

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar



Yucca Mountain, Nevada

Nevada fights its second nuclear war

by Jim Robbins

Early in the morning on Jan. 21, 1951, Nevada rancher Martha Bardoli was startled awake when a brilliant flash filled her bedroom as if the sun were rising. Several seconds later the ground rippled with an earth tremor, rattling dishes and windows.

The explosion was the first of many above-ground atomic bomb tests at the Nevada Test Site over the next decade, and they caused a variety of problems for the Bardolis, as they did for other ranchers in a sparsely settled area of the state known as Railroad Valley.

Concussion from the blast would blow the front door of the house open. It

broke a kitchen window. Thick, radioactive clouds would settle over the ranch and make it difficult for her and her husband Alfred to go about their ranch work for the better part of a day.

However, Martha Bardoli Laird (she's since remarried) believes the weapons testing had a more pernicious effect, one she can never find it in her heart to forgive the government for. In 1956, five years after the tests began, Laird's seven-year-old boy Martin, a youngster who had played unknowingly in the pinkish and white fallout that descended periodically on the ranch, died of leukemia.

Laird and others in the fallout's path, who later formed a group called the Downwinders, tried for years to convince the government they had suffered harm from the tests.

Citing studies showing that the number of cancer cases, especially leukemia, was unusually high in the test area, angry residents were sure the strange clouds that floated over their ranches and homes had carried death. In 1979, 1,200 plaintiffs filed suit against the U.S. government.

In January 1988, their long legal battle came to an end when the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a ruling that the federal government was immune to lawsuits stemming from the 1950s bomb tests.

While the Downwinders' legal battle is over, Nevada's atomic legacy

remains. The U.S. Department of Energy is preparing to place the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository on federal land adjacent to the test site.

Many Nevadans, however, have learned their lesson. Polls show most oppose the dump. "Dog bites me once, shame on dog," says former two-term Governor Michael O'Callaghan, now an editor at the *Las Vegas Sun*, who remembers getting up early to watch the bombs go off. "Dog bites me twice, shame on me."

But Nevada may not have a choice. Some critics of the repository charge that the DOE and the nuclear industry have already chosen Nevada for the high-level waste repository. And, these critics charge, the DOE is doing its damndest to make sure the science fits that decision.

"Why would you trust them now?" asks attorney and former Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall, who also served as an Arizona congressman for three terms. "It is written large. They will not level with you or tell you the truth. You can't trust them."

The American nuclear industry is currently suffering through the most trying times of its short life. Plants have become enormously expensive to build and to operate. Once promising to deliver power without cost, the nuclear industry is, in many cases, delivering cost without power.

Some facilities, such as the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver, Colo., have been discharging radioactivity into the atmosphere and have been deemed unsafe. This DOE facility is one of 127 facilities, and a good many more are having problems. One problem is that without a place to dump it, high level waste is building up at many sites. Monitoring and storage is expensive.

As a result, there is a great deal of pressure from the industry and from Congress to find a solution to the disposal problem, which is reflected in the story of how Nevada came to be the only state under consideration as a site for a nuclear waste repository.

In 1986, nine states were being considered as the site of a waste repository. Four were eliminated, and a short time later two others were dropped, leaving three sites under active consideration — Deaf Smith County in Texas, Hanford, Wash., and Nevada.

Congress offered any state that would volunteer to take the dump \$100 million annually during site preparation and \$200 million when the waste was actually stored. In return the state would have to forgo any future claims of damage and the right to sue. Critics called it the Big Bribe Bill. There were no takers.

Questions were raised in Congress about the site selection process. Supporters of the nuclear industry and the Department of Energy began to get ner-

(Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,



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He likes open space

Our newest "mini-bureau" head is George Hardeen, who lives in Tuba City, Ariz., in the midst of the vast Navajo Reservation. From that location, George reports for the Gallup, N.M., *Independent*, and now for HCN.

In 1987, George was deputy managing editor of *Navajo Times TODAY* when Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald shut it down and fired all the staff.

"I decided early on to stay," he says. "Orange sandstone and Edward Abbey convinced me to move to Arizona. The towns are nicely spaced apart here. Lots of nice, nasty desert in between. You wouldn't like it."

Visitors

Among the paper's recent visitors was Peggy Berryhill, director of High Plains News Service, a new radio news source being produced by the Western Organization of Resource Councils. Peggy was travelling through the area visiting public radio stations when she spotted our sign, just down the block from the local public radio station, KVNF.

Subscriber Michael Smith and Kerry Dwyer, who are helping to run a rural revitalization program in Paonia and other rural towns, came by to say hello and to find out what we know about Paonia.

Susan Biddle and Jim Carrier came through earlier in the spring. Susan, an official photographer for the White House, was on her way back to Washington, D.C. Jim, a *Denver Post* writer whose book on this summer's Yellowstone fires is being published by Peregrine Smith Books in Salt Lake City, was on his way to report on a ranch in Gunnison.

A man we have known only through his monthly check to the Research Fund dropped in recently. He is Hal Coyle, a high school science teacher from Framingham, Mass. He came by on a social visit, but also found time to tell us and several Paonia High School teachers about a program he is working on to enliven high school astronomy. Hal is working with the Harvard Observatory under a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Folksinger Walkin' Jim Stoltz and his wife, Leslie, dropped in late one day on their way from a concert in Boulder, Colo., to one in Phoenix, Ariz. Jim told us he writes 90 percent of his songs celebrating wilderness and the outdoors while out walking. Actually, "walking" does not convey the scale of what he does. In the last 16 years, Jim has trekked across the country more than once. He plans a solo walk this summer in Utah's High Uintas, and then he and Leslie plan to walk the Colorado Trail for several weeks.

Jim carries a beat-up guitar with him on these journeys. Once, sliding down an ice field, blood from his scraped hands staining the snow, the guitar saved him from plunging over a cliff. "I rolled over on my back to see where I was going to go and the guitar neck dug in like an ice ax."

Jim and Leslie, who live in Big Sky, Mont., when not on tour, provided staffers with an impromptu treat. Jim unearthed his guitar from a crowded van and in a voice deep, resonant and too large for a small office, transported us to the mountains by singing *Forever Wild*.

Other visitors included Susann Maybach, a landscape architect from Telluride, Colo., who just bought five acres outside Paonia, and John and Tom Gawne, on their way back to Chicago

from the Grand Canyon. Also stopping by was Riede Wyatt of Canon City, Colo., and Lori Armagost, of Sterling, Colo. Riede says he is the recipient of one of the several HCN gift subscriptions his mom, P-Roe of Canon City, gives each year.

Chas and Mary Clifton of Florence, Colo., visited us on their way back from the annual meeting of the Colorado Wildlife Federation in Grand Junction. Chas had accepted an award to the *Canon City Daily Record* from the CWF. The award was for the paper's coverage of natural resource issues. Chas has the natural resource beat for the paper.

His words will endure

Several readers wrote in to share their remembrances of the late Edward Abbey. John Sisk, writing from Flagstaff, Ariz., recalled these words from *Desert Solitaire*, written in 1968: "There is a cloud on my horizon. A small dark cloud no bigger than my hand. Its name is Progress."

Sisk says that by the 1980s that cloud had swollen to a thunderhead made up of oil shale, the MX missile, and the push to develop oil and gas in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and throughout the wilderness system.

"We surprised ourselves. We organized old warriors and new recruits, worked harder than ever, and we weathered the onslaught."

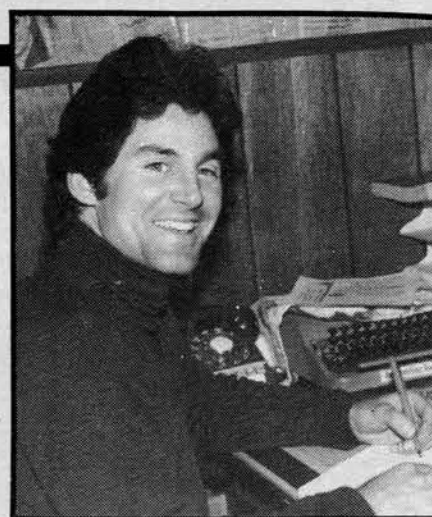
"But the surface is deceiving," he adds. "The storm cloud is still there... and a great warrior has passed."

However, Sisk continues, a writer can cheat death by passing on to others "the record of a way of knowing the land, the desert, the wilderness."

What almost everyone who wrote to HCN mentioned about Edward Abbey is the impact his book *Desert Solitaire* had on an awakening mind. No matter what the age of the reader, that book more than any other seems to speak with a voice that will not die.

Penetrating Russia

David Bird of Bison Associates wrote recently to ask that we send a free subscription to V.I. Zakharenkov, editor of *Nature and Man*, an environmental magazine in the USSR. According to Bird, Zakharenkov told a visitor that he and other Soviet environmentalists are out of touch with world environmental-



George Hardeen

ism; they do not have the hard currency to subscribe to outside publications.

HCN will send a one year's subscription to *Nature and Man*, although, for it to be useful, its staff's English is going to have to be a lot better than our Russian. For those wishing to send to the Soviet magazine their organization's newsletter or a gift subscription to another publication, the address is: V.I. Zakharenkov, Priroda i Chelovek, 123436 Moscow, 8 Ulitsa Marshall Rybalko, USSR. If you want to give editor Zakharenkov a ring first, the number is 194-18-96. David Bird's address is: One Kendall Square, Suite 2200, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Successful fundraiser

A dinner and auction held recently to raise money to buy private land at the confluence of the Gunnison and North Fork rivers in western Colorado was successful. Some 300 people raised \$22,000. The strong grass-roots support may make public agencies more receptive to coming up with the additional money needed to buy the land, preserving public access to excellent fishing and hiking.

As befits an environmental effort, recycling was the order of the dinner-auction for Jim McRoberts. Early in the evening, McRoberts won \$500 in cash at a raffle. He then spent that money bidding on various outfitter trips for himself and his family. During the day, McRoberts, an electronics technician, had sought out visiting VIPs to ride into the Black Canyon in the helicopter his firm, U.S. West, had donated to the Gunnison River Trust Fund for the day.

—the staff

HOTLINE

A new ski area for Colorado?

A 690-page draft environmental impact statement discusses three alternatives for the proposed Lake Catamount Resort eight miles south of Steamboat Springs, Colo. The developers' proposal, which is favored by the Forest Service, would need 6,600 acres in the Routt National Forest along with 3,266 acres of private land. At completion, the resort would have a capacity of 12,000 skiers, 69 ski runs, 13 chairlifts, a gondola and restaurant with a seating capacity of 800-1,000 on top of 9,960-foot Mount Baldy. A second alternative calls for developing 3,266 acres of private land only, and the "no-action" alternative would permit no resort at Lake Catamount. Routt forest supervisor Jerry Schmidt says that after considering the impacts to public lands and the opportunities for long-term benefits to the most people, full development seems to be the best alternative. Conservationists do not agree. They say

the proposed ski area would destroy the wilderness character of Service Creek, a nearby area included in the conservationists' wilderness proposal. In addition, say the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and the Colorado Environmental Coalition, development of Lake Catamount would harm wildlife habitat for elk and black bear and could degrade water quality affecting spawning brook trout. Environmental groups, including Western Colorado Congress, also question the need and demand for the resort, saying that skier-use in the Routt National Forest declined 1.73 percent between 1984-86, and that as the baby boomer generation ages, skier numbers may decline further. Written comments on the draft EIS are due June 8 to Jerry Schmidt, Routt National Forest Supervisor, 29587 West U.S. Highway 40, Suite 20, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477. Copies of the draft are available from the same address. The Forest Service is also holding "open houses" on the draft EIS, one of which is May 30 at the Steamboat Springs High School Auditorium, at 7 p.m.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Spotted owls win lawsuit but still face tough fight

A recent decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could have a major impact on the economy and environment of the Northwest. On April 25, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service notified a federal judge of its intention to list the northern spotted owl as a "threatened" species throughout its range in Washington and Oregon.

Under the Endangered Species Act, the federal government will now have to protect the bird's habitat, which is primarily the old growth forests west of the Cascade Mountains. And that may mean an end to logging in much of the ancient forests.

"The impact on the timber industry is tremendous," said Chris West of the Northwest Forestry Association, which represents the industry. "Eighty to 90 percent of the program in western Oregon and Washington could be shut down. By Christmas we're probably going to see a lot of people in trouble."

"It's an extremely wise decision, and we're very pleased to see that the process works," countered James Monteith of the Oregon Natural Resources Council. "It creates the context for making changes in forest policy to take us back toward multiple use and away from timber dominance."

USFWS had originally rejected a petition by environmental groups to list the owl as threatened. But U.S. District Judge Thomas Zilly termed the USFWS's decision "arbitrary and capricious" and he ordered a reassessment.

After a 12-member team of biologists reviewed the situation and unanimously concluded that the owl was indeed threatened, USFWS presented Zilly with its new decision. If the judge, as expected, accepts the listing, the agency must draw up a management plan to protect the owl, a process that could take years. USFWS must first officially propose the listing in the Federal Register, then accept public comment for up to a year before making its final decision. Other federal agencies will have to confer with USFWS before allowing any actions, such as logging, that may jeopardize the owl.

USFWS's decision came weeks after an anonymous person dropped an unmarked envelope on the desk of a Sierra Club lawyer in Seattle. In it was a report, written by six Bureau of Land Management specialists in 1987, but never made public, that found that the BLM's planned timber sales could threaten the spotted owl's survival.

USFWS's action may strengthen the hand of environmentalists in two court injunctions, now only temporary, which have stopped about a third of the Forest Service and BLM's planned timber sales in the Northwest this year. As West put it, "no judge is going to reverse USFWS's decision until we have a recovery plan."

Other support for the owls has come from a report by the General Accounting Office. The report said that the agency had based its rejection on politics rather than science.

Timber industry officials quickly

predicted economic ruin from the listing, with job loss estimates ranging as high as 280,000. Environmental groups, however, labelled such predictions "hysteria."

"Sure, you'll likely see some mills closing right off the bat, but there's been a mill a week closing, and it's because of automation," Monteith said.

Nonetheless, politicians scrambled to blunt the economic impact of USFWS's action. Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio called for speeding up salvage sales on lands burnt by fires and restrictions on log exports. All seven members of Oregon's congressional delegation, along with Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, agreed on a June "summit meeting" between industry and environmentalists.

All the hubbub may mean a rise in housing prices. A dwindling timber supply, after a record cut of 5.5 billion board feet on northwest public lands last year, has helped drive prices to their highest levels in almost a decade. Companies are often bidding twice the appraised value for standing timber.

One timber sale that was bought for \$450 per thousand board feet in 1982, when the market was high, then returned to the government under a special congressional bail-out plan after the market dropped, has just been bought again for \$475 per thousand. Such prices, however, are still less than the value on the export market, where prime old growth Douglas firs can fetch \$1500 per thousand.

Meanwhile, the spotted owl's suc-

cess in the courts may not necessarily protect it in the forest. There have been numerous reports of loggers shooting at the estimated 2,400 owls or felling trees in which they nest. Taverns and cafes throughout the northwest now feature tongue-in-cheek "spotted owl" items on the menus, and t-shirts and bumper stickers are encouraging people to "Save a logger — eat an owl."

— Jim Stiak

HOTLINE



Mechanization wins

Every year, Wyoming's production of coal increases, and the number of coal miners decreases. From 1980 to 1988, Wyoming coal mines saw production soar by 73 percent, to 164 million tons — a figure that more or less tied it with Kentucky as the top national producer. But over approximately the same period, the number of employed miners dropped from 6,231 in 1981 to 4,093 in the first three quarters of 1988. The 73 percent increase in coal production was achieved with 35 percent fewer miners. According to a story in the *Casper Star-Tribune* by reporter Bill Lazarus, the decrease in miners was due to greater and greater mechanization, with the trend likely to continue into the future. The same trend is visible in other areas of natural resource extraction, such as logging and copper and gold mining and milling. More material is produced by fewer and fewer workers.

— Steve Stuebner

Legislature acts to protect Idaho's water

The Idaho Legislature, an overwhelmingly conservative lot, underwent an unprecedented conversion in 1989 to become an environmental body.

Lawmakers passed three landmark laws on water quality and a measure boosting state oversight of the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. No one could think of a year when as many key environmental concerns were met with swift legislative action.

"We got just about everything we wanted," said Gov. Cecil Andrus after the session concluded in the wee hours of March 29. "It is quite remarkable," added Sen. Laird Nob, chairman of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee.

Will Whelan, lobbyist for the Idaho Conservation League, said strong bipartisan support had earned the body the title, "the clean water Legislature." The agreement, hammered out by a seven-member negotiating team composed of industry, conservation and Indian interests, will meet federal Clean Water Act requirements for preventing waters from being polluted by non-point pollution. It boosts on-site monitoring of streams, calls for designation of outstanding waters and requires public notification if an outstanding lake or stream is threatened by development.

Clean lakes legislation, urged by northern Idaho communities and lake protection groups, creates a coordinating council to oversee management and cleanup of Lake Pend Oreille, Coeur d'Alene Lake, Priest Lake and others. A separate bill calls for a statewide nutrient management plan to keep fertilizers and other contaminants from degrading lake quality.

That bill also contained a clause

making it difficult for northern Idaho communities to enact phosphate bans. But when city leaders heard the bill was going to become law, they swiftly adopted bans of their own. "Pure rivers and lakes are our potatoes," said Sandpoint Mayor Ron Chaney. "We will do everything in our power to clean up our lakes and keep them clean."

Groundwater legislation will radically improve the state's monitoring system of underground aquifers, which supply 90 percent of Idaho's drinking water.

Lawmakers also sent a strong message to the Department of Energy with legislation on the Idaho National Engi-

neering Laboratory. It gives increased funding to the state Division of Environmental Quality to monitor INEL activities, and it indicates that the state will not tolerate further releases of radioactive materials into groundwater or the air.

"It's a great improvement," said Carey Cook, a spokeswoman for the Snake River Alliance. "But greater monitoring and oversight won't necessarily prevent environmental damage. If anything, we have to increase our vigilance even more."

— Steve Stuebner

Idaho legislators fail to bag their trophy

BOISE, Idaho — For many sportsmen, the 1989 Legislature will be remembered as the year when lawmakers declared open season on the state Fish and Game Department. Some called it "Fish and Game bashing" for short.

It has been a rough four months for the department. A favorite target among landowner-legislators, Fish and Game took heat for allegedly using "public funds" to lobby the Legislature for failing to resolve landowner complaints about wildlife damage.

Tensions culminated on the eve of adjournment when Republican Rep. Boyd Hill called for Fish and Game director Jerry Conley to resign.

"We need to replace this director and get one that can return credibility (to the department)," said Hill, a good friend of the executive director of the Idaho Cattle Association. Fish and Game Commission Chairman Keith Carlson rallied

to Conley's defense. "It's not going to happen. We're 100 percent behind Jerry."

When all was said and done, only two bills cleared the Statehouse in connection with the complaints. Both focused on the subject of wildlife damage on private land, such as deer and elk eating haystacks.

That no other bills passed seemed to indicate Idaho sportsmen and conservationists wield more political clout than before. On numerous occasions, lawmakers were forced to vote down measures they otherwise supported because of phone calls from unhappy sportsmen.

"Will someone let the public know we passed this bill? My phone's been ringing off the hook," exclaimed Sen. John Hanson, after the Senate Resources and Environment Committee passed a resolution creating a committee to study wildlife damage problems.

Oftentimes, lawmakers criticized Fish and Game for doing its job. Rep. Russell Newcomb, a Burley farmer, criticized the department for holding up a mining project when, in fact, it was doing its job by pointing out concerns about lost mule deer and hawk habitat. Other legislators complained about the large numbers of deer, elk and antelope in the state.

"When sportsmen complain about heavy seasons on does this fall, we'll tell them their legislator told us to thin out the herds," Conley said.

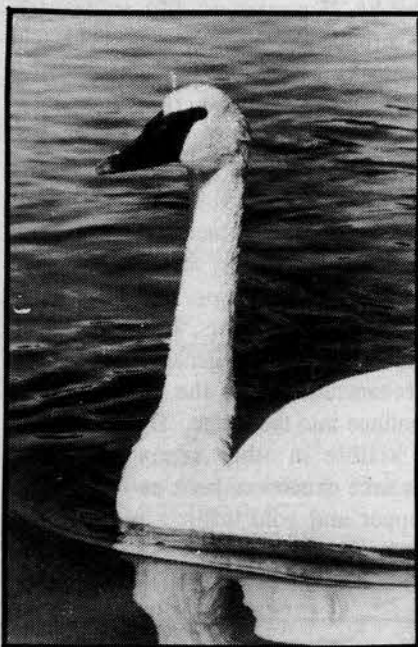
In the end, Conley said he views the session in a positive light. No unwanted bills were passed. A committee will try to work out long-term solutions to the perpetually thorny problem of wildlife damage on private land. And \$500,000 has been appropriated to pay landowners for damage from this past winter.

— Steve Stuebner

HOTLINE

Nevada ranchers cry foul

Nevada ranchers have filed a lawsuit challenging a Forest Service management plan that attempts to rehabilitate lands damaged by overgrazing in the Humboldt and Toiyabe national forests. The Nev. Cattlemen's Assoc., a group called Nevadans for a Practical Wilderness Policy and six individual ranchers say the agency unjustly blames livestock for deterioration of streambeds, wildlife habitat, soil and watersheds on public land. They also say no proof exists that grazing causes problems, reports the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. The plan calls for reducing the amount of time cattle are allowed to graze around water sources to allow vegetation to recover. In extremely damaged areas, cattle would be fenced out. The suit says the Forest Service is giving preferential treatment to wildlife, big game and recreation at the expense of ranchers who have leased the public lands for decades. But Sierra Club member Rose Strickland says, "We personally don't think the Forest Service is doing quite enough ... But we are going to support what it is doing: seeking redress of decades of abuse of wildlife habitat." David Edelson, San Francisco attorney for the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council, says the Forest Service statutes "explicitly talk about multiple use and define those uses for wildlife, fish and recreation as entirely of legitimate value on public lands." Edelson adds, "What we're seeing is a gradual shift in the public's desires on how public land should be managed."



Trumpeter swan

The legacy of lead shot

Thirty-two trumpeter swans died of lead poisoning in Minnesota this winter, wiping out 16 percent of the statewide population. Although the state of Minnesota banned lead shot for waterfowl hunting two years ago, swans ate lead that remained in the marshes, mistaking it for grit, which they need for digestion. Steve Kittleson of the state's Resources Department said some birds had more than 50 lead shot in their gizzards when they were brought in for treatment. According to county wildlife manager Larry Gillette, swans were forced into deeper waters filled with lead shot after drought dried up the lead-free marshes. Although lead will continue to threaten the swans, Gillette says he hopes the spring runoff and stepped-up breeding efforts will allow the population to rebound.

Kathleen Marie Menke

Wyoming land for 'sale': only \$2.68/acre

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Nearly 30,000 acres of federal land in Wyoming have been sold to private owners in the last 12 years — at an average price of \$2.68 an acre, federal records show.

Applications are pending for the sale of an additional 10,000 acres at similar bargain prices, according to documents provided by the Wyoming office of the Bureau of Land Management. The sales are allowed by a 117-year-old federal mining law that sets land prices at no more than \$5 an acre.

Most of the land transfers in Wyoming involve bentonite deposits in the north-central part of the state. One bentonite producer, Dresser Industries, has obtained more than 11,000 acres of federal land since 1977, and has applications pending for another 3,870 acres, BLM documents show.

Other federal lands have been acquired for uranium millsites or uranium mines, and for deposits of marble, clay and sand and gravel.

The land acquisitions are governed by the 1872 Mining Law, which allows any U.S. citizen to file a mining claim on federal lands. The law allows the claimholder to hold the claim indefinitely by performing as little as \$100 of development work annually.

If the claim is found to contain valuable mineral deposits, the claimholder can purchase the federal land — a process known as patenting the claim — for \$2.50 or \$5 an acre, depending on the type of mineral deposit. Patents can also be obtained for millsites.

Other than the sale income (patent fee), the federal government receives no revenue from mining claims filed under the 1872 law.

The law originally applied to nearly all mineral deposits. Since 1920, Congress has narrowed the law to exclude energy sources such as coal, oil, gas, and oil shale, and construction materials such as building stone and gravel. The law now applies mostly to hardrock minerals such as iron or gold.

Claims filed before the exclusions

went into effect have been "grandfathered" and may still be patented, even though no new claims may be filed for those minerals.

The validity of many of the older claims has been questioned, particularly in the case of oil shale. A Reagan administration decision to patent 82,000 acres of oil shale claims in Colorado prompted moves in Congress to suspend all patenting of oil shale claims.

The Reagan administration voluntarily halted the processing of oil shale claims in 1987. But earlier this year, just before leaving office, the Reagan administration moved to resume the patenting of the disputed claims.

A recent report by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, revealed widespread abuses of the patent rights granted by the 1872 Mining Law. The GAO found that the law was being used to acquire property near ski areas in Colorado and in the Phoenix and Las Vegas suburbs.

In one case, a never-mined gold claim near Keystone, Colo., was purchased for \$400 in 1983. Part of the 160-acre parcel was subsequently subdivided into residential lots selling for \$11,000 per acre. Similar claims are pending near the Breckenridge ski resort in Colorado, the GAO found.

The GAO found 20 patented claims that together brought the federal government less than \$4,500 for lands worth a total of between \$14 million and \$48 million. Another 12 pending applications identified by the GAO would bring in about \$16,000 for land worth from \$14 million to \$47 million.

None of the abuses identified by the GAO report were in Wyoming. A review of BLM records for the state indicates that patents filed since 1977 are tied to legitimate mineral development.

Of the 29,087 acres — more than 45 square miles — of claims patented in Wyoming since December 1977, 25,391 acres have been for bentonite. The mineral is the major component of drilling mud used in oilfield operations.

In addition to Dresser Industries, other major bentonite producers patenting claims — all at \$2.50 per acre — included American Colloid (5,390 acres), Magnet Cove Barium (3,539 acres), and Kaycee Bentonite (1,770 acres).

Minerals Exploration Inc. patented 1,334 acres of uranium claims, as well as a 642-acre millsite, in an area 30 miles northwest of Rawlins. Bear Creek Uranium patented its 95-acre millsite near Douglas and Getty Petrochemicals patented 112 acres at its mill in the Shirley Basin. The uranium claim and millsites brought the federal government \$5 an acre.

Only 2,071 acres of the claims patented since late 1977 have been at the \$5 per acre rate. The remaining 27,015 acres have gone into private hands for \$2.50 per acre. The total income to the U.S. Treasury has been about \$78,000 — an average of \$2.68 per acre.

BLM records show 49 pending claim applications. Acreages have been determined for 33 of those claims, with a total area of 10,674 acres — nearly 17 square miles.

Bentonite accounts for 9,852 acres of the pending claims. There is a pending uranium claim of 562 acres and a kaolin clay claim for 260 acres. Together, the 33 pending claims of known size would bring the government a total of about \$28,000.

Another 234,000 unpatented claims exist on federal land in Wyoming, according to the BLM. In fiscal year 1987, 3,300 claims were invalidated because of inactivity, while 3,500 new claims were filed. Most of the new claims were for gold and uranium, the BLM says.

The report, "Federal Land Management: The Mining Law of 1872 Needs Revision," is available from the General Accounting Office, Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (202/275-6241).

— Andrew Melnykovych

Cow-lamb bonding wards off coyotes

Because sheep and cattle have different tastes, letting them graze together can be efficient. One species eats what the other disdains.

That advantage has been known for a long time. What is just being discovered is the protection against coyotes that mixed grazing offers. Recent research by Dean Anderson and Clarence Hulet at the federal Jornada Experiment Range in New Mexico indicates that cattle may be able to guard sheep.

Usually, sheep and cattle in the same pasture will graze apart with sheep preferring higher ground while cattle graze lower, wetter areas. But the Jornada researchers bonded young lambs to cattle by penning small groups of 45-day-old lambs with heifers for 30 to 60 days. The lambs formed strong attachments to the cattle, and, when turned out on pasture, rarely strayed more than 70 feet from them. When threatened, the sheep would run in among the cattle.

In a 163-day study, no lambs bonded to cattle were lost to predation in the test group; in an adjacent pasture with a control group of unbonded lambs and heifers, half the lambs were lost in the first 19 days.

The Jornada station has now kept a bonded group, called a flerd, under free-range conditions for over two years. There were no losses to predators during

Tom Baugh



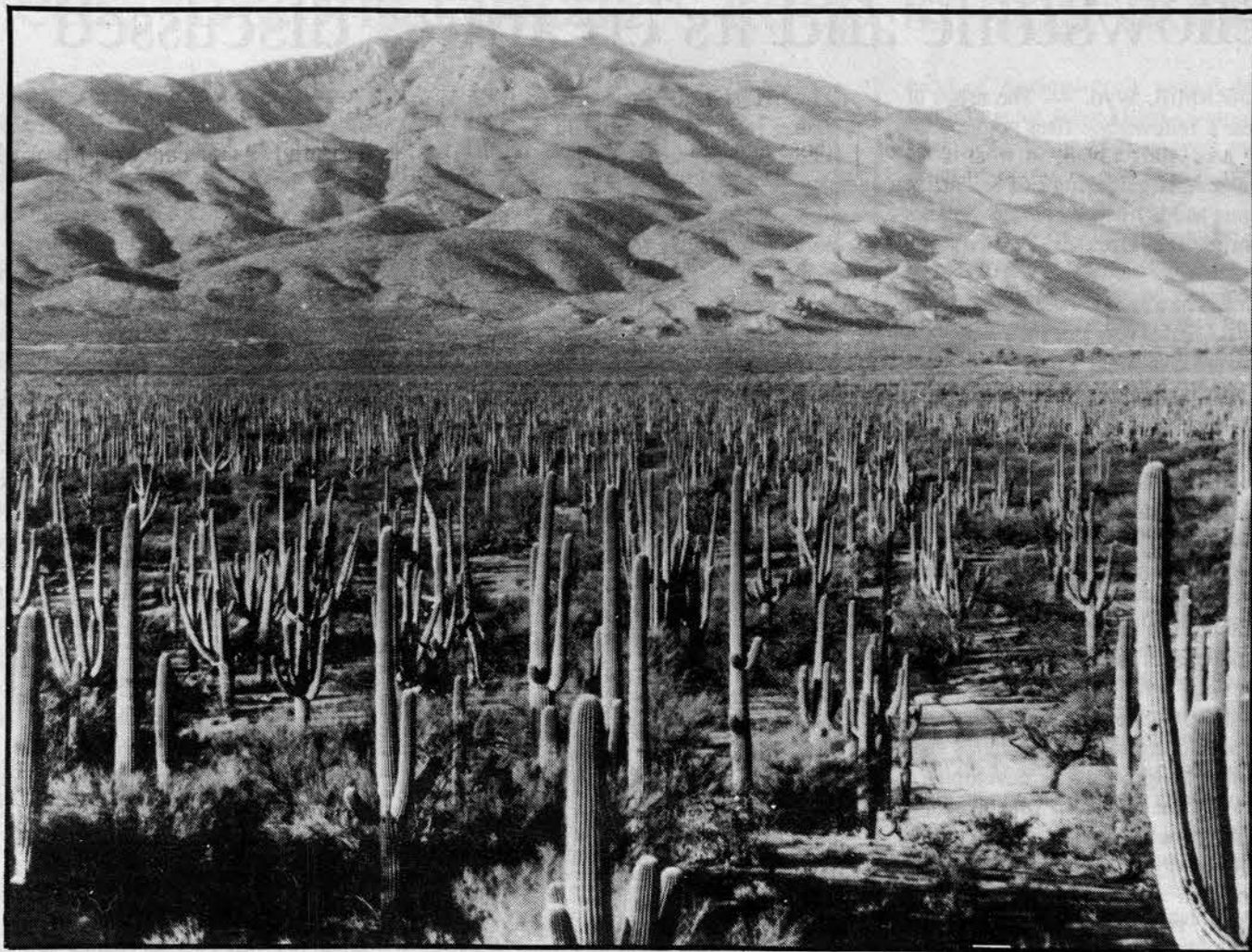
Coyote

the first year although the area is densely populated with coyotes. There were some losses during the second year when the bonded ewes lambled on the range because the ewes tended to separate from the flerd during lambing. Losses were no greater, however, than those in a similar flock accompanied by a guard dog. In subsequent years the ewes will

lamb in drylot, the lambs will be weaned early and the ewes returned to range.

For more information on cattle-sheep bonding contact Clarence Hulet or Dean Anderson, Jornada Experiment Range, Box 30003, Las Cruces, NM 88003 (505/646-5190).

— Judith E. Strom



1935: Saguaro cactus are abundant near Tucson, Arizona

For unknown reasons, Tucson is losing its saguaro forest

The giant saguaro cactuses near Tucson, Ariz., are dying, and the National Park Service has enlisted a team of scientists to find out why.

Ray Turner, for example, says that colder winters might be killing off the saguaros. He has been studying the distribution of the saguaros in Arizona for 40 years for the U.S. Geological Survey, and his series of photographs dramatically shows their decline near Tucson since 1935.

What is known for sure, says Ken Stolte, a biologist with the Park Service, is that mature saguaros in some areas of the national monument are not producing as many new seedlings as normal. Younger saguaros are aging prematurely and are also more susceptible to winter freezes than in the past.

A study completed last year for the Environmental Protection Agency by the Tree Ring Laboratory at the University of Arizona suggests that air pollution has affected winter tolerance of other plants in the region. Researchers studied ponderosa pine and Douglas fir in the mountains near Phoenix and Tucson, finding that tree growth was abnormally slow between 1951 and 1987.

Current Park Service studies focus on the role of nitrogen as a pollutant. Scientists believe that either an excess or a lack of nitrogen plays a part in a plant's tolerance to winter freezes.

The Park Service is also studying acid rain. Ken Stolte says that acid rain in the southern half of the state has been documented for a number of years. Other studies are looking at:

- The effect of limestone-drying kilns on the area's soils. From 1890 to 1920, kilns that dehydrated limestone operated on lands later included in the national monument.

- Copper smelters in southern Arizona, which may be responsible for long-term acid rain. The smelters have pumped massive amounts of pollutants into the air since the early 1900s.

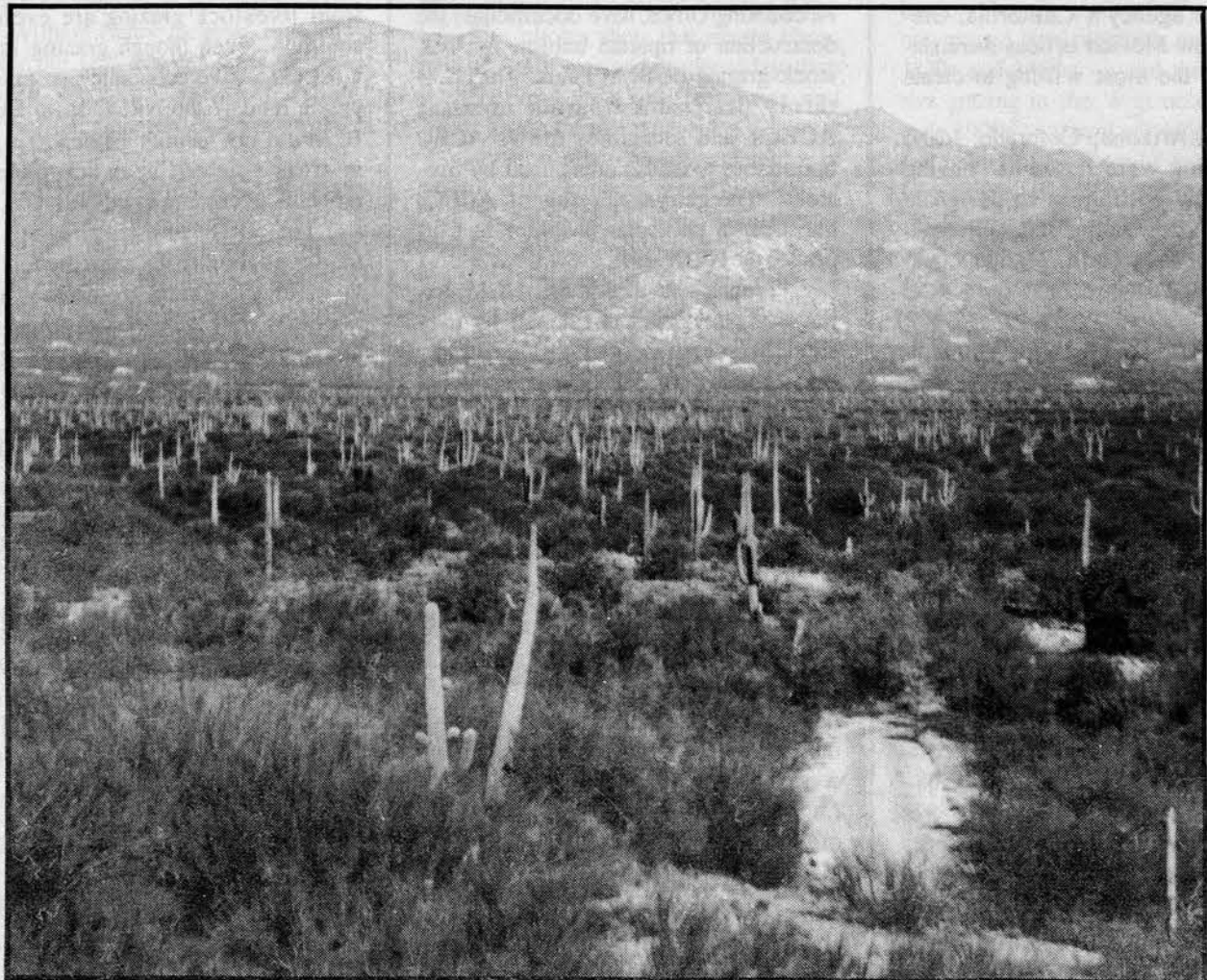
- Cattle grazing in the monument area, which caused trampling of cryptogamic soils that provide beneficial nitrogen to the soil. The Park Service is measuring the effects acid rain may have on the cryptogam, which is a blackish crust that resists erosion and "fixes nitrogen." It also forms the soil layer of desert areas in many western states.

- Urban sprawl is encroaching on

the monument. Since the mid-1970s, Tucson has been one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. Housing developments are eating up the natural landscape near the monument.

While saguaros are not flourishing in Arizona, the species itself is not in danger. Peter Warren, plant ecologist with the Nature Conservancy in Tucson, says saguaros are the dominant plant species in much of northern Mexico. Near Tucson, the saguaros are at the northern limit of their habitat, he points out, and that is why they present a "typical picture of a species on the margin of its habitat." What no one knows now is why that habitat was sufficient in the 1930s but is no longer hospitable to saguaro in the 1980s.

— Steve Ryder



1985: 50 years later, the saguaro have declined in numbers, and air quality has deteriorated

HOTLINE

Thanks to the Navajo 'code talkers'

Navajo "code talkers," who helped win World War II in the Pacific by sending coded messages in their native tongue, were honored recently in Phoenix, Ariz. City and state lawmakers dedicated a 10-foot-high bronze statue of a young Indian boy, sculpted by Taos Indian Doug Hyde, at the Phoenix Plaza. Using Navajo Indians to transmit secret messages was originally considered a long shot, reports the *Navajo Times*. But the 400 men quickly became indispensable as their code became the only one the Japanese could not decipher. While mechanically coded messages took over two hours to decode, code talkers were able to decipher military messages in a matter of minutes. According to Harold Foster, vice president of the Navajo Code Talker's Association and once a code talker himself, there has been a surge of interest in the code-talking group, whose top-secret mission was not declassified until 1956. In Arizona, the state Legislature recently passed a bill making Aug. 14 Navajo Nation Code Talker's Day.

HOTLINE

Republican wins

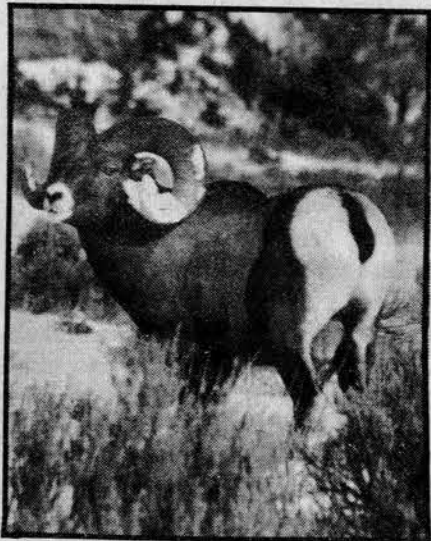
Wyoming has a new Congressman for its lone seat. He is Craig Thomas, 56, the general manager of the Wyoming Rural Electric Association and a three-term member of the Wyoming house. He beat Democrat John Vinich, 38, a 15-year veteran legislator and owner of a bar and restaurant in Hudson. Thomas will take over the seat vacated by Richard Cheney, who became Secretary of Defense. The contest was a dirty slugfest fueled by out-of-state money. Thomas beat Vinich 74,258 to 60,821. In November, Vinich lost a bid for the U.S. Senate seat held by incumbent Malcolm Wallop by a much narrower margin.

BARBS

No doubt the senator is also willing to give up federal subsidies to Idaho's below-cost timber sales, federal reclamation projects and agricultural price supports.

Idaho Sen. James McClure is furious over New York state's closure of the Shoreham nuclear power plant: "They have no right to call on taxpayers of the entire country to bail them out."

HOTLINE

**Basque rancher honored**

Thanks to rancher Emmett Elizondo, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the Big Blue Wilderness east of Ouray, Colo., will have more room. A sheepherder in the area for many years, Elizondo recently gave back his 7,000-acre grazing allotments to the Forest Service. Ordinarily, says the agency's Paul Senteney, sheepherders sell their grazing permit for a profit when they sell a ranch, but Elizondo, a Basque immigrant, grazed the land lightly and was concerned that other ranchers might not. Senteney says prescribed burning is now under way on the allotments that will allow the bighorn to migrate between their winter and summer ranges. Tom Brown, president of the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society, says that all the money his organization has invested in projects this year will not equal what Elizondo has done for the bighorn sheep. Elizondo was recently honored for his gift by the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society, Colorado Wildlife Commission, state Division of Wildlife and the Forest Service.

Yellowstone and its creatures discussed

LARAMIE, Wyo. — The ashes of last year's Yellowstone fires got a public sifting here April 13-15, in what is the first of several gatherings of scientists, managers and laymen to review policies governing the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

Critics like author Alston Chase and biologist Charles Kay got their licks in at Yellowstone National Park's managers, and the whipping boys of last summer got a word in too. "Every dog must have his day," said Yellowstone National Park science coordinator John Varley, as he launched his defense of park fire policy with an attack on press coverage.

Chase took a familiar swipe during the first day's luncheon speech, denouncing the park's "natural regulation" policies as no more than "waiting to see what will happen." Ed Lewis, head of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, said during the symposium's final panel that his group was developing a "vision" for the region in which "natural integrity" would take precedence over logging, energy development, and other man-caused intrusions. But between these more sweeping statements, papers and discussions honed in on fire ecology, elk herd management, brucellosis, wolf reintroduction and other specific management issues in Yellowstone.

Discussions often spilled out of the auditoriums and onto the steps outside, where clusters of conservationists, public officials and others formed throughout the weekend.

The many fire experts at the conference, even those critical of the Yellowstone fire plan, generally agreed that prescribed burning in earlier years would not have prevented a major conflagration in 1988's dry, windy conditions.

Bill Romme of Fort Lewis College

said his study of fire scars in Yellowstone indicated such big fires had occurred previously on the Yellowstone plateau; he said the new burn pattern created in 1988 would dominate Yellowstone fire ecology for the next 200-300 years.

But opinions diverged on the proper course for the future. "God's way is too rough," said Dr. Tom Bonnicksen of Texas A&M University, who pointed to the Canadians' successful re-creation of mosaic burn patterns in Banff National Park with intentionally set fires.

James K. Brown of the U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Fire Science Laboratory in Missoula, Mont., suggested that planned burning could be limited to areas near developments and communities.

Brown's proposal, which was not developed under Park Service direction, called for prescribed burning in the park between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, but only when moisture, wind and temperature conditions fit prescription, an event that he estimated would occur every three-to-five years. Fires of approximately 3,500 acres would be set, at a cost of about \$67,000 per fire.

Prescribed burning around park developments, gateway communities and along the park's borders would cost an estimated \$3.8 million and would have to be repeated every 40-to-200 years, said Brown. Fighting the fires in 1988 cost about \$120 million.

Park officials interviewed outside the conference indicated a new fire plan is now in development which would likely include some form of "fuel management" for old stands of timber near developed areas inside and outside the park.

Fire was not the only subject of the

symposium, which was sponsored by the University of Wyoming. Over 70 presentations were made in the course of three days. Given the limitations of space and reporter's footspeed, here is a sampling of symposium presentations:

- Tom Thorne of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department proposed vaccinating elk against brucellosis with "biobullets" outside Yellowstone National Park to prevent the spread of the disease to livestock;

- Robert Gresswell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said that Shoshone and Lewis lakes hold the only surviving lake trout of a strain transplanted from Lake Michigan. If the fish should be removed from Yellowstone as undesirable "exotics" there would be none remaining to recolonize the Great Lakes;

- Charles Kay of Utah State University suggested that an over-large elk herd was so overgrazing the shrubbery of the northern range that it threatened the grizzly bears, which in other areas depend greatly on berries and cowsnip;

- Mark Boyce of the University of Wyoming said that if the feeding program for elk in Teton Valley were stopped, two-thirds of the 22,000 elk that now gather at the Jackson Hole Elk Refuge every winter would die. He also said a second feeding program in the Gros Ventre Mountains served merely to "appease the ranchers"; and

- When Larry Bourret of the Wyoming Farm Bureau told horror stories about wolves (as one of the few dissidents during several sessions on wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone) there were unwolf-like howls of laughter from the generally pro-wolf audience.

— Geoff O'Gara



CAPITOL HILL

Report says BLM kowtows to cows

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Bureau of Land Management has not lived up to its 12-year-old obligation to protect exceptional or important natural areas and cultural sites throughout the West, a new study charges.

The Natural Resources Defense Council says that the BLM's unwillingness to set aside Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) is due to the agency's traditional subservience to the interests of ranchers and the mineral industry. That deference to commodity interests is seen in the low number of ACECs in rangelands and riparian areas, the report says.

Although about 5.5 million acres had been placed into ACECs by the end of last year, that is less than 2 percent of the 332 million acres under BLM management in Alaska and 12 Western states, the NRDC says.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 requires the BLM to establish ACECs to protect areas with important natural habitat or scenic, historic or cultural resources. The NRDC report was made public April 11, at a hearing on renewing the law.

The NRDC report is an update of two earlier reports written by Charles Callison and issued by the Public Lands Institute. Those earlier reports also criticized the BLM for foot-dragging on ACECs.

As was the case with the Callison studies, the NRDC found wide variation

among state BLM offices in the designation of ACECs and their subsequent protection. The agency's California, Oregon, and New Mexico offices were singled out as the most willing to create ACECs.

Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho and Wyoming were listed as "having shown a new willingness to designate ACECs." The remaining state offices — in Washington, Nevada, Montana, and Utah — have dismal records, the NRDC says.

"There are...only two ACECs in Montana and only six in Nevada, although the BLM administers significant acreage in each state," the report says.

The limited number of ACECs in rangeland areas is evidence "that the BLM is still reluctant to designate ACECs in areas utilized by livestock," the report says. Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, which have the largest amounts of federal grazing lands, "have been among the slowest to designate ACECs," the NRDC says.

That reluctance is a particular problem in riparian areas — streambeds and wetlands — that are used by livestock, the NRDC says. Riparian areas are critical wildlife habitat in the arid and semi-arid lands administered by the BLM. Damage to streambank vegetation also harms fisheries by reducing shade and increasing erosion.

A number of reports, including several prepared by Congress' General Accounting Office, have documented the destruction of riparian habitat by livestock grazing on BLM lands. The BLM rarely designates riparian areas as ACECs, and sometimes draws ACEC boundaries to exclude areas used by livestock. The gerrymandering of ACECs has been a particular problem in Colorado, the NRDC says.

"It appears to us that the (BLM) has not designated sites threatened by livestock in order to avoid upsetting its powerful grazing constituency," the NRDC says.

However, recent ACEC designations in New Mexico, Idaho, and Arizona indicate that the agency might be moving in the direction of dealing directly with the problems caused by overgrazing, the report says.

The NRDC surveyed state BLM offices to determine the threats posed to ACECs by human activities. "Abusive human recreational use," especially vandalism and the use of off-road vehicles, were the most common threat. Controlling ORV use and other recreation-associated abuses is particularly difficult because "recreationists number in the millions and are well organized."

Mineral development, including petroleum exploration, was the second most common threat to ACECs, according to the study. The NRDC says the

threat was relatively small given the amount of mineral development on BLM land. That suggests that the agency is reluctant to designate ACECs where they might conflict with mineral development.

The BLM said threats to ACECs from livestock grazing are even less common, even though grazing is "the most extensive economic use made of public lands," the NRDC says. But the BLM did not identify grazing as a threat in areas where it is an acknowledged problem, according to the NRDC.

The NRDC also criticizes the BLM for designating ACECs that are too small to offer adequate protection to the resources they were created to preserve. The White Mountain petroglyph site in Wyoming is threatened by erosion, yet, at 20 acres, may be too small to be managed to effectively deal with that threat, the report says.

A lack of funding also threatens ACECs, the NRDC says. In Wyoming, private groups did work to restore riparian areas because the BLM did not have money for the projects, the report says.

Other threats to ACECs cited by the NRDC include patrols by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and residential development in the California desert, logging in Washington and Oregon, and geothermal development near hot springs in Nevada. Another ACEC in Nevada was found to be located on private, not federal, land, and will be dropped from the protected list, the NRDC says.

— Andrew Melnykovych

Feds, Arizona ranchers keep killing lions

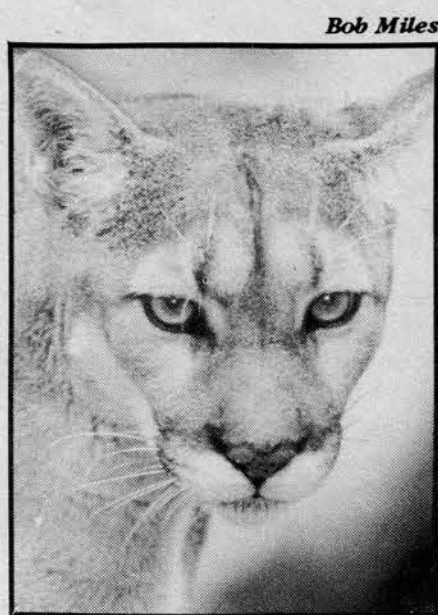
A bill introduced by Arizona state Sen. Tony Gabildon, D-Flagstaff, would have repealed his state's archaic "stock-killer law" that allows ranchers and their agents to use any method to kill any lion or bear in any area where livestock has been killed or might be killed.

Now the bill is dead for the year, never having been brought out for a hearing by Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jamie Sossaman, R-Queen Creek. A corresponding House bill also failed to get out of any of the three committees in which it was introduced.

Also dead is a "compromise bill" drafted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It would have required ranchers and predator control agents to identify and inspect their trap sets. The bill would also have removed a state bounty on wolves and lions.

It was quietly dropped from consideration when it failed to attract support from either conservation or livestock interests. After ranchers let it be known that they would oppose any legislation that restricted their present license to kill lions and bears as they saw fit, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission directed the department not to support its own legislation.

Both sides in this continuing controversy know that the present situation



Lion

cannot last. Conservationists and even some ranchers are irate over an episode in which cattleman Eddie Lackner received a suspended sentence for killing bears in a mammoth-sized trap and not reporting them to the Arizona Game and Fish Department as required by law (HCN, 2/27/89). Until some sort of bill is passed, such emotion-charged incidents are sure to continue.

In the meantime, the killing goes on. Ranchers have reported taking nine lions already in 1989, and the U.S. Depart-

ment of Agriculture's animal damage control agents have killed 13 more for a total of 22. Only 23 lions were reported taken by ranchers and federal agents in Arizona during all of 1988.

One-half of the lions taken so far this year are on or adjacent to Lackner's ranch in the Galiuro Mountains. Just why more lions are being taken this year in other parts of the state is a matter of conjecture. Some say the Lackner case caused some ranchers to begin complying with the requirement to report any and all lions taken as "stock-killers." Others say that a high lion population and declining deer numbers are causing an increase in predation problems.

Last year, 17 of the 22 stock-killing lions reported taken in Arizona were killed by federal personnel. Animal damage control agents say they will kill more this year but the agency has become reluctant to report any details.

Letters accompanying their mandated reports to the Arizona Game and Fish Department provide no information as to the age and sex of an animal killed and state that "Part, or all of this information may be protected by provisions of the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act exclusions, or the Trade Secrets Act..."

—David E. Brown

HOTLINE

Indian babies at risk

In 1986, Native American infants in South Dakota were much more likely to die before age one than their counterparts in certain third world countries. That was one finding of a Children's Defense Fund national study, which found that of 1,000 babies born in South Dakota, 24.5 Native American babies died before their first birthdays. The national death rate was 10.4 deaths for every 1,000 babies born. Although it's possible that South Dakota's relatively low birthrate skewed statistics, Joseph Liu of the Children's Defense Fund said the real problem is inadequate health care. The tribal chairman of the Rosebud Sioux told the Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* that since 1981, federal funding for the Indian Health Service program has been cut by 25 percent. The report, *The Health of America's Children*, was published by the Children's Defense Fund, 122 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

BARBS

That's like criticizing Lady MacBeth for putting her lipstick on crooked.

An article in the business section of *The New York Times* criticized Exxon Corporation for a poor public relations strategy in the wake of the Prince William Sound oil spill.

BOOKS

Book concludes that Wyoming's range has held its own

Rangeland Through Time

Kendall L. Johnson. *Miscellaneous Publication 50, University of Wyoming, Box 3354, Laramie, WY 82071, 1987. 188 pages. \$18, paperback.*

—Review by Bruce Pendery

It is fascinating to compare a photograph of a Western landscape taken in 1870 to one taken on the same spot more than 100 years later. In *Rangeland Through Time*, Kendall L. Johnson did just that; he selected 56 photographs taken by William Henry Jackson, photographer for the 1870 Hayden Expedition to southern Wyoming, and then rephotographed the same scenes between 1974 and 1985.

"I try to show how Wyoming rangeland looked in the 1870s and how it looks in the present, speculate on the probable causes of the changes observed, and from that infer the relative ecological stability involved," the author says. Johnson, who directs the Range Resources Department at the University of Idaho, meets his first two objectives but not the third.

William Henry Jackson was one of the first and best photographers of the Western landscape. His career was long — he lived to 99, dying in 1942 — and his 1871 photographs of the Yellowstone region were instrumental in the designation of Yellowstone National Park. In 1869, Jackson became acquainted with Ferdinand Hayden, leader of the congressionally authorized survey of Wyoming, and joined his expedition in 1870.

The Hayden Expedition started from Cheyenne in August and traveled north to the Oregon Trail. It followed the general course of the Oregon Trail west to South Pass, then proceeded south to Fort Bridger, near the present Utah-Wyoming

border. The expedition then turned east, following the general route of the Overland Trail and Transcontinental Railroad, and ended at Laramie in November.

Jackson's photos are our best and earliest glimpse of rangeland conditions in Wyoming before settlement was widespread, Johnson tells us. Coupled with the author's photographs, they provide graphic evidence of changes to the land.

Riparian areas changed most, Johnson says, because of dams and irrigation diversions. Roads, railroads, cultivation and grazing also affected riparian habitats. The photos show that stream channels are narrower and deeper today than in 1870, and there are more trees and weeds along the stream-courses.

Johnson also considers changes in several other kinds of range, concluding that there have been no significant changes in Wyoming's Great Plains grasslands in the past 100 years, perhaps because cattle grazing does not differ "materially" from grazing by bison and other large herbivores. The author singles out fire suppression as the reason that trees have increased in density on all wooded sites that Jackson photographed. "Low potential sites," rocky uplands and salty soils have changed little, except where construction has occurred. Changes in sagebrush rangelands are variable, Johnson says, and cannot always be ascribed to one land use, such as livestock grazing.

"In general terms, the land appears now much as it did then," Johnson concludes, except "the river bottoms where change has been marked." If water is the lifeblood of the West, this conclusion seems like the doctor telling you, "In general you're pretty healthy, except for a few problems with your heart."

Furthermore, while Johnson's views on causes of rangeland changes in Wyoming are reasonable possibilities,

lack of supporting information in *Rangeland* makes them questionable.

For example, the author believes the increase in tree density in some photo comparisons is due to less frequent fires. But he never states whether a fire has actually been suppressed near any of these spots in the last 100 years.

Although the author is careful to point out that Jackson's photographs only give an "indication" of pristine conditions in Wyoming, he does not make it clear where Jackson's pictures were taken in relation to areas with human disturbance. Though most of Wyoming was not grazed by livestock until the late 1870s and 1880s — and the most abusive grazing in the West occurred in the early 1900s — travel corridors that Jackson photographed could have been far from pristine in 1870.

For example, in 1850 it was reported that about 32,000 emigrants and 44,000 horses, mules and oxen had passed Fort Laramie on the Oregon Trail. The Overland Trail was heavily used in the 1860s and the Transcontinental Railroad was completed through Wyoming in 1868. Johnson omits such information in *Rangeland*.

The author's most sweeping conclusion, that "in any regional or broadscale definition the land remains essentially

the same as Jackson found it," and "the dominant characteristic is relative stability," is unfounded.

Accompanying the photographs in *Rangeland* are location maps, virtually all showing a spaghetti-tangle of roads dissecting the rangelands Jackson photographed. This change is not apparent in the photos, but since the maps give the photographs a regional dimension, they should not be ignored. Parts of Wyoming have become semi-industrialized, certainly a fundamental regional change. Bison, wolves and grizzlies, perhaps rare even in 1870, are gone from these lands. There are many alien, weedy plant species in Wyoming now.

Despite these limitations, Johnson's book is a useful and enjoyable study in "repeat-photography." Repeat photography has been used to evaluate vegetation change in several Western ecosystems. Many of these studies are discussed in *Rangeland*, a valuable contribution in itself. And the photographs are a joy to ponder; they speak for themselves — and ultimately for the land.

□

Bruce Pendery is a range scientist and conservation chair of Bridgerland Audubon Society in Logan, Utah.

HOTLINE

Nuclear protesters arrested

All but 434 of 1,500 protesters were arrested at Nevada's nuclear testing grounds during the ninth day of the annual "Reclaim the Test Site" demonstration. Most of those arrested and taken by bus to a county sheriff's office were charged with trespassing and then released, AP reports. County officials said they can no longer process the

growing number of trespassers in the courts. Last year, 2,065 people were arrested during the 10-day protest.

BARBS

That's like criticizing Lady MacBeth for putting her lipstick on crooked.

An article in the business section of *The New York Times* criticized Exxon Corporation for a poor public relations strategy in the wake of the Prince William Sound oil spill.

8-High Country News — May 8, 1989



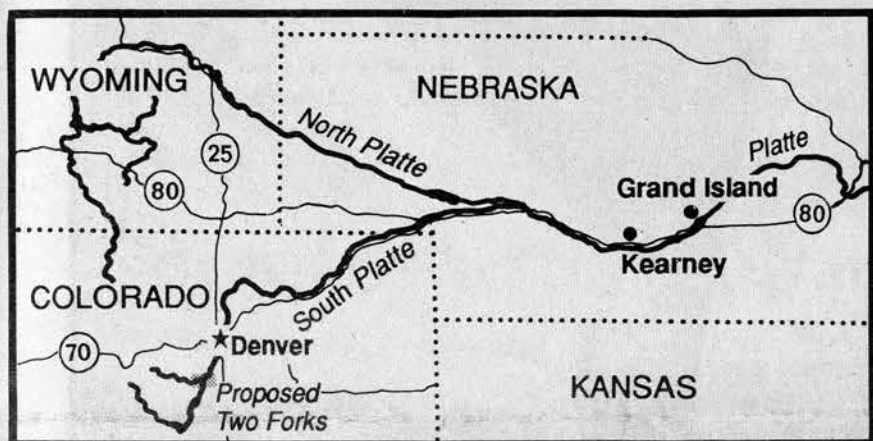
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A wonderful wildlife display

by Kent Dannen

On March 24, Environmental Protection Agency national administrator William Reilly ordered his Denver office to begin a veto of Two Forks Dam on Colorado's South Platte River.

This serious blow to Two Forks Dam from EPA is good news for 80 percent of the world's sandhill cranes. These 500,000 large birds need undiminished water flowing downstream in that stretch of the Platte between Kearney and Grand Island, Neb.

In Jeremiah 8:7, the prophet observes that cranes "keep the time of their coming." Sure enough, around the beginning of March, sandhill cranes pause along this 50-mile section of the Platte to rest and build up food reserves before proceeding into Canada and Alaska.

In the river's broad channels, the cranes roost on submerged sand bars at night. They rise from these sites at dawn with a thrilling clamor to feed on insects, seeds and small critters in nearby fields.

But in recent years, reduced amounts of water in the Platte have caused the cranes to quit using many stretches of the river. A dam would significantly reduce the flow even more.

One of the most spectacular wildlife displays on earth — right along I-80 in the middle of Nebraska — could be destroyed by drying the Platte, and the world's crane population could be drastically reduced. Moreover, this stretch of the Platte is important in the northward migration of whooping cranes, which have become a symbol of all endangered species.

To stand on a bridge across the Platte at sunrise and watch thousands of three-and-a-half-foot tall sandhill cranes rise into the air, silhouetted against the red ball of sun and honking incessantly, is a treat that everyone should enjoy. With elegant gray bodies and red and white faces, the cranes make an unsurpassed wildlife spectacle that is accessible and free.

Moreover, the entertainment does not stop after the birds leave the river. Driving along country roads that parallel the Platte, particularly on the south side, reveals thousands of cranes foraging in the fields. They are easy to view, especially early in the day. And often they pause from eating to perform one of the most comical antics in nature.

They crouch and whirl with wings outspread six feet tip-to-tip, then leap into the air in a wild dance.

My wife Donna and I decided that our two-and-a-half-year-old son might enjoy the cranes' dances. So we drove to Kearney, Neb., for the event. Patrick responded with satisfactory enthusiasm to the cranes' "walkin' and dancin'."

But, in truth, he's probably too young to remember or appreciate the experience. I very much want him to be able to enjoy it even more fully when he's older. So it made me cringe when I heard a fellow crane watcher on a Nebraska back road comment about cranes in Europe.

There, he said, it's people who flock by the thousands to see a few hundred cranes congregate to "keep the time of their coming." Europeans think this is a wonderful wildlife display. I prayed that Pat never would live in an America so deprived.

□

Kent Dannen is a photographer and freelance writer in Estes Park, Colorado.

'They figured we have gambling and prostitution, and the test site, so what's a little nuclear waste thrown in.'

Nevada...

(Continued from page 1)

vous about further delays. Although all three sites were to undergo lengthy evaluation as possible sites, Sen. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, short-circuited the process and introduced a measure that removed both Washington and Texas from consideration as sites.

His bill directed the DOE to study only the Yucca Mountain site. Annual compensation was reduced to \$10 million during site construction and \$20 million after the waste begins flowing to Nevada. The bill passed, and earned a nickname in the Sagebrush State as the "Screw Nevada Bill."

Nevada, from the Spanish word for snow-clad, is arid country, part of what is called the Great Basin Desert. The state's primary industry is gaming, and more than 85 percent of the population lives in urban areas, primarily Reno or Las Vegas. Once you get away from the neon and green felt, Nevada is extremely sparsely settled, mostly by miners and cattle and sheep ranchers. Some 87 percent of Nevada is owned by the federal government. As a consequence Nevada is dotted with federal military installations.

Yucca Mountain is actually a long ridge that slices through federally owned property adjacent to the eastern boundary of the test site. Atomic bombs are still tested next door to Yucca Mountain, but the tests have gone underground.

The proposed nuclear waste repository here is one of the driest parts of the driest state in the country. From the top of Yucca Mountain stretch mountains and hills, their craggy features undiminished by trees or grass. The desert vegetation here, yucca trees and creosote bushes, occurs only occasionally when it occurs at all.

The nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository would be some 1,400 feet beneath the top of this windy ridge composed of volcanic tuff. Nuclear power plants would ship 12-foot-long spent fuel rods for storage beneath the earth here, each sealed vertically in its own tomb and capped with 5,000-pound concrete plugs.

The closest settlements to Yucca Mountain — they aren't really towns — are Amargosa Springs and Lathrop Wells. A gas station and restaurant, and in the case of Lathrop Wells, a small, dilapidated brothel called the Cherry Patch, have grown up along the highway to Death Valley Monument.

Beatty is the closest town, with a miniature casino, a short main street and some 1,200 people, sustained in large measure by a low-level nuclear waste repository several miles up the road. Many of the folks here see the high-level dump as a way to increase the town's prosperity, to inject a little new life into an economically depressed city out on the sagebrush flats.

Most Nevadans, however, are less than enthusiastic about being the home

of the nation's first nuclear waste dump. There is deep concern about the environmental hazards of high-level radioactive waste being stored in the state for centuries. And it is understatement to say there is a great deal of high-level mistrust of the same federal agency that brought Nevada a decade of atmospheric testing.

There is also a great deal of chronic resentment in Nevada when it comes to the federal government, period. It's a feeling that a heavy-handed federal landlord is foisting an unwanted policy on the state. This is the same state where the Sagebrush Rebellion was born, with the goal of wresting away control over the millions of acres of public land from the federal government. The state's rights rebellion has faded from the headlines, but not from the minds of Nevadans. There is resolve not to let the federal government have its way with the state again.

Bob Fulkerson is head of Citizen Alert, a statewide environmental group in Reno that spends much of its time fighting federal incursions into the state. The lean, energetic man, who often has a wad of chewing tobacco tucked under a lip, was arrested when he and several other protestors entered federal land the military had recently condemned.

"Nevadans have been used as guinea pigs since the 1950s," Fulkerson says. "The dump is the same kind of thing. No other state in the union will take it. They figured we have gambling and prostitution, and the test site, so what's a little nuclear waste thrown in? It's the idea that Nevada can be sacrificed in the national interest." The group sells bumper stickers and buttons that read: Nevada is not a wasteland.

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Las Vegas News Bureau



"Atomic" beauty queen

Nevada trivialized the nuclear danger

Las Vegas adopted the atomic testing of the 1950s in their own inimitable way.

Clark County adopted the mushroom cloud as its official county seal. In a book called *Bombs in the Backyard*, University of Nevada at Las Vegas political scientist Dina Titus detailed some of the ways the atomic bomb found its way into Nevada's culture.

A "Miss Atomic Bomb" beauty contest at the Sands Hotel on the Las Vegas strip featured mushroom clouds pinned to the contestants' bathing suits.

During the 1950s, an "Atomic Hairdo" designed by GeeGee at the Flamingo Hotel was popular. Hair was pulled over a wire form shaped like a mushroom cloud and sprinkled with silver glitter. Only \$25. Color photos of the mushroom cloud reaching into the heavens were a common Christmas present.

Bomb parties were popular, and lawn chairs would be set up on the porch. "We'd set the alarm and go outside and watch the bombs," said Michael

O'Callaghan. "You couldn't help but wake up. The flash was so bright it would come right through the venetian blinds."

"Do not look toward the test site at shot time," the AEC warned in a booklet, "unless you're wearing dark glasses." Sunglass-wearing bomb watchers often sipped something called the "atomic cocktail" made from equal parts vodka, brandy and champagne with a dash of sherry.

A Las Vegas piano player wrote a boogie woogie number called the "Atomic Bomb Bounce" and a comedian called himself the Original Atomic Comic. Merchants capitalized on the blasts. One haberdashery shop, its plate glass window broken by a blast, placed the glass shards in a barrel in front of the store with a sign, Atomic Bomb Souvenirs. A furniture store offered the "Great Atomic Bomb Sale." The first 10 customers after the next blast got a free \$5 gift certificate.

The local J.C. Penney provided mannequins for one test in which a whole town — "Survival Town" — was built at the test range, including homes, power lines, automobiles and other facilities. Dummies were placed in the homes and the bomb detonated.

Proud of its patriotic role, J.C. Penney took out a two-page advertisement in the local newspaper. It was filled with small photographs — two of each dummy. The first was before the blast and described the dummy: for example, "small boy with gabardine suit, barefoot with sandals." The second photo was the dummy after the blast, with descriptions such as "slight burns on back of neck." Many of the "after" shots are simply black, with the caption "missing."

Such responses by Nevadans, Titus believes, were a coping mechanism. "It's whistling in the graveyard," she says. "If you take something so scary and trivialize it, you can deal with it."

— Jim Robbins

Nevada...

(Continued from page 10)

But the controversy doesn't end there. The debate now is over whether the Department of Energy is seriously and objectively studying Yucca Mountain to see if it qualifies as a safe site for deep geologic disposal. Those in Nevada opposed to the dump think they are not. They point to the obvious fact that Yucca Mountain is the only site being considered. It seems to them as if a de facto choice has been made.

Among those who believe that DOE has its mind made up is Steve Frishman, technical policy coordinator for the Nuclear Waste Project office in Carson City, Nevada's capital.

Frishman, flamboyant in appearance with flowing black hair and goatee, both shot with streaks of gray, worked for the state of Texas in the same capacity before coming to Nevada 18 months ago, after Texas was removed from consideration. The office was established with DOE monies, though it is now funded by Congress directly and is run by the state. It is meant to serve as an independent watch dog to assure the state that DOE's work is scientifically acceptable.

Frishman and Bob Loux, executive director of the project, charge that the

DOE has waged an effective bureaucratic guerrilla war to keep the state from checking its study of the site. They say DOE's studies cannot stand the light of day.

"DOE has used one tactic or another to sandbag the state so we haven't been able to do any substantive or independent research," Loux said. The DOE, according to Frishman, has managed to keep the funding for the office tied up, which has hamstrung the agency's work. The state has four separate cases pending in federal court on Yucca Mountain matters.

Nevada officials, from U.S. senators down, have, in no uncertain terms, accused the DOE of repeated duplicity regarding its work in the Nevada desert. Though the Atomic Energy Commission changed its name to the Department of Energy, said an angry Loux, they have not changed the way they treat Nevada.

The state is not the only entity that has raised serious questions about DOE and the lack of integrity of the scientific work being done at Yucca Mountain. One of the most serious charges came from a team of 16 hydrologists and hydrological technicians of the United States Geological Survey in Denver, Colo., which is studying groundwater at the site for the DOE.

In August 1988, the 16 scientists wrote a memo to a high-level USGS geologist in charge of their program at

headquarters in Reston, Va. The memo stated that DOE was blocking scientific study of site suitability and had issued stop-work orders on two studies the hydrologists considered essential.

Managers, they said, were ignoring important warning signs of unsuitability and moving ahead with engineering of the site — even though the site had not yet officially been approved.

"It is appropriate to refer to the Challenger space shuttle disaster as a profound example of what happens when management is unresponsive to the concerns of the technical staff ... It is our urgent recommendation that we prevent our own 'disaster' by making management aware that in subjugating the technical program to satisfy DOE political objectives, we may succeed in making the program comply with regulations, while being scientifically indefensible," they wrote.

"It is certain," the report also said, "that the good reputation of the USGS is being eroded by the action of DOE..."

There are other problems. In every major study of this type, a quality assurance program is necessary. That is, \$1.5 billion worth of complex scientific work to determine site suitability must meet certain established standards along the way to make sure contractors are doing acceptable work, and that their results are valid.

The Government Accounting

Office, which was asked to investigate quality assurance by a concerned Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which is overseeing the project, issued a report last September on the quality assurance program in place at Yucca Mountain.

"None of the documents met regulatory standards," the GAO report concluded. It went on to say that Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff had concluded "the significant number of identified problems — especially given the limited scope of their oversight activities — indicates the problems are probably widespread within DOE's quality assurance program."

The 16 scientists from USGS came to the same conclusion, calling quality assurances "inappropriate in most instances and counterproductive to the needs of good scientific investigation."

Serious charges, according to the state's Frishman. "At this point there aren't any facts," he said. "There's not one piece of usable evidence that the site is suitable as a repository, because none of their data has been collected under an adequate quality assurance program. At this point they've wasted literally hundreds of millions of dollars. Nine years of data is down the drain."

A report on the geologic suitability of Yucca Mountain also created an uproar in Nevada. A physical scientist

(Continued on page 12)

Nevadans testify for and against nuclear waste dump

by Jon Klusmire

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — If recent public hearings on the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository are any indication, Nevada's four-decade love affair with everything nuclear is starting to sour.

During three days of hearings March 20, 21 and 23, dozens of Nevadans, including Gov. Bob Miller and Sens. Richard Bryan and Harry Reid, all Democrats, attacked plans for building the nation's first high-level nuclear waste dump in Yucca Mountain inside the Nevada Test Site, 65 miles north of Las Vegas.

Opponents pointed out that earthquakes, volcanoes, and nuclear and conventional bombs could disrupt the dump and unleash a deadly environmental catastrophe. Environmental problems at government nuclear reactors and waste facilities across the nation also prompted many to question the Department of Energy's ability to manage the burial ground safely and legally for millennia.

All speakers urged extreme caution and detailed study before a final decision is made. As Las Vegas Peg Bean noted, "Plutonium wasn't named after the god of hell for nothing."

Several speakers, Gov. Miller among them, also voiced concerns that national politics, not science, will force Nevada to accept the nation's radioactive garbage, regardless of the state's wishes or concerns. In 1987, Congress designated Yucca Mountain as the only potential waste site. Nevadans openly call that legislation the "screw Nevada bill."

The DOE sponsored the hearings to gather comment on the massive, six-year study it will undertake on Yucca Mountain's physical fitness. If approved, Yucca Mountain would hold about 70,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel-rods from commercial and government reactors and other high-level radioactive waste.

The earliest possible date for completion of the \$35 billion dump is 2003.

While a panel of experts sat through hours of testimony in the plush Aladdin Hotel March 21, Tom Polikalas, of Nevadans Against Nuclear Dumping, buttonholed participants in the hallway.

"Technical flaws and political opposition" can kill Yucca Mountain, said Polikalas. As for the perception that the Yucca Mountain site is "greased" and will be approved, no matter what, Polikalas said, "citizen opposition always has an impact."

But not everyone at the hearings was against the dump. Nevada native Kirk Thayer took Polikalas' handouts but said he was "cautiously in favor of the dump." He said the highly radioactive waste would probably be safer in the Nevada desert than in "some New Jersey neighborhood." He also noted that Nevada, through long association, is accepting of nuclear industries.

Pro-nuclear sentiment is common in Las Vegas and surrounding Clark County. Thayer noted that his family, along with hundreds of others during the 1950s, proudly went out to the Nevada Test Site to view mushroom clouds emerging from the above-ground nuclear bomb tests. Clark County's official logo used to be a nuclear mushroom cloud, in honor of the test site and the jobs it provided.

More nuclear jobs are a primary concern in Amargosa Valley and the hardscrabble 100-mile stretch of desolate desert and small towns on the Nevada/California border closest to the test site and proposed dump. Dump advocates in the area are ignoring negative impacts and focusing on the economic allure of the dump's proposed 3,000 construction jobs and 800 permanent jobs, said Shirley Harlan, a member of the anti-dump group, Citizen Alert.

At the DOE hearing March 20 in Amargosa Valley, Yucca Mountain opponents who spoke about how the dump

would spoil the area's tranquil, non-toxic quality of life were casually ignored or discounted as "people who are against nuclear anything," by Yucca Mountain supporters such as Lyle Lowe.

Politicians rattling the anti-nuclear saber drew the ire of former Nevada assemblyman R. Guild Gray. During the Las Vegas hearing, Gray lambasted the state's politicians for "ranting" against the dump, which he called pure political demagoguery and vote chasing. He said the DOE should continue to study the Yucca Mountain site.

Study is exactly what the DOE plans to do. "Everything conceivable" about Yucca Mountain will be studied, said DOE spokesman Chris West. The DOE has completed a 6,300-page site characterization plan that outlines every aspect of the pending six-year, \$2 billion effort, he said. The money will come from customers of the nation's nuclear utilities, who pay a surcharge that is set aside for waste disposal, he added.

The DOE won't be working alone, however. West said "the state will be holding our hand," as will the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency. In light of such oversight, West said the saying going around DOE offices is, "You can't build it wrong with that many hands involved. You may not build it, but you can't build it wrong."

But nothing will get built, West said, if the scientific and technical data indicate that Yucca Mountain is not safe.

Gov. Miller presented a number of safety concerns that he said should kill the site. Eight natural earthquakes have hit the area since the 1880s, he said, and the neighboring Lathrop Wells volcano is less than 20,000 years old, meaning it could erupt. Critic Peg Bean pointed out that the dump site will be rattled by man-made earthquakes produced by underground nuclear weapons tests, which

have also rattled Las Vegas. The dump is also in the Nellis Air Force Gunnery Range flight line, she said.

The governor concluded that the project is driven by politics. If the DOE were concerned about safety it would start over and include more scientifically sound sites in the process, he said. Sen. Bryan echoed those concerns, and Sen. Reid, in written testimony, restated his "unequivocal opposition" to the dump. West agreed that studying only Yucca Mountain puts all the nation's nuclear eggs in one basket, but added that was a congressional decision, not a DOE directive.

Nevada Attorney General Brian McKay blasted the DOE's history of pollution, deception and reluctance to follow environmental laws at its present nuclear facilities. He concluded that it's insulting for the DOE to say "trust me" about the technical aspects of the dump. Las Vegas Chris Brown agreed, calling the DOE's assurances that "it's impossible to build it wrong" a "Hindenburg attitude."

The state Legislature, however, wasn't waiting for the DOE or the hearings to act. As the public hearings wrapped up, the Legislature gave initial approval to legislation opposing the Yucca Mountain site. The legislation reminds Congress it must get the state's approval for the dump, then goes on record opposing the Yucca Mountain site. The bill has no legal weight but puts the state on record against the dump and gives it a stronger position to fight the dump in the courts, according to Attorney General McKay.

For more information on Yucca Mountain, call the DOE at 702/295-3521, or Nevadans Against Nuclear Dumping at 702/786-5401.

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Jon Klusmire is a freelance writer in Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

Nevada...

(Continued from page 11)

named Jerry Syzmanski took a comprehensive look at the geology and concluded in his report that "serious consideration should be given to abandoning the Yucca Mountain site and declaring it unsuitable for the purposes of permanent disposal of high-level nuclear wastes." Among the most serious of his findings is that earthquake and volcanic activity haven't been adequately considered, and as a result the area is much more unstable than previously thought.

Even though the report was complete at the time Congress was holding hearings on the suitability of Yucca Mountain as a waste repository, Syzmanski's theory of what lies beneath Yucca Mountain never saw the light of day — until the author mailed it to state officials.

How does the Department of Energy respond to the long list of allegations of duplicity and wrongdoing? Carl Gertz is the project manager at Yucca Mountain, and he says there is nothing underhanded about DOE's role in the repository.

"We've been told to go study it and see if it's safe," Gertz said. "If it's not safe after five-to-seven years and \$1-to-\$2 billion, we'll determine it's not safe. We won't build it."

As far as the quality assurance of studies of the site, Gertz said that between the time the GAO investigation began and the time it was completed, quality assurance was part of the process.

"We think it was good science," without the quality assurance, and the information can still be used with some modification, he said. Complaints by USGS geohydrologists, he said, are born of frustration with unfamiliar DOE requirements. The DOE is not practicing poor science, he said.

As far as the Syzmanski report, Gertz denies there was an attempt at cover-up. "Absolutely not," he said. The report was not finished when it fell into the hands of the state bureaucracy.

"This program is different than any other program," Gertz said when asked why Nevadans should trust the DOE. "We fund the state to watch us. The National Academy of Sciences watches us. The utilities are watching what we're doing. And the NRC must approve the site."

Bob Loux and others close to the controversy believe that by attempting to force the repository on Nevada, the DOE is doing a great disservice to a sound national energy policy. First, there is disagreement over whether deep geologic disposal is practical, and some say the technology is a long way from being proven.

And there remains the very serious question of how the waste will be transported to Nevada from disparate points, most on the eastern seaboard. The dangerous waste would have to pass by truck or rail through hundreds of cities and towns. Loux says the DOE has not even begun to study the transportation issue, which he believes is the weakest link in the program.

Yet Congress, in spite of the fact there may be flaws with Yucca Mountain, are putting all of their eggs there. They have no back-up plan. Should the DOE find the site unusable after spending some \$2 billion on studies by 1995, the search for disposal of high-level waste will begin anew.

Frishman believes that nuclear waste should be stored for the long term in concrete casks at the power plant site until a safe, proven disposal technique is developed. Such a technique, he says, is

Loux says the DOE has not even begun to study the transportation issue, which he believes is the weakest link in the system.

good for 80 to 200 years and will buy time.

Although Nevada's state motto is "All For Country," many Nevadans feel that by giving a home to the test site in the 1950s they more than fulfilled an obligation to the country's atomic policies. Now it's someone else's turn.

"We feel our patriotic duty has been done pretty well," said former Gov. O'Callaghan. "A state should have the

right to say no, the right to veto it on any grounds."

Those who are actively opposed to the dump are not optimistic about it. They've lived in casino-land long enough, they say, to know when the fix is on. They know that no state wants such a facility, no matter how many goodies come with it, and they know that when it comes to political clout, Nevada ranks at the bottom.

"When push comes to shove," says O'Callaghan, "it will be 98 to 2 and we'll get the dump."

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A version of this article appeared previously in the *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine*. Jim Robbins is a freelance writer in Helena, Montana.

BOOK NOTES

How the sheep were betrayed

Fallout, An American Nuclear Tragedy

Philip L. Fradkin, *Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1989. 301 pages.*

Review by Ray Ring

Once the government liked to name its nuclear blasts as if they were chummy but maybe a little eccentric visiting uncles and aunts: Shot Harry, Shot Simon, Shot Nancy.

But as Philip Fradkin recounts in his new book, *Fallout, An American Nuclear Tragedy*, when these bruised masses of cloud drifted east from the bomb test site in Nevada, they proved to be less chummy than insidious. And as Fradkin hammers home, even more insidious was the government itself.

In concentrations known to be dangerous even then, the downwind fallout from 124 nuclear bombs exploded aboveground from 1951 to 1962 contaminated the countryside and small towns of Utah, northern Arizona and Nevada.

Fallout infiltrated food supplies, killing and inflicting illnesses with an ascendant logic: The livestock, including sheep by the thousands, were the first to go. Then the children, dying of leukemia and cancer of the thyroid and other cancers linked to radiation. And finally, slowly eaten away by cancers over the decades, the adults: ranchers, housewives, truck drivers, miners.

For the most part, the victims had the general profile of being patriotic, devout believers (this was and is Mormon country) and accepting of authority. But trusting was dangerous and precisely why they got screwed over so royally.

Just how did the government, led by the Atomic Energy Commission but with the conspiracy of federal health and justice agencies, do it? By consciously suppressing and distorting research that showed the dangers from radioactive fallout, by issuing no warnings about drifting fallout, and by having no real monitoring system set up while claiming to have one.

The official lies multiplied and layered upon themselves in the name of the old bugaboo, national security. We had to have a better bomb, a bigger bomb, in a hurry, so the consequences be damned.

When 1,200 of the damned or their next-of-kin finally did rise up and join a lawsuit filed in federal court in Salt Lake City, the reaction of government was

only to extend the ruling philosophy that had been in effect all along — as one AEC radiation monitor who concealed the danger reported early on, "The natives are getting restless."

Despite evidence that radiation was likely the cause of cancer rates two and three times higher than normal in counties closest to the blast site, and despite clearly established negligence, incompetence and deliberate public deception and endangerment by the government, the case balanced on a pinpoint legal issue unrelated to the facts: Can citizens hold government responsible for the results, no matter how bad, of national policy? Just about never, was the ultimate verdict based on Reagan-era Supreme Court decisions.

Fradkin, a veteran journalist and author, hammers us from the opening pages with revelations of crimes by government — a less effective method than allowing us to make discoveries on our own, as the story unfolds.

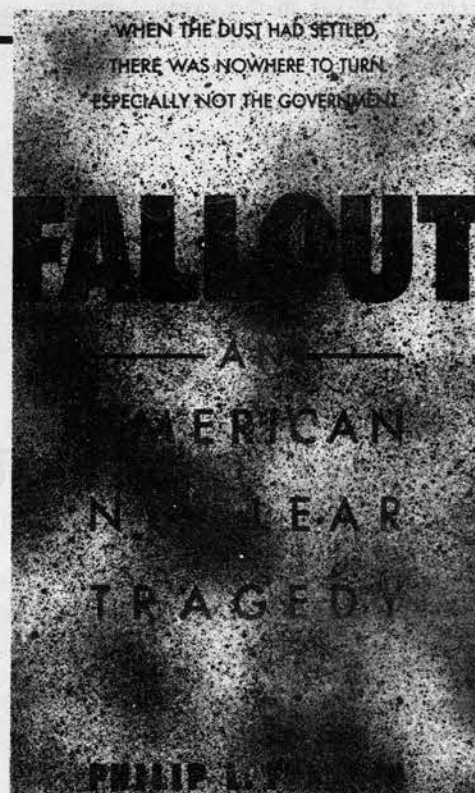
He's also somewhat overwhelmed trying to organize the results of his voluminous research, which required 54 pages of footnotes. But the book reads easily enough, and by reaching for so many aspects of the story Fradkin succeeds in portraying government and other institutions such as science and journalism — which also mostly failed the victims — not as monolithic, but made up of people who shout arguments behind the scenes, and some of whom take risks by disagreeing with the party line.

The real strength of this book is its message. When it comes to fallout from bomb blasts, or more currently, concerns about radioactive wastes and atomic power plants (regulated by the metamorphosed AEC/ Department of Energy), or the dangers of nuclear and chemical weapons production, poisons in fruit and vegetables and drinking water, and antibiotic-saturated meats, when it comes to trusting government to do anything to protect its citizens when there are higher stakes, watch out.

Watch your own back. As one Utah rancher concluded after the dust of justice settled, it was all "a great disappointment, but a kind of relief. We won't have our hopes up anymore."

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Ray Ring is a freelance writer in Tucson, Arizona.



LETTERS

QUESTION OF ETHICS

Dear HCN,

It is rather ironic that in the same 3/27/89 issue of HCN there are articles criticizing the organizing efforts of Bruce Vincent of Communities for a Great Northwest and Montana PLUS and praising those of Earth First! organizer Edward Abbey. Bruce's involvement in Western land use issues illustrates the growing political involvement of workers and recreationists that are dedicated to returning our country to a policy of "wise use" of our natural resources.

Idolizing Abbey, an advocate of "environmental terrorism," only questions the ethics of all preservationists. I would hope that HCN could lead the effort to restore credibility to the "environmental movement" by exposing Earth First! for the embarrassment they are. Also in that issue was a letter from the Utah Wilderness Association advocating working with other public land users. I hope that philosophy prevails. HCN should spend more time promoting cooperation and quit wasting ink on the juvenile antics of Earth First!

Clark L. Collins
Pocatello, Idaho

The writer is executive director of the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a group whose slogan is "Preserving our natural resources for the public instead of from the public."

LETTERS

IGNORANCE KILLED ELK

Dear HCN,

I'm writing this letter in response to your "Hotline" article of March 27, concerning our Glenwood Springs "Amok" elk. Some facts here need to be cleared up.

First of all, the elk cow in question was indeed patted, scratched, fed and otherwise harassed by the 74-year-old lifelong Glenwood resident who should've known better. It then naturally became either frightened, aggressive or both and began to chase its tormentor back into her house. The tragic denouement of this saga then begins with the arrival of local police and DOW officials. (I understand that it's almost always fatal for a hooved animal to be tranquilized.) They then tried to "coax" it back up into the hills and finally ended its life by shooting it several times. It did not drown as first reported.

This is an unusual incident, true, but one would think that a small mountain town surrounded by a famous canyon, a large national forest and a wilderness area would be able to reconcile itself to the fact of occasional in-town wildlife appearances. What the hell, our valley highways are strewn with spring roadkill and the lady of the episode is a local hero getting national attention. I don't think our local officials used automatic weapons in the incident.

Sincerely,
John Macker
Glenwood Springs, Colorado

ABBEY WILDERNESS

Dear HCN,

I think it would be a far more fitting tribute to Edward Abbey to designate a wilderness area in southern Utah to him than a national park.

Utah Congressman Wayne Owens currently has a 5-million-acre wilderness bill under consideration. How about adding the Edward Abbey Wilderness to that bill, along the lines of the Bob Marshall Wilderness?

Ken Sanders
Salt Lake City, Utah

ABOUT GOV. HATHAWAY

Dear HCN,

Reporter Steve Hinchman in his article "What Did Not Happen on the Great Plains?" (HCN, 3/13/89) said: "Wyoming Gov. Stan Hathaway, who supported the energy companies, was defeated (presumably as governor)..." Wrong! Let me set the record straight. Hathaway never lost an election! He was elected county and prosecuting attorney in 1954 and 1958. He was elected governor in 1966 and re-elected in 1970.

More important for perspective on the Hinchman article: Stan Hathaway, during his terms as governor (1967-1975) has supported carefully controlled energy development for his home state of Wyoming, but he was also the author (literally) of legislation which created the Department of Environmental Quality (passed in 1973); and he led the passage of successful state air and water quality legislation in 1969 (before a federal EPA had even come into existence). Wyoming's air and water quality legislation was the first of its kind in any of the Rocky Mountain states and served as a model for them. Also enacted during his tenure was the first Surface Mine Reclamation Act. Here, again, Wyoming led

the way, well before federal legislation was finally achieved.

It is a shame once a Republican office holder, such as Stan Hathaway, gets tagged as a "black hat" by environmentalists, that a paper such as yours continues to repeat the error. Stan Hathaway should be credited with leading the enactment of critical environmental control legislation that — to this day — is far superior to many of Wyoming's sister states in the Rocky Mountain Region.

If one is interested in proving the case just compare Wyoming's legislative record on environmental quality with that of Colorado. The "Cowboy State" comes out far ahead.

Sincerely yours,
David D. Dominick
Denver, Colo.

LONG HAUL

Dear HCN,

The four Republicans in Utah's congressional delegation and the governor recently issued a press release asking that "the type of unity" which resulted in their 1984 forest wilderness bill be repeated for Utah's upcoming canyon and desert wilderness bill. The 1984 bill protected only 750,000 acres of Utah's 8 million acres of national forest land. Even the relatively anti-wilderness Forest Service had recommended 780,000 acres and further study for another 140,000.

Not only were many deserving areas left out of the 1984 bill, but the areas designated were disastrously compromised by the Utah delegation's "unity." The boundary of the Box-Death Hollow Wilderness in the Escalante canyons was gerrymandered for carbon dioxide exploration. Critical recreation and wildlife lands on the east slope of Mt. Naomi and the north slope of the High Uintas were left open to oil exploration. Off-road vehicle corridors that the Forest Service recommended against were drawn through Mt. Nebo and Dark Canyon. Desert Peak and Pine Valley Mountain were left half-protected for no reason at all.

Now Utah's Republican members of Congress and the governor want us to use this lowest common-denominator approach again for southern Utah's canyons and western Utah's desert mountain ranges. What is needed, though, is a less rushed process that responds more to the long-term local and national quality of life and less to short-sighted local economic interests.

These lands are public lands belonging to all Americans and most of them are biologically and aesthetically integral with five national parks. Millions of people from across the country enjoy these lands every year and care deeply about what happens to them. All Americans rightfully should have a strong voice in determining the future of these lands. But Utahns have a special responsibility for protecting Utah's canyons and deserts and we must continue to speak out.

Particularly in southern Utah there is a national treasure of spectacular dimensions. Between Bryce Canyon and Canyonlands national parks there is a 10-million-acre area that has only one corridor of pavement cutting across it, no powerlines, and less than 1,000 residents. A 4.5-million-acre national monument was proposed for this region by the Department of the Interior in the 1930s. Today it falls to us to protect what is left after the inundation of Glen Canyon by Lake Powell.

Utah conservationists join Rep.

Wayne Owens in the four-to-five-year process to win protection for 5.1 million acres of the canyon country and the desert mountains — less than 10 percent of the state and less than one quarter of Utah's 22 million acres of canyon and desert public lands. Surely this is not too much to ask in a state as richly blessed as Utah.

Sincerely,
Rodney Greeno
Salt Lake City, Utah

The writer is a public lands specialist for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

CRITICIZES ARTICLE

Dear HCN,

John Baden's long op-ed piece in your issues of Feb. 27 and March 13 showed his ample devotion to 18th-century economics and 18th-century notions of biology. He asserted that private ownership of Yellowstone Park would have "saved" it from the "devastation" of the fires of 1888. In a sense he probably is right, because the likes of Club Med, Disney, Rockresorts, Louisiana Pacific, Burlington Resources and Montana Power probably would not let fires burn naturally and, besides, their clearcuts, roads, golf courses and condominium developments would offer good fire breaks and access for fire crews.

It's ironic, though, that Baden's notions of biology are so much at odds with his economic ideas since the principles of contemporary scientific ecology are traceable directly to the market economics of the 18th and 19th centuries. Yet while Baden is a staunch advocate of letting market forces run their courses, he denounces the policy of letting natural processes run theirs in Yellowstone. While he deplores economic regulation and social ownership, on the grounds that no one can have the wisdom to improve on the natural forces of the market, he thinks we have the wisdom to manipulate or improve on the natural processes in Yellowstone and other natural places. His "authority" apparently is the great axe-grinder Alston Chase, whose knowledge might rate a "B" in a sophomore biology course and who believes Yellowstone should be run as a combination tree museum, game ranch and amusement park.

Baden's idea that Yellowstone should be given to the Nature Conservancy or The Wilderness Society is a curious exception to his hard-nosed principles. Why not just sell it off piecemeal to the highest bidders? Certainly, Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts (of RJR Nabisco fame), Ford Motor or Malcolm Forbes could pay far more than the National Wildlife Federation, although the result might look more like Lake Tahoe or the Meadowlands of New Jersey. He believes that a nonprofit outfit which depended largely on user fees would run the park more like a resort and less as a natural reserve. But such an organization also would be less susceptible to political pressures and might favor scientific conservation policies instead.

Baden despises the institutions of the Progressive era of the early part of this century, such as the National Park Service and the Forest Service, because they interfere with his hallowed market. He thinks democratic government should be entirely subordinate to the market economy and tries to deny or ignore the creative tension between them. They are not one-and-the-same. Whereas the mar-

ket gives most of the marbles to a few players (about 10 percent, these days), democracy gives everyone an equal share, at least in principle.

Progressive institutions such as the Park Service and Forest Service were established as democratic remedies for the problems of the unbridled markets of the Gilded Age. Though they often bend to economic pressures and political uproars, they also can recognize long-term, non-material values and scientific reality. Despite their shortcomings, their lands by-and-large are in much better condition than comparable private lands.

Although the Park Service took more than 50 years to adopt scientific policies for Yellowstone and elsewhere, people a hundred years from now should enjoy a park which is much more like the Yellowstone of 1872 or 1776 than like Epcot or the devastated Amazon (or the Yellowstone of 1950). The Park Service rightly should protect the parks from the pressures of people, not from natural phenomena.

Larry Van Dusen
Bozeman, Montana

ACCESS

THE WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL JOB-LETTER is a Western regional newsletter listing jobs for environmentalists from the Great Plains to the Pacific Coast, and from Alaska and western Canada to the Sea of Cortez. We restrict our job listings to those positions with environmentally sound organizations. You won't find a job for an oil company in this publication. But you will find enlightening editorials and truthful reviews of current environmental issues in Western North America. To subscribe contact: WEJ, P.O. Box 800H, LaPorte, CO 80535. (2x9 p)

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GUEST ESSAY

Free markets can destroy the earth

by Thomas Michael Power

Recently John Baden chastised *HCN* and its writers because of their continued faith in the efficacy of political activity and public policy to protect the West's environmental quality (*HCN*, 3/13/89). He argued that the only reliable solution is a return to dependence upon free markets and private activities.

This is not a new argument. Baden and his colleagues on the "new right" have been making it for almost two decades now. The Reagan administration officially blessed this view of the world for the last eight years. Yet environmentalists remain skeptical and suspicious of private, free-market approaches to environmental problems.

This is due to the difficulty most environmentalists have with the grand ideological vision in which Baden places most of his practical proposals. That ideological vision often seems more important to Baden than the environmental problem at issue. His environmentalism often appears to be a stance taken to proselytize for his ideology. That ideology, built around the long-abandoned models of 18th-century physics, imagines a society guided by an automatic, self-regulating device — the free market. It leads us to a natural equilibrium in which the highest level of welfare is attained.

Government, by contrast, is an alien force in this world that interferes with the "fundamental laws of economic relationships" in ways that make almost all of us worse off.

It takes a quasi-religious leap of faith to enthusiastically buy into this peculiar world view. For those of us who have not experienced such a conversion, there is something seriously incomplete about Baden's arguments and proposals.

Consider his proposal for protecting our parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges from mismanagement by the federal government: We should slowly but systematically turn management of these areas over to "eligible conservation groups," on the basis of competitive proposals, to protect and manage these lands in accordance with "guidelines imposed by Congress when it established the areas." The conservation groups would then be responsible for financing management by selling recreation permits and raising money privately.

Larger national environmental groups would probably "win" such a competition. Baden mentions favorably the size and financial resources of the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, National Wildlife Federation and Nature Conservancy. Baden would have the National Academy of Sciences play an oversight role to see that the ecological values of these wildlands were in fact protected.

But a prerequisite for this proposal is that the federal government has already acted to protect certain lands by setting up a system of national parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges, plus regulations limiting what can be done with these lands. Note that he proposes that not-for-profit organizations heavily supported by our tax codes take over the management and oversight of these protected lands. He does not suggest that profit-making firms driven by the market do it.

As anyone who has worked with national environmental organizations knows, these organizations offer no escape from bureaucracy and politics: they are classic bureaucracies continuously caught up in a swirl of internal politics.

Baden's proposal could represent a modest decentralization of management and is certainly attractive because of that. But what does this have to do with Baden's sweeping claims about the virtues of the free market and the evils of government and bureaucracy? Commercial market-oriented institutions are largely absent while the government and bureaucracy are centrally present. It is true that large, private institutions would be strengthened and even larger public institutions would be reduced somewhat in size and influence. This might justify serious exploration of the idea.

But this improvement could be pursued without appeals to Adam Smith or fantasies about escaping bureaucracy and politics. Preservationists might ask what condition these natural areas and wildlands would now be in if those "counter-revolutionaries"

over the last century had not duped us into creating national parks and wilderness areas to begin with. There would be no protected lands to vie for.

Baden would have additional wilderness, park and habitat protection provided privately through user fees and private contributions to organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. If people really value these areas as much as environmental groups claim, they should be able to bid them away from those who would develop them for other purposes. They merely have to put their money where their mouths are, Baden says.

This may work for active recreational users when



it is feasible to charge whatever the market will bear. But most support for wildland protection is not associated with active users of these areas. The dominant values are not use values, and therefore user fees can never reflect those values.

One could, as Baden suggests, turn to voluntary contributions. But that is not what private, commercial developers do. They sell rights to shares of the commercial values to be developed. But that cannot be done for the non-use values because people cannot be excluded from enjoying them once they are available to anyone.

Take the grizzly bear, for example. Once it is saved from extinction, anyone who values the survival of that species automatically gets the benefit whether or not he or she contributed.

Markets cannot help because property rights to the benefits cannot be assigned to only certain people. The same goes for clean air, saving old growth forests, and so on. If people behave in a self-interested manner in the spirit of the free market, they will not contribute to help save these things because they know that their contribution will not be crucial and that they will get the benefit even if they don't contribute.

This puts the provision of public goods such as protected wildlands at a distinct disadvantage in any market-based competition. Such a competition will be heavily biased towards commercial values and against preservation values.

Just as Baden finds it easy to ignore the need for government in many important situations, he also finds it easy to ignore the damage done by private, commercial activities. He insists, for instance, that private ownership of the forested mountains of the West would better protect them because private forest owners would not engage in below-cost timber harvest activities. He cites the Gallatin National Forest in his backyard in Montana as an area where private owners would not have harvested timber.

This must be startling to those living in western Montana, where private industrial timber owners have been harvesting timber on a grand and destructive scale. The view from any peak in the Gallatin range will show massive clearcuts on Burlington Northern lands where timber holdings are being liquidated. Even when Burlington Northern was part owner of the Big Sky Resort, it decimated surrounding forest lands that provided the backdrop for skiers, condo owners and other recreationists.

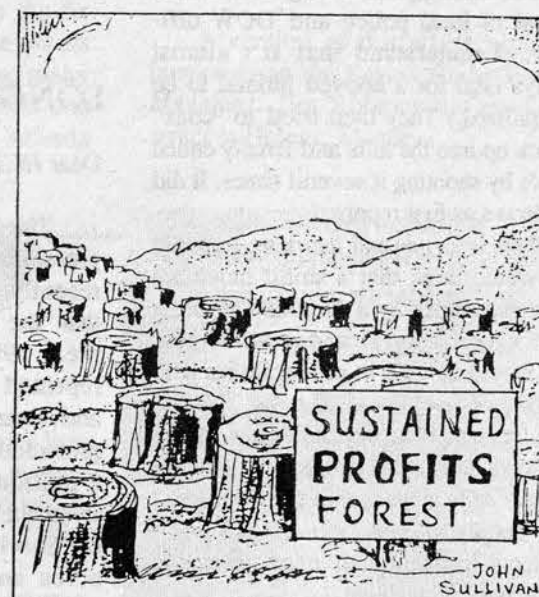
Champion International is also busily liquidating its timber inventory in the Blackfoot Valley of Montana while the Flathead tribes sustain themselves

in a time of lean federal support by extensive cutting in the Jeko and Mission valleys. One could go on.

The point is that one can harvest trees profitably in the mountain West simply by abandoning environmental constraints and butchering the land. Private landowners are ready and willing to do that. When there are none of those meddling government environmental regulations on private timber harvest activities, as in Montana, private lumber companies have no difficulty harvesting trees at a profit.

It is the sacrifice of the soil, water and land that provide the margin of profit.

The springboard Baden uses to catapult



environmental concern into an attack on government action and renewed faith in private commercial activities is the atrocious record of economic waste and environmental destruction of federal land managers in the West. The ongoing resistance of public agencies to economic and environmental reform lends credence to the assertion that such public agencies inevitably — even "naturally" — behave in destructive ways.

There is another explanation. These federal agencies were created to do exactly what they are now doing: to see that certain types of commercial activities enjoy special access to and use of these public lands. Some of us in the West now want to change that mandate to emphasize non-consumptive uses and preservation of environmental amenities. That involves taking away what historically has been a property right of certain well-established commercial users: lumber, mining, agribusiness, etc.

Those property rights, including the subsidies, are worth many billions of dollars. It is not surprising that the "confiscation" of "property" as valuable as this and its reassignment to other citizens is a very difficult and painstakingly slow process. That is not proof that government never works. The problem is the opposite; government has worked too well for the current set of beneficiaries and that is what makes the change hard.

It is like getting refineries, smelters, pulp mills and chemical plants to give up their right to use our air and water as their waste disposal sites. That is a valuable resource to which they previously had rights. Now we seek to take it and assign it to other users. There is no reason to expect this to be a simple process. It has usually taken revolutions to transfer property rights on so massive a scale. We should not expect newly formed sensitivities and alternative visions for our land to quickly replace the old. It will take sustained struggle.

Baden's view is that commercial markets would respond more quickly to such changes in preferences. In fact, government is regularly used to block such appropriate market adjustments. Environmentalists, however, have shown little enthusiasm for trusting environmental quality to such "quick acting" commercial markets. This may be tied to observation of the damage done by commercial operations. It may also be tied to the social and philosophic assumptions that have to be adopted before commercial markets can be embraced without reservation. Assumptions

(Continued on page 15)

GUEST OPINION

Logging our way to economic poverty

by Peter DeFazio

Drive through Coos Bay, Ore., and you'll see what might lie in store for the Pacific Northwest's forests and the industry and communities that depend on them.

The town is awash in logs: logs floating in the estuary, logs stacked on the docks, fully loaded log trucks hurrying back and forth. But for the first time since 1936, there is not a single plywood or lumber mill operating in the Coos Bay/North Bend area; no mills, but plenty of foreign flagged ships loading logs.

The International Woodworkers of America, representing millworkers in the Coos Bay area, has lost nearly 3,000 local members in the last eight years. During that same period, at least a dozen mills have closed their doors for good. Yet timber harvest continues at near record levels.

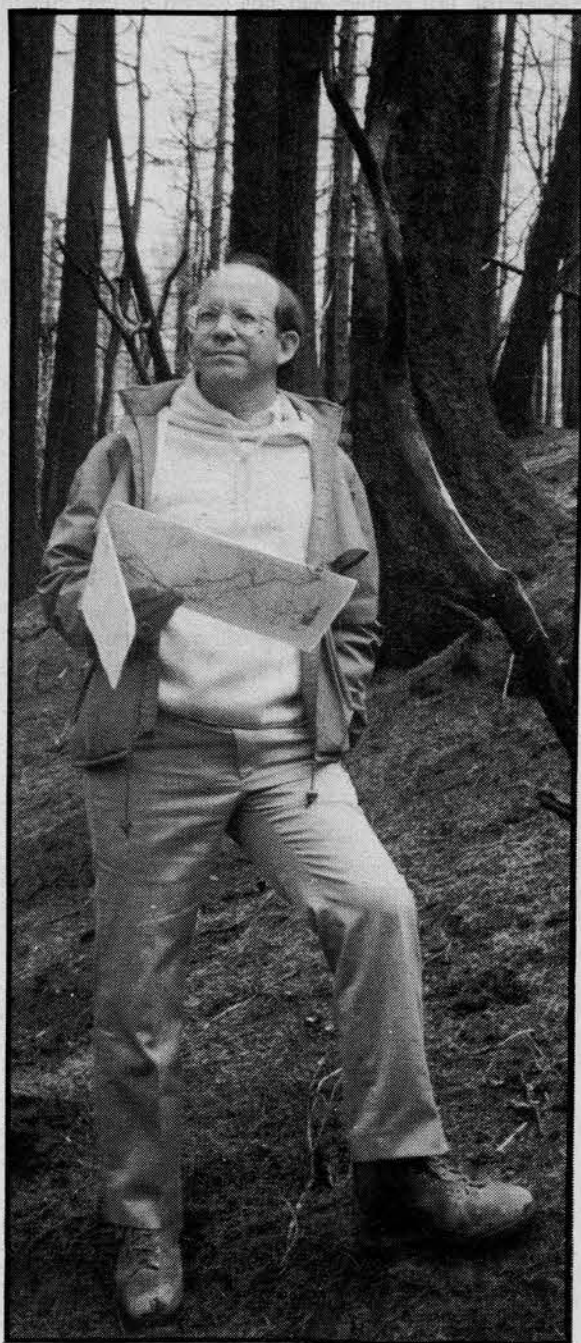
Last year, the Port of Coos Bay announced a 50 percent increase in the annual volume of logs it shipped overseas. In the Pacific Northwest, an all-time high of 3.7 billion board feet of raw logs were exported. Today, one out of every four logs cut in Oregon and Washington is exported unprocessed.

Until recently, the steady increase in log exports has been purely a regional issue. But that's changing. National environmental groups are waking up to the connection between record harvests and the wholesale export of unprocessed timber from Northwest ports. Nationally syndicated columnists, like Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*, are drawing a parallel between the destruction of Brazil's tropical forests and the disappearing rain forests of the Pacific Northwest. And representatives of the domestic wood processing industry now recognize the very real connection between log exports and job losses in the industry.

An unlikely coalition is developing to oppose continued log exports, confirming the maxim that "Politics makes strange bedfellows." Environmental activists see restricting log exports as a way to take some of the pressure off our public lands. Mill owners and labor unions are tired of standing on the docks and waving goodbye to their logs and their jobs.

Business leaders around the state recognize the value of the increased economic activity associated with a stable wood products industry. And thousands of Oregonians, myself included, are simply outraged that our nation allows the export of our forests and our livelihoods for the sake of a short-term profit.

Let me give you a little history. The export of federal logs was first restricted by order of the



Peter DeFazio

secretaries of Agriculture and Interior in 1968. They explained that the restriction was necessary in order to maintain a viable domestic wood processing industry. Their restriction was extended by an amendment offered by Senator Wayne Morse, D-Ore. The Morse amendment became effective on Jan. 1, 1969, and ultimately expired in 1973. Since that time, the export of federal logs has been totally banned by an annual

amendment to the Interior appropriations bill. As you probably know, President Bush, in his budget proposal, has recommended lifting that ban.

A number of states, including Oregon, have laws on the books banning the export of unprocessed logs from state lands. However, in 1984 the Supreme Court ruled that the Alaska statute violated the Constitution, which gives Congress the sole power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce. Soon after, the Oregon attorney general issued an opinion stating that the Oregon law was probably unconstitutional as well and should not be enforced.

So what can we do? My first priority will be to pass my bill in Congress giving states the authority to ban the export of unprocessed timber from their own lands.

*'It's stupid, it's bad policy;
and it's got to stop.'*

Second, I've asked the General Accounting Office to investigate "substitution" loopholes. They allow giant timber exporting companies to ship their private logs overseas, while purchasing federal timber to run through their domestic mills. Once the GAO reports back to me, I'll mount an effort in Congress to plug those loopholes. And finally, we've got to take steps to increase the amount of timber from all sources that is processed in American mills.

An article about the construction boom in Turkey recently caught my eye. Turkey, having devastated its own forests, is importing logs from the Pacific Northwest. Consider, for a moment, the absurdity of the situation. Oregon mills are closing for lack of logs. The cries of "timber shortage" are reaching a crescendo. Yet, instead of acting in our self-interest, like every other industrialized nation, we continue to allow a few giant corporations to ship the future of our forests overseas.

It's stupid; it's bad public policy; and it's got to stop.

□

Peter DeFazio is a Democratic congressman from Oregon. This article appeared in *The Runoff*, a publication of the Many Rivers Group of the Sierra Club, Box 11211, Eugene, OR 97440.

Free markets...

(Continued from page 14)

most likely to be problematic to environmentalists include:

- All things that are important to human beings can be provided through commercial markets. But we know that there are public goods crucial to the quality of our lives that cannot, even conceptually, be provided through commercial markets.

- All those things that are important to people that can be provided through commercial markets should be provided through those markets. But all societies purposely limit the extent of the market to protect their basic values: we do not allow the selling of votes, the sexual services of children, or human beings because we know that market transactions can degrade values that are very important to us.

- Calculating, self-regarding behavior is all that is needed for a good, responsible society. Such behavior should be encouraged, not constrained. But it is unlikely that any decent society can depend upon only this type of motivation. Even the commercial market is built around trust and a basic morality that is not narrowly self-regarding.

- Motives do not matter, only results do. But to most of us motives do matter: a mistake is not the same as a lie; murder is not the same as self-defense or an accidental killing; prostitution is not the same as love. Most of us do care about the motivations of our fellow citizens. It matters to us if someone seeks to

protect the community and its land base because they actually care as opposed to doing it only to protect their pocketbooks. Ethics and conscience matter.

- The preferences of others, whatever they may be, should be accepted and given an importance in proportion to the dollars that back them up. But most of us have strong moral and social values that lead us to be very critical of some preferences, the expression of which we seek to block even if they are backed by large quantities of money. Moral limits are important.

- Equity in the sense of the distribution of access to scarce resources is less important than the efficient use of resources and the protection of existing property rights. But this is hardly a general moral principle that is widely shared. Access to high quality environments is an important driving force behind the environmental movement in the West. Most of us are not ready to enshrine existing property rights.

Listing some of the problems I see with a free-market vision is not intended as an attack on the use of market forces to protect and enhance the quality of the natural and social environment. I have spent my professional life trying to harness market forces for environmental purposes and end government-sponsored attacks on the natural environment. I have not sensed any resistance to these efforts on the part of environmentalists.

Central to the critiques of the major Bureau of Reclamation water projects in the West has been the use of water markets to more rationally allocate scarce water and encourage conservation. Central to the control of unnecessary energy facilities and their

accompanying environmental and social disruption has been the use of rational energy pricing and rate design to encourage cost-effective conservation investments. Central to the effort to control Forest Service destruction have been efforts to impose business-like rationality on its investment decisions, forcing recognition of the economic value of recreational activity.

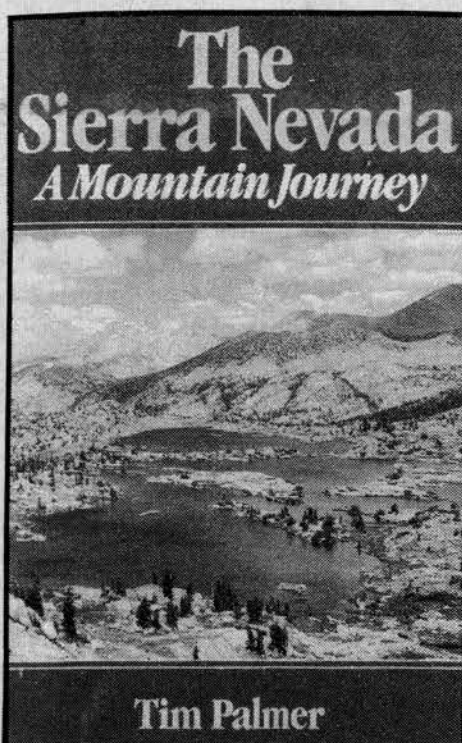
Environmentalists have readily embraced the market mechanisms in advocating bottle bills. Recently in Montana, it was environmentalists who led the fight to authorize the purchase of water rights from existing consumptive users in order to protect instream values. It was conservative Republicans who successfully blocked this use of the market to protect Montana's rivers.

This suggests to me that environmentalists have been very pragmatic about making use of the market when it seemed clear that it would help. They have also shown a healthy skepticism for grander schemes of "reform" that were burdened by an ideological agenda far afield from their primary concerns and their own world views. I, for one, hope they retain that pragmatic skepticism. Besides being safer, it also seems more comfortably Western.

□

Thomas Michael Power is professor of economics and chairman of the economics department at the University of Montana, Missoula, and author of *The Economic Pursuit of Quality* (M.E. Sharpe, 1988).

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TIM PALMER'S SIERRA NEVADA

The Sierra Nevada is managed by three national parks, eight national forests and parts of 18 counties in California and two in Nevada. Outside Alaska, it has the highest peak, deepest canyon and longest wilderness in the U.S. It is also popular. During an average year, 12 million people visit Lake Tahoe, 3 million stop at Yosemite, and 2 million tour the Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. Writer Tim Palmer easily describes the physical wonders of the range that forms the backbone of California in *The Sierra Nevada: A Mountain Journey*. But what he does best is share with us his conversations with park rangers, river runners, school teachers, escapees from the urban life and wanderers like himself. He writes of the environmental battles won and lost: water-hungry cities damming all the range's major rivers and most of the minor ones; Walt Disney's Mineral King; attempts to save Mono Lake; the polluting of Lake Tahoe ("the most troubled place in the Sierra"); as well as cattle grazing and timber cutting. He writes of the fight for and the passage of the 1984 California Wilderness Bill and the people who made it a reality. Reflecting on why people are attracted to the Sierra, he says: "I seek knowledge of the mountains, adventure, the Good Life, the escape and something more elusive: I want to be a part of these mountains, to belong here." Palmer succeeds in making his journey ours.

Island Press, Suite 300, 1718 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Paper: \$14.95. 340 pages. With black-and-white photos by the author and a 26-page "Sierra Nevada Almanac."

FATE OF THE CRYSTAL

The Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association has organized a two-day meeting on the increasing problem of pollution of Coal Creek and the Crystal River in western Colorado. Denver mining consultant Carolyn Johnson will talk to members and the public at 1 p.m. on May 14 at the Redstone Community Church. On May 15 at 7 p.m., Mid-Continent Coal officials will take the floor, also at the church. For more information, call Peter Westcott, 303/464-5346.

FIRE POLICIES CONFERENCE

Fires in Yellowstone National Park last summer have spawned more than one conference in the West on the problems and solutions of wildfire management. One called "Fire Policies and Management Strategies in Wilderness and Parks: Past and Future" will take place May 23-26 at Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont. It is intended for natural resource managers, scientists, educators and anyone interested in fire management. Sponsors are the Fire Impact Research Consortium, MSU, the National Park Service, Society of American Foresters and Forest Service. For more information contact Conference Services, 280 F Strand Union, MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717 (406/994-3333).

IN MORTAL PERIL

The 1990s must be a "turnaround decade," says Lester Brown and other writers at the Worldwatch Institute. If threats such as climatic change, ozone depletion and population growth in the next decade aren't addressed, social and political institutions will collapse, he warns. And that's just the foreword to the *State of the World 1989*, the sixth in an annual series. Brown and his colleagues are blunt: "The world faces the prospect of vastly accelerated climatic change in the decades ahead. Conditions essential to life as we know it are now at risk." This year's edition covers transportation, land degradation, the world food prospect, the ozone layer, AIDS and global security. *State of the World* was used in over 700 college courses last year and has been translated into most major languages, including Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Russian.

W.W. Norton & Company, 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110. Paper: \$9.95. 256 Pages.

NO LIFE WITHOUT WATER

A full-page ad featuring a photo of a dried-up river bed and the headline, "Imagine you're a salmon and you've come 2,000 miles," greeted readers of *The New York Times* in March. The ad was paid for by the Water Heritage Trust, a new organization that says its task is to acquire water for the preservation of wildlife habitat. The trust plans to acquire water rights by gift, purchase or trade, then give, lease or sell the rights to public agencies or other groups for recreational and environmental purposes. The trust has identified more than 120 Western rivers in need of instream flow protection. The Water Heritage Trust is a project of the Resource Renewal Institute, which says its goal is "to make natural resource policy an investment priority at the highest levels of government." For more information, contact the Water Heritage Trust, Bldg. 1055, Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito, CA 94965 (415/332-8082).

RAWLINS AND ARCHES

Poet and writer Chip Rawlins will lead a one-day workshop May 20 in Arches National Park called "Writing from Nature in Arches." The seminar is part of Canyonlands Field Institute's summer program and is limited to 12 participants. The cost is \$35 and those attending can receive college credit from Utah State University. For information, contact Canyonlands Field Institute, P.O. Box 68, Moab, UT 84532 (801/259-7750).

WILDERNESS SONGS

When Walkin' Jim Stoltz isn't walking in the wilderness, he's playing music about the wilderness. His new album, "Listen to the Earth," is a collection of folksongs written and sung by Stoltz in his deep baritone, accompanied by guitars, harmonicas, dobros, banjos, mandolins and fiddles. Most of the songs were written while he was traveling in the backcountry, his major occupation for the past few years. He wrote "Going Back to Idaho" on his way from the Grand Canyon to Idaho, on foot. The nomad-musician was a part of a group that walked 350 miles in 1987 around Montana's Bob Marshall and Scapegoat wildernesses in an effort to call attention to unprotected wildlands in the state. "I've walked more miles and spent more time in the wild country, gaining more wisdom in my relationship to it. I'm hopeful that we can stem the tide of waste and greed which threatens this earth at every turn." "Listen to the Earth" is available from Wild Wind Records, PO Box 477, Big Sky, MT 59716. Cassette: \$11.50.

ROUND RIVER RENDEZVOUS

The Earth First! annual get-together is set for June 18 in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico. The Round River Rendezvous brings together activists to review the year, plot strategy and "celebrate bonds with each other and with the sacred earth." Workshops will tackle topics such as "Ecofeminism, deep ecology and anarchy: towards an alliance for action." For a map and directions write RRR '89, 2405 Meadow SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105.

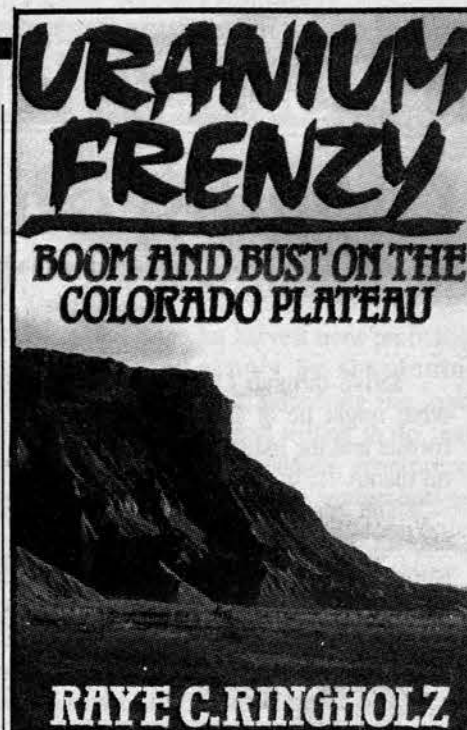
SAVORY IN PRINT

Allan Savory, a/k/a the grazing guru, has been a controversial figure for several years. His approach to cattle raising and land management has been hailed as a way to revive the West's ranching industry and rapped as a way to further degrade the land. Although fans and critics tend to focus on Savory's specific approaches to grazing, such as rotating cattle from one pen to another, his holistic resource management is as much a frame of mind as a specific technique. His interests range from the age distribution of an animal population to the relationships that exist in a multi-generation ranch family. One of the problems in using and assessing Savory has always been access. Savory propagated his ideas through workshops. But now, with the help of writers and editors Jody Butterfield and Sam Bingham, Savory has committed himself to paper in a 564-page book titled *Holistic Resource Management*. It contains his ideas, photos, numerous references and an index. Like Savory's talks and teachings, it is a mix of theory, history and technique. It is unlikely to settle the controversy but should give disputants a common starting point.

Island Press, Washington, D.C., 800/628-2828. Cloth: \$39.95, paper: \$24.95. Illustrated with photographs.

E FOR ENVIRONMENT

The editors and publishers of a new magazine plan to bring a multitude of environmental issues under one cover. They say *E, The Environmental Magazine*, will be a "clearinghouse for the environmental advocacy community." Editor Leslie Pardue, advertising director Deborah Kamlani, and publisher Doug Moss are all formerly from the *Animal's Agenda*, an animal protection magazine. Pardue says *E* will also serve as a "bridge between the animal protection movement and the environmental community ... we want a dialog on points of agreement." Moss says he is hoping for an initial circulation of between 35,000 and 50,000 and to publish six times a year. The first issue is due out early this summer. For more information, write *E*, 49 Richmondville Ave., P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881 (203/226-9265).



URANIUM FRENZY

Park City, Utah, writer Raye Ringholz includes some juicy anecdotes in her book, *Uranium Frenzy*, about the only rush for minerals that was set off by the U.S. government. Prospector Charlie Steen, for example, held yearly parties for the people of Moab, Utah, to celebrate his strike of 1952, while souvenir shop owner Pratt Seegmiller looked at his 50-pound collection of canary yellow rock, remembered where he had found it, and staked a mine that allowed him to "support my family in a style to which we were not accustomed." The uranium boom also encouraged speculative trading of mines, some of which existed only on paper. Ringholz makes it clear that the government neglected its duty to the miners. Men worked in mines so dangerously radioactive that their deaths from some form of cancer were certain. But from 1942 to 1968, no established standards existed to protect the thousands of miners against radiation. And just as people living downwind of bomb tests found the government unyielding, so did the families of uranium miners. Compensation was almost impossible to obtain and inadequate when it was grudgingly given.

W.W. Norton Co., 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110. Cloth \$18.95. 310 pages. Illustrated with photos.



John P. George

Melting ice in Yellowstone National Park

THREE PARKS IN WINTER

The Park Service Center is preparing a winter-use plan to determine what activities should be allowed in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. Planning began after a group called the Continental Divide Snowmobile Association proposed a 350-mile trail that would pass through all three areas, connecting Lander with West Yellowstone. Snowmobiling is big business in Wyoming, adding about \$26 million a year to the state's coffers, according to Wyoming Recreation Director Max Maxfield, but

conservationists fear increased use will harm wildlife. The winter-use plan will address the effects of snowmobiling and other activities on wildlife populations and examine the need for more staff and services. Park Service project coordinator Rick Alesch says although the plan will not directly address winter use in the adjacent Bridger-Teton National Forest, it will eventually participate in the planning. To comment or to receive a newsletter on the winter-use plan, write Rick Alesch, Winter-Use Plan Project Manager, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225.