

High Country News

May 23, 1988

Vol. 20 No. 10

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar

Along Idaho's Snake River

How do you combine birds and bombs?

by Stephen Stuebner

KUNA, Idaho -- Wind whips across the sweeping sagebrush plain just a stone's throw from a sheer basalt cliff overlooking the Snake River. The wind scours the ground, kicking up dirt from roads made by military tanks and ash from fire-charred soil.

Oblivious to its surroundings, a prairie falcon hangs above in the gusty breeze. Wings spread, it twirls and abruptly dives like a kamikaze pilot toward the ground, zeroing in on a Townsend ground squirrel.

Thirty yards away, a 105-millimeter tank shell plows into a thrifty stand of bluebunch wheatgrass and explodes. The squirrel's squeal is barely audible as the falcon seizes its prey in a cloud of TNT and angles toward the cliff.

What's going on here? The

National Guard is practising war maneuvers in the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area, a perfect blend of canyon and plateau that contains the densest known concentration of nesting raptors in the world.

It's not a new phenomenon. For almost 40 years, birds and bombs have co-existed in the Birds of Prey Area, seemingly without any major hitches.

"There's always been this assumption that the Guard's activities have had no effect on raptors because the birds are still there," said Karen Steenhoff, a research raptor-biologist for the Bureau of Land Management.

Lately, the Guard has been taking some heat over its proposal to build a tank firing-range at its Orchard Training Area, which at 138,000 acres occupies about one-third of the Birds of Prey Area. The OTA also is

home to an estimated 30 to 50 percent of the raptors' prey base.

The expansion will enable the Guard to offer one of two state-of-the-art tank training courses in the United States. The \$13.6 million project would involve wiring a large chunk of the desert to set up 270 "hardened" targets. They would rise out of the ground at varying speeds to challenge 290 charging tanks.

The Guard touts the project as an economic boon for the Boise economy. It would create 130 construction jobs for 12 to 15 months, create 75 permanent jobs, and inject \$1.5 million annually into the local economy, officials say.

Too good to pass up? Idaho's major politicians think so. Even Gov. Cecil Andrus, who as a first-term governor helped lend federal protection to the Birds of Prey Area in

1971, says he backs the Guard project.

Raptor experts and biologists, on the other hand, fear the Guard's expansion will inevitably lead to disaster for the unique refuge. Morley Nelson, World War II veteran and a world-renowned raptor expert and filmmaker, wants to bring the Guard's plans to a screeching halt.

"There's nothing else like this area in the world," said Nelson, who has been studying raptors in the Birds of Prey Area since 1948. "And now we're in danger of losing the whole thing."

Guard officials adamantly say, "We're just as concerned about environmental effects as all Idahoans." Lt. Col. Kent Jewell, public affairs officer for the Idaho Army National Guard, adds, "We're going to do our damndest to meet the

(Continued on page 10)

Glenn Oakley



National Guard training at Birds of Prey Natural Area in Idaho

Dear friends,



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Weather

We received two very different weather reports from South Dakota. Writer Linda Hasselstrom, whose Hermosa ranch is near the Black Hills, says: "We're getting the rain everyone's been hoping for, which ought to give the firebug some trouble -- some lout has been setting fires in this area. I just hope the police catch him before some of the local citizenry do."

In north-central South Dakota, well east of the Black Hills, HCN bureau chief Peter Carrels has a different report:

"During the noon hour (on a day in late April), I got a phone call from a farmer friend. 'If you want to see what it was like during the '30s, take a drive south of town,' he advised."

Peter took the advice, according to his column in *Dakota Outdoors*, and found: "South of Aberdeen, driving conditions were downright dangerous, like absolutely nothing I've ever seen. Down low, on either side of the highway, raw land was sucked up and pushed eastward. Visibility was at times near zero, as the strong winds rocked my car and airborne soil pelted it."

According to news clips Peter sent us, Gov. George Mickelson eventually asked for federal help. But first he resisted telling the nation that the dust bowl might be back in the Great Plains. In delaying the call for help, he was heeding the advice of State Tourism Secretary Susan Edwards: "We already have an image of hot, flat, dry and boring. We don't need to accentuate the situation."

Speaking of hot-flat-dry, NPR's *Morning Edition* predicted 102 degrees for Phoenix on May 13. Perhaps that, more than anything, explains former Gov. Evan Mecham's behavior.

Not welcome

The 60,000 or so letters we mailed recently in search of new subscribers are getting the usual response: lots of new subscribers and a few very angry people. Most of those who are outraged use our postage-paid envelope to tell us what rats we are, but an anonymous writer from Montana wrote on the envelope:

"YOU ARE NOT WELCOME IN MONTANA." So that we didn't miss the fact that he or she had affixed their stamp: "WE PAY FOR OUR POSTAGE FROM OWN HARD-EARNED MONEY, NOT FROM MISGUIDED PEOPLE AS YOUR SELVES." Inside, printed on our subscription card, was: "Your type of people have done more damage to Montana's environment than all the mining, logging, trappers, graziers and dammers has ever done. You should all be held financially responsible for Montana's working class because you have deprived us from earning a proper living. KEEP OUT OF MONTANA. WE ARE FED UP WITH YOUR CRAP." According to the number on the card, we got the writer's name from *Mother Jones* magazine.

Other responses struck a different tone. Max Smith of Rosemead, Cal., sent a beautifully calligraphed note and a Hargreaves cartoon from *Punch* magazine. It showed a lion

and cub on a rock overlooking a lush forest: "One day, my son, all this will not be yours."

Ernestine Williams of 11100 W. 38th Ave., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, wrote to say she doesn't have time to read HCN but she wondered if we knew the address of Aspen animal rights activist Georgie Leighton. Ms. Williams' envelope was embellished with stickers reading: "Conserve hunters -- harvest one today," and "People who wear furs deserve to be pelted." Unfortunately, Ms. Leighton is not a subscriber, so we couldn't be of help.

We recently read in the May/June *Utne* attacks on the nostalgia craze for the 1960s, including a line mocking the idea that we are all immersed in and connected by some sort of "cosmic mucus." Young people, the writers told us, are bored by the '60s.

And most people are probably similarly bored by computers and their problems. Therefore, we are not going to tell you about our computers. But we should mention that on our first call, via our modem, to snatch an article writer Sam Bingham had deposited for us in the innards of an MCI computer, we were informed, through a scratchy little voice emanating from our modem, that: "Due to local telephone circuit difficulties, your call cannot be completed."

Our guess is that at the first touch of our system, which we affectionately call Jonah, the entire MCI system crashed. We could probably impose peace on the world by having Jonah simultaneously dial both the USSR's and the US's defense system computer network.

Interpreting controversy

Interpreters, those energetic people at national parks who tell visitors about everything from the formation of mountain ranges to the location of restrooms, held a conference in Jackson, Wyo., recently. Their subject was interpreting controversial issues affecting public lands, and editor Betsy Marston has a report on their get-together:

The emphasis among this mostly youthful group in the Rocky Mountain branch of the National Association of Interpretation was not whether to tell tourists about threats to parks, but how. That forthrightness has not always been the case, agreed writer Alfred Runte of Seattle, Wash., and Kathy Ahlenslager, an interpreter who has worked at Glacier National Park for 10 summers.

Runte recalled his 1980 experience as a frank seasonal interpreter at Yosemite, which led to the agency sending out "spies in tourist-drag" to tape record his talks. Then as now, Runte said, interpreters must know their facts so that issues are presented without distortion.

Do tourists want the bad news about issues such as air pollution blotting out distant views in some parks? Christine Shaver, chief of policy planning for the Park Service's air quality division in Washington, D.C., said environmental threats are a high priority for the agency but not for all park visitors.

She said 5-15 percent of those asked said park staffs should leave controversy alone; about 20 percent showed "guarded interest"; 15-35



percent showed "active interest"; and 5-15 percent were park defenders: "They wanted to know how to join the posse."

Key to telling visitors about threats caused by activities close to parks is a solid understanding of facts, she said.

"Be objective," she advised, "but show people you care." Insubordination can get you removed, however, so "clear it with your superintendent," she said. If a visitor wants advice, Shaver suggested giving out a list of elected officials, telling who makes decisions and turning the tables by asking the audience what it could do.

Interpreters invited controversy into their midst in the person of Joe Helle, a Montana sheep rancher who lives 21 miles from Yellowstone National Park.

Helle said grizzly bears, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, were predator enough, and that bringing back wolves threatened his livelihood. "Wolf advocates" were fueled by religious fervor, he said, and only wanted a political issue.

If the wolf is reintroduced, he added, two million tourists at Yellowstone will see the "horrors of predation as elk are pulled down and their rear ends chewed off by wolves."

Borrowing the language of ecology, Helle, an effective speaker, said wolves had lost their niche ... "The wolf's place is gone." Sheep growers, on the other hand, had been on the land for generations and would be ranching for years to come, he said.

Questions were pointed but exceedingly polite: "As interpreters we accept predation ... Do you think it's bad?"

Helle responded by saying he knew predation was natural but visitors to Yellowstone did not. They consider the park a "zoo" and expect tranquil scenes of grazing elk, he said. Helle's compromise was to suggest a legal change that would allow ranchers to shoot wolves on their property.

For now, said Dan Smith, a Defenders of Wildlife staffer in Washington, D.C., the issue of wolf restoration to Wyoming remains stalemated by Wyoming politics. Getting on with the environmental impact statement process is the needed first step, he added.

The conference was organized by interpreters Debbie Tewell and Duncan Rollo. Region VII NAI Director Chan Biggs is at the Bureau of Land Management in Lewiston, MT 59457.

--the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Oil, gas leases dominate area rich in ruins

Hovenweep National Monument on the border of Utah and Colorado boasts six standing Anasazi towers. Surrounding these well-preserved ruins that represent the "climax" stage of Anasazi civilization are less dramatic, early ruins that archaeologists say are critical to understanding Anasazi culture.

But these ruins are outside the 785-acre Hovenweep monument on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management -- and that makes them vulnerable to oil and gas development.

The Park Service had hoped monument boundaries would be expanded to include and thus protect the early ruins. But a recent draft management plan says the Park Service and BLM will co-manage the area (*HCN*, 4/11/88). This is a departure from 1985, when the Park Service's first draft general management plan identified a "cultural resource protection zone" surrounding several Hovenweep monuments and called for protective management of the area.

Terri Martin, staffer for the National Parks and Conservation Association in Salt Lake City, says political pressure from the Reagan administration led the Park Service to agree to co-management.

Mike Snyder of the Rocky Mountain Regional Division of the Park Service responds, "The administration has been encouraging agencies to work together." But he also says, "the BLM doesn't have as much administrative authority as it needs under the draft plan. All they can do is encourage, rather than require."

Martin reads from the plan: "The BLM will encourage oil and gas operators/lessees to directional drill ... The BLM will encourage oil and gas operators/lessees to locate ancillary facilities outside the resource protection zone and screen facilities from major visitor use areas ... The BLM will consult with the NPS when reviewing and approving Applications for Permit to Drill ..."

Snyder says the Park Service will oversee and monitor the BLM's management, and "if we don't like how they're managing things, we'll pull out of the cooperative management agreement." In any case, he adds, the reality is that oil and gas companies "have leases and can do what they want."

Gene Nodine, who manages BLM lands surrounding Hovenweep, says he doesn't think his agency will have any problem managing the area. "We haven't ruined any artifacts on BLM land in the last 50 years, so I don't see why it should start happening now."

Just three months ago, BWAB Inc., hit oil and gas a mile from Hovenweep's Holly Monument. Although the company tried to hide its pumpjack in a depression, at night its glowing flame can be seen a mile from Square Tower Monument. At present, one well is in production and two exploratory wells are proposed for the same area. Since BWAB holds oil and gas drilling leases, legally it has every right to drill. If the new draft plan is accepted, Martin says, the BLM can only encourage BWAB to be as non-destructive in its drilling as possible. John Keller of BWAB says,



"We have valid federal mineral leases on this land (and) you can't change our permits now."

Although conservationists say the draft plan is too lenient, another oil company, Yates Petroleum, joins with BWAB in opposing the plan as too stringent. "All the rules that they (the BLM) are trying to implement already exist," says Keller. The plan's recommended reduction of well-pad density from one well every 40 acres to one well every 320 acres could lose his oil company 66 percent or more of the area's available oil, Keller adds.

The BLM's Gene Nodine says the Park Service's recommendation that well-pad density be reduced "is just about an impossibility. Well-pad density should be based on impacts and the geology of the area. I'm not gonna push for that part of the plan." Nodine says he will manage Hovenweep "by following the guide-

lines in the San Juan Resource Management Plan."

On May 13, the Park Service's Mike Snyder first learned of Nodine's opinion on well-pad densities during an *HCN* interview. Snyder says, "Nodine is violating the concepts of the joint management strategies. If he has no intention of managing according to the agreement, cooperative management won't work." Snyder points out that Nodine agreed to well-pad density reduction back on April 1, 1987. "If he feels our strategies are mutually exclusive now, that puts the Park Service back at square one. That could mean we'll try to get Hovenweep's boundaries expanded."

The Park Service and National Parks and Conservation Association are not alone in criticizing the draft plan -- two oil companies don't like it either. They protest a suggestion that they directional-drill to protect Hovenweep from unsightly rigs.

Oil companies object, saying this would double or triple costs, Keller says. "We're doing everything humanly possible to have the least harmful effects possible on the ruins without economically hurting ourselves," he adds.

Under the draft management plan, oil companies are allowed to drill a quarter-mile from Hovenweep's existing boundary and 100 feet from important cultural sites outside the monument. Terri Martin says "the cooperative management plan as it stands isn't able to protect cultural resources or the scenic value of the area." The plan also continues to allow grazing on ruins, even though the 1985 plan said grazing disturbs archaeological sites by "trampling, rubble-turning and fecal deposition."

Martin sees three scenarios: 1.) The BLM will manage the area with Park Service supervision. 2.) The BLM will be cut out and the Park Service will manage the area, leaving existent oil and gas leases as they are. 3.) The Park Service will buy out existing leases or impose restrictions on development, compensating oil and gas companies for their losses. Martin says the latter plan is best, but an expensive alternative. Having the Park Service manage Hovenweep under the present draft plan is the second best alternative since "we can at least expect the Park Service to try to protect the ruins." But letting the BLM oversee the area under Park Service supervision isn't a good idea, Martin says. "After all, it's hard to rely on the mere goodwill of the BLM and oil and gas operators."

--Tara Lumpkin

Two Forks Dam is now a two-front war

In Colorado, the Two Forks Dam controversy has turned into a two-front war. The first front is at the Army Corps of Engineers district office in Omaha, Neb., where letters are arriving at a rate of 300 a week, and now top 2,000. Strong public interest and many requests for further information or clarification of some points has led Corps district engineer Col. Steven West to again push the final deadline for public comment back, this time to June 10. That will also delay decisions from several state and federal agencies over the many preliminary permits the project requires.

In the meantime, the political fight over Two Forks is escalating. U.S. Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who represents nearly all of western and southern Colorado, became the state's first high-level elected official to oppose the dam. Citing both economic and environmental costs to the entire state -- many of which would be borne by his constituents -- Campbell asked Colorado Gov. Roy Romer to veto the project.

Campbell's stance brought a threat from Denver Water Board president Monte Pascoe: If Two Forks went under, Pascoe said, he would attack the federally-funded Animas La-Plata water project near Durango. Campbell is the major supporter of that project. Pascoe also promised other western Colorado officials that if Two Forks were killed Denver and the suburbs would go after water rights on the Gunnison



Fisherman on the South Platte

and Yampa rivers, where several dam projects are proposed.

In addition to strong opposition on the West Slope, the Denver Water Board is losing ground at home, in the Denver metro area. During the recent Democratic Party caucuses, all but one of the metro-area county conventions voted by wide margins to place anti-Two Forks planks in their party platforms. This adds to pressure on the Democratic leadership of Colorado, including Gov. Roy Romer and Denver Mayor Frederico Pena.

Also in Denver, a group of homeowner associations has attacked

the dam calling it a "\$550 million boondoggle paid for by Colorado taxpayers for the benefit of developers," reports the *Denver Post*.

The issue also continues to dominate the news in Colorado. A Sunday *Denver Post* front page article compared the projected costs of Two Forks -- \$440 million by the Denver Water Board and \$1 billion by environmentalists -- to every water project built in Colorado in the last three decades. Those projects had cost overruns of between 25 and 728 percent, said the story, which raised the specter of the entire state having to pay for the project. The *Post* also printed a statewide survey which showed the majority of Coloradans favor renewed controls on growth and urban sprawl.

While the Two Forks fight continues, the fight over Casper, Wyoming's Deer Creek Dam is nearly over (*HCN*, 5/9/88). The Army Corps issued a permit for the \$45 million, 60,000 acre foot dam early this month. However, before it can be built the project must still survive a Nebraska-Wyoming water rights lawsuit in the U.S. Supreme Court, and possible lawsuits from the many environmental groups that fought the dam.

Comments on Two Forks can be sent to Col. Steven West, District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Box 14, Omaha, NE 68101.

--Steve Hinchman

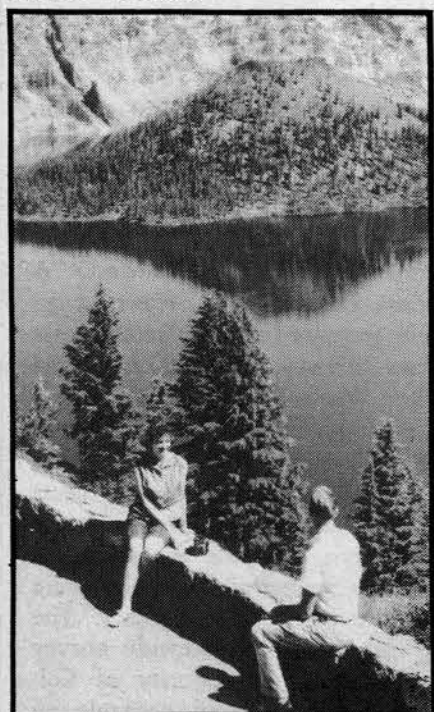
HOTLINE

Taxes due

The first natural gas company audited by Wyoming in an investigation of unpaid oil and gas taxes (HCN, 5/9/88) was found guilty of the practice and has submitted a check for \$309,796 to the state. That is the amount not paid over the last three years, according to the *Casper Star-Tribune*. That sum also includes interest payments but does not cover the bill since the company, Forest Oil, also owes approximately the same amount to local counties in which it operated. Additionally, the company is liable for a penalty of \$34,000 for the missing revenue. Forest was audited first because it was reputed to be conservatively operated and well managed.

Leased to the hilt

Dixie National Forest in Utah has recommended maximum leasing to look for carbon dioxide fields in ridges overlooking the Box-Death Hollow Wilderness (HCN, 10/12/87). To halt that prospect, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance will appeal the decision to Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson, says SUWA's Rodney Greeno. Calling Box-Death Hollow one of "the great canyon and forest landscapes in the country," Greeno says the final environmental impact statement failed to properly consider alternatives to leasing. Because there is no active proposal for development of Box-Death Hollow, the EIS could not do site-specific evaluations of impacts, he adds. If the group's appeal is denied, he says, those two omissions might be grounds for taking the Forest Service to court.



Crater Lake, Oregon

No hot springs

Despite front-page headlines to the contrary, hot springs have not been found in Crater Lake. Last summer as part of the National Park Service's 10-year study of the crystalline lake, two Oregon State University oceanographers announced that they had discovered hot springs on the floor of the half-mile-deep lake. Widely reported in the Northwest press, the finding, if verified, would likely put a halt to nearby drilling for geothermal energy -- drilling which the Park Service opposes. But the Bureau of Land Management, in a newly-published review, has refuted the oceanographers' report, saying that the evidence was inconclusive and had "an appearance of bias."

A drilling proposal stirs Montana town

RED LODGE, Mont. -- A proposal to explore for oil and natural gas in a nearby wild area has some residents of this tourist community fuming. What is especially maddening, the proposal's critics say, is that the oil company and regulatory agencies are misleading the public with contradictory information.

Phillips Petroleum proposes drilling on the Line Creek Plateau, a wild area east of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and seven miles south of Red Lodge, in south-central Montana.

The 10,000-foot-high plateau is a fragile alpine grassland popular with local hikers, horsemen and fishermen. Conservationists say the proposal is an example of oil and gas leasing gone awry on public lands. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management say they are merely following the law in considering the exploration. At a recent public meeting here sponsored by the Forest Service, the proposal drew fire from a crowd of more than 100.

In praising the area for its recreation values and wildlife, which include elk, goats and bighorn sheep, the testimony of Ken Shesney, a Red Lodge resident, typified most of the sentiment at the meeting.

"Would we put an oil well in St. Patrick's Cathedral, or on the lawn of the White House?" he asked Custer National Forest officials. "Line Creek is better than those two places."

Many speakers said Red Lodge's tourism and agricultural based economy could be hurt by oil and gas development. "The future of the Red Lodge economy is better related to clean air, water and wildlife," said Douglas Hart, a board member of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, a conservation group.

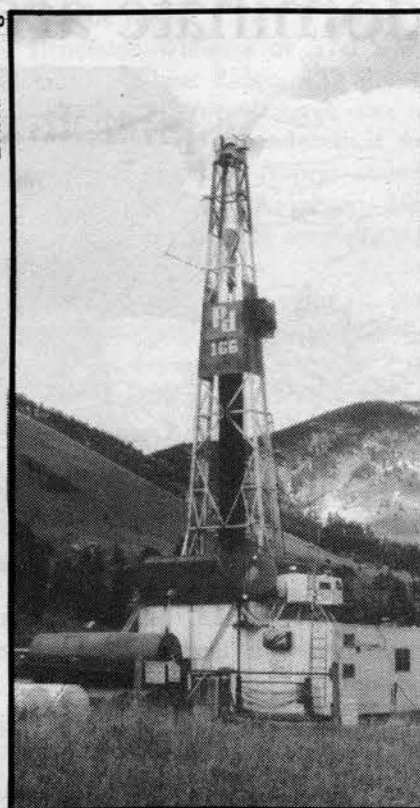
Carbon County Commissioner Mona Nutting, one of only three drilling proponents who spoke at the meeting, disagreed. She said an existing oil well next to town, the subject of another controversy, has resulted in an annual payroll of \$180,000. "Sentiment and emotion doesn't generate the money oil would generate," she said.

Phillips' well would be on the north side of the 21,000-acre Line Creek Plateau roadless area, which has long been recommended for wilderness designation by conservationists. The company plans on running a nine-mile-long water pipeline from Line Lake, a popular alpine attraction, to the well site. To protect the fragile alpine soil and plants, the company says it will not build a road along the pipeline and into the site. This is where the information gets a little confusing.

Phillips spokesperson Renee Taylor said the company will maintain the pipeline and bring in and remove the drilling equipment "by roading," but without making a road. The estimated 120 trips over the plateau to move the drilling equipment will be by all-terrain vehicles and the company will blade only areas that cannot be skirted or driven over, she said.

Confused critics complained that her explanation sounded like road-building to them. Residents were also befuddled by the company's rationale for proposing both overland access and helicopter access. When asked why the drilling equipment

Bruce Farling



Amoco drill rig in the Beartooth Mountains, near the Line Creek Plateau

won't be moved by helicopter, Taylor said because helicopters disturb wildlife. However, when pressed by several questioners, she said helicopters will still be used daily during the 110-day permit period for shuttling workers and equipment to the site. The reason: to protect fragile alpine soil and plants from being tracked up by vehicles.

The exploration proposal will require an environmental impact statement. But according to Phillips and the Forest Service, the document will not analyze the possibility of full-scale development. Norm Smyers, Custer Forest minerals specialist, said the EIS "will touch lightly on that (full development) as an addendum ... given some very general parameters."

If full development is not covered in detail in the EIS, conservationists say they may take the BLM and Forest Service to court. They cite a 1987 decision in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that ruled Montana's Flathead and Gallatin national forests could not sell leases

without analyzing potential effects of full-field development of the leases. The case is known as Conner vs. Burford (HCN, 2/29/88).

Because the leases on Line Creek Plateau were sold in 1984, before the Conner decision, it is unclear if the ruling is applicable to development at Line Creek.

Pressed by the audience on whether the lease could be cancelled, Mat Millenbach, Miles City district manager for the BLM, did not make the crowd happy. The lease is a property right and cannot be denied, he said. "If you want to take that lease away from the company, then you have to talk to somebody else ... but I can't tell you to call your congressman."

At two open house meetings the next day, and at an April public meeting in Billings, the Forest Service and BLM faced off again with drilling opponents. Proponents of the development were scarce.

Louisa Wilcox, associate director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, said in March from her Bozeman, Mont., office that the history of oil and gas leasing on the Custer is that "they never say no."

She said the Line Creek Plateau, which lies in the Beartooth Mountains on the eastern fringe of the Yellowstone ecosystem, contributes greatly to the ecological diversity of the region. Because the plateau is high, isolated, and has limestone bedrock, the area is home to at least 20 rare plants. Development would be disastrous, she said.

The Forest Service said the area can be reclaimed successfully after the drilling is completed and cited several well locations south of the plateau as evidence. Wilcox disputes these claims, saying there is no record of successful rehabilitation on sites similar in elevation and habitat to the plateau. Wilcox said the opposition Phillips faced at the public meetings is only the beginning.

"They couldn't have picked a place that touches the nerve more directly," she said.

--Bruce Farling

Two national parks under siege

The flap over oil and gas development on the Line Creek Plateau is a microcosm of a threat that many conservationists call the most severe in the greater Yellowstone region.

According to a 1986 report by the Sierra Club, almost two-thirds of the 9.8 million acres of National Forest land surrounding Yellowstone -- an area roughly the size of Maryland -- is open to oil and gas leasing. Of that 5.9 million acres, 83 percent had already been leased by the time of its report, the Sierra Club said. Exploratory wells have been sunk in scattered areas in the region, and more are proposed.

Four of the five entrances to Yellowstone Park have been leased, as has a 30-mile-long strip next to the park's northwestern boundary. Additionally, in two of the region's six national forests -- the Gallatin and Targhee -- all of the country critical to grizzlies, known as Situation I habitat, has been leased. On several forests such as the Custer,

most of the land outside of classified wilderness is open to the oil and gas industry.

Conservationists say if even a small fraction of these leased acres are explored and developed, it could damage the delicate network of wild lands that surround and buffer Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. They also fear the area's abundant wildlife numbers would be reduced.

Exploration of the leased land often brings seismic blasting, roads, land clearing, drill wells, pipelines and sump ponds. Full-scale development usually means more of the same as well as buildings, power lines, oil pipelines, water diversions, pollutants and lots of people.

Louisa Wilcox of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition said interest in leasing and exploring for the area's fossil fuels is not slowing down. "It's just full-bore oil and gas everywhere."

--B.F.

Critic says 'reform' bill is giveaway

A bill designed to halt the "giveaway" of federal oil shale lands (HCN, 3/28/88) is still too kind to private interests, says a semi-retired professor of public affairs named Mike March. March's critics, who include environmentalists, say he is obsessed and opposes a much needed reform. March says his detractors have neither the expertise nor inclination to stand up for the public interest.

The bill March decries is designed to prevent the recurrence of a 1986 sale of 82,000 acres of public land. The Interior Department allowed the land in northwestern Colorado to go for a filing fee of \$2.50 an acre. Sens. Tim Wirth, D-Colo., and John Melcher, D-Mont., are sponsoring a companion bill to that of Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D-Colo., which passed the House of Representatives in June 1987.

The legislation prevents the patenting of claims staked before 1920, the year oil shale became a leasable mineral with royalties accruing to the government. Before 1920, oil shale land was given away in patents under the 1872 Mining Law to encourage exploration. Wirth says his bill would "take down the 'For Sale' signs hanging over" 270,000 more acres of the public domain. It is land that was supposedly in line for patenting under the 1872 law, when the leasing law went into effect. The right to patent remained alive through the past 68 years. The reform bill would extinguish it.

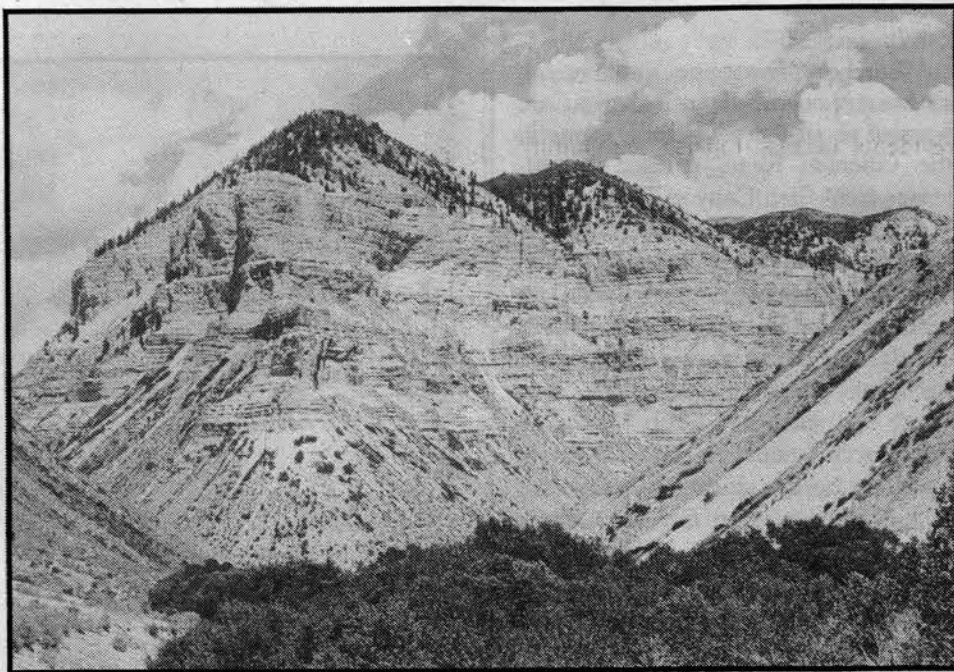
But March charges the legislation will lead to questionable mining leases and the eventual loss to the U.S. and state treasuries of hundreds of billions of dollars. March worked 33 years as a civil servant, 28 of them with the U.S. Bureau of the Budget, and has a long standing involvement with oil shale legislation. He has a Harvard Ph.D. in political economy and government.

March takes issue with a part of the bill that allows for transforming pre-1920 claims into 20-year leases while relaxing some standards for leasing. That means that while people and companies with pre-1920 claims won't get outright ownership, they will be able to get a new 20-year lease, with any production royalties accruing to the treasury.

March says none of the pre-1920 claims is valid. To be valid under the 1872 law, the land must have been subject to \$100 of work each year for at least 68 years. March says oil was very cheap in the 1930s, and that during that period all the claims were abandoned. Decades later, he says, speculators bought them from the original claimants or their heirs. He says that unlike Campbell's bill, the Senate bill has no requirement for Interior to determine the validity of the claims before granting a 20-year lease.

March says Congress should enforce existing regulations on claims, including checking their validity, instead of granting new leases. If new leases are granted, he adds, they should include a timetable for oil shale development so claimants won't "just sit on the mineral rights." Oil shale is not yet commercially viable to produce.

March also points to a 1987 law sponsored by Melcher and Wirth, which temporarily stopped further



Oil shale lands in Piceance Basin, Colorado

patenting of public land except for 11,000 acres for which patents had already been filed. He says that exemption and this new bill will erode the government's ability to recover in court land already patented, and that Congress has not adequately investigated the past sales.

The result can be predicted, he says: Future bills will extend claims and leases that will ultimately end up in private hands, and it will cost the government huge amounts in royalties when production of oil shale finally becomes economical. He also says the new liberalized leases will encourage speculation on future federal extensions and relaxations of leases. "I know how this process works ... special interests squeezing successive liberalizations out of the Congress."

Jim Martin, a Wirth aide, disagrees. He says the bill is "tough" and liberalized standards on the new leases represent "bending over backwards to be fair" to those who might have planned to patent their claims.

March has unlikely allies in the Reagan administration and conservative Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Colo. While March calls the Senate bill a "giveaway," Armstrong calls it "confiscation."

Armstrong says he opposes ending oil shale patents because "valid mining claims are not in the public domain ... a mining claim belongs to the claimholder who is legally maintaining it." Armstrong does not have a view on whether most of the claims are valid, but would "trust

the experts" at the Bureau of Land Management, according to aide David Jensen. The Interior Department, of which the BLM is a part, was widely criticized for failing to fully contest the 1986 claims, which resulted in the patenting of the 86,000 acres.

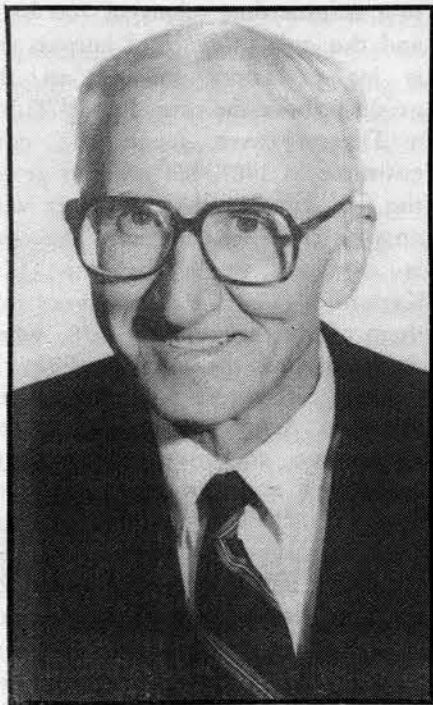
The Sierra Club's Washington, D.C., representative, Brooks Yeager, agrees with March that many of the claims are invalid and should be challenged. But he says the Senate bill is still "a long step in the right direction," and predicts any 20-year lease issued will expire without being mined. In January of this year, the Sierra Club urged an extension of the moratorium on patents and a full investigation of oil shale history, policy and outstanding claims.

Steve Blomeke, executive director of the Colorado Wildlife Federation, takes the same approach. He says in many ways March is right. But he adds, "I get kind of tired of Monday morning quarterbacks in the environmental community." He supports the bill.

Thomas Lustig, a National Wildlife Federation attorney, also supports the bill but says March may be correct that the government could recover the previously patented land if it could prove the claims were fraudulent. Lustig says he thinks pressing for that is not worth the effort compared to other battles. "We have to live in the real world."

March disagrees with the environmentalists because his vision of oil shale is different. He says while environmental groups are interested in "surface value" and beauty, the environmental value of the land is "negligible compared to its subsurface value." He says he would like to see oil shale eventually developed. But he wants to make sure the public gets its proper due from that development, perhaps in the form of a trust for education. According to March, oil shale revenue will likely add up to hundreds of billions of dollars. Western oil shale land, he says, has "more energy than Arabia."

The Senate bill is now being considered in committee. For more information write Mike March, 2605 Stanford Ave., Boulder, CO 80303 (303/494-4871) or Sen. Tim Wirth, 380 RSOB, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202/224-5852).



Mike March

--Michael J. Robinson

HOTLINE

Hysteria

"Stupid, idiotic and inaccurate" are what Colorado state Sen. Steve Durham, R-Colorado Springs, calls advertisements urging less driving to reduce Denver's "brown cloud," according to the *Denver Post*. Durham, who says the ads describing Denver's thick ambience might scare away business, attached a measure to a state pollution bill requiring the state-funded Better Air Campaign ads to be cleared first by the Legislature. Durham says the anti-pollution campaign creates "public hysteria," and that Denver's air is "overall ... pretty good." Durham is no stranger to controversy, having served as regional director for the Environmental Protection Agency early in the Reagan administration. Denver's carbon monoxide pollution rating recently dropped to only seventh worst in the nation, down from highest in 1986.

L-P mill closes

Louisiana-Pacific has made it official, its timber mill in Dubois is closed indefinitely (HCN, 3/14/88). Environmentalists and the Forest Service recently opposed more timber sales in the Bridger-Teton National Forest and District Court Judge Clarence Brimmer refused to issue an injunction allowing L-P to continue timbering near Dubois. Margie DeSpain, editor of the *Dubois Frontier*, says the town is divided in its feelings toward L-P's shutdown, with some people planning to leave while others say "good riddance" to the mill. According to the *Casper Star-Tribune*, most people are worried about the effect of the closure on the town and its economy, but others say the mill's shutting may benefit Dubois in the long run, forcing it to diversify from a just-timber economy. Of the 27 employees who have asked L-P to relocate them, the company will relocate 20 immediately, transferring them to L-P's other operations in the West.

Mazeltov

The Wyoming Fish and Game Department said two black-footed ferrets were born this spring after all 24 of the endangered animals at its research center "participated in the captive breeding program." There was one hitch, however. Molly, an "aggressive female ferret," consistently rejected each potential suitor in the population. Since Molly was not directly related to any other ferrets in captivity, her genetic contribution is key, says Art Reese of Fish and Game. Thus Molly became the first black-footed ferret to be artificially inseminated.

Radiation compensation

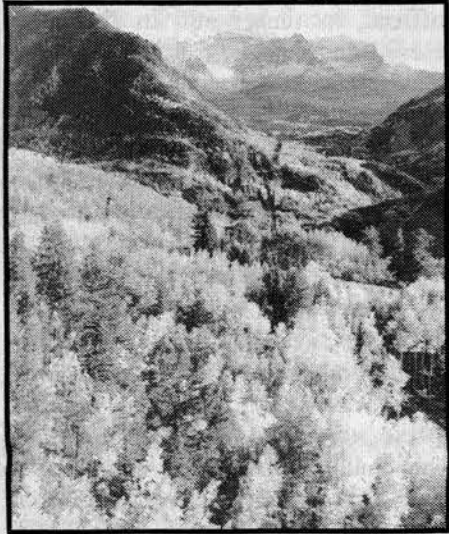
A bill granting benefits to 250,000 veterans exposed to radiation during the 1945 attack on Japan and postwar nuclear tests in Nevada and the Pacific just passed the House and Senate. President Reagan is expected to veto the bill, since his administration claims there is no scientific basis for assuming past exposure to radiation caused cancer in veterans. Only 28 of nearly 5,000 veterans sick with cancers have received disability benefits.

6-High Country News -- May 23, 1988

HOTLINE

Cutting the BLM

Federal agencies usually resist budget cuts, but not BLM director Robert Burford. He appeared before both House and Senate Appropriations' Interior subcommittees to defend his agency's 1989 fiscal request for \$643 million, which is \$47 million below last year's level. In past years Congress has not approved of the Bureau of Land Management's requests for budget cuts. This year the BLM proposes reducing wildlife programs and cutting its wild horse and burro program by \$7.2 million. According to Joe Zilincar, BLM spokesman, the agency is looking toward adoptions on the East Coast, expanding its wild horse training program for prison inmates and trying to establish a wild horse sanctuary near Hot Springs, South Dakota. The BLM proposes doubling spending on hazardous waste investigations in 1989 and funding a new computerized record-keeping system to keep track of land and mineral leases, sales, and fees.



Sheep Mountain near Telluride, Colorado

Timber fight

Residents of the resort town of Telluride, Colo., are rallying against a Forest Service timber plan that would cut 3.1 million board feet on nearby Sheep Mountain. Art Goodtimes, a member of the newly formed Sheep Mountain Alliance, says that it is really exciting. Telluride has not been active in environmental issues, but this "has catalyzed energy. Even the San Miguel County Commissioners have come out against the proposed sale." The proposed timbering would harm more than the local economy. Sheep Mountain is a significant elk grazing and calving area, says Jim Davidson, publisher of the *Telluride Mountain Journal*. "Every July, stockmen dump sheep in there and the elk move up into the timber stands -- the same timber stands the Forest Service is talking about cutting." Because much of Sheep Mountain is boggy, 4.5 miles of gravelled roads would have to be built to reach the timber. Davidson points out that gravelled roads can't be closed: "The best they can do is put up a gate. ORVs will have a hey-day." The Sheep Mountain Alliance is pressing the Forest Service to do an EIS, however, the agency is working on an environmental assessment to determine whether an EIS is necessary. For more information, write the alliance at Box 389, Telluride, CO 81435, or the Forest Service, c/o Leonard Atencio, Dolores District Office, 100 N. 6th St., Dolores, CO 81323.

Grand Canyon environment versus kilowatts

Whether private or commercial, all boaters on the Grand Canyon are worried about the wild fluctuations in the Colorado River caused by releases from Glen Canyon Dam.

The Bureau of Reclamation and Western Area Power Administration operate the downstream Hoover Dam on Lake Mead for base electric power supply, but Glen Canyon Dam is run for peak power supply. The side effect of spinning Glen Canyon's turbines to meet electric demands from far away cities is pulses of water through the Grand Canyon ranging from 3,000 cubic feet of water per second up to 33,000 cfs.

According to BuRec's recently completed Glen Canyon Environmental Studies report, flow levels in the canyon change hourly, usually in cycles of two peaks and two troughs a day, with the river fluctuating up to 13 feet. The report concludes that releases for electricity, as well as flood waters spilling over the dam, are having devastating effects on beaches, campsites, fish populations and riparian zones in the Grand Canyon.

Flood releases cause the greatest damage, the report says. In 1983, spring floods carried off 50 percent of the beaches in some areas, and wiped out 95 percent of the canyon's marshes and 75 percent of bird nests in riparian zones. Flood releases are not rare. The report estimates they occur in one out of four years.

Daily releases for electricity cause the same effects as flood releases, but on a smaller scale and with relentless consistency. The Bureau's report says rapid changes in river levels reduce the quality of white water rafting and fishing in the canyon by approximately 15 percent, often stranding fish, exposing spawning beds and preventing adult fish ready to spawn from reaching tributaries. The impacts are most severe to the federally endangered humpback chub, the report says.

As beaches and gravel bars are swept away, the huge dam upriver stops silt from replacing the lost sands, meaning erosion in the Grand Canyon is permanent and irreversible. Rob Elliott, a long-time guide and outfitter in the canyon, says in the mid-1960s, when he first started guide trips, "there were wide, expansive beaches in most parts of the Grand Canyon." Now, 20 years later, he says many of the same beaches have been reduced to half or less of their former size. In three corridors where there are already a limited number of beaches because of narrow canyons and rocky ledges, some campsites have been eliminated.

Elliott says while beaches are critical to river rafters, they also provide the majority of the habitat for birds and wildlife that live in the canyon year round.

The problem may worsen in the future. BuRec recently upgraded the electrical turbines in the concrete interior of the dam, and now it and the Western Area Power Administration want permission to produce more peak power, and therefore greater fluctuations in river flow.

WAPA officials say the dam's new capacity could be worth \$9.2 million a year in electricity, and that improvements should proceed as planned because Congress authorized



Rafting the Grand Canyon

the Glen Canyon Dam primarily for water storage and hydropower.

River guides, private boaters and others oppose the changes. They say changing river flows constitutes a major federal action with serious environmental and social impacts, which therefore requires an environmental impact statement.

Elliott adds that while the newly-released Glen Canyon study (a six-year, \$6 million report) doesn't fit the requirements of an EIS, it does say impacts to the river are severe enough to require an EIS. At a hearing before Congress on May 4, Elliott, speaking on behalf of the Arizona River Guides Association, asked the House Interior Committee to require a full-scale study of impacts to the canyon and interim steps to protect the river.

At the same time, the National Organization of River Sports has

begun a letter-writing campaign among its large private boater membership to ask Congress for the same.

The boaters face an upriver paddle. No river and dam complex in the Western U.S. puts recreation, wildlife and aesthetics ahead of water storage and hydro production.

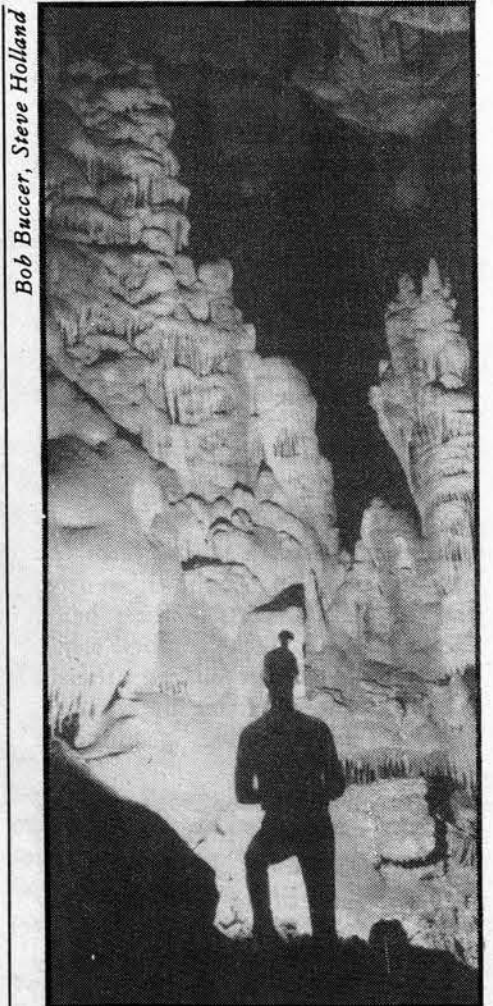
Meanwhile, the various federal agencies involved in decisions over the Grand Canyon and the dam -- the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Western Area Power Administration -- are split over what recommendations to make to their common boss, Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. Unless instructed by Congress, Hodel will decide if an EIS is required. His decision is expected this summer.

--Steve Hinchman

HOTLINE

No longer a deep secret

An Arizona cave first entered in 1974 and kept secret until now has become part of the state's park system. "It's a wonderful cave and was hard to keep secret," says Cheryl Steenerson of Arizona State Parks. Near Benson, Ariz., the cave is made up of two football-field-sized rooms about 50 to 100 feet high. It is a "live" cave, meaning its thousands of stalagmites and stalactites are wet and actively growing. It is also home to a summertime colony of 700 bats, and the only evidence of human use is by prehistoric Indians on the ground above the cave. Randy Tufts, a Tucson caver, found the cave entrance in 1967, but entered it for the first time seven years later with another caver, Gary Tenen. The cave is on land owned by the J.A. Kartchner family, and the cavers told them about their find in 1978, when they enlisted the family's help in finding caretakers. That search led them to Arizona State Parks, and after two secretive years state legislators and Gov. Rose Mofford acted to include the cave in the state parks system. Arizona plans to buy the land for \$1.6 million from the Arizona Nature Conservancy, which is acting as mediator in the land exchange. In the works are guided underground tours, an educational and interpretive center, and nature



Inside the new cave

and archaeological surface trails. For more information, contact Cheryl A. Steenerson, Arizona State Parks, 800 W. Washington -- Suite 415, Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602/255-4174).

Bob Bucer, Steve Holland

The fight for rowing room in the Grand Canyon

One of the fastest growing and most lucrative sports in the West is river running. But, like all uses of water here, there is more demand than supply and river runners who once rafted at will now run on restricted launch dates and compete for access.

Nowhere is the popularity and regulation of the West's rivers more controversial than on the region's premier stretch of white water: the Colorado River through Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park. Last year more than 21,000 boaters set off down the canyon. For most of the summer season, more than 100 people launch a day, including up to five commercial trips and one private trip. But while use of the river is continually rising, it is only a fraction of those who would like to make the trip.

The Colorado was one of the first rivers in the West to be regulated, and now the paper dam at the Lee's Ferry launch site holds a backlog of 3,200 private boaters waiting for permits. Their wait averages 4.2 years, say Park Service officials, and is often longer for rafters with tight schedules.

There is a much shorter wait to get on the river if you buy the services of one of 20 rafting guide companies, which are allocated 67 percent of the user-days in the canyon. A user-day is one person on the river for one day. For each of the last seven summers, the Park Service has allocated commercial rafters 106,000 user days and the private sector 44,000.

The lopsided allocation of permits is a serious problem, say private boaters, and the issue tops the list of complaints received by the Park Service about its Colorado River management plan. That plan, established in 1981, is now up for review.

Eric Leaper, executive director of the National Organization of River Sports in Colorado Springs, Colo., says the allocation system does not reflect actual demand. "The public's right to go down the canyon non-commercially is not even a faint shadow of the right to go commercially," he says. To get on the river in any reasonable length of time, Leaper says boaters are often forced to buy a place on a commercial trip. At a cost of over \$100 a day, a vacation on a commercial trip is more expensive than going on a cruise ship in the Caribbean, says Leaper.

His organization, which represents 10,000 private boaters nationwide, wants the Park Service to amend its management plan to even the waiting time for river permits.

Commercial outfitters say waiting is a problem for everyone. Rob Elliott, owner of Arizona Raft Adventures in Flagstaff, says by late last winter his company had already filled 95 percent of this summer's trips. Elliott says, like many other commercial companies, he is turning people away for this season and is already taking bookings for the summer of 1990.

Elliott, who is also chair of the Arizona chapter of the Western River Guides Association, adds that the figures for private boaters look worse than they really are. He says people planning a trip together will often all apply for a permit, which inflates the numbers. Moreover, he says, a private permit gets not one, but 16

1941	4
1942	8
1943	0
1944	0
1945	0
1946	0
1947	4
1948	6
1949	12
1950	7
1951	29
1952	19
1953	31
1954	21
1955	70
1956	55
1957	135
1958	80
1959	120
1960	205
1961	255
1962	372
1963	6
1964	38
1965	547
1966	1,067
1967	2,099
1968	3,609
1969	6,019
1970	9,933
1971	10,885
1972	14,333
1973	13,247
1974	11,947
1975	12,007
1976	11,529
1977	9,717
1978	11,730
1979	12,138
1980	14,830
1981	17,038
1982	16,949
1983	15,443
1984	15,952
1985	18,113
1986	21,168

Rafting the
Colorado River:
1941-1986

people on the river at the same time. To put that many people together on a commercial trip you would have to make reservations a year or two in advance, says Elliott.

Rather than conflict, Elliott says the real need is for the Park Service to improve its management plan to get rafters on the river in the most efficient manner. During the 1987 season, the commercial rafter sector used 95 percent of its allocated river days by donating unused permits to a pool which the Park Service then redistributed among other outfitters.

But despite the long waiting list, non-commercial rafters only used 79 percent of their river days. The problem comes when a scheduled private trip cancels on short notice. The group that form to fill the empty slot often have fewer passengers than 16, and go for less time than originally planned. In 1987 nearly 10,000 private user-days went unused.

As a temporary solution, the Park Service has given private boaters 30 extra launch dates in the 1988 summer season. That won't give the non-commercial sector more days on the river, but it allows more flexibility, says Chuck Lundy, head of the management plan review team. Lundy says the Park Service will decide if a change in allocations is justified after reviewing the 1988 season.

More efficient use of the river could add to another growing problem in the canyon -- congestion of boaters at campsites and side attractions. Elliott says 12 to 20 times a season his trips reach a well-known archaeological site, waterfall or side canyon only to find 150 or more people already there. That's only 10 percent of the time, he says, but it cuts into a visitor's solitude and wilderness experience.

Motorized boating is another

conflict. Original studies in the 1970s, backed by public comment, recommended phasing out motors within five years. That became the preferred alternative in a 1979 environmental impact statement, but the plan was overturned by Congress. Led by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, Congress forbid the Park Service to spend any money to phase out motors. Today, perhaps as a result of the trend toward mini-vacations, 65 percent of commercial raft expeditions are the faster, one-week motorized trips. That has reduced the number of user days expended by each visitor and increased the total number of rafters who get on the river each year. No motorized use is allowed from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15.

However, high use levels are beginning to take a toll on the canyon. Lundy says the Park Service spends \$30,000 a year to maintain trails down by the river. Because of impacts to flora, fauna and archaeological sites, the agency is also debating temporary closure of some sites to give them a rest.

Lundy's Colorado River review team will hold workshops on these issues and on proposals to increase winter rafting and to permit fishing trips in addition to white water trips. One meeting was held in Flagstaff, Ariz., last month and two more are set for May 24 at the Sheraton Airport Hotel, 3535 Quebec St. in Denver, Colo.; and May 25 at the Holiday Inn, 1000 East 6th St. in Reno, Nev. Both are from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the afternoon, and from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the evening. Call the Park Service at 602/638-7708 for more information.

Lundy says the Park Service will present drafts of proposed revisions by July, and decide on final alternatives by December.

--Steve Hinchman

Quotas come to two Colorado rivers

Starting this summer, two western Colorado rivers will join the growing ranks of rivers in the West with regulated access.

Bureau of Land Management officials say the Gunnison River through the Gunnison Gorge near Montrose has topped saturation levels of boating and fishing use, and the Dolores River from Cahone to Bedrock near the Utah border is not far behind. The agency is currently drafting management plans for each, intending to avoid the crowding now occurring on rivers such as the Arkansas in eastern Colorado (HCN, 2/29/88).

A ceiling on the number of private and commercial boating trips down the Gunnison goes into effect this year, the result of a management plan written by the BLM and a task force of private and commercial boaters, fishing interests, wildlife representatives and conservationists.

Still in draft form, the plan gives the most launch permits to private rafters and kayakers and distributes commercial permits among 13 outfitters based on historic use of the river. That has upset outfitters. They say restrictions are coming after the Gunnison has been heavily impacted by human use, and that they are being penalized for litter and other damage along the river corridor caused by private users.

However, rafting restrictions this year may be irrelevant, as no one may be able to raft the Gunnison at all. Blue Mesa Reservoir above the Gunnison gorge is 180,000 acre-feet below capacity, the result of a drought year and miscalculations in winter releases by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau says it will maintain the river at 300 cubic feet per second for the entire summer to conserve water in the reservoir.

Outfitters say that will wipe out

their business, which needs, at a minimum, double that flow for safe boating.

The BLM has also put restrictions on the Dolores River for the first time. Use on the Dolores -- a combination alpine white water and desert rock river in southwestern Colorado -- doubled in 1987 over the previous two summers. Tom Christensen of the local BLM office says the agency wants "to get a plan in place before things get out of hand down there," as happened on the Gunnison.

While a plan is being written, the BLM has limited commercial use to outfitters that rafted the Dolores in 1987, and has restricted each outfitter to the same number of river days they used in 1987, with no more than 25 passengers per trip. Private boaters will be monitored but not regulated.

BARBED WIRE

Next we'll stop bureauterrorists from whistle-blowing on federal agencies.

Idaho Sen. James McClure is co-sponsoring a bill to stop "ecoterrorists" from blowing whistles to scare away hunters' game.

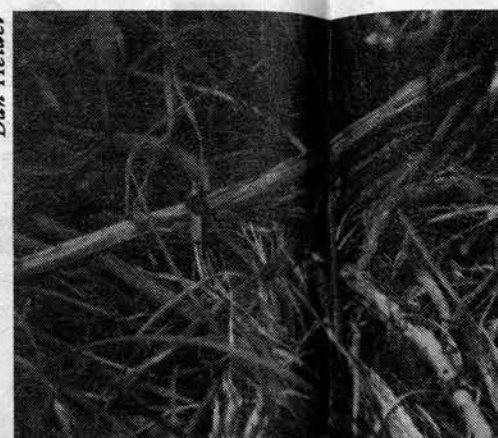
Don't blame Regan. His astrologer told him that was the day to act.

President Ronald Reagan is upset that Donald Regan attempted to "defame the First Lady on Mother's Day."

8-High Country News -- May 23, 1988

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has been something to sing about!
Thanks to all of you.*

Dan Heidel

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Coeur D'Alene, Idaho

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Cynthia Howard
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WESTERN ROUNDUP

Timber study causes a flap

Western Colorado's largest environmental group, the Western Colorado Congress, held its annual meeting in Paonia, Colo., May 14.

Titled, "National Forests: For What and For Whom?" the conference featured Forest Service critic Randal O'Toole of Cascade Holistic Environmental Consultants in Eugene, Ore. Over 100 activists from across the region listened as O'Toole presented his economic incentives blueprint for reforming the Forest Service, so that the agency would want to manage land for recreational and aesthetic values rather than timber.

O'Toole was followed by a panel discussion on national forest management and by workshops on current forest and water issues in western Colorado.

But the big event of the meeting happened at a press conference during a lunch break, where WCC leaders released a study titled, "The Social Effects of Aspen Harvesting in Western Colorado." The \$34,000 report, funded by the Ford Foundation, was to provide an authoritative look at the bitter fight over aspen harvest levels in western Colorado forests. But the report's substance has been overshadowed by a controversy started by the report's principal researcher, Mary Jane Masters.

Before the study was released, Masters charged in the local press that WCC leaders altered data and added conclusions. In reaction, she quit and called the Forest Service to apologize for the report.

Kevin Williams, author of the study and director of the Montrose-based group, denies he or any of his staff altered Masters' data. Dick Wingerson, a member who contributed to the report, says the conflict arose when the group's timber committee decided to add two chapters to Masters' work: a statistical analysis of her data and conclusions based on that analysis.

Wingerson says Masters' draft lacked a conclusion; because of the complexity of the information, the committee decided both analysis and conclusion were needed. He adds that Masters quit before the last two chapters were written and talked to the Forest Service and the press without reading the final copy.

The report is a first-ever look at western Colorado communities' economic relationships to national for-

ests, and how those towns and the Forest Service perceive timber harvest impacts. It includes background information on aspen timbering on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison national forests, and a comparison of those values to recreational use of the forest and the jobs recreation supports.

The main, and controversial, part of the 70-page, year and a half study is an opinion survey of both Forest Service officials and forest users on the good and bad impacts of higher and lower aspen harvests. A description of the survey and tables of responses is included in the report, followed by a standard analytical T-test. Winderson says is so "squeaky clean it cannot be questioned." The analysis shows that, on the questions asked, Forest Service personnel and forest users, with the exception of the timber industry, disagree almost 100 percent on the impacts of timber harvesting.

Masters, who has since read the report, says, "I reached different conclusions, and I don't think their conclusions were supported by the data." Masters adds that her draft report did indeed have an analysis and conclusion, and that Williams' substitutions were both confusing and disappointing.

However, Masters refused to tell *High Country News* what her conclusions were and how they differed from the report. She said the issue is a local fight, and too technical to be understood in a brief news article. She added that she would only give that information to the Forest Service or to other agencies involved in timber disputes.

Williams and Wingerson say the controversy has not damaged the report's usefulness. Williams says it will aid the dialogue over the Louisiana-Pacific Corp's request to double aspen harvests in the area.

While WCC opposes the increase, the report reaches no conclusion about harvest levels; indeed, Williams says it has no earth-shaking conclusions at all.

He told the press conference that it concludes that the national forests are critically important to towns. He also said that while increased harvesting, as proposed by L-P, could have significant impacts, no one agrees on the facts at issue or on how serious the impacts would be.

--Steve Hinchman

HCN



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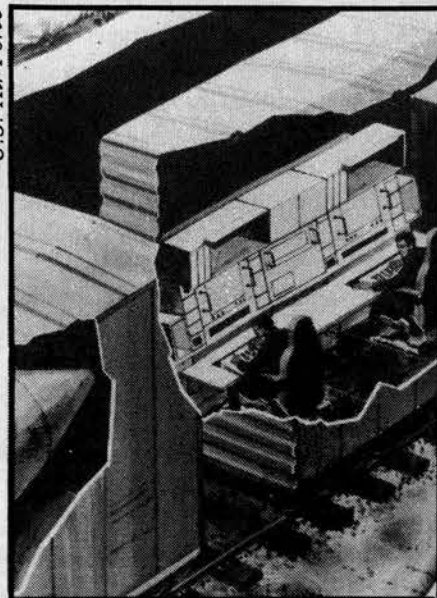
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ANONYMOUS DONORS

How do you move a bomb?

Congress is considering two rival mobile missile systems, both of which could be based at Malmstrom Air Force Base near Great Falls, Mont. The 10-nuclear warhead MX, destined to ride the railways, is said to be cheaper than the single-nuclear warhead Midgetman. But Midgetman advocates say its lightness and movement by truck makes it more mobile. The Pentagon backs the rail-MX missile system while House Democrats strongly support Midgetman, says the *Great Falls Tribune*. Recently, however, the Pentagon cut Midgetman's budget in favor of the rail-MX, leaving just enough money for Midgetman research to be resuscitated under the next president.

U.S. Air Force





National Guard practices rappelling into the Snake River Birds of Prey Area

Bombing...

(Continued from page 1)

mandate of the Department of Defense and to meet environmental constraints."

It's the Guard's priorities that rile Nelson. According to the memorandum of understanding that guides the area's management, birds come first, and Guard activities second. Right now, he says, that is reversed.

Countless studies have been conducted on the more than 1,000 pairs of raptors that nest in the Birds of Prey Area, but none has been conducted in the Orchard Training Area. Nelson fears that unless crucial baseline data are collected now, it will be too late to reverse possible damage to raptor's prey and their associated habitat.

In keeping with its upbeat environmental attitude, the Guard is conducting its own draft environmental impact statement on the project. The Bureau of Land Management will have the final say on the matter, and it has yet to decide whether to conduct an environmental analysis or a full EIS.

So far, the Guard's draft EIS has been blasted by critics who say the Guard should have widened its scope to include cumulative environmental impacts of its expansion. Instead, the Guard focused only on the direct environmental impacts of constructing two storage buildings and updating the firing range.

"We decided in the scoping process last year that we would not get into that (cumulative impacts)," said Tom Haislip, project manager for the Guard's environmental contractor, CH2M Hill in Boise. Haislip said the Guard's Environmental Management and Analysis Plan evaluates environmental impacts and designates courses of action for the BLM and the Guard. Raptor advocates say the plan has no formal public review, and because of that, has been unresponsive to public concern.

"We need to make a complete environmental impact statement before (the Guard) wastes any more public money and public land," Nelson said.

A Cornell University Advisory Group on the Birds of Prey Area wrote that the Guard's environmental analysis may be an "important, new, and constructive approach to solving the serious environmental problems"

'You can't tell me that 290 tanks driving around out there shooting off artillery aren't having an effect on birds.'

that the Guard's activities have caused on public lands near the Snake River, "or it could be a subtle circumvention of the intent of NEPA" (National Environmental Policy Act).

"Since the public has not been involved, there is no way for the public to know," the Cornell advisors concluded.

Guard officials deny they are shutting the public out of the environmental review process. They point to the Birds of Prey Steering Committee as the link to public concerns. Nelson, a committee member since the beginning, counters that his and others' suggestions have often been disregarded. He says the major concern has been the need for hard data.

Before the Guard expands its war games, conservationists say the Guard should:

- Inventory ground squirrel and jackrabbit populations in the Orchard Training Area. These two species are the prey base for 210 pairs of prairie falcons and 35 pairs of golden eagles, not to mention 65 pairs of red-tailed hawks. Unless scientists collect baseline population data, it's impossible to know whether prey species are being affected by the Guard.

- Determine the impact of wild-fire, caused by artillery and lightning, on ground squirrel and jackrabbit habitat. Past fires have killed perennial bunchgrasses, opening the way for the spread of annual weeds such as cheatgrass and medusa-head wild rye. Jackrabbits and ground-squirrels need a mixture of sagebrush and perennial bunchgrasses for survival, biologists say.

Raptor experts point to the lack of fire control as a serious threat to prey habitat. The Guard can't fight fires in the OTA's artillery "impact area" because the ground is littered with potentially live explosives. A cat driver plowing a fire line might ignite the explosive and get blown to bits, Guard officials say.

- Determine whether troop and tank maneuvers and bombing have had an effect on ground-nesting raptors such as short-eared owls. The Guard has agreed to restrict troop and tank maneuvers in certain areas during nesting season to try to mitigate this potential problem.

- Determine whether troop and tank maneuvers affect raptors' hunting activities. Nelson says noise and disturbance could have an impact on hunting success. "The noise (of bombing) is not going to disturb them and bump them from their nests," Steenhoff added. "But it might have an impact on their hunting activities and their ability to feed their young." In addition, birds could be swooping down on prey and

get blown up if they happen to be hunting in a target area, Steenhoff said.

Tom Nicholson, a third-generation Kuna rancher, gave his own observations of how Guard activities have affected the OTA. "That area's just grown and grown and grown," Nicholson said at a March 22 public hearing. "The tanks are destroying the area, and it's hard to control the young (soldiers) when they're out here for two weeks of troop exercises."

"The night flares light up the sky like you can't believe," he continued in a slow, steady voice. "If that continues, thousands of acres will burn out there as they have in past years, and the rodents won't have anyplace to go. You know if it comes down to national defense against the rodents and the Birds of Prey Area, it's going to be national defense."

Morley Nelson says it doesn't take a genius to know that the Guard's activities are slowly wiping out prey populations and habitat in the OTA: "You can't tell me that 290 tanks driving around out there

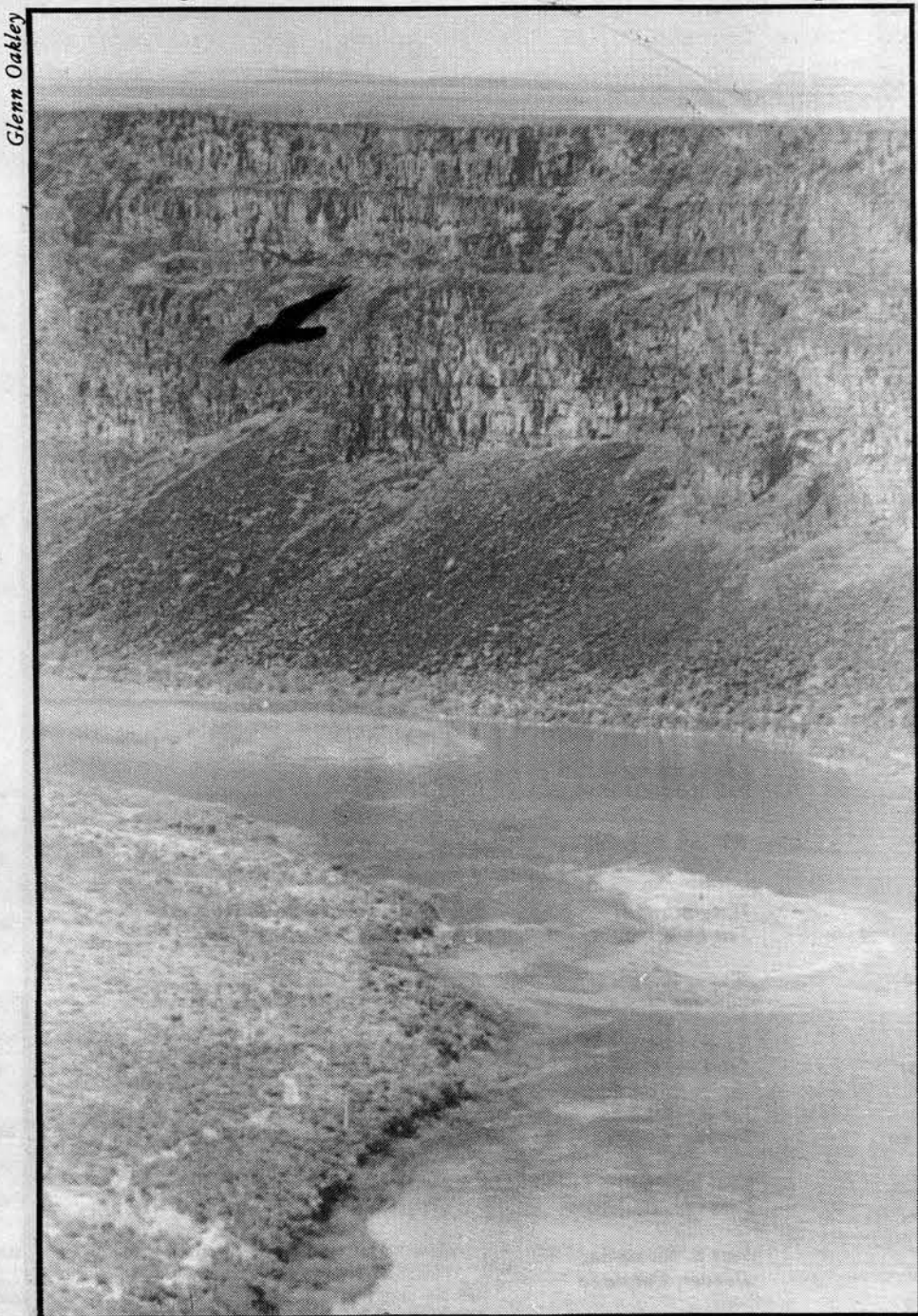
shooting off artillery aren't having an effect on the birds. Come on!"

The Guard is not bashful about explaining why it won't address cumulative environmental impacts. "We have to proceed or we might lose the appropriation and some other state will get the project," said Col. Richard H. Brown, Guard engineer. The Guard wants to complete its EIS by mid-May, and gain approval from the BLM by late summer.

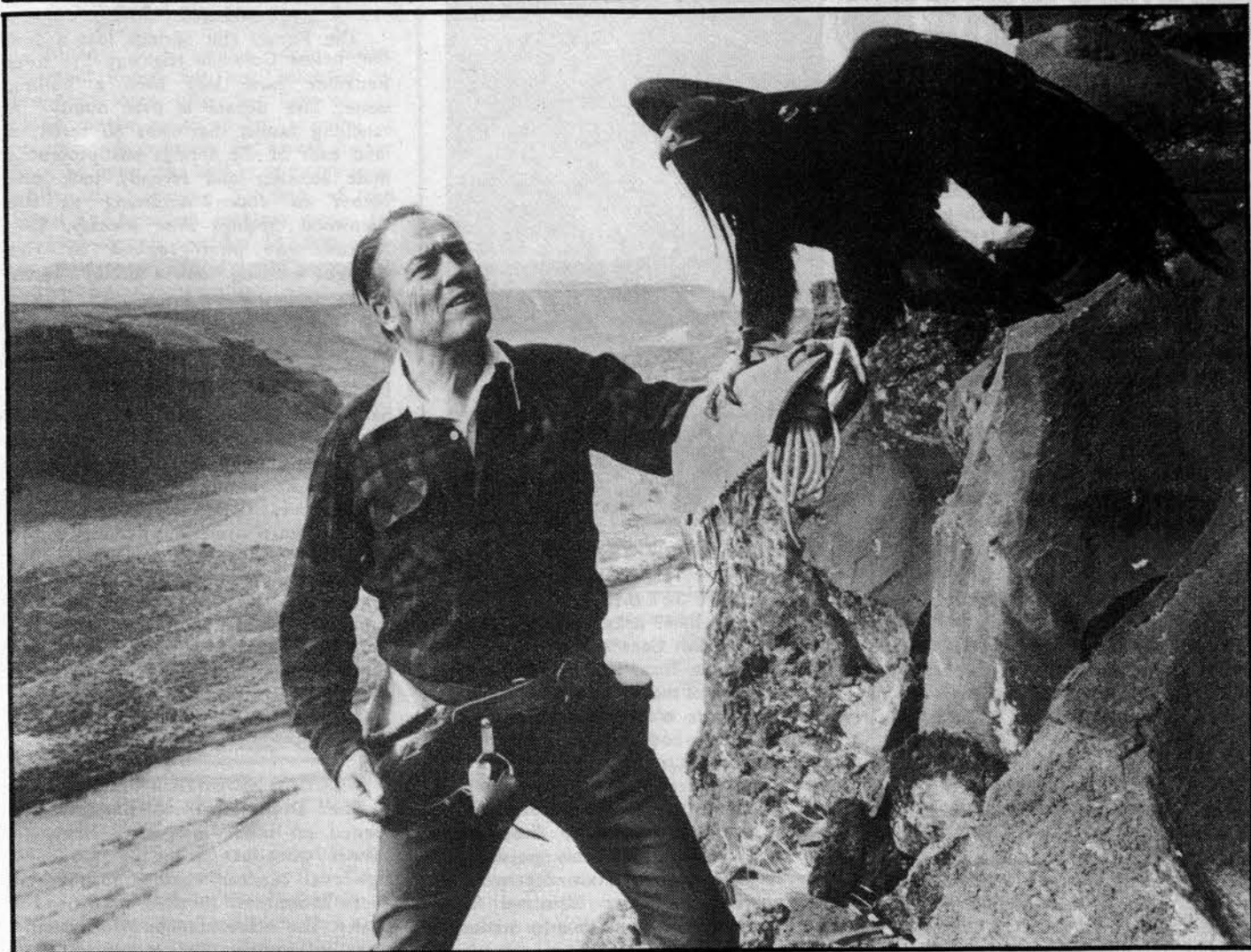
"Just because they have the money doesn't mean they should plow through and do it now," Nelson said. "We need to remind the Department of Interior that the Guard is a tenant of our public land. That land is yours and mine."

Nelson and others know their only hope in bringing the Guard's expansion to a halt will rest with the BLM, from which the Guard must obtain a right-of-way in order to proceed with expansion.

Dennis Hoyem, manager of the BLM's Bruneau Resource Area, said the BLM may require the Guard to conduct the studies as part of



Turkey vulture flies over the Snake River within Birds of Prey area



Idaho Tourism

Morley Nelson, expert on eagles and birds of prey, visits a golden eagle on a cliff above the Snake River

granting the right-of-way. But he doubted any studies could be mandated prior to approval. "The guard and the birds have been co-existing out there for a long time," Hoyem said. "A lot of people don't know the history behind this thing."

The BLM's stand was not surprising to Nelson. "Here you have one man dealing with an international problem," he said of Hoyem. "That is wrong. This thing goes all the way to Washington, D.C. The Department of the Interior doesn't want to get into a fight with the war department."

Officials with the World Center for Birds of Prey, a Peregrine Fund-operated rehabilitation and tour center, have been cautious in their criticism of Guard activities at the OTA.

Bill Heinrich, a raptor biologist and manager of operations at the World Center, said, "When the Birds of Prey Area was formed, it would have been best then to relocate the training elsewhere or restrict any increase in use. But instead the level of use multiplied and further improvements were made, and now more are about to be added."

"In five or 15 years, we wonder what will come next, for each improvement or modification increases the value of the OTA to the military, but will most probably reduce the value to birds of prey," added Heinrich.

Bill Burnham, director of the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey, commended the Guard for its willingness to address environmental impacts. "The Guard is really interested in doing it right," said Burnham, national director of the Peregrine Fund. "They want to preserve the wildlife and the land. But they're on a learning curve, and they've got a long ways to go."

Burnham said he hopes the Guard considers that its activities could make a significant impact on raptors' prey base. "The prey base is what makes the Birds of Prey Area unique," he said. "Without the prey, it would be just another

canyon. What a shame it would be to ruin the uniqueness of this area."

Nelson believes the best alternative is to set up a committee of concerned parties that could oversee the completion of an impartial environmental impact study. "It must be a committee that is not under pressure from the Department of Defense," he said. "Anything less than that will result in gross error."

As part of that environmental study, Nelson said, several alternatives should be considered that the Guard ignored. For example, the feasibility of relocating the OTA to the south side of the Snake River canyon should be considered, he said. Nelson, who served under Gen. George Patton in World War II and also fought with the much-heralded 10th Mountain Division, said it makes no sense to conduct tank maneuvers on the flat plateau on the north side of the river, when countless acres of rolling terrain lies to the south. Nelson says the southern side of the river is not nearly as important for raptors.

The biggest issue the EIS should address is compatibility, said Nelson, who was joined on that point by the Cornell study group. "The memorandum of understanding ... clearly states that the main goal of BLM management is the 'protection and maintenance of the nesting raptor population,' and that all other uses must be 'compatible with the primary use of the area by raptors,'" the group said in a written statement to the Guard.

"There is no public record of the specific guidance and control that the BLM may have exercised under this (memorandum of understanding)," the letter goes on. "Consequently a great deal of environmental damage in the area has gone unnoticed by the conservation community."

The study group noted that in 1980, the Interior Department barred cropland farming activities to protect birds of prey. "Compatible means 'capable of existing together in harmony,'" the group wrote. "It is now time to question whether or not the intensified military training activ-

ities ... can be considered compatible with the biological needs of raptors and other wildlife."

Nelson says he hopes people aren't taken in by the Guard's economic argument. He maintains that if Idaho protects and promotes the Birds of Prey Area, the potential tourism income could far exceed that from short-term construction jobs. "A conservative estimate of the number of people who have seen the canyon or the birds from it through TV, motion pictures and written articles is over one billion," he said. "The long-range financial potential through tourism and related work is far greater than the National Guard training."

Nelson believes his American and international film efforts, combined with the high-profile actions of the Peregrine Fund and the media, will shine the spotlight on southern Idaho as the raptor centre of the United States, if not the world. Keeping Birds of Prey Area intact is a long-term investment that will engender huge payoffs. Nelson said.

"I've been taking people into that canyon and doing films down there for more than 40 years," he said. "You see an eagle running down a coyote, and you feel a part of your environment, which is a wonderful feeling of understanding what the world needs."

Because of his national and international contacts, Nelson stands to wield the greatest influence in the battle to save the Birds of Prey Area from becoming overrun by the Guard. If the military and the BLM resist his idea to conduct an independent environmental review, Nelson said he will call in national environmental groups and national media to save the day.

"If the Guard really wants to do something intelligent, they should calm down," he said. "They can hold that money over till next year. We're not in danger of going to war right now. Let's take some time and do this thing right. It's the only prudent thing to do."

Written comments should be sent to Col. Richard H. Brown, Deputy Chief of Staff, engineering, Idaho Army National Guard, P.O. Box 45, Boise, ID 83707. Copies should be sent to Dennis R. Hoyem, Bruneau Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 3948 Development Ave., Boise, Idaho, 83705.

□

Stephen Stuebner is a reporter with the *Idaho Statesman* in Boise, Idaho. His story was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.



Glenn Oakley

Golden eagle chick in a cliff nest at Birds of Prey Natural Area

BULLETIN BOARD

LASTING ORV DAMAGE

The Park Service says unauthorized off road vehicles are inflicting lasting damage on the fragile desert of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Park officials say they are increasing efforts to educate visitors on vehicle-use restrictions and are also increasing law enforcement through more backcountry patrols and prosecution of violators. ORVs have already imposed a widespread network of roads and trails in the area, adding to vehicle routes that preceded recreation-area designation. Many of the latter began as uranium prospecting roads in the 1940s and '50s. For more information on ORV policy, write Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Box 1507, Page AZ 86040.

HELP OUT IN UTAH

Two parks and a national monument in Utah would like to hear from people interested in helping out this summer. Volunteers will assist biologists and archaeologists in Arches and Canyonlands national parks and Natural Bridges National Monument. Overnight travel into the backcountry is a possibility and small daily stipends may be awarded. For more information contact Larry Thomas, Kate Kitchell, Tim Graham or Chas Cartwright at National Park Service headquarters, 125 West 200 South, Moab, Utah 84532 (801/259-7164).

GREEN RIVER RAFTING

One definition of heaven might be a raft trip through tortuous Desolation Canyon on the Green River for five days and nights. The Utah Wilderness Association is offering just such a trip June 16-20 for \$325. It includes rafting equipment, meals and transportation from Price, Utah, to the launch site and back to Price at journey's end. The expedition is limited to 25 rafters; a deposit of \$100 reserves a place. The UWA says a substantial amount of the trip's proceeds will go to the group to help preserve Utah's remaining wildlands. For more information or to make a reservation, write Utah Wilderness Association, 455 E. 400 S. #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/359-1337).

WATER FOR SALE

"Water for Sale: Colorado in the Balance" is the topic for the 13th annual Colorado Water Workshop July 11-13 at Western State College in Gunnison, Colo. More than 250 people are expected at the three-day conference, which will examine how water sales and transfers are transforming the traditional water picture in the state. Western State College offers academic credit for the workshop, which costs \$175, including meals and materials. Some scholarships are available. For more information write Western State College, Gunnison, CO 81230 (303/943-2082).

Merlin D. Tuttle



Gambian epauleted bats

BATS GET BAD RAP

Why save bats? asks the non-profit organization, Bat Conservation International, based in Texas and dedicated to the protection of these "misunderstood" mammals. Bats act as seed-dispersers and pollinators, and best of all a single endangered gray bat can eat up to 3,000 insects in one night. But a grey cloud of fear and misinformation hovers around bats, and so they are deliberately killed, mistakenly poisoned by pesticides, their habitats destroyed, and large numbers are captured for medical research. For more information on living peacefully with bats, contact Bat Conservation International, P.O. Box 162603, Austin, TX 78716 (512/327-9721).

ARTS FOR THE PARKS

Last year, 2,706 artists vied for a \$100,000 prize offered in the first Arts for the Parks competition. Judges this year say they will be looking for paintings that capture the "essence" and diversity of landscape, wildlife, and history of the national parks. The contest is sponsored by the National Park Foundation and the National Park Academy, which will donate a portion of the money raised from entry fees and the future sale of prints to the national parks. A \$50 non-refundable entry fee is required to enter each painting. June 30 is the postmark deadline. For more information, contact Arts for the Parks, South Park Service Center, 3610 South Park Drive, P.O. Box 1, Jackson Hole, WY 83001 (307/733-ARTS).

A BOILING ISSUE

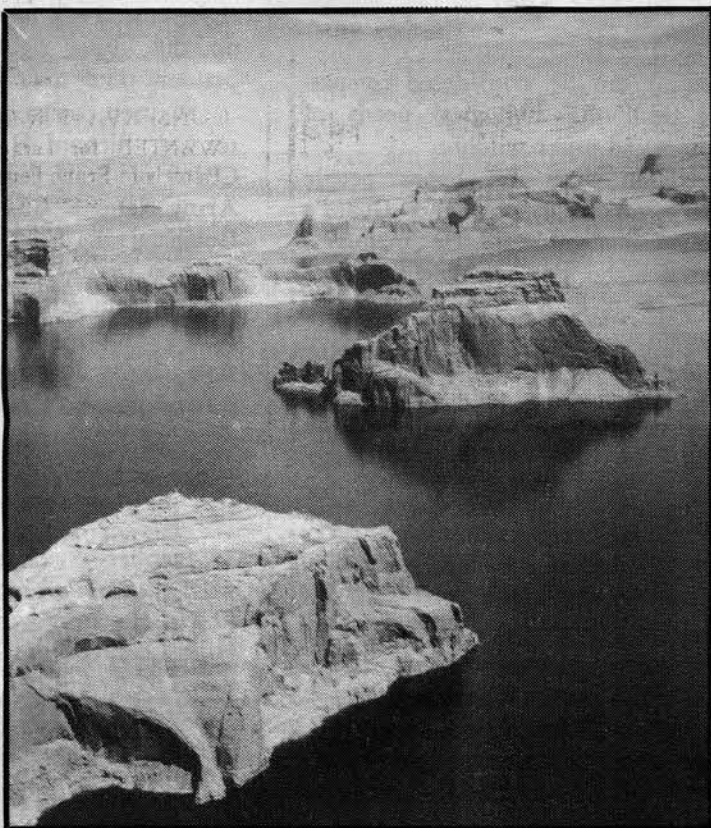
The Penny Hot Springs just a few feet below Colorado Highway 133 near Redstone have long been a boiling issue. The debate is over nudity. A ranching family that owns 80 acres of land east of the springs has protested nude soaking and recently took one bather to court. According to the Glenwood Springs *Free Weekly*, Roy Rickus was photographed by the Granges wearing "only a turban" as he skinny-dipped in the hot springs. Rickus was found guilty of indecent exposure, but Pitkin County Court Judge Fitzhugh Scott threw out the jury verdict and found Rickus not guilty. Rickus' attorney had pointed out that although the Granges photographed Rickus while he was bathing nude, that is not the same as Rickus knowingly exposing himself to another person. Recently, several large boulders were mysteriously dumped into the warm springs, destroying the bathing pool. Now a group called Friends Of The Hot Springs has been formed to promote public awareness and to work toward obtaining permanent public access to Penny Hot Springs. For more information, write James Tonozi, P.O. Box 2148, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602 (303/945-8482).

YUCCA MOUNTAIN OFFICE

The Department of Energy has opened an office in Beatty, Nev., to answer questions about its proposed high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, 20 miles southeast of Beatty. The office contains exhibits, and other information and coordinates requests for speakers about "suitability" studies that will be conducted at the site during the next five to seven years. The Nevada site has aroused controversy since the 1983 Nuclear Waste Policy Act was amended last year to indefinitely postpone consideration of any other location. Critics, including Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, say that Nevada was selected because it lacked political clout. The Safe Energy Communication Council, a Washington, D.C.-based coalition of environmental and public interest groups, charges that the scientific process leading to a decision on whether Yucca Mountain is a safe site was undermined by the participation of companies that stood to profit by its selection. The new office is at Box 69, Beatty, NV 89003 (702/553-2130). For a free copy of SECC's eight-page Nuclear Waste Disposal "MYTHbuster" publication, write 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite LL215, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/483-8491).

LAKE POWELL

Heart of the Grand Circle



Lake Powell is the center jewel in nature's crown of spectacular beauty. The lake is surrounded by the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. Now, two half-inch videotapes are available, so you can experience the beauty of the area while relaxing at home.

☐ (Qty.) *With Different Eyes*—raft down the Colorado River with Josef Muench. \$29.95 each.

☐ (Qty.) *Lake Powell, Heart of the Grand Circle*—video tour of the Lake Powell area. \$29.95 each.

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"A miracle. The book lives up to its oxymoronic title—and then some. Fast-paced, full of the drama of high adventure, and comprehensive in its coverage, it is a triumph of journalistic lucidity and a stirring experience for the reader."

—Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.
Author of *Indian Heritage of America*

"High Country News has done an important service for the West by bringing these river basins together within the covers of one book."

—Philip L. Fradkin,
author of *A River No More*

Western water was once shielded from public understanding by a coalition of local water interests, the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, and a few members of the U. S. Congress. Now, fundamental economic and social forces have put that coalition in disarray, and western water is, for the first time, a public issue.

This superbly-organized, award-winning series of articles, published for the first time in book form, guides the reader through the most pressing issues affecting western water. By focusing on the West's three great rivers—the Colorado, the Columbia, and the Missouri—*Western Water Made Simple* presents a lively and penetrating account of the developments and controversies that must be understood by all those who are struggling to solve western water development issues. *Island Press* 256 pages.

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BOISE FOREST DRAFT

Idaho's 2.25 million acre Boise National Forest has just released its proposed forest plan. The last of 123 plans in the nation to be unveiled, it recommends reducing the forest timber base by more than half to 606,000 acres while also opening 713,000 of the forest's 1.2 million roadless acres for development. It proposes 187,000 acres for wilderness and 310,000 acres for undeveloped recreation. Around 21 miles of road would be built annually. The draft also says there are between four and nine gray wolves in the forest, and proposes to protect them by limiting logging within one mile of den sites and in crucial prey habitat, and by limiting livestock grazing during the winter in crucial prey areas. Comments on the draft plan and accompanying draft environmental impact statement should arrive by Aug. 4 at Forest Planning, Boise National Forest, 1750 Front Street, Boise, Idaho 83702. Copies of the plan are available at the same address.

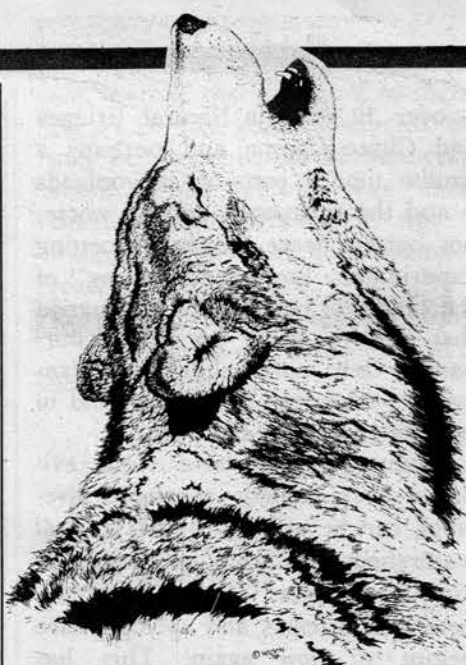


NATURAL RESOURCES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

A three-day conference titled Natural Resource Development in Indian Country will be held at the University of Colorado, Boulder, June 8-10. This ninth annual event will cover federal influence of natural resource development on reservations; taxation in Indian country, the marketing of Indian water; the treatment of wildlife and wildlands; the development of recreational opportunities; and several case studies, including the Wind River (Wyoming) litigation, the proposed Dine power plant on the Navajo Reservation, and the Montana reserved water rights compact commission. The cost ranges from \$300 to \$545, depending on affiliation. For information, contact Kathy Taylor at 303/492-1288, or write: Natural Resources Law Center, University of Colorado School of Law, Campus Box 401, Boulder, CO 80309-0401.

SAN JUAN PLAN MEETINGS

The Bureau of Land Management has scheduled open houses to answer questions about its controversial San Juan Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (HCN, 4/25/88). The extended deadline for comments about the archaeologically-rich area is June 13. The plan would continue to allow mineral leasing, disposal of minerals, restricted off-road vehicle use, range modification, and mining with minimal restrictions. Meetings are set for May 24, 7-9 p.m. at the San Juan County Library in Blanding, Utah; May 31, 7-9 p.m. at the Elementary School in Montezuma Creek, Utah; June 1, 7-9 p.m. at the Monument Valley High School, Utah. For more information, contact Nick Sandberg in the San Juan Resource Area Office, Monticello, 801/587-2141 or Daryl Trotter in the Moab District Office, Moab, (801/259-6111).



THEY WANT WOLVES

While Wyoming's three-man congressional delegation delays an environmental impact statement on restoring wolves to Yellowstone National Park, a new group based in Laramie, Wyo., called Wyoming Wants Wolves has been circulating a petition supporting the wolves' return. Michael Durgain, an organizer of Wyoming Wants Wolves who works as a custodian for the county school district, says his group has gathered 1,400 signatures, 1,000 of which are from Wyoming residents. The group plans to send a copy of the petition to Wyoming's elected representatives as well as to Rep. Wayne Owens of Utah, who has introduced a bill that would allow an environmental analysis to begin. "Our group sees its role as one of educator," says Durgain. "We want the public to understand that wolves are important to a whole ecosystem in Yellowstone." Durgain will mail a petition to anyone interested in circulating one. For more information, contact Michael Durgain, 655 N. Cedar, Laramie, Wyo. 82070.

LAW FELLOWSHIP

The University of Colorado's Natural Resources Law Center in Boulder, Colo., offers a term-long research fellowship to anyone in legal practice, business, government or academe. In the past 20 years there has been an explosion of new laws and regulations in the natural resources area, and the center hopes fellows will analyze changes in the field and clarify them for the courts, as well as for the public. For more information, contact Katherine S. Taylor, Natural Resources Law Center, University of Colorado School of Law, Boulder, CO 80309-0401 (303/492-1288).



DESERT WRITER'S WORKSHOP

David Lee
Richard Shelton
William Kittredge
Terry Tempest Williams

Pack Creek Ranch, Oct. 14-17, 1988

For information and registration, contact: Canyonlands Field Institute, P.O. Box 68, Moab, UT 84532.

HONORING ROBERT CAHN

Writer Robert Cahn recently received the National Parks and Conservation Association's prestigious Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award, which honors a life of environmental activism and writings. In 1960, Cahn won the Pulitzer Prize for a series of articles about the national parks, and he has also won the Interior Department's Conservation Service Award and National Wildlife Federation's Distinguished Service Award. Cahn was involved in the passage of the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which brought over 40 million acres into the National Park System, and recorded the event in *The Fight To Save Wild Lands*. His latest book is *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1923*, co-authored with Horace M. Albright.

NOTES OF A HALF-ASPENITE

Notes of a Half-Aspenite is a compilation of essays spiced with anecdotes by Bruce Berger, a part-time Aspen resident, pianist and writer who tells us he "converted" to Aspen in 1951. He writes about recycling trash, discovering that life can be fun, garage sale society, hummingbirds and rosy finches, writer Joyce Carol Oates, singer John Denver, and the town's fighter for animal rights, Georgie Leighton. Berger's easy read might unsettle critics who fear their Rocky Mountain town will be "Aspenized." According to Berger, worse things could happen.

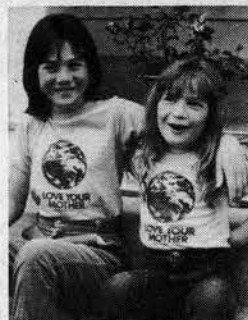
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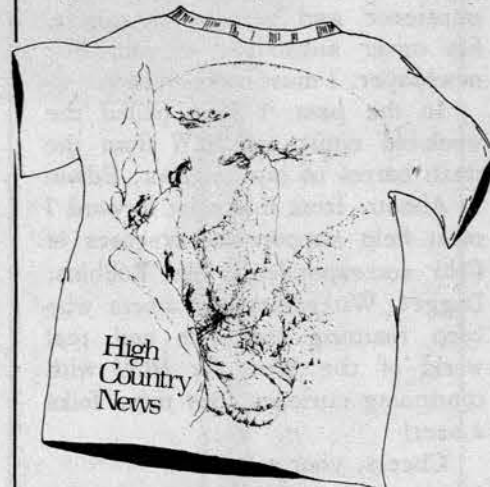
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TOTEM

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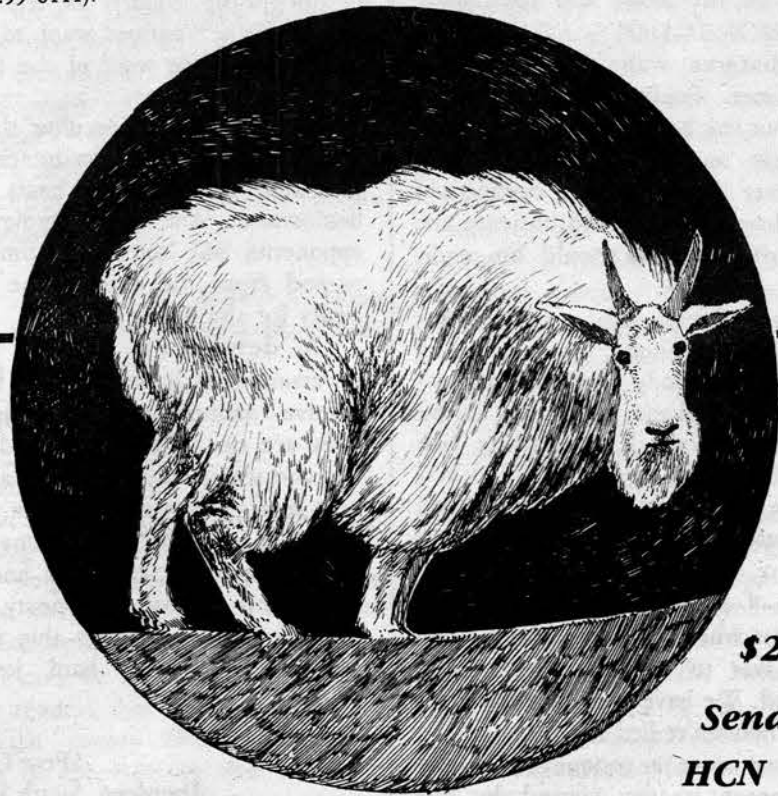
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14-High Country News -- May 23, 1988

LETTERS

BUCKS FOR BEER

Dear HCN,

As a reader of HCN for many years who, because of poverty, transience and perhaps cheapness, has never subscribed to your fine newspaper, I must make amends.

In the past, I have pulled the week-old copies of HCN from the trash barrel of my neighbor, Edwin P. Abbott; from this point forward I must help support the expenses of field correspondents like Robbins, Dagget, Wuerthner and others who keep roaming the wide and real world of the West for HCN with continuing curiosity. Buy these folks a beer!

Cheers, your pal,

D. Arapaho Peacock
Tucson, Arizona

DISNEYLAND CALLING

Dear HCN,

In the March 14, 1988 issue of HCN there was a letter from George Hawkins, Bountiful, Utah, regarding paving the Burr Trail.

He wondered how many people had actually driven over the Burr Trail or had intended to do so. On two occasions I have driven over 650 miles just to travel on the Burr Trail and enjoy this beautiful area. I plan to do so every time I get a chance.

He also stated that the people of Garfield County have the right to pave roads leading to adjacent population centers. The Burr Trail is on BLM managed land that means it is public land; not Garfield County land, so we all have a voice when it comes to public land. What population centers is he talking about -- I didn't know Boulder and Bullfrog were population centers.

If the Burr Trail is ever paved, I can just imagine that spectacular drive up the Waterpocket Fold Switchbacks or through Long Canyon behind a bus or a diesel truck. Nothing like the wonderful smell of diesel fumes to enhance the magnificent scenery on a gorgeous day. If he wants pavement between population centers he is invited to southern California.

Ron Messick
Riverside, California

A USE FOR CATTLE

Dear HCN,

I enjoyed the letter by F.A. Barnes entitled "a Ravaged Land" (HCN, 2/29/88) and commend him on such extensive investigation. Similar examples abound across the West and in many other parts of the world.

One of the best examples is located just west of Albuquerque in the Rio Puerco basin. The cycle of arroyo cutting here also corresponds with settlement and high numbers of livestock. Once described as the granary of New Mexico, the landscape today is composed of deserted villages, irrigation works and deep arroyos. It is also dotted everywhere by our technological attempts to solve the problem.

Flying over the country, one can see the numerous check dams, contour ridges and reseeded areas that attest to the valiant effort made

to halt the degradation. One cannot see the continually reduced stocking rates imposed as another measure of control, but the effect has been similar. What is of major interest in the Rio Puerco area is that cattle exclosures put in during the 1930s to demonstrate the beneficial effects of complete removal of livestock are now more deteriorated than the surrounding overgrazed land.

Barnes may have noticed, but he does not comment on the fact that in both the Canyonlands area and Natural Bridges area authorities are now experimenting with nylon netting on the ground holding woodwool shavings as litter to try to get grass growing. Despite the netting and woodwool, no grass is establishing.

While Barnes' evidence of recent arroyo cutting is certain, attributing it all to overgrazing is not -- as evidenced by the death of grassland in such areas mentioned above where livestock are absent.

Barnes is correct in stating that pioneers would have settled in good pastures where there was permanent water. The very existence of such areas indicates that at that time the water cycle over vast areas of the watershed surrounding those riparian flats was effective. The tree ring data indicates this change in effectiveness more than it reflects total precipitation.

Besides the overgrazing that occurred due to prolonged exposure of plants and soils to the livestock, precipitation may also be made less effective by increased incidence of fire, tree cutting, hunting, predator control, irrigation and farming. All very likely considering the needs of the settlers.

Although farming and irrigation were limited, it may have been enough to cause the first "nicks" in the alluvial flats that quickly turned to gullies. Any cutting of the land would have tended to amplify the damage to riparian vegetation by lowering the water table, as when we cut ditches to drain marshes. The destruction of riparian vegetation and the increased overland flows resulting from misuse of the aforementioned tools sealed the fate of these alluvial meadows.

The canyonlands area lies in an environment that exhibits a slow physical decay process of organic matter and slow successional advancement from bare soil. Such grasslands and good water cycles developed over prolonged time with wild herding ungulates under predation. The constant movement of herding ungulates prevented the mature grass plants from being choked by their own oxidizing stems and leaves that would otherwise have clogged growth points at their bases. Much of the material was returned to the soil surface as litter cover. This movement also quickened the pace of nutrient cycles, disturbed cryptogamic crusts and compacted soil that "puffed up" due to freezing and thawing. Thus, new seedling establishment was assured. (Nylon nets can't do this.)

The introduction of cattle, whose movement was restricted, and the loss of wild herds meant that the land was no longer, by turns, "disturbed" and given physiological "rest". This alone probably would have been enough to damage the water cycle and cause the results Barnes observes.

Livestock have been removed from large areas for a long time now

-- over 50 years in Natural Bridges and Chaco Canyon and perhaps a similar time in parts of Canyonlands -- and the situation is getting worse, not better; hence the nylon netting experiments. Prolonged "resting" of the land will not remedy a situation that evolved under periodic disturbance. Only more enlightened management now can return the land to its former stability and beauty.

Conversely, we have clear evidence that properly managed livestock can be used as a tool to heal watersheds and begin building alluvial sediments. In some areas, perennial streams and springs have begun to flow again. This has occurred in other high desert areas of Utah, as well as the high desert in Oregon, where in recent times there were no recorded large herds of wildlife.

It would be marvelous if the needed disturbance and rest could be provided with the help of lions, wolves, hunting Indians, and vast herds of pronghorn, elk, etc. Without these we may have to use livestock to simulate the effects of the herds of old. Many of us dislike this though, but livestock are more natural than nylon netting and other technological fixes, and their use as a tool can be planned to minimize conflicts with other uses.

Aldo Leopold once wrote that the same tools that destroyed the land -- the cow, the plow, the axe, and fire -- are the ones that will bring it back. This far-sighted man has proved remarkably prophetic and our most up-to-date knowledge of the desertification process indicates he was right.

It would be wonderful if we could all unite behind the need for sound management to produce the landscape we all desire, rather than calling for livestock removal when we already have clear evidence that the land will continue to deteriorate if they are removed.

Kirk Gadzia
Center for
Holistic Resource Management
Albuquerque, New Mexico

TRUTH AND JUSTICE

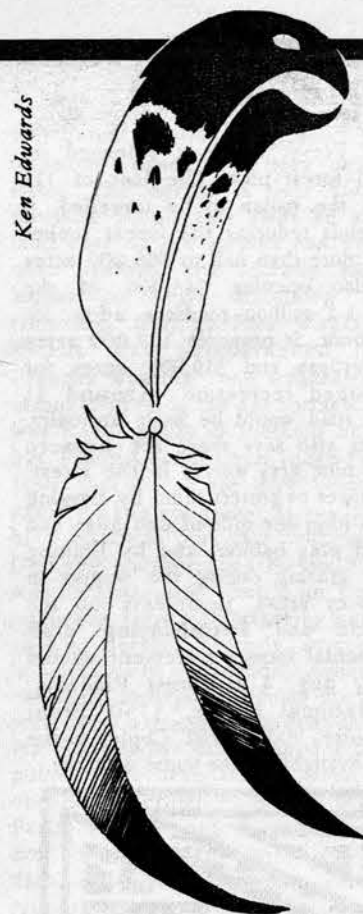
Dear HCN,

This is a response to the opinion piece, "Public land; the best idea America ever had," published in the "Other Voices" section in the April 11, 1988, issue in response to my article on the Sioux and the Black Hills (HCN, 2/15/88).

I disagree with writer George Wuerthner. Public land is a good idea, but the best idea America ever had was recognizing that freedom (whatever that really is), democracy (or a close facsimile) and honesty are the stuff a country should be made of.

Our sovereign nation made treaties with the Sioux. Those treaties were subsequently ignored. In essence, the Indians were lied to by our government. If something like that happens today, we picket, protest, and start up organizations and publications. Like HCN patrolling the West, looking for miscarriages of justice. Like the protests and riots when the government's lies about war in southeast Asia were exposed. We have every right to get mad when we're lied to.

If we were a conquered people with peace treaties signed by our



Salmon-feather

conquerers, I would suspect we would be upset, maybe even a little angry, if those treaties were casually violated.

According to Senator Bill Bradley, N.J., the proposal is a matter of restoring honor to the United States.

The victorious U.S. government admits it wronged the red man. But the whites want to settle the issue with cash. That's the white's way of repenting for his sins. The vanquished Sioux say cash alone is inadequate and inappropriate.

Sioux historians can eloquently defend their people's roots in the Black Hills. Wuerthner's description is the commonly held interpretation among non-Sioux. No doubt this issue is complex and may never be satisfactorily resolved. In my mind it is irrelevant when the Sioux arrived in western South Dakota or who they deposed once they arrived. The United States made a treaty with the Sioux, not the Arikara, Crow or Hidatsa.

The Sioux agreed to sign the treaty with the United States. The United States did not sign a Sioux treaty. The Sioux looked to the United States to uphold its own law. Then the United States demonstrated that its highest levels of government were willing to break its own laws and lie.

That, I think, is why nations around the world are so curious about the Bradley Bill. A cornerstone of our noble country is truth and justice. Other nations want to know how good is the word of the United States government.

It strikes me as peculiar that we continue to point at a document more than 200 years old as the basis of our democracy. And yet, Bradley Bill opponents say too much time has passed from the date of the Sioux treaty for the bill to be valid.

A democracy, or any other government of human beings, should revolve around truth and justice. They are the ideals we should shoot for, and we should never be satisfied with less. We're lucky in this nation to have so many forums and opportunities to search for and find truth and reveal dishonesty. The Bradley Bill encourages this search for truth. It is a hard journey, though.

Pete Carrels
Aberdeen, South Dakota

LETTERS

HE UNDERSTANDS YELLOWSTONE

Dear HCN,

I can't believe Yellowstone Park Superintendent Robert Barbee has the audacity to chastise the Church Universal and Triumphant for building "a new city of 500 to 1,000 people next to the park border." (God's Country is being developed, HCN, 4/11/88). In 1981, the Park Service could have bought the land now owned by CUT. Instead, park officials invested the money in a new city called Grant Village. I would estimate the population of Grant Village at somewhere between 500 and 1,000.

I also can't believe Yellowstone Park officials are seriously concerned that developing a new city on CUT land "will cause grizzly bear problems." After all, the Grant Village Environmental Assessment warned that "Intensified human use associated with the completion of new facilities at Grant will increase the probability of encounters between humans and bears. The likelihood that bears will be killed, injured, or removed from the area as a result of these encounters will also be greater." Despite this warning, the agency built Grant Village.

I can't believe Superintendent Barbee is worried about the adequacy of CUT's environmental impact statement, saying it "does not address the cumulative impact on biological and aesthetic resources." Yellowstone's recently released Fishing Bridge EIS conclusively demonstrates that building a new campground in grizzly bear habitat at Weasel Creek will have a negative impact on the park's biological resources. Nevertheless, the Park Service plans to build the campground. The Fishing Bridge EIS demonstrates that the failure to honor an agreement to close the Fishing Bridge RV Park will have a negative biological impact on grizzly bears. The agency intends to violate the agreement.

I think I understand why Park Service officials have been such prominent critics of CUT -- it tends to shift the public's attention from problems in the park to troubles outside the park. Clever plan. Ignore problems you can do something about. Focus attention on trouble spots you can't do anything about.

I have a better plan. If Yellowstone officials are so concerned about the cumulative impacts of CUT development on the park's biological resources, they can mitigate for CUT's development outside the park by reducing development within Yellowstone.

David A. Smith
Gustavus, Alaska

NO ANSWER

Dear HCN,

You have run several stories about a proposed facility for incinerating hazardous wastes in Utah that might adversely affect areas there and in Colorado. PCBs and dioxins were mentioned.

It may be of interest to some of your readers that this deep southern Georgia county (Pierce) appeared high in the running for the state hazardous wastes disposal facility

and learned that the act of incinerating PCBs can generate dioxins that may be emitted from an incinerator stack. The meaning was clear: Dioxins themselves need not be incinerated in order for dioxins to reach the atmosphere, to be sent in whatever directions the winds blow.

Proponents of the facility had no answer to that one.

William Voigt, Jr.
Blackshear, Georgia

MORE ON THE BLACK HILLS

Dear HCN,

George Wuerthner astutely cautions against romanticized notions of the Indian as a determinant of public land policy (HCN, 4/11/88), but then commits the same error with his own fanciful view of the public lands.

From numerous sources we know that, in general, the Indians revered the earth as their "mother" and, as with any other relation, they had certain socially and religiously defined responsibilities in this relationship. Instead of people owning land, as in the Euro-American concept, they believed that people (as well as plants and animals) belonged to the Earth. Much of the conflict between Indian and white was due to the white man's notion of land as an object to be bought and sold. How purely the Indians put their religious beliefs toward land into practice may be debated endlessly. The point is, however, that there was (at least conceptually and often in practice) a direct linkage between benefits received from and responsibility to the earth.

Obviously and of course, the Indians' bonds to the land have been seriously eroded in modern times. After centuries of forced acculturation and being "unfairly treated," how could it be otherwise? A combination of "primitive" technology and various cultural adaptations (including wars and migrations) had allowed and required them to live within environmental constraints and thus limited their populations and the environmental damage they could inflict. This is why the Europeans found a "pristine" and "virgin" land.

Now that we have finally succeeded in imposing our technology and cultural values onto these "primitive savages," it is easy to castigate them for adopting our ways. A balanced appraisal must consider the historic, economic, and socio-political factors and the incentives that encourage the excessive clearcutting on Indian lands on the Tongass, for example, and seek to address these issues instead of merely branding the Indians as land-rapers. If the incentives are wrong, it matters little whether the land is managed by Indian tribe or government agency, the result will be much the same.

The theory of the public lands, in essence, is that land is a common asset held in trust by the government for the use and benefit of all. The American people have certain rights to this land, but its management is the responsibility of the government as directed by our elected representatives. A fundamental difference between this and the Indian philosophical concept is the lack of a direct relationship between rights to and responsibility for the land.

Without this linkage, people

Jim Stiak



Sign at the northwest's largest ghost town, Rajneeshpuram, Oregon

inevitably seek to maximize their "rights" while ignoring their responsibilities; the classic formula of the "Tragedy of the Commons" so readily apparent on much of our public lands. It is therefore not surprising that cattlemen, for example, lobby for stocking increases on public lands, even where the range is already overgrazed.

Our current system of "democratic decision-making," which delegates authority of the public lands to politicians and bureaucrats, seems to operate on the notion that these species of human are immune to existing incentives and to powerful special interests. Politicians seeking to maximize votes and bureaucrats seeking to maximize job security often have interests at odds with what is best for the public lands. This explains much of why below-cost timber sales and the wholesale transfer of grazing, mineral, and water rights, at a fraction of their true value, are the rule rather than the exception on public lands.

The same is true in the Black Hills. Instead of imputing ravenous land-grab motives on the Sioux, I prefer the more benign interpretation that they have a legitimate interest in correcting such abuses, as well as in securing their treaty rights. "Public lands" and "democratic decision-making" are only hollow slogans where those making decisions in behalf of the public are not held accountable and where special interests benefit without paying the costs of their actions.

I share much of Wuerthner's romantic view of the public lands, where at least the illusion of the freedom of the western frontier still survives. I too seek to protect the

integrity of these lands and their values, which should be the heritage of all Americans of both present and future generations. But we must not allow romantic notions to blind us to the changes necessary to save that which we love.

At issue is not whether the public lands are administered by the present bureaucracy or by Indian tribes or by some other agency, but on restructuring a system where accountability is tied to authority to create a strong incentive for protecting these lands.

With the proper incentives and the remarriage of rights to responsibility, it is certainly not inconceivable that Indian tribes could manage certain lands in trust for all Americans at the same time they renew their own traditional cultures and economy and liberate themselves from the bureaucratic oppression of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Jeff Mecham
Logan, Utah



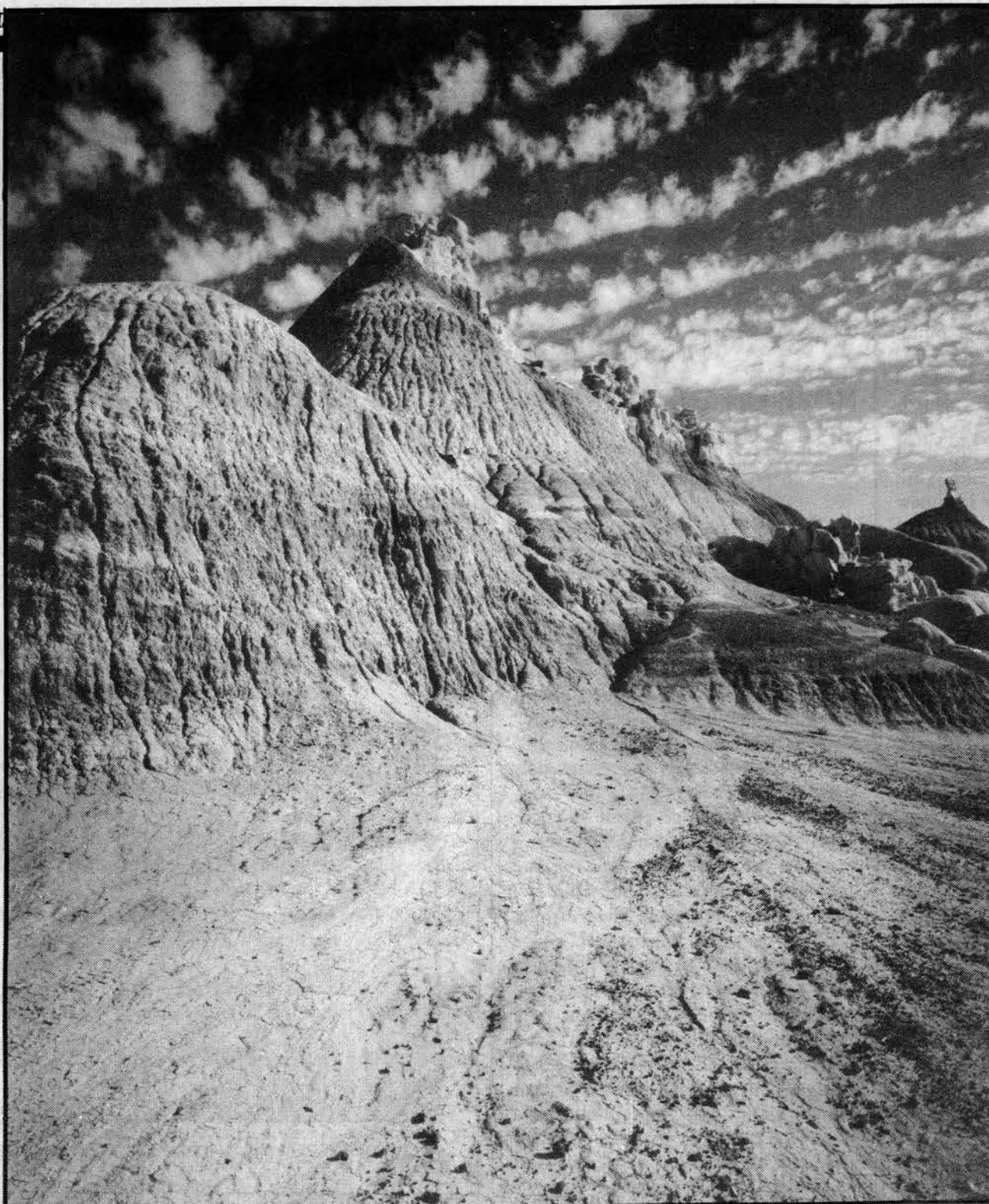
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16-High Country News -- M

Dale Schickelanz



Painted Desert, Arizona

Phoenix and LA cast long shadows

by Joan Baeza

Petrified Forest-Painted Desert National Park in northeastern Arizona is about 200 miles and a mountain range away from Phoenix, Ariz. But Phoenix, with help from even more distant Los Angeles, is the primary cause of air pollution at the park.

Air quality is important at any national park, but it is especially important at Painted Desert. The primary attraction of the 93,000-acre twin park near Holbrook is the color of its striated geologic formations, whose appearance changes with the angle of the sun and the clarity of the atmosphere.

For the past year, Carl Bowman, a resource management specialist, and other Park Service employees have been measuring air quality in Petrified Forest-Painted Desert. Their goal is to determine how clear and clean the air is today, so that future threats to the air quality can be dealt with.

When it comes to protecting large, Western parks, the Park Service is armed with a powerful weapon. The Clean Air Act labels certain national parks, including Painted Desert, as Class I areas, and severely limits the extent to which their air quality can be degraded.

Bowman says, "Any new industry or power plant in this area will have to meet standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. The state has the authority for

enforcement. If an industry does not meet standards, it will not be given a permit to build. I think we're in pretty good shape here. We stand a pretty good chance of maintaining our air quality in northern Arizona."

But the Park Service and the state of Arizona can only control new sources of air pollution relatively close to the park. Regional pollution wafting in from Phoenix or Los Angeles -- which today is the dominant degrader of the park's air -- presents a tougher problem.

Bowman says, "It's hard to handle more distant sources." A large new factory in Los Angeles, he says, could dirty the park's air quality, "but we can't say by how much. So we have to watch what's close to us and keep that under control while we hope for improvement in areas far away from us."

The key to protection from nearby sources is monitoring. Unless the Park Service knows how clean the air is now, it cannot demand that future industries or activities setting up shop in Holbrook or Winslow or Snowflake control their emissions. Painted Desert is one of the first national parks to have a full complement of equipment designed to establish the so-called air quality baseline.

The park faces two threats to its air: chemical threats from acid deposition and visual threats from particulates. Most of the acid deposition comes from power plants and automobiles in distant cities. Much

of the rock in the park is limestone, which neutralizes acid deposition. But acid attacks the desert varnish on which many valuable petroglyphs are carved.

The other threat is to the park's clear air, which lets visitors see long distances, and which reveals the brilliant colors of the rocks.

"Most of the problems with visibility in this area seem to be linked to dirt roads and wood smoke. Summer dust is worse than winter smoke, but as the White Mountain area grows, smoke can become a major problem. Right now, the EPA is setting up standards on environmental controls of wood stoves. Page (Arizona) has already adopted Oregon standards," Bowman says.

The Park Service monitors the air quality in two general ways. In a "Criteria Station" near the park's museum, instruments measure the levels of ozone, particulates and other pollutants. Data are pulled from the measuring devices every three-fourths of a second and stored in a computer for later analysis.

In another location, the air is viewed the way people see it. Cameras peer out over the Painted Desert and record the visible changes in air quality. In the Petrified Forest, a transmissometer measures the amount of light that travels from a light transmitter to a receiver. The clearer the air, the more light is received. Together, the analytic results from the Criteria Station and the visual results from

the camera and the transmissometer define the present air quality level in the park.

The Clean Air Act strictly limits how much the present air quality level can deteriorate. But regulations are only as good as the will to use them. Bowman says that as of now, the desire to protect the air in northern Arizona is strong.

"My basic optimism comes from the fact that people aren't taking air quality for granted. But I worry: Do we have the technical tools to control things? Will the public remain committed to air quality?"

Some anxiety for the air at Painted Desert was fueled by a trip he took to Arches National Park, located next to Moab, Utah. Like Painted Desert, Arches is in a lightly populated, rural area. Moab, a town of about 6,000, is the largest community for long distances in any direction, and is several hundred miles from Salt Lake City and Denver. Local industry is practically non-existent.

But, Bowman says, "I was there during an inversion. It was hazy. The brilliant colors of Arches were muted."

□

Joan Baeza lives in Pinetop, Ariz. and is editor of the *Fort Apache Scout*, the White Mountain Apache Tribe's official newspaper.