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San Luis Valley, Colorado

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

Money comes calling in a remote poor valley

by Rick Boychuk

Colorado's San Luis Valley is high, wide and remote. It is also very poor, very sparsely settled, and without strong ties to either Denver's urbanized Front Range or to the state's rural Western Slope.

However, this detachment may be ending. The announced veto of Denver's proposed Two Forks Dam may eventually put the valley at the center of Colorado politics and its ongoing struggle for an approach to water.

The likely veto by the EPA has sent Denver and its suburban allies in search of a political solution. They hope to bludgeon the EPA and its political allies into submission, and to thereby revive the proposed \$1 billion dam, which is intended to provide the metropolitan area with water well into the 21st century.

But others see the defeat of Two Forks as heralding a new era, and new opportunity.

While Denver development interests plan to continue to fight for Two Forks with traditional political weapons, a group of wealthy investors has set up a water development company in Denver to slake the thirst of the Front Range. The investors in the company, American Water Development Inc., think it is time for the private sector to move into what has traditionally been the preserve of the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and big cities.

AWDI officials have been working quietly behind the scenes to deliver up to 200,000 acre-feet of water to the Front Range. This is twice what Two Forks would have supplied and more than the 130,000 acre-feet Denver's 500,000 residents use in a year. AWDI's optimistic management and owners believe they can sidestep the political deadlock that is frustrating the development of new water supplies.

The company has financial clout. Its investors include Vancouver-based

financier/developer Sam Belzberg; Robert B. Anderson, the son of former ARCO President Robert O. Anderson; and a Pennsylvania investment banking group. On the political side, the firm is an oddball coalition of political figures: Some are environmentalists, and some like to build water projects.

William Ruckelshaus, former head of the EPA, is a director and investor.

Former Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm sits on the board of directors.

The company's founder and current chairman is Maurice Strong, a Canadian industrialist who was the first executive-director of the United Nations' Environment Program. He was also a member of the UN World Commission on the Environment and Economy, and has impressive connections with inter-

national environmental organizations.

AWDI's legal advice comes from a firm that has defended and promoted water development projects for the past 30 years: Saunders, Snyder, Ross and Dickson.

Marc Reisner, in *Cadillac Desert*, says that under the tutelage of the firm's senior man, Glenn Saunders, the Denver Water Board became "a well-oiled, well-funded suprapolitical machine trying to purloin water from every corner of the state." So it's no surprise that the man currently running AWDI, president Dale Shaffer, is a former chairman of the Denver Water Board.

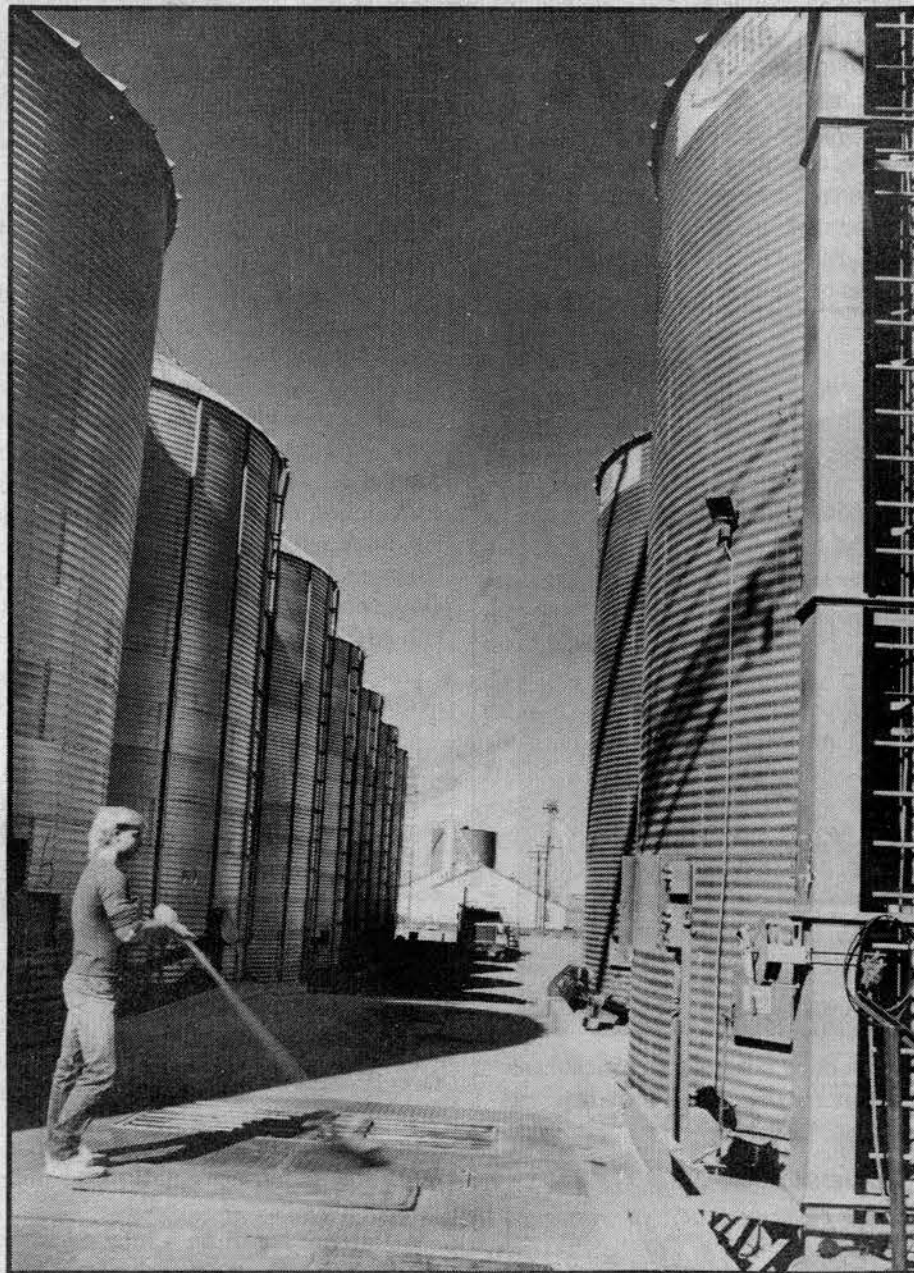
According to a confidential company document, American Water Development Inc.'s strategy is to set itself up as a "water bank." In the short term, the company plans to lease water from Front Range communities with surpluses and re-lease it to communities with shortages. The report notes that communities with surpluses have been reluctant to lease them because of uncertainty over whether they can get new supplies eventually.

A vast aquifer

AWDI plans to reassure surplus-holders through the company's major asset: the promise of 200,000 acre-feet of water a year from a vast aquifer that underlies the remote San Luis valley in southern Colorado. AWDI owns a 100,000-acre ranch in the valley.

The amount would indeed be reassuring; the Denver Water Department in 1988 supplied 240,000 acre-feet to its one million Denver and suburban users. Company officials say the aquifer may be as large as the Ogallala aquifer, which nourishes farmland in seven mid-western states.

But AWDI can't simply start drilling wells. Its plan to pump water



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Cleaning grain silos in Center, Colorado

(Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,



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An answer

The June 5, 1989, issue of *High Country News* reprinted a letter written by Forest Service staffer Jeff DeBonis to Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. DeBonis asked the chief to explain several agency policies, including the one on old growth.

The letter was answered by silence from the chief's office, despite several requests by this paper for a response. Then, on Oct. 19, came what we consider a partial answer to DeBonis and to others who have challenged the agency's policies. Robertson announced:

"For the first time as an agency, we are recognizing the importance of old growth on a national level."

This does not mean the end of the agency's policy of liquidating old growth forests. But it is a step toward that end, and is another major indication that the West is changing. There are more details in a Hotline on this page.

Welcome back

HCN's pride in its intern program is demonstrated by its hiring: we just added two former interns to the staff. They are Steve Ryder and Florence Williams.

Steve, who once worked as a planner for the city of Fort Collins, made the same geographic move as HCN: from Lander, Wyo., where he has been an instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School since 1978, to Paonia.

Following his internship last winter, he went to North Carolina, to work on a farm. Now he is putting the paper's computers to fuller use by automating layout procedures; Steve also handles the darkroom.

Florence Williams is the new staff writer. She interned at HCN in summer 1987. After that, she spent six months in East Africa studying wildlife and ecology, and worked for the United Nations Environment Program editing technical manuscripts.

She graduated from Yale in spring 1989 with a degree in English and then went to *Time* magazine's San Francisco office for the summer. She left a few days before the quake to join HCN. She is glad to be back in Paonia, but regrets that she left San Francisco, and a national news magazine, just days before that city's biggest story in 83 years broke.

Not such bad guys

While a picture in this column won't bring fame and fortune, two HCN interns found it can lead to a raft trip through the Colorado River's Westwater Canyon. Readers Peter Winn, a consulting geologist in Grand Junction, and Lowell Braxton, a mining geologist with Utah's Department of Natural Resources, invited Kate Gunness and Devin Odell along to see some of the country they have begun to write about. But the host's real agenda, they later confessed, was to convince them that "mining geologists aren't such bad guys." Also on the trip was Mark Mesch, a biologist with Utah's abandoned mine reclamation program.



With hundreds of hunters' bullet holes in it, why is this deer still standing? See page 4.

First poet-explorer

Recent visitors included John Gudvangen, assistant admissions director at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. John and his spouse, Judy, a graduate student at Denver University, were traveling the Western Slope, telling high school seniors about C.C.

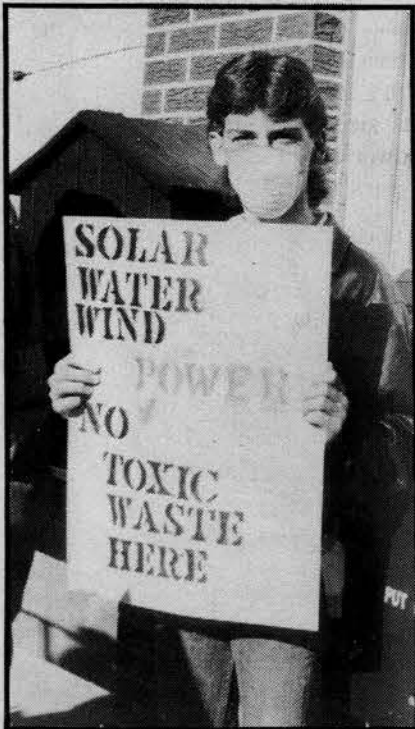
The paper's first poet-explorer visitor also came through: Charlie Mercier, of the Washington, D.C., area, and his friend, John Savarese, a computer software developer of Staten Island, N.Y. They have been on the road in rural areas for three months. While in town, they looked at something that does not exist in urban America: a livable (although small and charmless) house for sale at \$13,000.

—Ed Marston for the staff

HOTLINE

Log-nappers on trial

Three men from Washington state face trial Nov. 20 on charges that they tried to export logs to Japan from national forests in Montana. The case will be the first in Montana under a law designed to protect jobs in America. The timber, totalling 558,515 board feet, is worth 10 times as much in Japan as in Montana, according to Tom King of the U.S. Forest Service. "With the tremendous demand and money that can be made," King told AP, "we don't think this is an isolated case."



Cosette Henzize

High school student demonstrates against proposed dump at Trinidad, Colorado

Proposed dump draws protest

About 600 residents of Trinidad in southern Colorado angrily rejected a proposal to store radioactive waste from the Rocky Flats weapons plant. "We're

becoming known as a good place to live," said Trinidad Mayor Robert Fabee. "We're attracting retirees and tourists. This is the kind of thing that would put an end to that." The temporary dump, proposed by Seattle-based Pacific Nuclear Systems Inc., would be just off I-25 close to New Mexico, on the route for waste from Rocky Flats, near Denver, to the still unopened Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M. (HCN, 10/9/89). The \$16 million private facility would store the waste in concrete casks above ground until WIPP opens. Although the proposal faces strong local opposition, Pacific Nuclear is not yet ready to give up. Miller Hudson, spokesman for the project, said he is confident that once people understand the plan, they will support it and, if it comes to an election, vote for it. Hudson added that the project can only go forward if the Department of Energy, now considering the proposal, approves it. For more information, write Concerned Citizens for an Honest and Efficient Government, P.O. Box 965, Trinidad, CO 81082.

New old-growth policy

For the first time as an agency, the Forest Service has taken a position on the need to protect old-growth forests. "Old-growth forests are important ecosystems that we are just beginning to understand," says Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. "But we've learned enough to know that a significant share of them deserve to be protected and managed for posterity." In a statement Oct. 19, the Forest Service said its main objectives are to:

- reduce both traditional clearcutting methods and fragmentation of old-growth forests;
- manage stands on a rotation basis to develop old-growth ecosystems as well as provide timber;
- create future old-growth through careful management; and

•increase research efforts with additional funding of \$1,051,000 in 1990.

Wendell Wood of the Oregon Natural Resources Council says the policy is a "major concession" on the part of the Forest Service, but he fears that clearcutting mandates from Congress may make it difficult to implement. For a copy of the position statement, contact the Forest Service Public Affairs Office, 11177 West 8th Ave., P.O. Box 25127, Lakewood, CO 80225 (303/776-9660).

Nevada wilderness bill is still alive

The Senate passed a bill Sept. 20 that would set aside wilderness areas in three of Nevada's national forests. Co-sponsored by Nevada's Democratic Sens. Harry Reid and Richard Bryan, the bill designates 733,000 acres as wilderness and releases 2.4 million acres for multiple use. The bill has changed in Congress, however. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee amended its original water provisions to give precedence to existing water rights of surrounding landowners. A more controversial second amendment introduced by Sen. Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., permits military overflights in the wilderness areas. This ensures that the new wilderness will not "interfere" with military operations, particularly at Fallon Naval Air Station near Carson City and a proposed base in central Nevada. Craig Varoga, an aide to Sen. Reid in Washington, says this amendment "did not change anything the bill did or did not do." Some environmentalists disagreed. Bob Fulkerson of Citizen Alert, a Nevada-based environmental group, called it a "dangerous" amendment that undermines the 1964 Wilderness Act. The bill is currently working its way through hearings in House subcommittees where a number of legislators, led by Sen. James Bilbray, D-Nev., are hoping to forge a compromise on the Wallop amendment.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Eagles catch an updraft toward survival

Under a proposal before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, bald eagles will be "downlisted" from endangered to threatened during the next 18 months.

"The bald eagle is no longer in danger of extinction throughout all or even a significant portion of its range," said Dan James, an endangered species biologist for USFWS, based in Minneapolis, Minn.

"Clearly, (the eagle) is on the increase. We want to place the bird's legal status in sync with its biological status."

Recovery of the bald eagle is a priority for newly appointed USFWS Director John Turner. Twenty years ago he spearheaded the first comprehensive eagle survey in eight Rocky Mountain states.

Turner, a trained wildlife biologist who owns a ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyo., has maintained a keen interest in eagle recovery since he completed a master's level research program on eagles in the 1960s. He also wrote a book, *The Magnificent Bald Eagle: America's National Bird*.

Early next year, a formal recommendation to downlist the eagle will come from the Fish and Wildlife Service's regional office in Minneapolis. Once the proposal reaches officials in the Interior Department, Turner is expected to support the change.

"Eagle recovery is one of the great conservation success stories in America today," Turner said recently from his office in Washington.

Raptor biologists say eagles are abundant now in the Yellowstone, Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay regions. "I would actually say the Chesapeake Bay area is approaching its carrying capacity," James said. "And we're having very positive results in other parts of the country."

Technically, downlisting represents more a shift in philosophy than actual protection, eagle experts say. Turner and James cited the grizzly bear as one species which continues to receive maximum federal protection in the lower 48 even though it is classified as threatened.

"Legally, a threatened species is one that may become endangered if trends in the population continue," James said. "What we're seeing (with eagles), though, is just the opposite."

James said one misperception, and a likely target of criticism by conservation groups, is that downlisting means the public no longer needs to be concerned.

"I don't think anything would be farther from the truth," James said. "We still have a goal, and our job is to get this bird off the endangered species list. We don't intend to decrease the level of effort we're making to provide for total recovery."

Fewer than 800 nesting pairs of bald eagles survived the scourge of pesticides, poaching and rampant habitat destruction which reached its zenith 30 years ago.

"In the mid 1960s, it looked like we could easily lose the eagle as a resident species in the lower 48 states," Turner said.

The bald eagle was saved only after federal wildlife agencies and the conservation community mounted an unprecedented campaign for habitat protection. In particular, James attributed eagle survival to the 1972 ban on DDT, aggressive efforts to protect wetlands around nesting sites and a ban against lead shot



Bill Ott

that will go nationwide in two years.

Still lingering as major causes of eagle mortality, however, are collisions with power lines, water pollution and encroachment of human development upon riparian areas.

Approximately 2,400 nesting pairs of eagles survive in the lower 48 states. The proposal to downlist will focus on 43 states where eagles are federally classified as endangered.

In five states — Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin — eagle numbers are considered stable and the bird is already listed as threatened. The action also does not apply to Alaska or Hawaii. Eagles are neither endangered nor threatened in Alaska, where there are over 30,000 birds. Hawaii has no resident or migratory populations.

Turner said he will not proceed with downlisting if data gathered after the 1990 nesting season fail to substantiate a recovered population. As for the future, he said, "I don't think we can

ever take for granted the long-term survival of eagles."

While concurring with his boss, James said agency officials will proceed cautiously, given the public's sensitivity to changing the status of an endangered species. "It's conceivable if there's overwhelming opposition we would not take this action any further," he said. "This is going to be an emotional issue."

— Todd Wilkinson

Todd Wilkinson is a freelance writer living in Bozeman, Montana.

BARBS

Perhaps they were engaged in a bear hug.

With a single bullet, a hunter in northern Idaho's Shoshone County shot and injured a couple he mistook for a bear, reports AP.

Ranchers go to bat for an Idaho mountain

CAMBRIDGE, Idaho — A proposal to clearcut Cuddy Mountain — a pristine roadless area perched 6,000 feet above Hells Canyon — has incited the wrath of local sportsmen and ranchers here in western Idaho.

"It'll ruin our watershed," said George Volle, a Cambridge rancher and part-time logger. "We depend on all those little creeks that come off Cuddy Mountain for summer-long irrigation."

"If they clearcut it, the water will come down a month early, and by June, it'll be gone," he said.

The Cuddy timber sales are the first in a series of sales the Payette National Forest hopes to accomplish in the coming decade. Payette officials expected that logging other roadless areas such as French Creek and the South Fork of the Salmon would be controversial. But the outcry in Cambridge caught them off guard.

"Yeah, we're a little surprised," said Payette spokesman David Olson. "Since Cuddy is a roadless area, we realized there would be concerns. But they usually come from people we hear from all the time."

Payette officials say that Cuddy Mountain, covered with old-growth and diseased Douglas fir, Grand fir and Ponderosa pine trees, must be logged.

"It's in need of management," said Dan Hormaechea, forest economist. "You're looking at a potential for a \$1

million sale. The trees in there are huge."

Dick Woodworth, a Boise conservationist and former director of the Idaho Fish and Game Department, said the mountain is better off left alone.

"It's the most prolific wildlife area of its size anywhere in the state," Woodworth said. "It's unique because you've got this terrific variety of wildlife all squashed into a small space of land. It may be the best black bear area in southern Idaho," he added. "It's got excellent habitat for elk and deer, it's maybe the top blue grouse area and it's first-rate chukar and quail country."

State environmental groups say they are carefully studying the Cuddy Mountain draft environmental impact statement to uncover legal flaws. Under orders from Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson, forests such as the Payette are writing impact statements before entering roadless areas to comply with the *California v. Block* case. In that case, justices in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Forest Service could not develop roadless areas until it outlined site-specific environmental impacts and fully assessed wilderness values.

Though Cuddy Mountain rated "the worst on the RARE II (roadless evaluation) scale" for wilderness, Craig Gehrke, regional director of The Wilderness Society, has taken an interest

Cason nomination advances

Environmentalists will now take the fight against the nomination of James Cason as overseer of the national forests before the full Senate. Voting 12-7, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved Cason's nomination as assistant agriculture secretary for natural resources and environment, the post in the Agriculture Department responsible for both the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service. Cason's record drew sharp criticism even from senators who voted to approve it. Sen. Rudy Boschwitz, R-Minn., said that Cason, unlike previous holders of the position, would be closely watched by the head of the Agriculture Department. Two of three Democrats who voted to approve the nomination said they might vote against Cason later after looking at the details of his record. As deputy assistant interior secretary for lands and minerals management in the Reagan Administration, Cason repeatedly made decisions that angered conservationists, state and tribal officials, and career professionals in several federal agencies (HCN, 10/23/89).

Supermarkets unite against pesticides

Phoenix-based ABCO Markets Inc. and the Midwest's Petrini Supermarkets are among five grocery chains that have banded together against pesticides. After working with Boston's National Toxics Campaign, the supermarkets decided they would ask food suppliers to identify all chemicals used on fruits and vegetables. The stores said they want growers to phase out the use of 64 potentially carcinogenic pesticides by 1995. Executives of the grocery stores said their action was prompted by the Environmental Protection Agency's slow pace in removing the chemicals from the market, reports the *New York Times*.

in the area. He admits to "writing off" the area earlier but he says found the draft EIS to be woefully inadequate.

"This is going to be the doorway for the other sales in the entire area," Gehrke said. "I'm real disappointed in the lack of detail." If the final environmental analysis is not vastly improved, he said, the document could easily be challenged in court.

Payette officials say Cuddy and other roadless areas must be logged to satisfy an 85 million-board-foot annual cut. Now that the Payette is penetrating the last of its "unmanaged" forests, roadless sales comprise 35 percent of its annual cut.

Loggers, who see a timber-supply crisis on the horizon, say Cuddy and other roadless areas must be logged. "That 30 million board-feet up there (on Cuddy) is essential to our livelihood," added Roy Grossen, who works at a nearby Boise Cascade Corp. sawmill in Council, Idaho.

But Cambridge ranchers and farmers, whose lifeblood is the pure water draining off Cuddy Mountain, say the logging plan is an insult to the earth. "This country made us what we are today," said Cecil Bilbao, a Cambridge rancher. "Now we owe the country something in return."

— Steve Stuebner

HOTLINE



Christopher Canble

Grizzly bear

The fate of problem grizzlies

Individual hunters in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming would be able to kill problem grizzlies in the Yellowstone ecosystem under a proposed rule by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nuisance grizzlies are defined as those that threaten human safety, that have killed or injured livestock, or that can't be controlled by trapping or removal. Officials of the Montana or Wyoming wildlife agencies now kill those bears. But John Talbott, Lander district supervisor of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, said his agency would rather not act as executioners. "By allowing folks to participate in the management of the bear, you give them a chance to help with its recovery," he said. Talbott said the \$50 to \$400 hunting fee would go toward recovery of the grizzly, which is endangered in the lower 48 states. Bear hunts, he said, would take place under strict supervision and wildlife personnel would be present for the kill. If approved, the proposal would allow hunting of problem grizzlies in more than 10 million acres of the mountainous area surrounding Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. Hunting would not be allowed in the parks themselves or in the Wind River Indian Reservation. Copies of the proposed rule can be obtained by writing to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NS 312, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812. Public comments on the proposal should be sent to the same address no later than Dec. 18.

Restoring the Columbia

The Columbia River will be the target of one of the largest biological restoration efforts in the world. The Northwest Power Planning Council approved a plan to replace about a third of the wildlife habitat flooded behind 27 hydroelectric dams built during the last half century. "Back then, they had no sense of what the environmental impacts would be," said the council's Dulcy Mahar. The 20-year program, which begins next spring, will cover areas in Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho. Combined with a program to restore fish runs on the river, the total cost could be \$50 million a year, which will be spread among electric ratepayers served by the Bonneville Power Administration. "There are enormous riches from these dams," Mahar said, "but they have exacted a cost."

Utah is using dummies to catch poachers

"Truck coming!" yells Rudy Musclow, game warden supervisor for Utah. Three bodies dive for cover as a red Toyota pickup with California license plates rounds a corner near the Utah/Colorado border. It is 8:30 a.m.

The truck comes to a slow halt and two muzzle-loading rifles poke out from the driver and passenger side windows. The driver of the car pulls the trigger on his gun, and a burst of black smoke billows into the blue morning sky. For a moment, all is silent. But with that single shot several Utah fish and game laws were broken all at one time:

- The hunters were in Utah with a Colorado license;
- They were hunting deer out of season in Utah;
- A gun was fired from a motor vehicle; and
- The target deer was on private, posted land.

All of the above are Class B misdemeanors punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.

At the shot, the deer never flinched. The passengers in the car did as game warden Brett Johnson rushed downhill toward the truck. "Conservation officer — stop!" yelled Johnson from about 10 yards behind the truck.

But the truck sped away, leaving only a cloud of dust and a hole in a decoy deer as a reminder of what had just happened.

While Johnson was racing toward the truck on foot, however, Rudy Musclow was getting the state truck out of hiding. In seconds, the brown Chevrolet pickup with gold and blue state game and fish decals was roaring down the road.

About three miles later the violators were pulled over and inside the pickup were three men and one woman — all elderly. They were from California and headed for Colorado on a hunting trip. One problem was that they had come at least a half-mile into Utah to hunt. A few days earlier the wildlife officials had seen the same vehicle at least three miles inside Utah but never saw them hunting.

"We didn't know we were in Utah," the hunters explained as they were stopped. "We thought the fence was the state line." But the deer decoy was over the fence boundary. Hearing that, the driver laughed and said, "Okay, how much is the fine? This is a story I'll have fun telling."

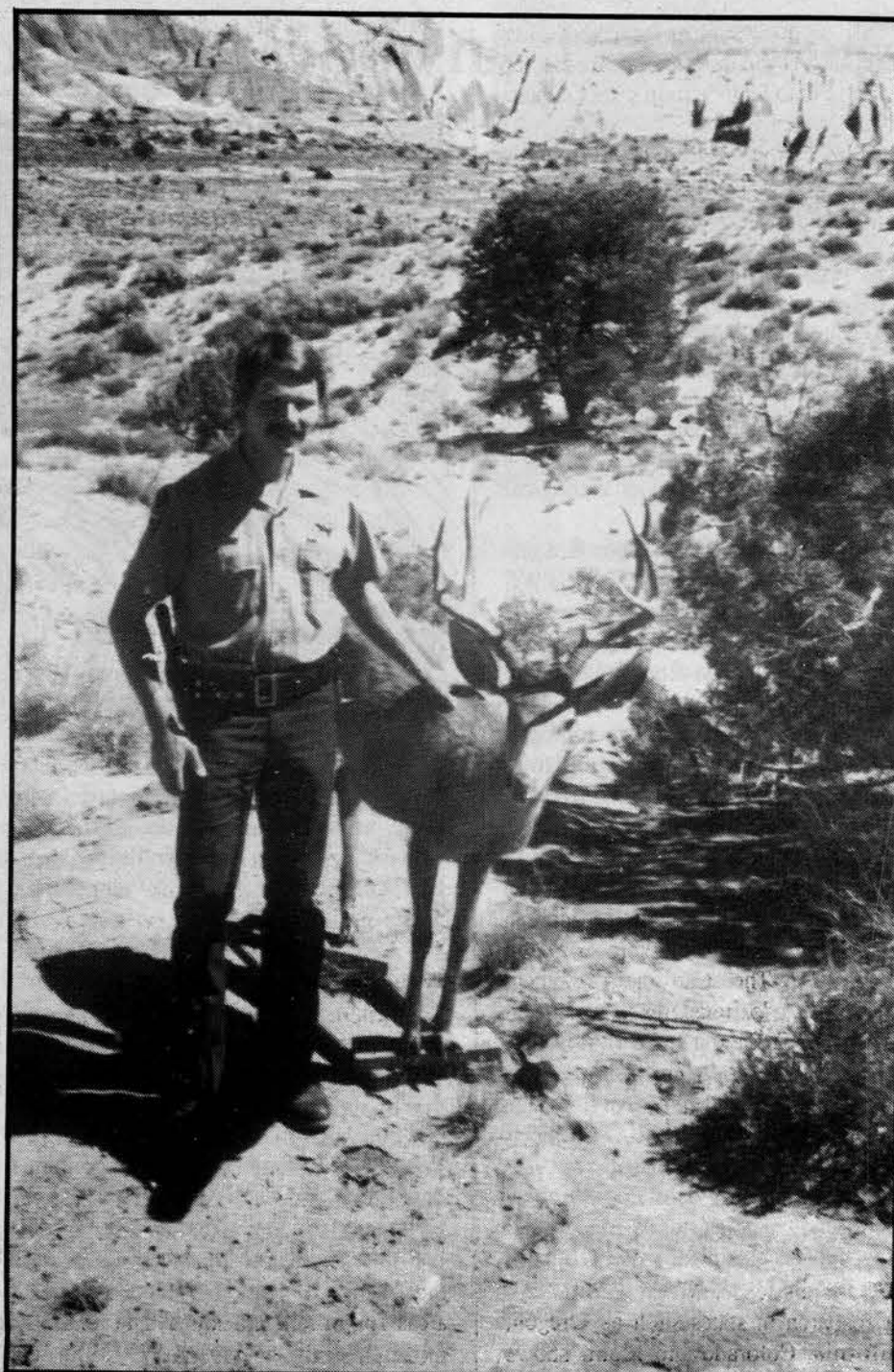
He was charged with "attempt to take game in a closed area" and "shooting from a motor vehicle," said Musclow. It was minor compared to what could have been charged. The would-be poacher posted a \$400 bond and left.

"It's not often you catch people right in the act of attempting to take an animal illegally," said Johnson. "This really shows how many animals are taken illegally each year in Utah and elsewhere."

When the use of deer decoys first began in the United States, lawyers questioned whether they constituted "entrapment." But in state after state, judges found that people were not being entrapped and cases have withstood challenges.

Utah law says, "Conduct merely affording a person an opportunity to commit an offense does not constitute entrapment."

The decoy deer was placed a full 50 yards off the roadway. The four-point buck was partially screened by trees making it even harder to see. You had to be "road hunting" in order to notice it.



Utah game warden Rudy Musclow and bullet-riddled decoy deer

This was the fourth arrest by local wardens since the beginning of this year's Utah archery season. The first arrest was in the La Sal Mountains, where a woman made a perfect nighttime 25-yard shot in the deer's neck. It cost her \$300.

The second arrest came nights later in the Blue Mountains, when a man in his forties took a shot and missed at 60 yards. It cost him \$300.

The third mistake was made by a 15-year-old Colorado boy at 10 in the morning in the same area. After shooting the deer and seeing it remain upright, the

boy asked an older friend, "What does that mean?"

"It means we're in big trouble," his friend stated. "The wardens should be here any second."

Paul Woodbury, chief of game and fish law enforcement for Utah, said there are at least six deer decoys somewhere in the state. Two others full of holes are under repair. He said that since this archery season began nearly 100 arrests have been made in Utah.

— John Maynard

HOTLINE

No money for wolves

Wolves are one step further from returning to Yellowstone National Park, thanks to a congressional prohibition on spending any money for a formal analysis of reintroduction. Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, attached the ban to an Interior Department spending bill approved early this month. The Idaho legislator, who says he favors wolf reintroduction, told the *Casper Star-Tribune* he wants to delay preparation of an environmental impact statement until interest groups have time to reach agreement on the controversial issue. The National Park Service would have begun preparing an environmental impact statement early next year if Congress had not prohibited it.

Highway to hell in Utah

A car races up the canyon, kicking up a cloud of dust, then slams to a halt before a donut shop facade. At least that

is what Highway Productions Inc., a Los Angeles film company, hopes will happen in a scene from its movie, *Highway to Hell*. The canyon under question, however, is in southern Utah's Wahweap wilderness study area and environmental groups have protested. Scott Groene of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance asked, "Why do they have to go into one of the few remaining untrammelled places and trammel it?" But a Bureau of Land Management study, conducted in September, concluded that the film would not impair the area's potential for later wilderness designation. There is an existing road in the area, and the BLM says the cameraman's car would drive only on it. Regional BLM director Martha Hahn said, "It seems that the impact would be temporary, with regeneration of the land possible during the winter." Hahn will make a final decision Nov. 1, after *HCN* goes to press. For more information, call Hahn at 801/644-2672. According to *AP*, Highway Productions Inc. chose the site because it "resembles hell."

A land-poor sheep co-op trespasses in search of grass

A 50-member Hispanic cooperative hopes that a state task force will come up with a plan to let the group's sheep graze on public land.

The co-op, called Ganados del Valle, which means livestock of the valley, is a bright economic spot in Arriba County, New Mexico. It has attracted national attention for its successful revival of weaving with the wool of rare churro sheep, animals that were brought to the Southwest some 300 years ago by Spanish settlers.

But success can breed problems. Ganados, founded in 1981, has increased its flock to some 2,000 sheep that have exhausted their usual grazing ranges. When its lease of Apache reservation land expired last summer, Ganados decided to break the law and stage a "graze-in" on a state-owned wildlife area.

"We have weighed the consequences of this action and know we may soon be at your mercy," the co-op wrote to the state game and fish commissioners. "We have nowhere to turn ... we have our backs to the wall."

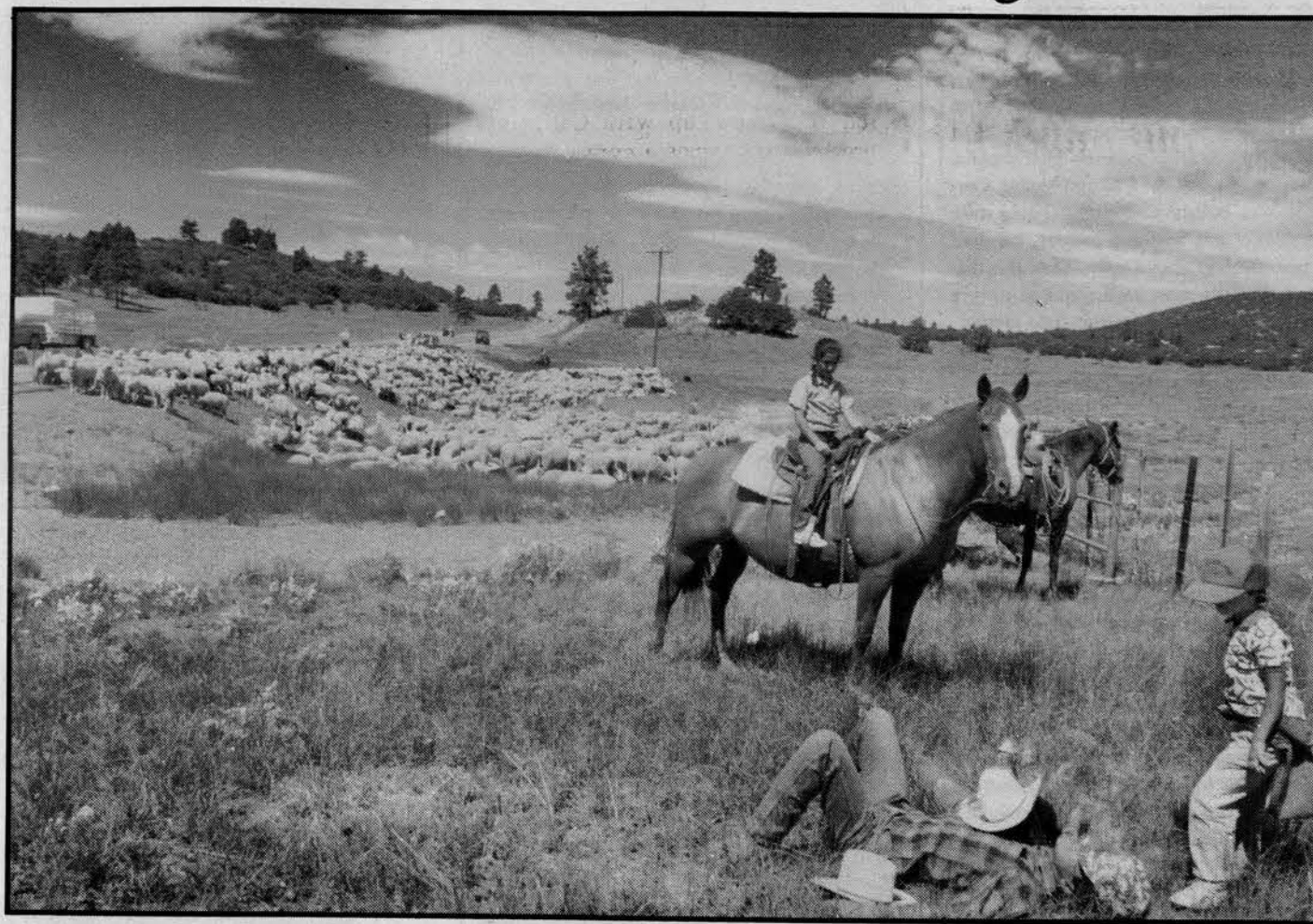
The first response of New Mexico Gov. Garrey Carruthers was to send in state police on horseback to rout the sheepherders. Then Carruthers relented, offering Ganados temporary grazing on 800 acres near Heron Lake State Park. Now, the job of his state task force is to devise a permanent settlement.

That will not be an easy job. Many Anglo ranchers insist that in arid New Mexico there is not enough public grazing land to support both big game and churro sheep.

Ganados leader Maria Varela says that research in states such as Oregon, California, Colorado and Idaho shows benefits to deer and elk where controlled livestock grazing occurs.

Varela says the research shows that rather than competing with elk, sheep benefit wildlife by stimulating the growth of young grasses favored by the elk.

In fact, she says, under-grazing contributes to deterioration of the range. "Seventy-five percent of the environmentalists in the state come from the



Sydney Brink

Ganados del Valle sheep on the move last summer

East, where it is not arid, and don't know about the process of desertification," Varela says.

The vice president of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation says Varela may be leaning too hard on grazing data from elsewhere. The Northwest, says David Weingarten, has a lot more rainfall than New Mexico. Weingarten says the suitability of Rio Arriba wildlife areas for mixed grazing will be examined in a study the governor's task force will propose. The study might take as long as seven years, Weingarten adds.

Weingarten and Tom Wolf, a New Mexico staffer for the Nature Conservancy, say even if research supports mixed grazing, there are other species that call the land home. They include grouse, prairie falcon and beaver. If the lands are taken to subsidize Ganados, that would constitute "a broken trust to the sportsmen and fishermen

who have paid hunting and fishing licenses," Weingarten said.

Gumercindo P. Salazar, the co-founder of Ganados, said the issue is not so much environmental as cultural.

"Elk is not an endangered species," he says. "The churro is. So is the Hispanic pastoral culture of New Mexico. If we can work together to solve this problem, the wildlife will benefit, the churro will be preserved, and our children will inherit a strong culture and economic future."

One area that Ganados needs for its sheep, however, may be denied them no matter what a grazing study reveals. It is the Sargent Wildlife Area, which the Nature Conservancy deeded to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish with a stipulation: It can only be used to manage wildlife.

Wolf says, "Our main concern is that we did a real estate transaction that

involved certain deed restrictions. We intend to enforce" them.

Ganados has had better luck with the Forest Service. The co-op recently came to an agreement with the Carson National Forest that allows the churro sheep to get some grazing allotments next summer.

In the meantime, Ganados co-chairman Antonio Manzanares faces a trespassing charge stemming from the graze-in.

For more information about the New Mexico Range Improvement Task Force, call John Fowler, 505/646-2841. Ganados del Valle can be reached at its retail outlet, Tierra Wools, 505/588-7231.

— Kent Patterson

The writer is a freelancer in Toas, New Mexico.

Land fights are an old story

The dispute in New Mexico over access to public land has its roots in the ownership of the land itself.

Much of the parks and refuges Ganados del Valle wants to put its 2,000 sheep on to graze was once the property of the Hispanic people. In 1832, 12 years before New Mexico became a U.S. territory, the government of Mexico gave Hispanic settlers a 600,000-acre tract called the Tierra Amarilla grant.

After Mexico relinquished New Mexico to the United States in 1848, however, Congress approved the transfer of the Tierra Amarilla grant to one person, Manuel Martinez.

He did not retain it. By 1900, most of the grant belonged to an Anglo named Thomas B. Catron, a New Mexico politician believed to have a taste for shady land deals.

Some descendants of the Hispanic settlers who were given a huge chunk of land only to lose it shortly thereafter have never reconciled themselves to the loss.

One angry man is Amador Flores. Two years ago he insisted he owned land he had leased and worked on for 20 years. The land was part of the Tierra Amarilla grant in the 19th century.

Santa Fe Judge Bruce Kaufman dis-

agreed, saying a Phoenix investment firm owned the land. The judge ordered Flores off the property in 1988.

Amador responded to the judge's order by burning it, and with the help of relatives, Vietnam veterans and land-grant political activists, he built bunkers and established an armed camp.

The 16-month standoff ended when the insurance company for the Phoenix investment firm decided the case was too expensive to fight. Flores was offered 200 acres out of the 500 acres he claimed, in addition to a cash settlement.

Flores' father, Rafael, called the settlement a victory, adding, "We're going to continue forward with more."

Flores' revolt recalled the mass movement in the 1960s led by Reies Lopez Tijerina. In 1967, Tijerina and his band raided the Tierra Amarilla courthouse, which caused a shootout with the sheriff and his deputies. The state called out the national guard.

Although the movement declined over the years, it did not die. Some say Flores and his supporters are the beginning of a new land-grant crusade.

"I know a number of people who are extremely nervous about their land being targeted," said Peter Holzem, the Chama, N.M., attorney who defended



Neil Jacobs

Amador Flores, left, and supporter at a press conference

the Phoenix investment firm against Flores.

Flores says he will donate his 200 acres to the group that coordinated the 16-month occupation, called El Consejo

de Tierra Amarilla, the council of Tierra Amarilla.

— Kent Patterson

6-High Country News — November 6, 1989

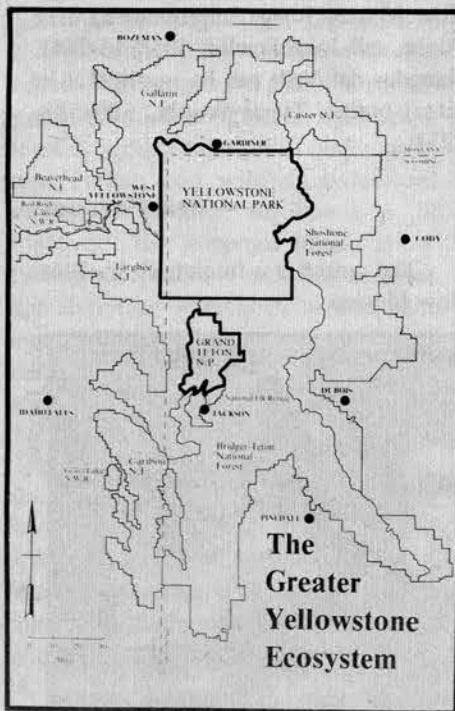
BULLETIN BOARD

PONY RESIDENTS ARE WORRIED

When the 112 residents of Pony, Mont., about 50 miles due west of Bozeman, saw new roads on the hillside above their town and heavy equipment rumbling through their streets, many started making phone calls. They found out that the Chicago Mining Corporation was building a "custom" gold mill, which uses a vat leaching process, one-half mile and 300 feet above town. They also discovered that the new mill required only a groundwater permit from the state Department of Health and Environmental Sciences. Janet Zimmerman, a member of Concerned Citizens of Pony, the group protesting the location of the mill, said that an environmental assessment and two public meetings have left many of their questions unanswered. Exactly what "caustic chemicals" will be used in the mill and how will they be kept from leaking? she asks. And where will the mill, which will use 50 gallons a minute, get its water? She says the company called the group "an enemy of free enterprise" for its scrutiny and at one meeting harassed members. "We are not opposed to mining, we just want responsible mining," says Zimmerman. "The more we find out, the more uneasy we get." For more information, write Concerned Citizens of Pony, P.O. Box 253, Pony, MT 59747 or call 406/685-3481.

BAT FACTS

One good reason to like bats: a bat, weighing less than an ounce, can eat 3,000 mosquitoes a night. They also spread seeds, fertilize plants, produce high-quality fertilizer and eat gypsy moths, corn borers and other insects that feed on crops. But their diet of insects makes them vulnerable to chemical pesticides, and people, out of fear and ignorance, often illegally kill or harass bats hibernating in caves. To help people learn more about bats, the Colorado Division of Wildlife offers a free booklet, *The Bats of Colorado: Shadows in the Night*. Write to Steven Bissell, Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216. Bissell says he also visits schools and groups to talk about bats and other wildlife.

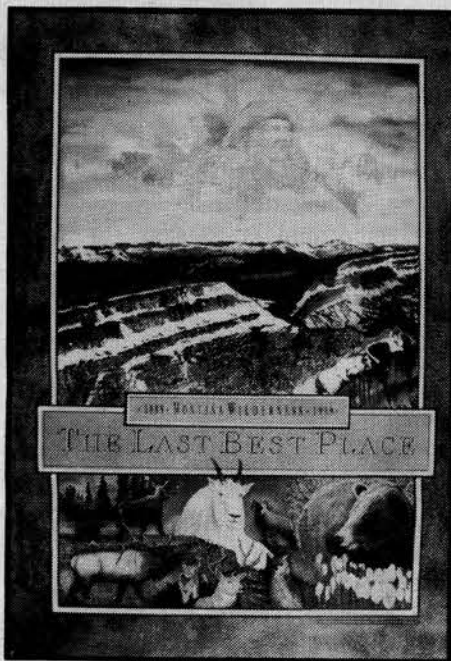


ECOSYSTEMS AND THE LAW

Does the law support the protection of ecosystems? Using the jurisdictional jumble of the Greater Yellowstone region as an example, University of Wyoming Law Professor Robert B. Keiter answers this question with a tentative "yes." In a recent 74-page article, *Taking Account of the Ecosystem on the Public Domain: Law and Ecology in the Greater Yellowstone Region*, in the University of Colorado Law Review, Keiter explores what he calls an emerging "common law" of ecosystem management. "Current (federal) law," he concludes, "not only legitimizes the emerging notion of ecosystem-based management, but it also provides agency officials with sufficient authority to implement ecologically sound policies." For a copy of the University of Colorado Law Review, Natural Resources Issue, Volume 60/Issue 4/1989, send \$8 to University of Colorado Law Review, 290 Fleming Law Building, Campus Box 401, Boulder, CO 80309 or call 303/492-6145.

WAR GAMES IN NEVADA

The Nevada National Guard wants to develop a 600,000-acre training center on BLM land near Hawthorne, Nev., about 170 miles southeast of Reno. The center would be used twice each year for month-long war games involving 10,000 to 15,000 people. The state military department says it needs the greatly expanded area, four times its existing facilities, to realistically simulate modern warfare. Though no live ammunition would be used, the training would involve extensive use of tanks, trucks and aircraft. Impacts include compacting of soils and destruction of vegetation and wildlife habitat. In addition, part of the area considered in the preferred proposal was designated a wilderness study area by the BLM. Because the center would be on BLM lands, it would require an environmental impact statement and congressional approval. For copies of the *Environmental Assessment on the Proposed Reserve Component Training Center*, write State of Nevada Military Department, Office of the Adjutant General, 2525 S. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701 (702/887-7302). The deadline for comments on the proposal, which should be sent to Col. Jerry Bussell at the address above, is Nov. 13.



ONE OF THE BEST

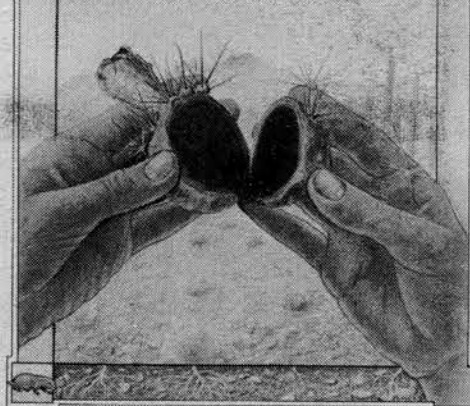
The Montana Wilderness Association is offering a colorful poster to celebrate the state's centennial. "The Last Best Place," by artist Craig Joslin, captures Montana's history of wild land, wildlife, Indians and settlers, and kicks off the association's century poster series. The series will continue until the year 2000, showcasing a range of Montana artists. A limited number of signed copies of "The Last Best Place" are available for \$35, and unsigned copies are available for \$16. Include \$4 for postage. For information, contact Montana Wilderness Association, P.O. Box 635, Helena, MT 59624 (406/443-7350).

MUSHROOMING WASTE

While the United States spent billions of dollars in the first three decades of the nuclear age developing nuclear energy and weapons, it allocated only \$300 million to find ways to dispose of nuclear waste. A report from Public Citizen, the environmental and consumer group founded in 1971 by Ralph Nader, called *Nuclear Legacy: An Overview of the Places, Problems, and Politics of Radioactive Waste in the United States*, looks at the consequences of our priorities. Based primarily on documents obtained from federal agencies, the report examines how much nuclear waste has been generated, where it came from, how it is stored and transported and what health risks it poses. While the radioactivity and volume of nuclear waste is increasing rapidly, the government is not developing adequate methods of disposal, says principal author Scott Saleska. "In the absence of a proven, safe solution to the disposal of nuclear wastes, it is irresponsible to continue generating them," he says. The 165-page report costs \$20; a 17-page "Executive Summary" costs \$3. Write Public Citizen, 215 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003 (202/546-4996).

Gathering the Desert

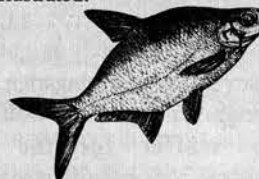
GARY PAUL NABHAN



GATHERING THE DESERT

For most of the time humans lived in the seemingly harsh Sonoran Desert, life would have been inconceivable without native plants such as mesquite, fan palms, agaves and cacti. But our understanding and use of these and other desert plants, which are part of a folk wisdom developed over centuries, have given way to modern farming and medicine. In *Gathering the Desert*, Gary Nabhan, a research botanist at the University of Arizona, writes of the old folkways with appreciation. He tells us how desert gourds have been used as food, medicine, soap, bleach and utensils, and that amaranth greens, the "meat of the poor," are a highly nutritious substitute for lettuce and spinach. "Whether superabundant and storable, or as rare and perishable as manna, these plants helped shape and succor cultures within the Sonoran Desert," Nabhan writes. He also encourages a debate about the wisdom of growing modern crops in the desert by showing that native plants are proven providers over the long-term. This well-written book is the winner of the John Burroughs Medal for outstanding nature writing. Paul Mirocha, an artist with the office of arid lands at the University of Arizona, is the excellent illustrator.

University of Arizona Press, 1615 East Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85719. Paper: \$14.95. 209 pages. Illustrated.



HELP CLEAN UP THE CLARK FORK

An estimated 5,300 fish died in Montana's Upper Clark Fork River this year in a kill that state biologists call "one of the most severe in the river's history." But the decimation of wildlife in that river basin is not unusual. It happens almost every year when summer thunderstorms wash mine wastes downstream from the Butte area, where some 13 abandoned copper smelters are located. "There are deposits of metals throughout the flood plain," said Glen Phillips, a biologist with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. "In the spring, water collects in those areas, then it dries in the summer and washes off in the thunderstorms in July." When the Atlantic Richfield Company bought the mines from Anaconda Minerals Company, it assumed liability for damages caused by the tailings. This year, Atlantic Richfield paid \$1 million in restitution fees. The Clark Fork Rehabilitation Advisory Council, a group appointed by the governor from environmental and business communities, is overseeing \$750,000 of that money. Phillips said the council will design and implement a demonstration project of new cleanup technologies to be used in the Superfund cleanup of the river, scheduled to begin at Warm Springs Pond next summer. The remaining \$250,000 will be distributed by the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department. Jerry Wells, regional supervisor for the area, said his agency is considering using the money to augment stream flows, improve spawning areas, develop new fishing access sites or to conduct additional biological research on the river's fish population. "But we can't operate in a vacuum here," he says. "We need public input." Wells said his agency is also looking for recommendations on any other fishing needs people think should be considered. Comments should be sent by Nov. 10 to Jerry Wells, regional supervisor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59801.

THE QUALITY OF WESTERN AIR

While the haze gets thicker, links between air pollutants and damage to the West's sweeping views, high country water and fragile biology are becoming clearer. And Congress, for the first time in almost a decade, is working on changes to the Clean Air Act. To help legislators, regulators, environmentalists and researchers understand the West's air quality issues, the Natural Resources Law Center of the University of Colorado at Boulder will host a conference called "Air Quality Protection in the West." Issues discussed at the Nov. 27-28 conference in Boulder, Colo., will include visibility, acid rain and long-distance transport, air toxics, and urban air pollution. Christine Shaver of the National Park Service's air quality division, Prof. Mark Squillace of the University of Wyoming, College of Law, and Robert Yuhnke of the Environmental Defense Fund will be among 10 featured speakers. Admission for academics and those from public interest groups is \$125; government officials pay \$195; and everyone else pays \$250. To register, write Natural Resources Law Center, Campus Box 401, Boulder, CO 80309, or call 303/492-1288 before Nov. 17.

TWO FORKS' WAKE

When the EPA initiated a veto process against Two Forks dam earlier this year, it put Colorado water policy up for grabs. "Colorado in the Wake of the Two Forks Decision," a conference presented by the University of Denver College of Law's Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in Denver, will look at the Two Forks process and Colorado's options for the future. Speakers at the Nov. 17 conference include Democratic Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Lee A. DeHihns, the Environmental Protection Agency's acting regional administrator for Two Forks; Robert McWhinnie, formerly of the Metropolitan Water Board; Charles Jordan of the Denver Water Board; and Dan Luecke of the Environmental Defense Fund. The conference offers three concurrent workshops on topics including interstate water sales in the Colorado River Basin, municipalities and investors in the water market and legal ethics in Colorado water issues. Registration is \$125 for government employees, staff members of nonprofits and university employees and \$160 for others. Call 303/871-6118.

ECOTAGE HOTLINE

An Elko, Nev.-based group called the Wilderness Impact Research Foundation established a toll-free number in early September to report incidents of ecotage, such as tree-spiking. Foundation chairman Grant Gerber says these incidents are currently under-reported and poorly researched, and he hopes his analysts can gather data from the hotline to compute patterns and consequences. But so far, only one or two calls a week have been coming in to 1/800/SABO-TAG. Gerber says his nonprofit foundation is supported by hunters, snowmobilers and off-vehicle highway users.

REPRIEVE FOR GOLDEN EAGLES

Pressure from animal rights activists has delayed plans to test the toxic compound 1080 on 15 injured golden eagles. Researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture at regional headquarters in Lakewood, Colo., wanted to see if the raptors would avoid eating the poison on lamb carcasses. If they did, the poison, which was banned in 1972, could be reintroduced to control coyote predation on ranches in Wyoming and Montana. Bill Van Dusen, head researcher for the Rocky Mountain Humane Society, vehemently opposed the testing. He said it would not only put the eagles at great risk and probably kill them, but also promote the use of a toxin that scientists class with strychnine and cyanide as among the most deadly known to humans. Before the Nixon administration banned its use, compound 1080 was known to have caused the deaths of 13 humans, 20 bald eagles and one California condor. Federal researchers said they were sure the eagles would survive the test, proving that a new "bite collar," which releases 1080 when bitten by a coyote, is a safe and effective option that could save ranchers over \$1 million per year in sheep losses, reports the *Denver Post*. The test was originally planned for late October and has not yet been rescheduled.

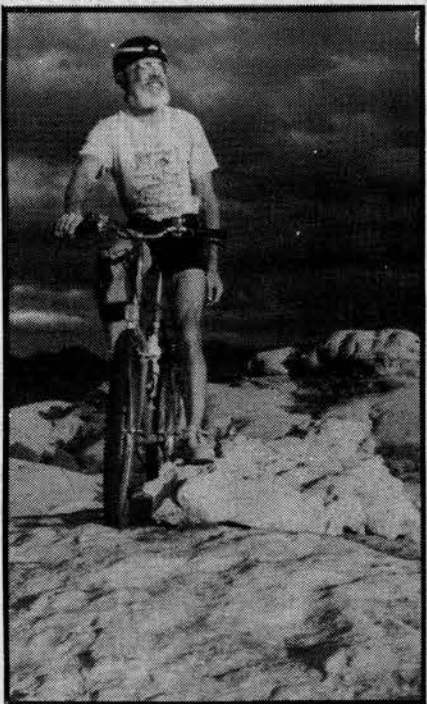
CLEARCUTTING IS INDICTED

As a trial lawyer, Edward C. Fritz has spent years preparing and presenting evidence against clearcutting projects, most recently in the fight over the habitat of the red-cockaded woodpecker in eastern Texas. His new book, *Clearcutting: A Crime Against Nature*, expands his arguments to a national scale. He says a vastly superior alternative to clearcutting is individual tree-selection, but a combination of loopholes in the National Forestry Management Act, bureaucratic inertia and pressure from the timber industry keeps the Forest Service from considering this option. He suggests a number of legal and political strategies for fighting clearcutting on public lands, and includes case studies of forestry practices from around the country. Fritz, who considers clearcutting an environmental problem compounded by incompetence and corruption, addresses his book to taxpayers.

Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, TX 78709. Hardcover: \$14.95. 124 pages. Illustrated with color plates, photographs, drawings, maps. Includes glossary and index.

GATHER AT THE RIVER

The Northern Lights Research and Education Institute has organized a Missouri River Assembly to gather representatives of the Missouri Basin's states, federal water agencies and Indian tribes. The assembly meets Nov. 12-14 in St. Louis, Mo., to focus on such issues as recreation versus navigational interests, distribution of revenues from hydropower production and Indian water rights. The agenda will include discussions of state and tribal interests and alternative river management plans, and group workshops at the end will try to plan the implementation of proposed changes. Duane Sveum, chief of the Army Corps of Engineers' Reservoir control center, says that while it is "time to take a look" at the way the Missouri is managed, the number of different interests involved will make changes a long time in coming. Current river management policy, a set of six priorities, was established by Congress in 1979, and has been criticized in recent years as being too rigid. For more information, contact Richard Oppen, Executive Director, Northern Lights Institute, 210 N. Higgins, Suite 328, P.O. Box 8084, Missoula, MT 59807 (406/721-7415).



Mary Plumb

Craig Bigler in Canyonlands

PEDAL POWER

Did you know that the bicycle is the most widely used means of personal transportation in the world? That's the finding of a new study by the Worldwatch Institute called *The Bicycle: Vehicle for a Small Planet*. Although the world's 800 million bikes outnumber cars two-to-one, bicycle commuting remains primarily a means of the poor. The United States has seven times more bikes per person than India, but one in two Americans also owns a car. Only one in 500 Indians has access to a car — our major traveling mode. But author Marcia D. Lowe offers enough useful statistics to make any city planner consider bicycles as a transportation alternative. She includes examples of cities that have integrated bikes into their mass transit systems.

Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Paper: \$4. 62 pages.



Snowy egret

WILDLIFE REFUGES ARE ABUSED

Wildlife is supposed to come first on the nation's 452 wildlife refuges. But on 60 percent of them, wildlife suffers from such activities as mining, hunting, logging, grazing, power boating and military exercises. That is the finding of a recent report from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, called *Wildlife Refuges: Continuing Problems with Incompatible Uses Call for Bold Action*. The report says that on many refuges, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows wildlife to come second because of pressure from economic and recreational interests. To combat this growing problem, the report recommends that the agency base decisions solely on biological, rather than political, considerations. On one-third of the refuges where the agency lacks control of such resources as mineral rights or waterways, the GAO suggests either purchasing needed rights or eliminating the refuge from the system. For a copy of the report, write U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (202/275-6241).

TRACING WESTERN HISTORY

Each entry in the *Historical Atlas of the American West* reveals a layer of western history. Authors Warren A. Beck, a historian, and Ynez D. Haase, a geographer, aim to reveal the relationship between the human presence in the region and its physical setting. All entries include at least one map accompanied by a brief text and a bibliography, beginning with the physical and biological characteristics of the region, which they define as the 17 states west of the hundredth meridian. Later entries show the movement of humans from early explorations to railroads, the changes in territory from the Mormon empire to federal lands, and the distribution of natural resources. The authors pay particular attention to Indian events, Spanish lands and military installations.

University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Ave., Norman, OK 73019. Cloth: \$29.95. 200 pages. Appendix, references, index.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE REPORT

The *Audubon Wildlife Report* for 1989-1990 offers both background and new information on federal wildlife conservation policies. Nine chapters of the 585-page book cover such issues as developments in Western water law, the restoration of public rangelands in the West, conservation of ancient forests in the Northwest, recent interpretations of federal wildlife law and global climate change and its effect on wildlife. Eight species, including the ocelot, golden eagle and marbled murrelet are the subjects of case studies. As in four previous editions, the report focuses on one federal agency, this time the Army Corps of Engineers and its increasing role as manager and overseer of millions of acres of public lands and waters. Appendices include directories of key wildlife and fisheries personnel in seven federal agencies.

Academic Press, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, Book Marketing Department, 1250 Sixth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101. Hardcover: \$39.95. 585 pages. Index, illustrated with photos.

YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

The Park Service has announced final approval and release of the general management plan for Arches National Park. Four years in the making, the plan outlines preservation and use policies for the 73,379-acre park. Projects included in the plan are a new visitors center, a connecting loop trail in the Windows Section, and 10 new walk-in campsites at the Devil's Garden campground. The plan also calls for a new parking lot at the Delicate Arch viewing point and paving of the road leading to that point. Superintendent Paul D. Guraedy said he realizes that "none of us got all that we wanted" in the management plan, but asks everyone to continue their interest in the park. Copies of the general management plan are available from Arches National Park, P.O. Box 907, Moab, UT 84532, or by calling 801/259-8161.



OIL WELLS AND GLACIER

Drilling could begin next summer on two oil wells near Glacier National Park. The wells, both on the Lewis and Clark National Forest south of the park in Montana, would require 26 miles of new or reconstructed road and two new bridges. Opponents of the development, first proposed in 1983, have twice sent environmental assessments back to the Forest Service for more work. To protect grizzly bears, mountain goats and other wildlife, a new draft environmental impact statement says that drilling would only be allowed part of the year. Motorcyclists would face restrictions on nearby trails, and two outfitters would be relocated. But critics worry that more roads will increase the use of motorized vehicles in the area, reports the *Great Falls Tribune*. They also question the road construction and drilling on land Congress tried to set aside, in a bill vetoed by President Reagan last year, for wilderness study. Traditionalist Blackfoot Indians say the development would desecrate some of the last untouched land where they can practice their religion. Open houses on the draft environmental impact statement will be held from 3 to 8 p.m. at Cut Bank in the Glacier Electric Building on Nov. 6; at Browning, Little Flower Parish, on Nov. 7; at East Glacier Park Community Hall on Nov. 8; and at Great Falls, Ponderosa Inn on Nov. 14. Send public comments by Nov. 15 to the Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 871, Great Falls, MT 59403.

ACCESS

NEAT STUFF

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY — Let the sun work for you. Solar electricity for your home or RV. Free information. Photocomm, 2555 N. Hwy 89, Chino Valley, AZ 86323, 602/636-2201 or 602/778-1616. (ufn17B)

PROGRAM ASSISTANT opening with non-profit environmental research and advocacy organization. Duties: coordinate public involvement, fundraise, technical assistance to citizen groups and more. Qualifications: strong communication skills, college degree, commitment. Salary: \$14,000-\$18,000 DOE. Contact Technical Information Project, Box 1371, Rapid City, SD 57709 (605/343-0439). (3x20p)

NONHORMONAL ALTERNATIVES IN CONTRACEPTION from nonprofit service. Safe, effective birth control up to 50 percent below standard retail: Condoms, sponges, foams, creams, jellies. Plus books, lubricants, recyclable menstrual items. Send long SASE for free mail order brochure. ZPG-Seattle, Dept. HC, 4426 Burke North, Seattle, WA 98103, 206/633-4750. (3x21 p)

SHARON D. CLARK, ATTORNEY AT LAW. ENVIRONMENTAL LAW, LAND USE, and WATER LAW. 20 Boulder Crescent, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. (719/473-9966). (10x14p)

I LOVE THE USA (the flag) bumper strip. Free. Send 25 cents stamp postage. USA Stickers, Box 251-H, G-town, MD 20874. (2x21 p)

BEAUTIFUL BIG SKY COUNTRY, 20 acres near Pipestone, Montana. Trees, five natural springs, meadow, creek, natural log corral. Remote but accessible year-round. \$28,000. Call Sandy, 406/723-8881. (3x21 p)

THE SUN WILL SHINE every day in your child's room with an appliqued quilt crafted from authentic Indian designs. Five choices. For free brochure send SASE to: Quilts, Box 243, Butte, MT 59703. (3x21 p)

CLASSIFIED ADS cost 30 cents per word, pre-paid, \$5 minimum. General rates for display are \$8/column inch if camera-ready; \$10/column inch if we make up. Send your ad with payment to: HCN, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428 or call 303/527-4898 for more information.

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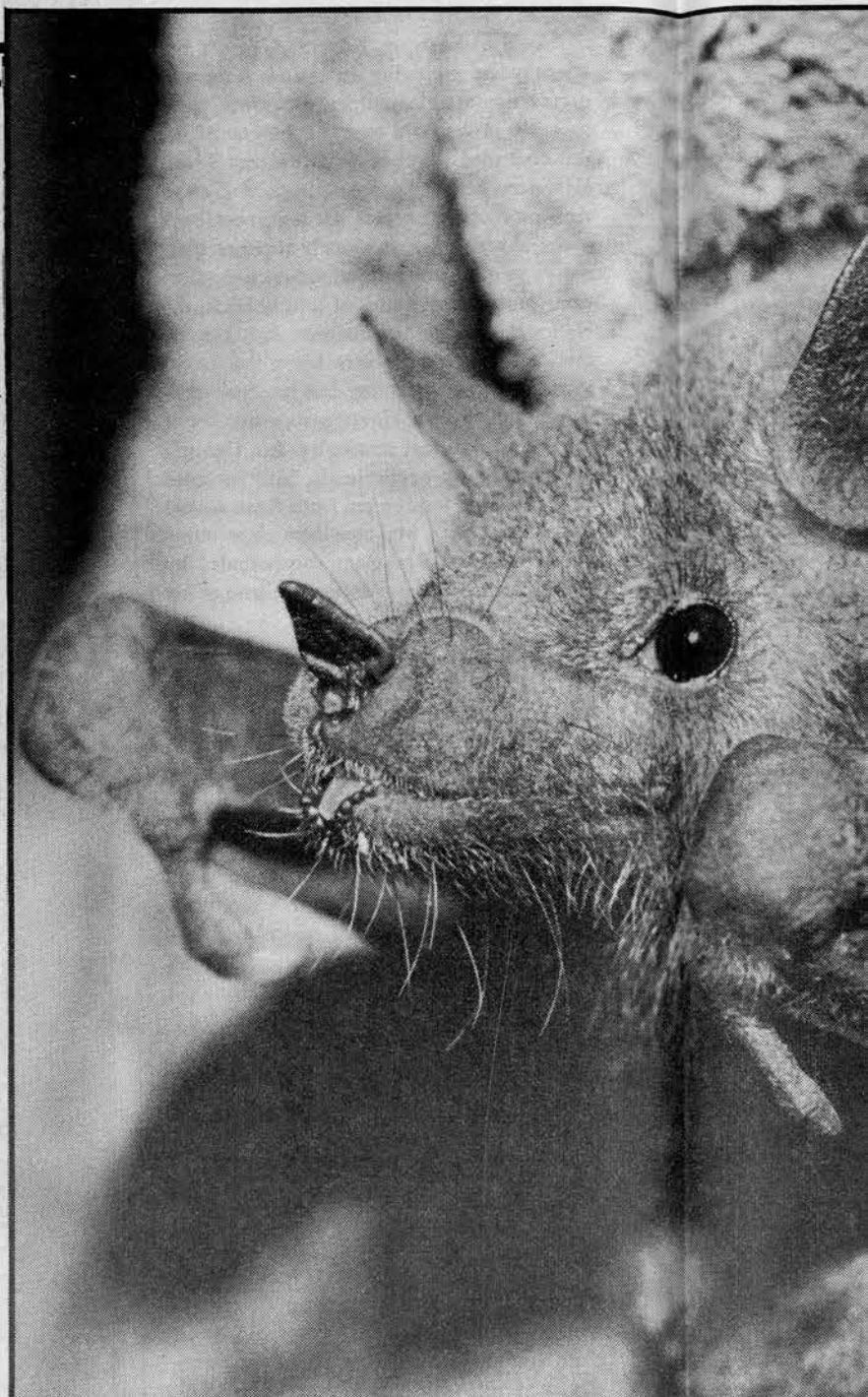
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San Luis Valley...*(Continued from page 1)*

from beneath the ranch is opposed by virtually every organization in the San Luis valley as well as by state and federal agencies. Yet AWDI is confident its legal claims to the water will be upheld by the courts.

AWDI came to its water plans by an indirect path. The firm's founder, Maurice Strong, discovered the San Luis valley in the late 1970s, when he and several business associates acquired a controlling interest in the Phoenix-based Arizona Land and Cattle Company, whose name was later changed to AZL.

During an interview, Strong, 60, said AZL owned two million acres of land in the southwest United States as well as cattle feedlots, a commodity trading business, a farm machinery business and other interests.

"It was a troubled company. It had a lot of assets but was losing money when I invested in it ... The game plan was to get rid of all the land because ranch and farmland doesn't produce any significant amount of income," Strong said. "Therefore it's not the best investment for a public company that has to show income return."

While Strong was stripping the company's assets and placing mineral and oil rights in separate subsidiaries, he and his Danish wife, Hanne, decided to look at one of AZL's southern Colorado properties: the Luis Maria Baca ranch, a 100,000-acre cattle ranch that includes flat valley hay lands and at least one mountain peak. The mountain, Kit Carson Peak, is part of the Sangre de Cristo range, which forms the east wall of the San Luis valley.

The San Luis valley is 100 miles long and 60 miles wide. Its east face is the Sangre de Cristo range; 60 miles to the west are the San Juan mountains. The two ranges converge at the north end of the valley, closing it in on three sides with high peaks.

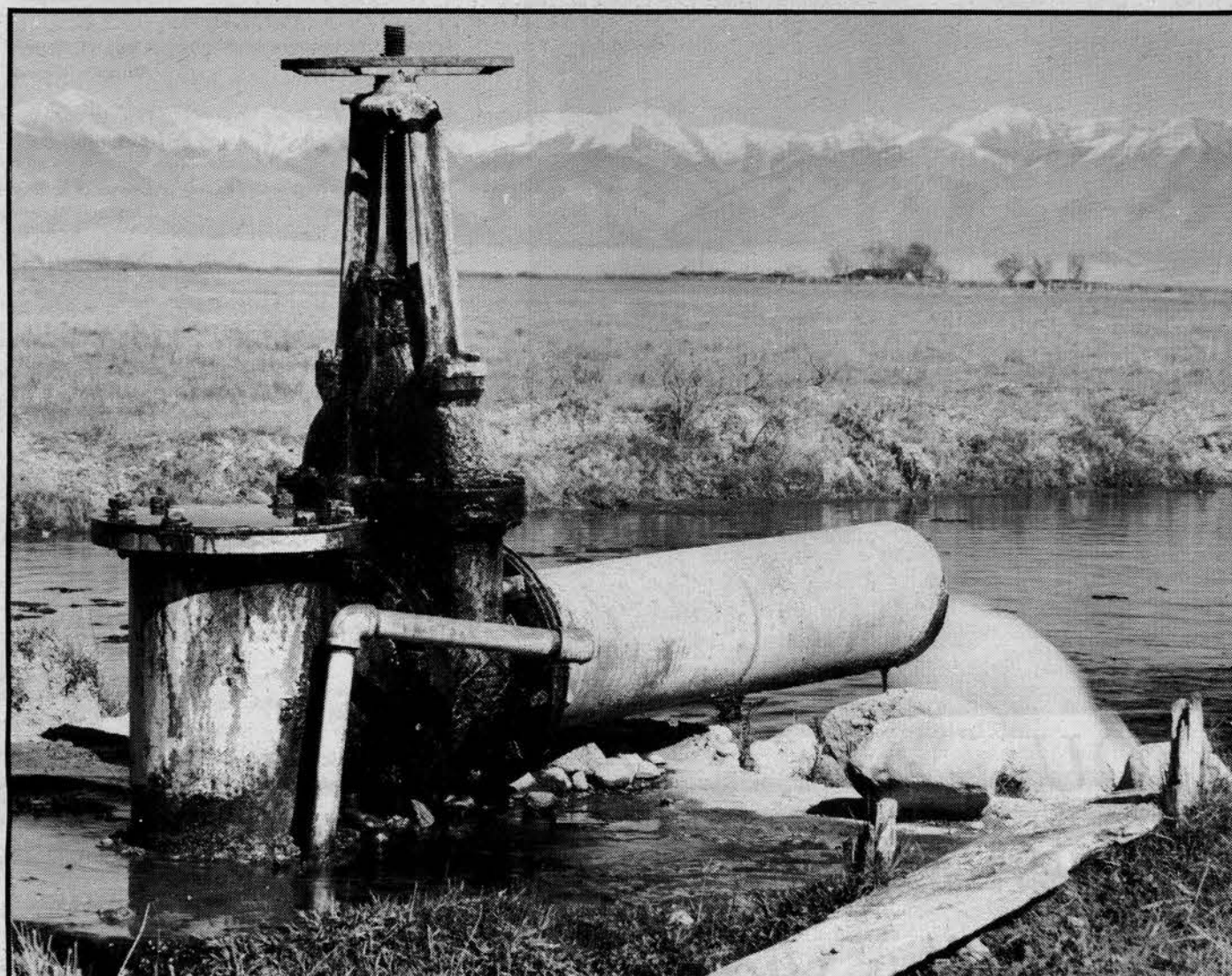
Altogether, the remote valley supports a population of about 40,000 scattered across a couple of dozen small farming towns. According to San Luis Valley Christian Community Services, three of the six counties in the valley are among the poorest in the nation. Farm income in the valley in 1986 was \$41 million. The lion's share of that went into the pockets of a group of rich potato, barley and vegetable farmers who own big plots of irrigated land.

The valley is 200 miles and three mountains passes south of Denver. It is also high — the lowest point is 1,500 feet higher than the mile-high city of Denver. It is also extremely dry — the average rainfall is only seven inches a year.

But runoff from the peaks gives the valley floor a high water table and grassland that once sustained huge buffalo herds.

The valley does not offer typical Rocky Mountain vistas. The wide, flat

'The Closed Basin Project is designed to pump about 100,000 acre-feet of water a year from more than 150 shallow wells and flush it into the Rio Grande.'



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Water spout near Saguache, Colorado

land between the two abruptly rising ranges is dotted with huge center pivot machines used to irrigate potatoes; in the spring, water pools on the fields and along the road.

The towns present little charm to the visitor. The smaller communities' downtowns are mainly boarded up. Nevertheless, Strong and his wife fell in love with the area and decided that the company would keep the Baca ranch.

"With my environmental interest I felt that, you know, it's a very unique valley. It's not a ski area. It was economically depressed. And here was a big piece of land where I had kind of a stewardship role. I began to think that rather than sell it we should have the company keep it and see whether we could find a better future for the area that

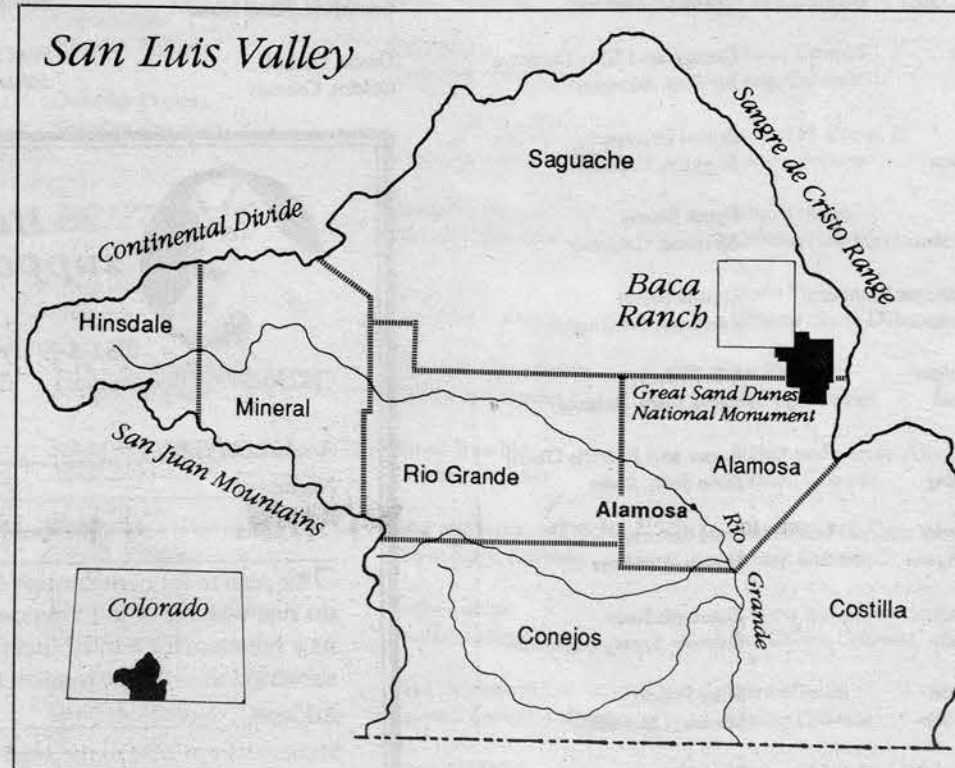
would be good for the company and good for the area as well."

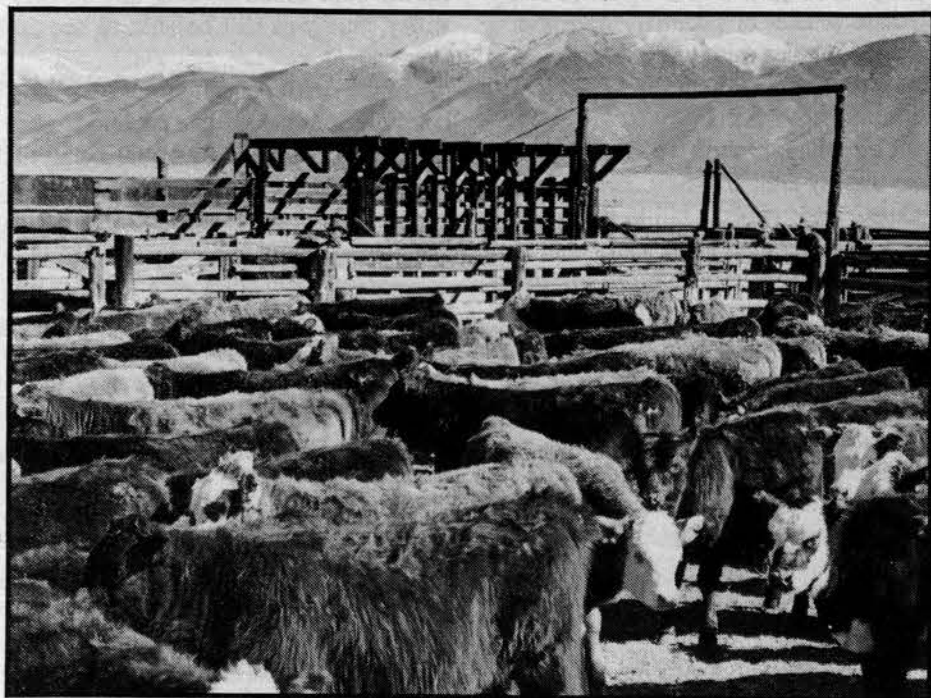
Before Strong's investment in AZL, the company had split off 12,000 acres from the ranch and spent \$30 million trying to turn it into a retirement resort. AZL installed telephone, water, sewage and electricity lines to 10,000 lots carved out of the mountainsides and plains. The company also built roads, a hotel, a golf course, tennis courts and stables. The resort was a flop.

A spiritual retreat center

Strong says, "They designed it as though it were the suburb of a big city. They didn't really design it to make the best use of the environment here ... We contracted the development and at the same time tried to find a new theme. And it gradually dawned on us that this was an ideal place for activities of a contemplative, spiritual, cultural and environmental nature."

'It gradually dawned on us that this was an ideal place for activities of a contemplative, spiritual, cultural and environmental nature.'





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Valley ranchers preparing to ship cattle to market

San Luis Valley . . .

(Continued from page 10)

Strong says he and Hanne had long had an interest in spiritual groups and eastern and native Indian religions. They and the company decided to encourage development by making land and some money available to religious and spiritual groups.

"We got Lindesfarne to move. We gave them land and money. The company gave both money and land to the Aspen Institute. We have also helped in varying ways a number of others. The Carmelites. Sri Aurobindo. And then, apart from the land, there are some people who came and established themselves here. The Tibetans. There is no master plan. We don't have what I call the shopping center syndrome where you have a slot for everybody and look for people to fill those slots."

The Baca Grande development is now dotted with Navajo-style hogans, Zen and yoga retreats and Catholic Carmelite hermitages. The strategy has been a modest, low-key success. People linked to those groups have bought lots and built about 150 homes in the development, although many remain summer retreats.

This is heady stuff for the farm folk down the valley. The contrast between the Baca and the rest of the valley is most visible in the "What's Happening" section of *The Valley Courier*, published 50 miles south in Alamosa.

For the week of Sept. 15, Alamosa notices included meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Presbyterian Adult Bible study group, the Seventh Day Adventists and Weight Watchers.

In that same week, notices for Baca activities included an "evening program on Earth Rituals — Full Moon Celebration," a lecture on the "transformation of the cells," and a "Personal Empowerment Retreat."

Assets at a good price

In 1980, Strong merged what was left of AZL with a Los Angeles-based oil company named Tosco. Several years later, when oil prices began to slide, Tosco's bankers urged the company to rid itself of non-oil assets. Strong put together a group of investors — Sam Belzberg, William Ruckelshaus and several others — and bought the Baca ranch; the purchase included 400,000 acres of mineral and oil rights. Strong and his associates bought when ranchland prices were in a slump, and Strong said he told his

colleagues: "We can get these assets at a good price and there is also a plus factor on the water. We don't quite know what it is, but it looks interesting."

The investors formed a new company called First Colorado Corporation, which is the parent company of AWDI, and began studying the economic potential of the water beneath the ranch.

Strong had been given a quick lesson in the valley's water by the Bureau of Reclamation, which condemned 38,000 acres in the southwest corner of the ranch for what has turned into a \$94-million water salvage project. Called the Closed Basin project, it is designed to pump about 100,000 acre-feet of water a year from more than 150 shallow wells in the southeastern part of the valley and flush it into the Rio Grande.

The headwaters of the Rio Grande lie in the San Juans on the west slope of the valley. The water pumped into the river from the Closed Basin project will replace water taken out of the river upstream by several hundred valley farmers for irrigation, allowing those farmers to stay in business.

The federal and Colorado governments have contractual obligations to ensure New Mexico, Texas and Mexico receive their allotted share of the Rio Grande's flow. The

bureau says the water pumped from the wells would otherwise be lost to evaporation and plant transpiration. As an additional benefit, the agency says the wells and pumping should lower the high water table in the area that now sustains saltgrass, greasewood and other "uneconomic" species of plants.

100 wells

In 1986, AWDI filed its application in water court in Alamosa, 50 miles south of the Baca ranch, for 200,000 acre-feet of water. An acre-foot is an acre of water a foot deep, about the amount of water a suburban family of four would use in a year. To obtain the water, AWDI would drill 100 wells 2,500 feet deep.

An engineering study AWDI financed argued that more than two billion acre-feet of water are stored in the upper 6,000 feet of sediment in the valley. The water-bearing materials, which in places are separated by layers of blue clay, run as deep as 30,000 feet at the center of the valley.

Most of the water in the sediments has come from the estimated annual 1.5 million acre-feet of runoff from the surrounding mountains. A good portion of that runoff seeps into the ground and contributes to the valley's high water table. The engineering report also argued that the estimated 120 million acre-feet of water beneath the Baca property could "potentially ... be developed as non-tributary ground water."

That last phrase has become a key legal issue in water court. Under Colorado law, non-tributary ground water is water "whose withdrawal will not deplete the surface stream within 100 years of pumping."

The main surface stream in question in the valley is the Rio Grande. If the court rules that the water AWDI wants is non-tributary, then AWDI will be able to pump without regard to the rights of senior water users, since those users depend on surface water or shallow ground water.

The company argues that its water withdrawals from deep wells will have a limited effect on other valley water users, who, for the most part, are pumping from wells less than 100 feet deep.

Below 100 feet lies a so-called "confined aquifer" that is separated from the upper, or unconfined, aquifer by layers of blue clay. Strong says his company made an offer to the farmers to conduct a joint study of the valley's hydrology. But the farmers refused the offer, according to Strong, and are not willing to negotiate with AWDI.

The Colorado state engineer's office doesn't think the valley's hydrology divides neatly into surface water and deep, non-tributary ground water. Steven Vandevere, the state's district engineer, told the *Denver Post*: "If you create a big enough hole, and 200,000 acre-feet is a major volume, you'll change the whole hydrological system of the valley."

Among the possible changes would be the drying up of the shallow wells the bureau's Closed Basin project depends on.

The impacts of the AWDI project would be less — hydrologically and politically — if the water were to be used locally. After the 1986 court filing, Strong began telling valley residents that the company would irrigate 38,000 acres of the ranch property, grow barley, attract a brewery to the area and generally use the water for local economic development projects.

Opposition was total

Despite those promises, everyone lined up against the AWDI project: the farmers, counties, municipalities within the valley, the state engineer, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other state and federal agencies. Most opponents say that all of the water in the valley has been appropriated and that any further pumping would lower the water table and, as a result, the level of the Rio Grande.

AWDI responds with two legal arguments. First, it argues that the company has inherited water rights accorded under the Spanish land grant, which supersedes Colorado water law. If that argument succeeds, AWDI will win senior rights to the water.

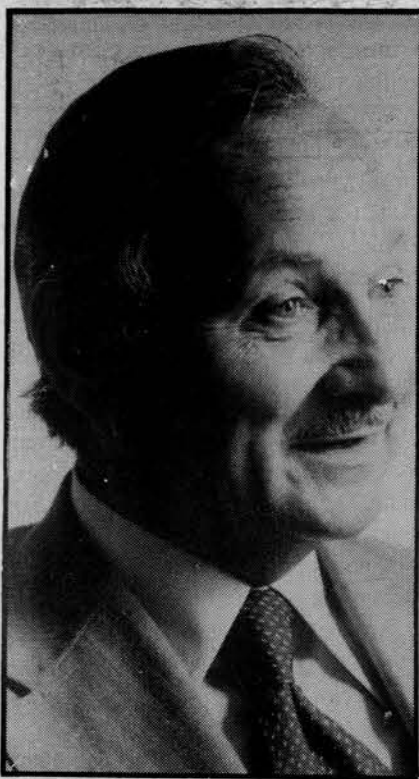
Failing that, the company is also advancing the claim that the water is non-tributary and that there is water aplenty in the confined aquifer that can

(Continued on page 12)



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Center pivot sprinkler near Hooper, Colorado



Maurice Strong

San Luis Valley...

(Continued from page 11)

be pumped out without hurting other users.

Ralph Curtis of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, which is raising \$250,000 a year from its farmer members to battle AWDI, says the company's plan "sure as hell is going to lower the water table. It will put people out of business. Farmers won't be able to afford to pump if the water table drops too much."

Curtis says there has been a moratorium on the drilling of any new wells in the valley since 1981 because the state engineer is convinced new wells will lower the level of the Rio Grande.

Fred Bauder, a part-time lawyer, electric company meter reader and local landowner, says if AWDI wins its case

as a result of the non-tributary groundwater argument, and is allowed to drill deep wells, then everybody else is going to have to be able to do it as well.

"It'll be like an oil field. The only constraint will be the price of the electricity needed to pump the water up."

Bauder says that in the resulting free-for-all, industry and urban users will have the upper hand because they can afford to pay the most for water. Studies show farmers can afford to pay, at most, \$20 an acre-foot for water while urban areas can easily afford \$1,000 an acre-foot or more for the same water.

But economics is still a concern. If farmers are concerned about the cost of pumping irrigation water from less than 100 feet below the surface, imagine the electric bills AWDI faces from wells lifting water to the surface from 2,500 feet below the valley floor.

Those costs were the key to the second part of the AWDI project, filed in water court in May. This second application called for construction of five dams on creeks flowing out of the Sangre de Cristos. The dams would require the construction of roads, power lines and channelized creekbeds in pristine areas. Most of the proposed structures were planned for Forest Service land adjacent to the ranch.

The original filing angered the farmers. The second filing created outrage in the Baca area; the angriest people were those attracted to the area by the Strong's.

Company officials pointed out that they were simply "maintaining corporate options" by making a claim for storage of the mountain runoff before others did. But Strong also said that the dams would produce electricity to power the pumps on the valley floor.

Four months later, with the Baca mobilizing against the project, the company withdrew plans for the dams. AWDI's front man in the valley, ranch

manager Buddy Whitlock, explained that alternate sources of electricity had been arranged. Critics said it was a move to ensure the Baca residents would not join forces with the farmers.

The withdrawal of the dam filings came shortly after U.S. Sen. Tim Wirth, D-Colo., made public a bill to designate new wilderness areas in the state. One of those areas is a large chunk of the Sangre de Cristos around the Baca ranch. Had the company pursued its dam filing, that would have meant opening up a battle on a second front. Company officials may have decided they could not afford to wade into the highly contentious scrap over wilderness areas.

The withdrawal of the filing mollified many of the angry Baca residents. Since then, Whitlock, who is the former supervisor of the Rio Grande National Forest, has suggested that the company might donate ranch property on Kit Carson Peak to the government for inclusion in the proposed wilderness area.

Goal was water export

Despite Strong's initial talk of local economic development by irrigating ranchland in the valley and attracting a brewery, it is now clear that the company's priority is the export of the water to the Front Range. When the company began talking openly this summer of its plans to export the water, criticism of Strong reached a new pitch in the valley.

"How can he call himself an environmentalist?" asked rancher George Whitten, the former head of the San Luis Valley Cattlemen's Association.

"Our livelihood depends on the native species of grasses out there that need the high water table. You draw down the water table and kill the vegetation and you are going to have a

brown dust cloud coming out of this valley that you will be able to see in Denver."

With criticism mounting, Strong suddenly announced that he had given his 23 percent stake in AWDI's parent company, First Colorado Corporation, to a private nonprofit foundation, the Fetzter Foundation, based in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Fetzter literature describes the organization as a "foundation dedicated to research, education and service." Foundation officials have since said they intend to plough back into the valley a portion of any profits realized from Strong's donation.

Lawyers for the ranchers began probing the foundation and the nature of the donation. Some suggested Strong made the donation to salvage his reputation as an environmentalist; the more cynical suggested it was a legal ploy, and that he still owns the shares.

Strong himself is incredulous that anyone would doubt his motives.

"I gave away all of the shares I had in the parent company," Strong said, adding that their value was "a few million dollars."

"What kind of cynical interpretation can you put on that? I gave it away to a nonprofit foundation. If my reputation had been at stake, the best thing would have been not to undertake (the project) in the first place. I knew how controversial it was going to be."

Despite the donation, Strong remains intimately involved in the project. He is on Fetzter's board and is chairman of the foundation's investment committee. He also remains chairman of both AWDI and of the parent company, First Colorado Corporation.

In addition he said he has a "small residual in some options" and a "small remaining interest in a royalty interest." Strong's family holding company in Canada, Strovest Holdings, is also owner of about 5 percent of First Colorado and owner of a royalty interest in the water.

The San Luis Valley shows a few signs of renewal

David Garcia's school in the southern San Luis Valley is one of the few in the state where every kid gets a free lunch. The school qualifies because 30 percent of Costilla County lives well below the poverty level; household incomes are half those in the rest of the state.

"It's called a recession, but we never came out of the Depression," says Garcia, who teaches basic adult education and runs job training programs for the school's predominantly Hispanic students.

It is Garcia's self-described mission to help reverse the steadily climbing unemployment in his corner of the valley. Nearly half the adults in Costilla never graduated from high school; many cannot read, and still others speak no English. Unemployment here runs four times the state average.

Despite the bleak figures, something unexpected has been happening in Garcia's Centennial School over the past few years: More than three-fourths of the graduating seniors have gone to college. What's even more surprising is that Garcia and guidance counselor Pete Ortega fully expect many of them to return to the isolated county with their new skills.

"There are very strong family ties here," says Ortega. "Many students want to come back and help their community."

The effort of Centennial School educators is more the exception than the

rule in San Luis Valley. But it reflects an underlying optimism beginning to emerge from the otherwise impoverished valley floor. Many valley residents find themselves looking inward to family, culture and religion rather than outward to industry or resource development as a means of deliverance from hardship. While many economic development projects are under way throughout the region, the most successful can be traced to these community-based, non-industrial forces.

In the tiny, dusty town of San Luis, an artisans' revival approaching Taos, N.M., proportions has recently sprung up under the aegis of the Catholic Church and its charismatic leader, Rev. Patrick Valdez. He recruited local craftspeople and outside volunteers to renovate the church, design a tourists' center and art gallery, and convert a nunnery into a bed and breakfast, called El Convento.

The inn, which opened in June, has become something of a media sensation, attracting a constant stream of visitors and students with its crafty, historic appeal.

Capitalizing on the town's folkloric past (San Luis is the oldest incorporated town in Colorado), Father Pat, as he is known, has singlehandedly turned around the town's economy, as well as the town's self-esteem.

"He's brought this community together like you wouldn't believe," marvels Felix Romero, a fourth-

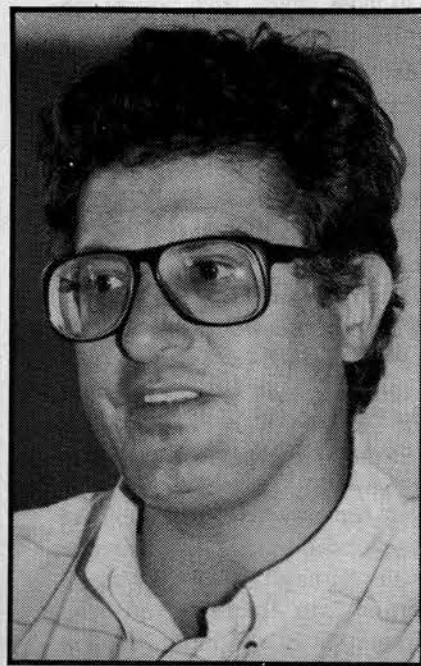
generation grocery and hardware store owner. "It was all local people behind this. We had nothing of our heritage for our children. Now they have something to come back and do," adds Romero.

The San Luis revival represents just the sort of progress that valley residents welcome, one in which they feel in control of local resources and in touch with their rich past. What some of the area's priests have been able to do that many politicians have not is instill a feeling of civic pride and individual power.

In Alamosa, the region's biggest city, community activist Carmen Kelly often witnesses the sadder side of impoverished valley life. She has worked with pregnant teens, victims of domestic violence and disadvantaged Hispanic youths.

What has also emerged from her experience is a sense that strong cultural traditions have kept the valley more intact than it might otherwise be. Says Kelly: "We try to keep things in perspective. It's true — there are a lot of economic hardships. There are few job opportunities. We see poverty, alcoholism, suicide and isolation. But there is also a lot of celebration in our heritage."

Kelly says the closeness of the Hispanic community, including its cashless, underground exchange of goods and services, enables it to slug along on a day-to-day survival course. Like Father Pat, she believes the



Erin Macgillivray Smith

Father Pat Valdez

economic salvation of the valley lies rooted in revitalizing the past.

Reinforcing the bonds of community, Kelly says, will also help residents battle the industrial giants, the water developers and mining companies she believes threaten the foundations of valley life.

"This region is the fountainhead of Hispanic culture. We are a strong people with a heritage that can bring in a lot of money. That's what we're promoting."

— Florence Williams

San Luis Valley...

(Continued from page 12)

Strong has demonstrated some commitment to development of the valley's economy. He has invested in high altitude agricultural research. He bought, with partners, and maintains on a valley ranch a buffalo herd. He and Fetzer Foundation officials have promised to invest in the valley a portion of the earnings from the water. He has talked of turning the Baca ranch into a game preserve.

In addition, if it builds the project, AWDI will spend several hundred million dollars in the valley drilling wells, building pipelines, and eventually creating a handful of permanent jobs. The company may also be persuaded to invest in other ventures.

Agricultural economy is declining

Among the valley residents are a few heretics who have quietly suggested that somebody should be talking to AWDI about investing in the valley in an attempt to diversify the economy. While agricultural revenue is still vital to the valley, its contribution to the local economy is declining.

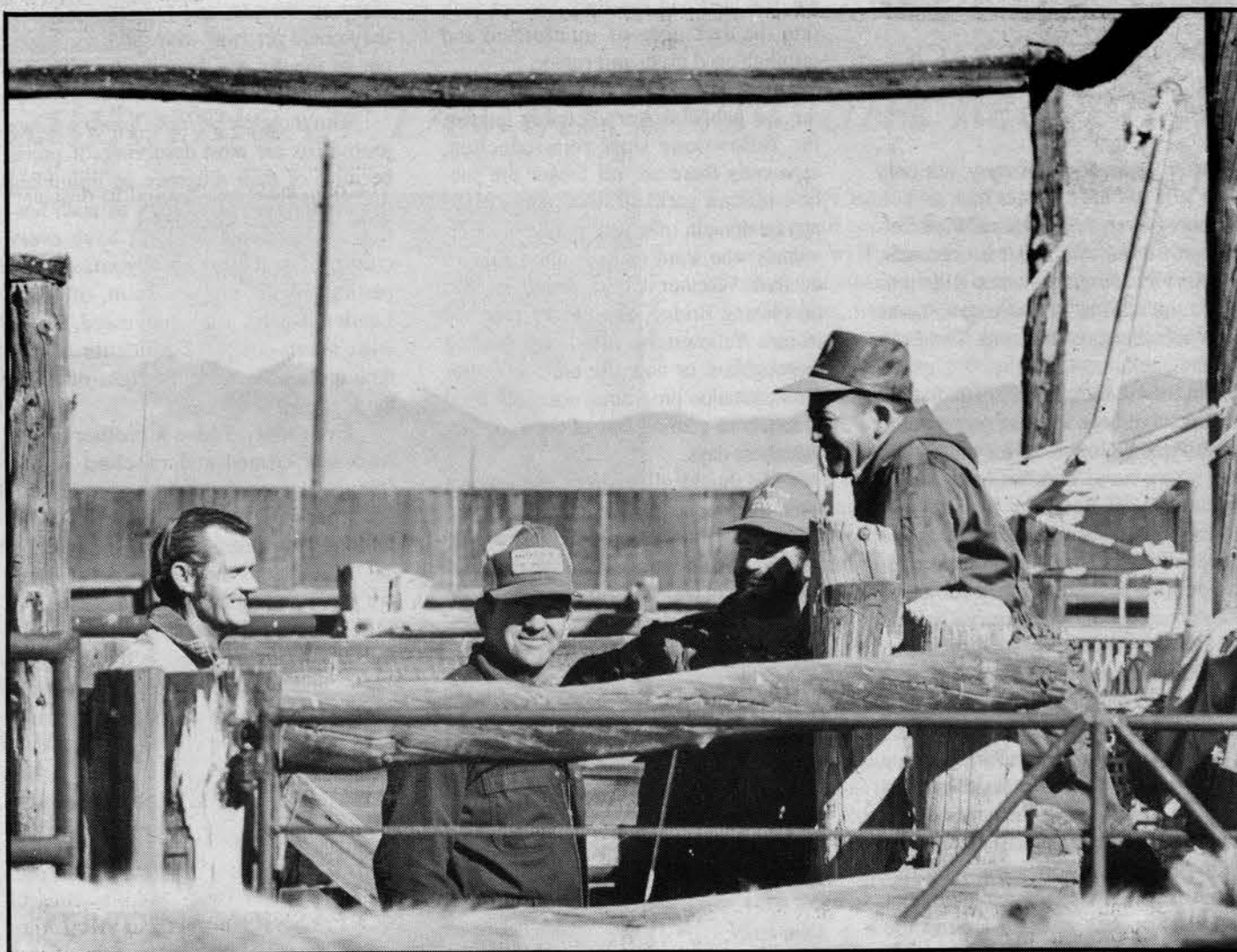
In 1970, farm earnings accounted for 17 percent, or \$50 million, of the total personal income earned by valley residents. By 1986, farm earnings were down to 10 percent, or \$40 million. Strong, who is a board member of the San Luis Valley Economic Development Council, says he and the company are willing to help diversify the valley economy.

That offer may be the basis for future negotiations. For the present, however, all talks are being held in Alamosa Water Court, where the legal sparring could take two years or more.

Even a complete victory on the question of water rights would be only half, or less, of the battle. Denver, after all, had the water rights to fill Two Forks Reservoir, but was beaten because of the environmental damage the project would cause.

For now, the Front Range environmentalists who organized the fight against Two Forks are staying out of the San Luis Valley water-rights fight. But Dan Luecke of the Environmental Defense Fund and Chris Meyer of the National Wildlife Federation say they are watching events closely. Both say environmental organizations are likely to weigh in if the project turns into a trans-mountain diversion.

The San Luis Valley is not the only place in the West where attempts are being made to move water from agriculture to cities. All around Denver, for example, farms and ditch companies are being bought up by cities for their water. The central Arizona metropolitan areas are reaching far into the state's western desert to buy up cotton farms



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Cattlemen shooting the breeze in the corrals near Moffat, Colorado

and turn them into "water farms" for Phoenix and Tucson. And in southern California, the Metropolitan Water District has signed an agreement with the Imperial Irrigation District to transfer some agricultural water to the Los Angeles area.

But the San Luis Valley situation is not your typical Western water transfer. First, of course, Strong isn't offering to buy out valley ranchers and potato farmers. Instead, he is claiming that he has a right to a vast amount of water. He is, in the view of his opponents, trying to steal the water through legal means.

Second, San Luis Valley agriculture is not a highly subsidized operation. Farming here wasn't developed by United States taxpayers building irrigation projects. Instead, the farmers built their own irrigation systems and the potato farming that dominates the valley is relatively free market. Nor are the potato farmers in trouble at the moment. They have just enjoyed two excellent years in a row.

Yet the San Luis Valley is typical in that its water would have much more value if it were for sale to Denver or San Diego instead of irrigating potato and alfalfa fields.

And, of course, the valley is no rural paradise. The farming is dominated by large growers, huge center-pivot irrigators, and ample use of chemicals. It is a high, harsh place to live, and it is home to some of the poorest people in the West.

Nevertheless, it has been a relatively stable place. People stay despite the

greater economic opportunity available almost anywhere, and they make the valley work.

But that was before Two Forks and before Maurice Strong. Now, as Wall Street would say, the San Luis Valley is in play. Its vast amount of water has been spotlighted. Should Strong's group lose its court bid, others may come calling on the large landholders, but with cash rather than legal claims. And the landowners may be more receptive to water buyers than they are to people they perceive as water thieves.

This means that even a resounding defeat for Strong won't end the valley's problems. Thus far, hardly anyone here is looking at the broader, longer-term questions raised by the value of the ground water. Local attention is focused on water rights; distant observers like the Front Range environmentalists see it as a water rights fight that just may become an environmental fight.

It is unlikely that the water court will rule on any but the narrowest grounds. And that will leave the most interesting questions for some other forum, assuming one can be found.

For example, does the existence of rural and small-town life have a value beyond the revenues people working in

those areas generate? Can one corporation's call on a resource so essential to a local economy be allowed to reshape the character of that economy?

The only valley farmer who cast the struggle in those terms runs an organic wheat and beef farm. While other farmers complained that lowering the water table will drive up their pumping costs, Greg Gosar talked of engaging the company on the question of whether valley water should be exported to Denver.

"It doesn't make sense to me to give higher priority to the growth of cities over food production. For them to say they need the water to flush another five ounces of pee down a toilet is crazy," Gosar said. "I have often thought we need to have some constraint on the growth of cities. Access to water may be the best constraint."

□

Rick Boychuk is a freelance writer in Crestone, Colorado, in the San Luis Valley. His story was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.



copyright J.D. Marston

Loading grain into box cars in Center, Colorado

'I have often thought we need some constraint on the growth of cities. Access to water may be the best constraint.'

LETTERS

DARK AGES ARE BACK

Dear HCN,

After years of controversy, not only do we still not have wolves back in Yellowstone, but now the National Park Service can't even talk about it. Recently, Park Service Director James Ridenour ordered the staff at Yellowstone to cease their wolf education programs. The Dark Ages are back.

But let me back up a bit. The federal agencies have been working on returning the wolf to Yellowstone for more than seven years now. The Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan recommended that wolves be returned to greater Yellowstone. Congress has appropriated several hundred thousand dollars to study the question. Bills have been introduced this year to mandate the preparation of an environmental impact statement to consider all aspects of wolf reintroduction.

In the meantime, the Park Service through various programs has been educating the public about the wolf and its role in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Isn't that a perfectly proper role for our national parks? Park research interpreter Norm Bishop has traveled around the region, and indeed the country, with his excellent wolf public education presentation and slide show. Former Park Service Director William Penn Mott unabashedly promoted Yellowstone wolf recovery everywhere he went and every opportunity he had.

But this is a new era. Education is apparently dangerous. Since Ridenour's decree, Norm Bishop has been pulled off the lecture circuit, and his slide show has been unplugged. Yellowstone has been ordered not to mention wolf reintroduction in its newsletters. God forbid the public should know too much. They might be able to make an informed decision on this issue.

This is but the latest blatant example of the politicization of the Park Service and its decision-making processes. Mr. Ridenour issued his edict after receiving letters from Montana Senator Conrad Burns and another unnamed senator complaining about Yellowstone's educational programs. For some inexplicable reason, Mr. Ridenour bowed to this pressure, once again overrode his profession-

als, and launched the Park Service back into the dark ages of uninformed and unenlightened myth and rumor.

Despite surveys constantly expressing the public's overwhelming support for Yellowstone wolf reintroduction, apparently these are no longer the public's national parks. Rather, they are the private domain of a few influential individuals who want to keep the public in the dark. Whether it's the wrong decision on Fishing Bridge, the absurd proposal to turn Yellowstone into a log-hauling thoroughfare, or now the order to censor wolf education programs, not much good seems to be coming out of the Park Service these days.

We should all express our outrage over this decision. We should tell the Park Service that the public wants to be informed about wolves. We should make it clear that we will no longer put up with this blatantly political and uneducated interventionism.

Ed Lewis
Bozeman, Montana

The writer is executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

LITTLE BIT RIGHT

Dear HCN,

Congratulations on your outstanding 20th anniversary edition. I was so impressed by every article that I read through the paper first from front to back, then from back to front, and I'll probably read it a couple of more times before filing it away for future enjoyment.

I am greatly impressed by the high level of dedication demonstrated by Tom Bell and those young and enthusiastic journalists of yesteryear. It takes a lot of grit to forego the luxuries and even the necessities of life — not that journalists have ever been exorbitantly paid.

As a native of Greybull, Wyo., and a 1952 graduate of the University of Wyoming college of journalism, I can empathize with Ambler, O'Gara, Hamilton and Hinchman. I recall working on the *Saratoga Sun* for \$100 per month, and thought I had hit the big time when working for the *Newcastle News Letter Journal* for \$200 per month! As a radio journalist in Casper, I was impressed by the power of the big ranchers such as

Herman Werner, and I wondered how they could get away with shooting eagles out of the sky and stringing barbed wire across the Red Desert.

But those early *High Country News* journalists are most deserving of praise because of their diligence in upholding the noble cause of ecology in such hostile surroundings. While I love every clump of sagebrush in Wyoming (and particularly the Bighorn Basin, of which Lander is part), I am convinced that at least seven out of 10 residents of that area are a little bit to the right of Atilla the Hun.

Even today, I have a brother-in-law who has farmed and ranched in the Greybull area for many years, who becomes positively apoplectic when someone mentions Teno Roncalio. Says he, "Teno thinks the people of New Jersey have as much right to the Cloud's Peak country as those of us in Washakie and Big Horn counties. It'll be a cold day in hell when those bastards in Perth Amboy have more right to Wyoming than I do!"

Robert P. Turner
Denver, Colorado

NO PASSION ALLOWED

Dear HCN,

My congratulations and sympathies to Richard Manning (*HCN*, 9/11/89), who found himself booted from his newspaper's environmental beat for showing passion about his topics. In a time when we are rapidly destroying the planet's basic life-support functions, anyone who becomes well-informed and remains coolly intellectual about it must be either numb or emotionally handicapped.

If the nation's traditional news media work to soothe an agitated public, they do us all a grave disservice.

But then, such behavior may be in keeping with the standards of objective journalism. As an ex-reporter friend once told me, balanced news reporting is where you write a profile of Hitler consisting of a positive quote, a negative quote and a funny story.

Dale S. Turner
Tucson, Arizona

ECOTAGE

Dear HCN,

Concerning ecotage: The real issue is whether ecotage is an effective and necessary measure for preventing a massive ecological disaster. Remember, also, that ecotage is a moral issue, created in the human mind. Non-human species could care less if human law is broken, as long as they survive. We must learn to consider complete ecosystems when we make decisions, not just ourselves or other species beneficial to us.

Jeff Foster
Grand Junction, Colorado

A COZY ARRANGEMENT

Dear HCN,

Once again, wolves attempting to establish residency in the United States have been trapped, drugged and killed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once again, Defenders of Wildlife has offered cash to ranchers who claimed wolves killed cattle, despite strong evidence that coyotes may have been the culprits. This is not the first time Montana ranchers have cashed in on dead wolves with the help of Defenders of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Federal tax dollars and private conservation contributions earmarked for wolf recovery are being misused to exterminate the wolf. It is illegal for cattlemen to kill wolves, so the USFWS does it for them. This cozy arrangement is probably illegal, too.

But who has the money and energy to sue the federal government over illegally killed wolves? National conservation groups like "Defenders" defend cows, ranchers, USFWS and their fat budgets with money they should be using to sue USFWS for violating the Endangered Species Act.

Wolves need our help, but be careful how you help them. Slick, commercial fund-raising scams and pretty pictures of wolves don't necessarily guarantee positive programs that aid wolf recovery. In these days of false fronts and mega-marketing, a fake is hard to spot. Make damn sure your wolf conservation donation promotes securing critical wolf habitat, first. Oversimplified solutions to wolf recovery often result in more dead wolves and bigger federal and private bureaucracies.

Habitat is "where it's at." Conservationists need to get back to basics or wolves and other native species will continue to be killed needlessly.

Steve Kelly
Swan Lake, Montana



Vernal, Utah, dinosaurs by photographer Doug Rinehart

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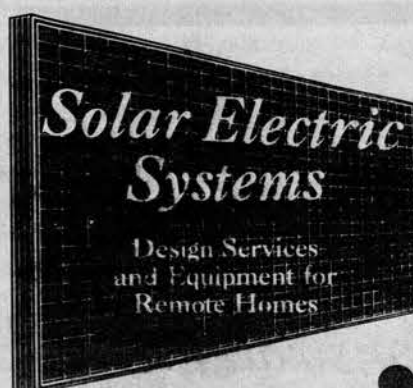
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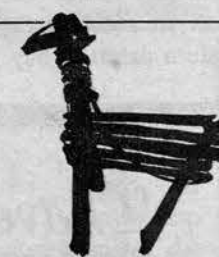
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GUEST ESSAY

Wyoming isn't California or Detroit, and thank heaven

by Kim D. Cannon

Sifting through the rhetorical wreckage of the last year, I am struck by how different this summer has been from the summer of 1988. Last August the smoke from our beloved Yellowstone-on-fire literally covered the state. The disbelief, grief, fear and anger that swept over Wyoming was every bit as real as the smoke.

The media delivered the obituary: Sorry folks, but most of Yellowstone has burned to the ground; the thing you loved and cherished is gone. With our eyes watering, we swallowed this coverage of the story, hook, line and sinker.

In our despair, we forgot that the fires of 1910 raged with the same ferocity, and yet, despite those fires, the land and wildlife lived on. We forgot that fire was part of the essence of Yellowstone. We forgot that the size of a fire is partly a function of past fire suppression policies. We refused to believe that fire is an important player among the forces of regeneration. Instead, we looked for someone to blame.

The world of 1988 was driven by two ideas which would have made no sense to the pioneer of 1910 trying to carve out and hang onto a homestead. The first idea stems from the religion of technology. Simply put, most people believe we have the technological capability to control all, or almost all, natural forces. The second idea springs from the first: if we can control it all and it still gets out of control, then it must be the fault of the hapless moron who was supposed to be at the controls.

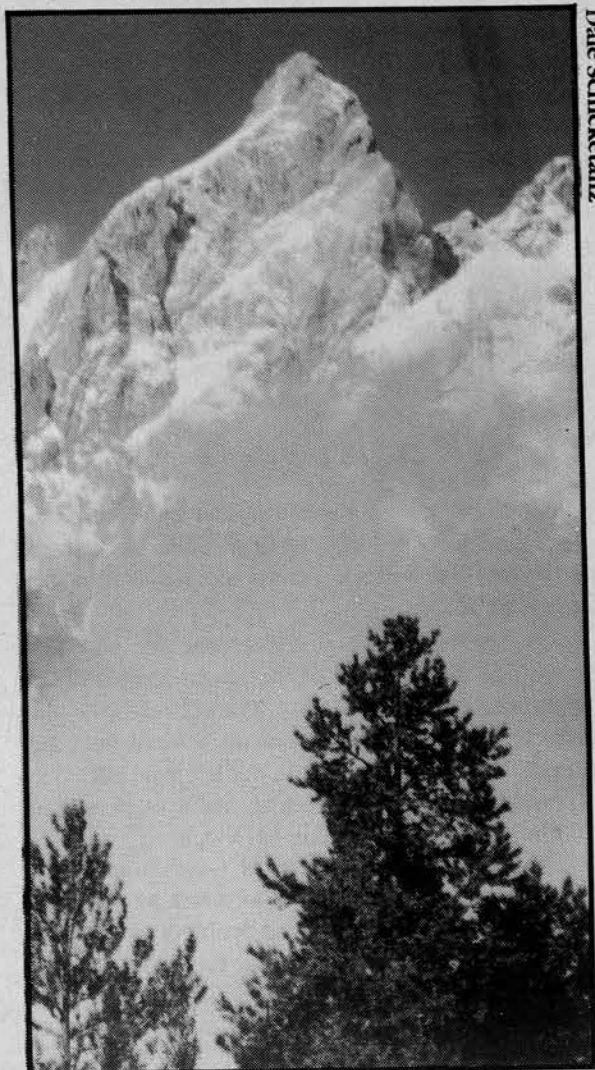
It is the unfortunate style of the late '80s to demand some high-level bureaucrat's head on a platter every time a story of national significance surfaces. Debates over the capability of Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Robert Barbee and National Park Service Director William Penn Mott, and the "just following orders" defenses we have come to expect from our appointed officials, were inconclusive. In their place, a whole class of folks were found blameworthy: the "environmentalists" who came up with the "let it burn" policy in the first place.

Paralleling the sound and fury over the fires was a debate over Wyoming's economy, which by 1988 had been in a serious decline in most parts of the state for four years. The Louisiana-Pacific mill had recently closed in Dubois after years of argument over acceptable levels of timber harvest and the recreational values of the forests. The "rig count" (by which we are led to believe all true Wyomingites take their financial blood pressure) was down. Legions of nomadic laborers and small contractors with magnetic signs on the sides of the heavily financed pickups had headed for Arizona in search of a chance to pour concrete in a housing project.

Times were tough. But again the thinking was flawed. The first premise was that the holy alliance of technology and government had the ability to control the economy just as it had the ability to control natural forces such as fires.

Any politician, the corollary followed, who didn't deliver the same level of prosperity Wyoming had enjoyed from 1976-1983 and create thousands of jobs for our children was not doing his job.

If government failed in this mission, if it imposed any regulation on, or denied any permit to, any and



Dale Schickelanz

North Face of the Grand Teton

all forms of industry and commerce, it must be because it was paying some secret homage to those known as "environmentalists."

Against this backdrop of blaming for the fires and the lack of jobs, the political campaigns of 1988 played out. With the notable exception of President George Bush, no national or state politician claimed to be an "environmentalist" or sought to make common cause with anyone who had the audacity to speak for the trees.

For our part, we failed to raise the level of the debate, quickly and articulately. When the discussion sinks to the level it did in 1988, when the smoke and politics are indistinguishable, we all must bear responsibility for it. We must stand up and speak out for the values that brought us and our ancestors to Wyoming, and the rugged beauty of the place and the sense of freedom which compels us to stay despite the economy. At the same time we must join the discussion over the economy and seek ways, as the settlers did, to create and develop businesses that are compatible with the land.

Before the dialogue can go on at the level that will be genuinely useful to all of us, we might agree on several things:

- We All Love Wyoming In Our Own Strange Ways.

Those of us who are still here — the survivors in the wake of the Bust — share a bond we may not realize: We have paid a price to be able to remain. Many of us could make more money outside of the state in our lines of work than we can in Wyoming.

Why do we stay? Maybe it's time to start asking that question of ourselves and each other. I suspect the answers will sound a lot like the things the environmentalists have been talking about. By the same token, we need to understand that the guy who is the angriest about the lack of fire suppression in Yellowstone is angry precisely because of a lifelong devotion to the beauty of the country. And we need to bear in mind that the people who are apoplectic about the lack of jobs feel that way because they want their children to have the same chance to live here in this rare and beautiful place.

- There Are Forces Beyond Our Control.

Our sense of technological omnipotence needs to be seriously questioned. Drought, grasshoppers, blizzards, the price of oil, and international corporate decisions to close small uneconomical sawmills or reorganize or close corporate offices are just a few of the things which are beyond our control. No politician wants to admit they are for fear of appearing to do too little for the home team. But here we can all take a lesson from the ranchers who learned from the beginning that there would be good years and bad, and that through it all they had to play the hand they were dealt. Those who understood their limitations were the most successful in basic economic terms. Wyoming is a land of enormous limitations because of the size and variety of the natural forces at work on a daily basis. We need to understand that in measuring the true worth of the economic development schemes that are presented.

- Jobs Don't Grow On Trees.

We cannot simply send the National Guard to San Diego to bring in 4,000 jobs. It doesn't work that way. Apart from the traditional energy industries whose development ambitions will reflect the price of oil, the new businesses that will locate here come because the people who will make the decision to relocate or develop a business here are attracted to Wyoming's natural beauty and sense of place. If so, the new businesses will be sized to fit the communities into which they will be placed, and those that plead the cause of the environment are anything but anti-business. For all the talk of jobs you'd think we were a suburb of Detroit. But the truth is that we will never have jobs for thousands of auto workers who have been sadly lobotomized by the boredom of their work. And that is just fine.

Wyoming has never been a land where anybody can make it. Ask the pioneers who settled the country. It will never be southern California. Many of us who know the difference are here because of that fact. Our history is that there have been wonderful opportunities here for people who are clever, independent and are not afraid of work. Let that tradition continue.

OK, let's talk. But be careful if you agree with these opening premises, you might get branded an "environmentalist." That's what George Bush called himself, and look where he ended up.

□

Kim D. Cannon is president of the Wyoming Outdoor Council and an attorney in Sheridan, Wyoming. This article is reprinted from the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

LETTERS

A HILLERMAN FAN

Dear HCN,

I must respond to Tom Wolf's and Ray Ring's attacks on Tony Hillerman's Navajo detective novels. Wolf in his letter of Oct. 9, 1989, agrees with Ring that Hillerman should not ignore the dark side of life on reservations and goes on to imply that all artists have a responsibility not to romanticize their subjects. Although I generally respect Wolf's writing, I must disagree with him on this point.

I'm a fan of Hillerman's novels. His sin, if any, is one of omission. Unlike other popular artists like Louis L'Amour, what Hillerman writes accurately describes the landscape, place names and many customs of his subjects. When we can turn to our newspapers and read of alcoholism, violent death and all the other trappings of poor social economic conditions on reservations, why insist that we get another dismal dose in our art?

Hillerman provides us the opportunity to glimpse another side of Indian reservation life, one that is almost universally ignored by non-Indians. Many of us see the reservation as the American version of apartheid and wonder why

Indians would want to live there. He writes about the enduring culture of the Indian people — the strong family ties, native language and the religious beliefs — as well as about the conflicts of being torn between two cultures.

After all, Hillerman is an artist, not a journalist. Should we have insisted that Charlie Russell focus upon drunken, bloody cowboys? That Georgia O'Keefe's cow skulls have maggots nibbling on squishy eyeballs? Living in the West, we're confronted with reality plenty. Let us sit back and relish a good thriller.

Marjane Ambler
Yellowstone Park, Wyoming

BARBS

The paleontological explanation for the abrupt appearance of yuppies on the earth.

A National Geographic News Service article on species extinction said: "When the dinosaurs disappeared, mammals took off. Within 10 million years, mammals of all shapes and lifestyles appeared."

Money flows uphill, to money.

The 400 richest Americans, *Forbes* magazine says, are worth \$269 billion this year, 22 percent more than last year.

16-High Country News — November 6, 1989

afield



Diane Sylvain

Forging the links of community at 110 miles per hour

by Peter Shelton

Most places, when a fellow driver makes a sign with his hand, he is not wishing you happy holidays. Most likely, you have offended his delicate sensibilities in some way and he is telling you, via time-honored gestures, where to park it.

But not here on the western slope of Colorado. Here as you motor along the highway, likely as not, oncoming drivers will proffer the wave. It's quick, almost shy, a pure greeting.

Usually it's two fingers lifted up off the steering wheel in the slightest flick of howdy. Sometimes there's a nod of the head or an arching of the eyebrows as well, but most often it's just the fingers of one hand making contact in the blink before the whoosh of passing.

Men wave more often than women do, especially men in trucks, but a woman is more likely to return a surprised smile once she realizes she has been

signaled. Friends wave, people who know you, like old Duane Wilson putting out from Montrose to check on the cows or Gertrude Perotti tooling about on her newspaper rounds.

Sometimes the waver is someone you only half know, like the UPS man or the phone company man or the driver of the big City Market semis. Or the sheriff. You can always count on a wave from the sheriff. It's as if he drives with his left hand affixed in a permanent attitude of greeting. As if he were Matt Dillon and all is well this day in Dodge.

Even more wonderful are the waves from perfect strangers. There you are about to whisk by at a combined 110 mph, for the first and probably only time in your two lives, and you flick your fingers into the sun above the dash while he does the same to acknowledge that fleeting moment. For no other reason than that you are there together.

We do it because we may be naturally friendly. But also, I believe, because of the space, physical and

psychic, we enjoy out here.

Unlike the freeway-bound individual encased in a metal crabshell and focused only on survival and a destination, we have the room and the time to share a mostly empty road. We are both pilgrims on the way from here to there, very much aware of the process, of our passing over the landscape, through the sky.

In the days of the horse and wagon, we'd have stopped and had a proper chat with anyone we passed along the trail. Not because we were lonely or particularly garrulous, but because of the social dictates of a big country and a sparse population.

Now we don't stop, but we do wave. Not because we are lonely, but because we are linked. On our ways across these still grand and mostly empty distances.

□

Peter Shelton is a writer in Ridgway, Colorado.

BOOK NOTES

Reinventing an ancient art

How to Shit in the Woods
Kathleen Meyer. Box 7123,
Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press,
1989. 77 pages. \$5.95, paper.

Review by Bert Lindler

One of the 20th century's lost arts is that of proper pooping in the woods.

If you don't believe me, check around any backcountry campsite. Watch your step because evidence of the problem won't be hard to find.

Despite modern problems, good advice has been available since Old Testament times. The New English Bible, Deuteronomy 23:13-14, puts it this way:

"With your equipment you will have a trowel and when you squat outside, you shall scrape a hole with it and then turn and cover your excrement. For the Lord your God goes about in your camp, to keep you safe and to hand over your enemies as you advance, and your camp must be kept holy for fear that he should see something indecent and go with you no further."

These skills are so rudimentary it's amazing they can be lost. But with the advent of scented toilet paper, padded toilet seats, blue toilet water and commodes that flush, they have. Most of us are urban these days, and backcountry skill must be learned.

Several years ago my wife, Kristi, and I went to Glacier National Park with a close relative from the toilet-trained East Coast. Kristi accompanied the woman into the restrooms at Lake McDonald as we prepared for the six-mile uphill trek to Sperry Chalet.

"What do you do if you have to pee

on the trail?" Kristi was asked.

"There's plenty of bushes," she replied. "Just get off the trail and squat." That advice was apparently considered out of the question, which made for a too-fast and tiring hike. The Easterner's goal, of course, was the bathroom up at the chalet.

Most Westerners haven't had the luxury of traveling from one flush toilet to the next. But that doesn't mean they're masters in the art of doing their duty in the out-of-doors.

Now there's a book by Kathleen Meyer that lays out "an environmentally sound approach to a lost art." The glee with which my colleagues greeted the book's title indicates Meyer was wise not to settle for a euphemism. "Shit is a superb word, really," she explains. "It doesn't have to be spoken in hushed moralizing tones. SHIT! OH, SHEEIT! A versatile, articulate and colorful word, it is indeed a pleasure to shout, to roll along one's tongue."

As evidence of the word's historical standing, Meyer quotes from Caxton's 1484 translation of the Fables of Aesop: "I dyde shyte thre grete toordes."

Chapter titles indicate the book does get down to business: "Anatomy of a Crap"; "When You Can't Dig a Hole"; "Trekker's Trots"; "For Women Only: How not to pee in your boots"; "What? No TP? Or Doing Without."

Many books have been written on the environment, but few would do more to improve it than this one were the instructions heeded. Without giving away all the book's secrets, the key is to bury your poop.

As often as not, you won't have a trowel handy. Here's where you can get

creative. Dead stumps can be broken off below the ground and replaced after duties are done. Large rocks with their bottoms sunk beneath the ground can be pried loose, leaving a hole. Rotten stumps can be kicked apart to leave a hole that can be covered later with splintered wood. So long as the poop and paper are buried, they will be out of sight and have the opportunity to decompose.

Don't try this on a gravel bar. High water might carry the remains into the stream. In addition, microorganisms that decompose animal wastes are most abundant in rich, living soil, not rocks and sand.

Leaves are sometimes recommended for after-duty details. Here's where I draw the line. The wood products industry need never fear that this camper will forsake certain products.

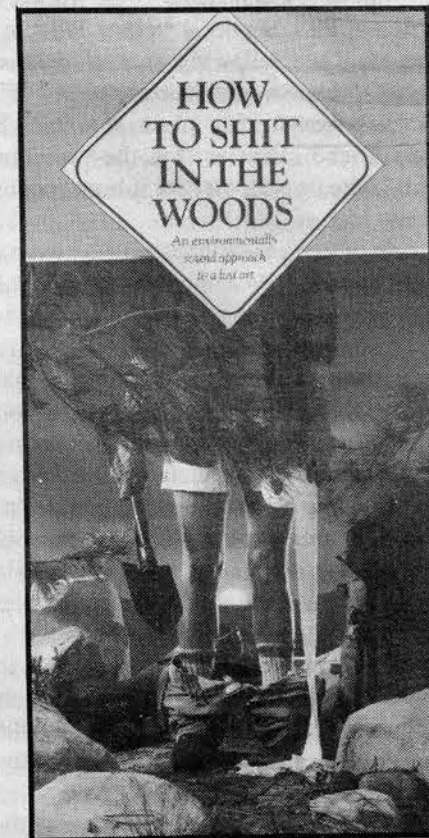
In my pack I carry a zip-seal plastic bag with cut-up paper towels. Toilet paper is too delicate for outside use.

When it comes to outdoor life, male plumbing has its advantages. Freud's hypothesized "penis envy" can become real when women are forced to pee in the woods, Meyer explains.

"With turned back but in full view of the world, men piss for anyone present, sometimes in baronial silhouette against a blazing sunset, sometimes without a break in the conversation, as if the flaunting of their ritual were the greatest part of its pleasure.

"Women, on the other hand, search for a place to hide (god forbid anyone should know we have to pee in the first place) where with dropped panties and sweet asses bared, we must assume the position of a flustered duck trying to watch itself pass an egg."

Meyer's approach to this delicate problem consists of elevating herself to avoid splatters. She recommends sitting on the edge of one rock or log while supporting the feet on another.



Although feminine funnels are available, Meyer feels they're most appropriate for public toilets when hygiene is a question. She concludes the women's chapter with a story from a Sausalito yachting supply house:

"After carefully selecting a pink plastic funnel, an elderly, white-haired couple arrived at the cash register, whereupon the woman sweetly inquired whether a long hose might be attached for her. Her request was gladly granted and the funnel whisked away to the back workroom. Then, lifting her gentle, wisdom-aged face toward her husband, with a cherubic wink she crooned, 'Now, dear, mine will be longer than yours.'"

□

Bert Lindler writes for the *Great Falls Tribune* in Montana.