

High Country News

October 10, 1988

Vol. 20 No. 19

A Paper for People who Care about the West

Three dollars



Lester Dore

***Environmentalism triumphant:
The third of four special
issues starts on page 6***

**THE REOPENING OF THE
WESTERN FRONTIER**

Dear friends,



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The Research Fund

Fall is when *High Country News* finds out if it is going to be around for another year. As you probably notice, HCN has essentially no advertising — about 3 percent of our revenue comes from ads, compared with 80 percent or so for a "real" publication.

The place of advertising is taken by a relatively high subscription rate, relatively low expenses, and the once-a-year fund-raising drive known as the Research Fund. The tax-deductible contributions subscribers make to the Research Fund are used to support the paper's editorial effort. Subscription income would allow us to print and mail (blank) paper. The Research Fund lets us pay writers, photographers, artists, and telephone bills and meet other editorial expenses.

If the Post Office is functioning properly, subscribers have just received a copy of this year's Research Fund appeal. In past years, 20 percent of the paper's readers have contributed to the Research Fund, supplying the paper with approximately 40 percent of its income.

As each Research Fund appeal states, without the Research Fund, there is no *High Country News*.

Several subscribers and firms have already helped the 1988-1989 Research Fund by donating or offering at a very low cost gifts that HCN in turn can give to contributors as tokens of appreciation. The first gift actually comes from the paper: All contributors of \$50 or more may designate the recipient of a gift subscription (it can't be used as a renewal). This "gift," of course, has a hook — it is our way of finding potential new subscribers.

Donors of \$100 to \$249 will receive a "Wilderness Patterns" engagement calendar, made possible by a Boulder, Colo., subscriber and Pomegranate Calendars and Books.

Donors of \$250 to \$499 have a choice: a jumbo, star-studded Christmas stocking of bright wool, or a bas relief paper sculpture of bighorn sheep, pressed from an elk horn carving and in a mounted, matted shadow-box style.

The stockings are produced by Cindy Owings Design, a unique high-fashion manufacturer out of Bozeman, Mont., run by Cindy Owings and Michael Houlton. The sculptures are by Sheila and David Torkelson of Hotchkiss, Colo.

Those who give from \$500 to \$999 will receive an eight-by-ten black-and-white photo by Charles Phillips of Dubois, Wyo., and Wichita, Kans., of remote wilderness scenes taken by an 8 by 10-inch view camera and offering great detail and sense of depth.

Donors of \$1,000 or more will receive a handsomely bound volume of all 24 HCNs published in 1988, including the four special issues, The Reopening of the Western Frontier. Because the bound volumes won't be available until 1989, donors will also receive a Charles Phillips photo.

Mixed reviews

Speaking of the four special issues, reaction has been swift. First word came from southeastern Utah, in a letter — to be printed in the next issue — whose kindest phrase was "yellow journalism."

A more positive treatment was in the Sunday, Sept. 18 *Los Angeles Times*. That paper's second editorial, titled "The

West's Destiny," summarized the Sept. 12 Special Issue, ending with the paragraph:

"*High Country News* offers no easy answers. But clearly the adversity of the 1980s also presents the West with the greatest opportunity that it has ever had to control its own destiny."

In another reaction, a resident of a tourist town said the rural West isn't that different from traffic-jammed urban areas, in that many resort workers have to commute long distances over bad roads because they can't afford to live in the towns they work in.

Those who have written for these issues have essentially tossed their contributions into a black hole and then wondered, in some cases for a year, what the overall result would be. Upon seeing the first issue, Ray Wheeler, the Salt Lake City-based writer whose tale of southern Utah is in all four issues, wrote the following:

"Most of all, it is the concept that I like. The boldness of it, the wacky chutzpah, the quintessentially American — and Western — hubris of this dinky little rural newspaper investing two years and whatever thousands of dollars and the combined energy of 20 writers all over the West to create this amazingly complex, wildly diverse, unfettered, uninhibited, chaotic, yet magically coherent journalistic 20-ring circus."

Alex Heindl wrote from Portland, Ore., to say that after reading C.L. Rawlins' piece, "Good fences make good neighbors," in the Sept. 26 issue, he is no longer going to wait for his firm's copy of HCN to make it to his desk: "I enclose a check for a subscription to be sent directly to me."

Stockbroker Tom Buck called from Denver to ask if we could send copies of the first issue to several of his rural clients, and Tom Vacalli wrote from Casper, Wyo., to say that he had planned to let his "subscription lapse... but got caught up in this special series."

A call from Wyoming took us severely to task. Dorothy Duncan Dodge, 89, one of Wyoming's pioneers, and a resident of Sheridan, called to express her disgust with the Sept. 26 piece by Tom Wolf on writer Gretel Ehrlich titled "Wyoming is dead — long live 'Wyoming.'" Ms. Dodge said the article did a disservice to her ranching state, reflected very poorly on the judgment of HCN's editorial staff, and almost led her to cancel her long-time subscription.

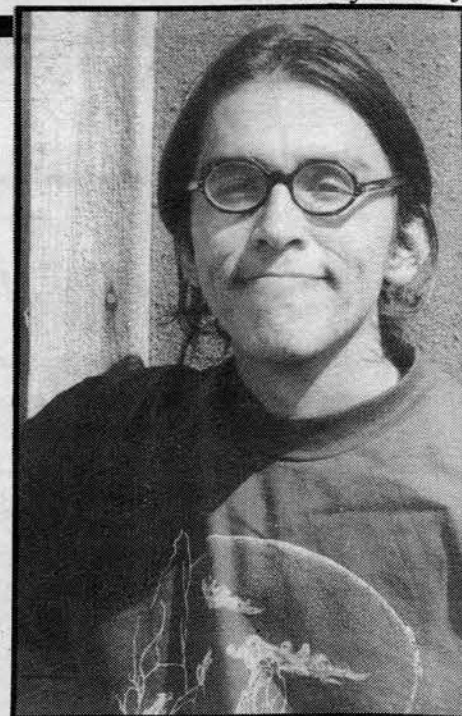
She finally decided not to cancel, but when it came time to take the issue down to the senior citizen center, as she regularly does, she tore out the offending article. Ms. Dodge said her eyesight is failing, and that each issue is read to her by Lynn Dickey, an HCN board member, who is also a member of the Wyoming Legislature.

On the other hand, writer Edward Abbey wrote from Oracle, Ariz., to specifically praise Wolf's article. Abbey's letter will be in the next issue.

Bob Murphy of the Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge in Kenmare, N.D., wrote that the bird we identified as a Cooper's hawk on page 3 of the Sept. 26 issue is "really a Northern Harrier (marsh hawk)," and is probably immature.

That correction (the photographer identified it as a Cooper's hawk) was a postscript to his words of praise for the editorial on the political fires raging over Yellowstone. Murphy politely ignored the fact that we treated William Penn Mott, head of the National Park Service, as roughly as the marsh hawk. We gave Mott a new first name: Benjamin.

We also apologize to the University



Kevin Lee Lopez

of Nevada Press for a Bulletin board in the Sept. 26 issue that listed the book, *Birds of the Great Basin: A Natural History*, as costing \$4.95. The price is \$34.95. This book is part of the beautiful Great Basin series.

New intern

Kevin Lee Lopez recently joined HCN as the newspaper's second Native American intern. His home is the Crow-Creek Indian Nation in South Dakota, but, as an army brat, he has lived in seven states and West Germany.

He earned a B.S. in history in 1986 at Phillips University in Enid, Okla., and has since sought to participate in political and environmental struggles affecting Indian people. He is a member of the American Indian Movement and eventually wishes to teach the English and Dakota languages on the reservation.

Fall visitors

Visitors continue to trickle through Paonia. Cliff and Joan Montagne of Bozeman, Mont., dropped by after attending one of Allan Savory's Holistic Resource Management courts in Albuquerque. Paige and Shane Smith of Cheyenne, Wyo., and Tom and Debra Throgmorton, former Wyomingites now living in Fort Collins, Colo., also came through on the same Saturday, Sept. 3. Paige said she thought the recent HCN story on the South Dakota sewage-ash scam was timely, because Wyoming is getting inundated with similar proposals.

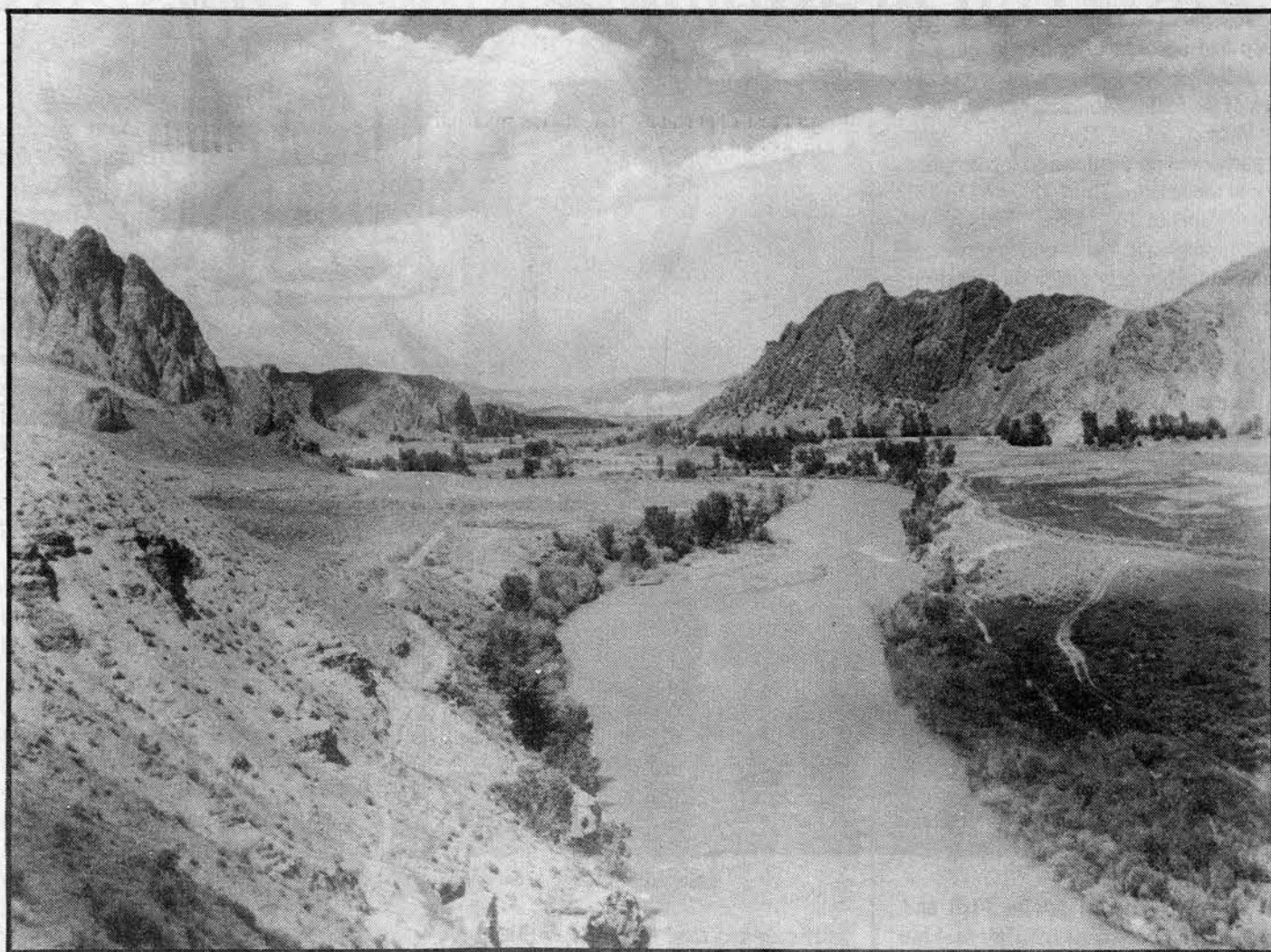
Two editors — Suzanne and Ed Randegger of *Environ* — stopped by on their way back to Fort Collins. Their magazine, a quarterly, concentrates on indoor environmental problems, food and lifestyle. The address is P.O. Box 2204, Ft. Collins, Colo. 80522.

In Paonia on business was Don Snow, former head of Northern Lights. He is now director of the Conservation Leadership Project of the Conservation Fund, and was in Colorado as part of the Missoula-based effort.

A newly minted Ph.D., Martin Price, who just completed his geography thesis at the University of Colorado, Boulder, on the forests on Pikes Peak and Summit County, Colo., stopped by. He was on his way home from a vacation in southern Utah to a new job at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, also in Boulder. Denver residents Ed and Grace Allen, Front Range residents who own the Whistling Acres Ranch outside Paonia, came in to "subscribe to this paper we've read about in the Denver papers."

— the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP



Salmon River near Challis, Idaho

Decision is a landmark for Idaho streams

Twenty years from now, Aug. 10, 1988, may be seen to mark one of the great achievements in Idaho conservation history. That was the day the Northwest Power Planning Council designated 12,441 miles of Idaho streams as "protected areas." If the designation works as intended, no new hydroelectric development, whether dams or diversions, will occur on those streams.

The eight-member council (two each from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana) was created by Congress in 1980 with a dual charter: to guide development of the Northwest's electric energy system and to rebuild fish and wildlife populations — especially ocean-going salmon and steelhead — hurt by dams built in the Columbia River basin. Overall, the council designated 44,000 miles of streams in the four states as protected areas.

The effect in Idaho could be sweeping. All of Idaho's salmon and steelhead habitat is included in the program as well as every valuable stream fishery in the state. If the program works, most of the existing hydro proposals Idaho conservationists and sportsmen are fighting will die, and new filings in protected areas will be more or less automatically rejected.

"We think it's a very big step," says Virgil Moore of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Moore and his colleagues in the Department's Fisheries Bureau compiled the long list of streams which the council voted to protect. For 50 years, the Fish and Game Department has fought, and often lost, against big dams on Idaho rivers.

But this decade, in the wake of federal laws encouraging small hydro, the department has also had to contend with literally hundreds of hydro filings on streams throughout Idaho.

"Designating protected areas has the promise of putting our good fisheries permanently off-limits to hydro," Moore says. "That's a big deal."

Actual licensing of hydro projects in the United States is done by the Fed-

eral Energy Regulatory Commission, which zealously guards its turf. But FERC is required to give significant weight in its decisions to "comprehensive" regional or state water plans, and FERC agrees the protected areas program qualifies as such.

Bob Saxvik, one of Idaho's two members on the Power Council, says, "Our indications, formal and informal, are that FERC is going to take our program very seriously."

Virgil Moore is more definite: "Unless there's overwhelming contrary evidence, we expect FERC to turn back any hydro application in a protected area."

Concrete test cases will occur over the next year. On Idaho's protected areas alone, 67 hydro filings are at various stages of FERC processing.

Political challenge is also expected from Idaho's powerful Republican senior Sen. Jim McClure. He has sharply attacked the program, both on merits and because he believes it exceeds the council's authority.

In addition, McClure's son is a lobbyist for Idaho hydro developers, his top

natural resources staffer is a former hydro developer, and his former chief of staff, Jim Gollar, was the only Northwest Power Planning Council member to vote against the program.

One usual council foe, the Bonneville Power Administration, is an ally. BPA markets the power from the Columbia basin's score of federal dams, and has consistently fought the council's assertions of authority.

But BPA also dislikes small hydro developers intruding on its turf and has thus agreed with the council to deny crucial transmission line access to hydro projects built in protected areas. If that policy holds against probable attacks by McClure, it will go far towards making the protected areas program stick.

Council member Saxvik believes the program's flexibility and well-defined focus will help it survive. "It doesn't apply to existing dams or adding hydropower to existing non-hydro dams," he says. "It leaves the majority of Northwest stream miles open to hydro."

—Pat Ford

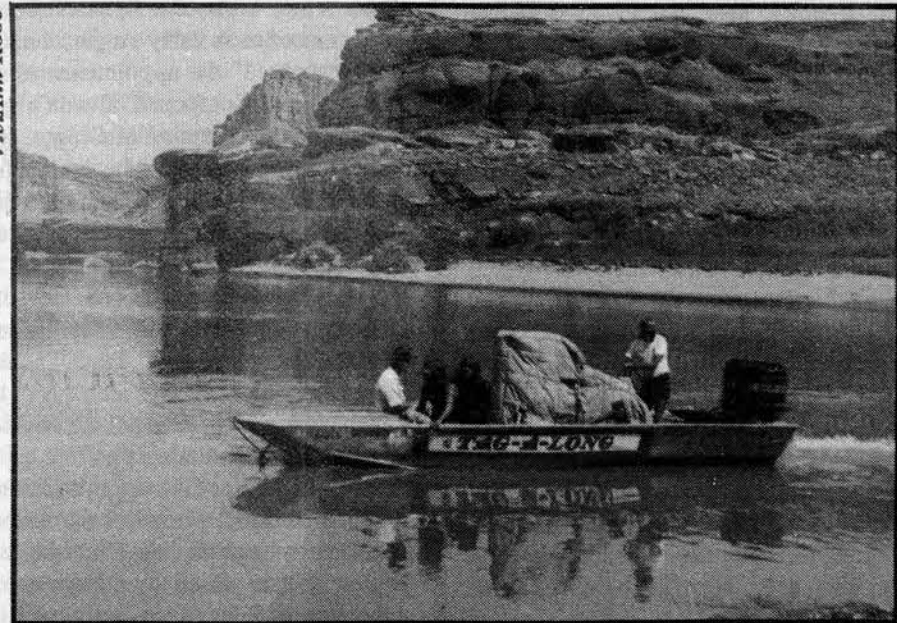
A canyon concert

A unique open-air opera concert on the Colorado River drew rave reviews and sand in performers' shoes.

To help celebrate its 25th anniversary, Tag-A-Long Expeditions, based in Moab, Utah, floated a 560-lb. grand piano and world-renowned opera singers to the Grotto, a redrock alcove 20 miles from Moab. There they performed works from operas such as *Faust* to an audience of 100, including consuls for the Netherlands, Finland and Mexico.

After the performance, pianist and singers, wearing tuxedos and gowns, joined the audience for hors d'oeuvres and champagne. One appreciative listener said the voices ricocheting from canyon walls were "beyond description."

Victoria Rose



560-lb. piano floats down the Colorado River

HOTLINE



Donna Crispin

Looter found guilty

"I was arrested for diggin' a hole and having long hair," Kenneth Walter Kirby said, but the charge against him was looting an ancient Indian site near Moab, Utah. Kirby allegedly fled from Trappers Alcove where signs of digging and sifting were later found, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Lubeck. One cave had been defaced by an orange-painted name from 20 years ago, and the date 1962 was found on a wall. That led Kirby's lawyer to ask, "What damage, if any, did Mr. Kirby do to that site that wasn't already done?" Talking to the *Deseret News*, Kirby charged that archaeologists do more to valuable Indian sites than anyone else. Both arguments failed. Kirby was found guilty of a misdemeanor under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and will be sentenced in November.



Bring on the weevils

New Mexico has declared war on broom snakeweed, and foreign bugs may be the front line of attack. Snakeweed is a poisonous desert plant that now covers over 60 percent of the state's rangeland. It competes for water with native grasses, causing them to be lost to overgrazing, and causes sickness and abortion in livestock. No one has a kind word for snakeweed. Because the plant's native enemies, including the roundheaded borer beetle, have failed to stop its rapid spread, New Mexico is trying out several hundred Argentine weevils in hopes they'll be a magic bullet. During its larval stage a weevil bores into the root of a snakeweed, then eats and kills the plant. David Richman, New Mexico State University insect researcher, says he hopes weevils will be a deterrent because snakeweed in New Mexico has gone "out of control."

BARBS

White knight to the rescue!

Evan Mecham, the impeached governor of Arizona, announced recently that he plans to start a Phoenix daily newspaper to "clean corruption out of Arizona."

HOTLINE

Sonic Stress

An Air Force Environmental Impact Statement has concluded that sonic booms don't harm the physical and mental health of Native Americans. That was not well received by Indians in Arizona on the Tohono O'odham reservation, where many of the 9,200 residents say the startling booms raise blood pressure and cause heart attacks, reports the *Arizona Republic*. The EIS, based on a study begun 10 years ago, said no scientific evidence exists that proves sonic booms are harmful. But the Air Force conceded that residents are anticipated to remain "highly annoyed" as jet training continues over the reservation and adjoining Pipe Organ National Monument. The number of military flights has not been cut, and 19,900 training flights are projected to cross air space above the reservation in 1990.

Among the dirty dozen

Once again 12 members of Congress have been singled out as the "Dirty Dozen" by Environmental Action, the Washington, D.C.-based political action group. This year four on the list of environmental foes are from the West. Sen. Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., co-sponsored legislation to open up Alaska's Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil well drilling, then sponsored a rollback in auto efficiency standards, says Environmental Action. Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., made the list by supporting Nevada's Yucca Mountain as a high-level nuclear waste dump and opposing an attempt to make Department of Energy contractors liable for nuclear accidents due to negligence and misconduct. Finally, both Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Rep. Dan Schaeffer, R-Colo., were picked for failing to support Clean Air bills, even though Salt Lake City and Denver face severe air pollution. Both also voted against Superfund provisions that would help clean up waste sites in their states.



About a bear and a death

A black bear was involved in the death of a Colorado man, but the bear may never have touched him. Jeffrey Carlson, 33, died after falling 50 feet from a tree in the West Elk Wilderness near Gunnison. Mike Smith of the Gunnison County Sheriff's Department says he thinks Carlson climbed the tree to look at a bear cub, then lost his balance and fell when the cub's mother climbed up the tree after him. Smith and state wildlife investigators reached this conclusion after reviewing evidence, which included two sets of claw marks on the tree trunk and an autopsy of Carlson's body. Except for a bite mark on Carlson's right tennis shoe and on his right foot, there was no evidence the bear touched him, reports the *Gunnison Times*.

Undercover agents nab large poaching ring

Joseph C. Wilson and his hunting group had become effective at bagging elk and other big game animals on both sides of the Idaho-Montana border.

Wilson, 50, of Dubois, Wyo., and his party used an airplane to locate game prior to the season. Then, directed by CB radios, teams of four-wheel-drive trucks drove through the back-country forcing elk toward other hunters, who shot them from vehicles.

Unfortunately for Wilson and 18 others, undercover agents were among the hunters he guided in 1986 and 1987. He charged the agents \$600 each per day for guiding services, and they in turn brought an end to Wilson's operation.

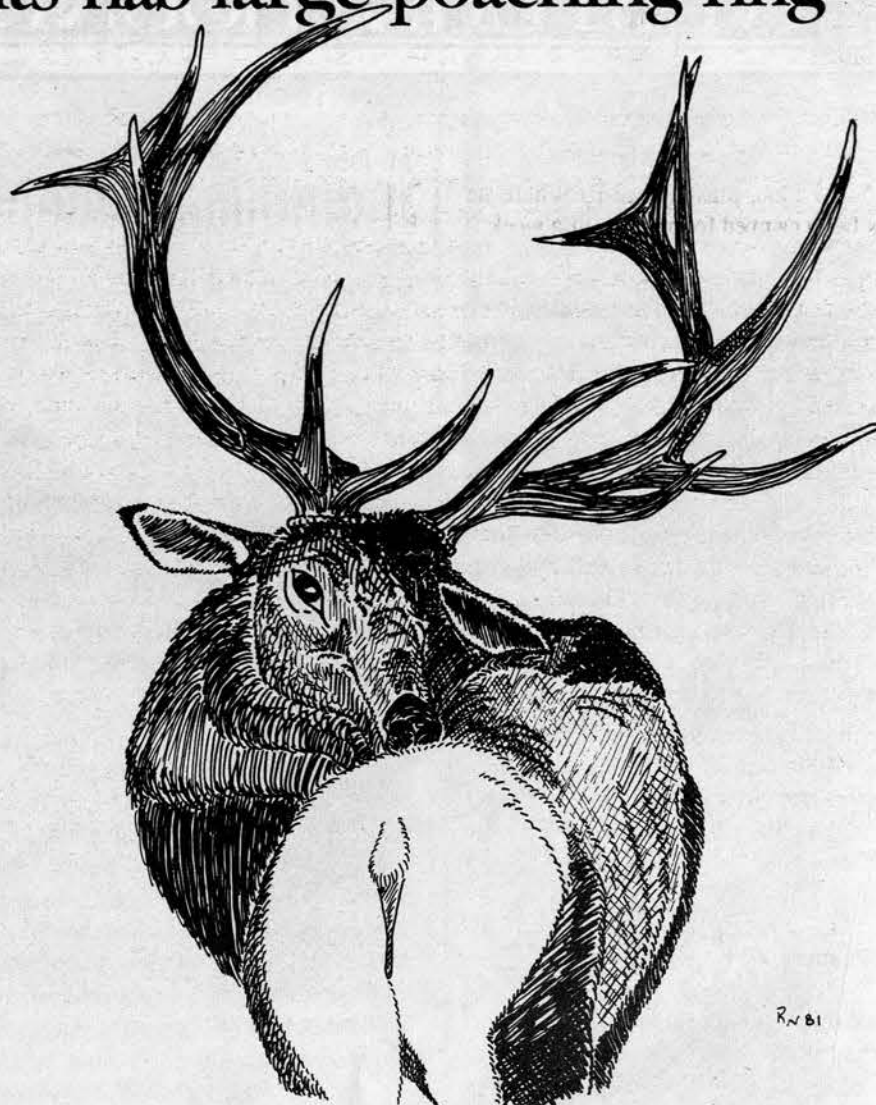
Wilson pleaded guilty to charges of outfitting without a valid license, three counts of possession of unlawfully taken big game, and transfer of big game tags, and was sentenced to two six-month sentences in jail. He was also fined \$3,626.50 and ordered to pay \$1,600 to a reward fund.

His hunting, fishing and trapping licenses were suspended for 10 years, nor can he be in any hunting camp, hunting vehicle or vehicle transporting fish and game for 10 years.

Don Wright, an Idaho Fish and Game law enforcement official, said his department had received tips about Wilson's illegal activities for years but never had enough evidence to make any arrests. Then in 1986, the state brought in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which supplied the undercover agents for "Operation Idaho Outfitter."

"Some members of the Wilson family had a major impact on the game populations in the area," Wright said. "Hopefully that will end."

During the two years of the sting operation, agents observed sophisticated poaching methods. In addition to using trucks to round up and shoot big game, hunters tore down road closure signs, ran over fences and once accidentally started



a range fire in the Beaverhead National Forest in Montana, Wright said.

Wilson and other members of his party knew the backcountry and the movement of elk on both sides of the border and, after years of unchecked hunting, could predict where they would be, Wright said. Most of the animals killed were shot from vehicles.

"I would say some members of this family have always taken advantage of the wildlife resources outside the boundary of the law," Wright said.

No state charges were filed for unlawful activities that allegedly occurred before 1987. Wilson is scheduled to appear in a Beaverhead County,

Mont., court in late September on four state wildlife charges.

Wright said undercover operations in eastern Idaho and elsewhere in Idaho continue. Wardens successfully stopped three major poaching operations in eastern Idaho in 1987, he said.

"But that doesn't mean we're getting ahead," he said. "We're hoping people will realize it doesn't pay to take game out of season and over the limits."

Of the 18 other men arrested and fined for poaching, 10 came from Dubois, Wyo., while the rest were from Small, Idaho Falls and Pocatello, Idaho, and Ipswich, S.D.

— Rocky Barker

Oregon law clinic is under attack

One of the country's most successful environmental law clinics is under the gun, and the timber industry is fingering the trigger.

The University of Oregon's Western Natural Resources Law Clinic has come under the scrutiny of a special review committee. Law School Dean Maurice Holland says that in February after the clinic requested a court injunction against the logging of old-growth timber in northern spotted owl habitat, he received dozens of letters critical of the clinic. In response, he asked University President Paul Olum to review the situation.

But it was not until a *New York Times* article broke the news of the review committee in early August that Olum "announced" the appointment of the six-man panel. Composed of two Oregon lawyers, two University of Oregon professors and two out-of-state law professors, the group is charged with determining if principles of academic freedom were violated by the clinic's actions.

"My belief is that the U.S. Constitution says you can't use tax dollars to support a fixed ideology" says Thomas Hoyt, Eugene lawyer and alumnus of the Oregon law school. "I want the clinic to continue, but constitutionally."

"Under the guise of education," agrees Mike Miller, head of the Associated Oregon Loggers, "they're using taxpayers' dollars which to a large extent are generated in the very activities

they're trying to stop. The people who operate the clinic now, their colors have come out. They're anti-growth and anti-timber. We'd have to start off with a different staff with at least the appearance of being unbiased."

Clinic director Mike Axline, however, says that the clinic is "simply enforcing laws that Congress has adopted."

Their sole criterion for accepting a case, he says, is its educational benefits. To charges that the clinic's actions have hurt the economy of a state dependent on timber revenues, Axline says, "it sounds like industry hyperbole." He adds, "I haven't seen any evidence of that" and points out that the old-growth timber injunction affects a miniscule 3000 acres of BLM land.

The clinic was founded in 1976 to give about 30 students a year of hands-on experience in practicing environmental law. With the directors — first Charles Wilkinson and Frank Barry, now Axline and John Bonine — serving as attorneys-of-record, the clinic has won all but one of its cases, most against federal agencies. The clinic's activities are not confined to Oregon. For example, it is currently representing a group of California citizens suing McClellan Air Force Base for contaminating their water supply.

In 1981, after a controversy over the clinic's funding, President Olum cut its financial relationship with the National Wildlife Federation, which had helped

pay the directors' salaries. But funded by about \$85,000 a year from the University Law School, the clinic has continued its work.

In 1983, Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer issued an opinion that the university was acting properly by spending tax money on such litigation "for educational purposes." That didn't settle the matter, however, and in February, after the clinic asked for the injunction (which was issued in May), the dispute boiled over again.

The review committee, said Olum, is charged with helping the university decide "whether any changes are appropriate in the clinic's operation." He insists that he has no intention of closing the clinic. But the committee's report, expected by the end of the year, is unlikely to silence critics.

"The difficulty with the committee is that they don't have any authority" says Thomas Hoyt. "They're just a study group." Hoyt has approached the Pacific Legal Foundation, a conservative public interest law firm in Sacramento, Calif., about bringing suit against the State Board of Higher Education for allowing special interest groups such as the Audubon Society to use the resources of a publicly-supported institution.

"I think that the Oregon Supreme Court should have this case presented to them," Hoyt says. "After 10 years, it's about time."

— Jim Stiak

Elko, Nevada, is bursting at its (golden) seams

ELKO, Nev. — Rob Biggers sits under a blue, plastic lean-to where he has been camped for more than a week.

Biggers has come to Elko to cash in on northern Nevada's gold boom, but his search for housing has been a bust.

The boom, which exploded about nine months ago, has drawn thousands to this region and to jobs created by new gold mines operated by international mining conglomerates from the United States, Canada and Great Britain using improved mining techniques.

But the new mines and their employees have made it next to impossible to find a house in any northern Nevada community. Many of the mines' employees, and those who flock to apply for jobs, are scattered along the banks of the rivers and hills, camped in tents, trailers and motor homes.

"I've been hearing about Elko all summer long," said Biggers, who is hoping to start work soon at one of the mines. "We just teamed up (with two other men) and headed here."

There are more than 40 working gold mines, most of them new, scattered across northern Nevada. Seven of those mines, including the largest, are near Elko. One of them, the Freeport McMoRan Mine, announced a \$43 million expansion in the spring.

Mining has brought more than 9,800 jobs into Elko County and a low unemployment rate of 4.4 percent, according to state figures.

"There is a major boom going on here all the way across the board," said Doug Koenig, executive director of the Elko Chamber of Commerce.

"Every miner in the western United States is headed here," he said, to find a job at one of the region's mines. Every time a mine closes somewhere else, "another thousand show up."

The gold rush has turned Elko into a wide-open, Old West type of boom town. It has several gambling halls and five legal brothels, and dozens of new residents show up every week.

Elko's population has shot up to more than 17,500 from just 12,000 less than a year ago, an increase of more than 45 percent. The new people have brought with them the problems of a large city: traffic, crime and overcrowding.

"The problem is Elko County is like a balloon, filled to capacity and ready to bust," Sheriff James G. Miller said.

One problem in Elko and throughout northern Nevada is that the boom has made it nearly impossible to rent a home.

Two local newspapers, a weekly and a daily, both carry several columns filled with help-wanted advertisements. Yet neither paper carries a single ad for a house or apartment rental.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Kathy Jaynes, assistant administrator at Elko General Hospital.

"(Recently,) we had to bring in a respiratory therapist, who had to live in a tent at Thomas Canyon Campground."

In Elko and neighboring Carlin, trailer courts have sprung up like weeds.

Dan Byington, owner of Gateway Home and RV Center in Elko, said that since the boom began in November, his sales of mobile homes have more than tripled.

"Nobody expected this kind of growth," Byington said.

The building of mobile-home parks in the city, however, is at a standstill. Both Elko and Carlin are unable to provide many city services, such as water and sewer lines, to new developments.

Monty Roesel



Booming Elko, Nevada

Moratoriums in both communities block any new developments until the water and sewer systems can be expanded to handle the increased loads.

Even in Spring Creek, a new development 15 miles south of Elko, the water system already is over capacity and is being rebuilt.

Byington and others credit the mines with contributing solutions to the problems. Newmont Mines recently completed an apartment house for its employees; it also rents motel rooms for new workers.

Don Stephenson, an electrician from Snowflake, Ariz., has lived in his motor home for about five weeks on a company lot.

"I kind of blame the towns and the mines," he said. "They want everyone here to mine the gold, but they've got nowhere to put us."

The housing shortage is just one of the symptoms of growing pains.

"Almost everything around here seems to be doubling," said Dee Waters, director of the Friends In Service Helping, or FISH, a United Way agency in Elko.

"People who come in here with nothing but the shirt on their back (expect to find a job at one of the mines). They're not thinking about the time it takes to get a first paycheck."

One problem for newcomers is that most of the mines, and nearly all of the service jobs at fast-food restaurants and casinos, require a local address before they will even give a job interview.

Many, including Biggers, use the address of friends in Elko or of the FISH program.

"All you can do is camp, haul water and shower in the truck stop," said Clay Mendenhall, who shares the camp with Biggers.

Mendenhall said he doesn't mind camping now but worries about the coming winter months.

"There's a number of people, transient workers, camping out there," said George R.E. Bouchet, the county manager.

"They would still camp if there were spaces available (in town). This is their method of operation, a way of making ends meet."

Bouchet contends it's part of the philosophy of workers who move from

boom town to boom town in search of good-paying jobs.

"The weather will thin them out," he said.

But the increased transient population has increased other problems.

Sheriff Miller said he asked the County Commission for eight new officers to handle the increase in crime. Elko County is one of the largest in the United States, spanning 17,351 square miles.

"We have to take the bad with the good," Miller said. In the past six months, violent crime, including spousal abuse, rape and murder, has about doubled.

Under a court order, the county recently built a new jail to house up to 107 prisoners. Last year, the county housed an average of 28 or 29 prisoners a day, Miller said.

"This year, it's in the 50s. In five years, we could be in trouble and need more cells," he said.

A state spending cap limits the growth of county governments, making it impossible for Miller to hire new officers.

County officials say the spending cap will be a problem until new tax revenues from the mines' employees catch up — a lag of about two years.

Miller did receive some assistance last year but not from the county — from Newmont Gold. He used the \$50,000 to buy new police cars.

Community leaders fear the "boom, bust" mentality that has hit other Western towns. Elko County has already experienced two other gold booms, albeit smaller ones.

In the 1960s, the Carlin Trend, a major gold-mining area, was discovered, and 20 years later, Freeport McMoRan and other mines expanded into the area for another boom. But none of these earlier booms compare to the one that began last year.

"I don't want it to end up like the last two booms," Byington said.

"We're hoping that this town will build along with the gold mining. The major feeling of all business people is that we don't want it to die."

Byington said that both business and government must find ways to grow without borrowing money.

Elko County Manager Bouchet said the county doesn't want to go the way of

communities that have boomed in the oil and gas fields.

"We need to be very cautious and thorough before we do a big bond issue, in case gold ... drops," he said.

Towns that have borrowed money to keep up with the growth are devastated when the price of minerals drop, and "then people leave and no one wants the property, a glut of subdivisions," he said.

"Those who remain must pay for the debts," Bouchet said.

Even governments get a case of gold fever, he said.

"We've got to look at ... the bust part of it," he said. "The key is to pay as you go."

Bouchet said it will take the county about two years for its tax base to catch up with the amount of money it needs to spend on services.

Many in the county call it "panic time." The school system was "at maximum" before the boom. Last year, enrollment was up more than 12 percent. Educators fear that this year will be even worse.

Most credit the mining companies for contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to counties in northern Nevada for schools, police and other services. Still, they say, more is needed.

Yet most in the community of Elko welcome the gold mining and the growth it has brought. To longtime residents, the biggest new problem is the traffic.

"There is no worse problem in Elko than traffic," the weekly *Elko Independent* wrote in March.

Hospital administrator Jaynes says Elko's size and the lack of traffic at the time were among the reasons she moved to the community seven years ago.

"I loved living in a small town. You now see a lot of strange faces, when you used to know everyone," she said.

But for temporary residents Biggers and Mendenhall, a boom town is nothing new.

"I've been through this before in Alaska," Biggers said. "On a smaller scale, it's the same thing — the atmosphere is the same."

Biggers' goal is to earn enough money from this boom to return to Alaska, this time as an independent prospector. He wants to get in on his own gold boom.

— Mark N. Trahan

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In theory, every U.S. citizen has an equal say in the management of public lands. In fact, residents of small towns dotted across the rural West exert a disproportionate control over those lands. In the past, that control has led to roading, logging, mining and oil and gas exploration. But now, as this story out of the Yellowstone region indicates, some small towns are using their power to oppose extractive activities.

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Environmentalism triumphant

Writers and artists

Tom Bell founded *High Country News* in 1970. He now edits a history magazine in Lander, Wyo.

Colleen Cabot is a gardener in Jackson, Wyo. For some years she was director of the Teton Science School in Grand Teton National Park.

Lester Dore is an artist and conservationist in Madison, Wis.

Bruce Farling is a freelance writer in Missoula, Mont.

Pat Ford is a freelance writer and conservationist in Boise, Idaho. He directed the Idaho Conservation League for several years.

Bert Lindler is an outdoor writer for the *Great Falls Tribune* in Great Falls, Mont.

Ed Marston has been publishing *High Country News* since 1983.

Don Moniak, a resident of eastern Montana, writes an occasional freelance article.

Perry Swisher, an Idaho native, is a former journalist who is now a member of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission.

Raymond Wheeler trained for a career in journalism by working as a cab driver, bicycle messenger and river guide. He lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is writing a book about the Colorado Plateau.



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Coming into a new land

During the 1980s, the mineral and energy companies lost the fight for the rural West and environmentalism triumphed. The companies lost the West because they focused on ore bodies and oil deposits, and scorned or took for granted the West's communities. Now the question is: Will the environmental movement, which focuses on land and wildlife rather than on underground resources, make the same mistake?

by Ed Marston

Over the last 20 years or so, quietly and without any organizing help, a new kind of people moved into the rural West to make new lives. They came with a variety of skills and for a variety of reasons. They were both pushed out of the nation's urban areas and pulled to the new land and new lives represented by the rural West.

They were of all types, and few of them realized they were part of something that could be called a movement. They came in search of a difficult mix: both the social and physical freedom the rural West represented and to build a new, collective way of life.

For the most part, they came to rest in the rural West's larger cities and in the resort towns: the Bozemens, Grand Junctions, Boises, Aspens and Santa Fes. But a significant number moved into traditional small towns.

In many of the places they chose to settle, they were a new phenomenon. The West has always been populated by migrants from other parts of the country, but in the past most newcomers have come from mining backgrounds or from other rural areas. The Rocky Mountain valleys, for example, have always beckoned to those who dwelled on the arid Plains to the east.

But these relatively well-educated seekers after both lifestyle and community, many of them children of the 1960s, came from urban areas and were neither miners, farmers nor merchants. Moreover, they didn't come to get rich, as did the forty-niners and the more recent construction boomers. If anything, these

children of often well-to-do parents came to get poor. Or rather, they came in search of things that had little to do with material possessions.

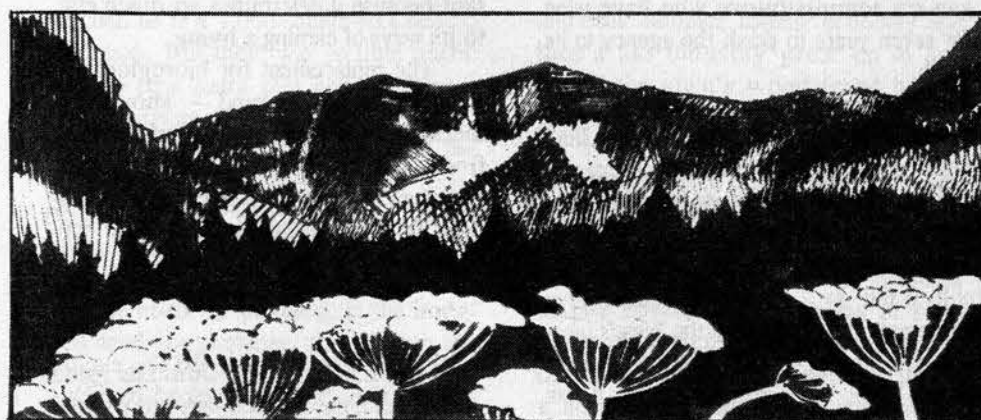
Whatever their personal motives, they were to become a key element in the recent triumph of environmentalism in the rural West. They were the on-the-ground troops, some would call them the Fifth Column, that forged the environmental victories of the past two decades.

Their impact was a result of their being in places where people with urban values and environmental leanings had never before lived. Almost against their will, they found themselves functioning initially as a sort of early-warning system in fights over logging, coal leasing, the deletion of wilderness study areas, and the birth of efforts to build dams. Later, as their numbers and their awareness of the pressures on the surrounding public lands increased, they coalesced into groups and became more than just sounders of alarms.

Suddenly, then, the damned environmentalists were no longer people with addresses only in San Francisco, New York and Denver. Appeals of Forest Service and BLM actions, letters to the editor, speakers at public hearings on public land development projects, and letterheads of environmental groups came with names and addresses from within the affected locales. Forest Service and BLM officials were being engaged in conversations by local environmentalists in their offices, while shopping on Main Street or at open-school nights. It was a new phenomenon, and it had results out of proportion to the numbers involved.

(Continued on page 8)

Lester Dore



New land...

(Continued from page 7)

In Frederick Pohl's and C.M. Kornbluth's science fiction novel *The Space Merchants*, an oppressed group called the consies — short for conservationists, and a play on

commies — attempts to slow the environmental devastation of the earth. Environmentalists who think their movement has done poorly over the past few decades should read that novel and see what the future looked like back then to two futurist-novelists.

Environmentalists' achievements are especially impressive in the rural West. Their efforts on offense have led to vast expanses of legislated wilderness, the growing movement to protect rivers, the use of the Clean Air Act to maintain the clarity of the air flowing through parks and wilderness, and protection of numerous endangered species. On defense, environmentalists have made a bulldog-like effort to stop or reduce the logging of forested lands, the exploration for oil and gas and the mining of sensitive public lands.

It is a measure of the dispersed strength of the movement that there is no one spectacular battle, as there was over the Grand Canyon or Dinosaur National Monument in the 1950s. Instead, there are continual skirmishes fought on every unit of public land in the rural West. They start on the ground, in district or area offices of the Forest Service or BLM, and by a process of natural selection the strong cases and those that gain local and national support go to the Congress or through the appeals and judicial system to the 9th or 10th circuit courts of appeals.

Those efforts act as a dead weight on natural resource development — a vise-like hold on the exploration legs of oil and mineral companies. The corporate behemoths keep moving, of course, but they must drag one or both legs. It is a war of attrition, fought in hundreds of valleys and drainages, and no one knows the extent of that war or how it is influencing the West's development.

At the other end of the scale, as far from the grass roots as you get, are the efforts that passed the array of laws that make possible environmentalists' on-the-ground success: the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Wilderness Act, the various land management acts.

Somewhere between are the court cases, many out of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, that have made the management of the public lands less arbitrary. Many of these cases had their roots in local conservation outrage over some activity undertaken by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management. But the ultimate disposition of the case, and its value in setting policy for the region, depended on the deeper pockets and the legal expertise of a national group.

These are the tangible results of two decades of extensive on-the-ground action by environmentalists in the rural West. But there are also intangible results that may prove more important. For starters, it appears that the Forest Service has tipped. It may take a decade or two for that tipping to become clear, but the agency has reversed its pro-extraction, pro-tree farm direction. It has begun, in an uneven way, to pull back from the brink, despite a cadre of Reagan-era administrators who have tried for seven years to push the agency to its death.

The Forest Service may have been saved by the example of a sister land management agency, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which is falling to its death, this time shoved there with a large assist from environmentalists. It is difficult to tell, in a land whose waterways are largely dammed, that the West's most powerful group — the Water Establishment — has been defeated. But it has been, and that defeat is symbolized

nationally by the shrinking budget and internal confusion of the Bureau.

There is another major intangible: Unlike any private or government entity in the West, environmentalists have an agenda for the land and the streams and rivers. It is embodied in the let-burn policy for fires, in reintroduction of wolves and grizzlies, in the creation of more wilderness, in the beginnings of wild river protection, and in the effort to transcend state boundaries and focus on the land by talking of Colorado Plateaus and Yellowstone ecosystems.

Another intangible accomplishment is the achievement of so many far-reaching environmentalist goals and the establishment of a strong agenda without generating a significant backlash. Even in the rural West, hostility to environmentalists — local and national — is low.

The lack of a backlash doesn't mean environmentalists are wonderful people. Rather, it means that the extractive culture in the West and the pave-it-over culture of the larger America have been unable to establish themselves as more legitimate than environmentalism. America in the 1980s has turned away from compassion toward people but has retained a softness for the land and its denizens.

The above reads like a brochure for the Sierra Club. It is accurate, so far as it goes, but it glosses over complications and deeper truths. Much of what is attributed here to environmentalism was helped along mightily by the global economy and the ending of certain cycles.

The Bureau of Reclamation ran out of dam sites and irrigable land. In many of its forests, the Forest Service ran out of trees it could cut economically. Urban populations grew and became less convinced that the production of commodities was tied to their well-being and more concerned about nature. Finally, the consequences and long-term costs of dam building, logging, grazing, mining and milling have become ever more clear and have received ever more publicity.

There is something else that detracts from the meaning of the environmentalist triumph: Much of it was forged in Washington, D.C., rather than on the ground. A powerful force, like the oil companies, may put faith in top-down influence. But environmentalists must know that dependence on Washington and on a large, but largely distant and uninformed, constituency, is stopgap at best. Those who believe in a livable future for the rural West look to the grass roots to create that future.

The closest word for this strategy is bioregional. But bioregional has a highfalutin sound — it implies a drawing of boundaries by experts in flora, fauna, geology. It sounds as if man and his works are excluded, or only tolerated.

A broader term is needed: something that means "an attachment to the West" — to its air, its sky, its several kinds of magnificent landscapes, its communities, and, perhaps most important because it determines so much else, to its ways of earning a living.

The replacement for bioregional — I don't have one in mind — should also incorporate the differentness of the West from the rest of America. This does not mean a civil war, or a quest for separation. It simply means cultural and economic self determination.

In what direction will this evolution, partly provoked by newcomers fleeing the other Ameri-

ca and partly due to larger economic forces affecting the region and the nation, take the West? To answer that, we must see where we started. Part of America's rural renaissance, as described by Dennis Brownridge (*HCN*, 9/12/88), was an uncoordinated, spontaneous flow of urban people into small communities in the West.

There were some back-to-the-land attempts, but the bulk of rural migration focused on small towns rather than on ranches and farms. The West, it is important to remember, is very urban. Houses don't dot the countryside — towns dot the countryside.

The newcomers didn't swap a typewriter or drill press or teller's cage for a tractor; they simply changed the scale of their lives from big city or suburb to small town and from \$10 to \$15 per hour to \$4 to \$7 an hour.

The flow of urbanites to the rural West can be compared to the Mormon migration to Utah's Great Salt Lake. The Mormons arrived, after an incredibly arduous trip, at Zion in late July of 1847. A day after they arrived, they were at work plowing, planting and diverting water out of streams onto the land.

Today's urbanite didn't come west to escape religious persecution and found a nation, as the Mormons did. But they did come for the land, and, uncoordinated and individual though their migration was, many shared an ideology. It is safe to say that the day after today's migrant arrived in the West, he or she was out on the land hiking, skiing, fishing, hunting. It is also safe to say that the land they were out on was public land.

The newcomers were brought west by the public land; but it was an uncritical attraction — the land was beautiful, the air was clear, the possibilities endless. It was only after they moved into the region that the land came into focus, and they saw the problems and the conflicts.

That realization, in turn, separated newcomers into bands: Some, probably most, remained nonpolitical and uninvolved. They avoided issues. They found the streams that had access and fish, or the land that hadn't been logged or had its access closed.

Others reacted oppositely and were drawn by the problems. Rather than shift their attention from a threatened or damaged area, they shifted to that area. Their fear was that if this threatened stream or valley went, the next one would go soon after. These people coalesced into groups such as the chapters of the Idaho Conservation League, the Northern Plains Resource Council, the Western Colorado Congress, the various state wildlife federations, the Wyoming Outdoor Council, the Montana Wilderness Association.

Those who became active environmentalists in small towns found themselves in opposition to the local establishment and to their neighbors. Those neighbors, friendly when met at the post office or supermarket, turned angry, and sometimes mean, at public meetings.

It was usually at public hearings on development projects that newcomers first saw what a strain they were putting on their new hometown or how their presence jarred. In the heat of public discussions about a new mine or powerplant or logging mill, the feelings emerged.

Local people wondered why well-educated young people would accept a low-wage life in a rural area when their own children felt compelled to move away in order to pursue the money available outside the West's rural valleys.



They wondered why these urban young people, these hippies who had been raised in a comparative lap of luxury, were now opposing progress and the creation of well-paying jobs.

Local people were especially bitter because the young newcomers were writing letters, filing appeals, and creating organizations to oppose the creation of jobs that might bring the area's *real* children home.

That was the polite part. The impolite part had to do with remarks about the newcomers' sources of income — food stamps and trust funds were equally objectionable — about their tendency to grow and consume marijuana, about their sexual habits, and about all the other matters of lifestyle that small town residents are bound to note, imagine and criticize about outsiders who move among them.

The surprising thing wasn't that there was friction but that there was no worse than friction and that the existing community, despite its differences from the newcomers, was far more open and accepting than might have been expected. In formal settings clashes could be strong and angry. In everyday life, there was acceptance, or at least enough tolerance to prevent unbearable hostility.

Newcomers and local people might not play bridge together, or ride snow machines together, or — especially — intermarry. But there was enough formal and informal interaction to keep the place stuck together.

The need for that interaction was clearest to those few who tried to make it on the land. There was one young urbanite turned farmer who took his cues from his nearest neighbor. He planted when the neighbor planted, irrigated when the neighbor irrigated, and harvested when the neighbor harvested.

One August when most of the other hay in the area had been cut, the neighbor still hadn't started cutting his. Finally, the newcomer ran into the neighbor at the post office and asked, "When are you going to start your second cutting?"

"I'm already 10 days late," came the reply. "I'm waiting on a part for my tractor."

But the newcomers brought skills, too, although they were not always welcome. Usually frustrated on public land issues at the local level, and recognizing that they were outnumbered, they started using their corridor-smarts of bureaucratic procedures that any urbanite has: They wrote letters, filed appeals, set up telephone-calling trees, lobbied bureaucrats. Fifty percent of the land in the West is owned and managed by public entities, and every inch of it, in theory, is subject to bureaucratic procedures.

Obviously, the users of the public lands were not helpless. The traditional good-old-boy methods were firmly in place. Ranchers, loggers and others who used the public lands had a rapport with land managers that the newcomers could not achieve. Moreover, the local people were very well connected politically. The head of a rational environmental group, let alone a local group, couldn't get a BLM manager transferred; almost any morning cafe gathering of ranchers could.

The result was predictable. Local environmental groups always tried to get decisions moved up to higher, more "objective" levels. They ran to the appeals procedure or the courts; the local people ran to their county commissioners or U.S. representative or senator.

Local people used the hometown weekly; environmentalists sought to

bring in the larger newspapers or even national press, which would recognize them as legitimate objectors rather than as hippie newcomers or a vocal minority.

This was the basic strategy employed in a wide variety of fights: access to public land, coal mining leases, oil and gas exploration permits, ski area permits, establishment of wilderness areas, protection of grizzlies, building of dams, spraying of herbicides and pesticides.

A different kind of struggle was going on within the communities on issues that had nothing to do with the land. But they were underlain by the same divisions. Craftspeople in a community would want to have the main street blocked off for a crafts fair. Had the request come from any other organization, it would have been honored. In this case, however, the town council finds five reasons to refuse the permit. Stores sprout "No shoes, no shirts, no service" signs; a more forthright one advertises "Hippies stay out!"

A roadside hot springs, long ignored, becomes a gathering place for newcomers and is bulldozed or signed off-limits by the county. A place long opposed to controls suddenly decides to bend its own dislike of rules to outlaw teepees or yurts or outhouses. An infant public radio station, started of course by newcomers, goes looking for funds among local merchants and gets turned down. A newcomer, resident in the community for only five years, can't get a teaching job; the district prefers someone with a more conventional background.

Within nearly every rural Western community there was this newly arrived, squirmy body of newcomers — incredulous both at how much was *right* within the community and on the public land around it, and at how much needed improving.

Perhaps the most interesting clashes came over planning and zoning. Rhetorically, the long-time residents were against planning and zoning. "A man has a right to do what he wants with his land." The newcomers were for planning: "We've got to protect this wonderful place."

The unspoken, perhaps unthought, argument was different. At least until the early 1970s, most small communities hadn't needed planning or zoning. It was rigidly controlled by a lack of money and by strong social interaction. A newcomer with a house on the highway discovered the social controls when he began to prune some beautiful old cottonwoods on his land. Everyone, he said, seemed to think they had a right to stop and question him closely about what he was going to do to the trees.

Newcomers moved to the small Western towns because they were attractive communities made up of low-priced modest homes, dirt streets in many places, large trees. There was unregulated "mixed use" — typically a beauty shop or gunsmith or taxidermist in a residential area. Occasionally, there was a backyard mechanic — every 1,000-square-foot home seemed to have attached to it a 1,000-square-foot heated workshop. But there was so little traffic that the few extra cars generated by a small business was no problem.

That's the way things were and the way things had been for a long time. Despite the lack of controls, the towns looked good to those newly arrived from planned and zoned suburbs.

The need for planning, or the imagined need for planning, arrived with the energy and mineral boom, but it was hastened by the newcomers' need to protect

the "nice" houses some of them wanted to build, by their need to create an economy which met their needs, by the need to protect the town against the next wave of newcomers.

The way was being prepared for this next wave by the first pioneers, who were changing the small towns by their social and political efforts, and by their unconscious or conscious promotion of the area to distant family and friends. (People who wouldn't have thought of living in many a small Western town in the early 1970s find them quite acceptable places in the late 1980s because they have been transformed by an earlier generation of newcomers.)

These conflicts over development and regulation raged into the early 1980s and then were cut short by the bust. As schools, churches, subdivisions and trailer parks, and main streets emptied, fights over development, education and planning took a backseat.

In addition, the social and economic position of the newcomers changed. Overnight, skills that the newcomers had used to oppose development that the larger community wanted were suddenly in demand, as tourism, retirement and other non-rural economic activities became potential saviors.

Just as quickly, the presence of extractive industries receded, and then essentially vanished. It is as if everyone — executives, miners, county commissioners and mayors, and the cadres of developers and boosters — suddenly realized that extraction's day was done.

Equally amazing is how shallow were the roots of the extractive industries. The mines and exploration drills may have gone deep into the ground, but companies did little in the communities. Looking back, it is clear that they were not in business for the long term. They built their mines and mills, managed them from afar, put little or nothing into the communities in the way of education or spin-off businesses, and when they left, left as if they never intended to return.

They were true colonial occupiers in the sense that they had only put down mechanical and financial roots. They had never committed to the region from the top down. That made it easier to pull out of a community, but it also meant that the occupied community had no loyalty to it.

Pittsburgh may have loyalty to U.S. Steel; Lander, Wyo., which once hosted a U.S. Steel iron ore mine, has no such attachment. The extractive industries' hearts are not where their workers and their ore bodies are; their hearts are where their front offices are.

So long as the rural West's only options have been extraction, coal and oil and timber companies could treat local towns like dirt. But now that the West may have choices, the situation is changing.

Take, for example, what happened in Crested Butte, Colo. It was originally a silver and then a coal mining town. When the mines closed and the companies left, vacationers bought up the miners' homes for pennies on the dollar. A laid-back summer tourist economy and then a ski industry grew up in and around the town's wood frame houses and unpaved streets.

Twenty years later, when the mining industry sought to come back in the person of an AMAX proposal for a large molybdenum mine, it got a hot welcome. A transformed Crested Butte, including its city government, chamber of commerce and representative to the board of county commissioners, wanted no part of a mining economy, however much

AMAX and the Forest Service talked of returning the town to its roots.

The mining industry had abandoned Crested Butte, forcing the miners to sell out and move. It had let non-mining interests pick up the homes and community infrastructure for spare change. Then when the industry tried to return, newcomers used the town as a base from which to fight the proposal. The struggle, which took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was rich in ironies.

The Forest Service, for example, was accustomed to wrapping itself in the flag of local economic need and playing on the desire of the local community for the extractive jobs. That worked especially well against environmentalists who lived elsewhere. In this case, the agency was confronted with a community that was joining distant environmental groups in opposing the development. The agency, of course, did AMAX's bidding as best it could, but it had to do it shorn of the usual rhetoric. The delaying tactics of the locals and the crash of the molybdenum market killed the 800-person mine. Crested Butte avoided the crash that would have come had work on the mine begun, and AMAX only lost the \$120 million it had put into planning and land acquisition. Both were lucky.

In general, the extractive industries didn't build a social environment that could last. They took no long-term responsibility for the communities that grew up alongside their operations. If they practiced philanthropy, supported the arts, and built better schools and col-

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Making economics less dismal

Economics, and economists, are traditional enemies of the environment. Behind a facade of neutrality and analysis, traditional economists have pushed for the extraction of natural resources and for the conversion of small communities and businesses into large ones. Now comes a Princeton-educated University of Montana economist to challenge traditional growth-at-all-costs economics.

by Bert Lindler

For the past 20 years Tom Power has been trying to get the right answers from economics about the things that matter most to him: livable communities and the natural environment.

"The things that are important to me are a combination of community and nature," said Power, who has been chairman of the economics department at the University of Montana for the past decade. "Those are two things that are clearly central to people's well-being and central to commercial economic activity."

Yet economists have left such concerns to others. "They're excluded from economic analysis," Power said. "Nature in traditional economic analysis is a raw material input and community is just the institutional background that goes undiscussed. It was clear to me that there was something wrong."

Like many other Westerners, Power is a refugee from urban America. He was a city boy in Milwaukee, Wis., before studying physics at Pennsylvania's LeHigh University. To mesh his social concerns with the mathematics in his undergraduate training, Power turned to economics for his doctoral studies at Princeton.

"It was a matter of simply working with economics to get it to be a useful tool for the concerns I had," said Power of his struggles to get the right answers from economics. "It seemed to always

give the wrong answer on any issue. I think it has ideological biases built into it. It took quite a bit of struggle to both escape those biases and find those ways of putting economic tools to work for the things that are important to me."

In 1968, before his dissertation was complete, Power left Princeton to take a teaching position in Missoula, Mont. "I came here quite consciously because I wanted to live in the mountains," he said. "I wanted to live in a political or social environment where I could get directly, politically involved other than just carrying a picket sign and protesting after the fact."

When Power came to Montana, he wore his hair short. Long hair wasn't worth the hassle, especially when his energies were consumed in opposing the Vietnam War. During the 1970s, he let his hair grow into a ponytail, which combined with his wire-rim glasses, gave him a bookish, Beatles look. He appeared, complete with ponytail, before utility regulatory commissions across the West on behalf of low-income and consumer groups. In addition, he analyzed the economics of strip-mining coal in eastern Montana from an environmental rather than an industrial bias.

Power's ponytail grew for nearly a decade, becoming something of a trademark. "I had started wearing it tied up in a bun," he said. "Some days I'd get up and look in the mirror and see my grandmother."

His dean called him "a living anachronism." To Power, this was proof that he was a conservative.

But in the spring following Ronald Reagan's election, Power cut off the ponytail, adopting a traditional hair style and dress befitting an economics professor in the 1980s. But he saved the ponytail and sometimes wears it at parties.

Whatever his dress or hair style, Power has always worked for livable communities and a healthy environment. And he's never figured that was uneconomic, despite the cries of business interests for tax relief, weakened environmental laws and unfettered growth.

"I'm not trying to say the area is booming," Power said of the rural West during the 1980s, "but people have to sit back and ask first, what is it they want from the economy? The Main Street business person may think what they want is an ongoing expansion or boom ... but most of that boom or expansion doesn't do the vast majority of us any

good at all. It doesn't add to our economic well-being."

In fact, it's possible for per-capita incomes to decline during a boom, since low-paying jobs may outnumber high-paying ones. And it's also possible for unemployment to rise, as persons are drawn from other areas in search of work.

Even if per-capita incomes rose significantly and unemployment declined, that wouldn't necessarily mean that persons who lived in the area before the boom had more income or were more likely to have jobs.

"Until we know who got the income, we don't know anything about the well-being of the local population," Power said. "Our traditional statistics don't tell us anything about the well-being of the existing population. It tells us something about the expansion of the commercial economy, and local economic well-being is often only tangentially tied to that expansion in the commercial economy."

Residents of the rural West haven't chosen to stay here because of an abundance of high-paying jobs. So they must have other reasons.

"That something else is our communities and our landscape," Power said. "That's the wealth that enriches those people's lives enough so that they will put up with the limited commercial economy."

Rural areas with an agricultural base haven't collapsed, despite tough times in agriculture and other natural resource industries throughout the West. "It's because people want to live there," Power said. "They take in their neighbor's wash; they do odd jobs; spend savings, not to give up what the natural and social environment provides them with."

"That commitment to place stabilizes everything," he said. "It means you don't have a Wyoming or an Alaska energy phenomenon where the population just comes and goes with the price of crude oil."

Traditional economists see low per capita income as a sign of poverty. Power says it may mean that residents are willing to accept less pay in a certain region because the quality of life is higher. He suggests that *real* income may be equal across the nation, if money and quality of life are both taken into account.

Power doesn't think communities are likely to benefit by establishing an economic development agency to offer tax breaks or other incentives to lure outside firms into an area.

"You get slick, PR types who really only want to go and hang out with other slick, PR types and corporate representatives and wine and dine, and what you get are incredibly marginal firms," Power said.

Often economic development agencies seek firms that will be manufacturing goods for sale elsewhere. Such firms are thought to provide the economic base for the community, since they're bringing in money from the outside.



Thomas Power

However, such firms also make the community vulnerable to economic shocks from the outside.

"The exports, touted as the primary source of local economic welfare, become the conduit through which instability in the national and international economies are imported," said Power in his newly published book, *The Economic Pursuit of Quality*. "The more dependent the economy is on exports ... the more it is at the mercy of random events."

Power believes communities would spend their money more wisely if they provided technical assistance to small local businesses. "We know that in Montana something between one-fourth and one-third of all employment is self-employed," Power said. "We know that those are low income, very unstable proprietary businesses that are very important to the economy of the state."

As the state's economy suffered during the 1980s, more and more Montanans have found that the only available jobs were those they made themselves.

"This is the primary adjustment mechanism that Montanans have used during the 1980s to allow them to remain Montanans," Power said. "It's responsible for tens of thousands of jobs. We should do something to support it, especially if it's real inexpensive to support it, instead of trying to offer million-dollar bribes to biotech companies to move from California to Bozeman."

In addition, Power says that efforts to make communities more livable are a form of economic development. Local communities can work to improve schools, control crime, protect the local environment or foster cultural development. If they do, the community will be better off.

The money wouldn't be spent for tourists, or to convince out-of-state businesses to relocate. It would be spent to foster the well-being of the existing residents.

"Citizens seeking new skills, environmentalists seeking clean air or water, artists seeking attention to their work, school boards seeking support for their schools, neighbors seeking to protect the integrity of their communities are all engaged in economic activities," Power says in his book. "They are as relevant to the area's development as the downtown business person or the national manufacturing or mining firms that operate locally."

The Economic Pursuit of Quality is published by M.E. Sharpe Inc., of Armonk, N.Y., in paper for \$14.95 and hardback for \$32.50. 218 pages.



Life in the good lane

Cedron Jones lives in a modest house in Helena, Mont., has few possessions, never eats out, doesn't go to the movies, works on and off, and does a lot of hiking and volunteer work. Is he poor, rich or just middle-class? Judge for yourself.

by Bert Lindler

Cedron Jones has spent 47 years proving it's possible to live a worthwhile life without working full-time for a living.

Now he spends about one-third hiking, bird-watching or cross-country skiing, and the remaining third taking care of the chores of life.

"I don't see any theoretical reason people couldn't live the way I do," Jones said. "What we really need to do is figure out how people can feel worthwhile without having to work."

Many persons think they work to earn money for possessions such as a new car or Gore-tex parka. But Jones thinks they work because it's the only way they can feel worthwhile. The money and the possessions it buys come with the job.

Rather than organizing society around jobs and the profit motive that provides them, Jones would like to see society say, "Hey, why don't we concentrate on making this a beautiful place to be and making it fun to be with one another?"

Jones was raised in San Francisco and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in biochemistry. He attended graduate school at Berkeley before going to India in the Peace Corps.

He returned to become a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, working for a physiologist using electron microscopy in his research.

By 1970, Jones realized he couldn't continue to work as a scientist. At the time, the possibility of genetic engineering was becoming apparent. The attitude of scientists was, "Oh man, this is the Brave New Frontier," Jones said. "My attitude was: Jesus Christ, there's no way we as a culture are prepared to deal with things like this."

In December 1970, Jones and his wife, Sarah Taubman, left Cambridge for the West. They lived with friends in Colorado before moving to Bend, Ore., where Jones spent 15 months working in a furniture factory. "That is the only period of extended employment I've ever had in my life."

By then, Jones and Taubman had caught back-to-the-land fever. Although they didn't know anything about trees or animals and had never held a gun or a fishing rod, they decided they would live on their own land as latter-day pioneers.

After some traveling, they found 28 acres of flat ground on a clay bench along the south side of the Clark Fork River valley near Heron, Mont. When they closed the deal in May 1973, half their belongings were stored at their relatives and the remainder was in their Toyota car, parked on land they could call their own, but with no place to live.

Because they had borrowed to buy the land, they had to find jobs, and within weeks they were living in a Forest Service fire lookout 15 miles from their land.

Jones was officially the lookout and Taubman was the alternate. The job gave them income and a place to live. On his days off, Jones built a log shed on their property.

That winter they worked as caretakers at a downhill ski area in Oregon. Again, they were able to earn money while their job provided housing.

"Over those two winters we saved enough to pay off the place," Jones said. They continued working summers for the Forest Service in a variety of jobs. At the same time, they built a pottery kiln for Taubman's pottery business and finally a 15-foot by 16-foot two-story log home.

They also rebuilt a washed-out pond and stocked it with trout. They canned food raised in their garden. They read by propane lights and heated their home with a wood stove.

One summer, while Jones was working on a Forest Service trail crew, some of his colleagues were griping about the high salaries Forest Service employees received for working in the office while field employees received meager wages.

"I realized that I didn't give a damn, and the reason that I didn't give a damn

was that the notion that your life is worth \$5.35 an hour is so patently degrading and absurd," Jones said. "I wanted to be clearing trail and I didn't care if I worked my ass off and some GS-7 sat in an office and made twice as much as I did."

As Jones traveled around Montana to hike, he realized he liked the big sky of eastern Montana more than the rain forest of the west. So in 1985, they sold their land in Heron and used the buyer's down payment to help buy a fix-it-up home in Helena and the buyer's monthly payments to help finance their life on the outskirts of the cash economy.

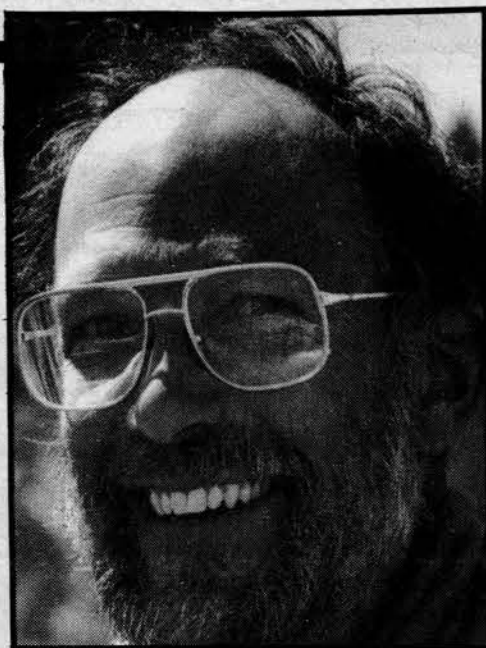
Jones works as a volunteer for the Montana Wilderness Association. He also contracts to work part-time for the Natural Heritage Information System, which records information about the state's rare plants and animals. Taubman pots.

"We eat well," Jones said. "We've got a nice house. We've got a car to drive. I play."

"What I feel I've given up to live this life are new clothes. I buy my clothes at the Salvation Army. I never eat out. We just don't buy pop. I don't go to movies anymore."

He walks to work. They use the pickup truck only when they travel. During their travels, they camp in the bed of the pickup in a simple, homemade camper.

One of their biggest headaches is health insurance. They don't feel they can do without it, yet it consumes a large portion of their income.



Cedron Jones

They aren't building retirement benefits, as they might if they were working at full-time jobs. "But I just feel like I'd rather postpone acting under necessity until the necessity's there," Jones said.

Although their income is no higher than that of some families society may consider poor, they are not.

"With the right kind of techniques of living, you can still have that positive feeling of controlling your destiny," Jones said. "Being willfully poor is just a totally different game than not knowing anything but poverty."

Jones believes his lifestyle is environmentally responsible, but he doesn't judge others who have chosen other lifestyles. A lot of people live with contradictions. They say they're environmentalists and their lifestyles are incredibly consumptive.

"I'm basically concerned with the quality of my life. I want to be proud of the record of Cedron Jones."

□

New land...

(Continued from page 9)

leges, they usually did so in their head-quarter cities rather than at the rural roots of their wealth.

There may be a lesson here for the environmental movement — insofar as one can talk about this loose grouping as a movement. This movement is focused on the land, and over the past several years that focus has made it triumphant. But unless the environmental movement figures out how to live in the West among Westerners and as Westerners, it runs the risk of losing the present advantage in the next inevitable economic upheaval, just as the extractive industries have lost their grip on the region.

The environmental agenda of more wilderness, more wild rivers, less logging, less drilling and less mining is well enough, so far as it goes. But a vision that sees only land and wildlife has the same weakness as a vision that sees only ore bodies and old-growth forests. A vision that does not recognize the small communities and rural human activities that accompany the land and wildlife has an Achilles heel you can — and somebody will — drive a D-9 Cat through.

Until recently, environmentalist attempts to involve themselves in the lives of small, traditional Western communities would have been like Americans making plans for the French countryside. That may no longer be true, for things have changed drastically in the rural West.

First, it has had a very large economic rug yanked out from under it. Second, there are newcomers — people

who have only been in the region 15 or 20 years but who do have some sense of the place — who may make it possible to discuss such plans, to seek a cohabitation of cultures and economic strategies.

I have a theory about the rural West and a fear for its future. The theory is that what I think of as the "real" residents of the region have been on the run from the organized wage economy for several centuries.

When Adam Smith's economy began to dominate Europe, they fled that continent to settle in America's wild places — Appalachia and the Ozarks. When the time clock reached those areas, they came to the rural West where they could continue to live as free people.

The "environmentalists" who most clearly recognize this are Earth First! adherents and writer Edward Abbey. Although EF! may rail at organized environmentalism and its professionalism, its real target is middle-class environmentalists — people who want to have good jobs, and to use the public lands for recreation. These people bring a middle-class, park-like vision to the West that sets Abbey's and Earth First!'s teeth on edge.

Abbey and EF! spokesman Dave Foreman are anything but middle-class park seekers. They are in flight from that kind of America, attracted to the relic anarchy and violence of this 19th century region. People who think ecotage is a tactic miss the point: Ecotage is the end, not the means.

That the Southwest is beautiful is almost incidental to its appeal. They gather in the Southwest because it is gritty, scruffy, dusty, unpaved, rough. When EF! and Abbey say "environmentalist," they mean something very nearly opposite to what the Sierra Club means when

it says "environmentalist."

In the Summer 1988 *Mother Earth News Special*, for example, Abbey writes: "Nor is it by chance that my two friends and I live in this region; we live here because we could not survive anywhere else. What most take for granted as simply the way things are, *urbanism*, Loeffler and De Puy and I regard as a stifling impoverishment of human possibility. So we cling to this blessed island of the American Southwest, refugees from the nightmare of contemporary times."

My fear is that Abbey and his forces will win the struggle for the West. Abetted by an economic collapse, the West could tip into a sort of Appalachian dark night. My other fear is that the Sierra Club and its forces will win and transform the rural West into another suburb of America.

If I could, I would stop the clock. Perhaps things were once better in the rural West, but they are now as good as any time in memory, where the word "good" is averaged over the condition of land, wildlife and small communities.

But danger lies on all sides. From one, the region is threatened by an ever-growing tourism and lifestyle industry, which might leave the West its landscape and air but would remove the way of life that makes it unique.

On the other side is the threat of a resurgent extractive industry, whose damage to the land, air and wildlife is obvious, but which has the virtue of supporting, through contemptuous neglect, an admirable way of life.

Hope lies, I think, not in a search for a middle ground but in locating a fulcrum upon which to balance these opposing forces so that neither becomes dominant.

□

Go (softly) west, young man

How do elephants make love? Carefully, goes the answer. How does one move into a small western town? Even more carefully, according to Perry Swisher, native of a small rural Idaho community, a former journalist and publisher, and presently a member of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission.

by Perry Swisher

I want to offer a few rules for seemingly large-minded persons who find themselves living in seemingly small-minded places in the late 1980s and beyond.

The rules will be simply stated. Rationales, yours and mine, can be subtle, complex, painful, exhilarating and all of them rejectable. But not the rules — not if I've done my homework. Their assembly here is original, but sources are as old and inescapable as society.

1. Don't generalize about the people you see. A community may be predominantly ranchers, Presbyterians, short on young adults, long on its own generalizations about the rest of the world. Ignoring the character of a community is foolish; even more foolish is to typecast the citizenry. Such a mindset is indistinguishable from racism, the lurking shorthand latent in the most enlightened mind. Fail on this, and the generalization, not the community, shuts you out.

2. Get acquainted with one person at a time, an encounter at a time. Familiarity is incremental; instant friendship isn't real. Recalling a friendship as instant really means both of you followed up on that initial spark, and circumstance contributed, too. Lasting respect isn't predictable at first meeting. Indeed, initial hostility or disappointment may instill enough curiosity that you pay more attention to ensuing encounters, with unforeseeable results.

3. Don't see what isn't there. A community's engine doesn't run full bore, day after day. Communities are far from autonomous. Like you, they are also members of mega- and micro-communities not corresponding to the community's boundaries. If a newcomer's visibility or self-consciousness remains high, usually that's because the newcomer, discovering he or she is an irritation in some particular, persists and

thus arouses and then sustains the community's search for a resolution to that distraction. Who said you wouldn't worry about what people think of you if you knew how seldom they do? Whoever it was should tell us again about once a day, including weekends.

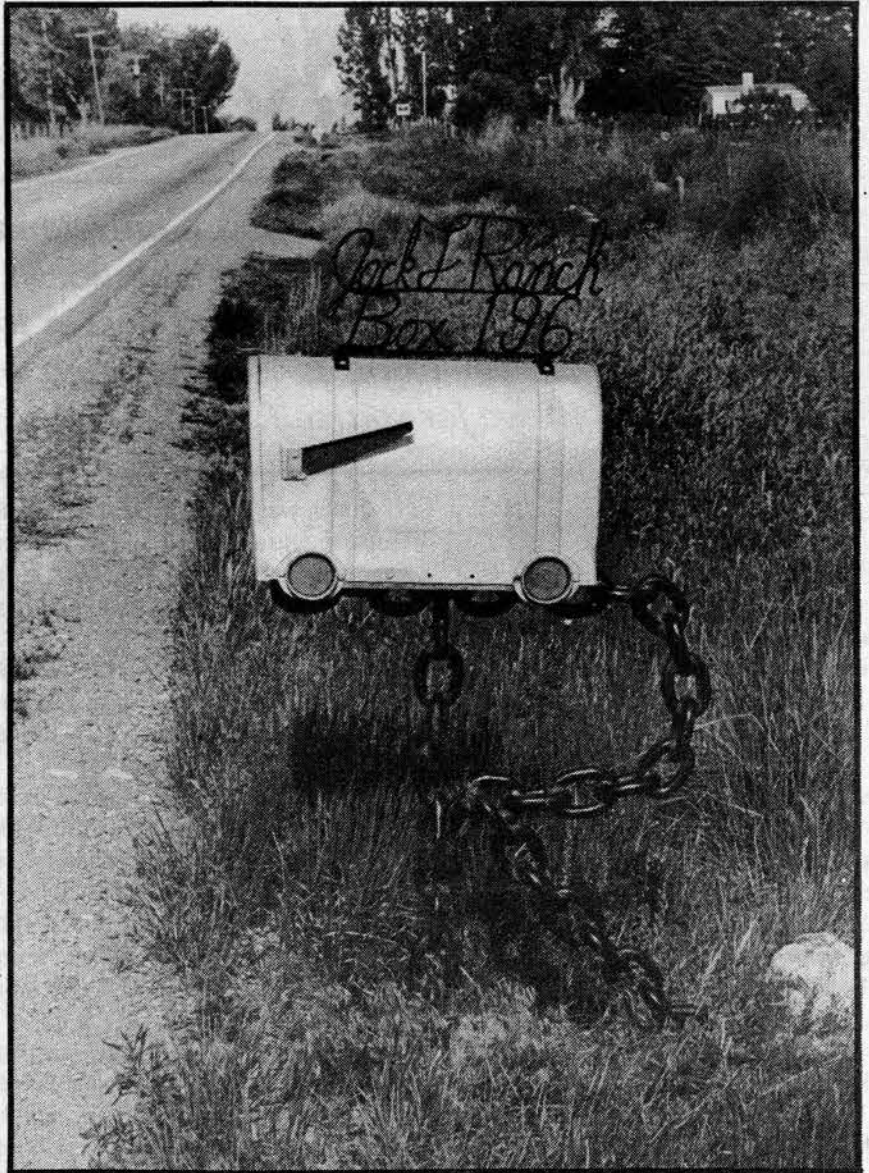
4. Get acquainted with the next arrival, and the next, but not on your own. Involve a third party. The urge to embrace other "strangers" as automatically sharing values the indigenous don't is polarizing. It is also terribly hard to resist. Nevertheless, resist it; your restraint will reassure the community! A view of the community as monolithic and resistant to change may be no more than the product of your own indiscreet behavior as the first greeter of the newest comer. You're not the welcoming committee.

5. Live off the land. Within the smallest neighborhoods are resources invisible at first and second glance. On your third look, choose to become dependent to some degree on amenities unique to this new place. An unusual craftsman. A performer of services. A teller of tales. A cache of field stones, a thicket of blackberries, a sharable ditchbank of asparagus, a waterhole. A runner of errands. The owner of an unused pump. A buyer of an outgrown tricycle. The thinnest, weakest of communities is still a well-disguised mall.

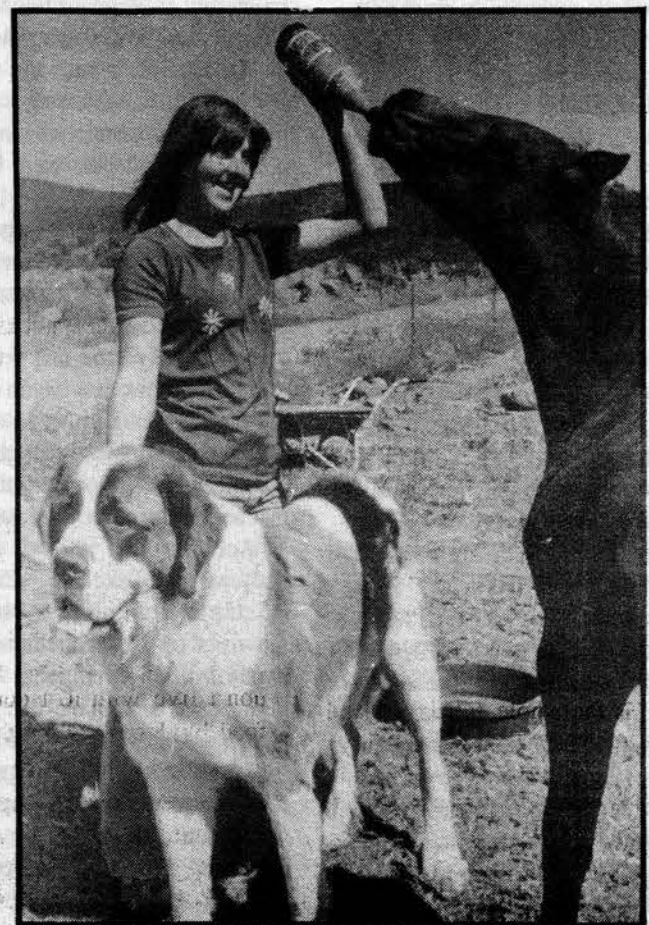
I've said nothing about churches, schools, politics, clubs, games, annual events, because I have no universally applicable advice to give you, and neither should anybody else. The same goes for each crutch/resource for combat with loneliness — the car, the TV, VCRs, the phone, the hobby, the tools of recreation and exercise. Nothing in the paragraph is any of my business.

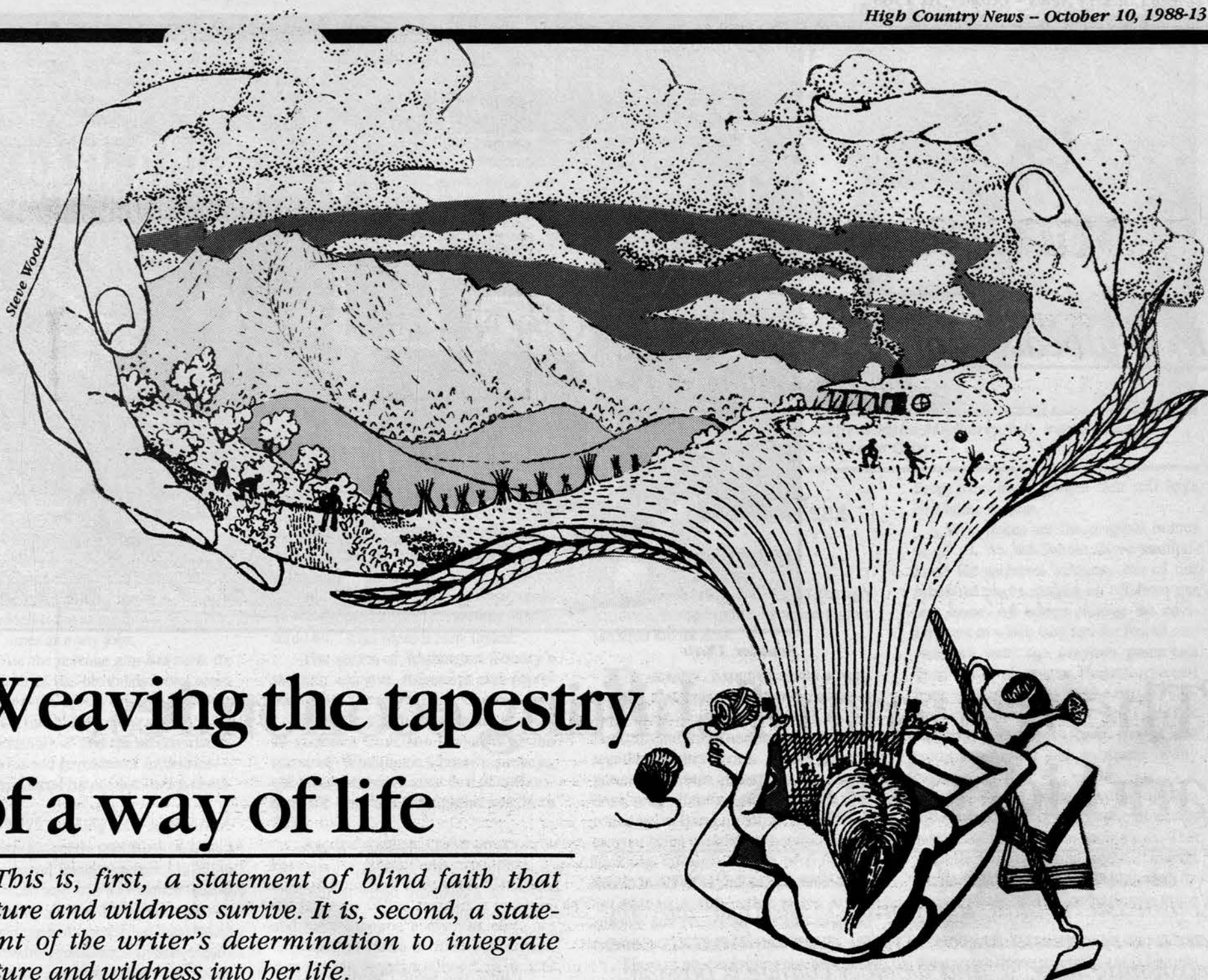
Those five rules are everybody's business.

□



Photos of Paonia and Hotchkiss, Colorado, 1975-1980, by Betsy Marston





Weaving the tapestry of a way of life

This is, first, a statement of blind faith that nature and wildness survive. It is, second, a statement of the writer's determination to integrate nature and wildness into her life.

by Colleen Cabot

We may not be able to change the course of nations or even of our home town. But each of us can change values and human dominance over the natural world.

Economic activity is narrowly defined as the generation of money to exchange for goods and services. And so the land and the people suffer from spiritual neglect. In the last two decades, land-centered values have regained a stronger voice in human activism and environmental education. Yet I am dissatisfied. My values and my daily life are not yet integrated. I no longer wish to talk about change. I wish to weave my values into a way of life.

A deep caring for wild lands underscores my values. I am looking for some way of making a living that involves dirt and physical labor, expresses my spiritual connections to land and embraces me in a human community. Landscape gardening and indigenous horticulture draw all these yearnings together, pulling me into occupied territory. Wilderness has always been "out there." Now I wish to bring wilderness into the garden.

My daily choices are grains of sand that one day may wash up on a beach marking the edge of a new culture. Culture is the expression of people enacting values through personal choice. My pursuit of livelihood is a matter of expressing my deep connection to intimate landscapes. The landscape, Gaia, is alive. Landscape is the whole fabric of land and my experience on the land: the brisk wind, the elusive heron, the adamant cliff. Qualities like integrity, which I sense in healthy landscapes, give me benchmarks from which to measure my wholeness and balance.

That sense of balance is given to me

through direct interaction with the land. My beliefs and imagination make up my personal internal landscape. To maintain integrity in my life, to nurture my internal landscape, my economic endeavors need to be responsive to the rhythms of the exterior landscape. Economy, in this sense, is the full measure of exchange between myself and my environment. I inhale and exhale with the plants. I trade my care and labor for sustenance from the earth. I exchange the excess bounty with fellow humans. My life ebbs and flows with the seasons and that rhythm beats in my soul. My external and internal landscapes thus co-create two dimensions of my self.

The wind touches my ear and passing through me is changed by my spirit. My voice mingles with the voice of the land.

The breath of the land, passing through me, creates story. Telling story, I recreate the land. Telling story again and again, I create a mythological landscape, a landscape reflecting my human spirit as well as its own.

I cannot attain this interaction with the land through politics or education. Nor can I attain wholeness if my life is fragmented into units like a job, spiritual growth and physical fitness. I don't want to jog to stay fit. Hiking, I pass over the land; I don't live with it. I don't want to eat food bludgeoned from the soil by Safeway. Productive labor that earns my daily bread directly from the earth in tune with Her rhythms would be more satisfying.

My jobs so far have not engendered this kind of wholeness. Years of wander-

ing in wild lands attuned me to the sacred harmonies in Gaia's dance. Academic training and political activism underscored these profound experiences. Yet I remain a visitor to wild places.

I talk a great line about being part of a landscape. I have committed to these ideals through my work as a cartographer, an environmental activist, a director of a field ecology school. But how can I frame a way of life in which I make daily choices in response to the landscape of a particular place?

My life must reflect a landscape if I wish to enact my values. To establish an indigenous livelihood, (i.e. a way of life native to a place) I am asking questions like these: Is the basis of the activity responsive to local resources and natural forces? Does the activity enhance the local environment? Is there a local or regional market for the service or product? Does it embrace elements of diversity which will enhance its viability and my continuing interest? The questions are many. Not only do I wish to establish a way of life for myself, I also hope to contribute to my community and culture.

Wilderness and culture are contrary notions in the modern vernacular. Humans left the wilderness to establish civilization. Growing a garden is the borderland between the wild and the domestic. I will weave the two together again.

I am a restless sort. While a thread of values string my days together, it isn't enough. I would pattern my life like the process of weaving. My interests, my values, and my habits would be the weft, woven across the warp of the intimate landscapes of my home territory. I want to live in harmony with Gaia, engaged in vital relationships with people and place. In a private space within a community I would live in health and elegant simplicity, expressing the beauty that flows through me, maintaining variety in my

life in an abiding rhythm that harmonizes with the seasons and the land's abundance.

At the moment I am untangling a bunch of threads chosen a bit at random as I fell in love with an appealing color or an intriguing texture. Periods of intense curiosity about animals and soil and clouds have filled my brain with a prodigious array of data. Ecological principles tied all this into a neat bundle of systems. But it was theory. Could I look at a piece of land and see all this "ecology" happening? And what difference did ecology make as I faithfully followed my Day-Timer through job after job? My life seemed chopped into a tangled bundle of yearnings. "Hireath" the Welsh call it: longing for the unattainable.

A memory offered a clue. I was 13, an avid Girl Scout. Our group trailed a loaded covered wagon through Hole in the Wall country on the southeast flank of Wyoming's Big Horn Range. A truck hauled the wagon, but we walked. It was real enough, walking along the edge of old times. A rancher's wife gave us a glass of cold water when we knocked at her door. Eight or 10 people sat around a long table eating dinner at mid-day. All the men's foreheads were pale. We would camp in a few days in the battlefield of Dull Knife.

After our trail supper cooked in a big iron kettle over an open fire, I wandered up a draw, looking for the outlaw stronghold. The sudden buzz of a rattlesnake peaked my adrenaline at the same moment the setting sun burnished red buttes with crimson. The sage edged this glory with a cloak of pale gray-green. The air was crystal. Something in that landscape at that moment spoke to me, left me in tears without words to

(Continued on page 15)

In southeast Utah:

Ray Wheeler



Boulder, Utah

The trauma of shifting economies, and ideologies

In part III, writer Ray Wheeler wanders across southeastern Utah, attempting to discover why the area is so bound to extraction, even against its own economic interest, and whether change is possible.

by Raymond Wheeler

Who will control the destiny of the Colorado Plateau? Clive Kincaid, former executive director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, says the struggle over the Burr Trail reconstruction is more than a fight to protect the land: "It's about power. And it's about the future of the Colorado Plateau. Will it be developed with an eye to what's exceptional about it, or will it be developed haphazardly? Who's going to have the authority to provide that guiding hand?"

The answer to that question is locked in the riddles of the past and the present. One clear lesson of the past is that the environmental and economic future of the Colorado Plateau are one and the same. As we manage the environment, so too will the economy be affected. As we manage the economy, so too will the environment be affected. In a sense, the Colorado Plateau — because it is publicly owned, because it is undeveloped and because its future is uncharted — will be a litmus test for our society as a whole.

And what of the future? Is the future driven entirely by expectations we bring to it out of the past? If we believe our society capable of preserving the beauty and silence of the Colorado Plateau, will it happen? And if we instead believe that massive development is inevitable, will not that, too, be a self-fulfilling prophecy?

What, then, do we believe? In the spring of 1987, I set out to ask, if not answer, that question. In four months I travelled across the heart of the Colorado Plateau from Moab to Escalante and on, working south and west to Kanab, St. George and the north rim of Grand Canyon. Along the way I talked to min-

ers, ranchers, land managers, county commissioners and environmentalists.

At each step of the journey, I asked questions like these:

What will become of the mining economy?

Two recent economic development studies have reached the same conclusion. "The boom is over," predicted a study of Monticello's economic prospects, "and most of our analysis shows little hope for its return."

Sitting in the Poplar Place, Moab's counterculture emporium, making my own study, I heard this:

"The uranium industry, for my lifetime, anyway, has had its heyday. With breeder reactors...the day will come when we'll have very cheap energy from fission, because it doesn't have the nasty by-products of nuclear waste. That's definitely what's coming down."

What was extraordinary was not the idea but that the man opposite me was Joe Kingsley, president of the Moab Chamber of Commerce.

"You have to be pragmatic," Kingsley continued cheerfully.

"Yes, I suppose you do."

"I'd be the first one to say, 'Great, let's open Atlas Minerals.' It's a big eyesore at the north end of town. If we have to have it, let it work. And I'm in real estate. Hell, I want to sell houses. But I'm also a realist. It won't happen. So why spend the energy?"

Wow, I thought to myself, weaving out of the Poplar Place later that evening with a bellyful of vegetarian pizza and 3.2 beer. Beer notwithstanding, I was high on reality.

Next morning I strolled up the street to the offices of the *Times-Independent* to consult with Moab's publisher, editor, reporter, typesetter and resident oracle, Sam Taylor.

"I don't discount uranium in Moab's future economic life, but I don't expect it to ever be a dominant factor in the life of the community again," Taylor announced.

What?

"I think that we're realistic enough to know that there aren't that many big reserves of ore left in southeast Utah."

Uh...surely potash...?

"The same could be said for our potash industry. Unfortunately, farmers now would rather go bankrupt than buy fertilizer. So we're not going to see much rebound in the commercial fertilizer industry."

But surely coal mining would boom again soon?

"I don't think we'll see any coal strip mines to speak of, and I certainly don't think we're going to see any large coal-burning power plants."

Tar sands? Oil shale?

"Probably not in my lifetime. Possibly not at all."

Three weeks later, I experienced the ultimate reality check. For a solid week, I had been preparing interview questions for that Darth Vader of southern Utah's Eco-wars — San Juan County Commissioner Calvin Black. By all accounts, Cal Black was one of the baddest bad boys in southern Utah. I took the precaution of parking my car five blocks from Black's office. The last thing an environmental reporter needs on a fact-finding tour of southern Utah is to give the chairman of the San Juan County Commission his license plate number. As the hour approached, I dialed Black from a phone booth near his office.

"Hello. It's Ray Wheeler. The reporter for *High Country News*."

"Yeah. Where are you?"

"A phone booth outside the Best Western Motel."

"Well, hell, you're right outside my window. I can probably see you."

A round head appeared at a window....

Inside the office, I found a genial,

fierce and garrulous man. Together for five hours we explored the fabulous political terrain of southeastern Utah, boosting one another over obstacles, wading together across streams, hacking through brush, scrambling across talus slopes.

Surely here I would find an optimistic prognosis for the future of the mining industry. Cal Black had made a fortune on uranium. He had always been the ultimate booster of a mining economy and the king of the Sagebrush Rebels.

But the latest mining bust had taken something out of Black. During the next two decades, Black told me, "Based on the international trade situation and the environmental factors, mining and milling will not come back significantly, if at all."

"The demand for uranium for fuel in this country will still grow a little bit, because there are still some nuclear power plants under construction, but I don't look for any new nuclear power plants in this country in the next decade or so."

Well...what about coal? Surely, the Kaiparowits...

"There's a world supply of coal that's cheaper to mine and easier to get. In mining and natural resource production, we can't compete with the rest of the world, and the reason we can't is our standard of living, our rate of pay, and the environmental costs — justified and unjustified."

Indeed, the smart money in southeastern Utah had gotten out of the mining and milling business years ago. Black himself has liquidated the uranium holdings that made him rich. And he has moved to purchase motels, gas stations, restaurants and other service-type businesses in downtown Blanding. For men who believe the mining economy is the sole hope for southern Utah's economic future, the Sagebrush Rebels have been investing a great deal of their energies lately in an entirely different trade — tourism.

"We have been spending a lot of effort trying to diversify through tourist-

oriented, outdoor recreation," Jimmie Walker, Grand County commission chairman told me. "We only have a nine-hole golf course, and it's becoming more and more apparent all the time, that with the direction we're trying to go, we need more than nine holes."

Direction? What direction?

"Moab and southeastern Utah, we think, have got a very good potential of being a hub for outdoor recreation," Walker said.

"I would like to see the maximum potential of recreation and tourist development," Cal Black told me.

When analyzing the behavior of southern Utah county commissioners, it is instructive to examine the economic bottom line. In 1986, Utah's travel industry generated nearly \$2 billion in revenues — well over twice the total value of all the oil, coal and uranium produced in Utah during the same year. While the mineral industry generated \$285 million in wages from 7,800 jobs, the travel industry provided twice as much wage income and six times as many jobs.

While the revenue gap between the two industries has obviously been exaggerated by the recent mining bust, the steady decline of the mining and agricultural industries — and the steady rise of the service and government industries — has been a trend for at least half a century.

In 1929, mining and agriculture accounted for nearly one-third of Utah's total personal income earnings, while government and services amounted to just 18 percent. By 1985, government and services had more than doubled in importance, providing 40 percent of Utah earnings income, while mining and agriculture together contributed less than 4 percent of personal income and less than 1 percent of employment.

Between 1975 and 1985, Utah's travel industry grew at a rate 27 percent faster than the rest of the economy. Between 1981 and 1986, Utah's income from tourism more than doubled.

It is instructive to compare southwestern and southeastern Utah. While southeastern Utah's economy has been driven since the 1950s by the boom-bust cycle of the mining industry, the economy of southwestern Utah has been almost wholly dependent upon tourism, retirement and recreation.

In 1981, at the peak of the last boom, mining provided less than 3 percent of employment in southwestern

Utah, while it provided more than 30 percent of the jobs in southeastern Utah.

The tourist attractions of the two regions are about equal. Southeastern Utah harbors three national parks and half of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Southwestern Utah harbors two national parks, a national monument, and the other half of Glen Canyon NRA. So one might expect that southeastern Utah's economy — bolstered as it supposedly is by the extra income from mining and milling — would be double or triple that of southwestern Utah, which must depend entirely on tourism and its notoriously low paying jobs.

But it is not. Southwestern Utah has been economically healthy and growing during the 1980s; southeastern Utah has been in its own version of the Great Depression.

Indeed, all southern Utah casts a covetous eye toward St. George, the county seat of Washington County and one of the fastest growing municipalities in the state. "St. George, I think, is where we would like to be in a number of years down the road, and I think possibly could be," says Moab's Sam Taylor.

The secret of Washington County's success: tourism, retirement and recreation.

If Washington County is the envy of all southern Utah, and if tourism is the secret of Washington County's success, one would expect a great deal of enthusiasm for tourism throughout southern Utah.

But for southern Utah's power brokers — its county commissioners — tourism remains a dirty word. "The people that say, 'What we need is tourism' and have stopped everything else, are devastating southern Utah. You cannot survive on tourism alone," says Cal Black.

Judging from the respective unemployment rates in Washington and Grand counties, one is hard pressed to believe that survival is precisely the issue. Indeed, jobs are far more abundant where tourism dominates mining. The question is not whether tourism can provide jobs, but whether tourism can provide high-paying jobs.

"When you lose natural resources, you lose manufacturing, you lose...high-pay jobs," explains Calvin Black. "Tourism is low-pay jobs."

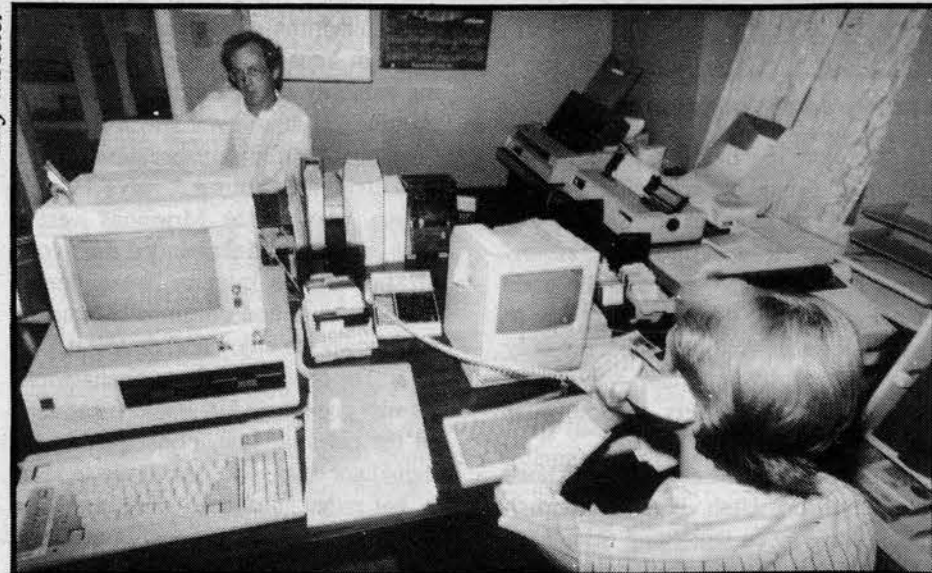
"Kids can get out of high school, they can go out in one of these mines, and in, say, six months, they'd be making anywhere from \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year," explains Jimmie Walker. "The problem is now, those particular individuals didn't go through the learning experience of someone who goes to college and this sort of thing, start out at \$15,000 a year and then go to \$20,000, \$30,000, and \$40,000 like everyone else." That is why the mining bust was so "devastating" to southern Utah. "The toughest thing that they've got to do is to learn that they're not going to be making \$30,000 or \$40,000 or \$50,000," says Walker. "And now they're making anywhere from minimum wage, up to \$5 an hour..."

Mining and milling jobs pay far better, on average, than tourism and service jobs. In 1986, per capita income in Utah was 3.6 times greater for the mining sector than for the services sector. And for southern Utah residents, the mining industry provides yet another and even more compelling attraction — the opportunity to get rich by staking and then leasing or selling mining claims on public land.

"The American dream is to strike it rich — that's the dream that settled the West," says Jimmie Walker.

(Continued on page 16)

Ray Wheeler



Utah Wilderness Coalition staffers Mike Medberry, left, and Rodney Greeno at headquarters at Salt Lake City

Way of life...

(Continued from page 13)

explain the feeling that knifed through my soul. Inexplicable. Science hadn't prepared me for this.

Recently, I stumbled onto a word that embraced the experience. Geomancy: the magic of the land. Experience and language come together in this word. I have felt the power of certain places: striking earth drum song vibrating along the bole of a cottonwood lying prostrate in a desert canyon; being caught in crystalline water trickling through shards of fractured quartz in a Teton saddle, spinning a silver thread a thousand miles along streams and rivers to the surf-rounded moonstones of Puget Sound.

There is no explaining the profound vitality I touched meditating with a jade plant, nor the joyous affection offered by a sycamore. Gaia's spirit emanates from rocks, plants, animals/humans, gathered by the motion of wind and water along features of the land to guild certain places with greater vitality and power. Tapping this essence of place is called geomancy.

It happens that way sometimes. We spend years picking up pieces from an intricate puzzle. One day, a batch of pieces falls together. (I will be a geomancer.) There have been so many voices informing my choices, sparking my imagination. Now it is time to give voice to my heart's desire: to let the voice of the land speak through me.

September. I am hiking up the Beckler River in southeast Yellowstone. An image comes: Snow is falling and a Great Bear ambles into her winter den. Curled in Gaia's womb, she begins to dream. Memories of the season's last succulent raspberry slide into a recollection of traversing the Pitchstone under a June full moon. Her dreams reach back across many seasons. The bear tidies her life, reweaves lessons from experience, and emerges in the spring new born of old stuff. Some say the Bear dreams for us all, dreams the world whole again.

The year turns for me to another September. A friend, a wildcrafter, gathers wild medicinal plants for tinctures and salves. I join her to dig osha. The root of this plant's name is bear. The root of the plant has healed my lungs over the past year. Digging, I can feel the powerful clawed arm part meadow soil.

In a few days, I left on a journey taking me into my own winter dream time, to sort the experiences of a lifetime through winter's solitude to spiral another step toward wholeness. I dreamed of growing medicinal herbs to share the healing they have given me. I want to sit with these plants in the wild and then

bring them into a garden that still feels like home to them.

Wild places are the original homes of us all. We, the People, have manipulated the ancestral wildness out of our inhabited places, cutting us off from our true home. All beings change the environment in which they reside: Rocks cast shadows, water cuts canyons, puma eats deer, tree gives oxygen. Humans can cast huge shadows that blight the earth. I cannot live without a shadow, but I can live modestly with respect for all beings, and nurturing beauty and wildness in my home.

I spent the winter reshaping torn landscapes, tracing the ghost of desert washes across suburban back yards. This summer I worked in an organic market garden and a nursery specializing in native plants, and helped friends make gardens.

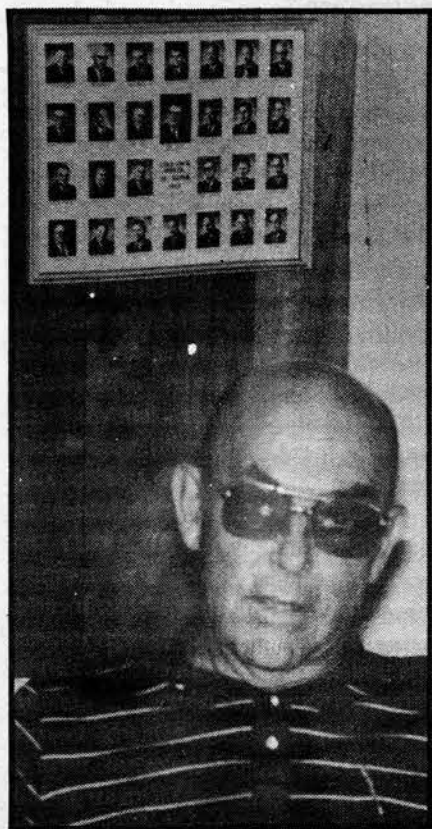
I dream of a greenhouse, round and big enough to house a little café. I would create a beautiful garden, as like a wild home as possible, asking plants to reside with me and give of their bounty in return for the care and respect I give them. In creating a home for plants, I would create a home for myself. Eventually, I wish to collaborate with indigenous varieties of plants adapted to high-altitude situations. Landscaping, organic produce, whole foods: GeoMagic, I call the enterprise. I will be the geomancer. The gardens will grow wilder, and so will I.

Despair is my enemy as I travel into this new country. My history is so entangled with greed and grief that establishing a pattern of harmony in human endeavor seems impossible. Yet my life is one thread in an evolving pattern. If I can untangle my life, live true to my beliefs, take responsibility for my choices, that is one thread untangled. My life has evolved from political action through education into personal action. My choices make up my only true sphere of influence. I am presumptuous to foist solutions on others. But I can live my life. With integrity. In beauty.

it is too easy
to yearn after innocence
it is our task
to live life
to shovel the dung
and heap the middens
if we are lucky
we will find simplicity
and beauty

□

The author wishes to thank the Northern Lights Institute and the many friends who backed a reconnaissance for a bioregional atlas for the Northern Rockies. The atlas project sowed the seeds from which this article, and this quest for livelihood, germinated.



Sam Taylor

16-High Country News -- October 10, 1988

Shifting...

(Continued from page 15)

"To varying degrees, these people believe that mankind was created, put on this earth, to conquer it," says Craig Bigler, a retired economic planner. "They subscribe very much to the puritanical notion that a sure sign that you're saved is wealth. And, therefore, the only thing that's really important — to you as an individual, to society, to God — is that you create wealth."

That insight answers some questions about southern Utah. If the Sagebrush Rebels have been benefiting from government subsidies and profiting from the buying and selling of mining claims on federally owned land, why in the world would they attack the federal government?

"A lot of people get real psychic income from the hope, the belief, that someday they'll strike it rich," says Bigler. "That's why they hate government so much. The only thing between them and riches is government."

"All wealth comes from the land," says Calvin Black. "Who controls the land, controls wealth."

The desire for "riches" is equally responsible for the attitudes of the Sagebrush Rebels toward the land itself. While the national parks are the principal tourist attraction for southern Utah, southern Utah's county commissioners have repeatedly campaigned for massive industrial development projects within or immediately adjacent to the national parks. If tourism is southern Utah's number one industry, why industrialize the parks?

"There is no need to preserve, to conserve anything — because God doesn't want it to be preserved," explains Craig Bigler, recalling the attitudes he observed while growing up in a small Mormon community in southern Idaho. "God wants us to exploit the earth. That's what we're here for. If people really want there to be a wilderness area, they'll figure out a way to make a profit at it. And if you can't make money at it, then it shouldn't be."

That certainly is the attitude of the Sagebrush Rebels — the county commissioners and businessmen who own most of southern Utah and run it like a feudal estate. But is the worship of "riches" important to the majority of southern Utah residents? Is it indigenous to the culture, inherent in the religion, a sacred, inviolable tradition?

Most certainly not, says the venerated Mormon scholar Hugh Nibley, pro-

fessor emeritus of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, and a leading authority on Mormon scripture and doctrine. "If there ever was a conservationist — a rabid conservationist — it was Brigham Young," says Nibley. Young, who led the Mormons west to Utah and who masterminded their colonization of the interior West, deeply revered nature and continually exhorted his followers to enjoy and protect it.

"The earth," Brigham Young wrote, "is very good in and of itself. It has abided the celestial law, consequently we should not despise it, nor desire to leave it, but rather...strive to obey the same laws that the earth abides...." Brigham Young had a "passion for recycling" says Nibley, and "his abhorrence of waste was almost paranoid." Young preached against hunting for sport, warned sternly against overgrazing, and exhorted his followers to "preserve the wild country. Keep it wild, and enjoy it as such."

Above all, says Nibley, Brigham Young fought against materialism — particularly the virulent strain transmitted by the forty-niners who surged through Utah on their way to the California gold fields. "A man says... 'I will have the credit of making the first iron in the territory.' By the beauty and glory of this kind of proceeding is the blackest of darkness and commonness and deformity," Brigham railed. He was talking about a proposal to open an iron mine near Cedar City.

"Brigham Young knew the real issue," says Nibley. "He was fighting a losing battle, and he knew it. The issue — and he made no secret of it — was simply covetousness, that was all. It was a matter of money."

In the battle between materialism and what we might call the Mormon pioneer tradition of good stewardship of the land, Brigham Young's death was a pivotal event. "You can almost date it," says Nibley. "1886, around there, a group of businessmen got together — they were just waiting, with a stopwatch, for Brigham Young to die so they could move in and take over."

Nibley has a keen understanding of the "complete switcheroo" that took place in the decades following Brigham Young's death. His own grandfather, Charles W. Nibley, was one of those businessmen most responsible for it.

In partnership with David Eccles, whose Utah Construction Company was to become one of the "Six Companies" that have dominated the Intermountain West, Charles Nibley cut down thousands of acres of forest on unsurveyed public land in Oregon without bothering to pay for it.

"He would explain to me," recalls Nibley, "when I was in my teens, how you should manage this sort of thing — how easy it was to buy off the government agents, and how easy it was to have all of your men homestead 500 acres or so and then deed the land to you, and then you just go and cut it down." Later in life, recalls Nibley, his grandfather "felt guilty as hell."

But if Utahns have become ever more materialistic since Brigham Young's death, says Nibley, they are violating — not revering — Mormon doctrine. "Half the hymns in our hymn book are on the beauties of nature. In Sunday school we usually pray and thank the Lord for the beauties of nature all around us, which we then proceed to burn and defile."

The Mormon prophet Joseph Smith retired to the woods to receive the vision which led him to discover the Book of Mormon. "I tremble to think," observes Nibley dryly, "what would have happened if those woods had any real commercial value."

Utah conservation leader Clive Kincaid might venture an opinion on the subject. In 1983, Kincaid filed a protest of a timber sale in the Dixie National Forest near the town of Escalante, Utah. The sale was the final phase of a five-year timber harvest program which had mowed down 100 million board-feet of old-growth ponderosa pine, carving some 250 miles of new roads across 25,000 acres of pristine wilderness on the south slope of Boulder Mountain.

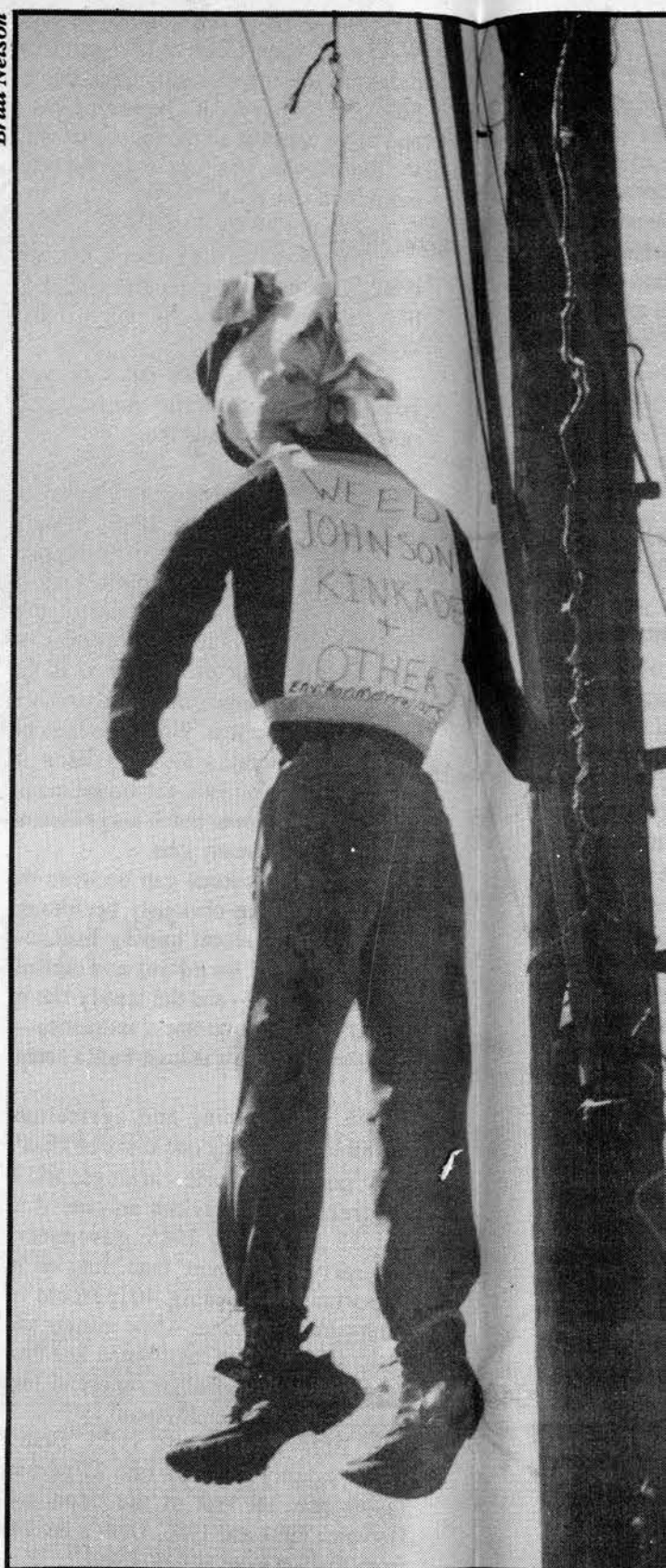
When the managers of the Kaibab Forest Products sawmill in Escalante learned of the protest, they stuffed employee paycheck envelopes with a notice declaring the protest would put the mill out of business. Several days later, Kincaid recalls, residents of Escalante assembled to perform a time-worn southern Utah ritual.

"They took this effigy with our names on it, and dragged it up and down Main Street for a couple of hours. Everybody had an opportunity to drag us behind their pickup. They would go up to one end of the town and then back, and they'd yell and scream, and then somebody would tie it on to the next pickup. Then they threw a rope up over a lamp post, and hoisted it, and left it hanging for three days."

Assisting with the hanging in effigy was Escalante's deputy sheriff, Boyd Woolsey.

In four years of environmental activism in southern Utah, Kincaid has received so many death threats he can no longer remember them all. Was it Woolsey or Escalante Mayor Norm

Brad Nelson



The effigy of environmentalists that was banged in Escalante.

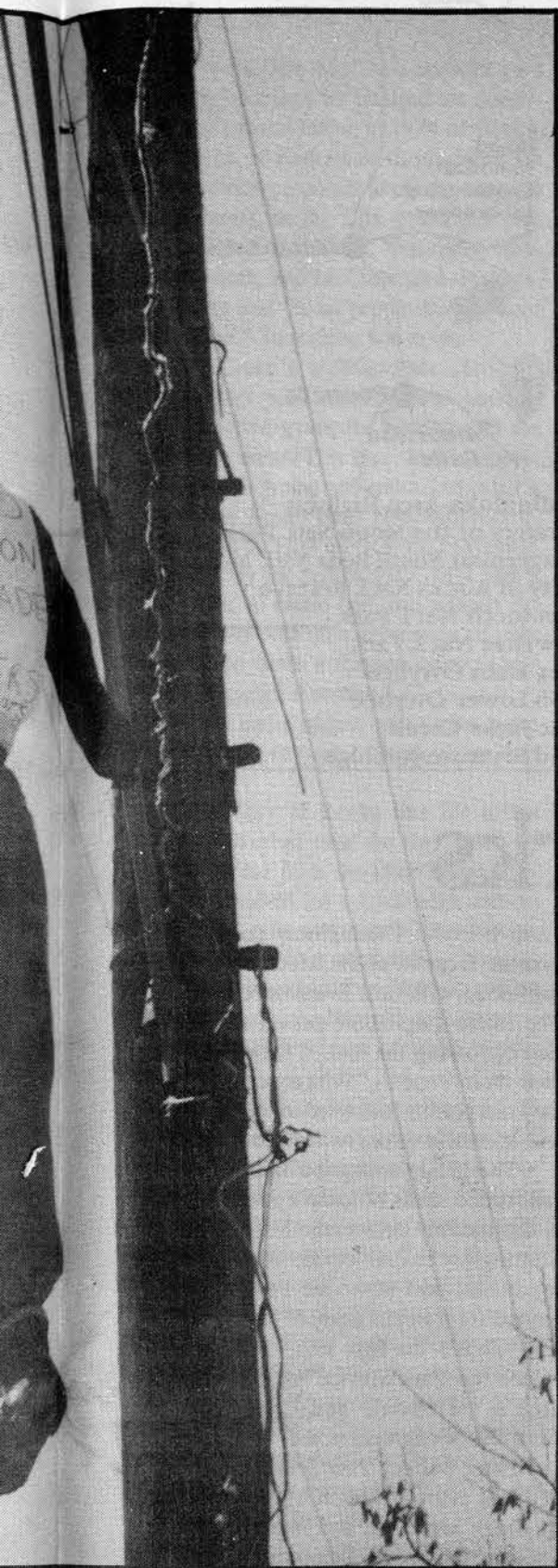
Christiansen who announced that whoever put a bullet hole in Kincaid would be doing the community a favor? In the fall of 1984 in a confrontation in front of the Burr Trail Cafe, a road construction worker shoved a pistol in Kincaid's face. On another occasion, a Moab rancher told Kincaid, "Those boys over in Escalante are pansy-asses. If it had been me over there, you'd have been dead a long time ago."

In spite of evidence, the Sagebrush Rebels have long maintained that tourism contributes little to the economy. "Garfield and Kane and Wayne counties are right in the center of the oldest national parks in the state of Utah," says Cal Black. "They're known nationally and internationally. They have millions of visitors. And those three counties have among the lowest historic per capita income in the state of Utah and the highest average unemployment. That's what tourism, alone, does."

But elsewhere in Utah there are small, isolated towns which, though wholly dependent on tourism for their income, are exploding with growth. Springdale, at the entrance to Zion National Park, is just such a town. On a warm spring morning, one can hear the whine of saws and the thunder of hammers emanating from the old Mormon temple — now being converted into a restaurant/gift shop complex by the town's entrepreneurs.



Accompanied by supporters, a county employee drives a bulldozer onto public land near Moab, Utah, during the Sagebrush Rebellion of 1980



... was hanged in Escalante, Utah, 1984

"If there were no tourists, there would be no Springdale," says Michael Parry, owner of the Bit and Spur Restaurant and a native of St. George. "Most of the old families around here either have a motel, a restaurant or a gift shop, and that's what they've done for a couple of generations."

It is puzzling that tourism has turned Springdale and St. George into boom towns, but not towns like Moab and Price. Why should tourism thrive in one town and fail miserably in another? Theoretical answers to that question are as abundant in southern Utah as corn in Kansas.

Springdale, it is said, thrives on tourism because it is directly adjacent to a national park. But St. George, which also thrives on tourism, is more than 60 miles from the nearest national park, while Moab, one of the most economically depressed towns in Utah, lies adjacent to not one but two national parks. It is said that St. George is thriving because it is located on an interstate and has golf courses and tennis courts to attract visitors. But Springdale is 25 miles from the nearest interstate — almost exactly the same distance that separates Moab from Interstate 70. And Springdale has no golf.

If there is a pattern, it is that the communities which are least successful at reaping income from tourism are those with a history of virulent antagonism toward outsiders. With few exceptions, those communities are the ones which

have been dominated by mining and timber interests and the legacy of the Sagebrush Rebellion.

In May 1986, Cal Black's protege, Blanding Mayor Jim Shumway, leaned into a microphone at a BLM wilderness hearing in Moab and issued a public service announcement: "We know that you want our lands. You will not get them.... We are tired of the wilderness terrorists.... Those seeking the solitude of our beautiful lands shall now be expected to furnish themselves with armed guards while enjoying the serenity of our country."

It is little wonder that many tourists feel a shade uneasy in certain southern Utah communities. If tourists feel uneasy, it is likely that businessmen do, too.

Certainly filmmaker Robert Redford must have felt uneasy in April 1976, when he learned that the townspeople of Kanab, Utah, had burned him in effigy. The problem, it seemed, was that Redford had made the error of voicing his opposition to the proposed Kaiparowits coal mine and power plant project, which would have disturbed more than 6,000 acres of land, carved hundreds of miles of new roads, and pumped pollutants daily into the clear air over the Escalante Canyon country and Capitol Reef National Park.

For nearly fifty years the movie industry has poured vast sums of money into Kanab's economy. Kanab was "Hollywood East" — the scenery behind more than 200 westerns and scores of television productions and commercials. In the '30s while the rest of the country was agonizing through the Depression, the town of Kanab was prosperous due to Hollywood's largesse. But after Kanab torched Robert Redford, the town's lucrative ties to Hollywood began drying up.

"Redford liked Kanab a lot," says Melvin Heaton, a Kanab-area rancher who has worked with Hollywood filmmakers all of his life. "Now he won't come back."

Instead, Redford, a resident of Utah, has taken movies such as "The Electric Horseman" precisely where so many other businessmen and tourists have chosen to take themselves and their business — to the St. George area. "Hanging Robert Redford was a mistake," says Heaton angrily. "It's cost me a lot of money. I've cursed them a lot."

Heaton is referring, of course, to those ubiquitous mischief makers, the Sagebrush Rebels — southern Utah's old-boy network of county commissioners, some BLM district managers, local businessmen, real estate and mining claim speculators, and the local representatives of the energy multinationals. And there is a very great deal of evidence that Melvin Heaton is not the only southern Utah native who has "cussed them a lot."

Winston Hurst is an archaeologist at the White Mesa Institute and a Blanding native whose family helped to settle the town.

As a teenager, Hurst roamed San Juan County's dirt roads "with a jeep and a dog." Like most kids, he had a favorite secret place — the top of an 800-foot-high sandstone fin called Comb Ridge, a place from which, Hurst says, "You could see the whole county."

In 1969, home from college and newly married, Hurst took his wife out to Comb Ridge to show her the view. But it had radically changed. Slicing a gash in the ridge and snaking across the valley below was a new paved highway. The highway, largely financed with San Juan County tax dollars, was the sole access route to Hall's Crossing Marina

on Lake Powell — then owned by San Juan County Commissioner Calvin Black.

"That made me really deeply angry," recalls Hurst. "The anger comes from the frustration that you can't even make an argument. I mean, what is the argument against it? What am I going to say — 'That's where I used to go with my dog?'"

In five months of interviews in southern Utah, almost everyone I spoke to repeatedly extolled the beauty of the land. Often the accolades came from the most committed of Sagebrush Rebels.

"The desert, or the hills, or whatever, always was fascinating to me," Jimmie Walker told me. "If a person really believes in God...it's awful hard for him to just destroy, tear up God's world. Non-renewable resources, once they're removed, what is the land good for? Farming? Maybe. Ranching? Maybe. Beauty to look at? Absolutely. So why in the hell would we want to mine, or do anything, to destroy the beauty? That's our long-range asset."

"I just simply love it down here," said Sam Taylor. "I like the aesthetics. I live here because I like the red rocks and the dry desert climate. I like the availability of the high alpine country we've got here in the La Sal Mountains."

On a Sierra Club hike across the heart of battered Mancos Mesa, I met Alfred Frost, a 67-year-old Monticello pinto-bean farmer who had taken up backpacking at age 60. Frost had mastered a technique of bending forward, grabbing his fully loaded backpack, and flipping it straight up over his head onto his back, all in one spectacular fluid motion. After struggling to the top of a 500-foot canyon wall, the 20- and 30-year-old yuppies on the trip would heave off their packs and collapse, only to find Frost waiting calmly for them, sucking contemplatively on a blade of grass. Frost radiated health, optimism, joy. And while he had no particular love for environmentalists, his love for the land — for wilderness — was exuberant.

As we watched evening flow down into the bed of North Gulch, Frost reminisced about a hearing on the proposed siting of the nation's first nuclear waste dump near Canyonlands Park. Frost had been asked to speak out against the proposal by a friend who could not for fear of losing her job. As the hearing began, the county commissioners each stood and gave a pro-dump speech. When they were finished talking, they simply walked out the door. "They wasn't about to listen to us," Frost recalled with a laugh.

How many Alfred Frosts, how many Winston Hursts, how many Melvin Heaton live in those small towns scattered around the perimeter of the canyon country? What would happen if their political leaders actually listened to them for a change?

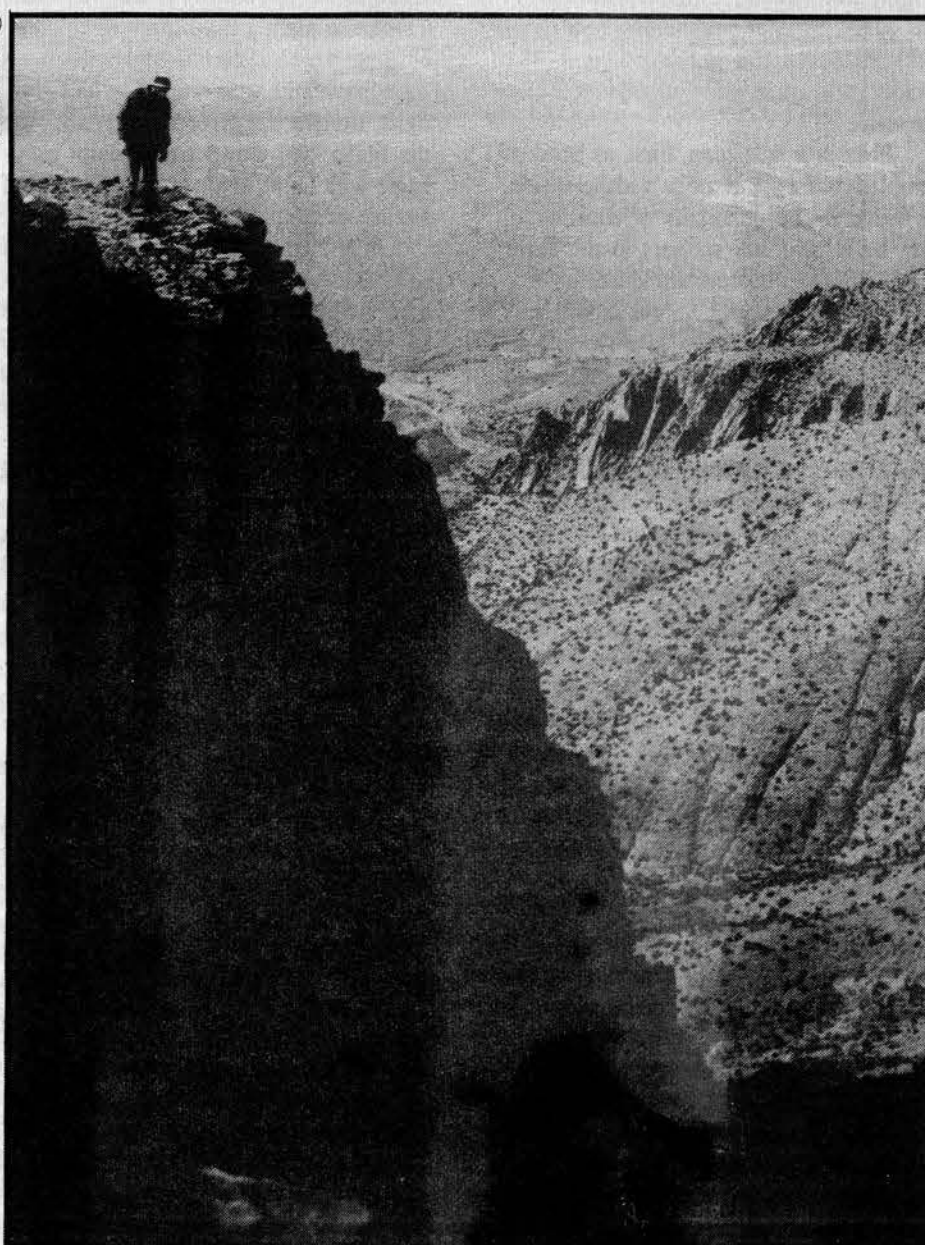
The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance has earned a reputation for being the "junkyard dog" of Utah conservation groups. That has earned the organization a great deal of dislike in southern Utah. But it has also aroused a strange new phenomenon.

"People in Boulder, for the first time, in the last six months — because of the intensity of hatred, I suppose, the open animosity toward me — have started coming out of the woodwork," says Clive Kincaid of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

After seven months of intense psychological warfare over the Burr Trail lawsuit, Kincaid began to notice a change among some of his neighbors. "SUWA supporters that I was always sort of protecting by trying not to associate with them very much have suddenly, on their own, begun fighting back. It's kind of nice to see people who were previously cowed and hear them say, 'You know what, I met so and so last week...and I told them to go to hell. I told them I was an environmentalist, and I didn't want to see that road paved.'"

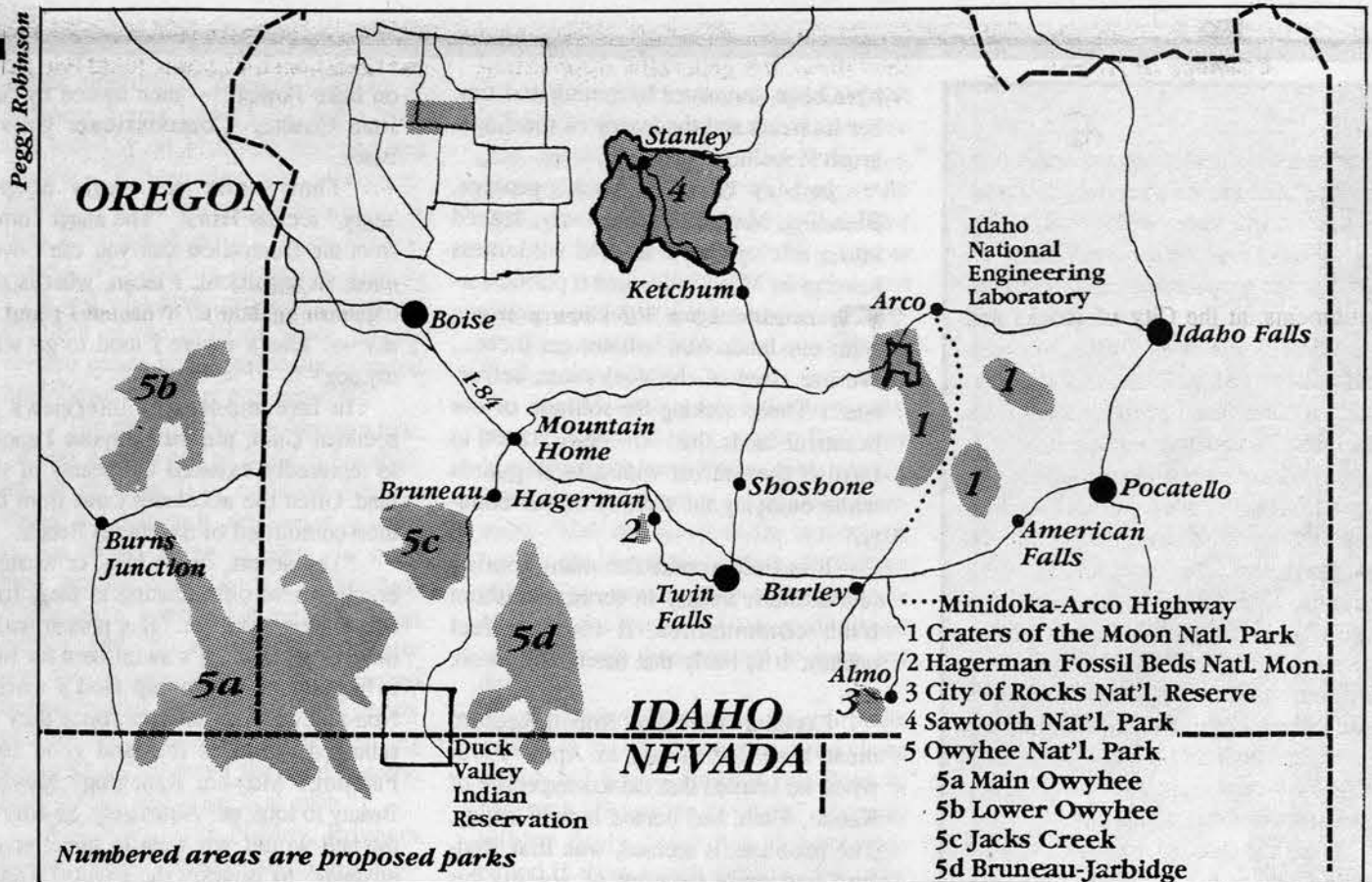
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Mike Young



Notch Peak, Utah

18-High Country News -- October 10, 1988



Now Idaho wants national parks

In theory, wild, beautiful and lightly populated Idaho should be bursting with national parks. In fact, its ranching, logging and mining roots have kept it totally free of parks. But the times are changing, and small communities all over Idaho today are clamoring for national parks and the visitors they attract.

by Pat Ford

An Unearthly Moonscape

Fifteen years ago, Paul Fritz had a vision for southcentral Idaho's future — a string of national parks and monuments displaying, within a long day's drive, a time-lapse series of the earth, animal and human history of this place where the Northwest, the Northern Rockies, and the Great Basin contend.

Fritz is a salesman. First, as head of the National Park Service's Idaho office, he worked the chambers of commerce, city halls and newspapers in the farm towns dotting southcentral Idaho.

His passion was for the landscapes and what they held — lava flows and craters, fossils, wildlands, salmon and bighorn sheep, the ruins of stage stations and ruts of wagon wheels. But he knew enough to lead with another argument — the travellers whom parks would attract and the dollars they would spend. Despite the lure, few were interested.

Today, Fritz's old office is long closed and he is retired. But for the businessmen in those same towns — some new, some the men he couldn't persuade in the 1970s — his vision has come alive. Now, when he traces on a home-made display the routes visitors would take among his prospective parks, mayors and merchants need little further urging.

There is a new look to the enduring tangle where Idaho public lands, pocket-books, and politics meet. Idaho, which has no national parks and not long ago was almost proud of it, is awash today in proposed parks and monuments. The places and chances vary, but dominant in all but one is "building Idaho's recreation economy." The natural, scientific and historical values are substantial, but they are passengers in a dollar-driven vehicle.

Thank the American space program for the concept of a Craters National Park. In the 1960s, Dr. Fred Bullard got interested in the vast volcanic laboratory on the Snake River Plain. (Get an Idaho road map; west of Pocatello is a huge white empty space — no towns, no roads, no rivers. That's the place.) Bullard was a world-eminent volcanologist, and among his former students was NASA's chief geologist. Bullard suggested that NASA use the Idaho lava flows to acquaint astronauts with lunar landscapes. A group of astronauts spent three days there in 1969.

Paul Fritz was then superintendent of Craters of the Moon National Monument — 53,000 acres of volcanic debris on the northern edge of the enormous flows Bullard had investigated. It was created in 1924 and remains Idaho's only contribution to the National Park System. Little of the monument proper had ever seen a human footprint — the jagged, fissured, waterless lava is not something you just stroll into — and Fritz knew even less about what lay south.

"The astronauts' visit made me realize what was out there beyond the monument," Fritz recalls. "Bullard said the entire story of vulcanism was right there, with only an active volcano missing."

For instance, there is the Great Rift — the longest (65 miles) and deepest (up to 800 feet) rift system in North America. Seven times in the last 15,000 years, most recently 2,000 years ago, lava poured from the vents, fissures and cracks of the Rift to create the huge Craters of the Moon lava field. The eruptions left behind craters, cinder and spatter cones, lava tubes, caves, monoliths, and about 450 kipukas — islands of vegetation surrounded by lava — ranging from less than one to 2,200 acres.

A few miles south of the Craters of the Moon flow are two others on the Rift

— the Kings Bowl and Wapi flows. Both were created quickly, perhaps in just a few months, some 2,000 years ago. Kings Bowl contains the 155-foot-deep Crystal Ice Cave, the only rift ice cave open to the public in the world. The Wapi Flow has a kipuka containing huge juniper trees up to 850 years old.

Thus spurred, Fritz developed a proposed expansion containing most of the Rift's length (only one-fifth of it is inside the monument). He also included 7,550-foot Big Southern Butte, a dormant volcano that is the most prominent landmark in the area. His proposal included 300,000 acres in three units.

Fritz wooed mayors and Main Street in the small towns nearby — Arco, Carey, Burley, Rupert, Shoshone and Aberdeen. But there was little interest, even when he stressed the tourism dollar. In the early 1970s, rural Idaho's idea of economic growth didn't include travel or tourism; times were good, with agriculture the engine (ranching and farming surround the lavas). Fritz shelved his idea and — as we shall see — moved on to others.

But 15 years have changed those Main Streets. Farming and farm towns emerged from the recession shrivelled and shaky and have stayed that way. When Burley or Rupert look for economic health today, they see it in recreation-based towns like nearby Ketchum/Sun Valley, or at INEL, the nuclear research and defense facility northeast across the lavas.

In 1985, a group of local businessmen formed the Minidoka-Arco Highway Committee, to push for paving a primitive 60-mile dirt road that cuts through the lavas between Rupert and Arco.

"We wanted to tie our part of the state together more," says former Idaho Gov. John Evans, now a banker in Burley. Arco farmers saw it as opening a potential new market for their surplus production. Burley and Rupert boosters saw it as a way for their businesses to reach the INEL market.

In early 1987, a few of the same people revived the national park idea. Fritz, retired in Boise, dusted off his proposal, and drove over in May to meet with them. His proposal envisioned that dirt road as the park's major through road. The two ideas became one.

In the next few months, Park expansion was endorsed by every nearby chamber of commerce and the Idaho

Farm Bureau. The highway committee became Craters of the Moon Development Inc., with Gov. Evans as point man. The Idaho Legislature passed a resolution endorsing the idea. "Economics is their main impetus," Fritz concedes, "but they are getting interested in the geology and scientific values as they work on it."

The group arranged a field trip last fall for the staffs of Idaho's congressional delegation. Democratic Rep. Richard Stallings was convinced; he endorsed expansion and wrote the Park Service requesting a formal study of the area.

"That's the first step," Fritz says. "Once the Park Service has studied the area's potential, and reported to Congress, Congress can act."

Enter politics. Park Service Director William Mott's March 1988 reply to Stallings was cool and noncommittal. Stallings is the only Democrat in Idaho's delegation, and Mott works for a Republican president. Idaho Republican Sens. Jim McClure and Steve Symms have not endorsed expansion, in part because doing so now would help Stallings get re-elected this fall. Local boosters, many of them Republicans, are frustrated.

"We feel like this project is being held hostage to petty politics," the head of Burley's Development Commission told a reporter recently. "We need a united delegation backing this." But in a late August meeting with park supporters — by now including nearly every chamber of commerce in southern Idaho — McClure refused to come on board.

The economic motivation of backers is the other difficulty. Stallings' letter to Mott said a park "could help stimulate the economy of many Idaho communities." Fritz winced when he saw that phrase: "It hands Mott an excuse to do nothing. You have to lead with the natural and scientific values. And they are there. The U.S. National Park Service should certainly be protecting and interpreting the most complete record of vulcanism in our country."

One would have to guess there will be a Craters of the Moon National Park soon. Beneath the politics, Park Service professionals want to proceed. McClure would seem to have little reason to withhold support after the election. There is some grazing within a few parts of Fritz's proposed boundary, but otherwise it's about the most conflict-free piece of ground imaginable. The existing monument, despite its relative remoteness, does draw visitors — 202,800 last year.

A Change of Heart

Sen. Jim McClure recalls two hearings he chaired in south-central Idaho, in 1974 at Burley and 1976 at Hagerman. Both were on Park Service proposals to create national monuments, at the City of Rocks and Hagerman Fossil Beds. Testimony was light at both, and McClure said the message was that "local people didn't want either one." So nothing was done.

McClure's recollection came in August last year, when he was back in the same two towns for hearings on the same two areas. This time, local support was overwhelming and enthusiastic for a Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument and a City of Rocks National Reserve. By the end of 1987, McClure's legislation to create both had passed the Senate, and both bills are certain to pass the House once a dispute over water rights language is resolved.

What had changed, once again, were the relative prospects of agriculture and tourism.

The City of Rocks lies 30 miles south of Burley, near the tiny town of Almo not far from the Utah-Idaho border. It is named for a 1,500-acre assemblage of weird rock monoliths, humps and portals, which wind and especially water slowly exposed and then sculpted from 2.5 billion-year-old granites — some of the oldest rocks in North America.

"We were so spellbound with the beauty and strangeness of it all, that no thought of Indians entered our head." So reads a typical reaction to City of Rocks from one of the emigrants who passed through in the mid-1800s. The area was a junction for several major routes west — the California Trail, Hudspeth's Cut-off, the Salt Lake Cutoff. Wagon ruts, ruins of stage stops, and emigrant graffiti (painted with axle grease) remain from that historic traffic. The larger surrounding area also possesses unique natural values thanks to the merging there of the Columbia and Great basins.

In 1973, Paul Fritz directed a Park Service study of 30,000 acres; it recommended a national monument to protect and interpret these geological, historical and natural values.

"We had support from the Republican congressman at the time and most of the local ranchers seemed favorable," he says today. "But then the Park Service said they planned to buy out the ranchers over 25 years. That turned them, and the politicians, against us."

Fifteen years later, with no help from the Park Service, most of the ranchers are gone. Some of their old lands are now owned by Burley businessmen who want to develop campgrounds rather than graze cows. And, with no one on site to protect the area (it is a mix of private and BLM land), off-road vehicle use and defacement of the emigrant markings is eroding the values that draw visitors. At the urging of Burley and Almo businessmen, Sen. McClure revisited the issue in 1987 and found unanimous local support for protection.

His legislation creates a 14,000-acre "National Reserve," to be cooperatively managed by the Park Service and Idaho's Parks Department. The state gets lead management, with federal oversight. It is modeled on a reserve recently established in the New Jersey Pinelands.

The bill is well short of the old national monument proposal. And conservationists argue that including an adjacent Forest Service roadless area, Cache Peak, as a wilderness addition would attract further visitors. But for

now they are generally supporting McClure's approach.

"The priority," Fritz says, "is to get someone on site to clean up, regulate ORVs, stop vandalism and build greater local awareness of what's there. This bill can do that."

Roughly 3.5 million years ago saber-toothed tigers, sloths, mastodons, camels and early horses roamed the tropical savannas and warm lakeshores of what is now southern Idaho. Then, 30,000 years ago, the cataclysmic Bonneville Flood carved the Snake River canyon and exposed a few miles of long-buried strata from those Pliocene days. Fifty years ago Elmer Cook, a Hagerman rancher, found some fossil bones in the canyon bluffs, and contacted the Geological Survey.

Today, the Hagerman Fossil Beds are recognized as the world's most complete known site of Pliocene mammal remains. More than 130 full skulls of *Equus Idahoensis*, an early zebra-sized horse, have been taken from the bluffs, as well as bones of early cats, sloths, mastodons, camels, beavers, turtles and

site, locals, and, of course, Paul Fritz, to organize a meeting.

Tourism was the other impetus. Burt Holmes owns a nearby hotel and is chairman of tourism for the Hagerman Chamber of Commerce. He pointed out the 200,000 annual visitors to Utah's Dinosaur National Monument and said the Hagerman Beds, if protected and publicized, could attract twice as many. "In these times of inflation and uncertain futures for our farmers," Mayor Owsley said, "this could create an extraordinary boost to the local economy."

The Hagerman Fossil National Monument Council was formed. On the day McClure held his City of Rocks hearing, he visited Hagerman, and one-tenth of the town, 65 people, turned out to ask his help. A later hearing showed strong local support for a monument, and McClure's resulting legislation quickly passed the senate.

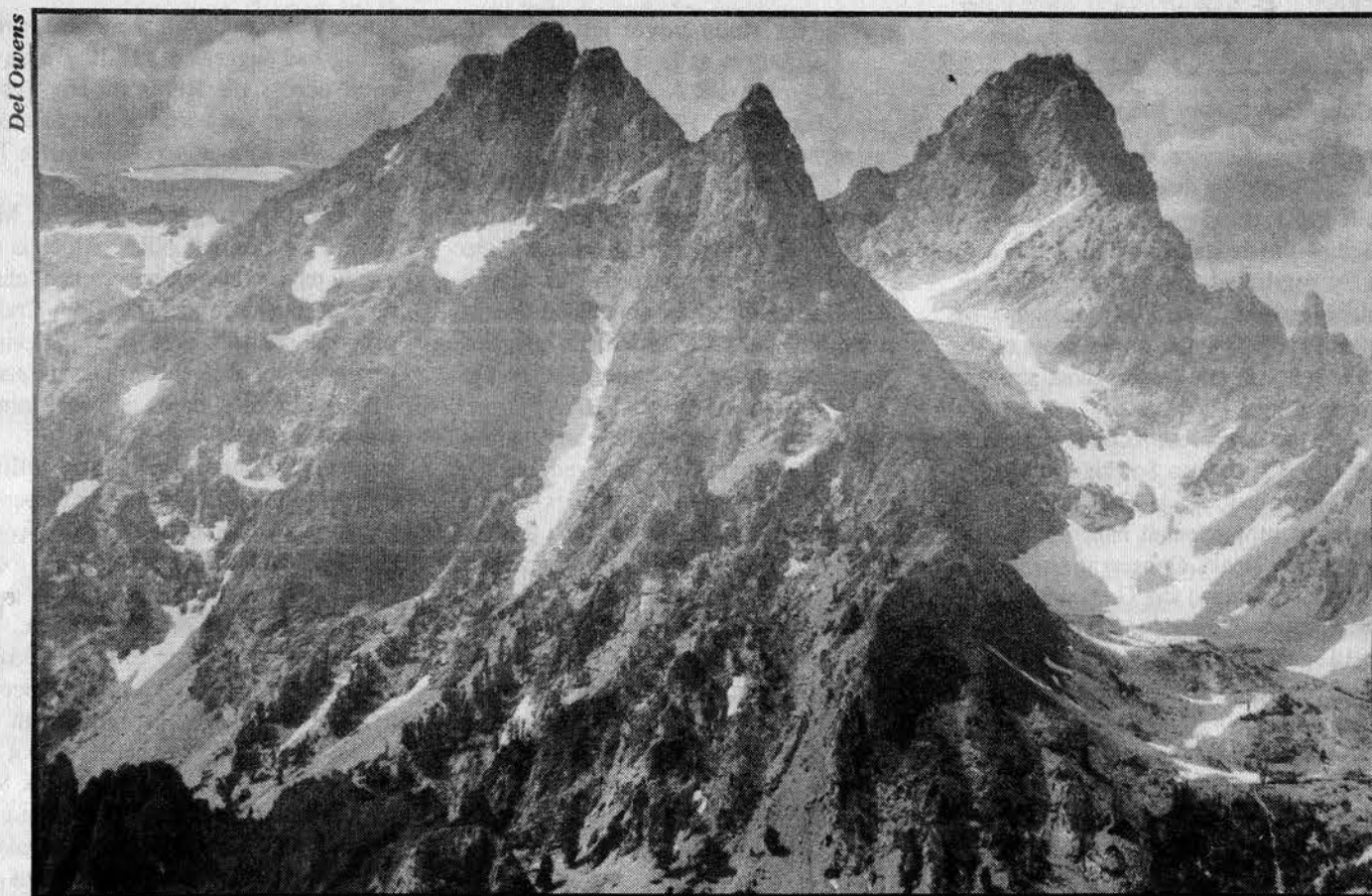
The Council is not sure McClure's bill goes far enough. It includes only the fossil beds themselves, 4,400 acres, but most want the boundary pushed a bit back from the bluffs, so that irrigation seepage right next to the beds can be

The Sawtooth Country

Idaho does not often get prominent notice in the *Los Angeles Times*. But there, on March 17 this year, was the lead editorial: "On behalf of an Idaho Park."

After summarizing the long history of national park proposals for Idaho's spectacular Sawtooth country, the *LA Times* told its huge readership: "But the rugged wilderness of the Sawtooth is so compelling that the idea just will not go away. Rep. Larry E. Craig, a Republican from Boise, has assembled an advisory board to study the idea and its potential benefits." The *LA Times* ended by urging Idaho's members of Congress to come together and agree on a proposal.

California's fishermen and conservationists, and their counterparts in the *LA Times'* national audience, must have been stirred. Perhaps a few hundred thousand of them have visited Sawtooth country, and know firsthand how compelling, how worthy a park is. They must have assumed Idaho conservationists solidly backed the idea, and that, if a Republican congressman is behind its



Idaho Sawtooth range

more. Most excavation has been at the so-called "main quarry," leaving years of further work in promising areas nearby.

In the early 1970s, a huge irrigation project, Bell Rapids, began watering 20,000 acres of desert land above these bluffs. It was the climax of Idaho's post-war agriculture boom. The project was given a right-of-way through the fossil beds for a pipeline up to the new farms. That stimulated a few local residents, with some help from Paul Fritz, to get Idaho's congressional delegation to request a Park Service study of the site. Fritz led the study, which recommended creation of a national monument.

At McClure's 1976 hearing in Hagerman, only six people testified, four of them in opposition. "Farmers were doing well then," recalls Hagerman Mayor Merle Owsley. "People weren't that interested in the fossils." Two more Bell Rapids pipelines were built later, and the Bureau of Land Management continued its low-rent management of the beds.

Last March, a 600-foot bluff collapsed at the site, burying a pumping station and pipeline, and no doubt a lot of fossils. The slide dramatized the way seepage from the irrigation was gradually undermining the soft soils of the beds. It galvanized scientists working at the

stopped. They also want a few acres across the Snake River, on the Hagerman side, added to the monument, so visitor facilities don't have to be in the beds themselves and will be closer to existing businesses. Fritz envisions a tramway to take tourists across the river to the beds.

There is a bigger problem with both the Hagerman and City of Rocks bills. Both contain McClure language denying any federally-reserved water rights for either area. The issue is not practical but political, part of a broader campaign by western Republicans to erase or weaken potential federal water reservations on public lands.

Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., chairman of the House Subcommittee on Public Lands in which both bills now sit, opposes McClure's language and thus is delaying action. Idaho Rep. Stallings supports the language but so far can't budge Vento. Neither bill will pass until a broader congressional compromise on federal water rights emerges.

That frustrates local supporters, who have recommended deleting the water language and moving forward. They want to start capitalizing on unique natural values which 10 years of farm troubles and empty storefronts have made them see with new eyes.

revival, it has some political legs in Idaho itself.

But not so. Larry Craig's Sawtooth park initiative is problematic at best. It does, however, have the same professed origin as Stallings' efforts on Craters of the Moon. With Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks "bursting at the seams," Craig said when announcing his study, "the potential economic benefits to Idaho are obvious."

Sawtooth country cannot be forgotten or mistaken. The Salmon River is born and for 25 miles winds through its broad valley below dark foothill forests sweeping up to the vaulting rock faces and serrate spires of the Sawtooth Mountains. Big glacier-made beauty is on display from dozens of places on and off the highway. Long lakes lie in folds of the foothills, and dozens more in the high cirque basins.

East of the river, the White Cloud Peaks keep their vistas, their lakes, basins and bighorns, for those who go into them. At their heart is a hidden Masada, Idaho's grandest if not quite tallest mountain, Castle Peak.

In 1916, Stephen Mather, first director of the National Park Service, proposed a park in Sawtooth country — which was managed, then and now, by

(Continued on page 20)



William P. Davis

The Owyhee River

Idaho parks...

(Continued from page 19)

the Forest Service. Interior Secretary Harold Ickes did the same in 1935. In the mid-1960s, the Park Service undertook a formal study and concluded the area fully qualified to be a national park. Idaho opinion was always mixed, with local ranchers (who owned most of the valley floor) and miners most strongly opposed.

It took a threat to force action. In 1969, the American Smelting and Refining Company, ASARCO, proposed an open-pit molybdenum mine at the base of Castle Peak. Conservationists and sportsmen formed the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council and endorsed a 1.3 million-acre Sawtooth National Park. Cecil Andrus rode his opposition to the mine to Idaho's governorship in 1970.

When Idaho Sen. Frank Church initiated congressional action the next year, a national park was within reach. Andrus favored it, Church leaned toward it. The Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Stanley chambers of commerce endorsed a park (Stanley is the only town, 100 or so folks, in the Sawtooth Valley). But opponents, including Idaho's Republican congressmen, rallied, and the Forest Service proposed a National Recreation Area, under its continued management, as an alternative.

Church chose the alternative, and the Sawtooth National Recreation Act passed Congress in 1972. "The cows whipped the people," is how Greater Sawtooth Council leader Ernie Day puts it today.

The Act created a 750,000-acre Sawtooth NRA, including a 250,000-acre wilderness in the Sawtooths themselves. It mandates recreation-first management, allowing logging, grazing and mining "insofar as their utilization will not substantially impair the purposes for which the area is established."

Park advocates were thrown a bone — a broader park study of lands in and near the Snake River National Recreation Area. Paul Fritz was put in charge (he had been a planner on the mid-1960s study), and in 1975 his team published a detailed, bold proposal: a three-unit national park in the Sawtooth, White Cloud, Boulder and Pioneer mountains (the last two ranges rise above Ketchum and Sun Valley, south and east of the White Clouds), connected by national recreation areas in the Sawtooth Valley and Copper Basin.

The study never left the shelf. Andrus at first called the Sawtooth NRA a step towards a park, but by his 1974 re-election campaign, he had changed his mind.

In 1977, soon after Jimmy Carter named him Secretary of the Interior, Andrus closed the Park Service's Idaho office. Paul Fritz transferred to Alaska. Most park advocates concluded that its time had passed, and their energies turned to fighting for more wilderness in and around the Sawtooth NRA.

Through the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the recession battered Idaho's extractive economies and its towns. Meanwhile, the Sawtooth NRA and the adjacent Sun Valley ski resort area grew into Idaho's most mature example of a recreation-based year-round economy.

Camping, fishing, hunting, river-running, hiking, horsepacking and cross-country skiing all grew steadily and gradually, good for business but not beyond control. The Sawtooth NRA's restrictions on private land development in the Sawtooth Valley — for instance, no subdivisions — rankled at first, but slowly won acceptance as recreation grew.

"Around here," says Ketchum Mayor Larry Young, "it's not environment versus jobs. It's environment is jobs."

Enter Larry Craig, a third-term Republican from Idaho's 1st Congressional District. His district is north Idaho and part of southwest Idaho; it does not include Sawtooth country. In late 1986, Craig said he would investigate creation of a national park in Sawtooth country, to "increase access," attract more tourists and build the area's recreation economy.

It came from the blue. Rep. Stallings, who represents the area, was taken by surprise. Cecil Andrus, just returned to the governor's chair after 10 years, dismissed it as a bid for statewide recognition so Craig could run for the Senate in 1990 if Jim McClure retired. McClure himself, who had led the solid Republican anti-park sentiment 17 years before, said there was neither support nor reason to reopen the issue. Other Republican leaders were silent, nonplussed.

Conservationists were suspicious. Craig's record and rhetoric is solidly anti-conservation. "You won't find him proposing a park in his own district," says Ketchum sportsman Tim Crawford. "His timber and ranching cronies would scream."

They fastened on his phrase,

"increase access." A few months earlier, Craig had suggested building a paved road across the River of No Return Wilderness, just north of the Sawtooth NRA. The park proposal seemed a Trojan horse for roadbuilding.

Local ranchers were puzzled. Most dislike the Sawtooth NRA, which is trying to reduce (many ranchers say "eliminate") grazing in the area. But Craig's proposal seemed worse, since grazing is generally not allowed in national parks. The diminishing ranks of local miners reacted similarly.

But the most vocal, and telling, opposition came from the very people Craig tailored his message to — owners, managers and workers in the local recreation economy. Their reasons took more people than Larry Craig by surprise.

"Everyone's trying to market Idaho, market our beauty to get more people here. I've got a big problem with the whole idea — 'more is better' is not my business philosophy." So says Jack See, whose family owns and operates Redfish Lake Lodge, the Sawtooth NRA's oldest recreation business. It is typical of the lodges, stores and suppliers operating in and near the Sawtooth NRA — small, locally owned, healthy, and about as busy as they can manage.

His sentiments are also typical. "More or less everyone in the community is against a park. Most of us are here because we want to live here, not to make money. Obviously we want to do well enough to support our families and stay — and we are. The recreation economy is healthy." The few businesses that favor a park are largely absentee or corporate-owned.

The 1988 summer season shows what See is talking about. It was the busiest ever for the Sawtooth NRA — more visitors and money spent than ever before. On Labor Day weekend, every room and campground space was occupied. Motels in Ketchum and Sun Valley were full.

The locals have another worry. "When businesses here get bought by out-of-state companies, the dollar thing gets stronger," See argues. "It's not good. I'm worried about a park bringing big concessionaires and companies, squeezing the local owners out."

This local sentiment was quickly registered; the Stanley, Ketchum and Sun Valley city councils all opposed a park. Craig back-pedaled — "a park is just one option; I want to look at them all" — and tried to salvage what he

could. In late 1987 he named an advisory board, with local officials and ranchers, and non-local recreation businesses and conservationists, to study the Sawtooth NRA. Its report is due in the fall of 1988.

Though a Sawtooth National Park is not in the present political cards, Larry Craig has gotten the Forest Service's attention. The Sawtooth NRA budget is suddenly a little bigger, and its managers are talking about "showcase recreation management." Few expect this to last once the Forest Service feels the dust has settled. Whether the dust settles depends less on Larry Craig than on the local communities.

The key issue facing Sawtooth country is not Sawtooth NRA vs. park but the one raised by Jack See and his neighbors: how to bring a recreation economy to maturity, with both the land and community preserved. Craig began with the goal of attracting more people spending more money. There is agreement now that managing the impact of the thousands who already come is far more pressing.

This is the first big chunk of Idaho facing the loved-to-death problems. The symptoms are familiar: deteriorating campgrounds and trails, garbage, beat-out riparian areas, sharp conflicts among users (ORVs vs. hikers, ranchers vs. fishermen, bears vs. people), poor user education, and community conflicts rooted in the changes wrought by all this use.

Jack See says: "Idaho is new to tourism, newer than it thinks. What we really need is to step back and think through what we're doing. The Sawtooth NRA hasn't given near enough attention or money to managing recreation use. The tourism promoters haven't paid attention to whether we can handle more and more people, and what it will mean to those of us who live here. We have to stop and think a little."

Can a recreation economy grow up, grow into an enduring balance with its land base and foster a community which serves not only tourists but its own best aspirations? That tough question will confront people and towns throughout Idaho in the next quarter century. It confronts Sawtooth country now.

A Desert Park

Idaho's final park proposal stands apart from the others. It has no history or prominent backers. Economic calculation has little to do with it. It is largely one man's vision, born of frustration, for the huge high desert reaches of the Owyhee Plateau.

In the southwest corner of an Idaho map, an empty expanse even bigger than the lava flows extends well into Oregon and Nevada. It is called Owyhee country — vast, high, dry plateaus rolling on endlessly before pitching into the deep sudden canyons of the Jarbidge, Bruneau and Owyhee rivers.

It is a remote and little-known place. Idaho's Owyhee County, for instance, has 8,000 people in 5 million acres. The few towns are tiny, the ranches scattered, water scant.

One of America's poorest Indian reservations, Duck Valley, straddles the Idaho-Nevada border, out of sight and mind. Though the area's northern edges are closer to Boise than the Sawtooths, you could assemble in a theater every Boisean who has explored much beyond its rivers or few roads, and count on your fingers those who could claim to know it well.

Two non-Boiseans who know it well, from much different angles, are

Dave Tindall and Randy Morris. The Tindall ranch, a cow-calf operation near the Bruneau River, has been in the family 104 years: "It's a life we like. It's been handed down, we understand it, we don't live high, but we make a living. Except for Envirosafe" — a commercial hazardous waste dump — "ranching's about all there is in Owyhee County." Tindall depends on public land grazing: His cows are on Bureau of Land Management ground year-round in Idaho, and Forest Service land for five months in Nevada.

Randy Morris — tall, blond, friendly — is a dentist in Mountain Home, an air-base town 40 miles up Interstate 84 from Boise. For the past decade, while other conservationists looked to the forests for their recreation and cause, he has gone into the desert — and found wilderness and wild rivers, history and pre-history, sweep and solitude. You get the sense he likes to walk alone in inhospitable country — a handy trait given his passion "to end the domination by livestock grazing of the Owyhee Plateau."

The different ways these two men see the Owyhee desert put them on opposite sides of a proposal to take 2.5 million acres of Owyhee plateau and canyonlands away from the BLM and give it to the National Park Service.

On his hikes, Morris has found sagebrush-steppe and salt-desert scrub communities that are today as they were 1,000 years ago. These are remnant islands surrounded by what he calls overgrazed cow pasture disguised as public land. He has run the desert rivers in their brief season and seen on the way "awesome erosion from overgrazed plateaus during spring runoff."

He has found 19th century ranch structures wonderfully preserved and then returned several years later to find them dismantled by vandalism.

"If it were managed for wildlife," he says, "this country could be an American Serengeti. About 200,000 animal unit months are allocated to livestock in the key areas. That could translate into millions of AUMs for elk and antelope. As it is, there are few of either because the cows get nearly all the forage."

Dave Tindall sounds tired; it's 8:30 p.m. and he just got in. "The thing we disagree with a lot of these people on is that we've been ranching 104 years on

this place, and if we're doing such damage to the land, how come we're still here?"

Overgrazing and wildlife? "Livestock numbers are way down from the past. We've got pictures from when my dad was first out here. There was no control on grazing then, and there was no grass. Now we've got control, better management, and a lot more grass to offer both cows and wildlife. Fish and Game says the wildlife is increasing. And most of us out here are willing to listen and learn how to get better, if the people who don't live here will also listen to us."

Merits aside, there's no doubt whose corner the BLM has been in since 1981 — the year Morris and a like-minded handful formed the Committee for Idaho's High Desert to defend roadless areas, wildlife and recreation on public desert lands. Their work — analyzing inch-thick plans, testimony, letters, appeals, publicity — has all had the same impact on the BLM. None.

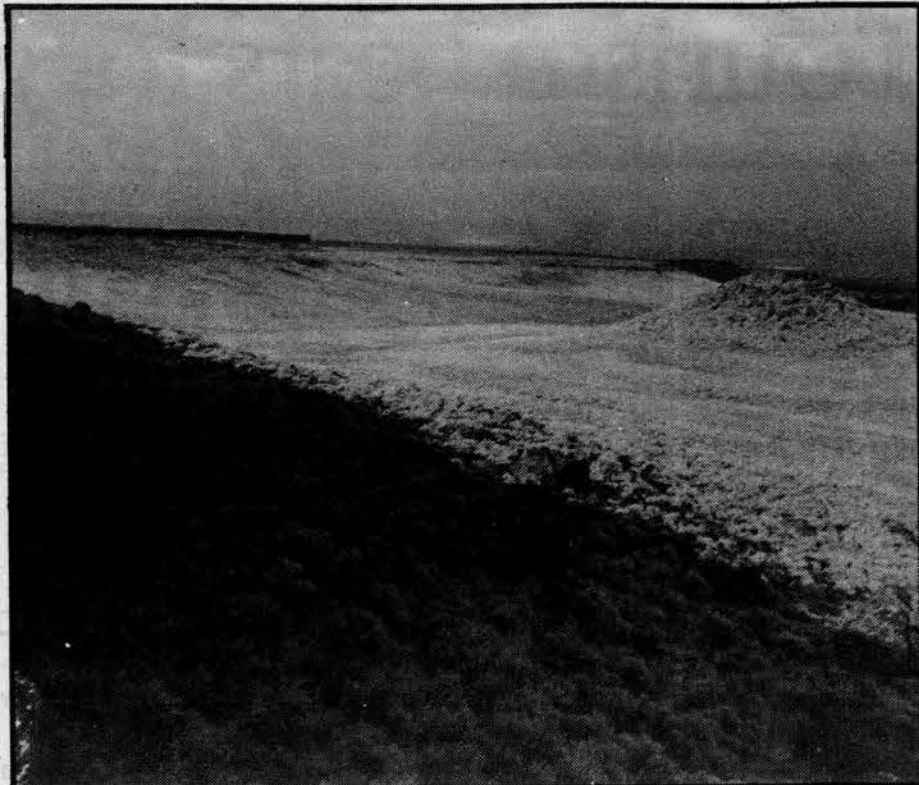
Morris ticks off a list from the last few years. Wilderness study areas destroyed, language slipped in the Owyhee River plan subordinating all recreation use to grazing, a 34-fold increase in vegetative removal slipped in the Jarbidge area plan before anyone knew. And — the clincher — the Egin-Hamer road. In 1986, based on a negative staff report and overwhelming public opposition, a BLM district manager in Idaho Falls denied a rancher's request to build a road through the winter range of Idaho's largest elk herd.

The ranchers went to see Interior Secretary Don Hodel, the manager was removed, and the road built.

"We got the message," Morris says. "Multiple use is a joke on BLM lands in Idaho. We won't see any kind of balance in the Owyhee country as long as they're in charge." In February 1988, the high desert committee unveiled a "conceptual" proposal for a Park Service-managed mosaic: wild and scenic rivers for the Bruneau, Jarbidge and Owyhee; national park or monument in the canyonlands; and national reserves or refuges, with hunting allowed, on the plateaus.

There are four units: the main Owyhee, about 1.3 million acres, including most of the upper Owyhee River and its forks; the lower Owyhee, entirely in

Ted Weigold



Upper Little Jack's Creek, a critical lambing area for bighorn sheep

Oregon; and, in Idaho, the Jacks Creek and Bruneau-Jarbidge units.

Each has unique values; Jacks Creek, for instance has those surviving pristine remnants of land never touched by livestock. But common to all are the rivers and their deep rugged canyons, extraordinary archaeological remains (like fish racks and woven sagebrush mats still intact in a few caves), vast clear vistas, half the world's California bighorn sheep, and the elk and antelope potential.

The proposal is deliberately elastic, especially on the key issue of grazing. "We want specifics to emerge from thorough local discussion, including ranchers and local businesses," says high desert committee chairwoman Janet O'Crowley, who is far more flexible on grazing's future role than Morris. The committee would like to enlist local support for a formal Park Service study of the potential; as at Craters, that study is the indispensable first step.

Dave Tindall doesn't sound enlistable. "The cattle people are pretty firm that we'd like to keep the multiple-use structure," and right now he clearly speaks for most of

Owyhee County. Without local support, no Idaho congressman is going to request a park study. Larry Craig, whose district includes Owyhee County, has stayed silent.

After a rush of immediate publicity in Idaho and Oregon (thanks to Larry Craig and Richard Stallings, park proposals were a newsy item) and a quick endorsement from the Idaho Innkeepers Association, public attention to the high desert committee proposal faded. Morris admits it will be a long haul but points out some small steps forward. When O'Crowley took a slide show on the concept to a dozen civic club meetings in southeast Oregon, she found hostile ranchers but also some interested businessmen. Her next circuit, perhaps this fall, will be through Owyhee County.

And the publicity is attracting more people to the public lands of the Owyhee Plateau. The committee helped organize a well-attended series of summer and fall hikes this year, and its newly published desert hiking guide by committee member Sheldon Bluestein is selling steadily.

"We're sowing seeds," Janet O'Crowley says. "We think they'll sprout, even if we can't say when."

□

Glenn Oakley



Across lava fields, Big Southern Butte, an ancient volcano, looms

22-High Country News - October 10, 1988

Tourism beats logging in Wyoming

In theory, every U.S. citizen has an equal say in the management of public lands. In fact, residents of small towns dotted across the rural West exert a disproportionate control over those lands. In the past, that control has led to roading, logging, mining and oil and gas exploration. But now, as this story out of the Yellowstone region indicates, some small towns are using their power to oppose extractive activities.

by Tom Bell

When Harold Wadley came to Dubois, Wyo., in the late 1960s to take charge of national forest lands around that town, the new district ranger was an experienced timber man and a decorated Marine captain from the Korean War. The over-cutting he saw on his new domain shocked him, and he recommended that the annual cut on his part of the Shoshone National Forest be reduced from 17 million board-feet to 1.3 million board-feet.

National forest policy requires that timber be managed so that it can be cut at a more or less constant rate, in perpetuity. The over-cutting Wadley saw meant that the timber around the Dubois area would be exhausted in a few years; his recommendation was meant to prevent that exhaustion.

In the hue and cry that followed, his superiors caved in to political pressure. He was cashiered as district ranger, and "promoted" to supervisor of the Pine Ridge Job Corps camp in South Dakota. The year was 1970.

In a timber sense, time has proven Wadley correct. But politically, he was 18 years ahead of his time.

The agency that chose to avoid a fight 18 years ago by transferring Wadley has now girded its loins and is fighting the war it backed away from then. Today's Bridger-Teton National Forest Supervisor Brian Stout describes the resource decisions he must make as "gut wrenching."

They are gut wrenching because they represent an abrupt turn for the agency, from giving almost carte blanche to logging on the national forest lands in

western Wyoming to an attempt to preserve surviving stands by drastically reducing logging.

The agency's change has had a major effect: the closing in May 1988 of Louisiana-Pacific's Dubois mill — an operation many in Dubois saw as the heart of the town's economy and heritage.

Small family sawmills have been a part of all the mountain towns in western Wyoming. Large-scale timbering came to Dubois with the advent of the railroad tie industry. From the early 1900s until after World War II, millions of ties were cut on the Shoshone National Forest land surrounding Dubois. The ties were floated down the DuNoir and Wind rivers in colorful tie drives to the railroad at Riverton.

Better methods of preserving railroad ties and the decline of railroads led the timber industry to turn to lumber and then to building studs. Now the days of large-scale timbering appear to be over.

The fact that Dubois had several years' warning that the closure was coming didn't make the event less traumatic for the town of 1,100 or for Fremont County and its county seat of Lander. Since 1981, there has been a loss of about 2,500 jobs in the basic industries of uranium, iron ore and oil and gas in a county that has about 40,000 inhabitants. In addition to the loss in mining, milling and oil and gas, the area's cattle ranching has been depressed for much of the 1980s.

Coming on top of the other economic losses, the effect of the mill closure achieved out-sized proportions. L-P provided about 165 jobs in Dubois and at the associated planing mill at Riverton.

About \$3 million in wages went with those jobs.

The loss of the L-P jobs at Dubois, transmitted a painful message to Dubois and to Fremont County — the need to rebuild the economy on a very different base, one that depends on new attitudes and new skills.

It is not just the human population that must change. Like the people, the forest lands have also been adapted to a timber economy. Logging and the accompanying road system have altered what was once roadless, prime big game habitat.

One of the scenic areas near Dubois is the stretch of country between Togwotee and Union passes. Jim Straley, a retired Wyoming Game and Fish Department big game biologist, says he saw much of the Togwotee Pass to Union Pass area go from wilderness-type elk hunting to practically nothing. He says that today automobiles drive over miles of road that didn't exist 20 years ago. Long, successful hunting seasons have been replaced by short seasons and controlled permits.

The fate of once beautiful lands, and the tighter and tighter box the Forest Service found itself in as a result of decades of earlier logging practices, is illustrated by the so-called co-op sale held in 1987 near Union Pass.

The co-op sale began life as two planned sales in other areas. But public anger over the location and size forced the Forest Service to cast about for another site and size.

The agency finally settled on 150 acres near the head of Fish Creek, a tributary to the Gros Ventre River. The relatively small co-op sale — 150 acres yielding 3.1 million board-feet — was set in an area that had been repeatedly logged and roaded since 1961.

What had been prime elk and moose habitat was now a big-game desert. Cover, or trees, for elk was down to 24 percent. The Forest Service's own standard for good elk habitat calls for 60 percent cover.

What was the agency doing cutting again in an area already badly over-cut? The co-op sale was an admission that the Forest Service was caught between its commitment to the timber industry to

supply a certain minimum cut each year and public and conservationist anger at over-cut forests. In so many words, the Forest Service admitted that the sale was a bad one. Bridger-Teton spokesman Fred Kingwill told a local newspaper on March 31, 1987:

"There will be impacts on what elk are left there, but they're impacts we feel we can live with. Habitat effectiveness has been heavily impacted by previous sales. It's not much good at all any more. This new sale will cause some further denigration of habitat effectiveness, but in an area that wasn't worth much anyway."

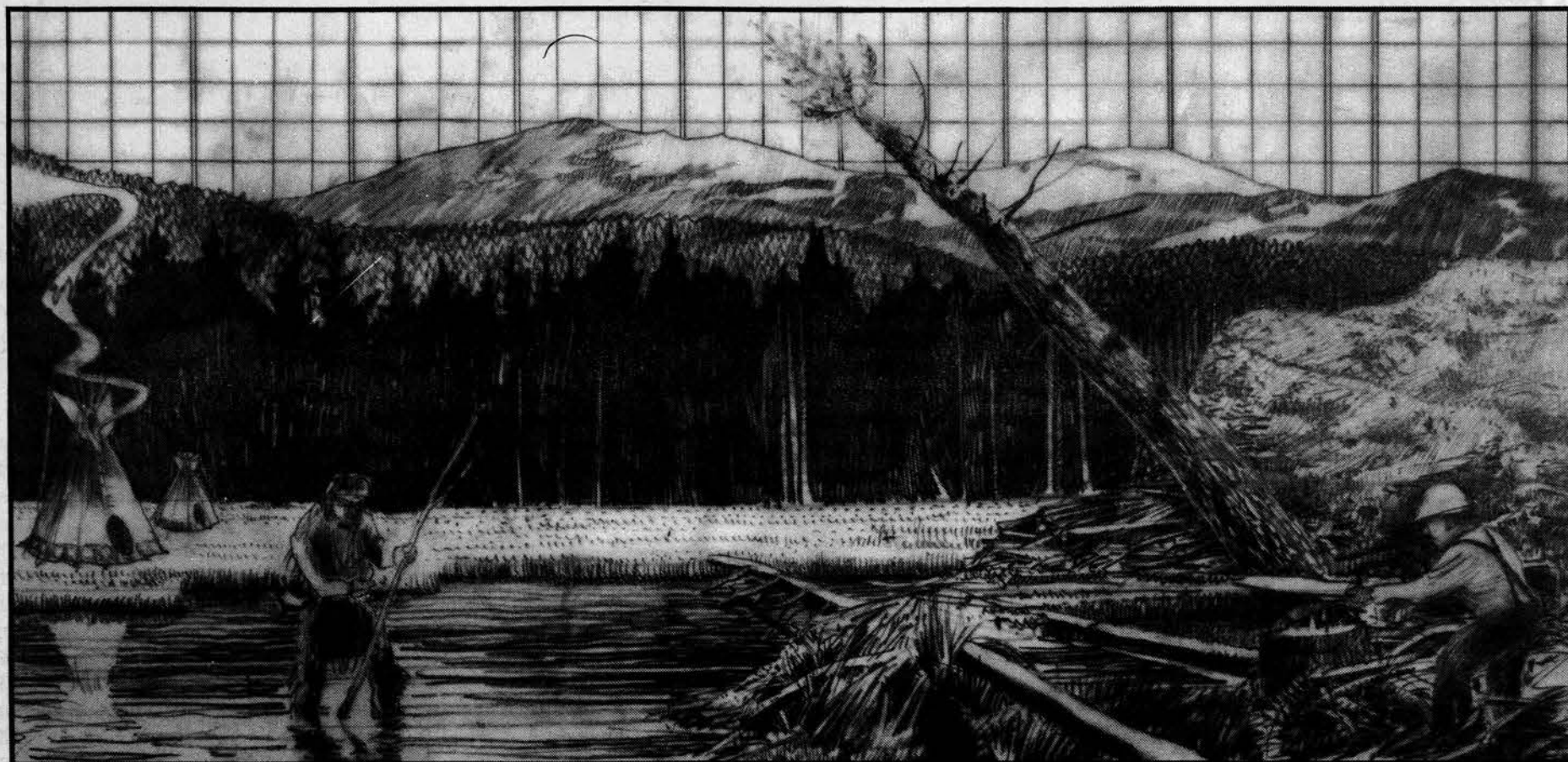
The Forest Service and L-P had been reduced to bonepicking in already heavily-logged lands because they had been cut off, through political and legal action, from the remaining unroaded, uncut forest lands in western Wyoming. Their adversaries were not just state and national environmental groups, but two neighboring communities: Jackson and Pinedale.

Jackson is only 85 highway miles from Dubois, and much less as the crow flies. Both communities started out as ranching towns with some tourism. But today they are poles apart.

Jackson, the seat of Teton County, lies on the west side of the Continental Divide, surrounded by two national forests, the Jackson Hole National Elk Refuge, and Grand Teton National Park. The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park is only an hour's drive away. Its chief commodities are scenery, abundant wildlife, ski slopes and that Old West, "unspoiled" feel so prized by tourists. Both the town and county have a tourist and visitor economy, although cattle ranching is still important.

The third point of this triangle, Pinedale, is a small community dominated by ranching, and, like Jackson, on the west side of the Continental Divide. It is in the Green River valley, almost directly south of Dubois. The two towns are separated from each other by the most rugged part of the Wind River Mountains.

In a lower-key way than Jackson, Pinedale also depends on tourism — it attracts hunters, fishermen and those in search of scenery. The area also has a few sawmills and, more recently, a booming oil and gas industry.



Lester Dore

As in most small communities, it has a long memory; the heavy logging it saw on the forests at the head of the Green River turned many against the timber industry. As a result, while Jackson opposes the oil and gas exploration that Pinedale accommodated, the two towns and their counties (Teton and Sublette) are united in opposition to timbering, and therefore to Dubois.

So when L-P and the Forest Service tried to solve their over-cutting problem by moving farther afield, they were met with fierce opposition. Generally, small communities like to live and let live. But Jackson and Pinedale felt that logging based in Dubois threatened both their tourist and their outfitting industries.

In theory, every citizen of the United States has an equal say in the management of the public lands. In fact, the small communities sitting amidst the public lands exert disproportionate control over those lands. L-P and its predecessors (L-P bought the Dubois mill in 1974) were able to over-cut the lands around Dubois because they had the general support of the town and county. But as the threat to other industries based on the public lands grew, public opinion in Jackson, Pinedale and neighboring communities mobilized against timbering. County commissioners in both Teton and Sublette counties took positions exactly opposite to those of Fremont County in regard to the timber industry.

Another element in the over-cutting involved the nature of the Forest Service itself. The Shoshone National Forest around Dubois was over-cut because the industry's desire coincided with a Forest Service philosophy of increased timbering. Many newly-trained foresters saw trees only as a commodity. They saw, too, that the forests were maturing, and therefore subject to disease and parasites. The Forest Service encouraged the industry build-up by offering, in the post-World War II period, large, cheap sales of the public timber.

The people of western Wyoming saw the results of that policy and in Jackson and Pinedale were incensed by it. A candid 1985 report by the Forest Service, titled "Preliminary Impact Analysis of the Dubois, Wyo., Community Relative to National Forest Management Decisions," backed up their observations.

Three agency economists wrote that accelerated timbering on the Shoshone forest began in the late 1950s. The tim-

ber available for cutting had been set at 21 million board-feet a year for 40 years. Much of the timber, the report said, existed only on paper, and the figure was dropped to around 5 million board-feet after only 10 years.

The situation has also been described by Phil Miller, a former forester who had been in charge of timber sale preparation on the Dubois district from 1960 until 1970. In a letter to the editor of the Dubois *Frontier* on Feb. 12, 1987, Miller wrote:

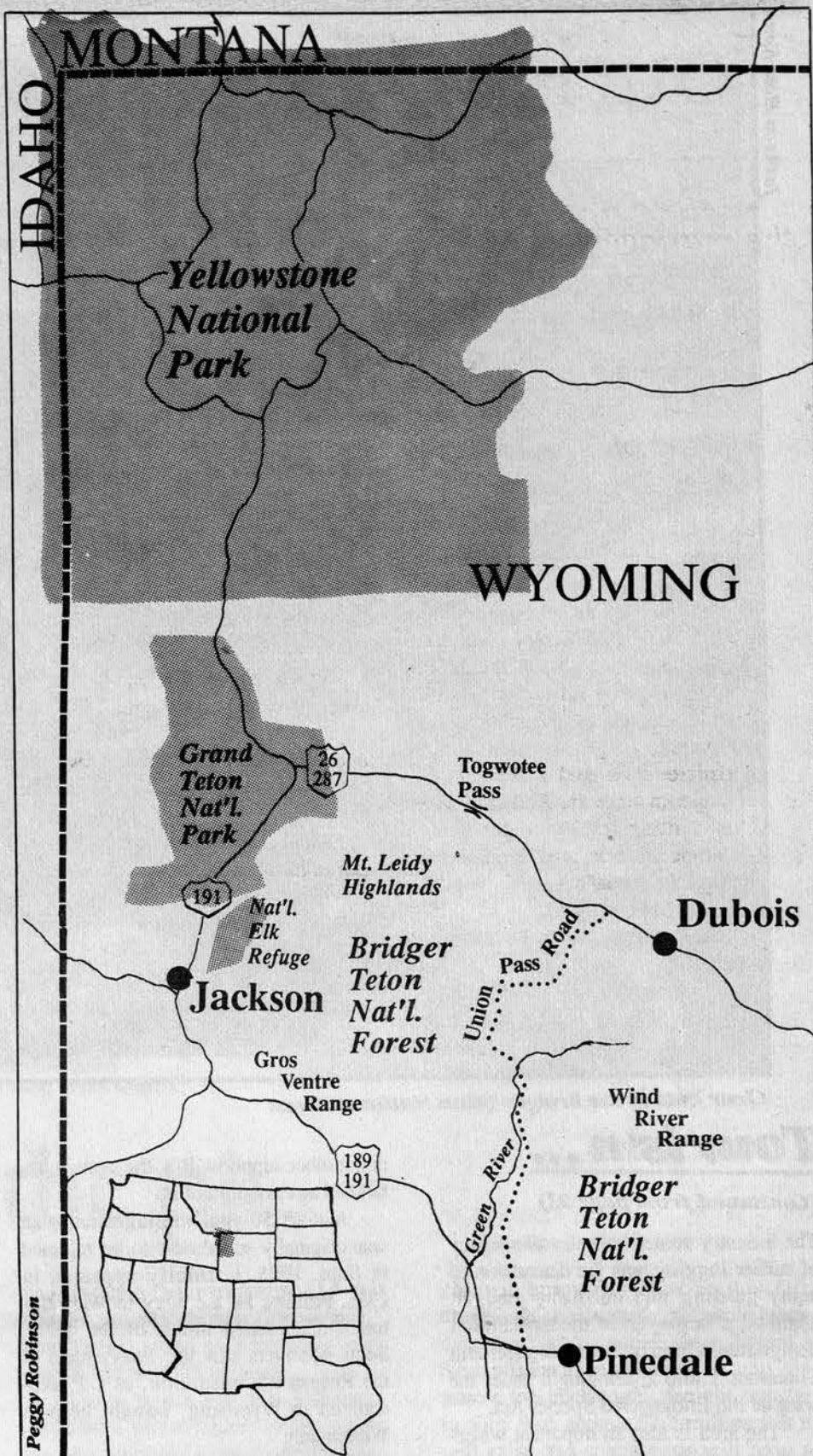
"One year, the Forest Service, using the beetle infestation as an excuse, authorized and financed the Dubois Ranger District to sell 25 million board-feet of timber for logging. The beetles weren't in half of it. From early in the 1960s until about 1967, 15 to 20 million board-feet of timber were cut on the district annually. The big clearcuts began to show."

The Teton forest, later combined with the Bridger National Forest into the Bridger-Teton, also began accelerated harvesting at about the same time, and on about the same scale.

Once the Shoshone forest's timber supply was exhausted, timbering was concentrated on the Bridger-Teton. All of the readily accessible timber in the Union Pass area was cut, even though it meant damaging other multiple-use resources. Brian Stout, Bridger-Teton Forest Supervisor, told a meeting of the Fremont County Commissioners in Lander on May 31, 1988, that the 1979 timber management plan on which the cutting had been based had not considered other resources.

Stout was explaining to the hostile commissioners why his agency was resisting, along with Jackson and Pinedale, the expansion of L-P chain saws into unroaded areas of the Bridger-Teton forest. L-P was demanding sales on the north end of the Bridger-Teton, in the most sensitive areas in the forest.

One of these is the Mt. Leidy Highlands. The 1985 Forest Service report describes it as the last remaining unprotected "gap" in what has been called the Emerald Chain. The chain includes areas off-limits to logging such as the Teton Wilderness Area, Yellowstone National Park, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Parkway, Grand Teton National Park, Jedediah Smith Wilderness, Palisades Wilderness Study Area, Snake River Scenic River (nominated by Congress), Grayback Ridge, Gros Ventre Wilderness and the National Elk Refuge.

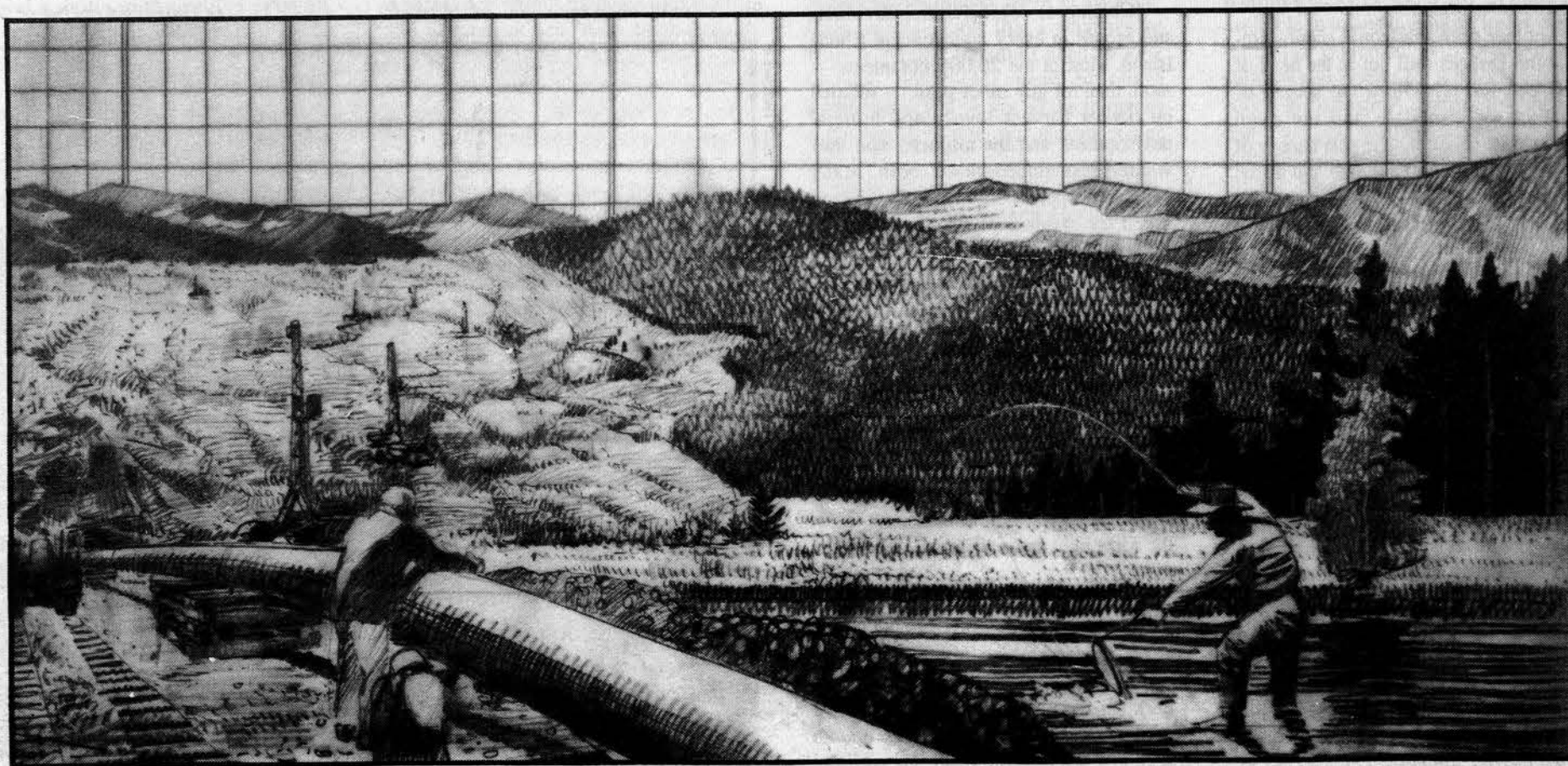


To the pro-logging contingent, the creation of all these protected areas has made it all the more important to log areas not protected by legislation or management directives. To others, the existence of large tracts of protected ground is an argument

to protect whatever hasn't yet been protected.

There are economic arguments on both sides. The Mt. Leidy Highlands are considered an integral part of the Jackson Hole guiding and outfitting industry.

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Clear cuts in the Bridger Teton National Forest

Tourism ...

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The industry remembers that one legacy of earlier logging was the destruction of many guiding and outfitting jobs. In addition, a large part of the highlands is designated Grizzly Bear Management Situations 1 and 2, bringing it under the wing of the Endangered Species Act.

The area is also an important watershed, containing the headwaters of the Gros Ventre River, Spread Creek and the Buffalo River. It is also an important viewshed. Parts of it can be seen from Grand Teton National Park and from a major tourist road into Jackson Hole, the Togwotee Pass highway. As if that were not enough, Mt. Leidy contains elk migration corridors to and from the National Elk Refuge, and the area lies within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Another area that could supply timber to the Dubois mill lies at the head of the Green River, within the sphere of influence of Pinedale and the even smaller town of Cora. The past history of timber in the Union Pass area and at the head of the Green River serves as a reminder of what indiscriminate logging can do.

Within the timbered areas, natural forest regrowth ranges from practically nothing to moderately successful. But even where it is termed successful, foresters estimate it will take at least 140 years to produce another crop of trees.

So the prevailing attitude — even in an area that ranches and drills for oil and gas — is that logging should be limited to supplying timber for small, locally owned sawmills supplied by sales that do not require much road building.

In response to its own analysis, and to increasing attention from national conservation groups and growing pressure from the communities around Dubois, the Forest Service moved to cut off L-P's access to

new timber supplies. But the agency has not had an easy time of it.

A draft 50-year management plan was originally scheduled to be released in Sept. 1985. It finally appeared in 1986. Politics, all the way to Washington, D.C., caused much of the delay. Some observers saw the heavy hand of the Reagan administration, as L-P, neutralized in Wyoming, sought help in Washington.

The public showed great interest in the plan. The allure of Yellowstone has been extended to the Bridger-Teton area through the efforts of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, which helped spread the idea that Yellowstone National Park is simply part of a more extensive ecological region covering parts of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. The area the Dubois mill covered was within this Yellowstone area.

Comments came from individuals and groups in every state except Rhode Island. Most of the 20,000 comments — more than for any other plan — focused on timber harvest levels and mineral development; and the majority said they wanted less emphasis on both. Many expressed opposition to new roads and asked for closures of existing roads. A majority expressed concern with the below-cost timber sales which dominated the Bridger-Teton.

The plan drew fire from both sides. The agency's preferred alternative called for an annual cut of only 15.9 million board-feet on the entire forest. That was much less than L-P wanted, but more than conservation groups thought healthy. The reduction was especially drastic on the north end of the forest, in the Mt. Leidy area, and that jeopardized the L-P mill.

The oil and gas industry also objected, saying the plan was extremely biased against its interests. It objected to a buffer zone next to Grand Teton National Park (in the past, drilling and logging have gone on close to the park boundary), to a ban on exploration in a wilder-

ness study area, and to a ban on leasing in critical grizzly bear habitat.

The flood of comments led to a major rewrite of the plan after the comment period ended in February 1987. Computer modelling and the use of map overlays to show all multiple uses, made the plan both more sophisticated and more understandable. This was combined with a genuine outreach effort, in which the forest laid its plan, and its dilemma, frankly on the table.

A complication came in December 1987 and January 1988, when the oil and gas industry and the timber industry filed suits against the Forest Service. L-P's case argued that it should be allowed to harvest much more timber than the Forest Service intended to put up for sale.

It was at the trial before Federal District Judge Clarence Brimmer that Bridger-Teton Forest Supervisor Brian Stout said management of forest

resources was "gut wrenching." The Bridger-Teton, Stout said, is probably the most complex forest in the lower 48 states. Its 3.4 million acres make it one of the nation's largest, and its closeness to national parks, wildlife refuges and rivers further increases its importance.

After a well-publicized trial, Judge Brimmer ruled for the Forest Service in April. He said increased logging would cause more harm to the region than would occur if the Dubois mill closed. "Tourism, recreation, ranchers and small loggers would be harmed..." He also said "...increased timber harvesting may have unforeseen environmental effects... some evidence connects diminished elk habitat with timber harvesting."

The agency then moved to insulate itself from the political pressures of the day. Stout told Fremont County commis-

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Members of the Jackson Hole Alliance tour a Union Pass clearcut

Montana Historical Society, Helena



The famous Berkeley Pit of Butte, Montana, in the late 1950s. The pit is filling with water.

Butte comes out of the pit

Butte, Montana's richest hill on earth is now a largely closed and dead operation. But Butte is far from dead. The tough town is finding, under the leadership of an energetic chief executive, that there is life after mining.

by Bruce Farling

For nearly 100 years, miners in Butte, Mont., rode rickety cages into a dank netherworld where the talk was of drifts, stopes, buzzies and rock. Or they pushed large machines around a dusty, wind-wracked open pit, one of the largest such mines in the world.

They argued about strikes, poor air, crumbling shafts. They discussed death, for mining in Butte and elsewhere was a daily gamble. Men learned to dodge rocks, keep an eye on the powder man, stay on their toes. If they didn't, they could die, or worse, end up crippled.

The world of the tunnel and pit was theirs, but the whole hill, the town, their jobs, belonged to well-dressed men with soft hands who sat in board rooms in New York, San Francisco and Denver. Men who never let Butte forget who signed the paychecks.

Then, in 1983, the boss walked. The Atlantic Richfield Company, the owner of Butte's old boss, Anaconda Minerals, shut down copper mining in the Berkeley Pit, putting the town's last 800 miners out of work. It was the final gasp of one of the country's largest mining and smelting empires, one that had produced an estimated \$3 billion in metals over the years. It was done in by low copper prices and foreign competition. From 1979 to 1984, Butte lost 5,000 jobs. The closure caused the town's population to

drop from 38,000 to 34,000. The last shovel had turned in Butte.

By all logic, the loss of its century-old dominant industry and many of its jobs should have laid Butte low. Yet five years later, the community enjoys growing prosperity. The number of new Butte businesses is up, unemployment is down. High technology, tourism, education, even some mining, have sparked an economic revival and grabbed national attention.

In June, Butte was named an All-American City by the National Civic League, an urban booster group. Of 870 cities nominated, only 10 were selected. The National League of Cities last year gave the town an award for having the nation's most innovative job training program. Stories about Butte appeared in *U.S. News and World Report* and *Business Week*, extolling the tenacity of the town and of boosters who refused to call it quits.

How did it happen? In this fiercely union town where agreement often used to come only after a fistfight, residents generally agree that Butte's emerging new economy is the result of a few local leaders who saw possibilities in a stagnant, crumbling mine town. The main architect, everyone agrees, has been Don Peoples.

"Now that I look back at it, one of

the best things that ever happened to this community was Anaconda's leaving," says Peoples, chief executive officer of Butte-Silver Bow government.

Fifteen years ago that sentiment would have raised cheers on the picket line and a brawl in the paycheck line. But times have changed. Peoples, the mayor in Butte's consolidated city-county government, says Butte had to learn to get along without being tethered to the Anaconda Company and ARCo.

"I often tell the story of how we put our shovel down in Butte," Peoples says. "I always talk about the guy who searched the world, but came back to home and found wealth and fortune just by putting his bucket down in his birthplace. And I think that's what we've done in Butte. We don't need to look outside. We don't need to chase smokestacks. We've got all the resources in the world. We're just making things happen."

With Peoples as chief ambassador, the community developed an economic strategy that has helped bring in new businesses. Peoples had refused to let the community destroy its industrial and commercial infrastructure after ARCo folded. And the old mine facilities and commercial buildings have attracted prospective businesses. In addition, Butte wasn't totally dependent on mining. For example, Montana Power employs 1,200 people, so it didn't empty-out after ARCo's closure, as other mining towns have. That provided an economic cushion during the transition.

Butte's support for Peoples' efforts is shown by its boosterism. Tourism brochures, restaurant menus and bumper stickers extol economic development in what locals call the "Can Do City" or "Butte, America."

The list of new developments is modest, but growing. A children's psy-

chiatric hospital will open this fall, employing 100 people. After out-hustling several other cities, Butte landed a \$2.1 million federal grant to start the state's top truck-to-rail freight transfer facility. With another \$2.7 million that it will raise, the community will have a shipping hub to both encourage export of local products and directly employ 100 people.

Butte's economic development commission is planning construction this winter of a 40,000-square-foot building to house a trade center to display and export Montana-produced products.

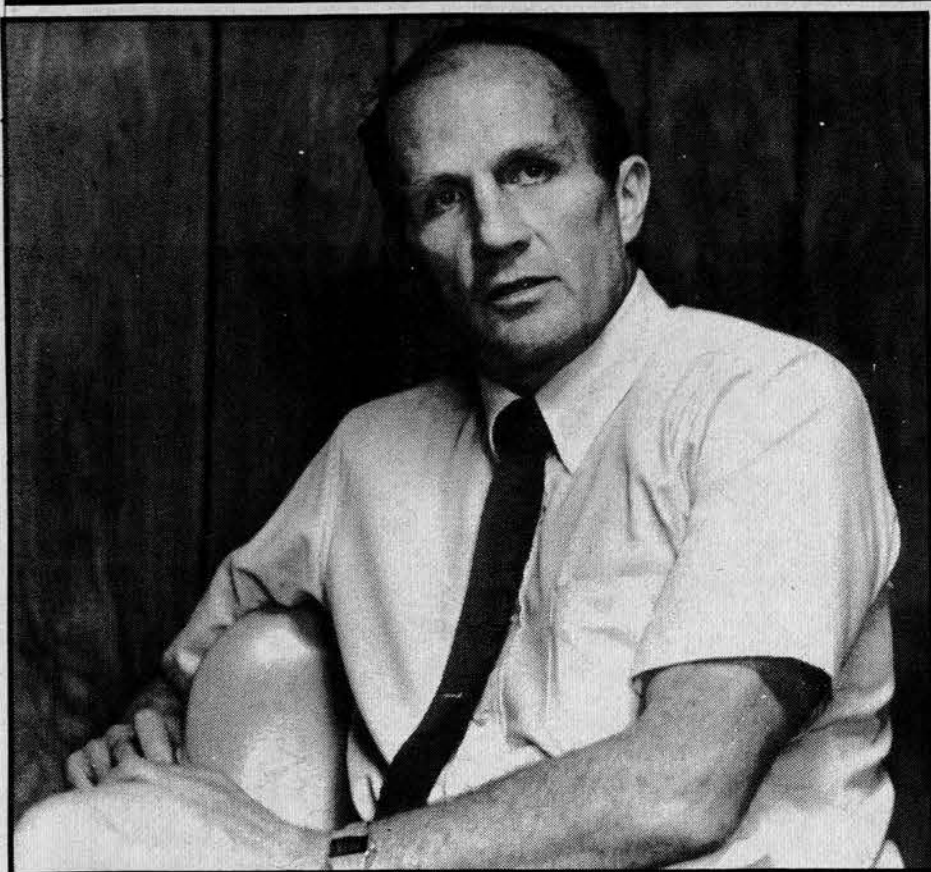
The community has also purchased a 230,000-square-foot former Safeway warehouse. It is the kind of bargain available in towns that have lost a major industry. Valued at \$4.5 million, the building was bought for \$700,000. It will house an industrial business incubator and a program that will research how to manufacture products in Montana from the raw natural resources the state now exports.

Butte has also started the country's only municipally-owned small business incubator, a project that has helped 18 new businesses in 18 months. Jim Kam-bich, the incubator's director, says the project only admits companies that do not compete with existing Butte businesses. It provides cheap rent, low overhead, shared administrative services and some consulting donated by local businesses, lawyers and accountants.

Among the incubator's tenants are a computer software company, a home health-care firm, a marketing consultant and a research company that specializes in a high-technology process used to recover metals from mining ores and mining waste. It has created about 75 jobs so far.

Peoples calls the incubator a "suc-

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Donald Peoples

Butte...

(Continued from page 25)

cess beyond our wildest dreams." He convinced the Catholic Diocese in Helena to sell the building that houses the project to the Butte-Silver Bow government for a dollar, even though it was appraised for \$200,000. A federal matching grant paid for the building's repair. According to Peoples, it is now worth \$1 million.

Butte has also landed several small high-technology firms with the help of the Montana Science and Technology Alliance, a state-run venture-capital program that loaned money to promising businesses. Butte's latest catch is an Oregon firm that produces materials for lasers and semi-conductors. It hopes to employ 50 people within two or three years. However, a state court ruled in July that the alliance's activities violate the state constitution. That decision could end one vehicle the town has used for attracting business.

The community is also turning its liabilities, such as its 5,700-foot elevation and cold winters, into assets. In 1985, it started construction of a high-altitude training center for Olympic athletes competing in speed and figure skating, hockey and indoor cycling. The unfinished \$9.5 million facility, funded by private donations, is one of only two such facilities in the world; the other is located in the Soviet Union. The training center was the site last winter of a World Cup speed skating competition that attracted thousands of tourists.

Some trace the roots of the business resurgence back to 1984, when the community, suffering from 20 percent unemployment and little prospect for immediate relief, tried New Age motivation to get residents pondering other things besides food stamps. A Seattle firm was brought in to put on 30-hour workshops on positive thinking. More than 4,000 attended.

"It sounds Pollyannish," Peoples says, "It sounds like something out of the space cadets or something, but this thing, it's really good." Peoples says it helped people to both think more positively about their community and to work together to solve problems.

Butte's success has given Peoples, a second generation Butte Irishman,

national recognition. In 1987, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked him among the country's top 20 mayors and chief executive officers. He has headed Butte-Silver Bow government since 1979 and says he'd like to keep the job for a while longer. He is considered by many to be one of Montana's rising Democratic stars.

The creation and attraction of new businesses aren't the only economic arrows in Butte's quiver. Mining — leaner, more efficient, and somewhat less dependent on absentee owners — has returned to Butte.

When ARCo left, it abandoned a huge empire: the mile-wide Berkeley Pit, more than 3,000 miles of underground tunnels, a huge ore concentrator, millions of dollars of mine equipment, and a considerable amount of copper, silver, lead, molybdenum and zinc ore. All ready to go. All ready to be mined. For somebody who liked to gamble.

Missoula entrepreneur Dennis Washington was described by former *Missoulian* reporter Steve Smith in a 1979 profile as having "an exuberant, almost boyish quality that might evidence itself in a youngster who has discovered the neighborhood's largest dirt pile; who is going to get paid handsome for moving it, and who, among his rival playmates, has the largest fleet of bright yellow Tonka Toys with which to do the job."

The description was prophetic. In 1985, Washington bought Montana's largest dirt pile from ARCo. The audacity of buying a copper mine when the mineral market was at rock bottom raised eyebrows around the state. Many said Washington would lose the gamble.

They were wrong. Prices went up, Washington cut costs, and the copper and molybdenum his mining company, Montana Resources Inc., hauled out of Butte's Continental Pit the first half of 1988 will bring in a \$40 million profit. The company projects a \$100 million profit for the year.

MRI employs 350 people, most of them long-time Anaconda-ARCo workers. According to Peoples, MRI adds \$50 million to the state economy, has a payroll of \$15 million and will pay \$5 million this year in state and local taxes.

The 54-year-old Washington, who parlayed a \$30,000 loan in 1964 into one of the West's biggest road and mining construction businesses, needed help to buy into Butte. But ARCo, which had reportedly lost \$750 million since buying

the Butte properties from Anaconda Minerals in the mid-1970s, was anxious to sell. With an \$8 million loan from the Montana State Board of Investment and another \$12 million of his own, Washington went into the mining business.

Butte also opened up its pocketbook for Washington. Montana Power, the town's largest employer, gave MRI a 15 percent discount on power rates. Property taxes on the new acquisition were dropped from \$5.2 million to \$1 million for a 3-year period.

But the toughest concession Butte made was its acceptance of the new company as a non-union operation. Labor leaders roundly criticized Washington. However, after considering its unemployment rate, the town reluctantly swallowed its union pride. Peoples says because of MRI's profit-sharing program, the miners "are making as much as when Anaconda was running the show."

Besides MRI, other mining is starting up around Butte. An Australian-European land-holding company bought the underground mines from Washington and turned them over to local miners. Closed since the 1970s, several of Butte's tunnels are now starting to produce ore, employing close to 100 people. In addition, Pegasus Gold is building a gold mine 16 miles southwest of Butte. It will employ 75 to 100 people.

Peoples says, "Mining is always going to be important in Butte," and he predicts the industry will employ 750 to 1,000 people within a few years. He says the new companies are more efficient and more competitive than were Anaconda and ARCo, which should result in a more stable mining industry. However, he adds, Butte's future is in diversity, and not just in turning shovels.

The recent economic growth hasn't hidden Butte's considerable blemishes. Mining left the town with a ravaged landscape and severe health hazards.

Millions of tons of mine waste are scattered about neighborhoods, children play near abandoned mines, and the water level in the 1,800-foot-deep Berkeley Pit is rising 10 feet a month. Some scientists say that unless something is done within four or five years, the water, which is loaded with heavy metals such as copper, zinc, cadmium and arsenic, will back into the town's groundwater and surface water.

Mining-related environmental problems are so bad that much of the town has been designated a Superfund toxic waste clean-up area. The Berkeley Pit, soils in the satellite community of Walkerville and various old mines are part of the enormous Silver Bow complex, the

largest Superfund site in the country. A defunct pole treatment plant located on the south end of the town has been leaking PCBs and PCPs into Silver Bow Creek. It also is a Superfund site.

Environmentalists have long recognized the problems left by mining and smelting in Butte and elsewhere in the upper Clark Fork River basin. "The third world has been trashed, and Montana has been part of the third world because of the copper barons," says Jim Jensen, director of the Montana Environmental Information Center.

Jensen and other environmentalists have criticized Butte for not doing enough to correct the sins of the past. The environmental center has also been critical recently of Butte's economic development leaders for their efforts to bring a \$6.8 million vermiculite processing plant to the community.

The mineral, which often contains highly toxic asbestos, would be hauled through Missoula and up the Clark Fork River valley to Butte. Jensen says that exposes other communities and the river to possible asbestos contamination. He adds that it is ironic that even as Butte tries to attract world-class athletes to its high altitude training center, it risks downgrading the community's air quality with asbestos.

The Environmental Protection Agency has been slow to push for clean-up in Butte. The community's business and political leaders, including Peoples, compounded the problem by resisting the Superfund classifications. They were afraid that the label would discourage businesses from locating there.

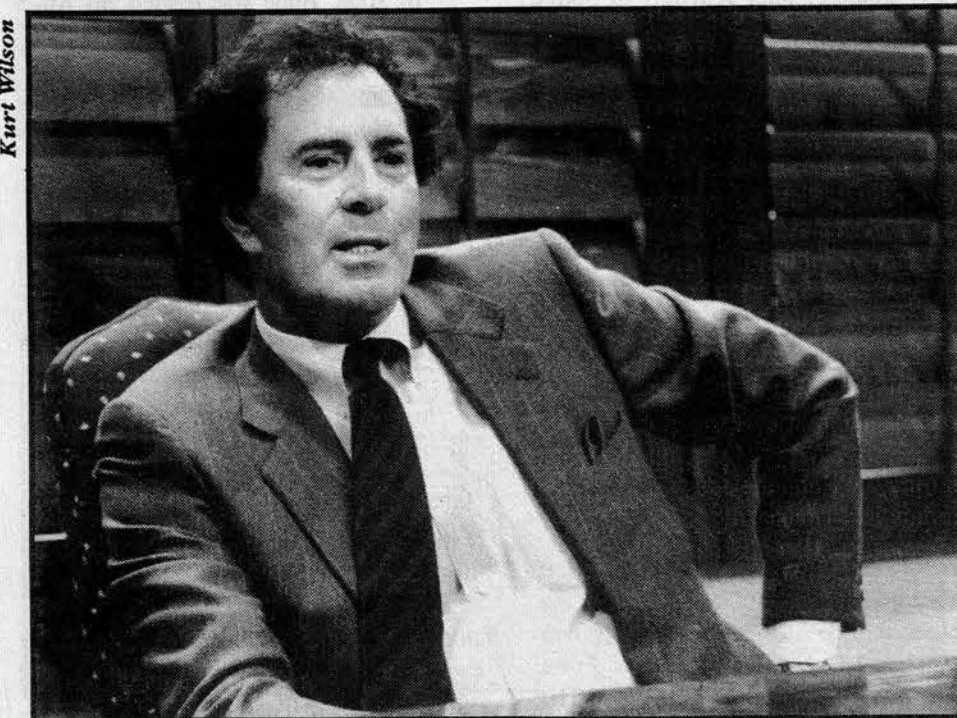
But some reclamation has occurred recently, most of it by local government. In the last two years \$500,000 has been spent building storm drains around tailings piles and reclaiming and converting three mine sites to parks and baseball fields. Rick Griffith, reclamation coordinator for Butte-Silver Bow government, says that is a drop in the bucket, and that there are 150 to 300 mine sites in the town that may need reclamation.

ARCo, which could be held liable for much of the reclamation, spent \$3 million recently to remove contaminated soils in Walkerville. Eventual costs could run in the hundreds of millions, spawning a local boom. But to date, only a few local people have been employed in reclamation.

From his office window, David Toppen looks out over a bleak landscape covered with old mine tailings and sees economic possibilities.

"A mine dump is another resource,"

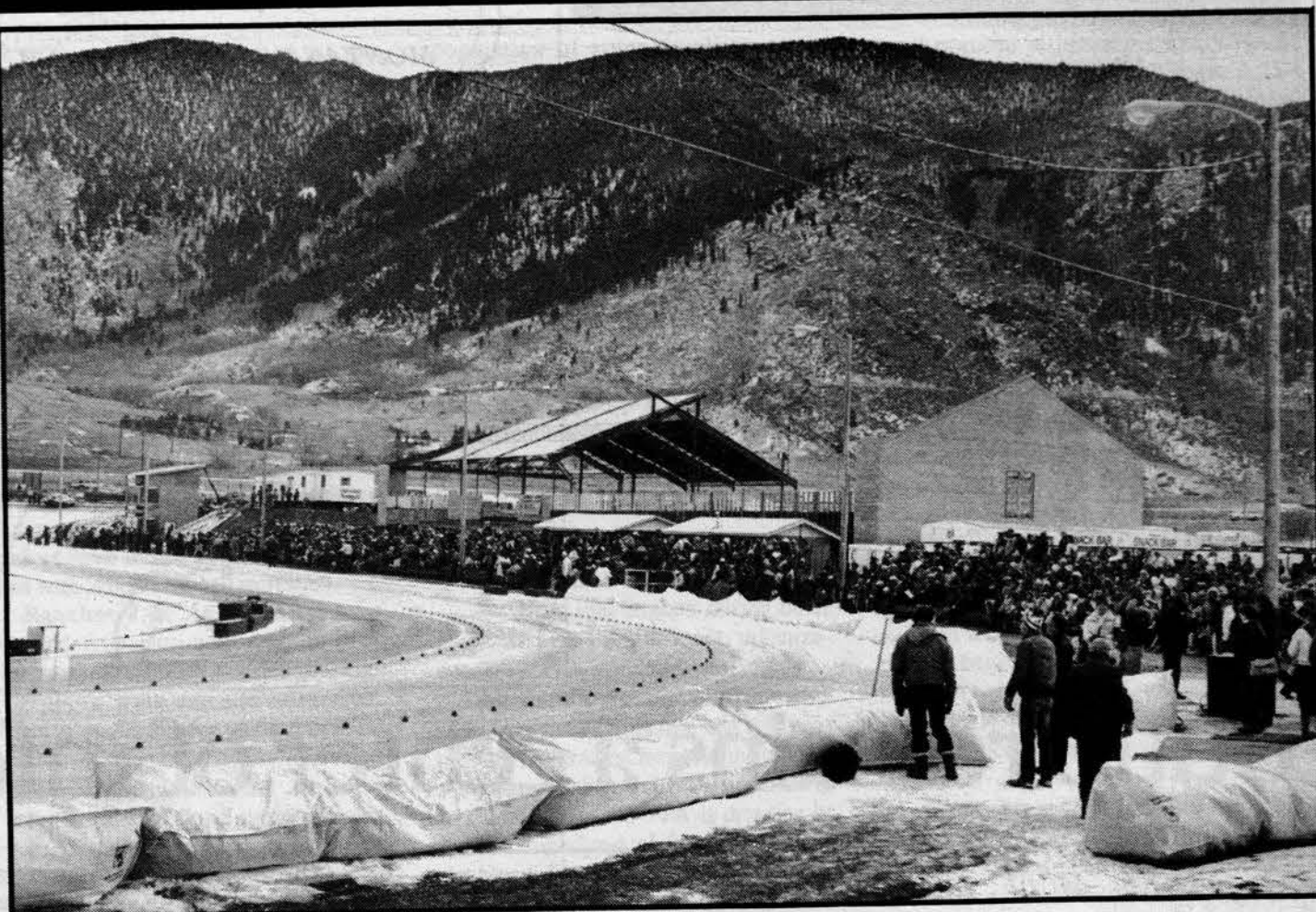
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Kurt Wilson

Dennis Washington

Walter Hennick



World Cup at Butte, 1987

Beating slag heaps into tourist sites

Missouri. South Carolina. California. Manitoba. West Virginia. So go the license plates on cars parked at Butte's World Museum of Mining on a warm day in mid-July.

The museum, according to its brochure, preserves a "segment of American history which has heretofore been neglected," and brings "to the people a realization of the glorious and ingenious heritage which is theirs."

In other parts of town, many of the museum's attractions would be trash or safety hazards. There are tons of rusty equipment; dilapidated buildings; an ancient, hulking 100-foot-tall mine headframe; and a backdrop of thousands of acres of mine-tailing scabland — part of the nation's largest Superfund site here near the headwaters of the Clark Fork River.

Not all of the museum is trash or toxic. It also features an interesting replica of a late-1800s mining town. However, on this day most of the action is in the gift shop.

An elderly woman in purple stretch

pants is haggling with the counter girl over the price of a coffee mug that says "From Montana, With Love." Copper trinkets (more heritage), tee-shirts and ceramic deer clutter the small shop. Platter-size pewter belt-buckles pay homage to God, guts, guns, cold dead fingers and the flag. Some crafty salesman snuck one in to torment dyslexic members of the National Rifle Association. It reads: "Second Amendment Revised — Support the Right to Arm Bears." A man with a Texas drawl shouts to no one in particular: "How many mines y'all got in this heah town? Suppose y'all want to get back to work, huh?" The counter girl smiles.

Business is brisker at the Berkeley Pit Viewing Platform. A tour bus pulls in, disgorging about 40 camera-or-kid toting tourists. They shuffle through the short tunnel to the platform, which is perched above the mile-wide cavity that is filling rapidly with chocolate-brown, heavy-metal-laden water.

A few video cameras pan a landscape left sterile by 25 years of open-pit

mining. Most people stay for just a few minutes. Somebody mentions the Grand Canyon. After staring at the pit for a moment, a man turns to his wife and says: "Is that all there is? It's just a big goddamn hole."

Tourism has become a significant player in Butte's economic revival. Jobs in the "industry" have increased by 300 to 400 people since 1983 when ARCo closed the mines, according to Don Peoples, Butte-Silver Bow chief executive. Many of the jobs depend on Butte's history as the West's biggest, and perhaps toughest, mining town. On a plaque at a highway viewpoint overlooking the town, Butte boosters declare: "She was a bold, unashamed, rootin' tootin', hell-roarin' camp in days gone by and still drinks her liquor straight."

Butte has also refurbished a portion of the railroad that once carried ore from the mines to the smelter in Anaconda. An antiquated rail car chugs from the old Kelly mine to the museum, hauling a different lode — smiling, gawking tourists at \$2.50 a crack. After the train ride, many will visit the opulent mansion of

one of the old copper barons, William Andrews Clark.

Not every tourist attraction features mining. Sitting 2,500 feet above the town on the Continental Divide where it can be seen from Butte and the interstate, is the Our Lady of the Rockies monument.

The 90-foot-high, bright-white statue of the Virgin Mary was placed on the divide in 1985, following a seven-year effort by three Butte men who wanted a memorial devoted to the mothers of the world. According to a brochure published by the group that leads tours to the statue, the monument is "nondenominational," weighs 51 tons and has lips that are three feet wide.

The statue has been praised and ridiculed; critics call it gaudy and "Our Lady of the Tailings," or "Darth Virgin." Gaudy or not, Al Beavis, president of all-volunteer, nonprofit Our Lady of the Rockies Inc., says it will attract 6,500 to 8,000 visitors in 1988. Trips to the statue cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

— Bruce Farling

Butte...

(Continued from page 26)

he says. "When we clean it up it has value."

Toppen is vice president of academic affairs at the Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, popularly known as Montana Tech. His school, which was cited last fall in *Newsweek* as the top small science-and-technology college in the country, has been selected as a state-designated "center for excellence." Using a loan from state coal-tax money for start-up, Montana Tech's center will focus on research in hazardous waste clean-up and metals recovery.

John Driscoll, a member of the Montana Public Service Commission, also sees possibilities in Butte's wastes. Driscoll, whose roots are in the town, says the Berkeley Pit represents an opportunity to convert an enormous environmental liability into an economic asset.

"I prefer to look at the pit as a mine," Driscoll says. The metals in the water could be recovered and used, he says, but more importantly, so could the water. Driscoll says existing technology could extract both commercial-grade metals and clean water from the pit's reddish-brown soup. "A lot of states have a similar problem, and they could benefit from the technologies we develop," he says.

Driscoll has been discussing the possibilities of pit clean-up with the Electric Power Research Institute, the nation's largest utility-funded research center. In January 1987 he put together a conference in Butte on reclamation of the pit's water that was attended by members of the institute and by scientists from both inside and outside Montana. Most agreed the technology was available, but expensive.

In an attempt to further the pit-cleaning concept, Driscoll proposed two years ago to spend part of his public service commission time working on the project. The proposal drew fire from his

fellow commissioners, people in Butte and some environmentalists who said that Butte had bigger problems than the pit.

Driscoll says part of the reason the pit isn't being cleaned is people won't admit that its rapidly rising water level is a problem. He blames locals who think the EPA will take care of things. "The presence of the EPA in Butte has sedated people," he says. "It has kept local initiative down."

Despite apathy and opposition, Driscoll plugs away. He has filed for water rights in the pit and continues to look for sponsors who might be interested in the high-technology reclamation project.

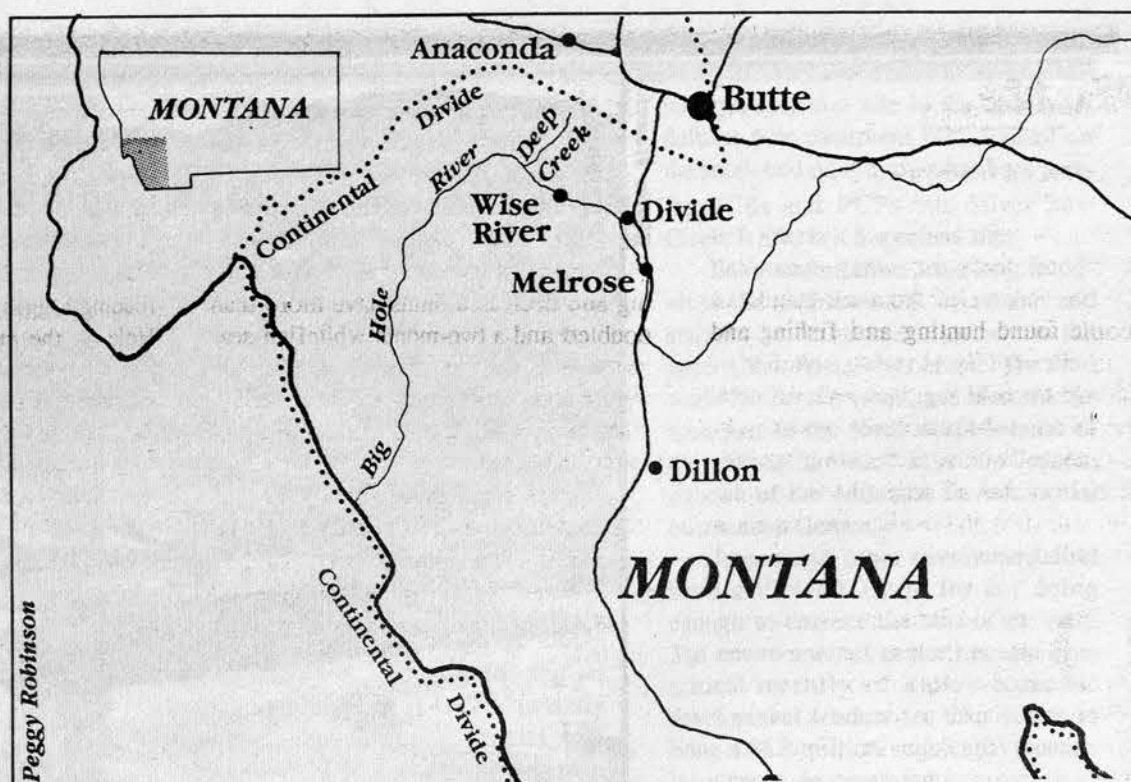
Other Montanans are beginning to look at Butte and neighboring Anaconda as possible centers for national and world-wide reclamation technologies. Jensen, at the Environmental Information Center, has promoted the idea for several years. "We have the best field laboratory on earth for heavy metal reclamation," he says, referring to the upper Clark Fork River basin, which

includes Butte and Anaconda. "What we need is the energy and a plan."

This past spring, a plan for promoting the area as center for reclamation technology emerged in Montana's Democratic gubernatorial primary. Frank Morrison, who eventually lost to former Gov. Tom Judge, proposed borrowing \$50 million from the state's mineral severance tax fund to fund reclamation work and a research center in the upper Clark Fork basin. Morrison said the loan would be repaid by suing ARCo for natural resource damages caused by mining in the basin, a move that is allowed by Superfund's program to collect from liable parties. Though Morrison won't be able to try out the program, environmentalists say they will continue to pursue the concept.

For the first time in its history, Butte will determine its own course. How close that takes the community to the past may be too early to tell. Certainly, though, if it doesn't forget its past, it will be less likely to repeat it.

□



Butte remains a center of infection

Butte, Mont., is a good example of a mining town making a transition to a new economic base. But the "new" Butte carries some old baggage, and this article suggests that that old baggage is a threat to the nearby Big Hole country.

by Don Moniak

The city of Butte, Mont., and its associated smelter town of Anaconda, 20 miles away, are not pretty places. Large vacant lots filled with rubble and noxious weeds are much more common than shade trees and green strips.

Butte itself is littered with abandoned headframes, old tailings piles, denuded hillsides and a devastated riparian area along Silver Bow Creek. Summers are hot, dusty, repelling; winters find Butte blanketed for much of the day by smog from woodburning stoves, industry and auto emissions from the nearby interstate highway.

In the case of both Butte and Anaconda, you can tell a book by its cover. A century of mining and smelting has left the communities a toxic legacy. Technically, both are mountain towns — over a mile high and close to the Continental Divide. Anaconda has a mural declaring itself a place "where the town meets the mountains," but neither contains much of a mountain climate or atmosphere, aside from mining waste and relics.

It is not surprising that residents of both places travel frequently 25 or so miles over the Continental Divide, to the Big Hole River area and its clean air and water, green valleys and forests, prime hunting and fishing, and the folksy small rural communities of Divide, Dewey and Wise River. The Big Hole area's recreation economy welcomes the visitors.

But the growing tourist economy may be a mixed blessing. It raises the question of whether the devastation that radiated outward from Butte and Anaconda when copper was king isn't being continued today through recreation and suburbanization.

Butte describes itself as the "can do city," and its recent economic turnaround following ARCo's departure has been applauded across Montana and the nation. But the term "won't do" may be more applicable so far as reclamation and pollution go.

As Bruce Farling pointed out in his

articles on the Clark Fork River (HCN, 3/14/88), Butte boosters have resisted a Superfund designation, fearing it would taint the city. The flooding Berkeley Pit is ignored, although its waters threaten to seep into city streets in the near future, and noxious weed infestations in and around the city and air quality problems are addressed at a snail's pace or not at all.

Not much appears to have been learned from the environmental devastation that has left Butte and Anaconda handicapped now that mining is a ghost of its past self. Don Peoples, the popular chief executive of the City of Butte and Silver Bow County, is striving for a diversified economic base. But that diversification has not yet included cleanup campaigns or long-term strategies for making Butte livable, let alone attractive.

Peoples says he is pushing hard on the EPA to clean up Butte. But in a replay of the past, most leaders and the

local press embrace polluting proposals, such as a vermiculite exfoliation plant, despite the dangers of airborne asbestos. The battle over the plant is complete with charges that objectors are "environmental extremists" and a "vocal minority" in a city that illustrates what happens when a place lacks environmentalists and vocal minorities.

Anaconda, a traditional Butte rival, is usually a tad different, and leaders there are looking at the jobs and potential to lure engineering firms that come with Superfund cleanup. But mining adventures remain sacred, and a meeting early in 1988 drew zero opposition to a proposed cyanide heap leaching gold mine on national forest land between Butte and Anaconda.

Given this attitude toward their hometowns, it is not surprising that some Big Hole locals wonder whether their area can survive as a combination playground and bedroom for the mining towns. Butte and Anaconda residents are not the only visitors to the Big Hole area — it is increasingly popular with visitors from across Montana and the nation. But residents of the two nearby towns are the largest and most easily identifiable group.

Take the controversial issue of off-road vehicles, or ORVs. An area that still reveres ex-convict and motorcycle dare-

devil Evel Knievel (a Butte native) is bound to produce a fair share of weekend ORV backcountry daredevils. Summer and winter, the vehicles travelling along the Big Hole on Highway 43 are hauling many more all-terrain vehicles, dirtbikes, snowmobiles and mobile homes than tents, skis, rubber rafts and canoes.

The country they head into is by no means untouched. The Big Hole drainage has been strongly affected by the Beaverhead National Forest's very ambitious timber-cutting policies over the past 25 years. The Deep Creek drainage, a tributary to the Big Hole River, was especially hard hit by mining. For decades, the emissions from the Anaconda stack passed over the Continental Divide carrying enough arsenic to poison forage and cattle in the valley.

As homesteaders lost herds and livelihood, Anaconda began buying them out, eventually consolidating all but one ranch. As for the smelter town itself, 75 years of emissions kept vegetative growth at bay for miles around the town. And as the smelter wreaked havoc along the Continental Divide, the first head of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, helped arrange early in this century an extremely large timber sale to stoke the smelter furnaces with charcoal.

Despite this harsh use of Big Hole

(Continued on page 29)



Off-road vehicle roars down a hill

Butte...

(Continued from page 28)

lands, its recreational economy has undergone steady and lately even rapid growth. This is clear from the number of people found hunting and fishing and from the rapidly growing number of hunting and fishing guides and outfitters. The effect of the recreation is more subtle than the flagrant clearcutting the Forest Service has allowed or the destruction caused by the smelter fumes, but it is visible.

On public land, increased pressure on designated wilderness and roadless backcountry by backpackers, horse users and motorized recreationists has degraded popular dispersed campsites, particularly around lakes. The degradation has led the Forest Service to take some action.

In the West Pioneer roadless area, almost 20 percent of the area, or 20,000 acres, has been closed to motorized travel and become defacto wilderness in reaction to meadow damage by ORVs. Log fences have been built in areas that have not had livestock for years to prevent damage by ORVs to grayling spawning sites.

But most areas are not protected. The Wise River valley, a major drainage for both the East and West Pioneer mountains, is slowly becoming a playground for ORVs, with heavy dirtbike traffic blazing new trails and damaging old ones.

The gravest threat from recreationists, however, is the dreaded knapweed — a tenacious, quickly-spreading plant that replaces native forage and turns land into deserts, so far as wildlife and domestic livestock are concerned. The Big Hole is nearly surrounded by knapweed-infested areas such as the Bitterroot and Clark Fork drainages, but thus far strong measures by Big Hole ranchers and public land managers have kept its knapweed under control.

That is a mixed blessing, for as an increasing amount of Montana winter range has its productivity reduced by knapweed, the Big Hole valley will feel more pressure from hunters following the big game. Charlie Hahnkamp, a local rancher who has spearheaded the anti-knapweed campaign, says hunting is a major culprit in the spread of weeds, because vehicles pick up weed seeds in one place and drop them someplace else.

Twenty-five years of heavy logging have left 1,800 miles of roads in the Big Hole area, and locals say they are a mecca for Butte-Anaconda residents, who have a reputation for road hunting. The sportsmen reject the weed-spreading tag. Tony Schnoonen, a Butte area resident, says, "Bad hay is responsible for the spread of knapweed, not hunters and recreationists."

Closing old logging roads would help prevent weed spread, and some roads have been closed. But road closure is opposed by most area sportsmen. Schnoonen says the Skyline Sportsmen group in Butte is opposed to all new road construction. But it is just as opposed to new road closures. The only issue more controversial than the Beaverhead's logging plan, which proposes 230 miles of new roads to harvest 100 million board-feet of timber over 10 years, is the road closure plan.

In the face of increased logging and roading, and growing use of these roads and backcountry for all sorts of motorized and non-motorized recreation, the Big Hole area will be increasingly hard put to keep knapweed under control.

There are other threats to the environmental health of the area. On the Big Hole River, regulations are now needed to preserve the blue ribbon fishery. This past year, the number of miles of no-live-bait fishing and decreased limits have more than doubled and a two-month whitefish season was closed. In addition to the new regulations, fishermen are responding voluntarily, and there is more and more catch and release.

The pressure on the fishery has put Big Hole area ranchers in a tricky situation. Until a few years ago, area ranchers generally supported logging and opposed wilderness. But in recent years, many ranchers have turned against logging and sided with wilderness and recreation.

Rancher J.B. Anderson says he switched from anti-wilderness to pro-wilderness because "I decided the logging plans were far less attractive. Ranching and recreation go hand in hand here. Ranchers and the fishery both need a steady yield of clean water."

But decreased flows during the past dry years have led to increased grumbling about the irrigation practices of Big Hole ranchers. Darryl Jacobson, the anti-wilderness owner of the Antler Saloon in the tiny town of Wisdom, says:

"If the goddamn ranchers are worried about grayling and trout, tell them to let some water down the river." The last

population of river-dwelling arctic grayling in the continental U.S. is in the upper Big Hole River, and it is a key issue in the timber debate.

At present, recreationists and ranchers are united against the Beaverhead's roading-logging plans for the upper Big Hole — the culmination of 25 years of heavy timbering. But the heavy irrigation practices used by the ranchers along the river, aggravated by bulldozed diversion dams which disturb the river bottom, could create a rift between them and recreationists once the timber fight, and its threat to water and scenery, is settled.

There is a final threat to the wild and rural character of the Big Hole that makes all the other problems look insignificant: urbanization, or rather suburbanization.

As Butte's economy diversifies away from heavy industry, and new people with new values move to the city for jobs, many of them will seek alternatives to a town where the EPA is dragging its feet on Superfund cleanup, and where the legacy of mining and smelting is so visible.

The appearance and possible health problems of living in Butte are in stark contrast to the clean, beautiful and nearby lower Big Hole. Suburbanization is already underway. Some entire ranches

and portions of just about every ranch between Divide and Deep Creek, a 25-mile stretch, have 20- to 40-acre parcels for sale.

The American dream includes owning 20 acres of the West, with a few horses or cattle grazing on them. The problem is illustrated by the country north of Salmon, Idaho, where subdivided land has led to a decline in open space, severely overgrazed lots, knapweed infested pastures, and a loss of agricultural land.

Charlie Hahnkamp, his eye on knapweed, says that control gets more and more difficult as the land is subdivided. Owners are more numerous and more difficult to organize, and are more likely to overgraze the land and let knapweed get footholds all over the valley.

In the Big Hole, the suburbanization is just beginning, but it could be socially and environmentally devastating. The Divide-Wise River-Melrose region is slowly becoming a bedroom community of Butte.

Attempts to slow or direct the trend bang into the West's aversion to controls. Efforts at flood plain management have been strongly resisted by landowners and developers. And ranchers who have bankers knocking at the door are less concerned with the social costs of residential development than with remaining solvent. □

Tourism vs. logging...

(Continued from page 24)

sioners in May that the revised forest plan was not going to be released until after the November elections. He also said the plan was not going to provide more timber on the north end of the forest than the draft had proposed.

L-P went to Washington to request a minimum of 14 million board-feet of timber from the north end. The Forest Service replied that the request would not be considered until after the final plan was adopted.

So a legal and administrative wall seems to separate L-P from the trees in Jackson's backyard, in the north end of the Bridger-Teton forest. But L-P has another option: the Union Pass road. It has been the main haul road for timber coming off the Dubois side of Union Pass. Part of the road between Dubois and Pinedale consists of a 3.8-mile section that is more trail than road.

L-P has long wanted to get that section rebuilt so that timber on the Upper Green River and on the south end of the forest would be more accessible. Ranchers, small loggers and recreationists have resisted, and the road has been an emotional issue for the last several years.

Ironically, as a result of the attention drawn to the road, Dubois and Pinedale have decided that an upgraded road would serve them both. Regardless of L-P, many now believe it will be a boon to tourism. The development could put L-P back in business on a reduced scale by providing timber from the south end of the forest. But it would also put the company in direct competition with mills in that area. And the road could also give Dubois a larger stake in a tourist economy.

Officially, Dubois has spoken with one voice on the L-P mill: Town and

Fremont County officials as well as community leaders have fought hard for the mill. But Dubois is not a one-industry town, except perhaps psychologically.

Cattle ranching, dude ranching, hunting and outfitting, and small sawmills are still in place. Of late, retirees have discovered the Dubois area, with its relatively mild climate and spectacular scenery.

Although L-P may look on the town of 1,100 as a company town, not all residents accept that benevolence. Open discussion, however, is not easy in the community. To take one example, in February 1987, the Forest Service scheduled a forest plan "listening session" for Dubois.

On the day of the hearing, flyers invited community members to enjoy free beer at the Ramshorn Bar prior to the hearing, and to wear black as a sign of mourning for lost jobs. Also planned was a funeral procession, complete with pine casket, leading from the bar to the high school, where logging trucks would circle the building as the meeting went forward. Other ideas included writing comments on two-by-fours and wheeling them in. L-P chief forester Bob Baker said the events were meant as an antidote to the dull, drawn-out planning process; people, he said, "wanted to have some fun."

The Forest Service cancelled the meeting.

The general nature of a small town has also inhibited discussion within the community. Mary Back, author, artist and environmentalist, has lived in the Dubois area for over 50 years. Like many other natives, she opposed clear-cutting and the roads. But she dislikes fighting with neighbors. She says, "We can still smile at each other" in spite of differences.

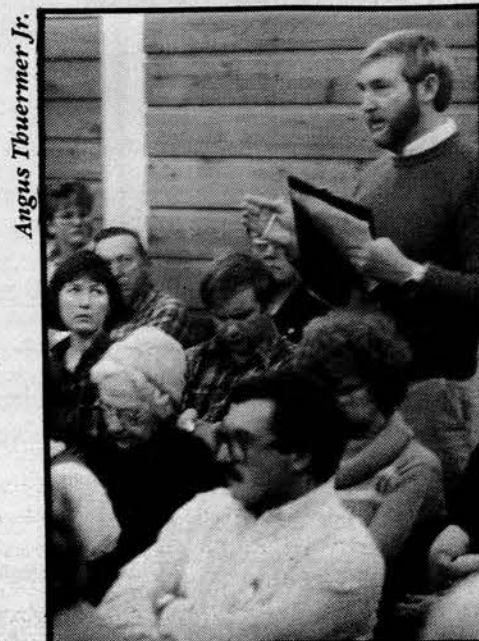
What comes now, with the L-P mill at Dubois and the associated planing mill at River-ton closed? The best guess is that the Dubois mill will stay closed. The Dubois area's timber is gone for the next century. And gone with the timber is the pub-

lic and Forest Service attitudes that permitted the overexploitation.

Dubois is already planning its future — one in which logging and sawmills will have much less importance. Now that the mill is closed, a serious reassessment is underway. The forested areas may have suffered from decades of logging by L-P and its predecessors, but Dubois is still in the midst of country that 99 percent of America would consider spectacular.

More broadly, logging has cost western Wyoming some loss of scenery, big game and its habitat, and fishing potential. But given enough time, the cut lands will recover and the scenery and wildlife will come back. These special lands will become even more important as pressures build on today's national parks.

It is only a matter of time until visitor restrictions are imposed in the parks. When that happens, people will be looking for other places to go while waiting for their "turn" in the parks to come up. Union Pass and other recovered areas may then be there to enthrall tomorrow's visitors. □



Bob Baker

Angus Thurner Jr.

30-High Country News -- October 10, 1988

BULLETIN BOARD

ROCKIES RENDEZVOUS

The Two Medicine Alliance, Badger Chapter, holds its third annual "Northern Rockies Rendezvous" in Missoula, Mont., Oct. 20-22. Resource professionals and conservationists from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, British Columbia and Alberta will talk about natural fire policy in the West and this summer's fires, grizzly bear and wolf management, Native American cultural values, timber management and wilderness legislation, among other topics. Singer-guitarist Jack Gladstone will be on hand for a benefit concert. Contact The Badger Chapter, P.O. Box 8374, Missoula, MT 59807.



ROUNDUP IN UTAH

The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance holds its 3rd annual "Roundup" in Moab Utah, October 21-23. Music and an informal gathering kick off the events on Friday at the Poplar Place, Main and 1st North streets in Moab. Clive Kincaid, co-founder of SUWA, opens Saturday's full schedule at the Pack Creek Ranch, eight miles south of Moab, at a breakfast session at 8 a.m. Speakers following Kincaid include Arden Pope, associate professor of economics at BYU; Ed Marston, publisher of the *High Country News*; and Wayne Petty, the attorney representing conservationists in the Burr Trail litigation. The evening features more music, awards and Ray Wheeler's slide presentation, "Back to the Future: the Battle for the Colorado Plateau." For more information, contact SUWA at 801/259-8825. Arrangements for rooms and the breakfast and dinner sessions on Saturday should be made with the Pack Creek Ranch, 801/259-5505.

RAILS TO TRAILS IN COLORADO

Every year 3,000 miles of railroad tracks are abandoned. But they could be turned into trails for recreation, open space conservation, historic preservation and wild life study. On Oct. 13, in Lakewood, Colo., the Rails to Trails Conservancy and National Park Service will conduct a one-day training seminar designed for Colorado public officials who want to develop a rail-trail. The seminar will tell how to fund a trail, what state and federal laws apply, and how to manage a trail once it's established. Registration is \$115 and must be in by Oct. 6. Write to Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1400 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/797-5400).

WALKING WITH WALKIN' JIM

*Rising up, the bushes rattle
A dozen partridge
Launched to the sky ...*

from The Birth.

Walkin' Jim Stoltz has hiked over 15,000 miles of American backcountry with a guitar named Stella. On the Appalachian Trail, walking from the Atlantic to the Pacific, or along the Continental Divide from Mexico to Canada, he writes poetry and songs along the way. *The Whisper Behind the Wind* is his new 43-page book of poems, filled with images of America's wildlands and wildlife.

Lone Coyote Publications, Box 477, Big Sky, MT 59716. Paper: \$5, plus \$1 postage and handling. 43 pages.

HIGHWAY TALES

Dancing Indians transformed to spruce trees, snow that turned blood-red and led a miner to his gold, teardrops that stopped volcanoes from erupting. These are a few of the tales from a little paperback called *Twelve Stories From the Scenic Highway of Legends: An historical activity book for Highway 12*. This 27-page guide to the history of southern Colorado between Trinidad and La Veta is designed for children, but adults might be entertained as well by writers Jan Kurtz and Allen Bachoroski, with illustrations by Bryan Kyle.

Roots and Wings Publishing, 721 Pine Street, Trinidad, CO 81082. Paper: \$1.25. 27 pages.

PAWS FOR PRESERVATION

Thousands of Mexican Wolves once roamed the Sierra Madre and adjoining tablelands in western Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Today the only remaining wolves live in zoos and captive breeding facilities. Now comes a new group called PAWS, for Preserve Arizona's Wolves, to urge support for the eventual reintroduction of wolves into Arizona. PAWS says it will alert its members when critical letters need to be written to agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department. For more information call Bobbie Holaday, 1413 East Dobbins Road, Phoenix, AZ 85040 (602/268-1089).

WILD ABOUT COLORADO

The Colorado Environmental Coalition will hold its 12th annual Colorado Wilderness and Wild River Conference Nov. 12-13 at the Shadow Mountain Community Center in Craig, Colo. Statewide environmental groups will try to set political strategies to bring about wild and scenic river designations and to get action on a Colorado wilderness bill. Democratic Colorado Rep. Ben Campbell and environmental guru David Brower are scheduled to speak. A \$20 registration fee includes 5 meals; call the Colorado Environmental Coalition at 303/837-8701 for more information.



COMFORTABLY EFFICIENT HOMES

You can build a home that is energy efficient and attractive, says the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, in its 229-page *Warm Places*. In clear terms and with extensive photographs and layouts, the book samples 77 energy-efficient homes that were built without sacrificing comfort or appearance. The paperback is free from the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 1520 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620.

VALLEY OF THE CRANES

For this tribute to the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado, the working title was "Bigger than Connecticut." But the book's photographers, inspired one late summer day by the return of the lanky sandhill cranes, changed the name to *The Valley of the Cranes*, which is what Indians, its earliest inhabitants, called it. Ringed by the jagged Sangre de Cristo and San Juan mountains, the valley is a major flyway for both sandhill and whooping cranes, a place where "abundant wildlife and spectacular geography are commonly overlooked by the casual observer." Photographers Robert Rozinski and Wendy Shattil share some of little-known gems of the valley, and Virginia McConnell Simmons, who lives there, writes mostly about its human history in an accompanying essay.

Roberts Rinehart Inc., P.O. Box 3161, Boulder, CO 80303. Cloth: \$25, Paper: \$12.95. 64 pages. Illustrated with color photographs.

NATIONAL RIVER CONFERENCE

"Celebrate America's Rivers" is the theme of a conference Nov. 18-19 in Alexandria, Va., sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management, American Rivers Inc., the National Park Service and Forest Service. The get-together will focus on expanding the river conservation movement at the federal and state levels, increasing public attention and celebrating the rivers of America. Speakers include Stewart L. Udall, Interior secretary from 1961-1969; William Penn Mott Jr., Park Service director, and Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield. Other elected officials and members of environmental organizations will hold workshops and also show films. Registration is \$100; for more information contact American Rivers Inc., 801 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Suite 303, Washington, D.C. 20003 (202/547-6900).



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MARDY MURIE
Two in the Far North

LETTERS

YELLOWSTONE LIVES

Dear HCN,

It is difficult for me to believe that most of the people castigating the Park Service over the fires in Yellowstone have actually visited the park.

Yellowstone is not in ashes, and over much of the park one would be hard pressed to find any evidence of the big fires at all. Yes, there are indeed some areas where charred stumps stand against the sky. But beyond these occasional swatches of snags are large regions where mature timber was lightly singed. Only the grass and litter were burned away. These areas do not look devastated and they will quickly recover. Even within the mapped perimeter of the fires, a good deal of the timber was not even touched at all.

In the lightly burned areas, only the tops of grasses and shrubs were consumed by flames. If you dig down, as I have, you will find that most of the roots are still intact. From them, new plants will sprout next spring, and these areas will be luxuriantly covered by new verdant growth that, because of its lushness, may even look more beautiful than adjacent non-burned areas.

But the most important idea that must be grasped is that the Park Service is supposed to manage for ecological processes, not some static end-product like trees. Mature timber is only one component of the process which we call a forest ecosystem. It is the process that must be preserved, not any particular portion of it.

Imagine those rides one occasionally sees at the carnivals where centrifugal force will hold a person against a wall even as the floor is dropped away. But if you stop the machine from spinning, everyone falls away from the wall. In much the same way, fire is one aspect of the circular force which keeps the forest ecological system running in the West, and if you try to prevent it, much like stopping the spinning carnival ride, the forest ecosystem will fall apart.

It is preservation of ecological processes, not trees, animals or any other specific subset of the whole, which is and should continue to be the primary duty of the National Park Service.

George Wuerthner
Livingston, Montana

THE TRUTH ABOUT UTAH

Dear HCN,

I greatly enjoyed the first of your series on the "Reopening of the New West" and am looking forward to the rest of the series. I have a comment to make about your introductory piece about the

rural West being an artifact of the 1800s, and a correction to offer concerning statements made about me in Ray Wheeler's article.

First, while I thoroughly agree with your analysis, living as I do in the heart of rural southeastern Utah, I somehow can't share your conclusion that the situation is now changing, and rapidly. Although the mineral industry, one-third of the ruling triumvirate, is now in a temporary slump, the other two triad members — grazing and logging interests — are still firmly in the saddle. They control this state's political structure, and its federal land administration agencies, with an iron fist.

While those who would like to bring about change are here in the little town of Moab in considerable numbers, and are presently making a lot of noise decrying the old ways of seeing and doing things, they are far from gaining control of the social-political infrastructure that has dominated Moab and Grand County since 1877, when the town of Moab was first established.

I have carefully watched this aspect of the community for more than two decades, hoping to see signs of change for the better, but to date the key local indicators — the composition of the Grand and San Juan county commissions — have not changed a bit. While commissioners have changed, from individuals who are functionally illiterate to others who are shrewd as foxes, they all sing the same old tune of redneck violence. Yet without this basic change there will be no "reopening" of southeastern Utah.

Right now an election is coming up, but the only hope for replacing, for example, Grand County Commissioner Jimmie Walker, is Merv Lawton, a man who has been active in mining all his life. In San Juan County, of course, the situation is hopeless. It will thus probably take at least one more Grand County election to make any fundamental change of direction in Moab, even though this region could, should and must convert firmly over to a generally conservationist philosophy, with tourism, recreation and retirement as its economic base.

I discussed this situation in considerable detail in the original text for my 1986 book, *Utah Canyon Country*, but most of what I wrote was edited out by the book's publisher.

My second comment is about the part ascribed to me in Ray Wheeler's article. The article's background is basically correct, but I did not, as Wheeler said, promise those threatening me and my family that I would "never speak out again." I did not communicate with these violence-prone people directly in any way. What actually happened is this:

Immediately after the first phone call threatening to blow my home and family to shreds, I alerted several federal agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), which has jurisdiction over the licensing of explosives. This led to a BATF investigation that quickly brought the then-common "recreational" use of mining explosives within and around Moab to a screaming halt. No more evening "gun" blasts that rattled every window in town. No more blown-up phone booths.

After my phone tap caught two Atlas Minerals people red-handed, I agreed with the county attorney not to press charges for the federal crime of making telephone threats if he would take action to get Atlas Minerals to stop instigating violence.

Between the phone taps catches, and whatever the county attorney said to Atlas, things calmed down after another drunken, threatening phone call or two with bar-noises in the background, although I was still given police protection for several days.

Thus, while I made no overt promises to anyone, there was a form of tacit agreement between myself and the county attorney that I would henceforth cease effectively to have full U.S. citizen rights — no freedom of speech, no political rights, no environmental activism, no right to make citizen comments on federal draft environmental impact statements, no say whatsoever in the political-social affairs of the town, county and state in which I resided.

This situation still applies, and those who really run this town and county have subtly but emphatically made it clear to me that the edict is still in force.

While elsewhere I am well known as an author, with some 15 books and a host of other publications about southeastern Utah to my credit, effectively I am still a non-person in Moab. I truly know the feelings of the "outsiders" you described so graphically in your article. I have lived with them daily for the last 10 years.

Of course, there is some chance that this letter, if published, will bring on more threats, but I thought perhaps your readers should know the truth about my long-standing situation, and that little has really changed in the southeastern Utah sector of the Old West. The "New West" isn't here yet, and isn't even in sight.

F.A. Barnes
Moab, Utah

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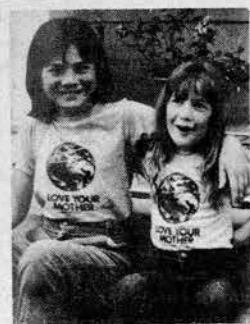
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