borders the South Fork of the Salmon River.

The road has produced piles of paperwork for the Forest Service and is the focus of a growing conflict between several environmental groups and some 40 residents of the backcountry town of Yellow Pine. Environmentalists want to close the South Fork Road; "Yellow Piners," as they're known in central Idaho, want to drive it year-round. They say the road is their best winter route to the outside world -- the Valley County seat of Cascade, about 60 miles away.

A trail of South Fork road decisions, appeals and petitions reaches from Idaho's Payette National Forest headquarters in McCall to Washington, D.C., and could ultimately lead to federal court.

On one side, organizations including The Wilderness Society, Idaho Conservation League and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission argue that winter use of the road puts too much sediment into the South Fork, harasses big game animals and threatens the Rocky Mountain grey wolf, believed to inhabit the drainage.

Yellow Piners say road-related silt problems and threats to wildlife are exaggerated to keep them from driving the road in winter. Some residents believe the Forest Service has a hidden agenda for wiping their town off the map.

"I think eventually the Forest Service would like to close all the roads and get rid of all the people in Yellow Pine so they could make this a wilderness," says Mary Greenway, a long-time Yellow Piner.

In the middle of the controversy is the Forest Service; a solution is supposed to emerge this spring in its forest plan for the Payette.

Environmentalists say they are adamant about protecting the South Fork, once the source of Idaho's largest salmon run. The stream was actually buried by logging-road runoff in the winter of 1964-1965, when by Forest Service estimates at least 120,000 tons of sediment descended on its spawning beds. In some places the stream bottom was covered with several feet of silt, and a summer chinook production of 50,000 fish was all but annihilated.

The sand-choked South Fork then became a symbol to conservationists of a worst-case scenario. It proved what a combination of bad management practices -- more than 600 miles of logging roads had been built in steep, unstable terrain -- and bad luck -- higher-than-average precipitation fell in 1964-1964 -- can do to a river.

"It's the kind of disaster that can happen when agencies don't know what they're doing," says David Simmonds, a member of the Idaho Conservation League.

The South Fork is gradually returning to its pre-1965 condition, but groups concerned about re-establishing chinook runs want to stop any activity that would bring more silt to the stream. They say that includes plowing and driving the sandy South Fork Road in winter, a practice estimated to push about 126 tons of additional sediment into the river.

Alice Kostela



Yellow Pine residents Lafe and Emma Cox

"The road has been clearly identified as the single largest point source of sediment for the South Fork and it's a point source we can do something about," Simmonds says.

But Yellow Pine residents say no. "If it's possible to provide winter access in here, why not?" asks John Hanson, the Yellow Pine school's only teacher. "This community is suffering this indignity for sheer lack of size," Hanson says. "If there were 1,000 people in here that road wouldn't be closed."

Historically, the road has been allowed to snow shut since it was constructed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Snowmobiles and airplanes were Yellow Piners' only available means of winter transportation until last year, when the route was first plowed open to allow vehicular travel. But that one winter of opportunity convinced Yellow Pine residents that the road must remain open.

Winter travel between Yellow Pine and Cascade was inadvertently made possible by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Valley County Road Department. In 1983, Fish and Game signed a contract with the county to plow the Warm Lake Highway from Cascade to a salmon-smolt release site on the South Fork, practically at the highway's junction with the disputed road. The five-year agreement requires only that the highway be opened to the South Fork by April 7 every year for fish planting; the county gets \$20,000 annually to do the job.

On its own, the county decided to routinely plow Warm Lake Highway

all winter, and continues to do so despite a request from Fish and Game Director Jerry Conley that it halt routine plowing. Road department supervisor Duane Peterson says it's cheaper to plow the road after every snowstorm than to break through deep drifts in the spring. But this regular plowing opened a major link in a Yellow Pine-to-Cascade route.

In 1984, the battle for the South Fork Road began, with an appeal of its traditional winter closure by Yellow Pine residents Jim and Gerri Adkins.

During the easy winter of 1984-1985, the road was being driven anyway. Four-wheel drive vehicles broke a trail to the Warm Lake Highway, and it was clear something would have to be done. The Forest Service response was a "limited opening" the following year, contracting with the county to plow the road and allowing traffic on it two days a week. But during the 10-week closure period, a Forest Service camera at the Yellow Pine end of the road snapped pictures of 216 violations of the limited opening. According to a Forest Service report, the route was used eight out of every 10 days between Jan. 3 and March 15, 1986.

When Forest Service officials announced they would open the road again this winter, several environmental groups appealed the decision. After a complex process of new decisions and new appeals, and a flurry of petitions by Yellow Piners, the road was closed for the winter on Jan. 12. Two more appeals followed,

(Continued on page 7)

Missouri River flows into Supreme Court

Forty-three years after their shotgun marriage in the Pick-Sloan Plan, the responsibilities of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation for the Missouri River Basin will be partially untangled. The untangling will come at the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court, which has agreed to hear a case deciding the jurisdiction of the Bureau, a part of the Department of Interior, over the river.

The 1944 Pick-Sloan marriage was officiated over by the U.S. Congress. Its Flood Control Act of 1944 merged the Corps' ideas for flood control and hydroelectricity with the Bureau's ideas for irrigation.

Today, the Bureau and the Corps are used to the arrangement. But the upper basin states of Montana, North and South Dakota are at war with the lower basin states of Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri, and the two federal agencies have been dragged into the conflict. Differing water needs is one reason for the interstate feuding. Don Ohnstad, acting director for the Missouri Basin States Association, says:

"Upstream states are interested in withdrawing river flows for water development while downstream states mostly want instream flows maintained."

The upper basin looks to the Bureau for help with water development. But thus far, Interior's authority has been interpreted to extend only to irrigation projects. The Corps oversees the other water allocations, including flood control, navigation (which means barge traffic in the lower basin), hydropower, recreation and industrial and domestic uses.

The Reagan Administration will ask the court to expand Interior's water marketing power. Opposing that request are Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri.

The eventual decision could affect water withdrawals' use from the six Missouri River reservoirs in the Dakotas and Montana whose capacity exceeds 69 million acre-feet. Oahe and Garrison are the largest reservoirs -- each holds over 22 million acre-feet.

Water withdrawals for use in the upper basin have never been substantial. For a variety of reasons, upper basin states have been unable to tap the reservoirs. Large Bureau irrigation projects, such as Garrison in North Dakota and Oahe in South Dakota, have met stubborn local opposition. In fact, lower basin states divert more water for industrial and municipal uses than upper basin states.

Army Corps of Engineers



Missouri River

Upper basin anger is fueled by more than the unequal diversions. The three states and Indian tribes lost over one million acres of valuable bottomlands to Missouri River reservoirs. Several small communities had to relocate. Indian tribes saw their best reservation lands inundated.

This was done to protect large cities and farms in downstream states from flooding. Most of the cheap hydroelectricity generated by the dams leaves the upper basin for Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska. But other than a notable new fishery, the Dakotas have realized little economic benefit from the dams and reservoirs. Leaders in those states say such benefits are deserved and overdue.

The upper basin hopes the case before the Supreme Court is a route to increased use of the Missouri's waters. South Dakota supports expansion of Interior's powers and has filed an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case. Harold Deering of the state's attorney general's office says, "We see Interior's Bureau of Reclamation as being especially sensitive to our water needs."

South Dakota is the impetus behind the case, thanks to a controversial proposal that would use water in the Oahe Reservoir for industrial purposes. The struggle began in 1982, when former Interior Secretary James Watt authorized a water sale from Oahe to Energy Transportation Systems Inc. (ETSI). Under the contract, 50,000 acre-feet

of water from Oahe would be piped each year to Wyoming, where it would be used to slurry coal to southern states. The 50-year contract was worth \$1.4 billion to South Dakota.

Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and a half dozen railroads sued Interior, challenging its authority to approve the diversion. The states said ETSI would set a precedent for additional diversions that they feared would eventually leave their barges aground. The railroads feared the loss of traffic to the slurry pipeline.

In May 1985, U.S. District Court Judge Warren K. Urbom ruled Interior's contract approval illegal. The federal government appealed, but the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Judge Urbom. It said authority over reservoir water sales for industrial and other non-reclamation purposes belongs to the Corps, not the Bureau.

South Dakota officials criticize the decision. Assistant Attorney General Dan Doyle says the case "needs to be decided by the Supreme Court because even in the judiciary system, there appears to be an upstream-downstream split."

But Iowa Deputy Attorney General Elizabeth Osenbaugh approves: "In the Act, Congress expressly said that only the Corps can market (Missouri River) water for industrial purposes."

Bureau and Corps officials say no feud exists between them and that both are eager to see Interior's authority defined. The Corps appears to now have authority to market non-irrigation water in the upper basin. But Corps official John Velehradsky says, "We don't have a uniform service charge policy for the Missouri River reservoirs."

The lack of the policy goes back to the disagreement between the basins. Velehradsky says, "No uniform definition has been agreed to by the states regarding what constitutes natural flows in the river basin. Without such agreements, he continues, it will be difficult to determine each state's right to river flows."

Given the lack of an interstate compact dividing the waters, as exists on the Colorado River, it is not clear that even a Supreme Court decision on the Bureau's powers in the basin will help resolve the stalemate.

--Alice Koskela

HOTLINE

North Platte is gassed

The Conoco gasoline pipeline that burst March 31 causing \$550,000 in damages to fish in the North Platte River near Casper, Wyo., and to a local water treatment facility, was last tested 24 years ago when the line was built. That information emerged after Conoco recently issued a report to the federal government about the spill. The company said it was caused by a "failed pipe" but did not elaborate further. Laboratory tests on the pipe were to have been included in the report but were not completed in time, according to company officials. In the report, the company reduced its estimate of the gasoline spilled from 105,000 gallons to 91,224 gallons, reports the Casper *Star-Tribune*.

Developers' bill vetoed

A controversial bill that would have given Colorado land developers a three-year protection period from citizen opposition was vetoed in May by Democratic Gov. Roy Romer. The bill was the most heavily lobbied of the legislative session, says the Colorado Environmental Lobby, because it required protesting voters or local governments to pay all of a developer's expenses up to the time a project was challenged. Most county officials said the bill would add delays and costs to any building proposal. The bill was sponsored by Republican state representatives from two of Colorado's fastest growing cities, Colorado Springs and Aurora.



Walkin' Jim Stoltz

Trailing along

The songwriter Walkin' Jim Stoltz will lead a 340-mile trek in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness this summer. The Montana Wilderness Association is organizing the walk to dramatize the need for adding 600,000 acres to the 1.5 million-acre complex that includes the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness areas. Stoltz lives in Big Sky, Mont., and tours the country singing in coffeehouses and at colleges. Limited groups of six to eight people will hike portions of the trail with Stoltz, who will be the only person to hike the entire route. To reserve your place on the July 15-Aug. 15 trip, write Montana Wilderness Association, P.O. Box 635, Helena, MT 59624 or call 406/443-7350.

--Peter Carrels

Access...

(Continued from page 6)

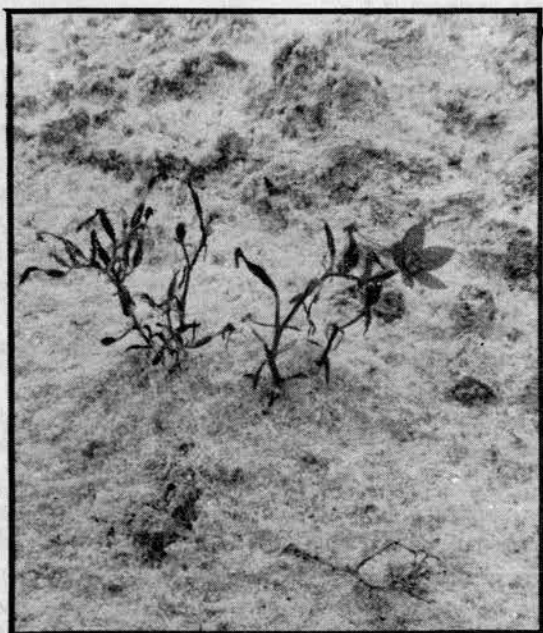
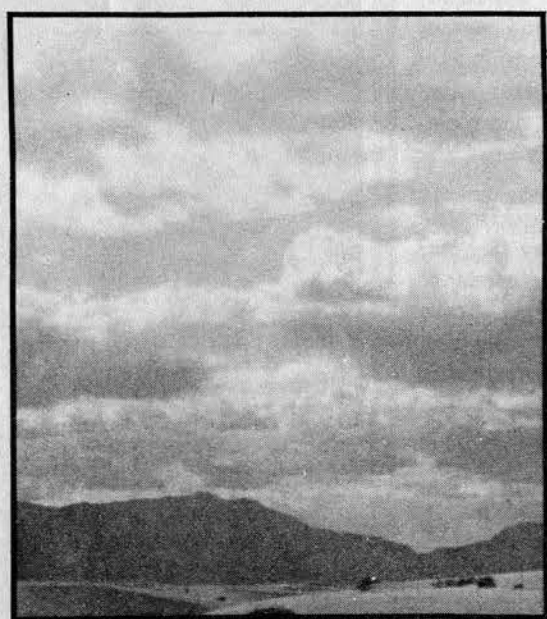
one from either side of the issue, but the road stayed closed. On March 16 it was plowed open to allow limited evening travel.

In the meantime, a South Fork Road petition drive led by Yellow Pine residents Lefe and Emma Cox has gathered more than 1,000 signatures from throughout central Idaho. The petitioners want Valley County to take over jurisdiction of the South Fork Road, and provide year-round access to Yellow Pine. The petition is now in the hands of Idaho Sen. James McClure, R.

According to the Payette's draft

forest plan, the preferred alternative for the South Fork Road is a \$5 million re-surfacing project. While Yellow Pines and several mining companies with operations in the drainage like this idea, environmentalists are set against it.

Idaho Conservation League's Simmonds says the best solution to the controversy is the construction of another route from the Warm Lake Highway to Yellow Pine. This proposal, included in the Payette's draft forest plan, would build 10 miles of new road to an existing route, and "put the South Fork Road to bed permanently," Simmonds says.



WHITE ON W

by Bob Willging

It is a therapeutic visit, born of a bad day with too many stoplights, heat and haze. I head the truck east, dog by my side, through the pass and across the deserted desert valley of the missile range. Stopping at a Border Patrol roadblock: "Are you an American citizen?" they ask. I say yes, but I'm not too sure about the dog.

A half-mile and there is the entrance gate to White Sands National Monument. Sun hanging low, the dollar entrance fee is forgiven and tourists are few.

White Sands fascinates me. It has ever since I learned of its existence as a kid growing up in a big city on a lake in Illinois, but dreaming of Western places. I saw the picture in a magazine: dunes of white gypsum sands, a gigantic beach with no ocean in sight, no real water for miles. I wondered if such a place was real.

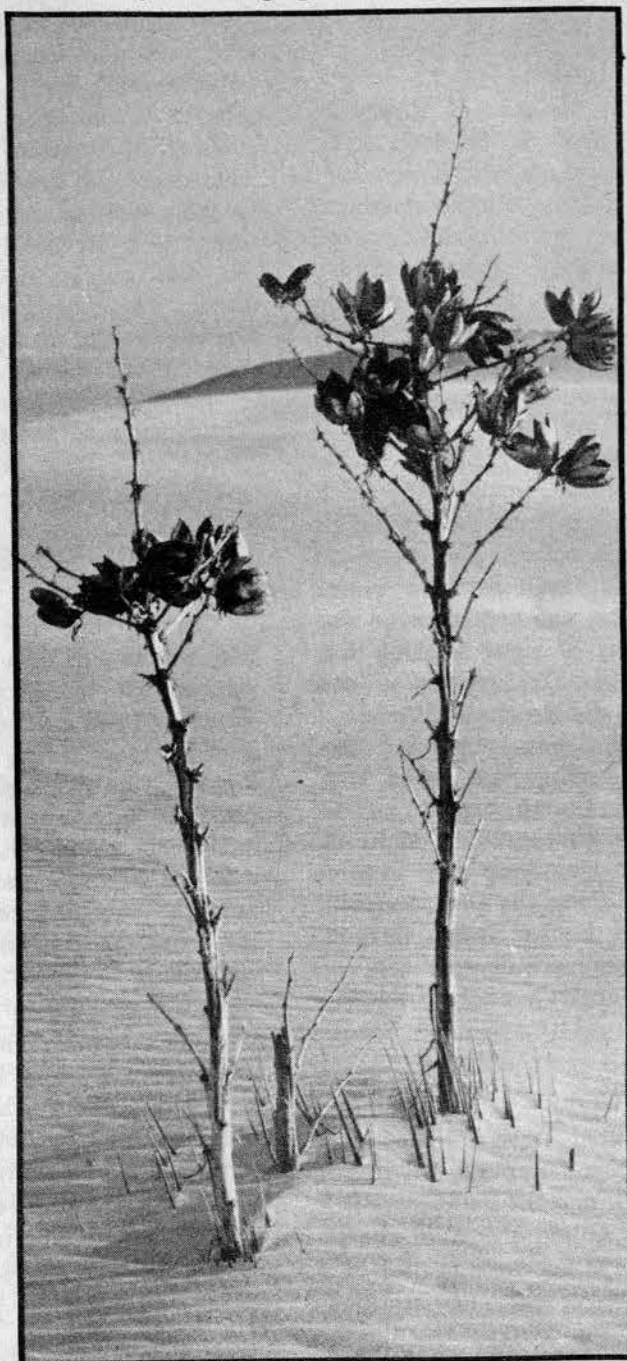
White Sands did exist, I learned, when I found myself living in the southern New Mexico city of Las Cruces, 50 miles from the monument. Driving the park road now, and anticipating that point where the pavement gives way to hard-packed sand, I have the illusion I'm about to hit snow, not sand.

But it is sand when I leave behind a world of order and people. I park the truck on the edge of the road next to a garbage can, and the black dog and I tumble out. The first order of business is to remove shoes and socks. The sand is a firm, singular substrate with no hidden dangers from broken glass or miscellaneous garbage. There is verbena and primrose, tiny tracks of earless lizards. There is complete freedom, unlimited space.

The dog feels it and heads west in an unbroken run, down a dune, up a dune, down a dune, up a dune.

Suddenly he is a small black speck, looking back at me from a distant white peak. He hops and

PHOTOS by Bob Willging



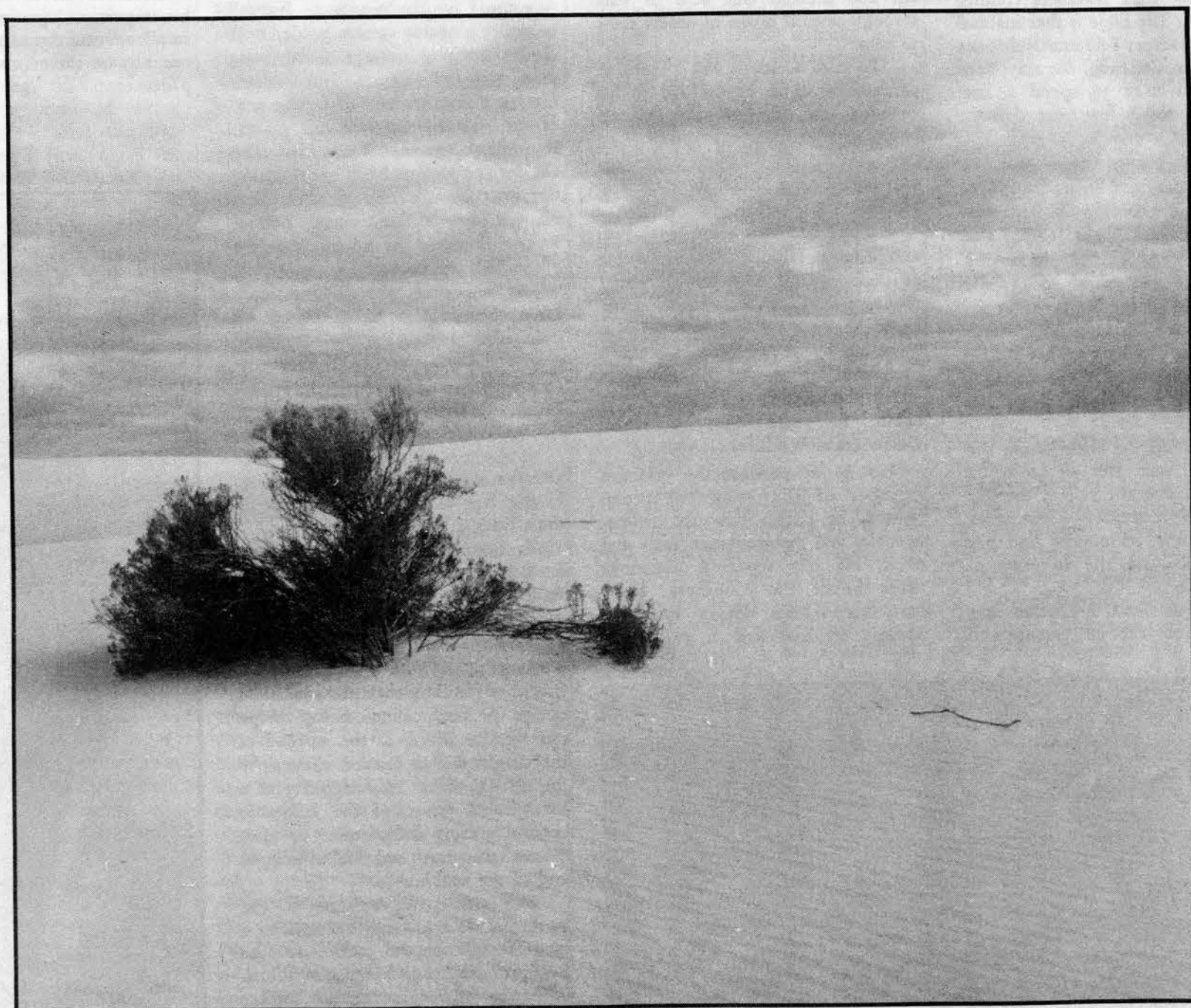
H I T E

jumps, alone on the sand, and chases a stick from a dried and broken yucca. I need to run, too, and drop my shoes as I leave in the opposite direction from the dog. In a flash he is with me, then past me. Finally I collapse on the side of a tall and steep dune, digging my feet in.

Lingering clouds from a just-passed thunderstorm plague the distant, liver-colored peaks of a mountain range. The air is cool, the sand still damp. For a few seconds the sun is balanced on the mountain and sends color through the clouds -- blues and purples, some pink and a strange hue of green. Streaks of gray-silver hover in the valley. Everything -- clouds, the sky, mist -- contrasts with the white of the sand. I close my eyes, feel the last of the sun, and dream white.

□

Bob Willging is a wildlife research assistant at New Mexico State University.



Red Desert...

(Continued from page 1)

two-track in an opposite direction. Roads are likely to be both slick, thanks to bentonite, and bottomless. Wet roads quickly turn the knobby tires into smooth, mud-coated cylinders, capable of spinning at very high rates without affecting the speed or direction of a vehicle in the slightest. Experienced Red Desert travellers carry two shovels: one for digging out the vehicle, the second for scraping mud off the first.

A new boom would bring back the seismic explorers, the helicopters, and the drillers. The increased traffic would result in more bullet holes in signs, and perhaps even the hauling away of signs marking the location of the Tri-Territory -- the point where the Northwest Territory, the land that was to become the Louisiana Purchase and what was then Mexico came together. The Tri-Territory was almost in sight of travellers making their way toward South Pass along the Oregon Trail, just north of the Red Desert. Oregon Buttes, a landmark on that trip, is one of the desert's prominent landmarks.

The Red Desert, then, is a fascinating place, both for itself and for its history. But between now and the next energy boom, there is not much chance of a horde of out-of-state tourists descending on the place. Last month, Wyoming opened with great fanfare a new tourist information center on Interstate-80 near Evanston. It is designed to snare travellers coming out of Utah. The hope is that instead of zooming across I-80 into Nebraska or down into Colorado, the travellers will be convinced to spend a few extra days, and a few extra dollars, in Wyoming.

When Katharine Collins, a Rock Springs resident and writer for HCN, stopped at the center on her way home from Salt Lake City, she found it crowded with people looking at brochures and maps. Meanwhile the person in charge of the center sat reading a book. After waiting vainly to see if he would notice her desire for help, she asked: "I've heard a lot about the Red Desert. What can you tell me?"

To his credit, he knew where the Red Desert was. But all he could suggest was that she stop at the gift shop at Little America -- a vast array of motel rooms, restaurants and gift shops on I-80 -- and the old prison at Rawlins.

On the one hand, it appears that Wyoming spent a lot on concrete and

then forgot that economies are built on human beings. On the other hand, it may be that we have blown the cover of an Earth First! operative who is doing more to keep tourists out of Wyoming's sensitive places than all of Audubon's lobbyists. Not that there is much advantage in keeping tourists out while the locals drive their ORVs all over it. It may be that publicizing the place to attract non-consumptive visitors is the only way to bring the well-organized ORVers to heel.

For now, however, it would be irresponsible to attract many people to the area. It is largely unsigned, and the lone traveller in a two-wheel-drive car had best stay on its edges, where a few strokes can bring him to shore.

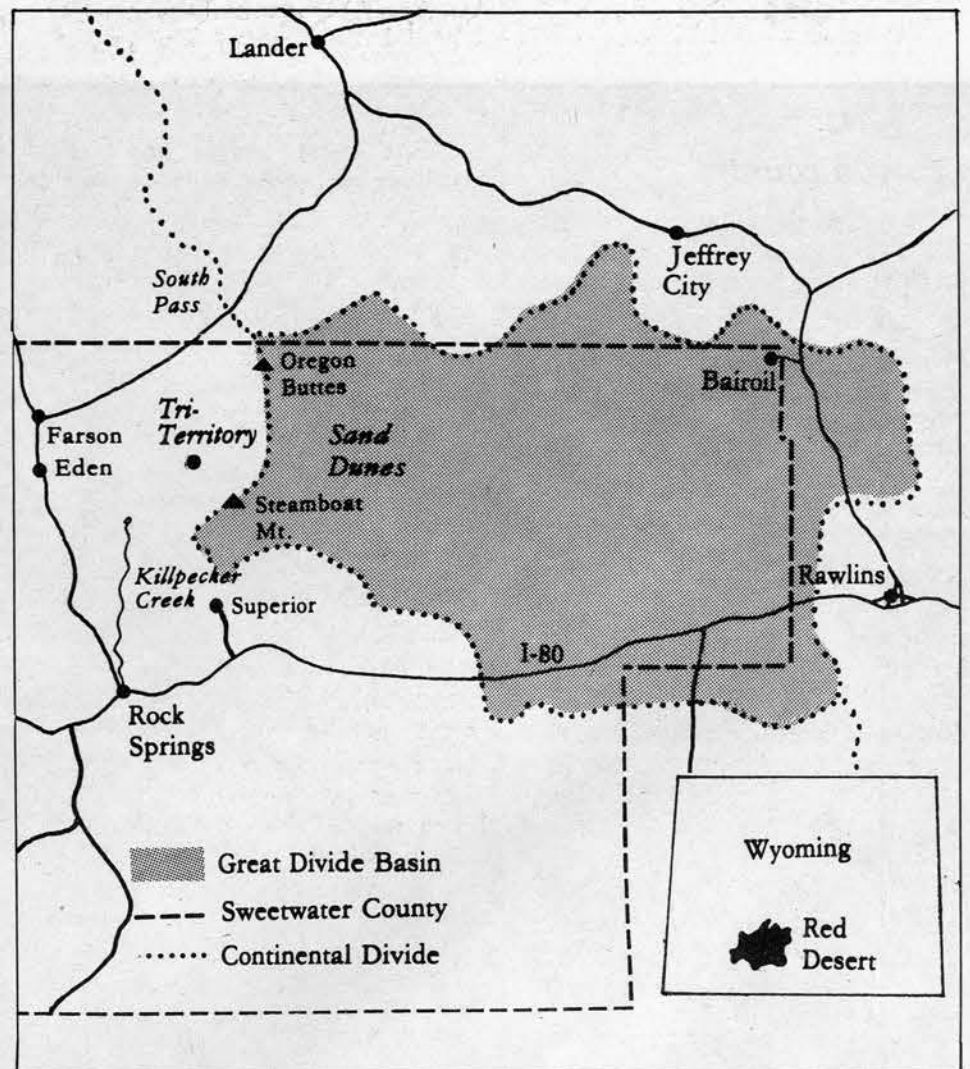
Our trip into the desert in late May was as part of a caravan of four vehicles led by Dick Randall, the Wyoming-Utah-Colorado staff member for Defenders of Wildlife. Randall, who lives in Rock Springs, came to environmentalism by an interesting route. He spent years with the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, trapping and poisoning coyotes on the ground and shotgunning them from the air.

He estimates that he killed 3,000 to 5,000 coyotes; in return, the coyotes several times came within an inch of killing him. The most serious near-miss was a mid-air collision between his plane and one herding wild horses. Randall suffered injuries that left him 70 percent disabled. But he got off easy compared with the two pilots: one was killed and one was brain-damaged. In a second accident, his pilot hit dead air, causing the plane to crash. This time, Randall got off easy -- he was cut and bruised but able to walk through several miles of desert snow to help.

The third accident was a cinch. A particularly agile coyote led to his shooting the tip of the plane's propeller with a shotgun pellet. The pilot set the craft down before the unbalanced prop shook the engine to pieces.

Randall had two stints with Fish and Wildlife. He quit first to become an outfitter, and then returned after the Leopold Report was issued because he believed it would lead to more intelligent attempts to manage predators. He found the old ways still in the saddle, and when he quit again, 14 years ago, he joined Defenders of Wildlife.

He is a particularly effective member of that national group because he knows how the federal agencies and the stockmen work and think. He has testified numerous times before the Congress. Some have resented his efforts. The Rock Springs resident lost a dog when



RED DESERT

someone tossed poison into his backyard, and he was given a very cold shoulder by those who were once his friends and co-workers.

Randall was raised on a farm in eastern Wyoming, and that, combined with his memory of his own coyote-hunting days, makes him less ideological and aggressive than he might otherwise be. When we drove into the Killpecker Dunes area -- named by the pioneers, Randall said, for a nearby stream loaded with desire-dampening nitrates -- a young man was unloading a four-wheeler from a pickup trailer. While the rest of us sent if-looks-could-kill glares, Randall ambled over for a visit. The ORV, he told us later, was setting out on a 20-mile ride to see desert elk. If he is like many others, Randall guessed, he would chase the elk, which are now calving.

At one time, the ORV could have chased large bands of elk all over the dunes themselves. And many did. As a result, the elk retreated to more remote locations. Four-wheeled recreationists now have to travel to pursue their sport.

If the test of a person is tenacity and the willingness to pursue a cause in the face of adversity and defeat, then Randall is a hero. The June 18, 1976, issue of HCN carried a long, front-page, first person article by Randall reprinted from the *Defenders* magazine for April 1976.

The article was an account of his long love affair with the Red Desert. It told of his early encounter with the dunes elk herd, of their being driven out by the ORVs, of the spread of the dunes due to erosion caused by the ORVs, of his 1969 sighting of a blackfooted ferret, of the effort to control grazing and remove or alter fences that trap and kill antelope, and of the wild horses.

The article was written as the boom hit the area, and it contained a plea for people to write to the Bureau of Land Management to influence an environmental impact statement the agency was preparing. Randall and others working to protect the Red Desert won some

victories. But development and the vandalizing ORVs won more. Randall knows the area as well as anyone, but on our trip even he was confused by the welter of new roads leading to pipelines, oil and gas wells, abandoned drill pads and old prospecting sites.

Most people would have surrendered the field, discouraged. Not Randall. Courteous and understated, he expresses gratitude that two, small several-thousand-acre wild areas may be carved out for wilderness protection in the vast desert.

--Ed Marston



Maze of off-road vehicle tracks



Dick Randall and his cocker spaniel, Missy

Dear friends,

(Continued from page 2)

Canyon country

They knew for certain that state government, for the benefit of northern Utahns, was robbing them of their right to use this water for private gain. I was shocked by the vituperation. Speaker after speaker railed against the Wasatch Front (urban Utah) conspiracy that decades ago had forced their ancestors to leave the good life in the Salt Lake Valley to colonize the Colorado Plateau before anyone else got to it.

The same sentences quoted scripture and uttered vile, personal accusations. They said their ancestors had been forced to leave the Garden of Eden to struggle against nature and government for a subsistence living. Worse yet, their children could not find work at home. They were forced to seek their fortunes in the Garden now transformed to sin city, i.e., Salt Lake City, a place known to be crawling with hippies, drug pushers and environmentalists.

The state bureaucrats bravely tolerated the vitriol, and explained that someday a public works project on the Escalante drainage would be built, and then everything would be OK. The water was now filling Lake Powell (an uncontroversial good), and it could be used to generate fortune for all by cooling the steam of the Kaiparowits Power Plant.

The only person who confronted the good townsfolk was a young man who was (and still was when I visited him in 1984) curator of the fledgling Anasazi State Park Museum in nearby Boulder. He admonished them for their hypocrisy, noting that the most pious among them had, in their own homes, proudly exhibited their new "poaching" rifles and their artifact collections, most of which were more extensive than the museum's collection. I have seen the file of letters written to Utah officials by the good townsfolk accusing this man of every outrage and demanding his dismissal. Credit is due the people who did not cave in and fire him.

There are more stories to tell, but suffice it to say that four years later I resigned my position of deputy state planning coordinator after being portrayed in a *New York Times* article as the only state official who cared about threats to the integrity of the Colorado Plateau from a proposed string of power plants. I then spent eight years, five of them in Washington, D.C., helping people find ways to work together for the common good of the community -- in the name of rural economic development.

The value of open space

I learned the value of open space. It is impossible to get away from people if you live in Washington, D.C., or any other large eastern city. Open space is there, but it is privately owned -- Keep Out, Private Property. Public parks are like crowded zoos. The so-called wilderness areas in West Virginia are busier and more trampled than Arches or Mesa Verde National Parks. Ocean beaches? They're privately owned or so jammed full of people you can't find room to put down a blanket. I finally found

isolation, if not open space, by canoeing on the rivers.

But most people can't find isolation or personal space outside their urban apartments or suburban yards. Over 80 percent of the nation's population lives within 50 miles of the shore of an ocean, a Great Lake, or the Gulf of Mexico.

However, millions want wilderness to turn to when they can afford it. Often the need to communicate with nature or to experience an outdoor adventure drives them to our country whether they can afford it or not. An astounding circumstance revealed by my sojourn in D.C. was that people who rarely if ever visit the West value and enjoy it by vicariously reliving the adventures of their children who become river guides, ski bums, backpackers or whatever.

There is a tremendously large constituency for natural open space in the only readily accessible part of the country still held in common. Whether the few thousands of us who live here like it or not, they have ways of insisting that we share it with them. And the only way they know for certain that we won't overwhelm our land is to have some of it designated wilderness.

Call it tyranny of the majority if you want. Many do. But the greatest good to the greatest number of people is still a criterion for allocating public resources. The pleasure of tens of millions of people potentially derivable from Colorado Plateau wilderness lands far outweighs the personal economic gain potentially available to the few who would exploit them.

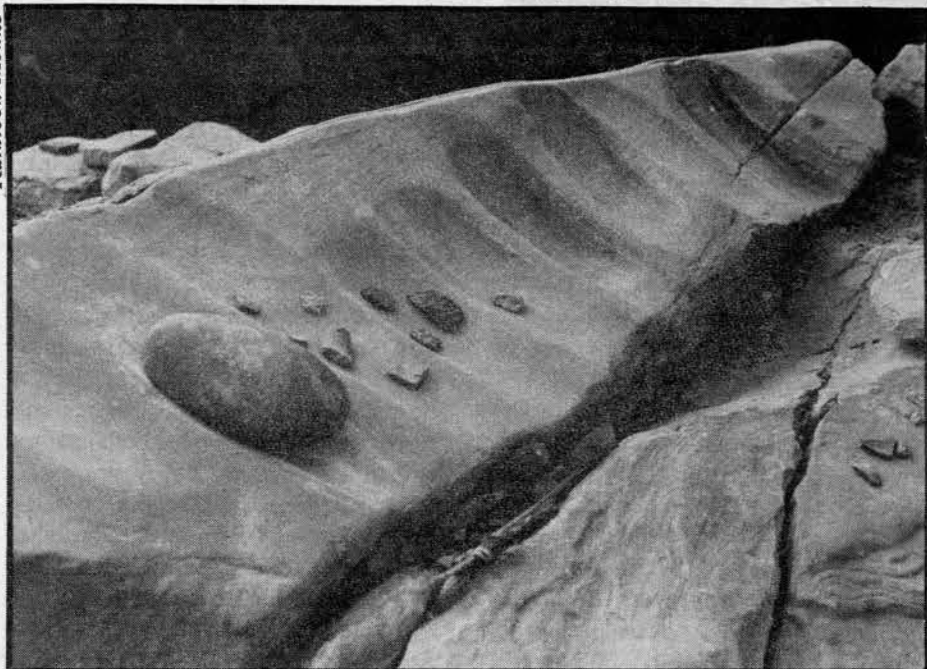
After my eye-opening years in the East, I returned to Salt Lake in 1984, and then moved to Moab in 1985. Under joint sponsorship of the federal and Utah governments, my job was to help Moab/Grand County (almost all of the county's population lives in or near Moab) find ways to recover from the collapse of the mining and oil drilling economies.

How could I help achieve economic development? The same isolation that makes this the last frontier means any traditional development is impossible. The obvious answer leaps out of the preceding paragraphs. Offer visitors something they deeply want but cannot get anywhere else and make them pay. As you have guessed, this is not acceptable to people who feel they have been deprived, by a conspiracy, of the industrial development that has made the rest of America rich.

Bulldozing wilderness

To no small degree, these people resent the canyons and natural conditions that set our country apart from industrial regions. On July 4, 1980, for example, members of the Grand County Commission drove bulldozers into some select canyons near Moab amid great hoopla and celebration. These canyons and others were soon removed from the BLM wilderness study list. They were, quite obviously, no longer roadless. More recently, San Juan County Commissioner Cal Black obtained a resolution from the National Public Lands Advisory Board, of which he is a member, protesting the designation of *any* wilderness on BLM lands in Utah. The Utah Legislature dutifully passed

Kathleen Menke



Anasazi grinding stone and pottery sherds, Utah

a similar resolution. The new governor, Norman Bangerter, issued a corresponding statement, from which he later demurred.

In 1985, however, I found at least one favorable situation in Moab. River runners and other outdoor adventure outfitters were among the few business people who were doing well. Community leaders, in particular Sam Taylor, publisher of the weekly *Moab Times-Independent*, and County Commission Chairman Jimmie Walker, a crusty uranium and arrowhead prospector, could see some light at the end of a tunnel. Although they believe that uranium mining will stage at least a partial comeback, they know the community has to welcome tourism and outdoor recreation if it is to be viable.

Understanding that antics like bulldozing WSAs and threats against environmentalists will eventually do more harm than good, Sam and Jimmie have worked hard to explain and to cajole their friends into accepting change. Unfortunately, much of what they gained was lost

last fall when federal agents, looking for illegal artifacts, ransacked the homes of prominent people.

A long scheduled public hearing on the BLM wilderness proposals was held in Moab the following evening. Any chance for reasonable discussion was gone. The room was divided, tensions were high. The new mayor of Blanding summed up the feelings of far too many when he warned environmentalists who dared venture into San Juan County that they had better come armed because they are, as in the days of old, targets of a vengeful population.

Friends who have worked hard and at social risk to overcome the divisions within our community assure me that the path to accommodation is still in place. It is just temporarily bent backwards. I'm skeptical, but trying hard to believe that it will prove possible to protect the land without stamping on the people.

--the staff

HOTLINE



Logging at a loss

A recent Wilderness Society report blasted the Forest Service for its plans to increase timber sales over the next 50 years by 72 percent. The conservation group says the logging will harm recreational opportunities and prove costly to taxpayers, who have paid an average of \$443 million a year for deficit timber-cuts since 1981. George Frampton, head of the Washington, D.C.-based group, says the cuts will bring substantial environmental damage, including the loss of wildlife habitat, silt in streams, erosion and scarred landscapes. The report will bring Forest Service officials up to Capitol Hill. AP says that Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., chairman of the agriculture, nutrition and forestry committee, will hold oversight hearings using the society's report as the "focal point." The report analyzes timber-cutting plans on 107 out of 122 national forests.

For a copy of the 100 page free report write Wilderness Society, 1400 I St., Washington, D.C., 20005 or call 202/842-3400.

Colorado duns Idarado

Colorado is still in U.S. District Court this month trying to collect \$49 million from a corporation charged with polluting two western Colorado counties. The state's case against Idarado Mining and its parent company, Newmont Mining Corp., is the first under the federal Superfund law to go to trial. For 43 years until 1978, Idarado mined gold and silver on Red Mountain, leaving behind mounds of wastes that include heavy metals such as lead, and organics such as PCBs. After a federal court ruled recently that Newmont was liable for air, water and soil contamination in Ouray and Mineral counties, the corporation challenged the state's \$49 million cleanup plan in court. The Idarado-Newmont case is one of seven suits begun by Colorado four years ago against alleged corporate polluters under provisions of Superfund. Two cases have been settled: Colorado reached agreement with Union Carbide, now Umetco, to clean up the closed uranium-mining town of Uravan and with ASARCO Inc. to clean up pollution at the Globeville cadmium smelter in Denver.

12-High Country News -- June 8, 1987

LETTERS

LO AND BEHOLD

Dear HCN,

I'd just about given HCN up when lo and behold -- a sane and honest article on HRM by Sam Bingham appears. Congratulations on treating your readers to a professional article on Holistic Resource Management.

After several emotional attacks on Allan Savory, including the one by Steve Johnson which appeared in the same issue, it's refreshing to find some down-to-earth journalism. It may interest your readers to know that while Steve boasts a vast amount of knowledge on HRM, he has yet to complete the one week course on HRM, even when offered to him free of charge.

Bobbie Holaday
Phoenix, Arizona

DEER WITHOUT CATTLE

Dear HCN,

Sam Bingham's "Allan Savory: Creator of a Socratic approach to land management," (HCN, 4/27/87) describes the Bear Creek area of Oregon as being "wall to wall sagebrush so poor in big game" that Hudson's Bay Company trappers almost starved there in 1825. He adds that 120 years of cattle grazing opened up the land considerably, creating better deer and elk habitat.

The Bear Creek area is just southeast of Prineville in the Crooked River region. Between 1825 and about 1870 there was little if any white occupation of the Prineville-Crooked River-Bear Creek region, and there certainly were no cows. Forty years after Ogden's first Hudson Bay brigade visited this vicinity, William McKay's U.S. Army Indian scouts pursued Paiute Indians wintering on the Crooked River. On Dec. 24, 1866, they killed a deer at the mouth of the Crooked River canyon. Two weeks later their horses were stampeded by wolves, and three weeks later a band of Warm Springs Indians arrived to hunt. By Jan. 16, 1867, this band left after having killed 48 deer in five days. On Jan. 26 McKay noted that his men "killed many deer." McKay's evidence suggests that between 1826 and 1867 there was a dramatic increase in the deer population in the Prineville region without any white influence. This conclusion is further supported by accounts of two market hunters who killed 120 deer on the Crooked River in the 1870s, just as white settlers were moving into central Oregon. (These accounts appear in Larry Rymon's Oregon State U. PhD thesis on wildlife conservation in Oregon. McKay's journal appeared in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Summer, 1978.)

Contrary to the impression Bingham conveys in his article, the evidence cited indicates good wildlife habitat in the Crooked River-Bear Creek region before the introduction of range cattle. There certainly was much sagebrush, but the large number of deer taken in the 1860s and 1870s in the region indicates this was not a factor which limited wildlife populations. Bingham's conclusion that 120 years of cattle grazing created better deer and elk habitat is of doubtful validity in the

Bear Creek-Crooked River area. It appears that Savory's theory that cattle can be used to improve wildlife habitat cannot be proved by early history.

Savory's "Management Model" includes fire as a range-management tool, but neither Johnson nor Bingham indicate the role it plays in his practice. Fire was probably the most important factor in maintaining grasslands of the West before Europeans arrived on the scene. Apparently they were both natural and Indian caused. Thirty years ago, Omer C. Stewart made a powerful case for the theory that aboriginal man maintained wildlife populations by manipulating the range with fire ("Fire as the First Great Force Employed by Man," in *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*.) Research into forest and brush fires in Oregon and California east side forests and ranges has indicated that new growth following fire is more palatable and nutritious, fire increases accessibility of game into dense brush areas, fire kills back brush grown too tall for game use, and that fire rejuvenates decadent shrubs. Fire also creates an ideal seedbed for broadcast seeding of herbaceous forage plants. (Jace R. Nelson, "Forest Fire and Big Game in the Pacific Northwest," *Proceedings of the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference*, No. 15). For what it is worth, William McKay, camped at Camp Steele near Prineville, noted "Prairies Burning" on March 15, 1867.

Range improvement through burning is fraught with obvious risks, but it would appear to be the method with the most promise since it has been used so often. Perhaps Mr. Savory and his critics should re-investigate a range improvement practice with thousands of years of R & D behind it. Today's changed conditions may make it unfeasible, but range improvement through broadcast burning should receive much more attention from the "establishment," from Savory and from Savory's environmentalist opponents than it has.

None of the above should reflect on the work of Earl McKinney in restoring the Bear Creek drainage to ecological health. The three days our school's senior class spent working with Earl and his colleagues on stabilizing the deeply gullied banks of another creek in May of 1982 were among the most rewarding experiences a group of our students ever had. We were all impressed by Earl's humor, ability, and concern for the land. His superiors and colleagues at that time were equally dedicated. We thought, and still think, that Earl and his cohorts had begun the vast job of putting the American West back together, and we were proud to be a part of it.

Dave Corkran
Portland, Oregon

The writer is a history teacher at the Catlin Gabel School in Portland.

HCN GLORIFIES RANCHING

Dear HCN,

On most issues, I think coverage by *High Country News* is excellent, but I once again take pen in hand to advocate ecological awareness and environmental responsibility on one certain issue.

Bob Greger



Although opposing views are sometimes printed, the readers of *High Country News* are often presented articles promoting (even glorifying) the Western ranching lifestyle and livestock grazing that comes with it, as once again in the centerfold article in the April 13 issue. No other lifestyle or occupation I can think of receives such exaltation and praise. At the end of this article, we are even treated to a long poem on the wonders of cattle and such.

Now I'd be the first to say that there's great appeal in the "simple life" of the Western rangelands. The vast panoramas, overwhelming quiet and solitude, direct experience with animals and plants, uncomplicated lifestyle -- all this and more has great appeal, especially to those of us surrounded by concrete and steel. I, too, would much rather mend fences and chase cattle around the landscape than sit in an office or fix cars all day. But, there are better and less destructive ways to experience Nature while making a living. There are also better and less destructive ways to produce cattle!

Almost every day of our lives we are bombarded with a barrage of images and ideas designed to reinforce our infatuation with the Great American Cowboy-Rancher Fantasy -- usually to sell this or that. Must we also read "Heroic Tales of the Old West" in the pages of *High Country News*?

It's ironic that we're now being sold the idea of grazing *our* public lands in the West with our own long-established, glorified fantasy of the livestock industry. We're willing to overlook the fact that livestock grazing has been and is more destructive to Western lands than any other single activity because we are wrapped up emotionally with our fantasy of this activity. We are willing to believe that physical proximity to Nature necessarily begets respect for Nature, ignoring the obvious overgrazing and destructive range "improvements" throughout most of the West. We are obsessed with our fantasy.

What's really more important --

the nostalgic romanticism of the ranching lifestyle or the environmental health of Western deserts, grasslands, brushlands, and forests?

Lynn Jacobs
Cottonwood, Arizona

A LA DIATRIBE

Dear HCN,

As a person who has been involved for several years with range management and its monitoring studies, I enjoyed the two articles on Allan Savory and his holistic range management.

Some comments: Steve Johnson is one of the latest who is striving to be second-to-none in stampeding livestock out of public-land range management "a la diatribe." However, to paraphrase Steve, anyone who investigates Steve Johnson's journalism must learn to deal with half-truths. For example, the range condition data for public lands shown in "Public Lands Statistics of 1985" is 4 percent excellent, 31 percent good, 42 percent fair, and 17 percent poor (6 percent unrated). Steve's cited figure of 71 percent of BLM lands in unsatisfactory condition is glib at worst and outdated at best.

As for the other article, Sam Bingham, it presents Allan's side. However, "Savory advocates" need to be up front, in that like all the rest of the grazing systems available for use on rangelands, it is just another tool to apply to a unit of rangeland needing intensive management. No panacea here.

But, Allan Savory is doing something that Steve Johnson and the others dedicated to diatribe cannot accomplish. He is getting people enthusiastic and observant of their land. I've observed ranchers who once cared only if fat calves were produced from the land, now they are also interested in improving the trend of their grasslands, etc. That is positive.

Lee E. Hughes
Washington, Utah

LETTERS

THANKS BUT NO THANKS

Dear HCN,

Thank you for the recent issue of HCN. We are former subscribers who have lived in West Virginia for the past 2 1/2 years, having moved here from Yellowstone National Park, and before that, from Colorado. We live in a rural area about 60 miles from both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Being Westerners at heart, we thought moving here was going to be something like dying and going to hell. Fortunately, that's not been the case. There's enough pseudo-space and blue sky here to lull us into feeling almost at home.

There are two reasons why we don't want to take you up on your offer of a new subscription to HCN. 1. Reading it makes us realize how tenuous the hold is on wilderness and how vicious the grip of progress. We have enough stress out here worrying about how many more farmers have to sell out before there won't be a green field anywhere without a development on it, without adding the whole western U.S. to it (our stress, that is); and 2. It makes us too homesick to bear. We're glad that you're keeping up the good work, however, and hope you'll find two subscribers to replace us!

We listen to the old-timers around here tell us about how wild and undeveloped this part of the country used to be. In two years we've watched the sprawl from D.C. and Baltimore spread west at an alarming rate so that the highways, commercial areas and quaint local towns are choked with people wanting a taste of fresh air and space, yet bringing their bondage right along with them in the shape of housing developments, fast-food alleys and neon litter.

As I read HCN tonight, all I could think was "they think it can't happen out there!" From 2,000 miles away, it looks all the more probable. Take it from my husband, who says "you can't go anywhere anymore without someone right on your bumper!" It didn't used to be that way *here*. Try to keep it from being that way *there*!

Don and Sharon Buck
Shepherdstown, West Virginia



FILLING THE VOID

Dear HCN,

I read with interest the articles on the Savory Method and the salvation/destruction of rangeland. Obviously, more time and study are needed before the true weight of this

method is measured. As a geologist interested in the last few tens of thousands of years, I would, however, like to clear up a few misconceptions about North American wildlife that crept into Steve Johnson's article.

One of Allan Savory's tenets is that cattle may fill the void left by the extinction of the North American large mammals at the end of the Pleistocene, a reasonable, but largely untested, hypothesis. Until sometime around 11,000 years ago, North America supported a fauna African in its intensity. This fauna vanished, apparently rapidly, and dozens of large mammals such as the mammoth, camel and the horse went extinct. Scientists don't understand why this extinction occurred, although theories abound.

These animals are often treated as if they could not survive on the land today. Anyone who believes this should take another look at the horse, which is again thriving in its native habitat. The extinct species survived numerous other dry times in North America over hundreds of thousands of years. It is a mistake to imagine the surviving native animals are a complete cast of players. Contrary to Mr. Johnson, the range plants of today did evolve with large herbivores and, if Africa is representative, vast herds of them. Nobody knows how important grazing was in the past, or what unique relationships existed between extant plants and extinct mammals. But we must not lightly dismiss the loss of this rich diversity of wildlife, or imagine that the ripples of that distant catastrophe no longer rock the West.

Finally, Mr. Johnson is mistaken in the range of the bison. At times their range has extended far west of the Texas Panhandle. Archaeological excavations along the Humboldt River place them in Nevada within the last 1,000 years.

Keith Katzer
Tucson, Arizona

DISAGREES WITH WILKINSON

Dear HCN,

How anyone who has observed what's been happening on our national forests can conclude that the Forest Service is about to usher in the millennium for recreational users is hard to understand. I haven't seen such optimism as demonstrated in Charles Wilkinson's guest essay (HCN, 3/30/87) since reading Voltaire's *Candide*.

To support his conclusion that the Forest Service will soon (two to four years?) turn over a new leaf, Wilkinson cites no less than 14 "happenings" that "symbolize the persistent, deep-currented new direction in forest policy." A review of these momentous events, however, reveals that not one of them shows that the Forest Service itself is doing anything to warrant the conclusion he draws. Moreover, I am unable to find in any of these 14 items anything as significant as any one of the five opposing negative scenarios: need to support timber dependent communities; possible upturn in housing; administration desires to double allowable cut; increased demand for wood products in Third World; Hatfield's success in getting

a 25 percent increase in cut in Northwest forests.

Wilkinson also ignores an even more important recent event: the release of individual long-range forest management plans intended to guide the Forest Service for the next 50 years. After reviewing all the plans for Arizona forests and a couple of others from adjacent states, it's obvious that as far as the Forest Service is concerned, it's going to be business as usual: Timber and livestock interests will be served and to hell with multiple use.

The plans are so biased in favor of commodity interests that conservation organizations and individuals in every state where there is a national forest are appealing these plans. The last compilation I saw by the National Wildlife Federation showed that ALL of the final plans released at that time (about 50) were being appealed by at least one conservation group.

Wilkinson quotes a recent speech by ex-Arizona governor and now presidential-hopeful Bruce Babbitt to support his contention that big changes are in the offing. Having been an interested observer of Arizona political shenanigans for some 40 years, and of Bruce Babbitt personally for as long as he's been in politics, I find myself unable to share his enthusiasm.

I am reminded of something that happened some 10 years ago. In a speech to the annual convention of the Arizona Wildlife Federation in Tucson in 1977 (while he was still attorney general), Babbitt lashed out at the livestock industry and the land management agencies in Arizona, castigating them for the overgrazing that was so widespread that even an

attorney general was aware of it. Needless to say, those of us who shared his views were delighted. That pleasant emotional state didn't last long.

A couple of weeks later Babbitt gave another talk, this one to the Arizona Cattle Growers Association. In that speech he apologized for his intemperate remarks in Tucson.

Babbitt may now say "the time is at hand to go beyond multiple use," but as governor, he never once so much as raised a voice to say, "It's time to implement MULTIPLE USE," something the Forest Service (and BLM) have never practiced, though they have long paid lip service to the concept.

Steve Gallizioli
Phoenix, Arizona

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DON'T LET THE GRIZZLY DIE



For over a hundred years, wild grizzly bears were indiscriminately killed by any means available. They were poisoned, shot on sight, trapped without restriction. The intent was to destroy them completely. It nearly succeeded.

As many as 50,000 to 100,000 grizzly bears once roamed wild and free in the lower 48 states. Today, only 1000 or fewer remain. Their last footholds on existence are but 1% of the vast lands they once occupied.

There has been a recent change of heart about the grizzly bear. As the American People learn more about this intelligent and wary animal, they realize that their world would be a shrunken and less valuable place if they were to let the grizzly die. Has this change of heart come in time to save the grizzly?

The American people and the grizzly bear are at a common crossroads. It is a crossroads where the people will make the choices, and the bear will take the consequences. If we are going to save them, now is the time to begin.

The grizzly can be saved. Don't let the grizzly die. Write the Great Bear Foundation, P.O. Box 2699, Missoula, Montana 59806.

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BULLETIN BOARD



THOUSANDS OF SIERRA CLUBBERS

David Brower, the grand old man of the environmental movement, Robert Redford, actor and environmental activist, and Anne Ehrlich, population biologist, are among the keynote speakers at the second Annual Sierra Club International Assembly to be held in Vail, Colo., July 2-5. Club members from all over the country will hear lectures on such diverse topics as Himalayan ecosystems, mineral leasing on public lands, volunteer recruiting, and urban population growth. Evening activities include a film festival, fireworks and campfire singing. The Vail resort area is at 8000 feet and is about two hours west of Denver by car. Registration is \$60 for members and \$90 for non-members. For more details write Sierra Club, 207 Day St., San Francisco, CA 94131.

SOUTH PLATTE INSTITUTE

You can learn about the hunting-foraging people who inhabited the South Platte River basin for 3700 years and the birds, mammals and insects that inhabit the river's ecosystem at the first annual South Platte River Institute, Aug. 1-6. Field sessions will be held at Buffalo Creek Lodge, 30 miles southwest of Denver, Colo., and participants will stay in rustic cabins and eat meals together. The institute is sponsored by the Denver Audubon Society in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Fees are \$350 and the deadline to register is June 15. Write Susan Foster, Director, South Platte Riparian Institute, P.O. Box 243, Jamestown, CO 80455 (303/442-6333).

SAVING OLD GROWTH FORESTS

Oregon conservationists hope to rally support for saving the largest area of unprotected Douglas fir, old-growth forest along the Pacific coast. At one event, Siskiyou-Earth First! is sponsoring a June 13-15 weekend near Agnes, Ore., of hikes, races, songs around the campfire and a rally at a local logging site. For more information, write Earth First!, Box 212, Williams, OR 97544. On June 21, the Breitenbush Community Center is hosting a concert from 2-9 p.m. near Detroit, Ore., with proceeds going toward preserving the forest. Entertainers include Lone Wolf Circles and Friends, Beat Soup, and the Warm Springs Indian Singers. Tickets are \$10. For information, write Breitenbush Community Center, P.O. Box 578, Detroit, OR 97342 or call 503/854-3501.

WESTERN GOVERNORS TO MEET

The Western Governors' Association meets July 5-7 at Snowbird, Utah, near Salt Lake City, for their fourth annual conference. Sixteen governors and leaders from two Pacific territories are expected to hear Akio Morita, chief executive officer of the Sony Corp., present the Japanese viewpoint on international trade. Two members of the Reagan administration, Labor Secretary William E. Brock and Transportation Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole, will also join the proceedings. Reporters and photographers can call 303/623-9378 to register.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPECIALTY SHEEP SALE

A sheep sale for small-scale growers of specialty long-haired sheep will be held Sat., June 13, at the Chama, N.M., fairgrounds. The wool from the sheep goes to Indians and others who weave by hand. The breeds invited to the sale are Navajo-Churro, Romney, Karakul, Lincoln, Corriedale, Leicester, Cotswold, Scottish Blackface, Cormo, mixed breeds-colored and Jacob. The sale is part of a larger effort to both preserve sheep breeds that are in danger of vanishing and provide an economic base for a way of life that is also in danger of vanishing. The sale is sponsored by the Ganados del Valle, P.O. Box 118, Los Ojos, NM 87551. Or call Antonio Manzanarez, 505/588-7792, evenings.

WOLF ADVOCATES

A foundation formed in 1986 supports the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park and the scientific research needed to make it a success. The number of wolves in the states is limited, with Montana estimating a population of 20, Idaho 12-15, Wyoming 0, and Minnesota 1,200. The Wolf Recovery Foundation publishes a newsletter, *Wolf Calls*, four times a year; membership costs \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. Write the Wolf Recovery Foundation, P.O. Box 793, Boise, ID 83701.

REWARD A WILY DEFENDER

The National Parks and Conservation Association is looking for part-time and fulltime Park Service employees to reward for showing initiative and resourcefulness in protecting nationally significant resources. Besides regional awards, there is a \$1,000 national award to someone who has taken direct action where others have hesitated; and who has risked his job and career "for the principles and practices of good stewardship of the natural environment." If a winner says that publicity would not be wise, there will be none, says the organization, which was formed in 1919. Stephen T. Mather, for whom the award is named, was the first director of the National Park Service and served for 14 years during the creation of the country's first national park system. Each nomination should consist of a one-to-three-page typed letter with five references, postmarked by June 15. Write NPCA, 1015 31st St. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON WAS THERE

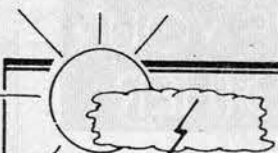
Bufs of both Western history and the evolution of landscape photography might find interesting *Time Exposure: The Autobiography of William Henry Jackson*. Jackson, whose life roughly paralleled the first 100 years of photography, accompanied the Hayden geological survey in the 1870s to northwest Montana and the Southwest, and his photography was influential in the creation of Yellowstone National Park. This is a colloquial and vivid account of one of America's first photographer-conservationists.

University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, N.M. 87131. Paper, \$9.95. 341 pages, photos.

BURGEONING

BED AND BREAKFASTS

"Bed and Breakfast" establishments are giving local economies a boost by keeping lodging dollars in town rather than supporting national franchises. New reservation services that help travelers locate accommodations throughout the Rockies include Bed and Breakfast Colorado, Ltd., which publishes a \$3 directory of 60 homes in Colorado with rates from \$25 to \$105 a day. Reservations are primarily made through their central office; for information call 303/442-6664 or write B & B Colorado, Ltd., Box 6061, Boulder, CO 80306. A directory of over 100 homes throughout the Rocky Mountains is available through B & B Rocky Mountains for \$3. Reservations are made only through their central office, with rates from \$29 to \$95. For a directory write B & B Rocky Mountains, P.O. Box 804, Colorado Springs, CO 80901 or call 303/630-3433.



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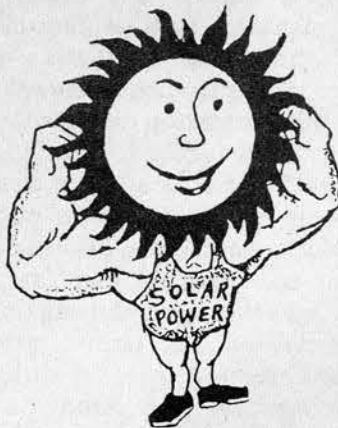
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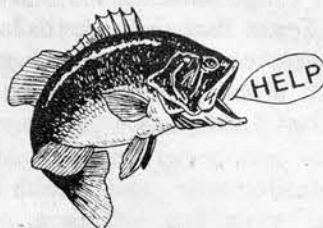
Falcon Press, P.O. Box 279, Billings, MT 59103. Paper, \$14.95. Hardcover, \$24.95. 104 pages. Illustrated with color photos and maps.

John Sullivan, Ecomews



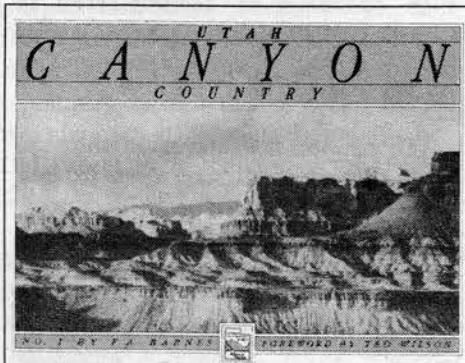
SUN POWER WORKSHOPS

Bordered by 14,000-foot peaks in the east and the rising San Juan Mountains to the west, the San Luis Valley in western Colorado is the setting for the Solar Energy Association's second annual adobe-building workshop, July 17-19. Participants will learn everything necessary to build an adobe structure including soil-testing, brick-making and plastering. The cost is \$160 and the registration deadline is July 10. The group also offers a seminar for \$23 on solar electricity June 20 that will cover electrical generation, lighting and water-pumping. For information about both events, write San Luis Valley Solar Energy Association, 512 Ross Ave., Alamosa, CO 81101 or call 303/589-2233.

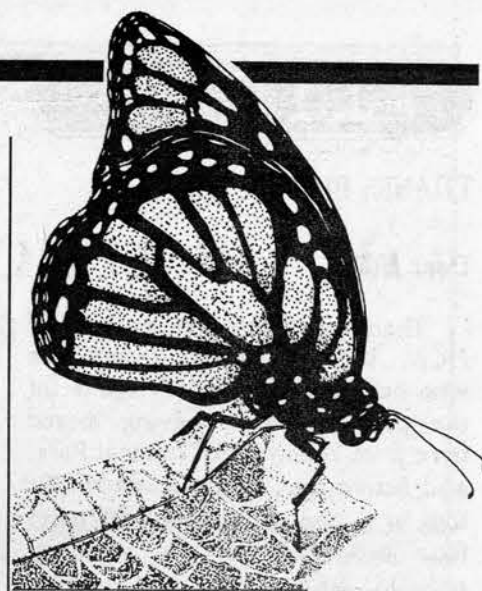


VOLUNTEER IN WYOMING

The Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming says it needs volunteers. Jobs range from clerical to public affairs and wild-horse management and are offered to individuals as well as to groups. Volunteers can choose their schedules and work when it is convenient. For a booklet describing positions open in each district, write BLM, Wyoming State Office, P.O. Box 1828, 2515 Warren Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82003.



UTAH CANYON COUNTRY, the first book in the Utah Geographic Series, is now available in hardcover as well as softcover editions. Includes authoritative text by Moab author F.A. Barnes, 162 color photos, maps, charts, and a foreword by Ted Wilson, former Mayor of Salt Lake City. Send \$15.95 plus \$1.00 for postage (\$16.95 total per softbound book) or \$24.95 plus \$1.20 for postage (\$26.15 total per hardbound book) to: Utah Geographic Series, Box 8325, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. Money-back guarantee if not fully satisfied. (M.J.b)



NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE

Deep in the heart of the North Cascades on the Canadian border, the Skagit River flows past dense coniferous forests, open alpine slopes and marine shorelines. The river's ecosystem is the focus of a North Cascade Institute workshop June 22-July 31, where part of the program will take place in the back-country. Tuition is \$850. The institute offers other field courses from two to five days on mountain birds, wild and edible plants, and Indian art of the Northwest coast. For information, write North Cascades Institute, 2105 Highway 20-NPS, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284 or call 206/856-5700.

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UTAH WILDLANDS, volume 3 in the Utah Geographic Series, is now available. This beautiful 112-page book features more than 90 color photographs, eight color maps and more than 30,000 words of text by author Stewart Aitchison about wilderness and proposed wilderness in the diverse vastness of Utah's Great Basin, Colorado Plateau and Rocky Mountain physiographic provinces. Send \$15.95 plus \$1.00 for postage (\$16.95 total per softbound book) or \$25.95 plus \$1.20 postage (\$26.15 total per hardbound book) to: Utah Geographic Series, Box 8325, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. Money-back guarantee if not fully satisfied. (1xb)

WORKING VACATIONS: Volunteers needed for rewarding, challenging 10-day public service trail projects in cooperation with the USFS and NPS. Tetons, Colorado, Alaska, NH, Maine, Montana, and elsewhere. Contact: Appalachian Mountain Club Trails Program, Box 298C, Gorham, NH 03581 (603/466-2721). Trails need you! (4x-b)

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

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER on profiting from hunting and conserving wildlife. 12 issues, \$40. Sample, \$3. Write *Hunting Ranch Business*, Dept. HCN, 5214 Starkridge, Houston, TX 77035. (6x7p)

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)

ESSAY

The destructive death throes of Oregon I

by Mark C. Ottenad

"Tourism is the root of a second-growth economy."

In the March 6th edition of the *Oregonian*, I was struck by the irony of two articles next to one another. One proclaimed, "Judge visits old growth timber," while the other nonchalantly spoke of our governor's heavy baggage for his trip to Japan. The apparently unrelated travels of these two men are actually milestone events that reflect major economic changes in our region: the swing away from a declining old growth, logging-dependent economy to one centered on second growth and finished wood products coupled with outdoor recreation, tourism, service and high technology. Old growth trees are loosely defined as some 200 years old and several feet in girth.

Federal Judge James Burns was inspecting controversial timber sales located on public land in a steep and previously unroaded, pristine old growth forest at Breitenbush, near the Cascade Mountains. Elsewhere, Gov. Neil Goldschmidt was promoting Oregon to the prosperous Japanese with 500 copies of the full-color coffee table book, *Oregon II*, whose front cover features the Breitenbush Gorge. Ironically, the Breitenbush Gorge National Recreation Trail is just downstream from, and adjacent to, the same clearcuts that the judge was visiting.

This contest between competing economic and social interests over an increasingly scarce resource is at the forefront of public attention throughout Oregon and the Northwest. The timber industry faces stiff competition from the rapidly growing industries of outdoor recreation and tourism represented by boating outlets, outdoor sporting stores, fisheries and the many retail, food, lodging and service-related businesses.

The old "Oregon I" was built upon the seemingly endless supply of never-cut timber called old growth. After 40 years of accelerated logging of these towering forests after World War II, less than 10 percent now remain. The balance of Oregon's original 30 million acres of forests was cut on public and private lands in the easily accessible Coast Mountains, Willamette Valley and foothills of the Cascades. The last old growth forests stand in the Siskiyou of southern Oregon (.4 million acres), the low-elevation western Cascades (2.2 million acres) and in

scattered, isolated pockets along the coast and inland valleys. Of Oregon's 2 million acres of designated wilderness, only 10 percent is low-elevation old-growth forest; the remaining, protected 1.8 million acres are primarily mountaintops made up of rock, ice and small alpine fir.

All the unprotected old growth is scheduled for "liquidation" by federal land-managing agencies in 10-14 years, given the current rate of over-cutting the forests. Over-cutting can be demonstrated by observing that the amount of timber sold and cut has exceeded the government's theoretical sustained-yield level -- that amount the forest can grow back -- by 26 percent every year for the last several years, according to Forest Service statistics.

Our current timber economy is showing signs of decline. Every month, mill closures and permanent layoffs appear in the newspapers as antiquated mills are replaced by a few modern, automated mills. They more efficiently produce the same or even more wood products with fewer workers. The steady move of timber companies away from the Northwest to the Southeast continues as the nation's timber center changes. Since privately held lands of virgin old growth have almost all been logged, national forests and Bureau of Land Management lands supply the few remaining old growth-dependent mills.

The largest and fastest-growing components of Oregon's economy today are outdoor recreation, tourism and service industries. Supporters of never-logged areas say that eliminating the few remaining acres is foolhardy, as the last of old growth mills will close sometime. They say diversification of our economy calls for a move away from an unhealthy dependence upon this non-renewable resource; that we need to consider more than a short-term profit since the monumental stands of timber provide some of Oregon's prime recreation areas.

A growing body of evidence collected by the Forest Service and BLM, concludes that no more old growth should be cut because the integrity of the whole ecosystem is at stake. Only now are we beginning to understand and appreciate the long-term benefits of old growth, which are primarily clean water and a superior gene pool, crucial to the success of second-growth forests. Additionally, over 140 known old growth-dependent species of wildlife are endangered, as indicated by the threat of extinction to the spotted owl.

The case of Breitenbush Community, a health spa and conference center at Breitenbush Hot Springs in the Willamette National Forest, is analogous to the transition of Oregon's economy. The business, which spent 10 years rebuilding the historic resort into an annual 50,000 visitor-use-day business, is threatened by logging. Hundreds of successive clearcuts have resulted in the destruction of critical wildlife habitat, the loss of hiking trails and scenic views, the widening of the Breitenbush River and erosion along its banks, and sediment runoff that muddies and degrades the river, which serves as the drinking source for thousands of people.

Removal of the surrounding forest has resulted in increased flooding, which has caused damage to and further threatens the community's land, business facilities and homes. In addition, the noise and sites of commercial logging activities are disturbing to the guests. The controversial old growth timber sales that the judge inspected are in the last uncut recreation, wildlife and watershed corridor between the Breitenbush Hot Springs and Mt. Jefferson, Oregon's second highest mountain.

Oregon is past the point of marginal return for cutting old growth; with so little left, it is simply more valuable left standing. The Forest Service and BLM, however, continue to allow over-cutting and roading of Oregon's forests, override timber sales appeals and delay the issuance of overdue forest plans. The result has been an increase in citizen-initiated lawsuits and protests. More than half the photos in the book touting Oregon to the Japanese are from popular recreation areas that had been proposed for protection by the Oregon Natural Resources Council, but were removed by federal agencies. Is this to be Oregon's future?

The economy of Oregon demands that we recognize and embrace the changes that need to occur. Rather than procrastinate, let us strengthen our competitiveness by smoothing the conversion from a timber industry dependent upon logging the last public virgin forests to an economy in which second growth and finished wood products complement outdoor recreation and tourism.

□

Mark C. Ottenad works at the Breitenbush Community, a retreat and conference center in Oregon.

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16-High Country News -- June 8, 1987

OFF THE WALL

A modest proposal: 'catch and release' hunting

by George Wuerthner

While passing through Yellowstone National Park I stopped to fish one of my favorite stretches of river in the entire West, the Buffalo Fords below Yellowstone Lake. The river is a fisherman's dream with a wadable cobble bottom, fast but even flow and big trout. Even if you don't catch the fish, you see them finning in the limpid waters and that, coupled with the mountain scenery, makes this area a mecca for fishermen from all over the world.

The reason trout grow large is that they live to old age. You can't keep trout caught in the fords section of the Yellowstone for this is a catch and release fishery. Catch and release fishing allows fishermen to pursue the sport without killing the fish, a method that provides a thrill to the fishermen while preserving the fish.

Studies show that 95 percent of the released fish caught on flies survive the ordeal, and if they also survive predators, disease and other normal mortality, they will eventually grow to be large, mature fish -- trophy size. For many fishermen catch and release fly fishing is the most ethical mode of fishing.

Of course, some people would argue there is no reason to catch the fish at all, and certainly not merely for one's amusement. They may be right, but for many it is the least consumptive expression of the sport and better than putting their fishing poles away and giving up the activity altogether.

Could hunters, like fishermen, gain satisfaction from merely capturing an elk or a grizzly rather than killing it outright? For many, especially the trophy hunting group, such a practice might have some attraction.

You stalk your animal, shoot it, measure the rack and document the "kill" with a photo, then let the animal go to wander the mountains once more. This resembles "counting coup" among many Indian tribes; braves won prestige by daring to come close enough to an enemy to strike without actually killing.

Catch and release hunting might help condition wildlife to avoid humans. Some people believe hunting grizzlies keeps them wary -- although I don't know how a dead grizzly can teach its descendants to avoid people. Nevertheless, a live grizzly can pass on knowledge, and catch and release grizzly hunting may be one way to condition bears outside of parks without having to kill them.

Certainly catch and release grizzly hunting has to be considered a pretty sporting affair since the hunter would have to approach a bear VERY CLOSE to successfully "capture" it. No doubt a captured bear would feel the sting and react before the sedative fully takes effect, which allows plenty of time for a bit of excitement.

On an experimental basis catch and release hunting could be practiced on game ranches where hunters pay large fees to hunt trophy-



sized animals. One ranch in Montana charges \$5,000 to hunt elk, so keep that in mind when you think about the value of cattle grazing on public lands compared to the economic worth of elk and other wildlife.

Most of these game ranches already have tranquilizer guns on hand, as they are used to sedate young elk whose antlers are removed for sale overseas as aphrodisiacs. Thus game ranchers are already experienced in the use of tranquilizers and could serve as guides for inexperienced catch and release hunters.

For those individuals who hunt for spiritual reasons and many non-hunters, catch and release may seem demeaning to the animal. It will terrorize and handle a creature unnecessarily. These are valid concerns, but they are not priorities for hunters who kill for meat or wall decorations. And for those concerned with trophy hunting, it may be -- like the big trout of the Yellowstone -- one way to continue hunting while letting the young game animals mature into truly magnificent creatures that everyone -- hunter and non-hunter -- can enjoy.

Nowadays, catch and release hunting is technologically possible through the use of tranquilizer guns presently utilized by biologists, game ranchers and zoo keepers. The rifles are specially designed to shoot darts carrying a sedative, and with proper training few animals die from being shot.

One biologist I spoke with says he has shot

over 300 animals with tranquilizers and only four have died, usually from an overdose. Perhaps to some people four deaths is intolerable. But aren't four better than 300?

Most people can only shoot a tranquilizer dart accurately at distances of 30 yards or less, although with special loads, accurate shots of 75 and 80 yards are possible; thus stalking prey requires the utmost in hunting skill.

Sedative darts are expensive -- about \$75 a shot -- so one would have to be careful and not blast away at anything that moved.

Because of the high degree of stalking skill required, successful hunters will have to learn much about the species they are stalking; relying on chance encounters won't bring much success.

An ethical hunter will also have to learn about the use of sedatives since the dosage must be carefully measured against an animal's overall condition, size and health to prevent an overdose. Obviously the constraints imposed by the use of tranquilizers require a great deal more skill and knowledge than other forms of hunting, and it should follow that catch and release hunters will be judged by their peers as deserving of prestige, which is part of the reason some people hunt.

□

George Wuerthner is a naturalist and writer in Missoula, Montana.

LETTERS

VISIONARY PROPOSAL

Dear HCN,

Bruce Farling's otherwise good May 11 article on Montana wilderness was marred by its omission of one of the major Montana wilderness proposals. The Americans for Wilderness Coalition is promoting a 9.3 million-acre wilderness proposal, incorporating all the significant roadless areas left in the state, and in addition including wilderness recovery areas.

Protected together, entire ecosystems are saved, instead of small

acres of "rock and ice" wilderness. Serious thought should be given to this well-thought-out, visionary proposal for Montana wilderness, and it should be included in future discussions of a Montana wilderness bill.

Brian Suderman
Carpenter, Wyoming

A BAD BILL

Dear HCN,

Sen. Bill Bradley's proposal to transfer Devil's Tower National Monument and other federal lands to the Sioux Indian Nation is a bad bill

(HCN, 4/13/87). Make no mistake about it: Transfer of public lands to Native Americans is just as much a policy of disposal, just as short-sighted, just as anti-conservation as transfers of land to railroads or land developers. Such action would indicate a lessened commitment to protection of wild nature, the West's most important resource.

Unless we are willing to provide Native Americans with cropland from Del Monte, petroleum land from Standard Oil, and gold mine land from Homestake, we should not even consider giving away units of the federal land system. It is popular to equate liberal political goals with conservation purposes, but they are not necessarily the same. For those

who truly value the conservation tradition, the distinction must be kept clear.

Thomas R. Vale
Madison, Wisconsin

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