

High Country News

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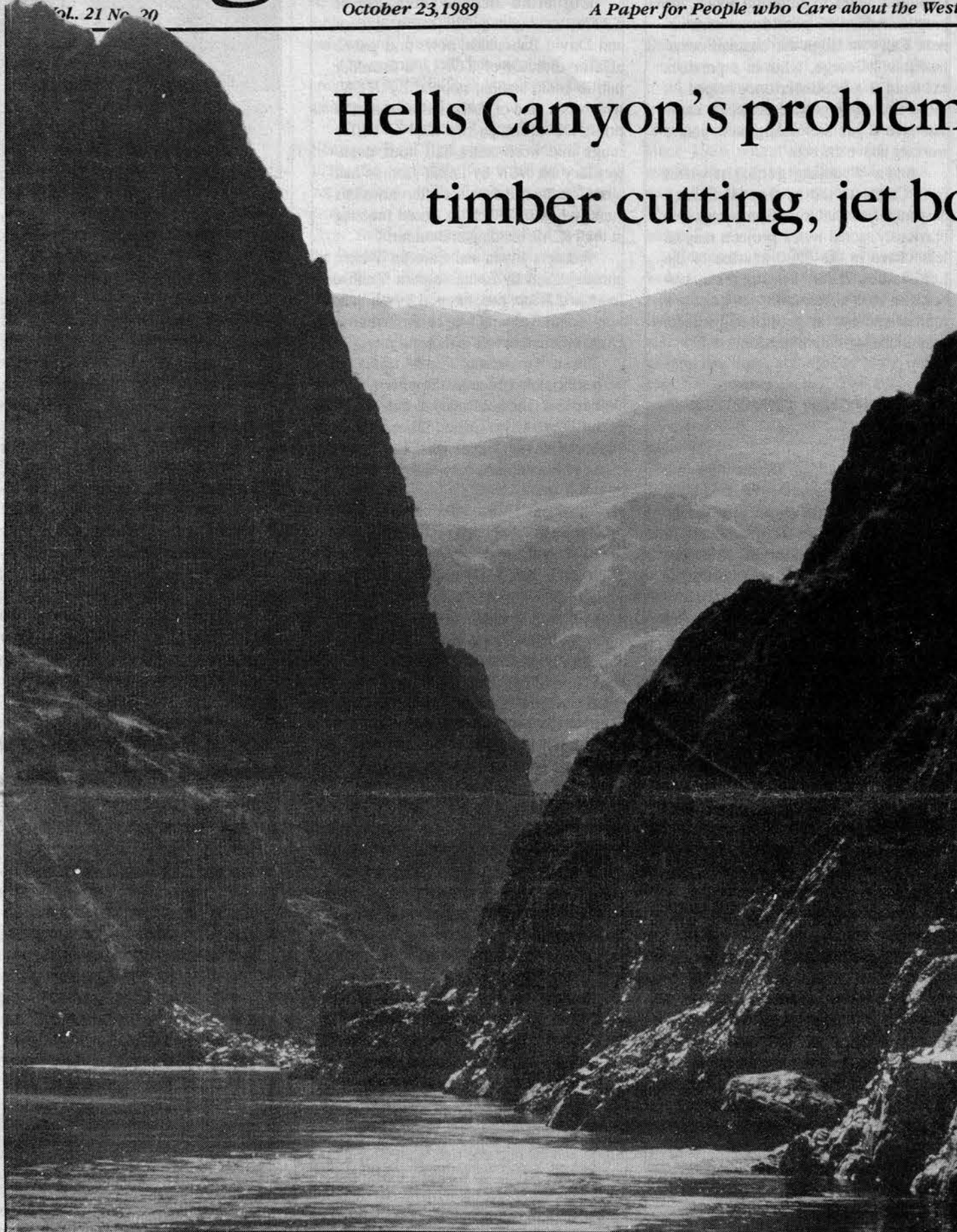
October 23, 1989

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

Hells Canyon's problems: timber cutting, jet boats

and
general
neglect



Ernie Day

Hells Canyon, the deepest gorge in the country

by Deborah Richie

Hells Canyon is America's deepest gorge; it rivals the Grand Canyon in splendor. Yet this spectacular creation of the Snake River is little known.

If scenery, wildlife and pure spectacle mean anything, Hells Canyon and its environs will someday be recognized as a national treasure. But today it is only another controversial wild area and even the controversy is local, rather than national.

Hells Canyon was formed by the Snake River pushing its way north to its confluence with the Columbia River. The river and its gorge forms the boundary between Idaho and Oregon, south of the Washington border.

By rights, Hells Canyon should be a settled matter for the nation. Back in

1975, the U.S. Congress passed a law establishing the 652,488-acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. The new law was expected by its supporters to protect the 100 miles of free-flowing Snake River, its gorge and the wild rim country and wildlife far above the river.

But today, 14 years later, critics charge that the Forest Service is managing the area little differently from surrounding "multiple use" lands, and conflicts grow week by week.

The vast national recreational area straddles two states and takes in 67.5 miles of a national wild and scenic river, a 214,000-acre core wilderness, jagged peaks of Idaho's Seven Devils Mountains and one of Oregon's premier Chinook salmon spawning rivers, the Imnaha. The canyon itself towers 8,000 feet above the Snake River.

Wildlife is thick — 349 species —

including black bears, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk, deer, chukars and peregrine falcons. There are also more than 1,000 prehistoric Indian sites on the river bars.

Just to drive around the national recreation area is a 450-mile journey. To look down into the deepest part of the canyon from Oregon's Hat Point lookout requires a six-hour round-trip detour. But horseback trips, llama treks and backpacking are probably the best ways to see the rugged canyon. Nine hundred miles of trails once traversed by depression-era homesteaders wander across rims, down side canyons and along both sides of the Snake. Hunters converge in the fall for trophy elk or once-in-a-lifetime bighorn sheep hunts.

Class five whitewater — Wild Sheep and Granite rapids — have earned the respect of rafters and jet boaters run-

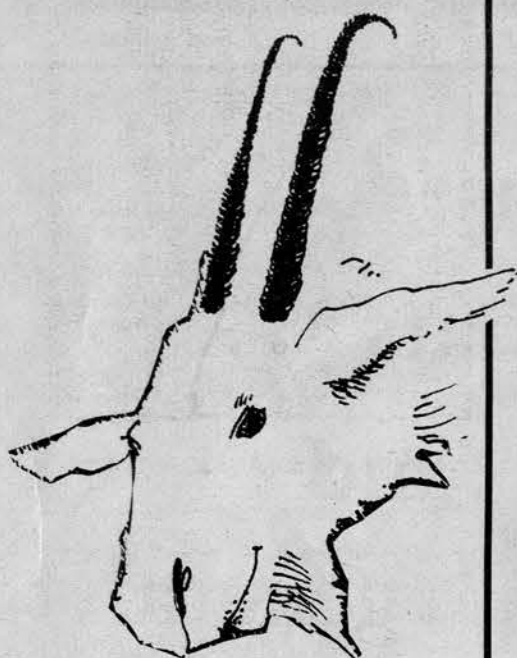
ning the river below Hells Canyon Dam.

But while the river below the dam still provides thrills for those running the river, the landscape and fish have been badly damaged. Hells Canyon was the third and final dam to be built in the canyon. Among them the three dams wiped out the upper Snake River salmon runs and blocked the granitic sands washing down from the mountains. As a result, beaches below the dam are fast turning into boulder fields.

In addition, water releases from the dam fluctuate from 5,000 cubic feet per second to 30,000 cfs, causing erosion. Only below the confluence of the dammed Snake with the undammed Salmon River, which still contributes sediment, do white sand beaches remain unscathed.

River management is controversial. (Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,



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Readers write

Responses to the spring 1989 reader survey continue to trickle in. George Sibley of Western State College in Gunnison writes to chide us about "the preponderance of ponderous seriousness. Can't we laugh the bastards out of business?" George, who in a previous existence as a freelancer once helped fill these and other pages, adds, "I know that even if you are hitting hard, you're working above the belt."

And a Wyoming geologist writes from Casper to tell us that Wyoming's desperate financial situation means that previously sacred water projects may be less sacred in the 1990 session of the Legislature. *HCN*, he suggests, can heighten their vulnerability by casting a journalistic eye at proposed projects prior to the legislative session.

Cutting room floor

The fact that *High Country News* is 20 years old proved newsworthy in the area. Several newspapers reported on the event, as did Denver television station KCNC, which sent reporter Scott Broom and cameraman Tom Meyers to Paonia for the day.

Television, we learned, is a different medium. The two-minute report, which aired on the Saturday evening news program, threw the office into day-long turmoil. We found ourselves doing things never done here before; we held editorial conferences, pushed piles of newspapers from room to room on a handtruck, and talked about the purpose of the paper instead of simply attempting to get it out. In the end, we were impressed by the ability of the medium to compress a lot of information into a brief period of time. We also came to understand the phrase "the cutting-room floor."

In addition to television, national magazines have come a-calling. A story about the paper by Idaho freelance writer Jim Fergus will appear in *Harrowsmith* this winter, and *Rolling Stone* magazine has said it may send a reporter to Paonia. *Harrowsmith*, which covers rural issues out of Vermont, was already a staple around our office. But the appearance of *Rolling Stone* on desks here is definitely new.

In response to an article by David Hill on *High Country News* in the May 1989 *Washington Journalism Review*, the *Reader's Digest* called. The *Digest* doesn't intend to write about *HCN*, but the editor wanted to see some back issues in case they contained material to

Visitors

The visitor notes in this column are not meant to be controversial, but our mention of law professor Joe Feller was. We affiliated Joe with the University of Arizona, rather than with his own institution: Arizona State University at Tempe.

Joe would have been less irked, he said, if that were not becoming a common mistake. But to show there are no hard feelings, he is letting us send 78 samples of *HCN* for use by his students. If you teach and would like a packet of samples, please call Linda Bacigalupi.

Exactly 60 percent of the population of South Pass City, Wyo., stopped by on their way to a conference on trails in Santa Fe, without crowding the office a bit. The visitors were Todd and Barbara

Guenther, and 21-month-old Nate. Todd is curator in the 1860s-era gold mining town, and also a freelancer who wrote for *HCN* recently on archaeological looting. He is currently concerned about a Canada to Wyoming to California natural gas pipeline whose proposed path, he says, appears to follow the historic Oregon Trail.

Catherine McLeod, manager of KAJX, an Aspen public radio station, and David Babsamian, news and public affairs director of KGNU, a Boulder public radio station, stopped by *HCN*, which is a kind of public radio station of print. David left us two KGNU coffee mugs and word that a half-hour documentary on *HCN* by Leslie Lomas had aired. Leslie had done her interviews this June, when *HCN* held its board meeting at the NCAR building in Boulder.

Readers Bryan and Carolyn Welch, accompanied by future readers Caitlin, four, and Noah, two, stopped by on their way from Taos, N.M., to Richmond, Utah, where they will visit family.

Dave Hamilton of Seattle came by with a brief report on the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance Roundup last month at the Moab Civic Center. Dave is with Motorola, Inc., and was traveling through Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona.

He's an outsider

Editor Betsy Marston nominated Forest Service staffer Jeff DeBonis (*HCN*, 6/5/89) to *Outside* magazine for its "Outsider of the Year Award." He didn't win, but DeBonis, who asks tough questions of his agency, was reportedly among a dozen runners-up, she hears.

Not over yet

Interns Susan Bridges and Devin Odell attended the annual meeting of the Colorado Environmental Coalition in Buena Vista in early October and came back with this report:

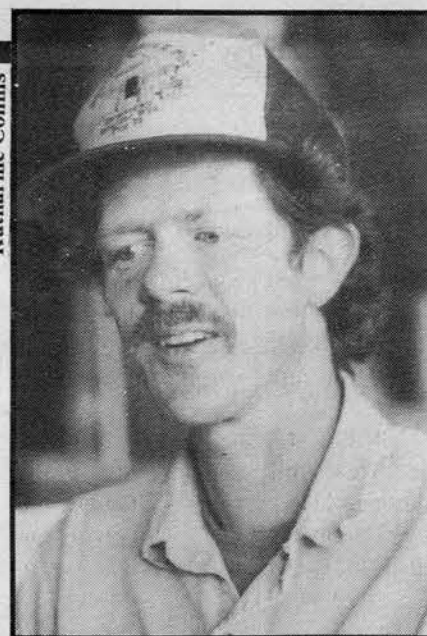
We didn't know if it was the most direct path to the meeting, but the 30-mile drive over the dirt Kebler Pass Road was the most scenic. Oak brush and thick stands of aspen were at their reddest and yellowest.

The drive through aspen stands the Forest Service hopes to cut down was perfect preparation for the conference, one of whose goals was to strengthen ties between environmentalists in Colorado's two states: the populous East Slope and the resource-rich West Slope.

Stuart Krebs of Western Colorado Congress described his half of the state as a source of trees and water and minerals, with political control resting in the Denver area. That, he said, makes western Colorado much like a third world nation.

The proposed Two Forks Dam, which would fill mainly with water diverted from the West Slope, served as an example, Rocky Smith of CEC reminded participants that the fight against Two Forks isn't over until it's

Katharine Collins



Chip Rawlins

over. Only a veto process is underway, he said, urging those at the conference to attend public hearings in Denver on Oct. 23 and 24, and to send comments to: Mary Alice Reedy, EPA Region VIII 8WM-SP, 999 18th St., Ste. 500, Denver, Colo. 80202-2405 before Nov. 17.

The conference also addressed CEC's plans to help celebrate Earth Day 1990, an international event scheduled for April 22. Several people at the CEC meeting said it was the first Earth Day celebration, in 1970, that had pulled them into the environmental movement.

Research Fund

By this time, you should have received the annual Research Fund appeal. We know at least some of the 7,500 appeals negotiated the United States mail because Jane McGarry, a proofreader who doubles as check depositor, has been working hard opening envelopes and filling out deposit slips.

This is very seasonal work. About 30 percent of *HCN*'s income arrives during the last few months of the year. Without that 30 percent, of course, there is no *High Country News*. Jane says she is willing to work overtime if you are willing to send a contribution via a check, pledge or credit card.

Chip travels east

HCN's poetry editor Chip Rawlins will make several late-October public appearances east of the Rockies. Readers (and poets whose fine work Rawlins has heartlessly spurned through the years) can hear him Oct. 25 along with Wyoming fiction writer Jean Hansen and California writer Susan Stright. They will be in New York City at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park, at 8 p.m. Rawlins travels next to Minnesota to hold two readings with writer Rick De Marinis: at 7:30 p.m., Oct. 26 at Mankato State University, and at 8 p.m., Oct. 27 at The Loft, 2301 Franklin Ave. East in Minneapolis. Receptions will follow each of the presentations.

—Ed Marston for the staff

HOTLINE

Mediating in the Tetons

The Forest Service announced that it has hired a private mediator to conduct negotiations between Citizens for Teton Valley and Mory Bergmeyer, owner of Targhee Ski Resort. Bergmeyer wants to exchange private land for 270 acres of Forest Service land that he currently leases, opening the way for expansion of the ski resort (*HCN*, 9/11/89). A U.S. District Court injunction halted the exchange in July after the citizens' group

filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service. That suit, which would be dismissed if mediation is successful, claims the Forest Service violated federal law when it failed to analyze environmental impacts caused by the proposed land exchange and development. Negotiation participants have yet to be selected although Forest Supervisor Jim Caswell said that his agency, Citizens for Teton Valley, Mory Bergmeyer, a group of people supporting the development and the county commissioners of Teton County, Idaho and Teton Valley, Wyo., will be represented.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Crow tribal leaders indicted in Montana

BILLINGS, Mont. — Crow Tribal Chairman Richard Real Bird and 25 other members of the Crow Tribe have been charged in federal court with offenses ranging from embezzlement to vote buying.

Not long after the indictments were issued, Real Bird was joined at a press conference here by another beleaguered tribal chairman charged with corruption — Peter MacDonald of the Navajo Tribe.

They said they were being harassed and persecuted by opponents of tribal sovereignty as part of a conspiracy to allow outside control of vast tribal land and coal resources.

Real Bird, elected in 1986, was accompanied by his lawyer, Melvin Belli, 82, of San Francisco, when he pleaded innocent Sept. 27 to 20 counts of embezzlement of tribal funds, bank fraud, making false statements to the bank, extortion and conspiracy.

His younger brother, Kennard Real Bird, an accomplished silversmith, pleaded innocent to one count each of conspiracy, extortion and embezzlement of tribal funds. Trial for the Real Birds and five others was set for Nov. 27.

"There's no proof in any of these charges of Indians bribing anyone or taking any money," said Belli after the arraignment. "These are all honorable men. I think if there's anything here, it's civil."

The government complaint alleges, "It was the object of the conspiracy to use Crow Tribal money in the form of trust funds and bank loans to solidify the

Real Bird administration political base through the purchase of votes and the misapplication of funds budgeted for specific purposes by the Bureau of Indian Affairs ... in order to sustain and promote the conspirators' political power and personal financial gain."

Other tribal officials involved with programs ranging from housing to land leasing also face charges.

Tribal Secretary Clara White Hip Nomee, a Real Bird opponent elected in 1988, and one of the few tribal officials not indicted, said, "The feds are after crooks, as far as I'm concerned. The Crow Tribe is innocent. Real Bird is not the Crow Tribe. One man indicted by the grand jury shouldn't be talking for the Crows. That really upsets me. All of my people aren't like that."

Nomee was a federal witness during the investigation and her car was vandalized at her home in late July. Four tribal members — all relatives of an indicted official — were arrested on federal charges of retaliating against a witness.

The Real Bird administration is accused of diverting funds meant for reservation social programs. The government claims that some defendants are responsible for the disappearance of \$90,000 out of a \$400,000 low-income energy assistance grant in 1987 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Last March, several families on the reservation were without power and heat because the grant hadn't been renewed, reportedly due to the accountability problems from the previous year.

Real Bird has filed a counter-suit

against the Bureau of Indian Affairs, charging the BIA with "malfeasance" and deliberately trying to destabilize the tribal government. He said Indian tribal sovereignty is at issue.

The suit was filed after BIA Area Director Richard Whitesell suspended or limited most financial activities of the tribal government in the wake of the criminal charges. A letter from the area director to Real Bird outlined instances since 1986 when the tribe failed to respond to requests for financial reports, and when it made expenditures "not authorized in the approved tribal budget."

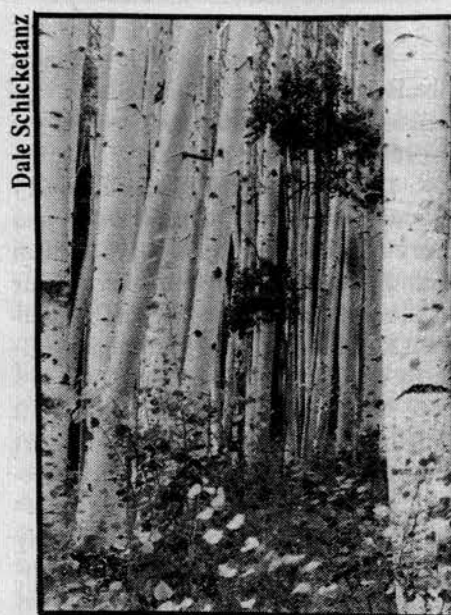
Nomee said Real Bird's suit was not authorized by the tribal council. She went to court earlier this year to argue that \$30 million in Crow coal-tax money still held in escrow should be placed in a government trust, not released to the current tribal government. The millions piled up during years of litigation by the tribe against the state of Montana (HCN, 6/6/88).

Meanwhile, the money remains in a Billings bank, drawing interest. But post-litigation proceeds from the coal tax have been paid to the tribal government, through the BIA.

Nomee says Real Bird and other defendants are not entitled to pay legal fees from tribal funds. Belli, an expensive lawyer, said he took the case because the issue of sovereignty appears "very interesting," but noted that he hadn't been paid any money yet.

— Pat Dawson

HOTLINE



Back to the drawing board

A controversial Forest Service plan to increase the aspen harvest in scenic mountain areas of western Colorado was put on hold Oct. 6. Forest Supervisor R.E. "Griff" Greffenius said, "It's clear to me that significant changes from the 'preferred alternative' are in order." The agency had proposed an aspen harvest of 3,000 acres per year over the next 10 years on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests. The trees were slated for a Louisiana-Pacific waferboard factory. Greffenius said "a large number" of the 2,490 letters sent to the Forest Service opposed the increased aspen logging. A new proposal based on an internal re-evaluation and public comment will provide the basis for a new proposal expected in mid-1990, Greffenius said.

Agency "loses" \$17 million

Due to sloppy record-keeping and poor management, \$17 million in Indian trust fund investments held by the Bureau of Indian Affairs is missing and may never be recovered. That is the conclusion of an audit by the inspector general for the Department of the Interior. The 31-page report also finds that the BIA failed to tell account-holders about another \$12 million it lost to failed financial institutions, bad loans and fraud. The Bureau of Indian Affairs invests \$1.7 billion for over 200 Indian tribes and 290,000 Indian individuals. Most of the money is income from timber, oil, gas and rangeland, plus revenues from irrigation and power projects. Since 1982, 30 audit reports have sharply criticized the BIA's financial and accounting systems. The inspector general says that problems with the agency's accounting have been "so pervasive and fundamental" that the "accounting accuracy for the entire \$1.7 billion invested for Indian tribes and individual Indians lacked credibility." Because he cannot point to specific accounting errors to explain why the \$17 million is missing, the inspector general does not rule out the possibility that it was stolen. For a copy of the report, No. 89-117, called *Audit Report: Selected Aspects of Indian Trust Fund Activities, Bureau of Indian Affairs*, call the Office of the Inspector General at 202/343-4356.

BARBS

We're finally getting Japan to yell "uncle" in the trade war.

So many old-growth trees have been cut in the Northwest and exported to Japan that that nation is glutted with U.S. logs, according to the *New York Times*.

'Weird science' and Earth First! attacked

William Perry Pendley and the Mountain States Legal Foundation he directs in Denver, Colo., intend to fight environmentalists every step of the way.

Pendley told a meeting of the Colorado Water Congress, a pro-water project group still smarting over the blocking of Denver's proposed Two Forks Dam, that the foundation will continue to sue on behalf of landowners and industry whenever necessary.

Pendley, a Republican who oversaw energy and mineral development for the Reagan administration's Interior Department, said he is not pleased by President Bush's position on environmental issues. He said Bush disregarded local sentiment and made several decisions that threaten to curtail, if not completely halt, development of the West's timber, oil, gas and water.

Bush's moratorium on off-shore oil leases and his pledge to increase the Park Service's parkland acquisition fund from

zero to \$250 million were the first shots in the war over who will decide how to use the West's resources, Pendley said.

Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan drew Pendley's ire. Pendley called the agency's plans to review grazing fees and policy a "debacle" that was barely headed off by efforts of Western politicians. Lujan's decision to delay patenting of controversial oil shale mining claims in Colorado's Piceance Basin is another case of the administration's inaction in the face of criticism, he said.

Pendley then attacked practitioners of what he called "weird science." He said concern about spotted owls in old-growth forests of the Northwest was a ruse to block timbering. Pendley said another example of "weird science" involved the endangered red squirrel that delayed construction of a telescope complex in Arizona. "Questionable" scientific data concerning the desert tortoise could block residential construction in

the desert outside of Las Vegas, he added.

Besides suing, Pendley presented another strategy to counter the "no-growthers." Those who want to use the West's natural resources and public lands need to mount an offensive to "win the hearts and minds" of the average American, he said.

One way to do that is to uncover the "dark side of environmentalism." That dark side is represented by "eco-terrorism," as promoted by EarthFirst!'s book, *Eco-Defense: A Guide to Monkey-wrenching*, and acted out by tree-spikers, Pendley said.

He urged conservative-minded Westerners to "go on the offensive" against environmentalists. Otherwise, "towns in Washington, Wyoming and Arizona will go the way of the (extinct) Siberian tiger."

— Jon Klusmire

HOTLINE

A Rocky Road for Flats

Despite help from the White House, the Department of Energy has still not found any takers for 42 boxcars of radioactive waste from the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver.

White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, citing the plant's key role in the making of nuclear warheads, personally called the governors of seven states asking them to share the waste. But all seven: Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, New Mexico, South Carolina, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, New Mexico

and Tennessee, forcefully rejected the proposal, according to the *Denver Post*.

Plagued by continued delays in the opening of a permanent waste dump near Carlsbad, N.M., (HCN, 10/9/89), the Energy Department may have to close Rocky Flats by March 1 when it runs out of temporary storage capacity. An independent investigation at the plant recently found enough weapons-grade plutonium accumulated in uncontrolled conditions to cause an accidental nuclear reaction, reports AP. The investigators' report also exposed many other safety

lapses that took place under the DOE's former manager at the plant, Rockwell International Corp. The Department of Energy fired Rockwell last month and will pay its new contractor, EG&G Inc. of Wellesley, Mass., \$625 million a year to run Rocky Flats. That is 25 percent more than it paid Rockwell. EG&G will also receive \$15 million when it takes over the plant on Jan. 1.

Because of problems at the plant, including soil and groundwater contamination, the Environmental Protection Agency recently added Rocky Flats to its Superfund list of highly polluted sites.

— Devin Odell

Momentary middle ground found in old-growth fight

After three months of give-and-take, the House of Representatives passed legislation aimed at temporarily solving the Northwest's timber conflicts.

The bill, which passed easily through the Senate, requires the Forest Service and BLM to sell 9.6 billion board-feet of timber in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. That is about 20 percent less than the two agencies had originally targeted for the year.

The bill also frees about half the 1.2 billion board-feet tied up by court injunctions involving the northern spotted owl; requires the agencies to "minimize fragmentation of environmentally significant" stands of old growth; protects areas around known spotted owl nests; and prohibits the agencies, for up to 60 days, from awarding any timber sales being challenged in court.

This last provision was a compromise from several Northwest lawmakers who wanted to preclude any judicial review of timber sales. They backed down after 101 congressmen declared their opposition to any restrictions on the right to pursue court injunctions.

Nonetheless, some environmentalists expressed concern that 60 days was not enough time for courts to act.

"The wheels of log trucks can roll faster than the wheels of justice," observed Doug Norlen of the Eugene, Ore.-based Waldo Wilderness Council.

The bill emerged after the Forest Service apparently waffled on whether it could reach the mandated cut level. Several foresters said that the cut could only be achieved at the expense of spotted owl habitat.

Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson said that the cut level was too high, but added that he'd do whatever possible to meet it. Other Forest Service spokespersons expressed a variety of opinions.

The Oregon Natural Resources Council then released an internal memo from Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield's staff, which urged the senator to tell Chief Robertson to "get a lid on his people."

Muffy timber industry and environmental groups half-heartedly supported the compromise. But one clause was especially disappointing to the environmental camp. The Forest Service's road-building budget, which had been slashed in July by almost a third, was restored to \$165 million. Another \$20 million was added for roads if revenues from timber sales in fiscal 1990 exceed the Forest Service's projection.

The legislation is only a short-term solution to the Northwest's timber supply crisis. Forestry consultant John Beuter, whose 1976 study foresaw a decline in the timber supply for at least two decades beginning in the late 1980s, now says that two factors make him think it could be worse. Land management laws have required federal agencies to take more forest out of commercial timber use, and private landowners are logging younger stands, possibly threatening future supplies.

This latter factor is transforming roadside vistas in the Northwest. Small woodlot owners are taking advantage of high timber prices to log right down to highways and freeways.

Timber buyers are targeting some rural areas with mailings, making offers that forest owners are finding hard to refuse. Federal agencies are also allowing logging closer to roads as they run out of saleable timber elsewhere.

Despite the controversy over cutting old trees, figures recently released by Oregon state forester James Brown show that logging in Oregon in 1988 was up almost 5 percent over 1987, to 8.6 billion board-feet. That is enough to fill almost 2 million log trucks.

This increase is good news for large timber companies, which continue to post record profits. In August, both WTD Industries and Bohemia Timber announced record quarterly earnings and sales that were from 27 percent to 212 percent higher than a year ago.

In other developments involving Northwest forests:

•The Bush administration shifted its position on the export of raw logs from federal forests. In his budget message to Congress, President Bush had proposed ending the 16-year-old ban on federal log exports as a way of reducing the deficit.

But Office of Management and Budget director Richard Darman, in a letter to Oregon's two senators in late September, reversed that stand. He said such a move would have minimal impact on the deficit and an adverse effect on the environment.

The Department of Commerce also entered the picture, announcing that it would begin an investigation of log exports. The move came in response to a petition filed by 159 wood products companies. It asked the department to ban raw log exports from all public lands in Oregon and Washington. Under the Export Administration Act, the president has the power to ban the export of any natural resource that is in critically short supply. The Commerce Department will accept public comment on the matter until Dec. 13, and is likely to make its decision early next year.

•The Turner Broadcasting System aired a National Audubon Society documentary, *Ancient Forests: Rage Over Trees*, despite losing all of its sponsors to pressure from the timber industry. Timber industry representatives said that the program was heavily biased and urged people to lodge protests with the sponsors: Stroh's Brewery, Ford Motor,

Citicorp, Exxon, ITT, Hartford Insurance, New York Life Insurance, Dean Witter Reynolds, and *Omni* magazine. As a result, the program ran commercial-free Sept. 24, with the last 10 minutes filled by *Three Stooges* clips. TBS reportedly lost \$250,000 on the broadcast.

•More than a dozen timber companies are beginning a joint three-year, \$12 million public relations campaign aimed largely at people outside of the Northwest. Ads will be appearing on cable TV, and in magazines such as *National Geographic* and *The Atlantic*. Industry spokesmen said that they're trying to counter successful efforts by environmentalists to win the hearts and minds of the public.

•The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded four public hearings on its proposal to list the northern spotted owl as a threatened species. Although the agency said the hearings were a chance for the public to present "any compelling biological information," emotion was more prevalent than facts.

In Eugene, Ore., log trucks outside blasted horns while fiery speeches inside were met with hoots and hollers. In Redding, Calif., 3,000-4000 people marched to show their opposition to listing the owl as endangered. Inside, a researcher employed by the timber industry told the hearing that spotted owls were being found in forests of all ages — not just old growth. The agency has until June 1990 to decide whether to formally list the owl.

— Jim Stiak

The writer lives in Eugene, Oregon, and is a frequent contributor to *High Country News*.

Yellowstone wildlife thrive on growing numbers of trout

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Millions of cutthroat trout are anchoring the recovery of wildlife in Yellowstone following years in which the park fishery was thought to be sliding toward collapse, biologists say.

"During the 1960s, Yellowstone Lake was in a condition known as commercial extinction," said Yellowstone's chief of research John Varley. "There's no question. The trout population in Yellowstone Lake and along the Yellowstone River was devastated."

A recent assessment of Yellowstone's world-renowned fisheries, conducted to measure the impact of last summer's forest fires, shows a dramatic resurgence of trout numbers over the last three decades, Varley said.

In Clear Creek, on the east side of Yellowstone Lake, 3,800 cutthroat trout were counted during the spawn of 1960. But with tight fishing regulations, those numbers peaked in 1989 at an average of 50,000 fish. "By anybody's measure, that's a pretty impressive comeback," Varley said.

Varley said when fish numbers were low three decades ago, bears used only 29 percent of the park's 140 stream tributaries to catch native cutthroat. Studies this year show that grizzlies now are stalking fish in 93 percent of the riverways.

Bear cinematographers Steve and Marilyn French said they watched one grizzly this summer devour 28 fish in 20

minutes. It is not uncommon, the Frenches said, to observe bears consuming as many as 80 to 100 fish over a three-hour period.

Similarly, bald eagle numbers have more than doubled since the 1960s, the osprey population is up 70 percent and the productivity among white pelicans is the highest in this century, according to field reports.

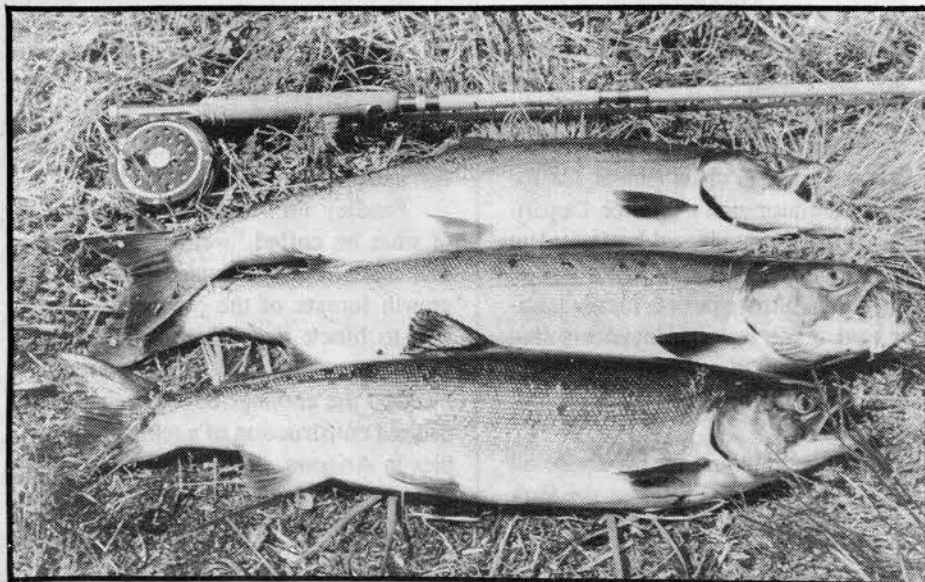
"You can't credit it all on the return of the fisheries but it makes you wonder," Varley said.

In 1986, a congressional study of the greater Yellowstone area said that fish and fish predators are viewed as scientific "barometers" for measuring the health of the local environment.

"There are more fish today and the average catchable size has noticeably increased," said fly fisherman and conservationist Bud Lilly, who has spent thousands of hours angling on the Yellowstone River. "Following a steep decline in fish productivity that began in the 1920s, researchers undertook rigid emergency measures in the early 1970s to save the Yellowstone fisheries."

Revolutionary concepts such as catch and release regulations coupled with slot limits were widely criticized as "heretical" and un-American, Varley said.

Yellowstone's catch and release program requires anglers to return some fish to the lake or stream in which they are caught. Meanwhile, slot limits



Yellowstone trout

require anglers to throw back fish which do not meet a certain size limit.

"When we started those things in 1973, we got no support from the public, the federal agencies or the scientific community," Varley said. "In fact, we were branded heretics. But today, those same regulations pioneered in Yellowstone are being adopted nationwide."

Perhaps the most controversial park action involved a ban which outlawed angling from Fishing Bridge over the Yellowstone River, a popular fishing location for visitors. Considered one of the premier spawning areas in the park,

cutthroat numbers at Fishing Bridge were almost wiped out as overfishing left few mature fish, Varley said.

Some 16 years after the ban was imposed, millions of young trout, averaging 1 1/2 pounds apiece, now swim beneath the landmark bridge. "Here we are 15 years after those regulations were first implemented and the trout population still is adjusting and recovering from the near crash," Varley said. "That tells you a little about the impact that man has on this ecosystem."

— Todd Wilkinson

CUT leader pleads guilty to conspiracy

An illegal weapons stockpiling scheme at the Church Universal and Triumphant's ranch on the edge of Yellowstone National Park apparently did not end with the conviction of the group's vice president.

On Oct. 13, the same day Ed Francis was pleading guilty, another church staffer was stopped by federal firearm agents near Moscow, Idaho. Frank Black, 29, was found with two .50-caliber Barrett long-range semi-automatic rifles. Federal officials say the Barretts are para-military weapons, capable of bringing down aircraft. Black works in the audiovisual department of CUT. He gave a false address to buy the guns, which is illegal, federal agents said.

Ed Francis, 39, CUT vice president, business manager and husband of CUT leader Elizabeth Clare "Guru Ma" Prophet, pleaded guilty Oct. 13 to federal charges of conspiracy to make false statements in the acquisition of firearms.

Earlier, longtime CUT security officer Vernon Hamilton, 42, pleaded guilty to one of four counts in connection with his arrest July 7 in Spokane, Wash. Federal agents found that Hamilton had bought over \$100,000 worth of semi-automatic assault rifles and ammunition using a false identification. Hamilton agreed to plead to the one count in exchange for testifying against Francis, who provided the money for the firearms. Hamilton received a one-month sentence.

Prosecutors will recommend that Francis be penalized with four months in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Conviction on the felony charge carries a maximum sentence of five years and a \$250,000 fine. Francis was freed on his own recognition.

Francis waived a grand jury indictment and admitted he furnished Hamilton with the cash and gold used to buy the arms and ammunition. Federal agents said Oct. 20 that Hamilton and Frank Black bought their guns from the same San Diego dealer.

Francis said the guns Hamilton bought were going to be used by the CUT staff to defend itself against foreign invasion in the event of a nuclear attack, a scenario which was part of a 1987 prediction by his wife.

Elizabeth Clare Prophet claims to have received a message from an "ascended master" warning that trouble could start early this October if the U.S. didn't have in place an anti-ballistic missile system. CUT followers have recently been feverishly building underground bomb shelters and stockpiling provisions for survival.

Guru Ma says she knew nothing of her husband's plans to buy guns, and that church money was not used for the transactions. She accompanied Francis to his hearing in Spokane, and said afterward that Francis was not acting within "the scope of his duties as an officer of the church. I stand unequivocally behind my husband and he has my full support."

U.S. Attorney Tom Rice said Francis admitted he concocted a false identity to avoid potential embarrassment, should any guns be traced back to CUT. At his hearing, Francis told the court that such discovery would subject the church to "an incredible amount of publicity, rumors and bad feelings among its neighbors," and would cause a public relations problem.

Rice said that before Francis is sentenced Dec. 15, he will be interviewed by agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and will show financial records concerning the rifles.



Elizabeth Clare Prophet at a press conference last month

"If we're satisfied with the responses of Ed Francis, then our investigation will be complete," Rice said. When asked if the Internal Revenue Service is interested in the case, Rice answered, "No comment."

Rice said most of the weapons and ammunition seized from Hamilton will be "ground up" and destroyed, except for four .308-caliber sniper rifles valued at \$2,100 each, which will be donated to the Spokane police department's SWAT team. He said the six .50 cal. Barrett long-range rifles seized "have no law enforcement value." He added that "the defendants abandoned their rights" to the \$26,000 in cash and gold seized from Hamilton. The money will be turned over to the federal government.

Francis issued a statement after his hearing that said the firearms were to "be used only for defensive purposes in the event of a war on American soil, which Vernon and I saw as a significant risk."

His statement also said, "I participated in his wrongdoing. I accept full responsibility for this involvement and I am willing to pay the consequences."

While CUT leaders insist that Francis used money from his Texas fortune to pay for the guns, that answer contradicts standard CUT procedure. CUT followers who wish to become staff members are encouraged by Elizabeth Clare Prophet to "give your all." Departed staff members claim that those who sign over their inheritances and other assets assure themselves a position quicker than those who are less generous.

Francis joined the group in 1970, when it was called Summit Lighthouse and headquartered in Colorado Springs. A native Texan, he was a student at Colorado College, a private school. When he married Elizabeth Prophet in 1981, it was his second marriage, her fourth. His ex-wife left the organization and has since spoken out against it.

Until the arrest of Hamilton in July, Francis was the most visible spokesman for CUT. Neighbors and other observers credited him for keeping the church out of legal trouble. As soon as Hamilton was arrested, Francis dropped out of public view. Erin Prophet, daughter of Elizabeth, has since made all statements to the press. However, Elizabeth Prophet says she stands behind her husband "unequivocally."

In Park County, Mont., CUT faces other problems. The state fire marshal says he is concerned about church plans

to bury large propane tanks to service the bomb shelters. County commissioners are pressing for a full-blown environmental impact statement covering CUT projects, including a planned school, and especially the bomb shelters.

"I now question whether we can work with them locally," said Commissioner Larry Lovely. "We keep asking for information and receiving none." Commissioner Carlo Cieri said the group's credibility is "terrible," and "I don't feel they are running a church anymore. It is one of the biggest scams in the country."

CUT neighbors in late September expressed concern over a published directive from ascended master El Morya for CUT followers to "continue to make calls that (church critics) be bound and held inactive and dealt with by the legions of blue flame under Archangel Michael."

El Morya also warned that "riffraff...want this organization destroyed, this Messenger stopped, this land taken from you," and that the critics "shorten their own lifestream and their own crystal cord." Erin Prophet said the message contains strictly spiritual connotations, and has "nothing to do with anybody physical." "We have never done anything harmful to anyone," she says.

Some neighbors fear that a church member could take the dictation too seriously. Julia Page of Gardiner, president of the Upper Yellowstone Defense Fund and outspoken CUT critic, said, "It sure is an ugly way to talk. It's a very hostile and ugly sentiment."

On the other hand, religious persecution reared its ugly head recently with an anonymous mailing proclaiming open season on CUT members. A hand-lettered flier announcing the "First Annual CUT Shoot!" says the shooter will receive from 10 to 50 points, depending on the victim's standing in the church. Additional points are promised for "cult folk shot while chanting in a religious fervor." Prizes will be the "self-satisfaction for cleaning out cults in Montana."

Livingston chiropractor and CUT member Dr. Paul Gamman said, "There is certainly a threat to it. I can't say that I thought somebody would show up with a shotgun, but it kept me on my toes for a while."

— Pat Dawson

HOTLINE

Denver tries water conservation

The Denver Water Department recently approved an ambitious conservation plan expected to save up to 9.4 billion gallons of water a year. The agency said it will install 63,500 water meters by 1994 and offer \$80 rebates on toilets that only use 1.6 gallons per flush. Many toilets consume 3.5 to 5 gallons per flush. Denver is also considering restructuring its rate system to discourage high water consumption. But Charlie Jordan, spokesperson for the water department, said his agency doesn't see the new program as an alternative to building the controversial Two Forks Dam, blocked by the Environmental Protection Agency (HCN, 9/11/89). "The idea of conserving water as a means of extending supply is a relatively new concept," he said. "None of our estimates suggest this will replace the need for a new water-storage facility." Environmental consultant Bob Weaver, a leader in the battle against Two Forks Dam, chose to emphasize the positive. "This is the beginning of a great plan," he said. "We've been trying to get the Denver Water Board interested in conservation for nearly 20 years."

Smithsonian and Indians agree

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., has agreed to give back some of its enormous collection of Indian remains to tribal members. The agreement removes a major stumbling block to the institution's plans for a new museum at the Smithsonian, to be called the National Museum of the American Indian. But Indian advocacy groups are pressing to help run the new museum, reports the *Washington Post*. Susan Shown Harjo, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, says, "Basically, we want the dead Indians out and the live Indians in."



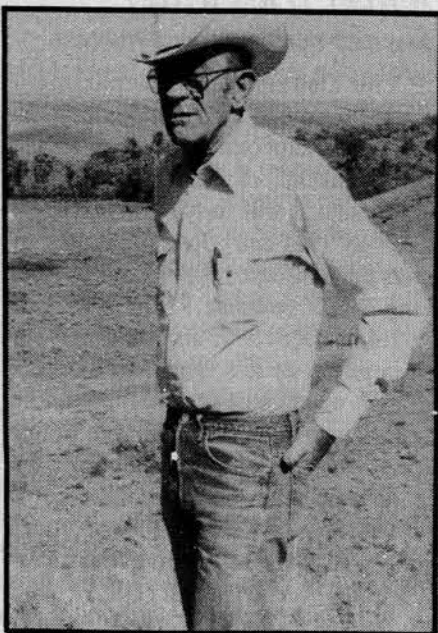
Joy Warren

Two Montana ranchers reimbursed

Defenders of Wildlife will pay two Montana ranchers for livestock killed by wolves. The idea is to "shift any economic burden associated with wolf recovery away from livestock producers and onto the willing shoulders of wolf supporters across the country," says Hank Fischer, the nonprofit group's Northern Rockies field representative. He says Defenders will pay approximately \$1,700 to two ranchers west of Kalispell to compensate for the losses of one cow and seven calves. The cow, identified by animal damage control specialists as a verified loss to wolves, will be compensated at market value. The calves, only "probable" losses to wolves, will be compensated at 50 percent of market value. Thus far Defenders has raised \$50,000 of a targeted \$100,000 for its compensation fund. While some provinces in Canada and the state of Minnesota offer publicly funded compensation programs for wolf damage to livestock, Defenders of Wildlife has begun the only privately funded program, Fischer says.

6-High Country News — October 23, 1989

Grass-eating tanks are fought by ranchers in Montana



Rancher Bill Cornwell

GLASGOW, Mont. — Bill Cornwell picks up a deer hunter's rifle cartridge as he looks over the grasslands where his father established a sheep ranch in 1892.

Aside from hunters and a few ranchers, there's been little human use of these lands since they were wrested from the Plains Indians more than 100 years ago. That means, like other remote lands in the West, that they have become attractive sites for training soldiers.

Fighters and bombers are already authorized to fly as low as 100 yards above the ground while they practice evading radar close to the northeast border of Montana.

The Montana Air National Guard, which flies its F-16s in the 120-mile by 40-mile military air space, now wants approval to practice shooting at targets towed behind airplanes. That would require temporarily closing an 18- by 20-mile training area where stray bullets could land.

That proposal was recently expanded to 1,500 square miles. The request came from Montana Gov. Stan Stephens, R., and Adjutant Gen. Gary Blair of the Montana National Guard.

Col. George Donnelly, project coordinator for the huge military training center, says it would allow the Montana Guard's tank brigade to train within the state, saving money and keeping training dollars at home. In addition, since areas near existing training centers in the Southwest are becoming more urbanized, other military units may want to bring their training dollars to Montana, Donnelly said.

The National Guard isn't proposing a military withdrawal of the area, Donnelly said. Instead, it hopes to accommodate the 120 ranchers and the hunters who now use the area. No training would be conducted during hunting season, he said, and the Guard could help ranchers build roads, fix fences and develop water for cattle.

Donnelly said the instructions he has received are: "It's got to be good for everybody and make money for Montana."

A trial run this summer, however, pointed out some problems. From four to seven tanks trained for six weekends on about 1,000 acres of land owned by Valley County.

Because soils in the area are fragile, the Soil Conservation Service advised the Guard to keep tanks off slopes steeper than 5 percent, stay out of wetlands and travel at reduced speed on slopes of from 2 to 5 percent, said Tim Julander, of the service's Glasgow office.

On the first weekend, a tank ended up stuck in a wetland. A vehicle known

as a tank retriever was needed to get it out.

About 100 ranchers and area residents visited the training site late this summer during a tour sponsored by the National Guard. Tank tracks ran up and down coulee bottoms and along side-hills. Wherever the tanks turned, their metal treads ripped through the sod, exposing bare ground.

"I think that the typical livestock producer was reserving his opinion until after they toured the area that was impacted," said Steve Page, who ranches on lands included within the training area. "I haven't talked to a single producer that was favorably impressed."

Destruction — not impacts

Bill Cornwell also ranches on lands that would be included within the training center. Although the military speaks of its "impact" on the land, Cornwell uses the word "destruction."

"I feel we have a general responsibility to explain to the people what's going to take place here," he said. "I'm really concerned about the destruction of the resource."

During meetings, the National Guard assured ranchers that tanks don't eat grass, Cornwell said. After seeing the results of the summer's maneuvers, Cornwell said, he figures tanks have two mouths, each about 24 inches wide, that gobble grass at 45 miles an hour.

"If any other multiple-user treated the terrain like that, they'd be quick-kicked out of the picture," Cornwell said. "You never hear anything about the Guard driving over a crop. They completely overlook the fact that the grass is a crop."

Soils in northern Valley County are covered with club moss that inhibits water from getting into the ground. Lands that were plowed during the homestead era still produce more than 25 percent more grass than unplowed grasslands, said John Fahlgren, a supervisory range conservationist for the BLM in Glasgow. However, success is dependent on getting vegetation re-established before the loose soil is blown or washed away, he cautioned.

In southern Valley County soils are even more fragile. A lone cow sometimes stirs dust as it grazes. "This is an extremely fragile soil type," said rancher Page. "When it gets skinned up, very likely it will not recover, at least within a lifetime."

Gravel roads will be built for tank travel during maneuvers in the southern area, Donnelly said. The area will also be used for gunnery exercises involving artillery, helicopters, tanks and airplanes. Although a large area will have to be closed for safety during the exercises, exploding ammunition will be fired only in an area of 3,500 to 5,000 acres, he said.

The "strong" grass of south Valley County puts 350 pounds of red meat on a yearling steer over a summer, Page said. But the grass is far from abundant. The Bureau of Land Management figures it takes 10 acres to feed a cow for a month.

"This country would not stand continuous high-level grazing, just like it's not going to stand high-level military training," Page said.

Few residents in the area

The proposed training area in south Valley County has no year-round residents and just a few dirt tracks besides the main gravel road. A buffalo would still recognize these rolling grasslands as home. Essentially the area is an undesigned wilderness, Page said.

"But you bring 300 tracked vehicles, 3,500 men, 700 wheeled vehicles, it ain't going to be a wilderness no more," he said.

Page's ranch uses a team and wagon when fixing fence or making other improvements. Roads contribute to erosion problems as does off-road vehicle use, he said.

"We recognize that too much off-road travel out here is already having an adverse impact," Page said. "Now we're looking with this Guard proposal at an impact that is beyond anything we can comprehend."

Although the BLM has no wilderness study areas in the southern portion of the proposed training center, the 60,000-acre Bitter Creek wilderness study area is within the northern portion. Congress would have to release Bitter Creek from study status before tanks could train there.

The fate of Glasgow, a town of 3,800, has been closely tied to federal projects since construction of Fort Peck Dam in the 1930s. An air base was at Glasgow in World War II, followed by a fighter and bomber base northeast of Glasgow that closed in 1968. Now the town's economy is primarily dependent on agriculture and its hospital.

Beverly Hartsock, who works as a dispatcher in the Valley County sheriff's office, says Glasgow needs the training center.

"The people that have cattle don't care at all about anyone else," Hartsock said. "They're not thinking about the business in town or the jobs it would create to keep our young people here."

One rancher points out that his operation alone contributes more than \$4 million a year to the economy. Steve Page said, "Virtually every dollar that we generate is spent here locally."

The Bureau of Land Management was already working on an environmental impact statement when the expanded military center was proposed. Issues involving BLM lands before the military entered the picture concerned off-road vehicle use, management of prairie dogs, possible reintroduction of black-footed ferrets, management of wetlands and riparian areas, oil and gas leasing, and techniques to improve forage production.

The lands in the proposed 572,660-acre maneuver area northwest of Glasgow are 62 percent owned by the BLM, 23 percent privately owned, 14 percent state owned and 1 percent owned by Valley County. The lands in the proposed 408,706-acre firing and maneuver area to the southwest are 89 percent owned by the BLM, 6 percent state owned and 5 percent privately owned. Of the 1.02 million acres of BLM land in Valley County, 720,000 acres would be included within the military training center.

The proposal avoids an adjacent county where the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets is proposed, and lands to the south used by elk living on the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. But wildlife is abundant on lands within the proposed training center.

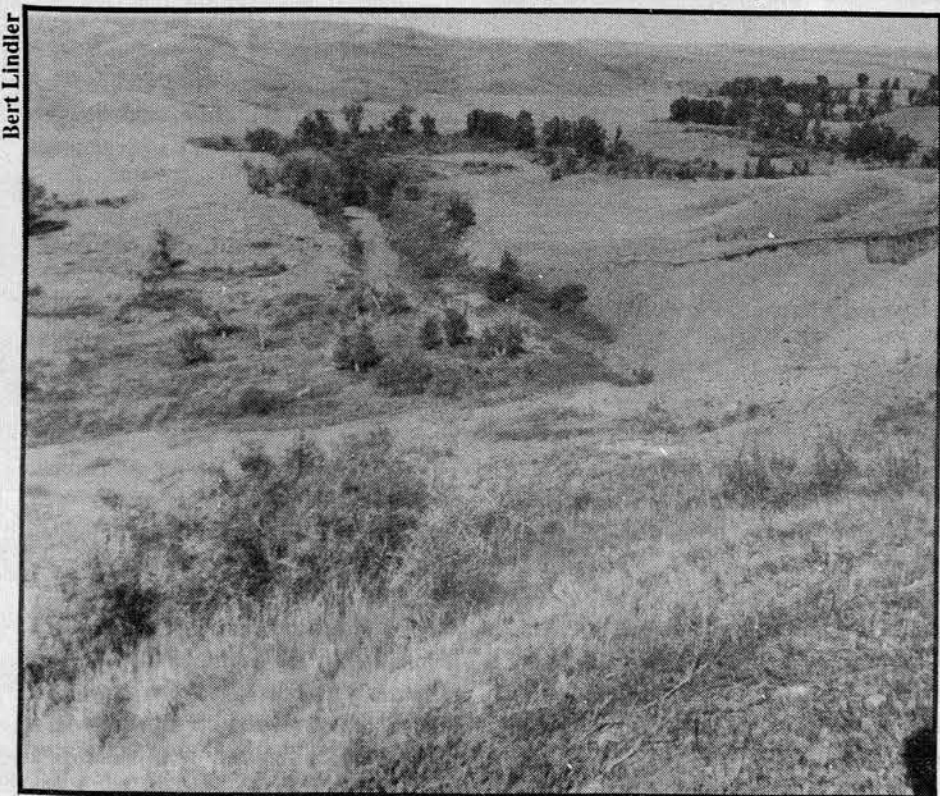
More than 1,000 deer have been counted wintering in the Bitter Creek area of north Valley County, and the counts probably miss half the deer, said Harold Wentland, regional wildlife manager for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Glasgow. In south Valley County, antelope are doing so well that the number of permits issued to hunters has been increased from 800 to 1,000 to 1,500.

There are numerous sharp-tailed grouse dancing grounds in north Valley County and numerous sage grouse dancing grounds in south Valley County. Male grouse strut their stuff on the dancing grounds each spring in hopes of attracting females.

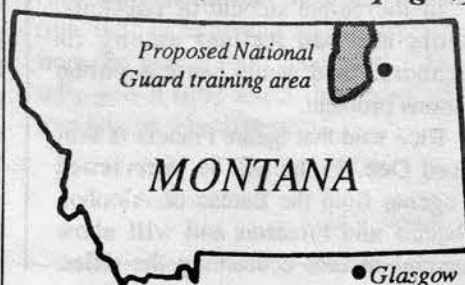
Chuck Griffith is the National Wildlife Federation's regional representative for Montana, Utah and Idaho. Based in Bozeman, Mont., he sees the military training center proposal as part of a larger attempt to convert public land to military uses throughout the West.

The Navy displaced 150 ranchers when it set up a four million-acre aerial exercise range around Fallon, Nev., Griffith said. In southwest Idaho, the Air Force wants to withdraw 1.4 million acres of BLM land to expand the existing 102,000-acre Saylor Creek Bombing Range. Four hearings on that proposal

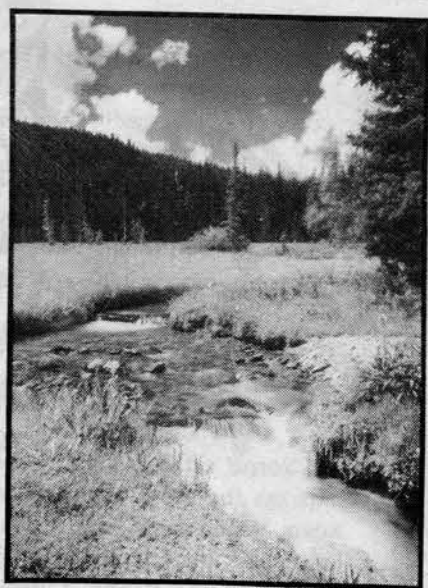
(Continued on page 7)



Rolling country of eastern Montana where the National Guard wants to do military exercises



BULLETIN BOARD



Rim country, Arizona

THEY CARE IN ARIZONA

A new conservation group called the White Mountain Conservation League has been formed in east-central Arizona. Jane Hoffman, the group's founder, said that members will watch over the section of Mogollon Rim country extending from Reserve, N.M., to the other side of Heber, Ariz. "We are monitoring timber sales, grazing leases and water management as these have a direct effect on wildlife habitat," said Hoffman. The league is also fighting to have the Blue Range Primitive Area in eastern Arizona granted wilderness status. Hoffman said she and her husband Don felt an active group voicing environmental concerns was necessary to balance the powerful timber and ranching lobbies. "At the meetings to determine timber sales," Hoffman said, "there has been ample representation of the timber and rancher interests but no one speaking out for environmental concerns." After living on the Blue River for 13 years, Hoffman said she assumed there was little local support for environmental issues. But the league has attracted 100 members, convincing Hoffman that "there are people here who care about the environment." The league recently produced a video on the Blue Range Primitive Area that was presented at the recent Wilderness Act celebration near Silver City, N.M. For more information about the White Mountain Conservation League, write c/o Jane Hoffman, Box 164, Alpine, AZ 85920.

Tanks...

(Continued from page 6)

attracted nearly 1,000 persons. Nearly all of those testifying denounced the proposal.

"You're talking about almost a million acres of land," Griffith said of the proposed training center in Valley County. "It's almost inconceivable that the National Guard needs that for tank maneuvers."

The National Guard is suggesting five alternatives for review in the BLM's management plan scheduled for publication in draft form by January or February 1991. They are:

- The roughly one million-acre training center as proposed;
- No training center;
- A training center of reduced size;
- Only an aerial training center; or
- Only a maneuver training center.

"There is a low-level amount that can be designed to fit in with the multiple-use concept," said the BLM's Fahlgren. "I'd say it's a far, far cry in my mind from the current proposal."

For more information or to comment on the Judith, Valley, Phillips Resource Management Plan, write BLM Lewistown District, 80 Airport Road, Lewistown, MT 59457. The BLM says comments are most useful if received by Nov. 17.

— Bert Lindler

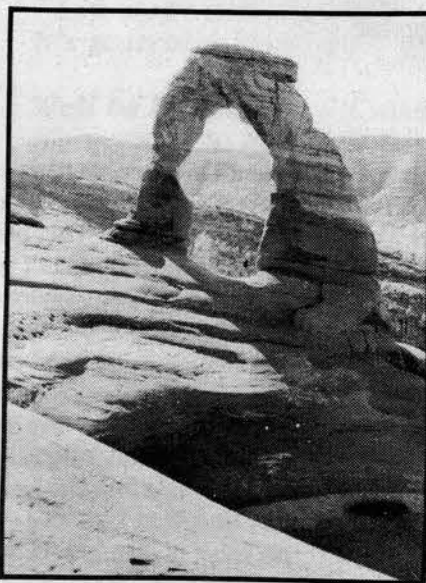
FARMER-TO-FARMER

The Alternative Energy Resources Organization, based in Helena, Mont., tackled a large project during 1987-88. It surveyed 489 Western farmers about their various goals and practices, then gathered the 188 responses into *AERO's Guide to Sustainable Agriculture in the Northern Rockies and Plains*. Edited by Nancy Matheson, this manual studies "closed-circle" farming that relies less on manufactured products derived from non-renewable resources than on organic products and practices. The bulk of the *Guide* is a directory of the respondents, including their addresses, crop and livestock descriptions, farming practices and individual commentary. Both the good judgment and the mistakes of these farmers are there for the taking, encouraging readers to discriminate and choose what works best in a wide range of circumstances.

Alternative Energy Resources Organization, 44 N. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601. Paper: \$7. 100 pages. Includes tables, appendices and bibliography.

OIL RESERVES DECLINE

At the current rate of consumption, the life expectancy of American oil resources, known and unknown, has slipped from 37 years to 26, according to the first Interior Department study on the subject since 1981. The amount of known oil reserves has hovered near 30 billion barrels for most of the 1980s, but the new estimates say the nation has only an additional 49 billion barrels of accessible crude. Eight years ago estimates of unknown crude were set at 83 billion barrels. But estimates dropped this year because fields previously listed as unknown have been discovered and re-recorded as known. Also, promising areas such as the Overthrust Belt of the Rocky Mountains have been abandoned as too expensive or too difficult to explore. The new estimate "clearly is a decline," Deputy Secretary of Energy Henson Moore told the *New York Times*. Copies of the report, titled *Estimates of the Undiscovered Conventional Oil and Gas Resources in the United States — A part of the Nation's Energy Endowment*, are available free by writing the U.S. Geological Survey, Books and Open-File Reports Section, Federal Center, Box 25425, Denver, CO 80225.



Elliott Bernshaw

Delicate Arch, Arches National Park, Utah

FOR ARCH ADMIRERS

The Natural Arch and Bridge Society offers an opportunity for arch enthusiasts to unite. Formed in Colorado Springs, Colo., a year ago by aerospace engineer Jay Wilbur and geologist Danny Horowitz, the society is a nonprofit organization with about 100 members. It aims to create a network of people interested in natural arches and bridges across the country while also engaging in some political advocacy. Last June, for example, it joined Utah and Arizona wilderness groups to support bills currently before Congress that would establish large wilderness areas in both states. The society's first national convention is set for May 1990, in Grand Junction, Colo. For more information or a copy of the society's newsletter, *SPAN*, contact Jay H. Wilbur, The Natural Arch and Bridge Society, P.O. Box 26236, Colorado Springs, CO 80936 (719/590-5114).



THE REAL COSTS

The Forest Service justifies below-cost timber sales by citing their benefits elsewhere. The agency says logging allows recreational access, increases water runoff, promotes wildlife abundance and keeps a forest healthy and vigorous. But a new report by The Wilderness Society, *The Uncounted Costs of Logging*, finds that the Forest Service systematically overstates these benefits. Far from increasing their economic value, logging actually does more harm than good to forest resources, the report contends. The fifth in a series on national forest issues, the report also makes policy recommendations designed to shift the focus of the Forest Service away from timber harvests. Those recommendations include requiring the agency to make money on its timber sales, increasing its conservation staff and allowing it to charge fees for recreational uses. For a copy of the report, send \$5 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling to The Wilderness Society, attn: Publications, 1400 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202/842-3400).

GEOLOGISTS MASS

More than 5,000 geologists will discuss such topics as mass extinctions, the exploration of the solar system, geological mapping and human influence on the Mississippi River at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America. The meeting is set for St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 6-9, and will feature 19 symposia and 27 theme sessions, as well as exhibits, field trips and special courses. To register, call Sandra Rush at 303/447-2020.

GREEN POWER

According to political scientist Robert C. Paehlke, environmentalism may be the first original ideology to develop since socialism emerged in the mid-19th century. In *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics*, Paehlke discusses values associated with the environmental movement and explains how they can be applied to issues such as unemployment and the arms race. The author, who teaches at Ontario's Trent University, says even environmentalists underestimate their role in shaping modern politics. One of the handicaps environmentalism faces, he says, is that it offers little personal economic gain. Paehlke discusses in detail the changes needed to give the movement a following large enough to make it a strong political force.

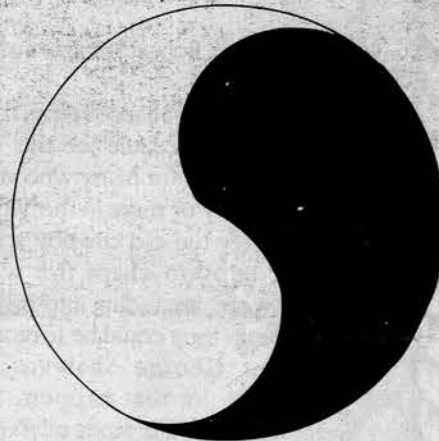
Yale University Press, 92A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520. Cloth: \$25. 325 pages.

NEW OFFICE IN LANDER

The Nature Conservancy opened its new Wyoming office in Lander Oct. 11. Ben Pierce, who worked for the group in Montana for four years, will serve as the director of the new office, which joins conservancy programs in 48 states and seven Latin American countries. Pierce said his goals are to "identify those species, communities and ecosystems that are rare and do our best to protect them here in Wyoming." The office's key projects include protecting critical bighorn sheep habitat around Whiskey Mountain, riparian communities on the east slope of the Bighorns and around Casper Mountain, and private parcels within and around the Yellowstone ecosystem. The Wyoming field office is at 258 Main St., Lander, WY 82520 (307/332-2971).

SIGN UP FOR WILDERNESS

The Colorado Environmental Coalition, Sierra Club and Wilderness Society have kicked off a petition drive in support of a 751,368-acre wilderness bill introduced by the state's Democratic Sen. Tim Wirth. Petitions have been sent to the leaders and members of conservation groups around the state, and organizers hope to present 20,000 signatures to the state's congressional delegation during a rally planned for Oct. 28. "It is time to hit the streets and show Colorado's congressional delegation how the people of the state feel toward additional wilderness," said Darrell Knuffke, central Rockies regional director of The Wilderness Society. Organizers say that their offices have been receiving up to 100 signed petitions daily for several weeks. For more information, contact Kirk Koepsel, Colorado Environmental Coalition, 777 Grant, Suite 606, Denver, CO 80203 (303/837-8701).



SACRED LAND

Dolores LaChapelle is many things — historian, poet, Native American scholar and mountaineer. To say she is widely read is an understatement. In her new book, *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex, Rapture of the Deep*, she draws on many perspectives to explore the philosophy of deep ecology, a belief in the equality of all living things. "Obviously, the task is too much for one person," she says, "but at least it's a beginning and others can carry on from here." She begins with Plato and interweaves ideas from philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Arne Naess. Then she adds Native American and Asian philosophies to reveal our roots in the "old ways" of primitive cultures. The provocative title, which she admits seemed outrageous at first, summarizes her vision by evoking the sanctity of the earth, the continuity of life and the rich connection between the two. LaChapelle is the director of the Way of the Mountain Earth Center in Silverton, Colo., a small mountain town.

Finn Hill Arts, Box 542, Silverton, CO 81433. Paper: \$22.95. 383 pages. Includes definition of terms, appendices, reference notes, bibliography and index.

WANTED: WESTERN WRITERS

If you are an undiscovered writer and live west of the Mississippi River, then the Western Writers of America Spur Awards may be your ticket. Contest organizers have created 10 categories for awards, including best novel or short fiction set in the West; best western or short western; best non-fiction about the West; and best Western cover art. Book reviewers and writers from throughout the region have been selected as judges. Entries are due by Dec. 31. Finalists will be announced next spring and recognized in June at the Western Writers' convention in San Angelo, Texas. For information write Jeannie Williams, Box 335, Portal, AZ 85632 (602/558-2436).

Oldtime Cowboy Ballad

*"Ob, it's Little Joe the Wrangler,
He'll wrangle never more,
His days with the ramada,
they are o'er.
Was a year ago last April
When he rode into our
town,
Just a little Texas stray and
all alone.
Was late in the evening
when he rode up to the
herd
On a little brown pony he
called Shaw.
With his brogan shoes and
overalls
A tough looking kid you
never in your life before
bad saw."*

by Roberta Donovan

Cowboy ballads such as this plaintive tale about Little Joe the Wrangler stir memories for many who've spent a half century or more in the West.

Today the old cowboy songs, like the sheepskin chaps the wranglers once wore, are fading into history. In a few years they could be forgotten.

But George Shawver doesn't intend to let that happen. Shawver records and sells tapes of the old ballads and poems that were once a part of the West.

It would be hard to find anyone with a better background for the task. Shawver has spent his life on the Missouri River "breaks" or badlands of eastern Montana. And he has learned the old-time cowboy ballads from his father and grandfather who lived there before him.

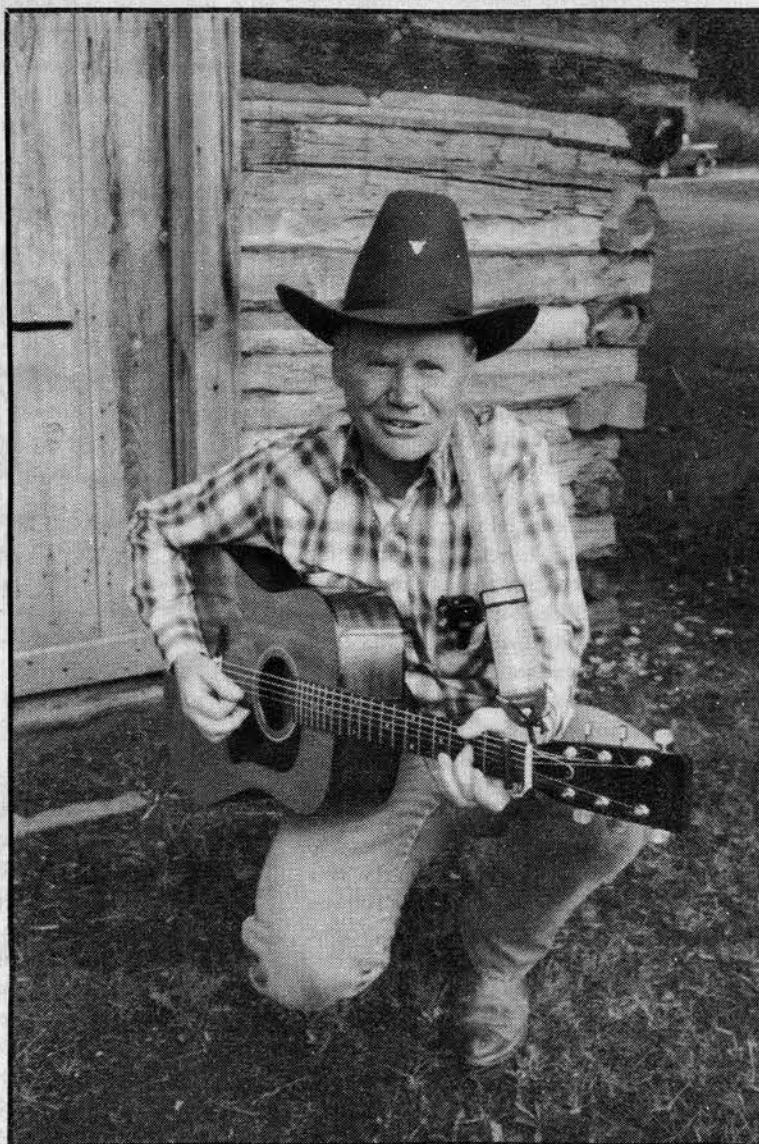
Shawver is the third generation of his family on a 9,000-acre cattle ranch near Brusett, northwest of Jordan. His home is on Squaw Creek, near where it flows into the Missouri. The area is still so untamed that he has to buck 12 miles of dirt road out of the steep breaks before he can get to an all-weather road. In wet weather, the gumbo mud leaves him no choice but to stay home.

Shawver's grandparents on both sides of his family homesteaded in the area and it has always been home to him.

He grew up riding and breaking horses.

"Part of the years when I was growing up, we didn't have an automobile," he said. "We did most of our traveling and visiting on horseback. We even went to the county fair on horseback. They (the horses) were an important part of our life and they still are, but not to the extent they were when we were growing up."

When Shawver was 16, he hired out to the big Wittmyer Ranch south of Glasgow.



George Shawver with his guitar

"Theirs was about as close to the old time roundup as I have been on," he said. "We slept out under the stars. I broke horses for them in the spring and at branding time I rode the rough string for them."

While Shawver was riding and roping, he discovered that he also had a strong interest in the music that is so much a part of the Old West.

"I learned to love cowboy ballads while I was breaking horses and chasing cows in the river breaks," he said.

When Shawver was about 12 years old, he and his younger brother each received a guitar. He enjoyed playing and even played in a few jam sessions. But eventually other interests took over.

"I got away from the music," he said. "I guess I didn't realize the value of it as my heritage."

Years passed and about five years ago Shawver once more became interested in the old cowboy songs and recognized a need to preserve them before it was too late.

"I realized they were really being lost," he said, "so I brushed up on my guitar again and I re-learned some of the words to the old songs. I decided to put them on tape and share them

with friends in other places."

Lots of research and hard work followed. Copies of the old songs have been hard to find, but gradually he is building up a library of cowboy music and poetry.

His interest in the old songs has led to a small business of producing and selling tapes of cowboy ballads.

Shawver is frequently called upon to perform in Montana and other states.

He spent two summers as the featured cowboy singer at the Cody Night Rodeo in Wyoming, performing every evening for almost three months. At the same time, he was performing daily at a motel in Cody.

Shawver was invited to the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nev., in January 1986, where he read poetry and played music for about 12,000 people.

This year he was invited to the Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Big Timber in August.

Shawver's guitar style is one he developed. He has been told by folklorists that his style of picking the melody while strumming chords — much as a piano is played — is similar to that used on early recordings of cowboy music.

Some of Shawver's favorite ballads on the tapes include Strawberry Roan, When the Work's All Done This Fall, Red River Valley, Buffalo Gals, Home on the Range, Old Blue (or Eighty Miles on Sands Without Water), True Blue Bill (or Where Rattlesnakes Have Legs) and, of course, Little Joe the Wrangler.

The tapes also include some pieces Shawver has written.

One of Shawver's originals, "Springtime in the Badlands," is reminiscent of the area he calls home. It tells of the crocus in bloom, the song of the meadowlark and a crippled cowboy who has been laid up all winter but is now able to ride again.

Among the cowboy poems Shawver has taped, "Sheriff Hank's Last Ride" was found in an old sheep wagon, written on the back of tomato can labels. It is the story of an early-day Chouteau County sheriff who rode against cattle rustlers. Shawver said his research indicates the story is true.

All of Shawver's tapes are suitable for family listening.

"The old time cowboys never sang off-color songs in public," he said. "If we are going to preserve the heritage they left, we need to consider their manners. They were gentlemen in front of women and children. If they weren't, they might have hung them at sunrise."

He's had some help in the time-consuming task he set for himself.

"People have been real helpful to share old song books and copies of old song sheets," he said. "Sometimes they write down the words as they remember them."

"But my best resource has been my Dad," he said. "He had memorized many of these old time ballads and he still sings them today."

Shawver's wife, Lucy, not only helps with research and production of the tapes, but she helped design their catalog.

Shawver said he hopes that his songs will catch on with young people, because they can pass the ballads on to future generations.

Shawver can be reached at Box 44, Brusett, Montana 59318.

□

Roberta Donovan is a freelance writer living in Lewistown, Montana.

THE STRAWBERRY ROAN

*I was a layin' round town, a spendin' my time
All out of a job, and not makin' a dime,
When a feller steps up and he says I suppose,
Your a bronc rider from the looks of your clothes.*

*Well you guesses me right, and a good one I'll claim,
Do you happen to have any bad ones to tame.
Well he says he's got one that's a bad one to buck,
At throwin' good riders, he's bad lots of luck.*

*He says this old pony ain't never been rode,
The guy that gets on him is sure to be throwed.
I gets all excited, and asked what he'd pay,
To ride this old pony a couple of days.*

*He offered a ten spot, I says I'm your man,
The bronc never lived, that I couldn't fan.
No the bronc never tried, nor he never drew breath,
That I couldn't ride till he starved plumb to death.*

*Well he says get your saddle, I'll give you a chance,
And we got in the buckboard and drove to the ranch.
I waited till mornin' and right after chuck,
I went out to see if that pony could buck.*

*Down in the horse corral, a standin' alone,
Was this little cabayo, a strawberry roan.
He had little pin ears that touched at the tips,
and a big 44 branded on his left hip.*

*His legs were all spavined, he's got pigeon toes,
Little pig eyes and a big roman nose.
He was U-necked and old with a long lower jaw,
You could tell with one eye he's a regular outlaw.*

*I buckled on my spurs, I'm feelin' fine,
I pulled down my hat and coiled up my twine,
when I throwed the loop on him,
right well I knowed then,
That before he gets rode, I'd sure earn my ten.*

*Well I gets the blind on him, it's a terrible fight,
Then comes the saddle, I screws 'er down tight.
Then steps in his middle, and pulls off the blind,
It's watchout boys, he's gonna unwind.*

*Well he bowed his old neck, I'll say he unwound,
He seemed to quit livin' down there on the ground.
He went up in the east and come down in the west,
To set in his middle, I'm a doin' my best.*

*He sure was frog walkin', I beaved a big sigh,
He only lacked wings, to be on the fly.
He turned his old belly, right up to the sun,
For he was a sunfishin', son of a gun.*

*He was about the worst buckner, I've seen on the range,
He'd turn on a nickle and leave you some change.
And while he's a buckin' he squealed like a shoat,
Let me tell you that outlaw's a gettin' my goat.*

*Well I'll tell all you people, that outlaw can step,
But I'm right in his middle a buildin a rep.
He came down on all fours and turned on his side,
I don't see how he kept from losin his hide.*

*Well I loses both stirrups and also my bat,
I'm a clawin' for leather as blind as a bat.
With a phenomenal jump, he made a high dive,
And he left me a sittin' way up in the sky.*

*Well I turned over twice, and I came back to earth,
And I set in to cussin' the day of his birth.
Well I'll say there're some ponies that I cannot ride.
There's some of them livin', they haven't all died.*

*But I'll bet all my money, there's no man alive,
That can ride ol' Strawberry, when he makes that high dive.*

Hells Canyon...

(Continued from page 1)

But the most volatile fights take place several thousand feet above the Snake River on the Oregon rims and along the banks of the Imnaha River. Here, where the Forest Service has been ordered by Congress to emphasize scenic, wilderness and recreational uses, logging is dominant, and becoming more so.

Logging ancient forests of Ponderosa pine, spruce, larch and fir is accelerating this year, as the agency salvages trees from a spruce bark-beetle epidemic and a major fire. Overall, the Forest Service has sold more than 100 million board-feet since the recreation area's creation in 1975.

Timber cutting has moved fast, but it took until 1984 for the first road signs marking entries to the Hells Canyon Natural Recreation Area. And it took until 1988 for the agency to start work on a visitor center in Enterprise, Ore., and to begin to improve the first six miles of the tire-gouging, 25-mile road to Hat Point — the lookout into the deepest part of the canyon.

The result has been confusion for visitors, who expect paved roads, interpretive signs, campground programs and other amenities found at national scenic wonders like Yellowstone. Instead, they encounter campgrounds surrounded by clear-cuts along the Imnaha River and travel delays caused by logging operations.

Tourists, local residents, conservation groups and timber industry alike appear generally disenchanted with Hells Canyon's management.

Mill managers, for example, complain about unreliable timber supplies from the recreation area. During a 1986 heated debate over a bill sponsored by

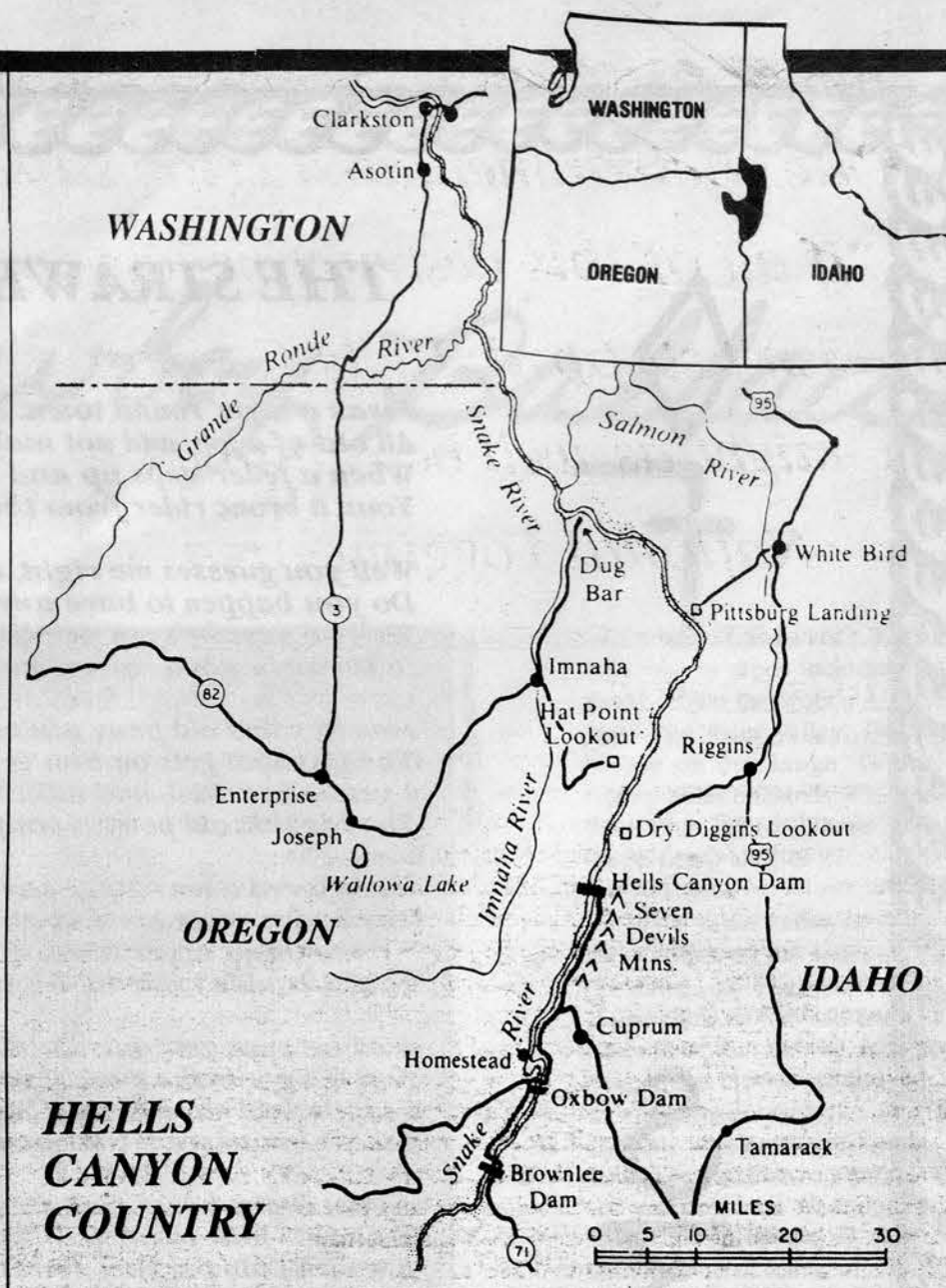
Sen. Bob Packwood of Oregon that would have placed strict limits on Hells Canyon logging, timber industry interests rallied. They formed two groups, People First! and SOS (Save Our Snake from wilderness), which helped to defeat the bill. Since then, the groups have been quiescent.

Persistent regional conservation groups such as the Hells Canyon Preservation Council and Oregon Natural Resources Council accuse the Forest Service of dishing up timber sales as if no recreation-area boundary existed.

Thus far, the local and regional groups have had to fight alone. National conservation groups are aware of the Hells Canyon situation but have stayed out of the fight.

Perhaps the best-informed group is National Audubon Society. Its vice president for national affairs, Brock Evans, cut his teeth as an environmentalist on the Hells Canyon Dam issue. He still cares deeply about the area, although he is dismayed by the results of the 1975 law creating the NRA. The bill stopped the dams, but appears to have created a timber preserve, he said from his Washington, D.C. office. He added that Forest Service ideology serves logging interests first, even in an area such as Hells Canyon, where the agency has a chance to prove its ability to manage recreation, fish and wildlife. Only by making Hells Canyon a "national cause celebre" will the Forest Service be forced to stop full-scale logging, Evans predicted.

The lack of involvement by national groups has left the fight to regional con-



servation groups. They have appealed more than 30 timber sales, all unsuccessfully, and sued the Forest Service both to stop a sale and to challenge management policies.

"You can't drive on any road on this national recreation area that has trees alongside of it without seeing stumps, slash piles, skid trails or ripped-up vegetation," said Ric Bailey of Enterprise, Ore., a town of 2,000.

Bailey is one of the most active members of Hells Canyon Preservation

Council, a group that led the effort to establish the recreation area in the late 1960s and then re-formed in 1987 to protest management practices.

Forest Service managers say that their 1984 approved plan for Hells Canyon (now part of the Wallowa Whitman Forest Plan) keeps timber sales within the Hells Canyon NRA Act's intent. They point to the act's seventh objective: it allows timber-cutting by selective means (no clear-cuts), and mining and grazing if they are compatible



David Tanzey, owner of the Imnaha Store and Tavern, on the dirt road to Hat Point Lookout.

Deborah Ritchie

Jet boats clash with rafts

While logging is the most visible controversy within Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, it is not the only one.

Within the main river canyon, jet boaters and jet skiers bounce over the whitewater at will. Their political power is such that the management plan gives the motorized users essentially free run of the river, while non-motorized rafters and kayakers must apply for permits six months in advance and then are limited to five launches per day (with a maximum of 30 people per launch). The first 67 of the 100 miles of free-flowing river between dams is designated a federal wild and scenic river.

"The situation is tailor-made for animosity," said Pete Gross, a river guide for Northwest Dorries and a 12-year veteran of trips through Hells Canyon. "It's taken concerted efforts by both parties to respect each other and be courteous."

Several commercial jet boat and float companies have put aside differences to unite against a planned recreational-vehicle campground in the heart of the canyon at Pittsburg Landing, the major access point by road from Idaho. Managers say improvements will solve overuse, but outfitters fear the development will

encourage more crowding and endanger a major Indian prehistoric site. The Forest Service has recorded vandalism on 182 sites in the culturally rich canyon.

On another front, recreationists have complained that the Forest Service has failed to prevent cattle and sheep from overgrazing popular campsites, scenic overlooks and springs. Domestic sheep also threaten the three bands of bighorn sheep on the Oregon side. Domestic sheep can infect bighorns with a bacteria that leads to fatal pneumonia.

Ranchers who lease the grazing lands, however, consider themselves good stewards carrying on a century-old tradition. They fear that the "recreation" designation may some day force them out.

One controversy was resolved last November, when Congress voted to ban all dam building on the 34 miles of unprotected Snake River, as well as on the lower Salmon. Sen. James McClure and Rep. Larry Craig, both Idaho Republicans, introduced the legislation in response to a Connecticut-based power company's application to build two dams near Asotin, Wash., just downstream from Hells Canyon.

—D.R.

*One environmentalist critic said,
'If all of this destructive logging
isn't stopped, Hells Canyon
might as well be renamed a
National Logging Area.'*

Hells Canyon . . .

(Continued from page 10)

with all other provisions.

"One of the compromises of this NRA is the timber compromise — as plain as the nose on your face," said Robert M. Richmond, supervisor of Oregon's Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, which has jurisdiction over Hells Canyon, including those parts of the NRA that are in Idaho's Nez-perce and Payette national forests.

The dilemma of running a national recreation area that allows logging appears increasingly difficult to resolve. Though the Forest Service has allocated just 12 percent of the total recreation area for timber cutting, the targeted area represents one-third of the forested lands. It includes the Imnaha River, producer of Oregon's biggest spring and summer Chinook salmon. More than 700 Chinook returned from the ocean to spawn there in 1988.

From the perspective of conservation groups appealing timber sales, logging already has done considerable damage. They cite as examples the following:

- 1982 — Loggers dragged trees through the Lick Creek tributary of the Imnaha River as salmon attempted to spawn;

- 1985 — Large, rectangular clear-cuts near the scenic Hat Point Road appeared as a result of a sale intended only to salvage dead trees uprooted by

storms. A Portland television news team filmed loggers clear-cutting live trees within this former roadless area on Horse Creek, which flows into the Imnaha River;

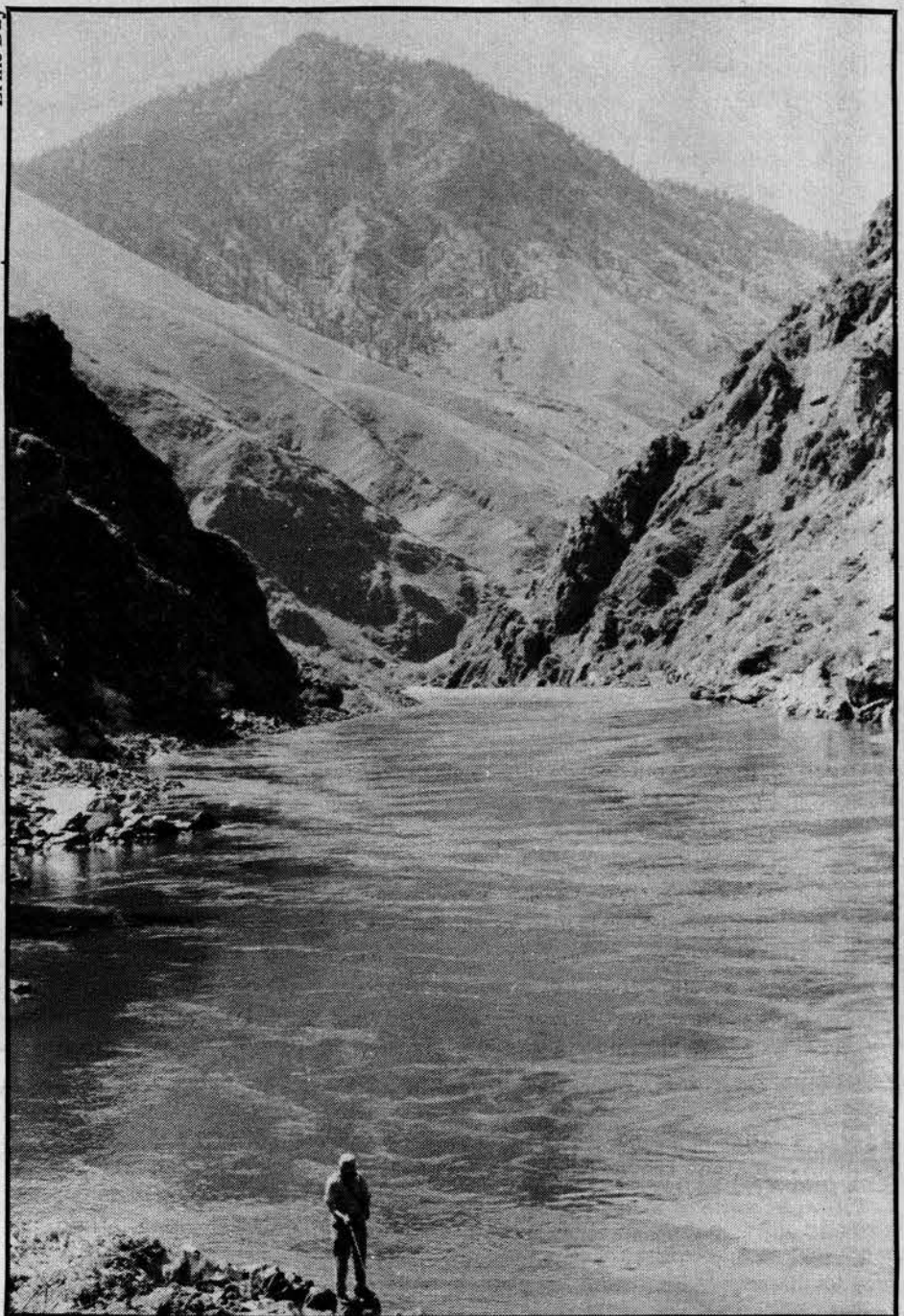
- 1988 — The Skook timber sale in the upper Imnaha watershed eradicated a historic trail and removed old-growth pines, larch and standing dead trees important to woodpeckers and owls. Engineering mistakes caused some new roads to be built twice as wide as specified in the contract; and

- 1988 to 1989 — The Forest Service chose to virtually clear-cut Lick Creek campground to remove dying spruce trees rather than move the campsites to a location where campers would be safe from falling trees. Three other campgrounds on the Imnaha River were also logged heavily over the summer.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has criticized the Hells Canyon Forest Service staff for building too many roads, all for logging. Biologists fear the 725 miles of maintained roads may have already infringed too much on habitat for one of the largest, free-roaming elk herds in the lower 48 states.

The Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission, a coalition of Nez-perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakima tribes, videotaped areas of the upper Imnaha River where they believe logging has threatened salmon spawning grounds protected by an 1855 treaty. The treaty assures the tribes the right to protect fisheries in the Columbia system from damaging land practices. The commission also appealed two timber sales.

Ernie Day



Hells Canyon

"The treaty is very strong," said Allen Pinkham, chairman of the Nez-perce Tribal Executive Committee. "We need to exert that power to preserve the fishing — not just the right to fish, but the right to have the fish back."

Tim Lillebo, field coordinator for the Oregon Natural Resources Council, contends that ill-conceived and poorly executed timber sales are degrading Hells Canyon's scenic qualities at an

alarming rate.

"If all of this destructive logging isn't stopped, Hells Canyon might as well be renamed a National Logging Area," Lillebo said.

The recreation area's timber sale program, on average, has exceeded the annual target of seven million board-feet listed in the Forest Service plan for Hells Canyon. Seven million board-feet of

(Continued on page 12)

NRAs are whatever agencies choose to say they are

National recreation areas exist in practice but not in theory. Congress has designated 31 NRAs, but it has never passed a national recreation area act specifying what an NRA is.

Of the 31 NRAs, 17 are under the Park Service. Thirteen are administered by the Forest Service and one by the Bureau of Land Management. But they have only loose ties to each other and each is managed under its own special law.

Some common qualities have emerged since Congress designated Lake Mead, Nev., the first national recreation area in the 1930s. Within the Park Service, nine NRAs are centered on reservoirs and five are in metropolitan areas, including Golden Gate in San Francisco and Gateway in New York City.

Three Forest Service recreation areas embrace reservoirs — Allegheny in Colorado, Flaming Gorge on the Utah-Wyoming border, and Whiskeytown-Shasta Trinity in California. The remaining 10, however, vary widely, and

include the spectacular Hells Canyon and the Sawtooths in Idaho, the Oregon Dunes on the Pacific shoreline, and Virginia's Mount Rodgers, which offers exhibits depicting early American history.

Recreation areas usually have less of a preservation mandate than do national parks and address people's developed recreation needs first. Managers at a recent national recreation area conference in Sun Valley suggested that the areas should become education centers to teach people outdoor ethics.

According to a guiding policy statement from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in 1963, recreation areas only require "natural endowments well above the ordinary" and should be within easy driving distance of urban areas.

North America's deepest gorge, Hells Canyon, containing one of the country's major rivers, the Snake, surpasses the first requirement and doesn't meet the second. The large cities nearest to Hells Canyon — Boise and Portland — are several hundred miles distant.

In fact, the decision to make Hells

Canyon a national recreation area had more to do with politics than policy. The act was a compromise between wilderness proponents and land developers and users. The final bill included a 194,132-acre of wilderness within the 652,488-acre NRA.

Hells Canyon could have been a "national river" or a "national forest parklands," or it could have been set aside under a 10-year moratorium on building dams.

Those possibilities were proposed in the early 1970s by Idaho and Oregon congressmen who opposed dam projects in the canyon. In 1973, Idaho's Democratic Sen. Frank Church, pointing to the model of the 1972 Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Idaho, suggested the recreation area designation. The label stuck.

One board member of the Hells Canyon Preservation Council agreed to the name with great reluctance. "It's like calling the Notre Dame Cathedral the Notre Dame Recreational Hall," he said.

Conservation groups now favor a re-designation of Hells Canyon as a

national park preserve, which is a national park that allows hunting. They argue that the recreation area label in combination with Forest Service policies have promoted abuses such as excessive logging and unregulated jet boating on the river.

The agencies managing a recreation area must follow the law creating the area, but they also apply their own policies to come up with the best way to meet objectives. For example, foresters within the Forest Service tend to view logging as compatible with recreation. In contrast, the Park Service, lacking the logging tradition, tends to leave forests alone.

There are also administrative differences. Park Service superintendents report directly to a regional director. Forest Service area rangers report to a national forest supervisor, who reports to a regional forester. Recreation areas under the Forest Service are lower in the hierarchy than those supervised by the Park Service.

—D.R.



Aerial view of Hells Canyon, which serves as the boundary between Idaho and Oregon

Hells Canyon...

(Continued from page 11)

timber may not seem like much compared to the five billion board-feet cut annually from the national forests of Oregon and Washington. However, one million board-feet is about 200 log-truck loads.

That means more than 1,400 truck-loads per year leave this partially forested recreation area.

This year, the Forest Service has proposed to exceed its target with plans to sell about 34 million board-feet from the 1988 Tepee Butte Fire and an additional 12 million board-feet from 1989 fires and insect outbreaks.

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., champion of the original Hells Canyon legislation, responded to conservationists' pleas for help three years ago. He introduced a bill that would have capped logging at one million board-feet annually. It would also have doubled the existing wilderness and added the lower 33 miles of the Snake River to the Wild and Scenic River system.

He dropped the bill because he lacked the support of the Northwest delegation or strong interest from national environmental groups. He has said it will take national as well as local pressure for him to return to the controversy.

His defense of Hells Canyon from logging may surprise those familiar with Packwood's recent support of the Northwest timber industry and the cutting of old-growth forests. But he is attached to this far corner of his state, he said.

Packwood remembers how narrowly the canyon escaped several major dams proposed in the 1960s by private and public utilities. Infighting among power companies over which would be allowed to build the dams gave frantic preservationists just enough time to mount their successful opposition.

"It was like hanging on the edge of a cliff with your fingernails trying to pull your way back up," Packwood said.

Hells Canyon remains a prized victory and unfinished task.

Many Oregon communities depend on logging, but local opposition to his most recent bill failed to sway Packwood. He argued that the timber sale reduction would affect only 1.5 percent of total mill capacity.

"If the sole criterion is going to be local opinion and only the senator from that state can decide what to do, I would have no voice in expanding the Redwoods park or I would have no voice in voting on a Cape Cod National Seashore," he said.

Packwood recently obtained the first major recreation appropriation since the act's passage. While conservationists have supported the planned visitor center and scenic road reconstruction, they have insisted the projects be accompanied by reduced logging.

Otherwise, "people will have better facilities in which to enjoy a less desirable place," said Andy Kerr, Oregon Natural Resources Council's associate director for conservation.

A ranching couple from Halfway, a

tiny town on the southern edge of the recreation area, said they were disappointed by their first visit to McGraw lookout, the best viewpoint down into the canyon from the south.

"We worked so hard here the first few years we never had a chance to look over the edge of the deepest canyon in America," said Catherine Light.

"We were pretty excited to take our picnic lunch and drive up there. Then, we saw stumps and logging roads all along the main road, even on the rim itself. It's so cut-over I don't even want to take my friends and relatives there to see Hells Canyon. We were appalled."

Nonetheless, the Forest Service has taken heat from timber companies.

"Timber from the NRA is desperately needed," said Gary L. Johnson, logging manager for Ellingson Timber Company, a family-run operation in Baker, Ore., that processes 60 million board-feet of timber annually. Ellingson cut its operations by half several years ago after reductions in lucrative Pon-

derosa pine sales. Johnson said lack of timber is forcing mills to go as far as 100 miles for their logs.

The three Oregon mills closest to the recreation area — Sequoia Forest Products, Rogge Lumber Inc., and Boise Cascade Corporation — each need 25 to 30 million board-feet annually.

"You can't depend on something like the NRA for timber," said Bruce Dunn, head forester for Sequoia in Joseph, a town near Enterprise that is in the shadows of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Dunn cited appeals and delays as obstacles to achieving a reliable supply. Last year, 65 percent of Sequoia's timber came from private lands.

Boise Cascade is the timber company with the greatest influence on Hells Canyon policy. Its lobbyists obtained special timber language in the 1975 act to ensure Congress recognized logging as a valid activity where it already existed.

In the 10 years prior to congressional designation, an annual average of 17 million board-feet was logged from places now within the recreation area. Brian E. Carper, an employee of Boise Cascade in Joseph and former president of the pro-logging citizens' group, People First!, said the recreation area could sustain the cutting of three times as many trees without hurting the area, so long as clear-cutting was avoided.

Overall, the timber managers say the timber program is a modest one that, if anything, leans toward interests of conservation groups. As an example, they cite the Hells Canyon's management plan's preservation of 10 percent of old-growth forests. And all timber sales require that 60 percent of the dead trees needed for woodpeckers be left standing.

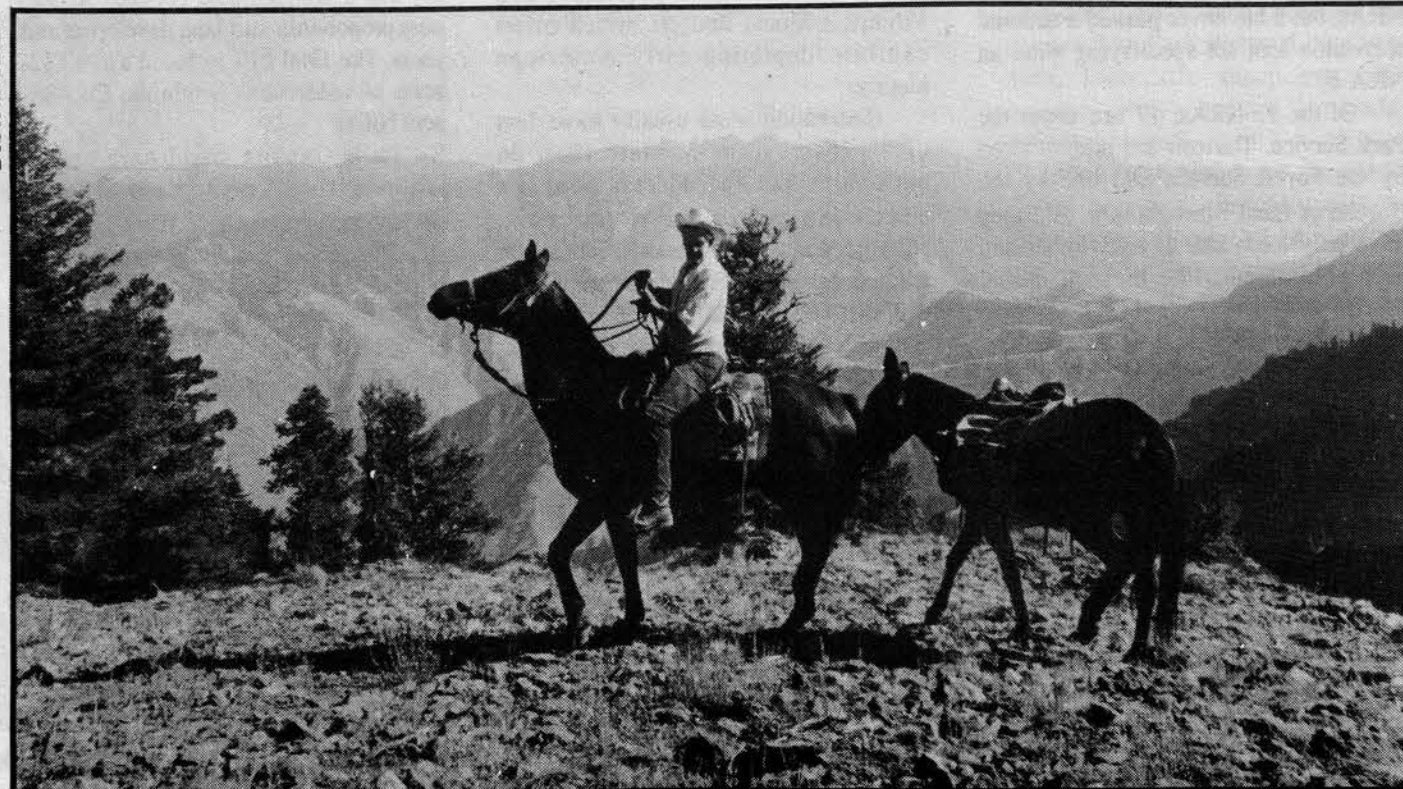
Forest Supervisor Richmond said a change in staffing made in fall 1988 may make some differences in "tailoring" timber sales for recreation objectives. The new area ranger, Ed Cole, and his assistant, Jim DeHerrera, have degrees in recreation. The previous staffers had degrees in forestry. But so far, environmentalists say they haven't seen a change.

But a recent legal decision, coupled with a new political push, may create enough pressure to change Forest Service policy.

The legal decision was a result of a June 1988 lawsuit against the Forest Service to stop the Duck Creek spruce salvage sale. The Oregon Natural Resources Council, Friends of Lake Fork and Hells Canyon Preservation Council

(Continued on page 13)

Deborah Ritchie



Long-time Hells Canyon conservationist Loren Hughes rides along the rim of the canyon.

Hells Canyon...

(Continued from page 12)

lost at the district court level and appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court.

While the suit made its way through the courts, the Forest Service went ahead and allowed the area to be logged. Then, in August 1989, the Ninth Circuit found the Forest Service negligent in writing rules and regulations governing timber cutting in a national recreation area. The ruling also gives conservation groups the right to file for injunctions on timber sales until new regulations are in place.

With this legal victory in hand,

Hells Canyon Preservation Council has started a political push to hit the Forest Service where it is most vulnerable by transferring the NRA to the National Park Service.

The group's proposed bill — promoted in a four-color brochure — would create a National Park Preserve. That would permit hunting but not logging.

The brochure's headline is: "The Hells Canyon Country: America's Next National Park or a lost legacy?" Its text reads:

"The National Park Service emphasizes aesthetic quality, recreation management, and resource protection. It is far more qualified than the Forest

Service to showcase and care for the Hells Canyon country."

But a brochure isn't a political campaign, and it remains to be seen if the group and its allies can mount a credible threat to Forest Service control of the 652,448-acre area.

For information on the National Park Preserve campaign, and Hells Canyon Preservation Council, write to: Hells Canyon Preservation Council, PO Box 908, Joseph, OR 97846.

Send comments on Hells Canyon management to:

Robert M. Richmond, Forest

Supervisor, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, PO Box 907, Baker, OR 97814, 503/523-6391;

Ed Cole, area ranger, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, PO Box 490, Enterprise, OR 97828, 503/426-3151; and

Sen. Bob Packwood, U.S. Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

□

Deborah Richie is a freelance writer in Missoula, Montana. Her story was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

LETTERS

MEXICAN WOLVES

Dear HCN,

I am writing in response to an article appearing in your June 19 issue, titled "Will the Mexican gray wolf repopulate its former range?" As a field researcher of the Mexican gray wolf in southern Arizona and northern Mexico for the past five years, the perspective I have gained on potential Mexican wolf recovery differs sharply from that presented by writer John Bancroft.

First, and foremost is the nature of the genetic base of the Mexican wolf captive breeding program, which has been conveniently ignored by Mr. Bancroft and those he talked to in developing this article. The official captive breeding program for the Mexican wolf is based on only one female and two male, wild-caught animals. That this limited a genetic base is insufficient for recovery purposes is presently being borne out on Isle Royale, where this island's isolated population of wolves has declined from a high of 50 animals to less than a dozen at the present time. According to Dr. Rolfe Peterson, food supply no longer provides a ready explanation for present wolf population trends, and it is thought that disease and/or reduced genetic variability is responsible for the decline of this population. It should be noted that this population was founded on a genetic base of seven individuals that crossed an ice bridge to Isle Royale in the 1940s.

Yet, in light of this situation, Mr. Bancroft and those that he interviewed advocate the release of intensively and unnaturally inbred captive animals as the means of securing Mexican wolf recovery; although all admit that Mexican wolves still exist in the wild.

It is a tragic fact that at this late date no thorough survey of wild Mexican

wolf populations has ever been accomplished. Yet the determining of the status of wild populations was stated to be the number one priority of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan. Although \$35,000 was allocated for this purpose, this money has remained unavailable for the accomplishment of crucial survey work.

Compounding this less than acceptable situation are the unsupported contentions of so-called Mexican wolf authorities that Mexican wolf depredations on livestock are overstated. That the biological record on this subject stands in direct opposition to this viewpoint is apparently of little concern to those espousing this conviction.

The fact is that Mexican wolves have been, and still are, significant predators on livestock. That these depredations can be very severe has been documented by the field work of Roy McBride (who is irrefutably the foremost authority on the Mexican wolf). Yet, in the 13 years that have passed since the federal listing of the Mexican wolf as endangered, not a single substantive action has been taken by the official recovery program to address this greatest of factors leading to Mexican wolf endangerment. At present, there is still no vehicle in place to provide compensation to those who suffer economic loss from Mexican wolf depredations.

This past April, reliable report was made of three lobos killing cattle on a ranch in Durango, Mexico. In lieu of any means of obtaining compensation for its losses, poison was put out by this ranch. Within a couple of weeks, the sign of three wolves had turned to two, and many other non-target animals were surely killed as well.

Unfortunately for the Mexican wolf, the continuing inbreeding of captive animals seems to be more important to the recovery program than the securing of wild populations and is evidence of the less than competent effort being pursued by official recovery.

Also unfortunate was the failure of any of the so-called authorities, identified in Mr. Bancroft's article, to attend the international symposium on the Mexican wolf that was held in Saltillo, Coahuila, in March of 1986. Had they been in attendance, they may have learned that Mexican wolves were still extant in northern Sonora, including an area along the Sonora-Arizona border, in 1985.

In summary, the current program for the recovery of the Mexican wolf lacks any semblance of biological credibility, and is, in fact, a threat to continued lobo

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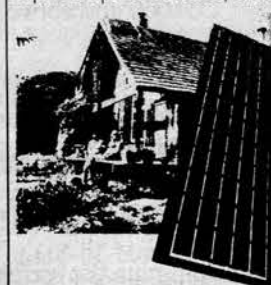
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GUEST ESSAY

Two cities in search of a little water and a lot of debt

by William L. Pfeiffer

If the cities of Colorado Springs and Aurora have their way, an 11-mile water tunnel will burrow through the Holy Cross Wilderness in the remote Sawatch range of Colorado. The tunnel will be part of the massive Homestake II transmountain water project. Water will be fed into the tunnel by diversion dams to be built on West Cross Creek, Cross Creek, East Cross Creek and Fall Creek at elevations of 10,500 feet and higher.

Homestake II will not be built without a fight. Although several major environmental groups signed off on the project as part of a 1980 deal designating wilderness in Colorado, the project is being opposed by Eagle County (Vail) and several small environmental groups. In fact, three court cases are still open and the battle will not be decided until the next century.

Much of the litigation and arguments turn on impacts of Homestake II, but I would like to examine another aspect of the project — its staggering cost.

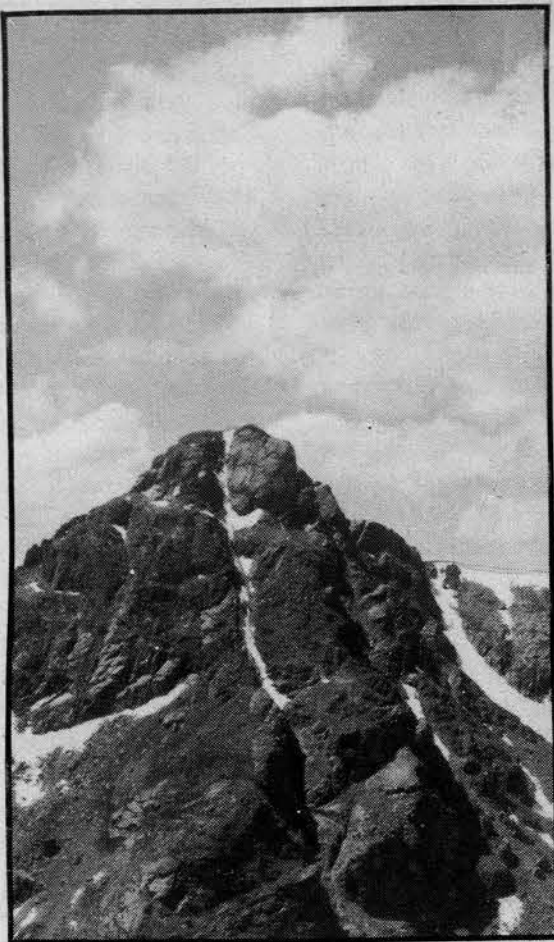
The Citizen's Water Council of Colorado Springs was formed in 1988 to study the cost of Homestake II. Our research offers compelling evidence that Homestake II, if developed, will be a financial burden for years to come.

The Homestake project began in 1955, when Colorado Springs and Aurora bought water rights in the Holy Cross watershed — rights that Denver had turned down twice as too expensive. In 1980, when the Holy Cross Wilderness was designated, the law left the water rights and the right to develop that water intact.

The first phase of the master plan, Homestake I, was completed in 1967. It lies outside the wilderness area. Total water received is 25,800 acre-feet or 12,900 acre-feet for each city. Costs were originally estimated at \$33.5 million, but the actual cost was \$63 million. Today its price has soared past the \$100 million mark due to massive tunnel cave-ins and maintenance problems. Also, after 20 years, the cities are being forced to live up to their environmental mitigation agreements, which will add to the cost.

Homestake II is a much larger and more complicated undertaking and its cost estimates are muddled. In 1980, the Colorado Springs Utility Department claimed the price would be \$140 million. In 1983, the figure was dropped to \$93 million, with no adequate explanation for the decrease. Today, spokesmen hedge all bets by saying that construction will be "reasonable."

The truth is that the cost could soar to over \$300 million. Extraordinary expenses will be incurred due to 11 miles of tunneling. Part of the expense will be due to carting the muck away from the wilderness. The tunnels must also be lined to shore up the unstable fragmented granite.



Mount of the Holy Cross, from Notch Mountain.

Estimating the cost of tunneling projects in the mountains of Colorado is notoriously unreliable. All projects have had tremendous cost overruns and delays. Colorado Springs has had its share of underground fiascoes, the most recent occurring in June 1989 on the Front Range. A state-of-the-art tunneling machine broke down after hitting loose gravel in a fault just 785 feet into a proposed 3.3-mile passageway. Ironically, this dream machine had been ballyhooed as an inexpensive way to dig the 11-mile wilderness tunnel.

Part of the huge price tag of Homestake II is the result of litigation instigated by the Holy Cross Defense Fund and other environmental groups. The cities have already spent over \$5 million on studies and lawsuits; appeals will use up more millions.

Never will so much money be spent for so little water. Each city will receive an estimated 10,800 acre-feet of water at a price of up to \$15,000 per acre-foot. Compare this with the Foxley Purchase of Arkansas River water recently acquired by Colorado Springs at \$2,000 an acre-foot. That 15,000 acre-feet came with storage rights in Twin Lakes and is already being delivered via the pipeline that had been reserved for Homestake II water.

The fact is that Colorado Springs does not need Homestake II water now or ever. The city today has annual supplies of 217,600 acre-feet of water, excluding Homestake II water. That's enough to meet the needs of triple the present population. Nevertheless, the city's utility department argues that it needs Homestake II to provide for future growth.

Despite the fact that a consumer conservation program would save considerably more water than Homestake II will provide, conservation is not encouraged in Colorado Springs. The utility department claims it needs to sell as much water as possible to pay off its indebtedness and meet operating expenses.

The Colorado Springs utility is city-owned and answers only to an over-worked city council. In the past, aggressive water acquisition policies have been rubber-stamped by the council and commended by the community as far-sighted. The policies served the city well in a time of rapid growth and relatively cheap and accessible water.

But times have changed. In the words of a *Denver Post* columnist, "The Colorado Springs economy is a wreck." This is a military town, but Star Wars funding has been slashed and other military budgets have been cut. The three largest thrift associations are operating under government control and other city lenders face tremendous losses. Some high-tech firms have retrenched and IBM and Data General have closed their doors. Real estate values have plummeted and several builders and developers have filed for bankruptcy.

With no prospect for growth and with a surplus of water, the city bureaucracy, programmed 35 years ago to build the transmountain diversion monument, still doggedly pursues its sacred cow despite skyrocketing costs and growing opposition. Building dams and tunnels is more gratifying to the ego — and much more fun — than implementing conservation programs. But hardly as cost-effective!

The continued commitment to building Homestake II is financially and ecologically irresponsible.

It's time we quit squandering our precious, life-giving commodity. To meet tomorrow's needs, we must change our priorities and find better ways to treat, reuse and conserve water. It can no longer be wasted at the expense of the environment and the pocketbook.

William L. Pfeiffer is a Colorado Springs stockbroker who helped found the Citizen's Water Council Inc. His address is 310 Hidden Valley Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80919.

Capitol Hill...

(Continued from page 16)

When Cason was finished, the committee heard from other witnesses. The most striking statement came from Max Peterson, the former Forest Service chief who is now executive director of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

As head of the Forest Service during most of the Reagan years, Peterson for the most part was a good soldier, carrying out and promoting administration policies in the face of opposition from conservationists. That made his indictment of Cason all the more remarkable.

Peterson urged withdrawal

Peterson recalled how he had met with Cason for nearly two hours, listening to Cason explain how his record was being distorted. Cason explained the controversial actions by downplaying his own role or saying he was simply fol-

lowing orders, Peterson said. At the end of the meeting, Peterson urged Cason to withdraw his nomination.

"I did not feel that he could disassociate himself from his record because that's the only thing he has," Peterson said.

That record is one of "controversial decisions which unfortunately paint a consistent pattern," he said. "They are decisions marked by one ingredient: They were uniformly bad when measured by any reasonable standard of public interest."

Peterson described some of Cason's actions in terms such as "inappropriate, inexcusable, and simply dangerous behavior by a public official," and as an "inexcusable betrayal of the public trust."

Worse yet, Cason has no professional qualifications, Peterson said, a shortcoming that could be overlooked if he demonstrated an ability to rely on the advice of the professionals under his supervision.

"But the record is that he does not use the professional people at Interior,

especially when they don't agree with him," Peterson concluded.

After Peterson, the remaining witnesses proved predictable and anticlimactic. Environmentalists came to excoriate Cason while livestock and logging interests came to praise him. The only noteworthy moment came when Mark Rey, representing the timber industry, urged the committee to judge Cason not by his record, but by his promises to do better.

Cason's fate is now in the hands of the agriculture committee. As of Oct. 10, no date had been set for a vote on the nomination.

Leahy clearly will oppose confirming Cason, as will several other Democrats, including Sens. Thomas Daschle of South Dakota, Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota and Wyche Fowler of Georgia. Sens. Max Baucus of Montana and Howell Heflin of Alabama are among the Democratic question marks.

The key vote may be that of Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, the ranking

Republican on the committee. He has expressed reservations about Cason, both privately and at the confirmation hearings. If Lugar finds Cason unacceptable, his decision could sway other GOP doubters, including Pete Wilson of California and Slade Gorton of Washington.

Win or lose, Cason will provide a further test of whether Bush's environmentalism extends to the management of the public lands. Should Cason be defeated, that test will come when the president selects a new nominee.

And if Cason does become assistant secretary of agriculture, he will be viewed as a bellwether of the Bush administration's public lands policies. For many conservationists, Cason's actions will define the limits of George Bush's commitment to the environment.

Andrew Melnykovich writes a regular column for *High Country News*. He is Washington, D.C., correspondent for the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

16 High Country News — October 23, 1989



CAPITOL HILL

Will Cason become the Forest Service's James Watt?

by Andrew Melnykovich

WASHINGTON, D.C. — George Bush's "I am an environmentalist" declaration has had little effect on America's public lands or on conservative western Republican legislators.

The only noteworthy change on Capitol Hill has been rhetorical. "Environmentalism" is no longer the perjorative term of choice for those with whom the lawmakers differ on issues such as logging, drilling for oil, grazing, or building dams. It has been replaced by "protectionist" or "preservationist."

Bush's commitment to the environment has extended only to the agencies with the E-word in their title — the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality. Both are now headed by people with strong environmental credentials.

Not so with the public land agencies, where Reaganite holdovers and political cronies of Vice President Dan Quayle are common. If Western Republicans seem comfortable with this group, it is because they had a large say in its selection.

Westerners blocked the appointment of a conservation-minded Interior Department secretary. While outgoing Sen. Dan Evans of Washington was among the early favorites for the post, he ran into strong opposition from several of his fellow Republicans on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, including James McClure of Idaho and Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming.

Lujan was bland

Conversely, candidates supported by Western conservatives were unacceptable to conservationists. As a compromise, Bush chose retiring Rep. Manuel Lujan, R-N.M., whose record was bland enough to be inoffensive to all sides, although environmentalists were disappointed by his selection.

As Lujan's undersecretary, Bush named Frank Bracken of Indiana, the president's neighbor when Bush was a member of the House, but also a man with previous service in federal government, including a stint at Interior.

Another Hoosier, James Ridenour, was named to head the National Park Service, replacing conservationist hero William Penn Mott. Ridenour's nomination stirred some protest. The Sierra Club opposed him on the basis of his record as head of the Indiana state park system. Ridenour had been an avid back-

er of greater commercialization of the parks.

Conservationists also complained about Bush's choice of Connie Harriman for assistant interior secretary for fish, wildlife and parks. Aside from a brief stint as an Interior Department lawyer in the Reagan administration, Harriman's chief qualification appeared to be the fact that her family gave a great deal of money to the Bush campaign, her opponents charged.

The choice of Delos "Cy" Jamison to head the Bureau of Land Management stirred some protest as well. Jamison had spent several years as a top aide to Rep. Ron Marlenee, the fire-breathing Montana Republican whose attacks on environmentalists are the stuff of Capitol Hill legend.

Turner won praise

Only John Turner's selection to head the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service won the acclaim of environmentalists. Turner, from Jackson Hole, was a leader of the conservation forces in the Wyoming Senate. His legislative efforts and other pro-environment activities won him awards from groups such as the National Wildlife Federation.

Bush's other choices for the Interior Department went largely unremarked. Several had served in the Reagan administration, but none had generated enough controversy to gain much attention.

Cason roused opposition

Not so with James Cason, whom Bush selected to be assistant agriculture secretary for environment and natural resources. In that post, Cason would oversee both the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service.

Cason's nomination in March mobilized the environmental community. His record as deputy assistant interior secretary for lands and minerals management showed a consistent bias against conservation and for development, environmentalists contend.

The leaders of 10 major conservation groups, including non-political outfits such as the Izaak Walton League, went on record as opposing Cason. Largely because of that opposition, his nomination has yet to be acted on by the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Only 35, Cason is undoubtedly a remarkable success story in the Horatio Alger mold. The son of migrant farm workers, he attended Pacific University in Oregon and graduated in the top 10 in

his class with a degree in business.

After a few years in the real estate and retail business in Oregon, as well as involvement in Republican politics, Cason landed in Washington in 1982 as a special assistant to Bureau of Land Management Director Robert Burford. He was named a deputy assistant secretary — a post he still holds — in 1985. Cason also served for a time as acting assistant interior secretary.

In those roles, Cason made decisions that infuriated not only conservationists, but also career professionals in several agencies, as well as officials in western states and Indian tribes.

He quashed a BLM report predicting that the spotted owl would be endangered by a continuation of current logging policies in the old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. Cason allegedly pressured the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service not to consider the owl for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

While Congress was considering legislation to end the practice of selling off federal oil shale lands at \$2.50 an acre, Cason flew to Denver to meet with oil shale claim holders and reportedly encouraged them to file papers to buy their claims before Congress acted.

Cason clashed with the National Park Service over proposed rules on the handling of old mining claims in national parks. He opposed the Forest Service's attempt to set new rules for oil and gas development on its lands, saying the proposed rules could impede drilling.

Cason was instrumental in setting new federal coal-royalty regulations that significantly reduce the amount of money going to the federal treasury and states and tribes. Like all federal royalties, those from coal are split 50-50 with states, while Indian tribes receive all income from their lands.

Cason favored industry

In a move that infuriated state and tribal auditors, Cason met with representatives of the major oil companies to discuss their objection to a plan that was agreed to by the federal Minerals Management Service and the states and tribes. The plan would have cleared the huge backlog of unaudited federal oil and gas royalty payments. Cason's meeting with industry led to a unilateral revision of the audit plan, severely limiting the number of audits that could be completed.

State and tribal officials were not told of the meetings. Nor were they told

of an agreement Cason made with the oil companies until months after it was signed.

Several of Cason's actions have been reversed or put on hold by the Bush administration. The "mining in the parks" proposal has been withdrawn, the coal royalty rules are under review, and the oil and gas audit deal has been substantially revised.

As his record at Interior was being examined in various newspapers, Cason consistently declined to respond to the allegations. He would answer the charges at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee, spokesmen said.

Cason finally got his chance Sept. 27. Committee chairman Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., opened the session by proclaiming, "We do not need somebody who is a James Watt clone in this position."

Leahy then quizzed Cason at length on the spotted owl issue, finally getting the admission from Cason that the evidence could certainly be interpreted to support the contention that the report was suppressed. But Cason insisted "that's not what happened."

Despite a sworn statement to the contrary from former USFWS Director Frank Dunkle, Cason also insisted that he did not try to prevent consideration of the spotted owl for inclusion on the endangered species list.

Later, Cason admitted that his meeting with the oil shale claimants might have been construed by the claimants as official encouragement to begin the process of buying the federal land before Congress barred the practice. But Cason again maintained that his actions were misinterpreted.

During a second day of questioning Oct. 4, Cason insisted that, contrary to statements by state and tribal auditors, the states and tribes were not kept in the dark about the audit policy revision. But he conceded that he had met only with industry, relying on federal officials to keep the states and tribes informed.

The audit policy revision was needed in order to do a better job of collecting the money owed the government, Cason explained.

Leahy was unconvinced, telling Cason he had "protected the oil companies" rather than the public interest.

Was there a coverup?

Sen. Tom Daschle, D-N.D., dropped the bombshell question of the hearing when he confronted Cason with a memorandum Cason had written in response to the National Park Service on the mining issue. His memo sharply criticized the Park Service and added, "I would prefer that our paper trail not include this memo."

Asked to explain, Cason told Daschle, "At the time, there must have been some concern that would have prompted me to write that sentence. At this time, I couldn't tell you what it was."

"Mr. Cason, that's not good enough," Daschle replied. "Give me your best shot."

Cason's best shot proved to be an ill-defined concern about not wanting to clutter "the file" with confusing preliminary correspondence. Daschle said the explanation "sounds like a coverup, to be honest with you."

(Continued on page 15)

*Cason wrote a memo criticizing
the National Park Service, and added,
"I would prefer that our paper trail
not include this memo."*