

High Country News

January 1, 1990

Vol. 22 No. 1

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

A decade ends

The decline of the West's made-in-Washington economy continues

by Ed Marston

What sense are we to make of the inland West's last 10 years? And what possible futures can we imagine for the 1990s and beyond, based on our interpretation — on the story we choose to tell — of the 1980s?

The West is an intensely governed place. Commerce and industry, away from the Salt Lakes and Denvers, touch the West lightly compared to the long arm of the federal government. So there is a great, and reasonable, temptation to seek to understand the 1980s by examining national political trends.

Former Secretary of Interior James Watt provides a natural starting point for the decade. Watt began and ended his three-year reign with assaults on the very idea that the environment might matter. His religious vision of an apocalyptic end to life made concerns about grizzlies, alluvial valleys and the ecological integrity of the Yellowstone region irrelevant. (It also, as we learned in 1989, made other conventional standards of behavior and morality irrelevant.)

We should not make too much of Watt. While memorable for his opposi-

tion to the Beach Boys and for a prickly, moralistic personality, he did not stand alone.

Behind him at the start of the 1980s stood a triumphant group of conservative Western senators, sure of their ideology and of their support back home, and buoyed by the largest energy, minerals and land boom in Western history.

A different ending

The end of the decade finds a very different situation. The boom is a distant memory, with some parts of the region recovering from the early 1980s bust and others adapting to a permanently busted condition.

Like the economy, the West's senators are also in reduced circumstances, marked by the startling defeat of a Watt clone — a servant of industry named James Cason whom the Western senators backed for political head of the U.S. Forest Service.

Given the Western delegation's close relationship to President Bush, and the fact that there were no personal scandals in Cason's background, his appointment seemed a sure thing. But in

November, after months of investigations, hearings and discussion, Cason proved so weak a nominee the Bush administration did not bring his name to the Senate floor for a vote.

Although a few years ago, the Western senators would have carried Cason into office without even breathing hard, the defeat doesn't mean the Western senators or the traditional Western economic interests they represent are weak.

Led by the very formidable Sen. James McClure of Idaho, who is considering retirement in 1990, these Western interests retain significant influence. They have the power to continue liquidating the old-growth forests of the Northwest, and to keep open to oil and gas exploration almost every square yard of federal ground not designated wilderness.

The West can also keep grizzlies and wolves penned on a few reservations and prevent the resurgent western Indian tribes from seizing larger measures of control over their resources and lives.

But momentum is another matter.

In striking contrast to the opening of the 1980s, initiative no longer lies with McClure and company. It has been seized by the bloc's handful of oppo-

nents within the region.

Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth and Utah Rep. Wayne Owens have in the past year introduced wilderness bills for their states. Rather than attempt to patch together the tattered remnants of the usual Democratic coalition — a coalition that failed former Montana Sen. John Melcher in the last election — Wirth and Owens appear to have chosen the wilderness issue on which to build a new political base.

They are attempting to manufacture a cohesive constituency out of the growing number of Westerners whose major priority is clear air, wildlife, access to public land, wild and scenic streams, and preserving old growth forests first.

They are not responding to pressure from wilderness advocates. Owens, who represents Salt Lake City, introduced his bill even though Utah's wilderness proponents urged delay. Wirth chose to abandon wilderness negotiations with ranchers, water developers, miners and loggers. The two may not have picked a fight on wilderness, but they definitely did not run from it.

It is easy to get such a fight in Utah, where the delegation and the special interests are fervently anti-wilderness.

(Continued on page 10)



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Dear friends,



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Cheyenne is next

High Country News returns to its home state on Saturday, January 27, 1990, to hold a day-long board meeting and a potluck-birthday party in the evening.

The celebration will be held at the Community House in Lion's Park, Cheyenne, Wyo., from 6:30 to 10 p.m. *HCN* will provide wine, beer and soft drinks. Those planning to attend should bring a covered dish and a service.

The potluck gatherings are held three times a year, after each of the High Country Foundation board's meetings. The last was in Bozeman and the one before that in Boulder.

For staff and board, they are among the most enjoyable, informative and uplifting events connected with the paper. There are no ordinary *HCN* readers — all are interested in the West, knowledgeable about their part of the region, and — a bonus — often very good cooks.

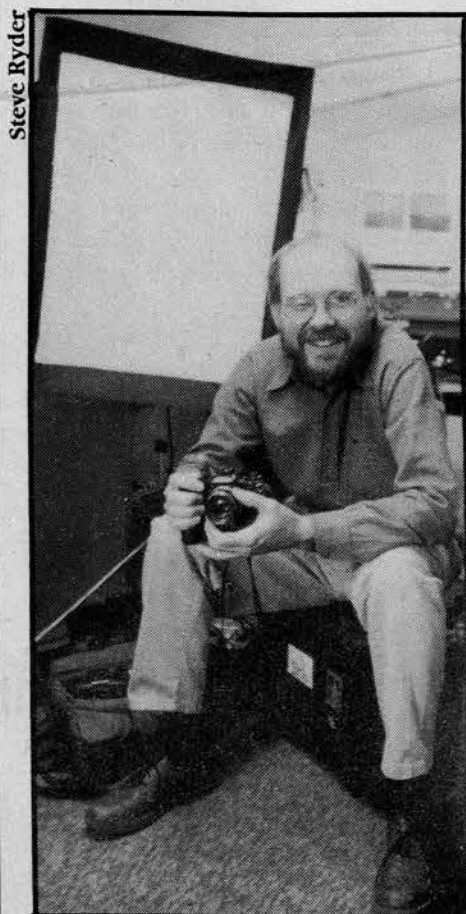
They are also hardy. The worse the weather, the more people show up, as those who attended the Santa Fe potluck in January 1989 will remember. We don't know if any liaisons have been formed at *HCN* potlucks, but we do know staff picks up ideas for stories and comes away more than a little intimidated by the breadth and depth of knowledge readers bring to the paper.

Invitations and directions to the event will go out to all subscribers within 100 miles or so of Cheyenne. But if you know now that you will be there, please RSVP to Linda Bacigalupi (simply ask for Linda) at 303/527-4898, or Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

A real photographer

In the late summer, writer Jim Fergus of Idaho and Colorado showed up with spouse Dillon to do an article on *High Country News* for *Harrowsmith* magazine. Thanks to car problems, Jim spent a bit more time in Paonia than he had planned.

In early December, photographer Jim Richardson arrived with a roomful of photographic equipment and what we thought was a year's supply of film. Instead, in two days of shooting that left staff feeling as if smiles and contrived looks of intelligence had been painted on



Photographer Jim Richardson

their faces, Jim shot most of his film. His motor-driven shutter clicked roughly 500 times in all conceivable settings: in the office, on the ditch road south of town, on a steep mesa road north of town, and on Paonia's main street, where staff fell into conversation with passersby to create the correct ambience.

Fortunately for our sanity, Richardson was entertaining as well as determined, and the two days shuttered by with great speed. All that suffered was productivity.

We were therefore grateful to Bill Hornby, senior editor for the *Denver Post*, for reviewing *HCN*'s recent book, *The Reopened Western Frontier*, without so much as a telephone call to the office. We were also grateful because Hornby both liked the book and homed in on its central conclusion.

Our most recent contact with the large world of journalism came via David Chandler, *People* magazine's man in Denver. Chandler interviewed staff in mid-December, filed the story a few days later, and said it is scheduled to run in early winter. There is the chance, Chandler said, that *People* will send its photographer to the Cheyenne meeting and potluck.

Myth has it that a story in *People*, America's best-selling publication, means an individual or television sitcom has hit the top and is on the way down. We are not worried, however; by no stretch of the imagination is *HCN* near anything that can be described as a "top."

Goofs

On the other hand, there are a few signs that *HCN* may be on the skids. For example, editing introduced a mistake into Peter Carrels' article on North Dakota's Garrison water project in the Dec. 4, 1989, issue. Editing caused all of the runoff from the 131,000 acre project to flow into the James River. In reality, only some of the runoff water will drain into the James.

Subscriber Dorothy K. Walker of Sandy Spring, MD., writes to say that she likes *HCN*, and would like it even better if we learned the difference between prostrate and prostate. A story on radiation victims had a person suffering from "prostrate cancer."

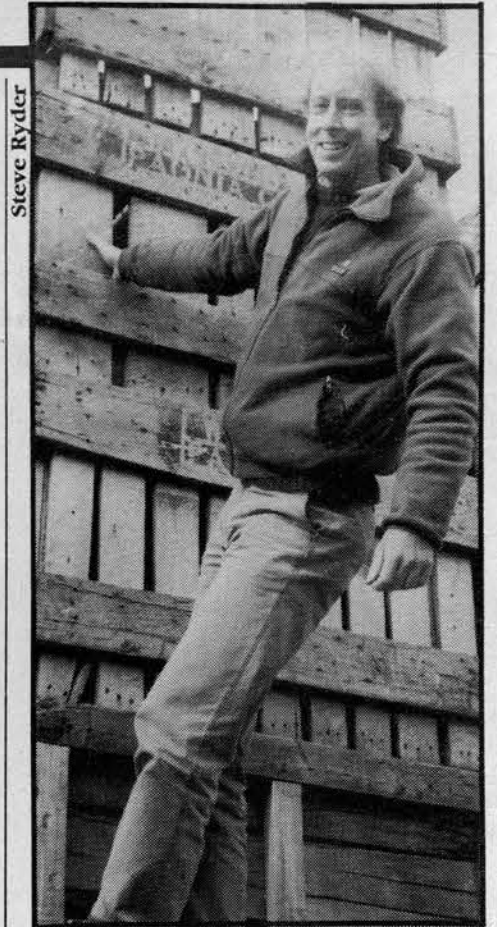
"Vomit comet"

We got in conversation on a Denver to Montrose commuter flight — locals call it the vomit comet — with a retired man from New England traveling to visit his son, also a New England resident, who had recently won his life-long dream: a free week of skiing in Telluride. The father was on crutches, with no one to meet him at the airport, so we gave him a ride to his son, at the local hospital. It turned out that the son had struck a tree early in his week of skiing and broken his back. The father, a remarkably cheerful man, said his son had escaped paralysis but was probably done skiing for the season.

This is by way of saying that the San Juan Mountains and the Elk Range outside Paonia have not had much snow through the end of fall. But the central and northern mountains of Colorado have had some dumps, with the area around Vail receiving 12 straight days of snow and Glenwood Springs five straight days of snow.

Looking for Sylvia

We would like to thank artist Sylvia Long for the wonderful drawings we



Brian Collins

pulled out of our files and used in our Christmas ads. We would also like to pay for their use, but the last address we have for her — in Scottsdale, Ariz. — doesn't work. Steve Ryder, who is in charge of tracking down and paying *HCN*'s freelancers, would appreciate Sylvia's current address.

New in Paonia

New intern Brian Collins moved with his family at age 10 from Milwaukee to the sagebrush hills and ponderosa pine forests of central Washington. After college in Oberlin, Ohio, he returned west to Seattle where he lives.

Before deciding to try out journalism, Brian led Outward Bound courses in the mountains and rivers of the Pacific states. He also consulted on river and watershed hydrology. Brian earned a master's in geology from the University of Washington by watching landscape evolve following Mt. St. Helen's eruption.

This spring he is planning a tour of classic mountaineering routes in the West.

— Ed Marston for the staff

HOTLINE

Coal production up

Coal production in Wyoming is at an all time high and should set a new record this year, predicts a state geologist. Richard Jones, head of the coal division of the Geological Survey of Wyoming, says that the state should produce 170 million tons of coal, about twice the level of production 10 years ago. But coal employment during that same time period, according to state data, has dropped 13 percent. Jones attributes the decline to two factors. In order to make up for low prices, coal companies have increased the efficiency of their operations. He also points out that coal production in Wyoming is shifting to the Powder River Basin, where thicker seams make mining less labor intensive than in southern Wyoming. Coal production will continue to increase through the mid-1990s, says Jones, especially if Congress allows electric companies to reduce stack emissions by switching to low-sulphur Western coal. Despite the increased production, however, Jones adds that low prices for coal mean that state tax and royalty revenues will remain constant or decline.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Coal swap causes critics to see red ink

The federal government plans to swap Wyoming coal lands for an assurance that a ranch within a national park will never be developed. But the proposed exchange has drawn protests from state officials and a conservation group. They say it will cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

Under the terms of the deal, Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming would get a conservation easement on a 1,106-acre ranch in the southern part of the park. The easement prohibits the owners of the ranch from ever developing it.

In exchange, the owners of the easement, the nonprofit Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research, will get 200 million tons of unmined federal coal administered by the Bureau of Land Management north of Sheridan, Wyo. A BLM appraisal puts the value on both the coal and the easement at \$5.6 million.

According to a BLM report, the exchange was agreed to in 1985 by the owner of the ranch, Laurence S. Rockefeller, and former Interior Secretary Donald P. Hodel as part of a long-range plan to preserve the "natural, open-space, ecological, and scenic qual-

ities" of the park. In 1987, the Rockefellers donated the conservation easement on the ranch to the Sloan-Kettering Institute, which wants to continue the exchange.

But the Powder River Basin Resource Council, a Sheridan-based conservation group, says that the BLM should not give up ownership of the coal. When federally leased coal is mined, the federal government and the state of Wyoming split a 12.5 percent royalty on the sales price. Since the non-profit institute would own the coal rather than lease it, those royalties would not be collected. The group says the lost royalties are worth about \$160 million.

G.W. "Digger" Moravek, a representative of the Powder River group, calls the trade the "biggest rip-off of Wyoming's resources since the Teapot Dome oil scandal in the 1920s." While he supports the protection of parklands, Moravek says the deal is unbalanced: "This is a high price to pay for blue sky."

The state of Wyoming also opposes the exchange. Though Rod Miller, Wyoming's federal-lands planning coor-

dinator, declined to estimate the value of the coal royalties to the state, he said that the taxes paid on privately developed coal would not make up for the loss of the royalties. Furthermore, he said, about half the royalties from leasing the coal, unlike the tax payments, would go to fund public education.

According to BLM spokesperson Kate Dupont, the BLM agrees that the state may lose some money as a result of the deal. But the value of the land exchange to the nation outweighs the cost to the state, she says.

Moravek remains unconvinced. "We applaud the Rockefeller family's generosity in making a donation to a worthy charity," he says. "They should not, however, expect the taxpayer to do it for them."

Comments on the proposed exchange were due Dec. 20, but others will probably be considered if received by early January, according to a BLM spokesperson. Write BLM, District Manager, Casper District, 1701 East E St., Casper, WY 82601.

—Devin Odell

HOTLINE



Study uses neighboring farms

Two neighboring farmers near Boone, Iowa, have agreed to help determine if organic or pesticide-controlled crops are more productive. They will participate in a multi-year, comparative study conducted by Jerry Hatfield of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Research Service. Dick and Sharon Thompson's 300-acre farm is almost entirely organic and managed through crop rotation and limited plowing. Dave Snyder manages his adjacent 1,400 acres with pesticides, commercial fertilizers and annual fall plowing. Hatfield will monitor the effects of each farmer's practices on soil, groundwater and crops. The most significant factor will be yields at harvest time, when 64 samples will be taken from each field. Results of the 1989 harvest are being analyzed now. For more information, contact Jerry Hatfield, plant physiologist, National Soil Tilth Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Ames, IA 50011 (515/294-5723).

Is this airport necessary?

Denver has projections showing that it will be a major air traffic hub by the turn of the century. It has preliminary assurances from Wall Street and the federal government that the \$2.3 billion it needs to build the new Denver International Airport will be forthcoming. It can point to orders for 343 new airplanes by its two major carriers, United and Continental, to show that there will be a need for bigger airports in the future. Despite all the good news, Denver lacks something today: airplanes and passengers at its existing, and supposedly inadequate, Stapleton Airport. With one of five concourses closed and another partially closed, Stapleton looks like a ghost airport at certain times of the day. Statistics support the impression. Traffic has been declining since its 1986 peak at 17.3 million passengers. Stapleton officials project 13.7 million boardings this year, for a 14 percent drop in 1989 and 20 percent decline since 1986. But the city is holding to its course. Denver aviation director George Doughty told the *Rocky Mountain News* that Denver International Airport is "designed for the long term, and even if there's no growth now, (a new airport) would position us to be ready when there's a rebound." Approximately half of Stapleton's traffic originates in Denver and half consists of people changing planes at Stapleton. Denver officials apparently believe that United and Continental will eventually route more flights through their city, but the airlines thus far refuse to sign leases for gates at the new airport. An air industry analyst told the *News* that present crowding at other airports and delivery of additional planes in the early 1990s might not fill up Denver. Morton Beyer said travel rises and falls with the economy, and not with the availability of aircraft or runways.

U.S. Army re-stages *Red Dawn* in Montana

When is the best time to drop 200 to 300 camouflaged soldiers into the Montana woods for training exercises?

Army planners decided that it would be one day after the beginning of the big-game hunting season, when an estimated 100,000 orange-clad hunters head for the hills.

The exercise, called Knife Blade 90, involved 1,500 Army, Air Force and Navy personnel from Wyoming, Montana, Utah and Michigan, and ran from Oct. 23 until Nov. 14, when all troops were out of Montana forests.

According to most reports, Knife Blade 90 was a mock Communist invasion pitting regular troops as Communists from Washington state against defending guerrilla units from Montana.

Hunters and others were asked to call a toll-free number to report sightings of the guerrillas to help with their capture. Anyone who called received a thank-you gram from the U.S. Army.

Some people protested the war games, including Montana's Sen. Max Baucus, D; Rep. Pat Williams, D, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. When approached about the exercises last summer, the department advised against any maneuvers in the woods during hunting season. Like most others, they learned about the war games by reading about them in the papers.

About halfway through the exercises, one of the "guerrilla" leaders broke ranks and called *The Montana Standard* newspaper in Butte. The guerrilla, who code-named himself Captain Keith, wanted to tell his version of what the exercises were all about. He explained that he was leading a group of 10 guerrillas who were playing the role of the good guys against the Communist invaders.

Captain Keith called the newspaper from the ranchhouse of a sympathetic Montana ranch family who had adopted and provided home-cooked meals for his group. The ranchwoman explained to the *Montana Standard's* reporter that the men were actually quite handy

around the property. In exchange for meals, the soldiers helped with chores such as rail splitting and fence mending.

A more serious incident occurred in the Bitterroot Valley when a guerrilla unit was ambushed at 4:30 in the morning on private property near Corvallis. The mock battle involved blank-firing automatic weapons, flares and training grenades. The battle terrified the property owners, who almost fired back with hunting rifles because they thought they were under attack. Army authorities returned to the property twice later in the day to retrieve spent ammunition and fake plastic explosives.

That led to Rep. Williams writing a protest to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. It read in part, "The exercise's conduct in Montana's forests in hunting season was foolhardy at best,

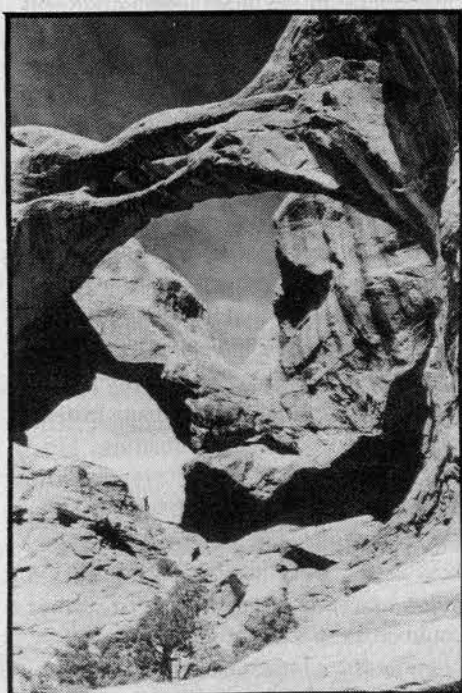
but bringing the soldiers into Montana's communities without warning is nothing less than reckless." The local sheriff threatened to arrest soldiers if there was another such incident on private property.

The Army later apologized but informed the public that there would be no formal investigation of the incident. Before leaving the state, the soldiers rendezvoused in Deer Lodge to help renovate the old Burlington Northern train depot into a new senior citizen's center.

—George Everett

The writer spends most of his time working for the National Center for Appropriate Technology in Butte, Montana.

HOTLINE



Double Arch

Arches everywhere

The number of documented arches in Arches National Park, Utah, has broken 1,000. On Sept. 11, seasonal park

ranger Sue Moore and librarian Dick Wunder discovered the park's one-thousandth arch in north Devil's Garden. Named "One Thousand Arch," the free-standing structure is 42 feet long and 15 inches high. Since then, more arches have been found, bringing the total in the park to nearly 1,100. In 1970, the park listed only 90. Edward McCarrick and Dale Stevens, publishers of *The Arches of Arches National Park: A Comprehensive Study* in 1988, say that for arches to be documented, the opening in the rock must be naturally caused and must allow light to pass through for at least three feet in one direction. Esthetics is not a consideration, they say. Park Service officials are certain there are more to be found, although they say the dimensions of One Thousand Arch are unique.

BARBS

Let's hope they have enough toilet paper.

At a cost of \$100 a roll, the U.S. Air Force has just purchased special paper for its new, battle-proof fax machines. The machines cost \$421,000 each.

Colleges for Native Americans deserve more support

An exhaustive two-year study of tribal colleges has been released by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, based in Princeton, N.J.

Titled "Tribal Colleges: Shaping the Future of Native America," the 100-page study is a scathing indictment of the federal government for its failure to adequately support the nation's 24 tribally controlled two- and four-year colleges.

At the same time, the report described tribal colleges as "the most powerful social force in their communities. Tribal colleges are in the vanguard of a cultural renaissance" in American Indian communities, it said.

The study praises the creativity and resourcefulness of tribal college leaders for increasing enrollment and expanding curricula even at a time when federal support has sharply diminished.

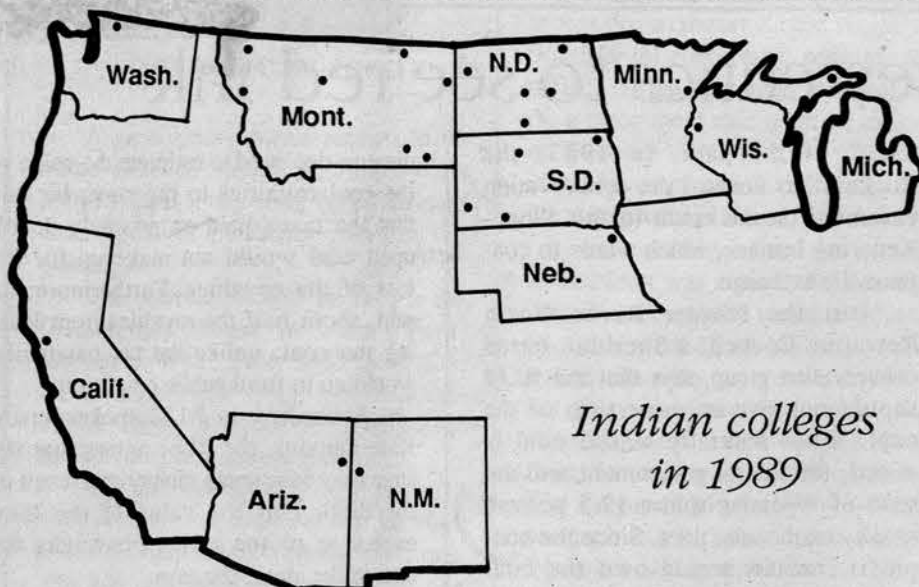
"At almost all of the institutions, salaries are far too low, libraries are shockingly underfunded, and administrators struggle to operate with day-to-day budget constraints that other higher learning institutions would totally reject," said Carnegie Foundation President Ernest Boyer in the report's introduction.

"Although a few of the colleges have accommodating campuses, many are getting by with mismatched trailers or unsuitable buildings converted from other uses.

"Still, faced with difficult conditions, tribal colleges have managed not only to stay alive, but also to expand their services and creatively serve their students and their communities," the study said.

The report's primary author is Paul Boyer, a journalism instructor at California State University at Sacramento. Boyer designed the study, visited numerous tribal college campuses, and worked closely with the 24 presidents of the colleges, as well as with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, in compiling the report.

The tribal colleges are located in 11 Western and Midwestern states, with all



but two on Indian reservations.

They represent a combined total enrollment of some 4,500 full-time students, and together serve more than 10,000 individuals. The Northern Plains states lead the nation in the number of tribal colleges, with seven in Montana, five in North Dakota and four in South Dakota.

The first tribally controlled college, Navajo Community College, was established at Tsaile, Ariz., in 1968. The institution later was supported by Congress through the Navajo Community College Act of 1970.

Just over a decade ago, Congress, through the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, authorized funding for a growing number of tribal colleges.

A major problem the report identified is that federal funding, originally allocated at a rate of \$4,000 per student, has failed to keep pace with growing enrollment. Currently, tribal colleges are funded at only \$1,900 per student, and so essentially are "being penalized for their success," the study said.

The report examines the historic failure of federal policies on Indian higher education, observing that the goal was almost always assimilation.

"If we have learned anything from our relationship with the American Indian, it is that people cannot be torn

from their cultural roots without harm," it said.

The study regards the development of tribal colleges as a phenomenon based in the tribal self-determination movement, and as having enormous importance to the future of American Indians.

"In their cultural rootedness and powerfully considered purposes, tribal colleges are unparalleled," it said. Paul Boyer believes the effectiveness of tribal colleges is based in the following characteristics:

- They establish a learning environment that encourages participation and builds self-confidence in students who have come to view failure as the norm;
- Celebrate and help sustain the rich Native American traditions;
- Provide essential services that enrich the communities surrounding them; and
- Are often centers for research and scholarship.

Tribal colleges are truly community institutions, the study said. "After years of brutal physical hardship and disorienting cultural loss, Native Americans — through the tribal college movement — are building new communities based on shared traditions ... the issue is empowerment," Boyer wrote.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- That the federal government ade-

quately support tribal colleges by providing the full \$4,820 per student authorized by Congress, and that funding keep pace with growth in student enrollment;

- That libraries, science laboratories and classroom facilities at tribal colleges be significantly improved through federal and foundation funding;

- That connections be strengthened between tribal colleges and non-Indian higher education, particularly for the transfer of credit and the development of cooperative degree programs;

- That programs linking tribal colleges to their communities be significantly increased.

- That tribal colleges expand their important role of preserving the languages, history and cultures of the tribes;

- That state governments more adequately support tribal colleges, especially with funds for community service programs;

- That a comprehensive program be established for faculty development at tribal colleges;

- That foundations collaboratively support the Tribal College Institute, a newly formed program designed to strengthen administrative leadership in Indian higher education;

- That national awareness and advocacy for tribal colleges be strengthened, specifically through financial support for the American Indian Higher Education Consortium;

- That the newly established American Indian College Fund be supported to increase the fiscal base and bring long-term stability to tribal colleges.

The report is available from Princeton University Press, 375 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648.

— Nancy Butterfield

The writer works for the Native American News Service.

BOOK NOTES

Exploring the last few chunks of wild land

The Big Outside

Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke,
Foreword by Michael Frome. Ned Ludd
Books, Box 5141, Tucson, Arizona
85703. 1989. \$19.

—Review by George Wuerthner

Guess where the second largest roadless area in the United States is? Idaho? Wyoming? Montana? Utah?

Surprisingly, this 2.8-million-acre chunk of wilderness sits in the Sierra Nevada in populous California.

Most people do not think of the Sierra range as a large block of wild country; we're used to perceiving and inventorying roadless areas using artificial, political borders instead of the geography of the landscape.

The 2.8 million roadless acres in the high Sierra are divided into three national forests, seven Forest Service wilderness areas, a dozen tracts of Bureau of Land Management country and small parcels of private land.

According to Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke, authors of *The Big Outside*, this artificial division of land based upon administrative criteria con-

tributes to the continual erosion of our last remaining wildlands. We simply do not know what there is to lose.

To remedy the situation, Foreman and Wolke have put together the first comprehensive overview of the nation's roadless resources since wilderness advocate Bob Marshall published his own inventory and map in the November 1936 issue of *Living Wilderness*.

Foreman and Wolke have identified all the large roadless areas remaining in the United States, ignoring private land boundaries and federal designations.

Each listed area had to meet several criteria — criteria that the authors readily admit are arbitrary at best — including a minimum size of 100,000 acres in the West and 50,000 acres in the East. They found 368 areas that met the necessary qualifications.

The authors organize each area by state, and include a brief description of its important ecological, geological and other significant characteristics. They also note any wilderness proposals for the area, as well as its potential for inclusion within larger wilderness areas.

In an excellent introduction, Wolke and Foreman, two of the founders of

Earth First!, delineate the major threats to our wilderness heritage and argue passionately for the protection of all our remaining roadless lands.

We need to reconstruct all our wilderness areas, they say, based upon biological truths rather than political convenience. Wolke and Foreman add that only large areas preserve biological diversity and ecological processes; only large areas reinforce human perceptions of solitude, remoteness and wildness.

The authors make clear how little wild country we have left, and how small those remaining areas really are.

Our custom of using acreage instead of miles for describing roadless land gives people a deceptive view of the size. A roadless area of 300,000 acres, the size of our largest designated wilderness areas, only measures 21.5 x 21.5 miles square, a distance that a fit walker could cross in a day.

The Big Outside makes good browsing material for the practical — Where can I go to find a large wild area near where I live? — but also stands as a visionary statement of where conservationists should be going in terms of protecting our wildlands heritage.



As a reference, this is the kind of book every wilderness lover can use. Get to know these areas from the ground, the authors invite. Then work to protect them before they are lost.

□

George Wuerthner is a freelance writer and staffer for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition in Wyoming.



courtesy of Elizabeth Hadley

Elizabeth Hadley works in the Lamar Valley dig in Yellowstone National Park

Dig shows wolves in Yellowstone area

A paleontologist has unearthed evidence suggesting wolves existed in Yellowstone National Park for hundreds of years. Some critics of restoring wolves to the park say the area was never home to the animals.

Elizabeth Hadley, who is earning her Ph.D in paleontology at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, says bone shards and sedimentation found recently in a Yellowstone cave suggest wolves inhabited the park region at least 960 years ago.

"The bones provide evidence that elk and wolves were present in the Yellowstone area prior to any influence by Europeans," Hadley said.

Staunch opponents of wolf reintroduction say wolves were pushed into the park when settlers late in the 19th century eliminated their habitat. Troy Mader of Gillette, Wyo., who heads a group called The Common Man Institute, has launched a personal letter-writing campaign to regional media promoting that assertion.

"There is no historical data to substantiate a group of wolves living and denning in the park," said Mader, who wants to squelch wolf reintroduction efforts.

Hadley says science demonstrates the contrary, and bones found in the cave since 1987 pinpoint the enduring presence of dozens of other mammals as well, including elk and grizzly bear.

The cave was discovered five years ago by a Yellowstone mountain lion biologist working on a study of the northern range. A four-foot-high tunnel through the cave extends 25 feet underground.

Hadley said she does not intend to reveal the exact location to the public until excavation is completed, which will take about five years. She is afraid that souvenir hunters might converge on the site and damage the natural, delicate time capsule.

"It's an unbelievable site because there aren't many like it in the northern Rockies," she said. "You can really look at the subtle changes that show up between each new layer of sediment."

Animal jawbones, teeth and foot bones are among the 10,000 specimens

collected from a meter of earthen debris. Some of the skeletal parts represent elk, pronghorn, bison, bighorn sheep and fish — meals for carnivores that probably dragged their prey into the sanctuary of the cave, Hadley said.

"The reason why there's so many bones and layers of sediment is because of pack rats and bigger carnivores such as wolves, coyotes, bears, foxes, weasels, badgers and skunks using it as a hiding place over the years," Hadley said.

Not only did some of the major predators eat and sleep in the cave, but some died there, too. Radiometric dating, a form of carbon dating, shows the remains of wolves and bears go back almost 1,000 years, Hadley said.

"We have found no evidence of humans in the cave," Hadley said. "This does not appear to be an archaeological site."

Researchers say most cave sites tend to be much older than the one in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley. In Idaho, for example, one rock structure, which similarly had a meter of stratified soil, spanned 14,000 years. The Yellowstone site may be more valuable than some other locations because it contains intact and unmixed levels, Hadley said.

Hadley has catalogued bits and pieces of 34 species in the cave. "Except for the prairie vole and the wolf, all of the species found in the cave are present in Yellowstone today," she said.

Word of the wolf bones comes at a time when the park has been told to suspend its public education program on wolf reintroduction as a result of politi-

cal pressure from top officials in the Interior Department.

Norm Bishop, a Yellowstone Park interpretive ranger, traveled thousands of miles over the past year bringing wolf education before American school children, civic groups and livestock industry organizations. In October, Bishop was ordered to halt his presentations.

Park Service head James Ridenour issued the edict after hearing criticism from Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., and another unnamed senator who wanted Yellowstone's wolf education stopped.

An outspoken supporter of the livestock industry, Burns said Yellowstone should not attempt to influence the American public though education when a federal study on the impacts of wolf reintroduction is uncompleted. The study is due for release next year.

Reached by telephone, Bishop would not discuss the action by Ridenour though he did praise the work of Hadley. "Her findings are important in that there had not been wolf bones seen in any datable excavations in the past," Bishop said.

Yellowstone's resident wolf expert dismissed Mader's assertions that wolves never roamed through Yellowstone until the white man drove them there, off the plains.

"The notion that wolves were only chased into the mountains by people from the low-lying areas is preposterous," Bishop said. "No serious wolf biologist would give serious credence to that."

— Todd Wilkinson

HOTLINE

Nowhere to go

After 30 years, no one has figured out what to do with nuclear waste from the nation's power plants. Last month the Department of Energy admitted that its proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository in Nevada would not be ready until 2010, instead of 1998. Energy Secretary James Watkins, continuing his policy of frankness, also admitted that the burial ground might not even be ready then. Watkins said he lacks confidence in the preliminary geological evaluations his department carried out at the desert site. This new delay increases pressure for the creation of an interim facility to store the 21,000 metric tons of lethal waste stored at power plants, an amount that is increasing by 2,000 tons a year. To find a site, the DOE is pressing the White House to appoint a civilian waste negotiator, a position created by Congress in 1987 but never filled. DOE spokesman Phil Garon says the negotiator would "cut deals" with states or towns interested in hosting an interim facility.

Montana trees spiked

Steel stakes were found Dec. 7 in seven trees on Montana's Stillwater State Forest, northwest of Whitefish. Typewritten notes attached to the trees stated that the spiking "was an act of conviction: of belief in the need of private citizens to curtail the continuing (and needless) harvesting of trees," *AP* reports. It was the first incident of ecotage on state lands in northwest Montana. James Conner of the Sierra Club condemned the spiking, saying it damaged the credibility of mainstream conservation groups, even though these groups do not spike trees. Conner said only radicals in the timber industry would benefit and that he'd "like to be on the jury if they ever figure out who did this." State law provides a maximum penalty of a \$50,000 fine and 10 years in jail for tree-spiking. Along with the stakes, the spikers left tracks in fresh snow. A spokeswoman for the Flathead County Sheriff's office said a suspect had been interviewed, but released no further information.

A fourth term for McClure?

Idaho Republican Sen. James A. McClure has not yet decided whether he will seek re-election in 1990 for a fourth term. McClure, 65, has been in Congress 23 years. McClure's main reservations about staying in office, says Idaho staffer Pat Sullivan, are that he would be 72 years old before the end of another term, and that politics simply isn't as much fun as it used to be. "Politics is getting meaner," McClure told the Idaho Falls *Post-Register* last week. "Negative campaigning, all the kinds of negative assumptions about people who hold public office, don't make the job any more attractive." But McClure says he would like to see through some of his long-term projects, including a defense program at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory and a proposed wilderness bill that has caused considerable controversy among both environmentalists and natural resource developers (*HCN*, 12/18/89). Before becoming a senator, McClure served three terms in the House. As chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee from 1980-1986, he passed more wilderness bills than any of his predecessors.

HOTLINE

Nevada goes wild

Concluding a six-year congressional battle, President Bush signed a Nevada wilderness bill Dec. 5 that designates 733,400 wilderness acres and releases 2.4 million roadless acres from wilderness study. The bill was hailed as "a compromise that should fit everyone" by Nevada Sen. Richard Bryan, D. A

steadfast opponent, however, was Rep. Barbara Vucanovitch, R, who was alone among Nevada's four-member congressional delegation in opposing the legislation. Dennis Ghighieri of the Sierra Club told the *Reno Gazette Journal* the club was pleased with the bill, which created 13 new wilderness areas. The bill also enlarged Nevada's only existing wilderness, Jarbridge, north of Elko.

HOTLINE



Power plant may endanger fish

Air pollution from the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Ariz., may be killing fish. The giant 2,250-megawatt, coal-fired power plant, which sits adjacent to Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River, has recently come under fire from the Environmental Protection Agency for polluting the air in Grand Canyon National Park (HCN, 10/9/89). Now, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists say the plant's smoke stacks may also be threatening fish in Lake Powell. Recent samples of striped bass caught near the plant contained three times as much selenium as fish caught 140 miles upstream, say Fish and Wildlife officials in Phoenix. Large-mouth bass, walleye and crappie, all popular sport and eating fish, have also been found with high levels of selenium, a mineral that is highly toxic even in small quantities. The Salt River Project, the Arizona utility that, together with the Bureau of Reclamation, runs the plant, says that its coal feedstock contains two to three parts per million of selenium, but that even if all of that reached Lake Powell, selenium levels would be far below federal and state environmental standards. Federal biologists, however, warn that selenium increases as it moves up the food chain. Several environmental groups monitoring the issue want the Navajo plant, which is not equipped with scrubbers or other high-tech pollution control, to be included in the upcoming environmental impact study evaluating the impacts of Glen Canyon Dam hydropower operations on the Grand Canyon.

Ranchers battle elk for grass in Arizona

The Arizona Game and Fish Department received a tip Aug. 30 that rancher Michael Oden had directed his ranch hands to shoot every elk that came on his property.

Two months later, Oden, the 29-year-old owner of the 7 Up Ranch near Camp Wood in east central Arizona, pleaded guilty to killing at least four elk out of season. Now, Game and Fish officials are investigating whether other Arizona ranchers have declared war on elk.

It is clear that elk and cattle are competing for a limited amount of forage. In Arizona, the controversy has come to a head because the elk population is at an all-time high.

Ranchers, particularly in the central portion of the state along the Mogollon Plateau, where the elk population is most dense, complain that elk break through fences and depredate the meadows irrigated for their cattle. Ranchers also say that land management agencies aren't doing enough to alleviate the problem.

Norris Dodd, regional habitat specialist at the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in central Arizona, says it's not that the agencies aren't doing enough, but that their management plans are beginning to reflect increased public support for wildlife and recreation.

Habitat improvement is the aim of one cooperative effort of the state and Forest Service in Arizona, supported by the Montana-based Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The nonprofit foundation, which works to conserve and manage elk habitat throughout the West, has spent nearly \$200,000 on several central Arizona projects.

Kevin Lackey, an elk foundation programs manager, says programs include thinning pinon-juniper groves that have grown too thick for big game, fencing out or planting willows in overused riparian areas, and constructing "wildlife guzzlers," or water catchment tanks, to provide elk with additional



George Andrejko

Arizona game wardens examine an elk carcass found on the 7-Up Ranch water sources.

Dodd says that while many ranchers applaud those efforts, the livestock industry is worried about its loss of "primacy" on public lands. Moreover, because Arizona is the only Western state that has no law providing some form of compensation for wildlife depredation on private lands, Dodd says ranchers are frustrated by not being reimbursed for damages.

During the state legislative session last summer, cattlegrowers initiated a wildlife-ranching committee to explore these issues. Ron Neal of the Arizona Cattlegrowers' Association says the meetings of ranchers, public lands officials and representatives from several environmental groups were "a positive step" toward developing understanding.

Lee Kohlhasse, president of the Arizona Wildlife Federation, says the committee has addressed important top-

ics ranging from compensation of ranchers for elk depredation on private lands to regulation of leases on public lands.

Arizona is not alone in its struggle to resolve the questions raised as public-lands priorities shift. In Idaho, for example, ranchers in the Oakley area on the southern border of the state are engaged in an increasingly bitter struggle with the Forest Service over administration of grazing rights in the Sawtooth National Forest. Rancher Ray Bedke recently pleaded not guilty to three charges of illegal possession of elk and wrote an angry letter to the Forest Service.

In Arizona, the wildlife federation's Kohlhasse admits that the shift to true multiple use on public land won't be accomplished easily. But he is optimistic, saying that the "romance of the cowboy is phasing out."

— Kate Gunness

Energy companies zero in on Wyoming's methane

Large-scale, coal-bed methane development may soon be coming to the Powder River Basin in Wyoming.

Energy developers are eyeing the massive Big George coal seam, which extends over about 1,000 square miles between Buffalo and Gillette. While only 10 wells have been drilled so far, 25 more will receive permits from the Bureau of Land Management, which controls most of the mineral resources in the area.

According to Glenn Bessinger, BLM resource manager in Buffalo, the number of wells drilled may go as high as 800 before the end of next year, when the tax credit for drilling wells ends.

The rapid development is due to a federal tax credit ending Dec. 31, 1990. The credit, part of the Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980, was designed to create an incentive for the production of non-conventional fuels. All successful wells drilled before the deadline will receive the credit for 10 additional years.

Making previously unprofitable development worthwhile, the credit has also spurred intense coal bed methane development in southwestern Colorado's La Plata County (HCN, 12/4/89). Other areas containing coal bed methane resources in the West include the Greater Green River coal region and the Wind River Basin in Wyoming, the Uinta area in Utah and

the Piceance Basin in Colorado.

To remove methane from coal beds, energy companies pump large amounts of water from the coal seam, disturbing the locked sediments that hold the gas. While the process usually requires lighter and less expensive drilling rigs than conventional wells, the cost of getting rid of the water can be high.

The energy potential for the development is substantial, according to Bessinger. But residents of the basin, which is now used primarily for grazing, have mixed feelings about the project.

Bessinger says they welcome the economic benefits but worry about the effect of removing and discharging large amounts of water from the coal aquifer.

The Big George Coal seam lies between 1,000 and 2,100 feet below the surface, deeper than most of the wells used for livestock or homes in the area.

What no one knows, says Richard McQuisten, a hydrologist with the U.S. Department of Energy in Laramie, is whether the shallower aquifers communicate with the deep coal-seam aquifers. If they do, removing the water may mean that water wells would dry up. And, if some of the water wells are driven by gas pressure from the coal seam, removing the gas may cause them to stop flowing.

The 10 wells drilled so far each discharge about 84,000 gallons of water a

day, the BLM says, and will continue to discharge water for up to two years before they begin to produce large quantities of gas.

If 100 wells pumped water at that rate, the volume of the Powder River would rise 13 cubic feet per second, possibly increasing erosion and siltation in the river and its tributaries. In addition, while water from the coal aquifer so far has been about the same quality as the water already flowing in the Powder River — too salty for irrigation but usable for stock — some of the water pumped up may add a considerable amount of salt to the river.

For ranchers in the area, the idea of seeing so much water go to waste does not rest easy. The Powder River Basin Resource Council, a group which works on environmental and agricultural issues, has been closely following the methane development. The council has urged the BLM to explore alternative ways to handle the water, such as developing wetlands and reinjecting it back into the coal seam.

State wildlife biologist Olin Oedekoven says he is also worried about the effect of the drilling on the water table. Lowering the water table, he says, will have serious, long-term impacts on the riparian communities mule deer and elk populations in the area depend on.

And over the short term, Oedekoven says, construction of roads,

pipelines and well pads will also harm wildlife habitat.

Each well site, according to BLM estimates, will disturb about one acre of land, not including road or pipeline construction.

Bill Barlow, a rancher in the area who has seen a few of the working wells, says that it looks to him as if the estimate of one acre may be too low. He also worries that water from the wells will freeze in the winter, leaving big sheets of ice on the ground and making access to livestock difficult.

To address some of the potential impacts of the development, the BLM will prepare a draft environmental assessment by April 1990. The assessment, according to Bessinger, will help the agency decide whether to prepare an environmental impact statement, a longer and more comprehensive process. An EIS would probably take about a year and a half, delaying approval of applications for drilling permits until after the end of next year.

Comments and information on the development and its environmental impacts will be accepted until March by Glenn Bessinger, Area Manager, Buffalo Resource Area, 189 N. Cedar, Buffalo, WY 82834. The Powder River Basin Resource Council can be reached at 23 North Scott, Sheridan, WY 82801.

— Devin Odell

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Edward Abbey got the FBI interested in literature

I see liberty being strangled like a dog, everywhere I look.

The Brave Cowboy — Edward Abbey, 1956

—by Tom Knudson

When he wrote those words, Edward Abbey — one of the West's most celebrated and outspoken authors — was himself the focus of a wide-ranging FBI investigation.

According to documents made available through the Freedom of Information Act, the FBI kept track of Abbey's writing and activities for 20 years, trying to determine whether the controversial author was a security threat to the United States.

It was a far-flung search, taking agents from Death Valley to Vienna, Austria. No lead was too insignificant. The FBI, for instance, took note of Abbey's "matrimonial history," the type of vehicles he drove and the fact he was "a good shot with a rifle."

Agents checked everything from CIA files to letters to the editor that Abbey wrote. They monitored his jobs at national monuments and forests across the West. Former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover was kept posted.

But in the end, Abbey was exonerated: Agents could find nothing indicating he was disloyal to the country.

"I have absolutely no idea why the FBI would want a file on Edward Abbey," said his longtime friend, Bill Hoy, former chief ranger at Fort Bowie National Historic site in Arizona.

"Sure, he wrote some pretty radical-sounding stuff, but as a person he was not like that at all. I found him to be a very quiet, kind man."

Although it has been more than 30 years since many of the documents were assembled, large parts of them remain censored today. Many of the deletions were to protect the FBI's informants, but some information has been withheld in the name of "national security."

The file spans 1947 to 1967, after which the FBI apparently lost interest in Abbey. During that time, the author wrote four books, including the classic *Desert Solitaire*, an impassioned plea for the protection of the slickrock canyon country of southeast Utah.

Abbey, who died in March, is perhaps best known for his love of the desert wilderness of the American Southwest and his contempt for civilization and its trappings.

I see my own country overwhelmed by ugliness and mediocrity and overcrowding, the land smothered under airstrips and super highways, the natural wealth of a million years

Pittsburgh to Bureau
March 8, 1947

EDWARD ABBEY
SEDITION

EDWARD ABBEY is a young man who resides at Home, Pennsylvania. He is a day student who does not board nor room at the college, and is a member of the Secondary Education Department. ABBEY is an ex-service man who understands, hates the Army and things military.

The above information is being furnished to the Bureau as constituting a possible violation of the Sedition Law or Counseling Evasion of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

As instructed in Bureau Bulletin No. 33, Series 1946, dated June 19, 1946, no investigation is being instituted unless instructed by the Bureau.

cc: New York

The excerpt above and two below are from the FBI's Edward Abbey file

squandered on atomic bombs and tin automobiles and television sets and ballpoint pens, he wrote in The Brave Cowboy.

Abbey's widow, Clarke, said her husband requested and received his FBI file in 1982, hoping to find material to use in a book.

"I don't think he was surprised by it at all," she said in a phone interview from Tucson, Ariz. "In fact, if he hadn't had an FBI file, he would have been sorely disappointed. He felt like it was his duty to upset the government."

She said her husband found it odd that his FBI file stopped in 1967, well before the publication of some of his more rebellious works, including *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, a fictional account of a group of environmental saboteurs who burn billboards, destroy bulldozers and blow up Glen Canyon Dam in northern Arizona.

"What we always assumed is that they kept part of the file for their current research," she said.

The FBI's interest in Abbey began in 1947 when, as a 20-year-old student at the State Teachers College in Indiana, Pa., he posted a notice on a bulletin board urging young men to "emancipate themselves from peacetime conscription."

"As Thoreau said, 'It is not too soon for an honest man to rebel,'" Abbey's note said. "Send your draft card with an

explanatory letter to the President. He'll appreciate it greatly, I'm sure."

Those words triggered a memo from the Pittsburgh FBI field office to Hoover, warning that Abbey, who had just finished serving two years in the U.S. Army, may have violated the Sedition Law. "Edward Abbey is a young man who hates the Army and things military," the memo warned.

Although nothing came of the memo, the FBI continued to keep tabs on Abbey, monitoring his travels as a Fulbright Scholar in Europe and as a student at the University of New Mexico in the early 1950s.

In 1952, while Abbey was in Europe, he attended the International Conference in Defense of Children. The FBI labeled the conference "Communist initiated" and produced a new blizzard of paper work on Abbey.

His widow said it was all a misunderstanding. "He just happened to be touring through the area and thought it looked interesting," she said.

Not long after he returned from Europe, Abbey's application for a clerk-typist position with the U.S. Geological Survey in Albuquerque triggered yet another wave of FBI activity, including a full-fledged "loyalty investigation."

FBI agents in Washington, Pennsylvania and New Mexico quickly went to work, checking, to little avail, with everyone from police officers to

former employers to Communist Party informants who "reported that the subject was unknown to them."

But at the University of New Mexico, the FBI found some things worth putting into their files, including Abbey's involvement with the "world peace movement," his reputation as a "highly individual thinker," and an "unstable matrimonial history."

One informant told the FBI that Abbey's "individualism might cause a rupture in his marital relations. (Abbey) and his wife did not get along too well, he being one who desired to follow his creative writing and she being one who desired a home and association with others."

At the time, Abbey was married to his first wife, Rita.

But it was Abbey's talent with a typewriter that drew special FBI concern. Agents seemed greatly concerned by one particular incident, in which Abbey published a quotation on the cover of *The Thunderbird*, a student literary publication of which he was editor.

The quotation went like this: "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." And in jest, Abbey attributed the quotation to author Louisa May Alcott.

The FBI did not appreciate the humor, describing the incident as "literary immaturity," and elaborating at length about it in memos to FBI headquarters.

Abbey "demonstrated a quality of rashness and immaturity which was irritating, to say the least," said one memo, quoting an informant.

Despite the thick and ominously worded dossier prepared by the FBI, the U.S. Civil Service Commission determined in 1953 that Abbey was a loyal citizen, paving the way for his employment in a variety of part-time government jobs. It was one of those jobs — as a seasonal ranger in Arches National Monument in 1957 — that led to his classic, *Desert Solitaire*.

Fourteen years later, though, the FBI was still suspicious. It tracked down Abbey in Death Valley and in a memo stamped "Subversive Control," made these observations:

"Abbey spends a great deal of time working as a free-lance writer on his own. Abbey does not take part in any community activities or social gatherings and remains to himself."

□

Tom Knudson is a reporter for *The Sacramento Bee* in California.

[redacted] State Teachers College, Indiana, Pennsylvania, in March 1947, made available to the Pittsburgh Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a typewritten notice on plain white, notebook paper, size 8-1/2" x 11", unruled, which he found posted on a bulletin board at the college. This notice is signed in ink by EDWARD ABBEY, and reads as follows:

A LETTER TO ALL STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS HOLDING DRAFT CARDS;

Tomorrow, the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, several thousand American men are going to attempt to emancipate themselves from peacetime conscription by publicly ridding themselves of their draft credentials, either by mailing them to the President or burning them in public bonfires. This sounds like a foolish, crackpot scheme but it's not. It is much worse than that—it is a form of civil disobedience. That's something rather old-fashioned but in times like these, when America's government is diverting the major portion of its expenditures to armaments and our military leaders are trying to fasten permanent peacetime conscription on the nation, then, as Thoreau said, "It is not too soon for an honest man to rebel."

These men are certainly honest and sincere, and they are rebelling, not only against what they consider a violation of personal liberty, but against the slow and deadly drift towards World War III which an international armament race and universal conscription make almost inevitable.

[redacted] stated that subject was indiscreet in his individualism in regard to the incident concerning the campus literary publication "The Thunderbird". [redacted] stated that he was not concerned over this incident particularly because it fit right into what a young promising literary individual might do in campus activities.

He stated that the novel subject wrote was the story of one man who tries to live several lives and consequently fails to achieve any genuine kind of life at all. He stated the theme as expressed by subject is deceptive and betrayal and fraud with variations. The end is an ironic and melodramatic death for the hero in the wilderness maze symbolic of the futile, confused, contradictory, barren waste he has made of his own life.

[redacted] stated that these are subject's words as regards the theme and the end of his novel. He described the main character of the novel as extremely repulsive. He stated, however, that he did not feel that the novel was any reflection of subject's feelings in one manner or another.

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8-High Country News — January 1, 1990

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Palo Alto, CaliforniaJeffrey and Pamela Marti
Olympia, WashingtonHoward Sklar
Cupertino, CaliforniaEdward and Dian Sparling
Fort Collins, ColoradoLarry Swisher
Colorado Springs, ColoradoWilliam Tweed
Three Rivers, CaliforniaWendy Morgan
Wilson, WyomingHoward Booth
Las Vegas, NevadaStephen Born
Madison, WisconsinKay Firor
Coe, OregonCharles Ray
Eagle, IdahoSuzanne Sarver
Ogden, UtahArlo A. Brown
Green Village, New JerseyDavid J. Larson
El Cerrito, CaliforniaSandy Dodge
Bozeman, MontanaLes and Mary Pengelly
Missoula, MontanaJohn R. Post
Greenwich, ConnecticutPat Musick
Colorado Springs, ColoradoRichard and Linda Van Wagenen
Salt Lake City, UtahTom Graff
Oakland, CaliforniaDennis Fritzinger
Berkeley, CaliforniaDavid Weber and
Karen Fogg
Flagstaff, ArizonaNancy and Walt Taylor
Flagstaff, ArizonaHoward and Ella Pfenning
Sierra Vista, ArizonaSteve Spangler and
Sue Lueloff
Geneva, New YorkBarbara Boland
Golden, ColoradoLuther and Virginia Linkhart
Alameda, CaliforniaArlo A. Brown
Green Village, New JerseySuzanne Sarver
Ogden, UtahMichael Miller
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Cimarron, ColoradoGerald Butenhoff
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Golden, ColoradoLuther and Virginia Linkhart
Alameda, California

afield

'Cause we needed it

A picture of actor Dennis Weaver standing near an archway inside his new all-solar energy home near Ridgway, Colo., took me back to my childhood.

Weaver used recycled trash to build his 8,000-square-foot home. The archway he was pictured with shows hundreds of beer and pop cans set in mortar like bricks. A novel idea.

The picture brought to memory another man, this one back in the late 1930s and early '40s, who constructed a home with tin cans. His name was Orval Sunderland, but everyone for miles around Kiowa, Kan., knew him simply as "Tink." He was my father.

Tink was a welder, general mechanic and blacksmith, and operated his own shop at the west edge of town. He, like many other people he grew up, never got beyond the fifth grade. But lack of an education didn't stop the wheels from turning. He was always inventing some gadget or special tool. "Tink" was aptly named.

He was a master acetylene welder and automotive mechanic, and a good blacksmith. With those skills, Dad earned the reputation of being the best "fix-it" man in the county.

During the depression, when no one had money for new equipment or new parts, and during the war years, when there were no new parts or machinery available, however much money you had, Tink was a pretty important fellow to the farm community. He kept the old, worn-out equipment running for farmers.

Most of the time, Dad was paid for his service with an old hog, or a milk cow, or chickens, or whatever else they could spare and he might find useful. I remember having a billy goat and two or three nanny goats, which he probably acquired by trade (the 'billy' liked chewing Dad's Prince Albert tobacco).

We always seemed to have two or three old junk cars around — in various degrees of disassembly for parts and steel — that he'd taken in as trade for work.

Occasionally he'd get a few dollars cash. Most of those would go for carbide for the acetylene gas generator, welding rods or oxygen to keep his business going. A few, but not many, would be left for groceries and family needs.

Those were tough times. Only on rare occasions were there "extra" dollars not needed for absolute essentials.

Dad was as honorable, as independent, as hard working, and as proud a man as I've ever known. He refused charity, and he abhorred the thought of seeking any kind of welfare assistance.

My parents and our family of five boys and one girl shared a four-room house with Grandpa and Grandma. Dad decided the family needed more space and started thinking about how he might build a new addition.

In his business there was always a need for scrap iron, steel pipe, angle iron and sheet metal, so he made frequent trips to his "warehouse" — the town dump. He recycled a lot of iron from the dump in his repair business.

In those days, there were no cardboard oil cans. They were made of tin, and the junk yard was full of empty quart oil cans.

It struck him that those oil cans could be used like bricks to build the walls of the house we needed, and so our expanded home got under construction.

It was a family project. I was only three or four years old when it started, but since it took three or four years to complete, I have a pretty good recollection of it all.

We all helped pick up cans, load them in the old pickup and haul them back to town. Dad then poured gasoline over the piles of cans to burn out the oil residue so the mortar would stick to them.

We made frequent trips to Mule Creek, where we hand-scooped clean sand into the pickup to use in making the mortar.

When Dad came by some extra dollars, he'd go to town and buy a few bags of cement. We mixed the concrete and mortar with a hoe in a large, flat wooden trough. The water was hand-pumped from our well and carried in buckets. The foundation was dug by hand.

During construction, the tin-can walls looked like huge honeycombs. But once the walls were complete, Dad covered them with stucco.

I believe almost all the wood in the house was salvaged from the junk yard. Probably the only purchased materials were the cement and window glass.

I grew up in that tin can house, and it stood in Kiowa for 30 years or so, until falling to a bulldozer to make room for a new implement company.

Dennis Weaver's new home was designed and built to make a social and environmental statement. The only cause the Sunderland family's home represented was 'cause we needed it.

□

Norm Sunderland publishes *North Fork Times*, a weekly newspaper in Paonia, Colorado.



Orval Sunderland, his wife, Utha, and their children in the early 1940s. The author is standing, front row left, with his hands on his hips.

Sam C. Mitchell
Frankfort, Illinois

Robin and Patrick Tierney
Fort Collins, Colorado

Justin Ward
Alexandria, Virginia

R. Kirk Schroeder
Albany, Oregon

Roger and Susan Butler Athey
Phoenix, Arizona

John Hough
Englewood, Colorado

Sarah Yost
Taylorsville, California

Paula Watson and
Rick Irwin
Flowery Branch, Georgia

Margaret and William Rhodes
Denver, Colorado

Nick Novich
Twin Bridges, Montana

Paul Edwards
Pacific Palisades, California

Philippe S. Cohen and
Cynthia I. Steed
Kelso, California

Erika Muller
Atco, New Jersey

Georgette Theotig
Tehachapi, California

Tamara Naumann and
Pete Williams
Boulder, Colorado

Tory and Meredith Taylor
Dubois, Wyoming

Marc Chytilo
Santa Barbara, California

Jeff Sussmann
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Joe Kippit
Missoula, Montana

Ann Fitzsimmons and
John Gould
Boulder, Colorado

Todo Vandyke
Louisville, Colorado

Suzanne Hecker
Salt Lake City, Utah

Harry Coff
Denver, Colorado

Hayden-Sullivan
Telluride, Colorado

Hal Borzone
Jersey City, New Jersey

Eric Dittert
Beaverton, Oregon

George Heine
Golden, Colorado

Gerald Meral
Sacramento, California

Sandra Phillips
Brecksville, Ohio

Gertrude K. Peterson
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Nolan Hester
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Eric Reische
Aspen, Colorado

Thomas Udall
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Steve Prince
Salt Lake City, Utah

Jean W. Rodman
Oakmont, Pennsylvania

Ronald French
Boulder, Colorado

Chuck Hendrit
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Tim Hogan
Boulder, Colorado

Guy A. Swenson, Jr.
Franconia, New Hampshire

Robert F. Richards
Denver, Colorado

Graham and Kathleen Wright
Bainbridge Island, Washington

Del Owens
New York, New York

Jim Fergus
Hailey, Idaho

Jeffrey Jackson
Seattle, Washington

D.B. Luten
Berkeley, California

Carol Jones and
Tim Martin
Windsor, Colorado

W. Dean Diedrich
Loyalton, California

Dottie Fox
Snowmass, Colorado

Tyler and Rosanne Clarke
Ridgway, Colorado

William Baker
Billings, Montana

Steve Weiss
Greeley, Colorado

Scott Jochim
Sandpoint, Idaho

Lorenz Schaller
Ojai, California

Don Bachman
Bozeman, Montana

Chuck and Margaret Wanner
Fort Collins, Colorado

Lori and Kit Nielsen
Fort Collins, Colorado

Richard Kroger
Bismarck, North Dakota

David Diggs
Boulder, Colorado

Rex and Ann Bavousett
Garland, Texas

Susanna Joannidis
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Holly Hunter
Moose, Wyoming

Julie Buono-Geddes
Toledo, Ohio

Daniel Kruse
Deadwood, South Dakota

J. Myra Johnson
Missoula, Montana

James R. King
Leslie, Missouri

Ryer Triezenberg
Aspen, Colorado

Edward J. Schiff
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

George Bagley
Boise, Idaho

MacGregor and Else Folsom
Evergreen, Colorado

Dan Kimball
Wheat Ridge, Colorado

Vernon and Katherine Sylvester
Stevensville, Montana

Mike Kenney and
Hannah Hinchman
Dubois, Wyoming

Michael and Kathleen Walker
Sandy, Oregon

Steve Flynn
Moorhead, Minnesota

Sherry L. Schenk
Greeley, Colorado

Robert C. Garrison
Salt Lake City, Utah

Kathy Woods and
Richard Paris
Hailey, Idaho

Steve Rosenstock and
Susi MacVean
Fredonia, Arizona

William C. Everhart
Reston, Virginia

Ted and Margherita Brich
Hotchkiss, Colorado

1980-1990...

(Continued from page 1)

But the political pattern of wilderness in Colorado, as in the most of the West until recently, has been to negotiate bills — draw boundaries so no one was too unhappy.

Negotiations became more difficult toward the end of this decade, as the fight for the West's remaining resources hardened; the connection between water rights and wilderness was made more prominent, and the ideological splits became more difficult to bridge.

Wilderness is the proxy

The lingering possibility of grudging cooperation on wilderness was destroyed by Wirth's unilateral filing of his bill. In response to his challenge, Colorado's traditional interest groups — from the water establishment to the Farm Bureau — became determined to shove the bill back down Wirth's throat.

Wilderness legislation is now a proxy fight for setbacks the state's traditional interests have suffered — on Two Forks, endangered species, the Homestake II water project, the coming loss to retirement of Colorado's senior, and conservative, senator, William Armstrong. Colorado has arrived at the political place Utah has long occupied with regard to wilderness.

So it is on wilderness that the apparently declining political and economic forces of the old order will be tested against the growing, but not very cohesive or well-organized, forces of the new order.

Watch the only Native American in Congress — Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Democrat like Wirth and Owens — for a line on how the fight is going. Campbell represents the rural, western half of Colorado.

Like his best known predecessor, the late Wayne Aspinall, Campbell's sympathies lie with the ranching, dam-building, tree-cutting West. But Campbell has stayed open to the new interests. And it is possible that at some point, he will introduce the Wirth wilderness bill into the House. That day will mark the clear end of the old West.

Look to the ground

Watching wilderness bills is a lazy way to track the West. The senators and congressmen are useful because they summarize, in one place, what has already happened.

But Washington, D.C., cannot tell us about the present and future of the region.

It has too much inertia. For fresher spoor, we must look on the ground, at events of the last 10 years. Here, signals are mixed and interpretation difficult.

The energy, minerals and real estate busts of the early 1980s, by any straight-line logic, should have led to the defeat of traditional Western politicians, all of whom pushed the boom as hard as they could. But the bust led to little turnover.

Idaho didn't blame Sens. James McClure or Steve Symms; Utah didn't blame Sens. Jake Garn or Orrin Hatch; and Nevada didn't blame former Sen. Paul Laxalt.

It may be that the people who would have taken their anger to the polling

places were gone. Newcomers brought in by the boom — school teachers, social workers, architects, accountants, geologists — were swept out by the bust.

Those who stuck were those who had been here before the boom, and they did not blame themselves or their representatives for going after the brass ring. If the boom had continued, the region's politics would probably have changed, for that is the way of newcomers to a region.

As it is, the bust helped to preserve, for a decade anyway, the West's traditional elected representatives, both locally and nationally.

Change may be rapid

Political change is now likely to come fast. The bust, the federal deficit and shifts in the global economy have undermined or transformed the region's traditional economy: oil and gas, copper, coal, uranium, powerplant and dam building, nuclear weapons production, missile placement, military training bases, logging, uranium mining and milling, and trona and hardrock mining.

Some industries, like uranium mining and milling, have disappeared. Others, like oil and gas and silver mining, are at low points. Still others have found a formula for survival.

Copper, coal, logging and gold have introduced new technologies and cost-cutting that allow them to compete. Today's copper mines and mills, for example, can make a profit selling copper at 60 cents a pound.

In 1980, American copper producers needed a dollar or more a pound to stay in business. The same kinds of numbers can be quoted in coal mining, logging and other extractive industries.

Efficiency gains have been so large that, even as production increases, there are fewer coal miners, fewer workers in copper mills, and fewer loggers and lumber mill workers.

The trend has been especially stark in the timber industry, but the backlash hasn't been felt by the companies. Instead, the firms have used the vanishing jobs against environmentalists' efforts to stop the liquidation of the old growth forests.

The shrinkage in workforce accurately reflects the declining economic importance of natural resource industries.

In the past, analyst Peter Drucker wrote in the Spring 1986 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the world economy was dominated by commodities. People spent their money on automobiles, homes, refrigerators and stoves. Industry invested its capital in mills, mines, and railroads. Raw materials were a large part of the cost of everything.

Today, raw materials are an ever smaller part of the total economy. Both industry and consumers spend money on communications, information and entertainment.

And these are activities that depend on fiber optics made of sand, electronic circuits invisible to the naked eye, computer software, and services.

The trend away from commodities, obscured by the energy and minerals boom of the 1980s, is now back with a vengeance, carrying the message that if the West is to avoid the fate of Appalachia, it must shift to a new economic base.

Pressure on the region to find new ways to earn its collective living is strengthened by recent revelations about another pillar of the West's economy: nuclear weapons factories and research

and development labs such as Hanford in Washington, Rocky Flats in Colorado, and INEL in Idaho.

The federal government and its private contractors have botched existing operations, been unable to open the low-level nuclear waste dump, WIPP, in southern New Mexico, and failed to launch a credible site investigation at the high-level nuclear waste site in Nevada, at Yucca Flats.

Thousands of high-paying jobs in the nuclear industry are no longer a dependable part of the West's economy; they have become yet another liability for a region already rich in liabilities. The undermining of the federally-financed nuclear industry undermines the political structure that created and protects it.

It is even conceivable that INEL, one of Sen. James McClure's political bases in Idaho, could turn into a political liability, just as the scandal at Hanford defeated incumbent Sen. Slade Gorton in the 1986 race in the state of Washington.

The nuclear problems were heralded during the 1980s by the refusal of the victims of the nation's bungled nuclear weapons program to die quiet deaths.

Although they have been denied justice, the downwinders — Utah stock growers, soldiers herded to the edge of nuclear explosions, residents of southwestern Utah towns near the Las Vegas nuclear tests, workers at the foundries and labs — have pursued their cause in the press, Congress and the courts. They have forced the region, which was Pollyannish toward nuclear energy, to recognize its deadly nature.

Callous bureaucracies foundered

There is a common theme to the nuclear debacles, the collapse of dam building, the farm credit crises, the chaos in forest management: all represent the failures of large, environmentally callous bureaucracies which had been central to the economic development of the West over the past several decades.

The bureaucracies — the shared instruments of the New Deal's economic development policies and the West's special interests — have followed a similar pattern of decline: They first lost the progressive vision often present at their founding, and then became gradually unable to carry out on-the-ground missions.

This failure is most obvious in the dying Bureau of Reclamation, which successively lost vision, budget and manpower.

Decline is also visible in other bureaucracies: the Forest Service, with its loss of leadership on the meaning of forests; the Department of Energy, with its scandalous management of the nuclear program; and even the National Park Service, which at times seems unable to choose between being a police force, a creator of Disneyland, and a guardian of natural values.

Bureaucratic paralysis is not a function of old age. The relatively new Environmental Protection Agency is unable to manage the Superfund program. Nor is failure confined to the federal government.

The Denver Water Board and the Metropolitan Water Department of southern California can no longer build the projects they say must be built.

Get tough

The U.S. Government has much

less money to throw around, and that is a partial cause of bureaucratic decline. And some is due to the loss of the bureaucracies' monopolies on information and propaganda. As was visible in the fight over Colorado's Two Forks Dam and in the many fights over forest planning, critics can now match the bureaucracies on data collection, data analysis, and media manipulation.

Enemies of dam building, logging, nuclear weapons plants and the like used to go up against the bureaucracies' data and analyses with gut feelings and rhetoric. Today, critics of large projects have analysts like Randal O'Toole, Amory and Hunter Lovins, Dan Luecke and political tacticians like Owens and Wirth.

The West's ideology of development is a century old. It is only recently that opponents of conventional development have put together their own theology. Its creators range from ecological fundamentalists like Dave Foreman to legal scholars like Charles Wilkinson to economic theorists like Thomas Michael Power and John Baden.

No longer do the bureaucracies and their local constituencies have the playing field to themselves. In the very recent past, they set the rules, produced and analyzed the data, and came up with the conclusions: build a dam, build a coal-fired powerplant, graze 10,000 head of cattle in an area, clearcut a forest. And the system worked.

Thanks to large amounts of federal money, a quiescent population, and unchallenged political power and agreement within the region, the bureaucracies and their Western interests could create an economy and then keep it going.

A dam built with federal funds generated cheap electricity that pumped water impounded by the dam onto arid land to grow crops whose prices were supported by crop price support programs.

When dam sites became scarce, low-interest loans from the federal Rural Electrification Administration — another failing federal bureaucracy — built powerplants to burn coal mined on public lands.

This federally-created and supported economy depended on another set of subsidies: those extracted from the land as dammed streams, dirtied air, clearcut forests, overgrazed range and unreclaimed minesites.

Those who ran and benefited from those programs understood the mix of financial and environmental subsidies needed to keep the contrived economy going, and so they responded ferociously, and unyieldingly, when environmentalism first reared its head in the rural West. It was no surprise to them when environmentalists joined forces with fiscal conservatives and free market types to oppose projects on economic grounds.

If the defeat of James Cason helps dramatize the decline of the power of the West's conservative senators, then the overthrow of the centralized, polluting, economically inefficient regimes of the Soviet bloc nations helps illuminate the same trends in the inland Western states.

With the exception of the protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, the similarities between the two widely separated parts of the world are striking. In both cases, you had and still have economies created by special-interest politics and bureaucrats rather than by any market Adam Smith would recognize.

And in both cases, those economies are unable to stand up against the new social, economic and technological winds blowing across the globe.

Yoo-hooting an economy

As the federal government continues to withdraw from the region, the question of replacing the built-in Washington economy will grow in prominence. A variety of solutions will be tried.

Denver, a bastion of cargo cult thinking, will continue to attempt to yoo-hoo toward development by building infrastructure: It failed on Two Forks Dam but hopes to lure bucks onto the plains with a huge new airport.

Utah, for the moment, is intent on attracting the winter Olympics. In that, it resembles much of the West, which sees salvation in the "lifestyle" industry: retirement, skiing, summer tourism, fishing and hunting, and second-home construction.

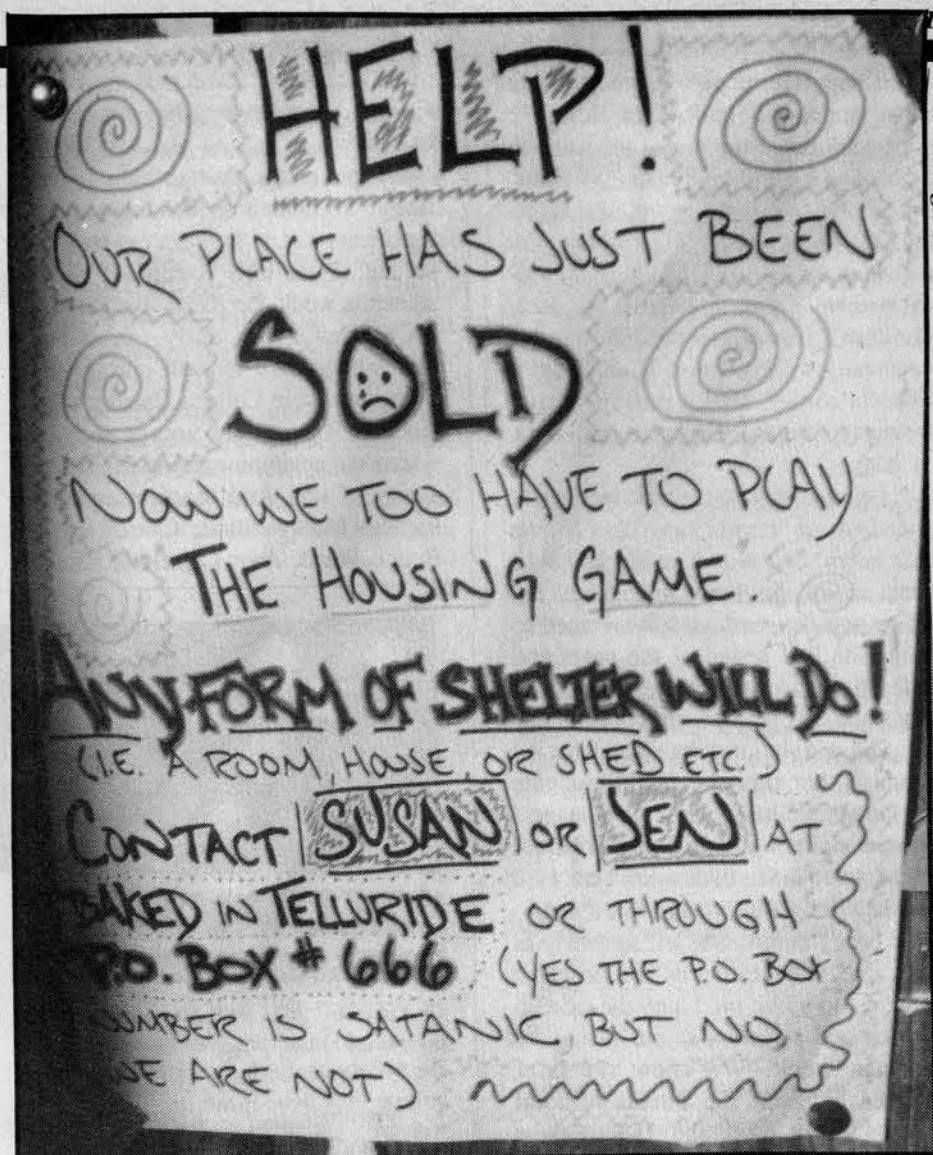
These activities put a premium on attractive landscapes, wildlife and fishable streams. But there are problems. The tourist towns around Yellowstone National Park wanted the 1988 fires stopped at any cost.

The fires' biological importance meant nothing to the towns and their chambers of commerce; they had as little regard for nature as the miners and dam builders before them.

At this moment, the lifestyle industry also seems incompatible with fair, stable community. Those who warned that a tourism economy would consist of many low-paid rural workers catering to well-heeled urban tourists appear to be correct. What they hadn't warned of was a certain accompanying brutality.

The brutality — callousness may be a better word — is apparent in some of the ski towns. Workers in Jackson, Wyo., for example, drive over 8,400-foot-high Teton Pass each day. It is a road that gives tourists a thrill in the summer. In the winter, it can be perilous. Jackson workers take that daily risk because there is affordable housing on the Idaho side of Teton Pass.

Aspen has become so expensive that millionaires, a local paper joked, are being forced out by billionaires. Since few who clean condos, cook and serve



A sign of the times in Telluride, Colorado

food, and run lifts are billionaires, they are forced to join the millionaires in searching for housing downvalley from Aspen. They then spend several hours a day in the ski season commuting between Aspen and the distant towns they can afford to live in.

Nineteenth century mining towns like Telluride, Colo., were tough places, where mining bosses often kept order with the help of pistols.

The story is told of a mining boss who became so angry one day that he shot a miner first in one wrist and then in the other. The injured miner said later, "If he'd have shot me one more time, I was going to quit."

Today, Telluride is a pricey ski town, but some of its bosses and workers are throwbacks to the old mining days.

Due to the shortage of worker housing within Telluride, and the long, icy distances along mountain roads to affordable housing in towns such as Norwood and Montrose, the Telluride municipal government has ordered its police to ignore the ordinances against people sleeping in cars and vans in the town.

In another effort to provide worker housing, the town council has installed running hot water and showers in a park restroom, and is renting tent and shack space for \$70 a month.

If a coal or oil shale company had allowed its employees to sleep in vehicles or tents during a mountain winter, the world's media would have been parked on its doorstep. When law and order break down in a ski town, no one notices.

High Country News — January 1, 1990-11

Parting out the West

The resorts are indicator species — signs that the productivity of the West's land and streams is so diminished that Westerners now despair of living off the land.

The region is being treated like a car that will no longer run. It has been put on blocks and is being parted out: sold off piece by piece to developers and vacation-home seekers who don't care that the land has been overgrazed, the streams dammed and polluted, and many of the region's natural flora and fauna exterminated.

Is the junkyard approach the only practical one? Has the extractive and development orgy of the last century destroyed the region's productivity for the next century or several centuries? Or is reform of the region's economies and politics and recovery of its natural systems possible?

No one knows. Even worse, few seem curious. The ongoing destruction of Indian ruins around the West is only the latest phase in a process that, in 150 years, has obliterated the wild and human aspects of the West the Anglo explorers and settlers found.

It is clear, then, how Westerners who care must spend the next years. We must explore the land as if it were new to us, filled with possibilities we could never consider so long as the old order was in place.

The end of the 1980s is a time of hope, because the old order, which has not worked even adequately for several decades, is finally in rapid decline. But the hope will be followed by terror when we realize we lack the faintest idea of what to put in place of the old order.

The realization will either galvanize Westerners and our institutions — the now almost useless universities and land grant colleges, the media, the schools, the many civic and volunteer organizations — or paralyze us.

LETTERS

DIFFERS

Dear HCN,

Although I am not addicted to writing letters-to-the-editor, I feel the need to set the record right on a few things and a few of the matters discussed in the issue of Sept. 25, 1989, *High Country News*. I am not a subscriber but a friend of mine has sent that issue to me.

Obviously, a newspaper being printed in Colorado would have a lack of knowledge about Wyoming history, but it is very apparent that you are trying to increase your subscriptions in Wyoming by digging up old issues and attempting to aggrandize your founder, Tom Bell. If I am to be the straight man for such a scenario, at least quote the record accurately on the following points:

1. I was elected Governor of Wyoming in 1966, not in 1968. Wyoming's first Air Quality Act was the result of a campaign promise that I made, and it was enacted in 1967 before your newspaper was founded and before I knew Tom Bell.

2. One of the articles in this Tom Bell issue states that the state passed a surface mining reclamation act and an environmental quality act in 1973, and pompously volunteers that: "The State's Environmental Quality Act even has

former Governor Hathaway's signature on it." Obviously, this is an attempt to let Tom Bell and your newspaper take credit for these measures. The truth is that my administrative assistant and I and Robert Sundin, Director of the Air Quality Division, drafted the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act. This can be documented by many witnesses, including the members of the Legislative-Executive Reorganization Commission serving at that time. The legislation that followed came out of the governor's office. So far as I know, neither Tom Bell nor your newspaper had anything to do with it.

3. Your articles also state that Tom Bell had the idea to place severance taxes in the permanent fund for future generations, since the taxes were coming from a non-renewable resource. I had never heard Tom Bell take credit for this before, because most of the public credit has been given to Ernest Wilkerson, whom I defeated for governor in 1966. In any event, the facts are that the Permanent Mineral Trust Fund came into being when I recommended it to the Wyoming Legislature in 1974, and when I signed the legislation that provided for a constitutional amendment which was approved by a majority of the people of Wyoming. If you view this matter now as credit to Wyoming, be fair about who got the job done.

I consider Tom Bell a good man, and he did make a contribution to the

conservation movement in Wyoming. If you will check with him, he will tell you that when he left for Oregon in 1974, he dropped by to tell me that I had done a pretty good job and much better than he thought I would do. Perhaps Tom realized that there is a big difference in trying to make policy as a newsman or as a member of an organization than when you are under the gun as an elected representative of the people. Some of the people in the environmental movement who love to make speeches and write articles would have more credibility if they were ever elected to public office.

I presume that your newspaper would acknowledge the fact that Wyoming has been in a depression for the past three or four years. Perhaps you would also grudgingly admit that the coal mines, power plants and soda ash mines that I helped initiate during my eight years in office now provide jobs for several thousand people who would otherwise be unemployed. In a state that is crying for governmental revenue, these ventures are producing some of the revenue that Wyoming is crying for. The Permanent Mineral Trust Fund now has more than a billion dollars in it, and the interest therefrom is the second leading producer of income to Wyoming's general fund.

I am sure your newspaper and the organizations it represents do not want to take credit for the Wyoming depression. However, if you and the organiza-

tion that you represent believe that development is wrong in Wyoming, perhaps you have an answer to the stark reality that 90 percent of the college graduates of the University of Wyoming have to go out of state to find a job and that nearly 50 percent of the high school graduates cannot find an economic opportunity in Wyoming. Surely, the quality of a good life in Wyoming means that our young people have a right to make a living here.

Stan Hathaway
Casper, Wyoming

SCREEN OUT NELLIES

Dear HCN,

I am writing in regard to Harvey W. Lance's Dec. 18 letter criticizing the book review by Bert Lindler of *How to Shit in the Woods*.

I am dumbfounded and extremely annoyed that you would stoop to allowing Mr. Lance on your subscription list in the first place. *Harpers Magazine* used to cull unsophisticates from its list. Have you no screening process to keep bluenoses and Nice Nellies from HCN.

Gene and Margo Lorig
Eagle, Colorado

LETTERS

POSTSCRIPT

Dear HCN,

I am very appreciative and greatly humbled by the anniversary issue of *High Country News*. The laudatory articles are more than I deserve for as the issue points out, I was only one of a succession of dedicated people who brought the paper to its present greatness. My thanks to you and all the former staffers for the many kind words, not only for me but for the very wonderful institution which HCN has become.

The fact is alluded to but not greatly emphasized that *High Country News* had many great friends. Had it not been for those wonderful and generous people who came forth to help in time of crisis, there would be no *High Country News* today. In fact, those friends continue to sustain the present operation of the paper. I continue to be most grateful to them.

I would like to point out a small error. Had I known you were going to reprint the *Sierra* article, I would have corrected it then. Reference is made to my debate with Frank Mockler. Frank, who was later to become a friend, was either president or a past president of the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association at the time of the debate. Contrary to the allusion that his range practices were bad, he was one of the more enlightened and better ranchers as far as I know. Our debate was not on grazing practices but on the concept of wilderness.

The debate took place in 1958, five years before the passage of the Wilderness Act. Frank took the position of the Stockgrowers (which has never been modified) that wilderness was one of those far-out, foreign ideas for which Wyoming had no use. I felt at the time that the concept of wilderness was one of civilized man's more noble ideas. I felt I won the debate, and subsequent events seem to have vindicated my feeling. Frank and I both respected each other's position and later worked together on a state committee. I am sure my long-time friend and mentor in journalism, Roger Budrow, had forgotten the specific issue we debated when he talked to author Geoff O'Gara.

I never knew Justus Bavarskis but I grieved with his friends and associates when he met his untimely death. I liked his willingness to take on the challenge of HCN, and I liked his style. We would have heard much more of him if he had been given the time. I regret that I could not have hiked a few trails with him.

There is one person whose name never appears in stories of HCN. He should be given the credit due him. He was Lander attorney Elmer C. Winters, my brother-in-law. He it was who did all the original legal work, pro bono, for incorporating the Wyoming Outdoor Council and for setting up the Wyoming Outdoor Foundation. The latter eventually evolved into High Country Foundation, the policy-setting instrument for the *High Country News* of today.

I also wish to acknowledge a good friend, Anne Turner, who was HCN's first intern. She was a young lady who came out of nowhere, walked into my office one day and said she wanted to help. She had heard of the paper and wanted to do something to help. I explained that we had no money to pay her. She said she understood and that if I would let her stay she would take care of herself. She found a room and worked nights washing dishes in a local restaurant to make ends meet. I can't tell you how long she worked but it had to have been months. She left as quietly as she came, after telling us she thought it was time to move on. Later, she came to Oregon and stayed with our family for about a week. We knew she later worked for both the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. We have no idea where she

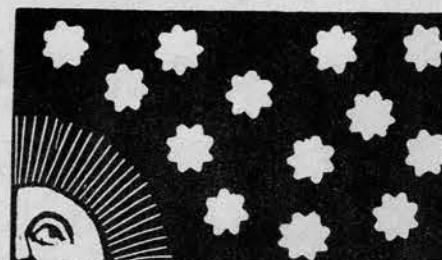
might be now but if she still reads *High Country News*, we send her our love and best wishes.

There were others whom I would like to recognize as having played a significant part in the success attributed to me. First and foremost of the stalwarts would be Keith Beckert (and his wonderful wife, Sally), an ex-Navy pilot who gave of himself unreservedly. Two others were Colleen Cabot and Bart Koehler. These were young people to whom the environmental cause became a way of life. And there were others such as Mardy Murie, Carroll Noble, Bruce Ward, Ann Lindahl, Charlie

Piersall, Burton Marston, Clayton Trospen, Jake Kittle, David Sumner, and a host of other friends from across Wyoming and the Intermountain West. My deepest gratitude and my thanks to them and to the memories of those who have since died.

It is exciting to see HCN continuing on, still informing people about God's good Earth and the outrages still being perpetrated against it. I wish the present staff and all who might follow the utmost success.

Tom Bell
Lander, Wyoming



ACCESS

NEAT STUFF

CLASSIFIED ADS cost 30 cents per word, pre-paid, \$5 minimum. New rates for display are \$10/column inch if camera-ready; \$15/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.

SIERRA CLUB: Full-time job opening for Northern Plains Assoc. Rep. Responsible for representing the goals and priorities of the Sierra Club to government agencies, the media, and congressional officials. 3-5 years' experience in politics, public policy and organizing. Demonstrated ability to organize and motivate volunteers, effectively communicate with key decision-makers, the media and the general public. Familiarity with the Sierra Club's Northern Plains region helpful. Please submit a cover letter and resume by Jan. 31, 1990, or for more information contact: Sierra Club, Attn: Associate Rep. Position, 23 N. Scott #25, Sheridan, WY 82801. (1x1b)

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Further information and mailings to follow.

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DAKOTA RURAL ACTION, based in Brookings, S.D., is hiring a community organizer to work with low and moderate income rural people on family farm, groundwater protection and economic development issues. Starting salary is \$13,000 annually, plus benefits. Application deadline is January 20, 1990; position begins February 1, 1990. Send resume and two writing samples to Dakota Rural Action, Box 549, Brookings, SD 57006, 605/697-5204. (2x1p)

PROGRAM ASSISTANT — The Greater Yellowstone Coalition is seeking an additional Program Assistant to work on GYC's broad agenda of issues. GYC is a national/regional nonprofit membership organization, dedicated to insuring the preservation of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The Program Assistant will work on such issues as oil and gas development, hard rock mining, watershed management, timbering and road building, geothermal and private land development, as well as the protection of threatened, endangered and other wildlife species. *Specific duties and responsibilities include:* Analyze and prepare written critiques and administrative appeals of Greater Yellowstone management agency documents, decisions, and plans; assist GYC with its legislative agenda at the state and federal level; serve as a spokesperson on GYC's issues; assist in planning and administering GYC's conferences and meetings; develop working relationships and help coordinate efforts with GYC's members and member organizations. *Qualifications include:* Experience in planning and implementing conservation activities aimed at bringing about policy change; excellent writing and public speaking skills; experience in state or federal legislative arenas; experience in mobilizing grassroots support for changing environmental policy; some background in ecology and/or natural history preferred; and knowledge of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, its resources and relevant issues. Salary: \$20-25,000/year + benefits DOE. Please submit the following by Feb. 9, 1990 to Gwen Arnesen, GYC, P.O. Box 1874, Bozeman, MT 59715, 406-586-1593: Resume; names, addresses and phone numbers of five references; a narrative description of pertinent qualifications; and writing samples. (1x1b)

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WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

Congress started Superfund in 1980 as a five-year cleanup program. Now approaching its second renewal, Superfund has cleaned up only a small percentage of the 1,200 sites on its list, which itself represents only 10 to 50 percent of the sites that could be added in the next decade. And over the next 50 years, according to a recent report by the Office of Technology Assessment, an analytical arm of Congress, the nation may have to spend \$500 billion, 100 times what we have spent so far, on cleaning up chemically contaminated sites. The report, *Coming Clean: Superfund Problems Can Be Solved*, says that Superfund as currently managed cannot cope with this massive challenge. Identifying what it calls the "Superfund Syndrome," the report says that "analysis breeds paralysis" as conflicting interests argue over data. "Reports pile up, contamination spreads into soil and groundwater, many sites wait to get into the (cleanup) system" and 50 to 70 percent of the cleanup funds are misspent. OTA says these problems result from excessive flexibility in the program that allows the Environmental Protection Agency to dodge its environmental mission. The report suggests 38 changes to strengthen the program, including making Superfund permanent and developing a comprehensive list of cleanup sites and basing priorities on environmental rather than political needs. For a copy of the report, send \$10 to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

EARTHY IN MONTANA

Living up to its name, *Down to Earth* is a publication which makes environmental issues in Montana understandable. The 20-page report, published quarterly by the Montana Environmental Information Center, offers current and concise analysis of environmental topics in the Montana legislature. The most recent issue focuses on Montana's 51st legislative session, with over 15 articles explaining what happened to bills ranging from storage of infectious wastes to monitoring groundwater. A table of House and Senate voting records provides hard numbers for those interested. Based in Helena, MEIC is a nonprofit group that mobilizes citizens to pressure local, state and federal officials to make prudent decisions about developing and protecting the state's resources. *Down to Earth* is available to members of the group, who pay \$20 yearly. For more information, contact Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624 (406/443-2520).

GOD'S DOG

To sheep ranchers, the coyote is often considered a scourge that needs to be trapped or poisoned. To Hope Ryden, author of a recently reissued book called *God's Dog*, the coyote is a fascinating, endearing and maligned wild creature. Ryden tells of the two years she spent studying the "trickster" animal and includes the political climate that led to coyote extermination programs. First published in 1975, the book includes over 50 photographs taken by the author during her research. Ryden is a New York City writer and filmmaker and the author of *America's Last Wild Horses*.

Lyons and Burford Publishers, 31 West 21 St., New York, NY 10010. Paper: \$14.95. 320 pages. Illustrated with black and white photos.

CONSCIENCE OF A CONSERVATIONIST

For 40 years, Michael Frome has been a strong voice against poor management of public land. In *Conscience of a Conservationist*, a collection of his writings from the 1960s and 1970s, Frome ranges from a history of American forestry to a discussion of Thoreau's writings. Frome also discusses his dismissal, under fire from disgruntled congressmen, from *Field and Stream Magazine*, where he was conservation editor. He is currently environmental journalist-in-residence at Huxley College, a division of Western Washington University. In 1981, Frome won an award for best magazine article of the year from the American Society of Journalists and Authors.

University of Tennessee Press, CUP Services, 750 Cascadilla St., Ithaca, NY 14850. Cloth: \$24.95. 285 pages.



PROTECT WATER IN FORESTS

Sixteen people, mostly Coloradans, attended a workshop on water quality in national forests Nov. 18 in Glenwood Springs, Colo. Organized by the Forest Trust, a Santa Fe-based nonprofit conservation group, the conference focused on basic forest hydrology, laws regulating forest water quality, grassroots organizing and the impacts of logging. Lane Krahl of the Forest Trust says another conference is set for February in either Arizona or New Mexico. For more information, contact Lane Krahl at the Forest Trust, P.O. Box 9238, Santa Fe, NM 87504 (505/983-8992).

COORDINATING A VISION

Responding to criticisms that they have differing goals for the greater Yellowstone area, the National Park Service and Forest Service announced they will work together to develop a comprehensive management plan. Slated for completion next summer, *The Vision: A Management Framework for the Greater Yellowstone Area* is intended to coordinate approaches to wildlife and fire management, mineral leasing and visual quality. The document will be prepared by the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, a new group of representatives from the two federal agencies. Then, says Betty Schmitt, public affairs director for the committee, the new plan will be compared to existing plans for the park, forests and region. "We'll be looking primarily for consistency," she said. "If one plan isn't consistent with the others, there could possibly be amendments to the forest or park plans." Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks are at the center of the 11.7-million-acre Yellowstone ecosystem, which is surrounded by Beaverhead, Gallatin, Custer, Shoshone, Bridger-Teton, Caribou and Targhee national forests. For more information on preparation of the document, or to learn about opportunities for public comment, write to Jack Troyer, Greater Yellowstone Area Team Leader, Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, Box 2556, Billings, MT 59103 (406/657-6361).



Abandoned mining waste near Leadville, Colorado

POISONED ROCKIES

NOVA, the award-winning science series on public television, will air a film about the legacy of water pollution in Colorado, called *Poison in the Rockies*. Produced by Christopher (Toby) McLeod and Richard Lewis, the documentary punctures the image of a pristine Colorado by focusing on the state's high mountain valleys, which form the watersheds for four major Western rivers: the Arkansas, Platte, Colorado and Rio Grande. All are acidic and polluted, says McLeod, who incorporated some of his 1988 film,

Downwind/downstream, into this new effort. This degradation is called "one of the untold stories in America," according to former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm. The film's philosophic focus is spelled out by the Aspen-area naturalist Stuart Mace, who says Colorado's subalpine valleys in their natural state are economic assets to be recovered, protected and maintained. The documentary can be seen Jan. 9 in Denver on KRMA, in Salt Lake City, Utah, on KUED, in Phoenix, Ariz., on KAET, and in Riverton, Wyo., on KCWC. Check TV schedules for local times.

WILDERNESS POETRY COMPETITION

Entries are still being accepted for the Utah Wilderness Association's fifth annual Wilderness Poetry Competition. All poets are encouraged to enter up to three unpublished poems related to the theme of wilderness, its preservation, its life and values, or its spiritual nature. The winning poem and the top five honorable mentions will be published in the spring issue of the *Utah Wilderness Association Review*, and the winning poet will receive a \$100 prize. Poems may be any style but must not exceed 40 lines. Entrants should send two copies of each poem — one with their name, address and phone number in the upper right corner and one with just the poem — along with a \$3 entry fee to: POETRY/Utah Wilderness Association, 455 East 400 South #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. Entries must be postmarked by Jan. 15, 1990. For more information, contact poetry coordinator Margaret Pettis at 801/359-1337.

THE POPULATION FACTOR

Two years ago, the earth's population reached five billion, and that number is expected to double within the next few decades. Global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of rainforests and water pollution are among the problems that will be exacerbated by a growing population. On Feb. 9-10, a Boulder, Colo., conference called *Restoring the Balance: The Population Factor*, will tackle these issues. Featured speakers include Dr. Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Bomb*, former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm and Dr. Warren Hern, a Boulder, Colo., population epidemiologist and private physician. Registration for the conference is \$15 and can be paid at the door. For more information, write to the CU Environmental Center, UMC 331-A, Campus Box 207, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, or call 303/492-8308.

VIDEO PROMOTES DAM

If the proposed Two Forks dam is not built, northern Colorado will suffer great environmental damage. That's the contention of a recent video that was funded by the Denver Water Board and produced by Rural Marketing Services. It was broadcast in Denver one day before the final public Environmental Protection Agency hearings on the proposed veto of the project. The video has also been shown to farming communities and organizations in northern Colorado and Nebraska. It argues that unless a major project is built to supply Denver with water, the city will purchase agricultural water rights in northern Colorado and dry up at least 50,000 acres of farmland. As a result, the video says, many northern Colorado communities will die. The video contains speeches and interviews with Rep. Hank Brown, R-Colo., the mayors of Thornton and Eaton, a resource consultant, a wildlife official, and several farmers. The documentary only considers two alternatives: Two Forks and drying up northern Colorado, although opponents of Two Forks have listed many more alternatives. The video can be rented for \$5 from American Lyceum, Inc., 1200 Carousal Drive, Suites 124 A-D, Windsor, CO 80550 (303/686-5686).

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14-High Country News — January 1, 1990

GUEST ESSAY

The newest historians attack the frontier

by Tom Wolf

Picture yourself a woman on a wagon train rolling west along the Platte River after the Civil War. The big sky, seen through your dust goggles, chokes on the pall of smoke cast by vast range fires. Many miles long, the fires were set by Indians to drive game and provide fresh forage for horses.

Along the river there are no trees for firewood or shade. Whatever the range fire missed, your fellow trailriders have burned for fuel or to destroy cover for game. Dust from the trail invades every part of your being. The land seems so dry and desolate that you constantly worry about water. Periodically, you halt your oxen to pitch off weighty unnecessarys. You cannot escape the track of trash, baggage, abandoned wagons and fresh graves along the trail West.

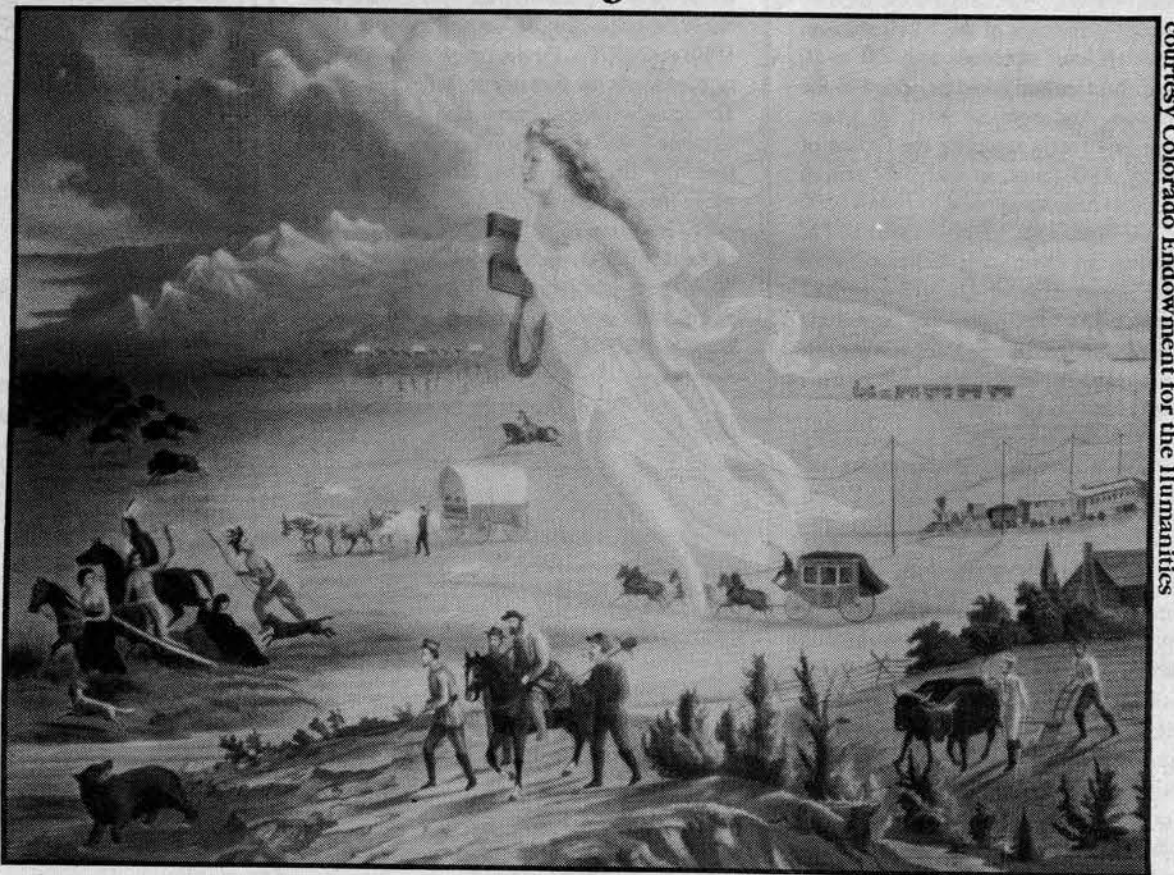
You pass a Pawnee earthlodge village. No one stirs. The stench confirms the presence of more smallpox victims. Behind you, the Official New Western History Tour Wagon grinds to a halt. Its cholera-stricken riders turn black and drop into the all-enveloping dust. You move on through the debris, the manure, the dust ...

Welcome to the new Western history, a tale full of sound and fury; a chronicle of class, gender and racial conflict; a story of invasion, conquest, colonization, exploitation and development. Welcome to the grim and violent "new" history of the West presented by the new Western historians, who seem to believe that every traditional American value and institution broke down once the pioneers passed beyond Nebraska.

These young myth-breakers contrast sharply with their professional predecessors, who asked for — and seemed to get — heroes, men to match their mountains. Such was the history of the West. But not if the new Western historians have their way.

At a recent meeting in Santa Fe, N.M., sponsored by a consortium of Rocky Mountain humanities councils and by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the new kids on the block set to work

Diane Sylvain



19th century painting of Westward expansion

smashing the idols of the old history, setting the stage for a new myth, a guiding story whose hour is finally come.

A voice crying in the wilderness

Every messiah or redeemer has a John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the Way of the Lord!" No one better plays this role than keynote speaker Donald Worster of the University of Kansas, who set the tone for the conference: "In a few minutes, I will offend many in this room."

He explained that the new Western history demands that we change the way we see ourselves and our past. We must critically re-examine the old Western history's transcendental faith that American history is unique, that expansion and conquest along a frontier lead to progress, prosperity and liberty.

This faith, Worster said, has simply not been borne out by the events that followed. "Instead, the West today stands at the dead center of modern warfare, its people imprisoned in their own aggressive fears."

Worster said that the believers in the "agrarian myth" cannot see any principle of evil in their garden or in themselves, so they ascribe all evils to alien powers, especially the federal government. They see only a flawless land existing in splendid isolation from a decadent urban America.

Dipping into the history of American history, Worster arrived at the great nemesis of the new Western historians, Frederick Jackson Turner. First appearing in 1893, Turner's theories about the redeeming and liberating values of the frontier have defined Western history ever since. They are still taught widely today.

According to Worster, Turner made the fatal mistake of actually believing in the agrarian myth, whereby an extraordinary land elevates an ordinary people. He became a celebrant of American nationalism rather than its critic. More importantly for the West, he conferred academic legitimacy on the popular image of the cowboy as hero.

Meanwhile, Worster said, American historians elsewhere, especially in the South, turned to re-defining their regional identity by examining the radical defects in its social order: the proper role of any historian at any time. The historian must always be willing to face up to tragedy in history, explaining the bad along with the good.

And tragedy on a grand scale is what Worster

sees in the West, a region won and retained today by violence, by the brutal exclusion of minorities, and especially by the conquest of nature.

What would Worster substitute? Today's historian must:

- Give a voice to the invaded and subjugated peoples of the West, re-examining the uses of the power of affluence and exposing the contradictions of a male-dominated culture that trumpets its own freedom while denying that of others.

- Give voice to the non-human, to the environment devastated in our drive to settle and industrialize the West. It is modern technology that has given birth to today's West, the showplace of federally subsidized agribusiness and the military-industrial complex. In becoming what it is today, the West has developed a political apparatus dedicated to the private accumulation of wealth through public, especially federal, investments. The best examples are the beneficiaries of federal water developments, hardrock mining policies, timbering on the national forests and grazing on public lands. In each case, public resources are carefully converted into private wealth.

- Expose the concentrations of power that rule the West: "power hiding its corruption behind beguiling masks, cowboy boots, snapbutton shirts, and the useful myth that outsiders are the source of all evil." These power elites include the federal agencies and their clients, such as irrigators, lumber companies and grazing associations.

Worster exhorted his audiences: "Be intellectuals! Live to question received opinions. Demythologize the past, or you will be a prisoner of its ideology, not a master of your own. Go ahead and be critical! Be a self-appointed moral analyst. But also be sympathetic enough to examine human behavior from a non-human perspective, in terms of our effects on the land. Discard the special innocence claimed by Westerners, and accept a role as part of a flawed world."

The new Western history tour

Richard White of the University of Utah is the wagonmaster of the new Western history. Renewing the attack on Frederick Jackson Turner, he said that the old Western historians pitted nature versus culture and defined their juncture as "The Frontier," a place where nature is a "she." On the nature side of the frontier, inconvenient, indigenous people like Indians or Hispanics are nature's children — those who cannot control nature.

courtesy Colorado Endowment for the Humanities

On the side of the frontier where culture reigns, however, feminine nature surrenders in the manner of a Victorian woman: dictating her own terms, to be sure, but emphatically domesticated, fruitful and "productive," Turner's favorite word.

In contrast to these common myths of the old historians, White sees no obvious distinction between nature and culture, no obvious frontier. However, he admits that the new Western history has so far failed to tell its story well enough, failed to replace the old but compelling myth of unlimited progress and personal freedom with a new and guiding story, failed to define a new hero.

He said that the best of his peers, Worster foremost among them, are committed to writing tragedy about the West, where they find no solace for the loss of the Edenic garden said to have preceded European conquest.

Ordinary people, however, will simply settle somewhere short of tragedy. They will settle for irony and cynicism to protect themselves against the burden of the tragic past, against the obvious limits and fatal flaws that the new Western history reveals in their lives and in their relations with the land. In summary, most people are not willing or able to face up to the death of a pristine nature.

Contrasting pristine nature with the man-made landscape of the new Western history, White criticized Worster as an essentialist, as someone who believes that there once was and perhaps still is a nature out there worth saving, that there was something valuable called "Nature" that could be betrayed.

"I don't know what that life force is," White claimed. "I am arrogant, but I am not that arrogant. I don't know nature as nature."

In response, Worster said, "Richard White is leading us into the modernist quagmire, where there are no values, where everything is determined by humans."

Violence as politics: history as policy

Continuing the revision of the past, Richard Brown of the University of Washington re-examined the violence of the West, especially gunfighters, whom he divided into two categories for the purposes of his political and ideological analysis:

- *Glorified Gunfighters* were historically significant participants in the great conflicts of the 19th century West. Often themselves Civil War veterans, they helped bring about the consolidation of power by Republicans, by forces standing for capital, law and order. They themselves were, or became, conservative social types who favored men of substance and property. It was only later in film, story and song that they became mythological — and apolitical. The best examples are Wyatt Earp and Pat Garrett. Earp lived to befriend many of the early heroes of Hollywood's westerns.

- *Grassroots Gunfighters* were known only locally, but their guns and their peculiar code of honor, called by Brown "The Code of the West," put an absolute premium on "standing one's ground" in the familiar armed confrontation known as "the walk-down," where there was no duty to retreat in the name



The new Western history is the history of the environment



of saving lives, and where it was perfectly permissible to kill in self-defense.

The West as South

Two other figures commanded the conference, their influence felt in nearly every word spoken, every idea exchanged. One was conference organizer and moderator Patricia Nelson Limerick of the University of Colorado. The other was Howard Lamar of Yale University, a Southerner whose former students have become the new Western historians.

Lamar said, "The most important walkdown was with the environment."

Patty Limerick said, "Turner was, to put it mildly, ethnocentric and nationalistic. English-speaking white men were the stars of his story."

If Worster is the St. John, Limerick seems to be the St. Paul of the new Western history, spreading the word to Jews and Gentiles, to academics and lay people alike. Herself of Danish-Mormon extraction, she is everywhere these days, speaking and writing with remarkable wit and energy about such urgently important subjects as the nuclear West and the American space program's abuse of the idea of the frontier. Limerick is one of those historians ready to surrender the profession's conventional, never-very-convincing claim of an omniscient, neutral objectivity. She manages to care convincingly about her subjects, both in the past and in the present, and to put her concerns into the scholarly record. She even finds time to contribute a provocative regular column to *USA Today*.

As she says in her summary of the new Western history, "This reappraisal is not meant to make white Americans 'look bad'; the intention is, on the contrary, simply to make it clear that in Western American history, heroism and villainy, virtue and vice, nobility and shoddiness appear in roughly the same proportions as they appear in any other subject of human history (and with the same relativity of definition and judgment). This is only disillusioning to those who have come to depend on illusions."

Listening to the new Western historians, one might conclude that our values today should be diversity and tolerance, while earlier they were domination and conquest. Catching the tone of urgency and outrage in their voices and in their writing, one feels that some new and dynamic Western culture might emerge from their work.

A new myth to live by

Yet most of them could probably agree that we must look to the future for our values. We must look not to historians but to creative writers and to artists

for a new myth to live by. A new hero might guide us through the labyrinthine problems created by our past and into a future where our relations with nature and with each other could be mutually beneficial and sustaining rather than dominating and destructive.

If the new Western history is, as Worster says, the history of the environment, then its practitioners will have to decide whether "nature" is simply an artifact of human action and feeling, forever imprisoned within quotation marks (Richard White's view), or whether there is something there (Donald Worster's view), something not us, something with a rightful place in our brave new world of respect for diversity.

Yet not one of the new Western historians is presently willing to say that a new myth-maker has emerged. Historians set the stage and they prepare our choices. Though some of them choose tragedy and some choose irony in describing the need for a new mythology, all of them realize that the redeeming hero, the messiah, is not yet among us.

New or old, the best Western history must be composed of conversation, interpretation and argument. It must be a tool for understanding and analyzing how the West we know today has come to pass. The new Western historians are especially adept at helping us understand that all our terms and categories have their own cultural baggage. They help us see that race, class and gender are categories of analysis that also change over time, elaborate social constructions that require constant attention if they are to serve us rather than enslave us, if they are to keep us alert to our propensity to make the world over in our own dominant image and likeness.

One wag simply called the ideas presented in Santa Fe "the newest history." Calls for a new history have been issued every year or so since the founding of the profession of American history over 100 years ago. Perhaps the real point is for Westerners to face the possibility that we are non-unique. In this, we must catch up with the rest of the world, joining in "the examination of the shameful" called for by Donald Worster, demanding the kind of good history which grabs the past with the concerns of the present and engages in conversation.

The nature of history is to rewrite, and in a free society this is a continuous, open process. The history of history in the South in this century can provide a model. The greatest historian of our times is a Southerner, C. Vann Woodward. His work and his students have provided the re-interpretation that has allowed the South to come to terms with its racial problems, with its civil war, with its internal evil, with its tragic past.

Matching Woodward was a great tragic writer, William Faulkner, whose books like *The Sound and the Fury* provided the mythic basis for coming to terms with a past of domination and exploitation, for facing tragedy, for confronting the reality of evil in the world and in the self.

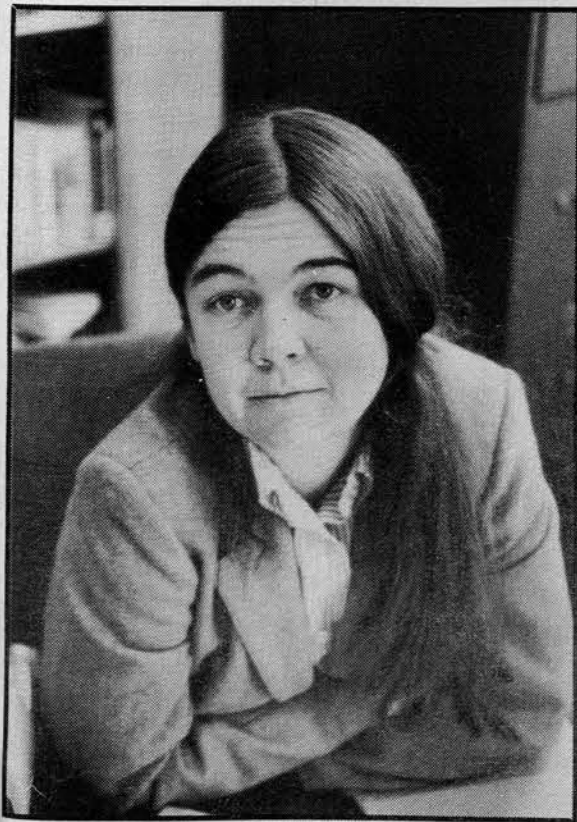
When Howard Lamar says that the most violent walkdown in the history of the West was the walk-down between man and the environment, he calls for a revision of our Western civil war, our war between man and nature, and he challenges writers of another sort, probably not historians, to create works of art that will help us Westerners come to terms with our violent past and get on with a present that somehow creates a place for man in nature.

If Worster is right, however, and the tale of Western history is darkly tragic, one without redeeming features, then our Western oat opera may end where Shakespeare's *Macbeth* chooses to end when he has no more choices left. If you don't mind strong stuff, try substituting the way you feel about the so-called "death of nature" for the way *Macbeth* feels after the death of Lady *Macbeth*:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

□

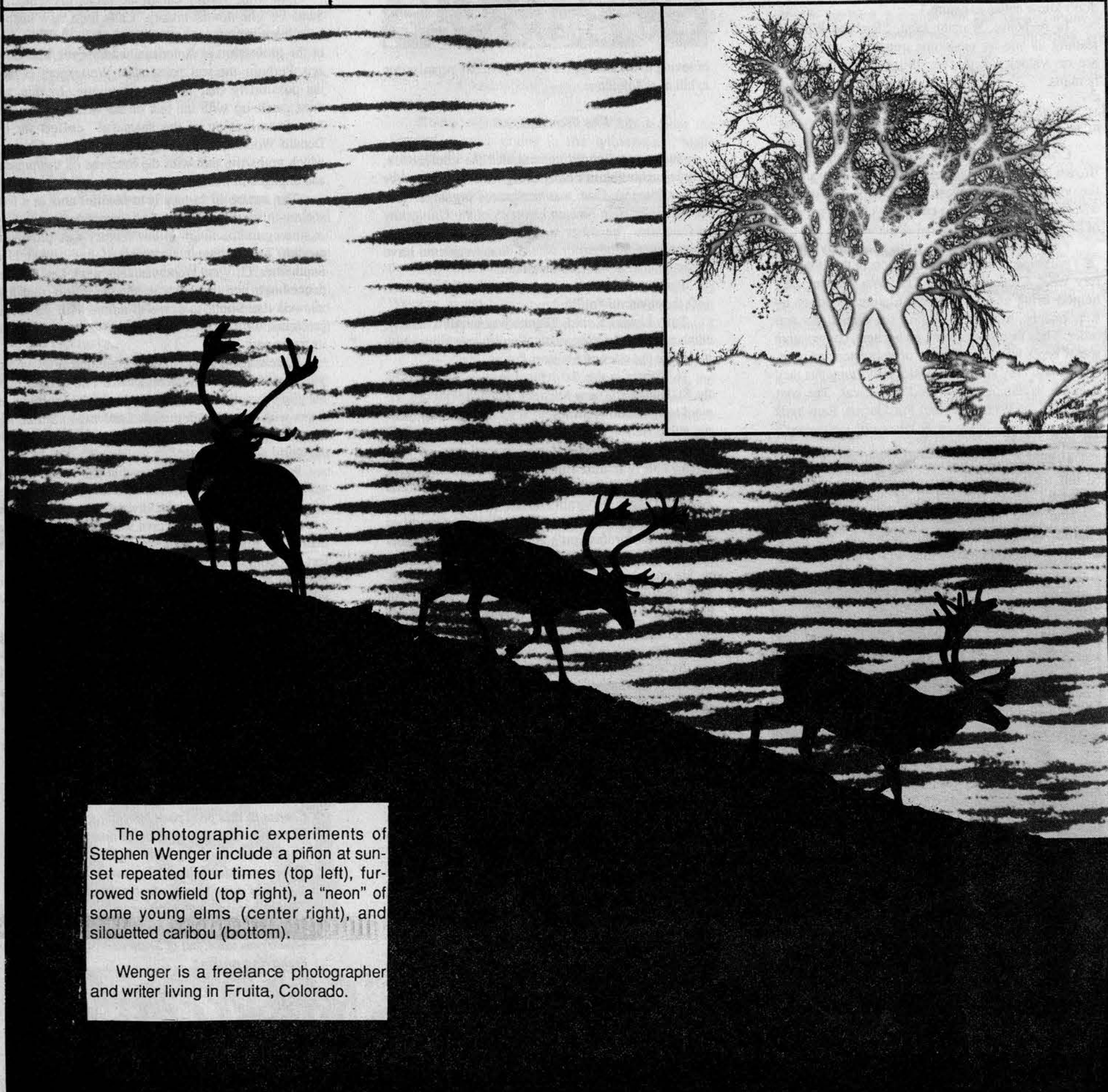
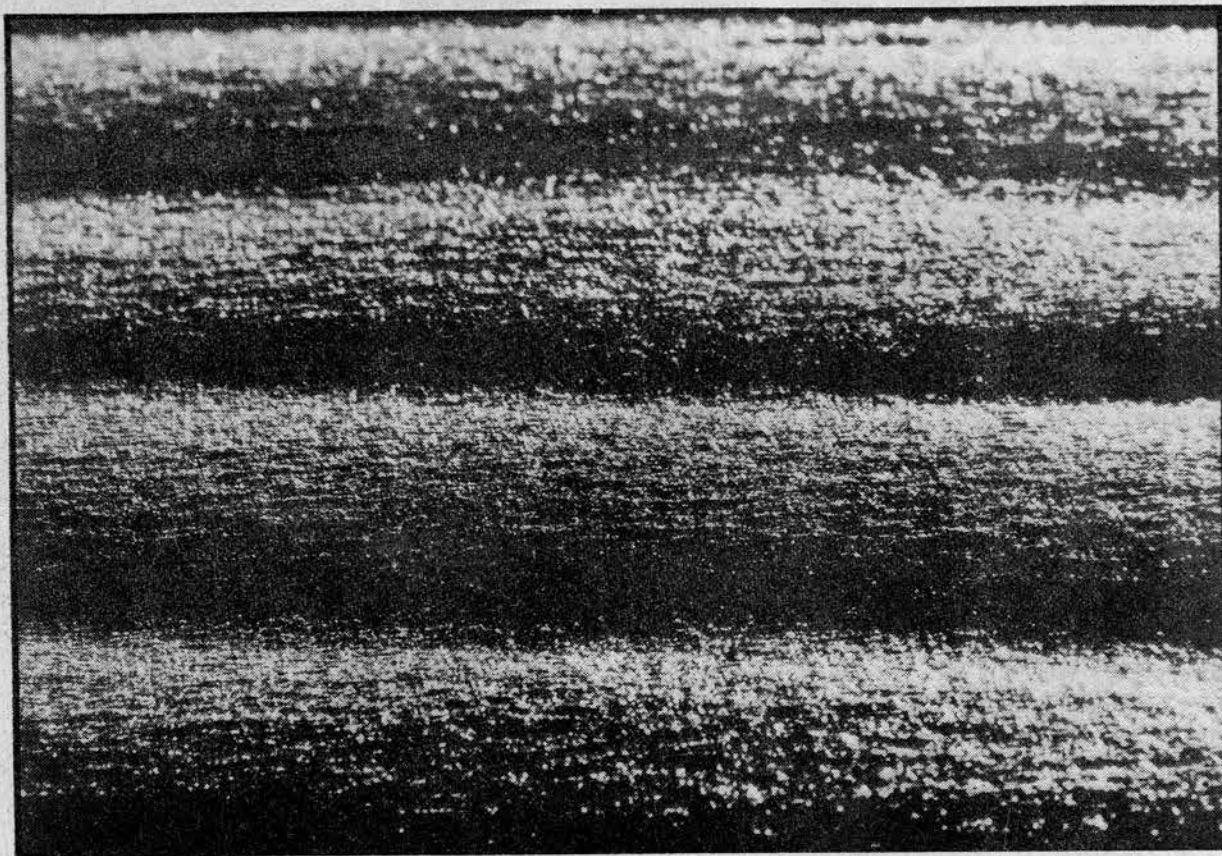
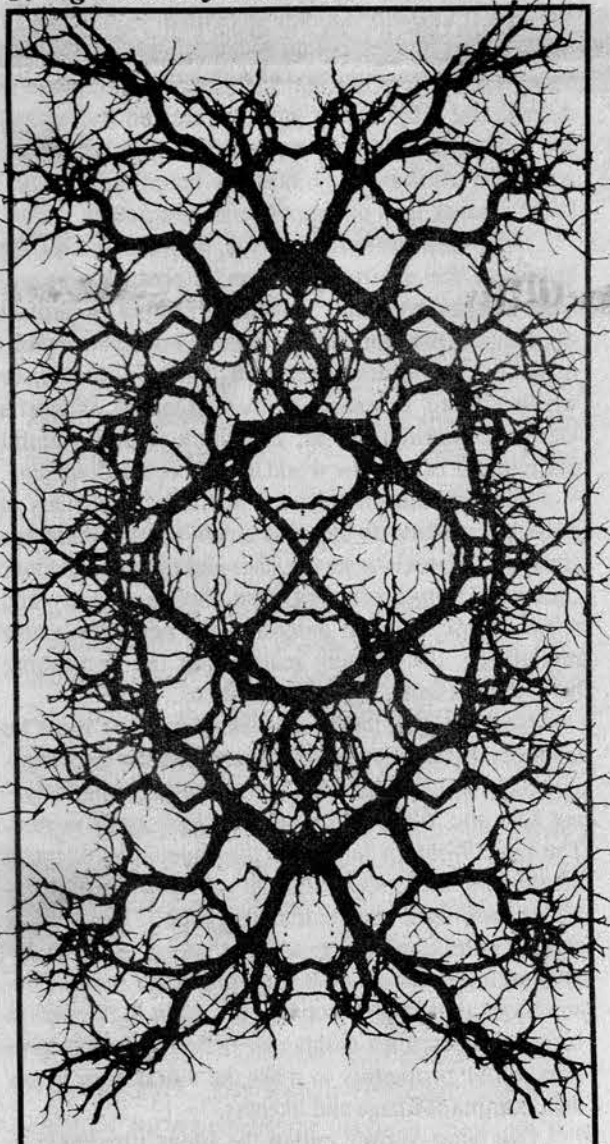
Tom Wolf lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he works for The Nature Conservancy. He is writing a new Western history-style book about Wyoming.



Patricia Limerick, historian

16-High Country News — January 1, 1990

Patterns



The photographic experiments of Stephen Wenger include a piñon at sunset repeated four times (top left), furrowed snowfield (top right), a "neon" of some young elms (center right), and silouetted caribou (bottom).

Wenger is a freelance photographer and writer living in Fruita, Colorado.