

High Country News

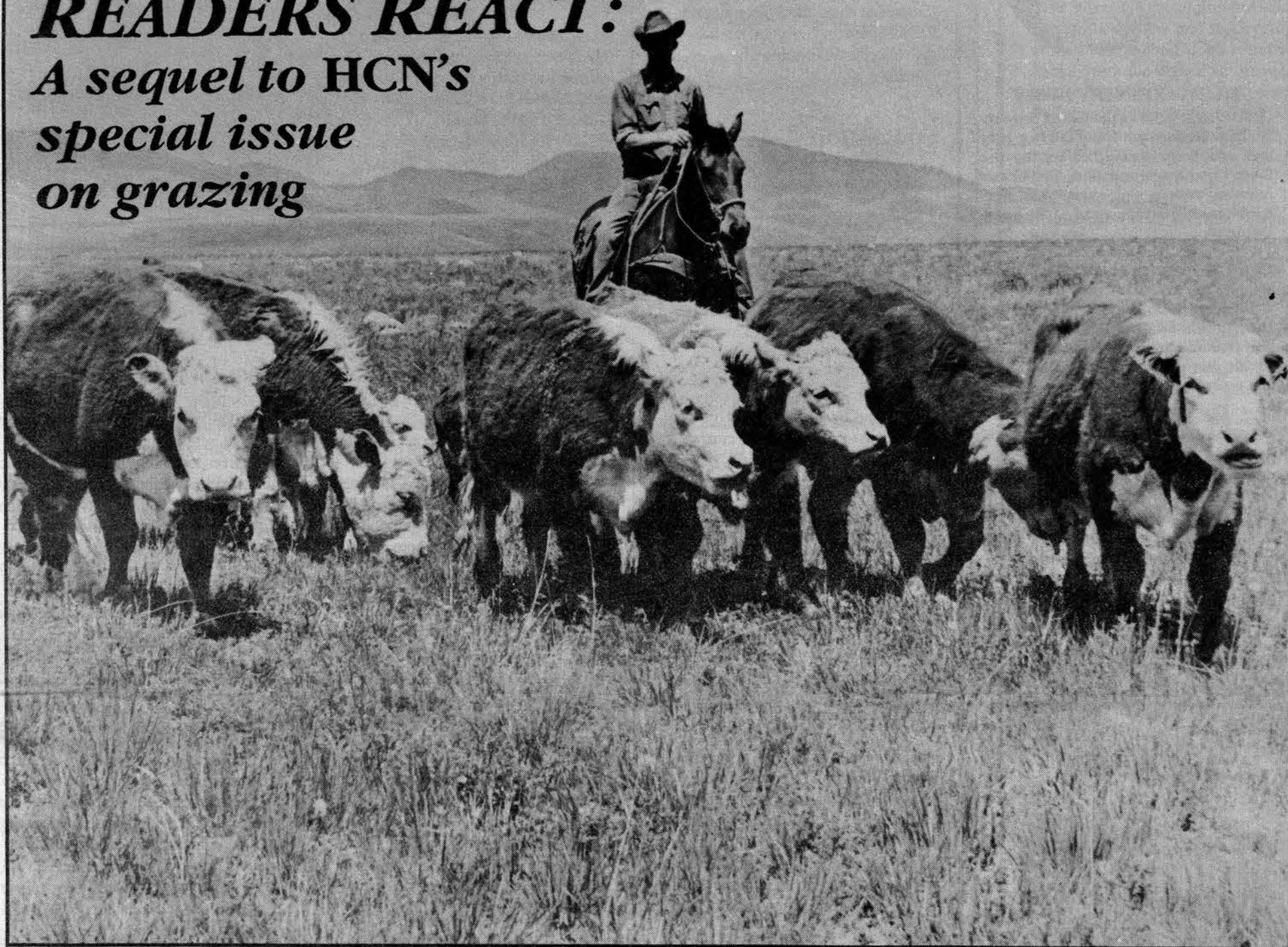
May 7, 1990

Vol. 22 No. 9

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

READERS REACT: A sequel to HCN's special issue on grazing



The public range begins to green up

This August, I will have been publisher of *High Country News* for seven years. In that time the work has moved me to tears twice — both times while compiling this issue on grazing.

The events that led to these unjournalistic displays do not matter. What matters is the emotion this issue inspired in me: a sense of profound relief because there is — at last — evidence of sustainable, unstoppable movement to recover a lost land.

The movement appears sustainable and unstoppable for two reasons. First, because I believe for a variety of reasons that both the Forest Service and the ranchers are ready for a new approach to the range. And second because the push for change is coming from what the media call "everyday" people, as this sequel to HCN's March 12 special issue on grazing shows. Its central figure is Don Oman, a Montana native who grew up on a ranch and has, for this precarious moment, achieved his goal in life: district ranger on a national forest in Idaho.

The motion toward reform also comes from Dick Kroger, a veteran of 10 years with the Bureau of Land Management in Worland, Wyo. He now lives in North Dakota, and his account of his 10 years with the BLM follows the stories on Oman.

Another important player here is Lloyd Smith, an Idaho native and resident of the small town of Rupert.

During an interview about Oman, Smith laughed when he described himself as a truck parts salesman. He is a truck parts salesman who filed a Freedom of Information Act request that produced Forest Service documents central to the story on Oman.

When Smith is not working or hunting or teaching hunter safety courses, he is organizing other sportsmen and applying pressure to the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to change their public land management.

I took his laugh to mean that the way he earns his living is incongruous with his self-appointed role as reformer of public land management. Work of such importance, Smith implied, ought to be done by more important people, and they ought to live in more important places than Rupert, Idaho.

But the more important people, perhaps because of their importance, have been unable to affect the public range. With all respect to the sincerity and energy of those who write reports and who lobby on grazing, and to the elected and appointed officials who intercede on both sides of the issue, change must come from the bottom. And it has to be rooted in the courage, persistence and intelligence of "ordinary" people.

These articles are not about perfect people. But they are about people who care about the land and are tough enough to translate that caring into action. They have all made themselves — no one invited them and

many attempted to discourage them — players. They have become part of the community of people who not only care about the West, but who have figured out how to act on that caring.

That community includes Scott Bedke, who, for the purpose of the two articles centered on Don Oman, is spokesman for the ranchers. Bedke, who almost singlehandedly bankrupted HCN in a telephone interview, became part of the community by being willing to talk long and frankly to a reporter he knew held different views.

Randall Hall, the grazing person on the Forest Service's Intermountain Region, was very helpful to the story, and is also a member of the community that must be formed if the West's range is to be recovered.

During the preparation of this issue, the rest of the world receded. But a telephone call from John Baden, the free-market economist, made an impression. He said the spotted owl controversy in the Northwest is creating a multi-billion-dollar reallocation of forest resources that in other nations could be accomplished only by bloody revolution.

I believe Don Oman, Dick Kroger and others like them are implementing the same vast reallocation. But instead of forests, these people are reallocating range.

— Ed Marston

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Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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Congratulations

Freelance writer Pete Carrels of Aberdeen, S.D., received the Citizens Wildlife Award from the South Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Carrels is writing a book on South Dakota's now defunct Oahe reclamation project. He is also keeping an eye on North Dakota's Garrison project, which threatens his beloved James River. A news story by Carrels and an opinion piece by Gary Pearson, both on Garrison, are two of the several items that couldn't be squeezed into this issue.

Congestion

Guilt is stalking the corridor-offices of *High Country News*. The special issues have resulted in less room for roundups and essays. Now we even find the Dear friends column backed up. A description of HCN's effort to find recycled newsprint has languished for months. A description of Earth Day in Paonia must await another day. Even visitors to the office have been slighted. An already serious situation has been made more serious by this unexpected issue: the reaction to our March 26 grazing issue. We apologize to writers, visitors and anyone else we have neglected.

Visitors

Gary Boyce, a rancher from Colorado's San Luis Valley, came by to talk about small town newspapers, and the potential for a newspaper in his valley. Also visiting was Chris Landry of Carbondale, an economic planner and nordic ski enthusiast.

Mac McCarren of Boise stopped by on his way to Miami, Fla., to help his parents, Vince and Peggy McCarren, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. Mac, a temporary employee with the National Guard, has lived in many places in the West, and told us that *High Country News* is his community newspaper. In a first, Mac had staff pose with his dog, Joe.

Dean Krakel and Winston Caine of the *Rocky Mountain News'* Western Region Bureau in Glenwood Springs came by on a break from doing a story on Paonia. Krakel formerly worked for the *Pinedale Roundup* in Wyoming.

Lucille Quintana, who writes a fitness column for the Taos, N.M., *News*, read about HCN in *People* magazine and came by to see what the place looked like.

Speaking of *People*, subscriber Charles Wilkinson, a law professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, tells us he was in the first issue of *People*. "We were living on a block where there had been 14 straight girl babies. Philip, our son, broke the string." The noteworthy event was published in a Boulder newspaper and picked up by *People*. It was also picked by a London, England, newspaper, which reported: "After 14 girls, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wilkinson finally had a boy."

Colorado celebrates the environment

Beginning last summer, editor Betsy Marston took part in a statewide effort to draft a comprehensive environmental strategy for Colorado. She was one of 43 members of a citizen advisory committee that met regularly to devise and write a

detailed plan for state, local, business and individual initiatives. The final draft was recently delivered to Gov. Roy Romer.

Air and water quality were major concerns, and among its recommendations were proposals that state agencies aggressively recycle and that they buy recycled material — not radical proposals these days. The big sticking point, not surprisingly, came on water. A divergent view in the report says water development projects aren't by their nature harmful to the environment, despite what critics say.

The clearly written *Draft Report of the Governor's Citizen Advisory Committee* is available, if copies last, from the Colorado Environment 2000 office, 4210 E. 11 Ave., Room 350 Denver CO 80220. The Environmental Protection Agency funded the project.

In addition to her advisory duties, the editor was also one of five judges of the state's first "Celebrate Colorado Environmental Awards." The focus was mostly on grassroots groups that did a huge job with lots of enthusiasm and very little money.

Winners were:

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, a 16-year-old group that has enlisted more than 5,900 volunteers;

The BLM Career Boy Scouts Explorer Troop 121 in Canon City, which helped plant trees after a forest fire;

Timms Fowler, Colorado Mountain Plateau Bike Trail Association, and Carlos Sauvage, BLM, Grand Junction, for building a mountain bike route called Kokopelli's Trail.

The trail winds its way for 128 miles between Loma, Colo., and Moab, Utah. The duo who helped create the route, along with 250 volunteers, said they were able to cut through official red tape with unusual speed. Their secret: "No one knew what we were doing."

Another award went to Wendy Hanophy and her Horizon High School Students in Adams County for creating an outdoor classroom on a 14-acre wetland;

King Soopers, which became, in 1979, one of the first grocery chains in the country to begin a voluntary recycling program, won for its pioneering efforts; and

The city of Littleton, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Cooley Gravel Co. were all honored for helping to establish Littleton's South Platte Park, a 625-acre flood plain that for 30 years served as a gravel quarry.

One award brought the gathering of 100 people in Colorado's Supreme Court chambers to its feet. That happened when Gov. Romer honored feisty League of Women Voters member Tess McNulty, an ex-Marine, for her decades of work as a water-quality lobbyist.

The governor said her "constant nagging" on behalf of the environment helped improve mined-land reclamation law. Then he asked what would she be like when she "got over her shyness?" McNulty, anything but shy, looked touched. Several people in the audience cried.

The governor gave a special award to this newspaper, calling it "the little paper with clout." He also said he did not agree with everything in it. All winners that day took home a framed photo of a high mountain wilderness by photographer John Fielder.

The governor concluded the event with a speech on the importance of environmental issues, saying that our frontier ethic was a narrow one: "We did not recognize that our actions sometimes would have unplanned and unwanted consequences. And that these consequences



Pete Carrels

would last for a long, long time." As examples he cited mill tailings in mountain towns and quarry scars.

One long trek

Former intern Spence Havlick, 24, writes us that he is on the trail these days. The trek is more than most people take, he admits, since they "lack the time, irresponsibility, or desire." Havlick will travel along the Continental Divide some 2,500 miles through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana, keeping his eyes peeled for whatever he encounters. We look forward to his dispatches. If you'd like to get word to him, the best bet is to write him at home: 665 Emporia Rd., Boulder, CO 80303.

Corrections

The April 9 article on the organization Wilderness Watch spelled one of the writers' names wrong. We apologize to Mark Ratledge. He also says that Wilderness Watch is not fighting outfitters who are trying to construct storage areas in Idaho's Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Rather, the group is trying to get the Forest Service to pack out what it packs in.

Lynn Jacobs of Tucson writes to correct a correction we made in the April 9 issue. He says that David Brown in *The Wolf in the Southwest* says the last jaguar in New Mexico was killed in 1925, as we originally reported. Lynn also says that a rancher in Arizona killed one only a couple of years ago.

Where's the video?

The May/June issue of *Harrowsmith Country Life* has an article on HCN by writer Jim Fergus. From now on, if anyone asks us what HCN is all about, we will send him or her the Fergus piece.

As if *People*, with its mega-million circulation, and *Country Life*, with its one million circulation, were not enough, there is an article on HCN in the May 17 issue of *Rolling Stone*, prompting people to ask us when we're doing our first video. *Rolling Stone* staff writer David Handleman, who had been in rural western airspace before but never here on the ground, brought a different perspective to HCN and Paonia than Fergus, who divides his time between a small town in Idaho and a smaller town in Colorado.

—Ed Marston for the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP



Tom Shands, Livingston Enterprise

Heavy equipment is used to clean up soil contaminated by CUT's leaking underground storage tanks

CUT's prophecy comes true, in a small way

It was not an auspicious way for a "New Age" religious group to celebrate Earth Day. The Church Universal and Triumphant found itself trying to clean up 31,000 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel that leaked from underground storage tanks into a fragile mountain drainage.

The tanks were buried as part of the church's attempt to build bomb shelters and prepare for imminent nuclear war.

Most of the shelters, however, are three miles from Yellowstone National Park, and park biologists said they were concerned because the area is critical grizzly bear breeding habitat.

When the leaking tanks were discovered April 10, CUT spokesman Murray Steinman says the group notified state and local authorities. But contamination had already reached nearby Heron Creek. It is one of only three area cutthroat trout spawning streams flowing into the upper Yellowstone River.

State fisheries biologists said their investigations showed that aquatic insect

colonies on the creek had been disrupted for about a mile and a half below the spill area.

No fish kills have been found, but Montana state biologist Glenn Phillips, who checked the aquatic insect disturbance, said "there's still uncertainty."

By the last week of April, Montana water quality bureau chief Steve Pilcher said 1,500 gallons of fuel had been recovered and eight of the 35 tanks pulled out of the ground, with the rest due out by June 3.

Pilcher said CUT and its contractor had removed 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and installed a recovery system with an interception trench.

The mountain meadow where the church's largest bomb shelter was built was originally meant to be an open-air camping and gathering site for CUT's annual two-week summer conference. The largest bomb shelter there can house 756 people.

Pilcher said the state environmental impact statement on the church's plans for the old Malcolm Forbes ranch never disclosed that the church would build a bomb shelter there, complete with sewage discharge and underground fuel storage.

Pilcher, who was in charge of the EIS, said he had been misled by the church: "I've been had," he said.

Hank Rate, a rancher who lives nearby, criticized the state for not monitoring the massive development from the beginning. "I fear that the oil spill is only the tip of the iceberg," he said. "We're talking about people preparing for war. Everything up there is a disaster waiting to happen."

Julia Page of Gardiner, president of a group called

the Upper Yellowstone Defense Fund, said the CUT settlement "looks like an industrial zone." Their methods, she added, were to do what they wanted first, get caught, and comply later.

Meanwhile, on April 23, a judge issued a restraining order prohibiting CUT from building or occupying any fallout shelters. The injunction was issued at the request of Montana health and environmental agencies.

Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., said he is assembling a federal task force to investigate whether CUT violated federal law.

Williams said he is concerned about reports that CUT has brought in illegal aliens, that the group's frantic building threatens endangered species such as grizzly bears, and that it is smuggling guns.

Williams said, "No individual or institution in America, including the church, whose freedom to pursue the tenets of their faith is guaranteed, is above the law."

CUT spokesman Murray Steinman refused to let the press see the cleanup efforts. But he said environmental protection "is our number one priority at the moment."

In late April, a state underground tank-enforcement team planned to inspect shelters in the CUT-owned subdivisions called North and South Glastonbury, 20 miles from church headquarters. Dozens of fuel tanks were buried at over 40 shelters, but only a handful were made known to the state and registered, state officials said.

—Pat Dawson

BARBS

A trickle-down approach to sensitivity.

The Wyoming state water engineer asked the Wind River Reservation tribes to show "sensitivity" toward Anglo farmers with junior water rights. The engineer also said flatly that the state would not enforce the tribes' plans to keep water flowing in streams.

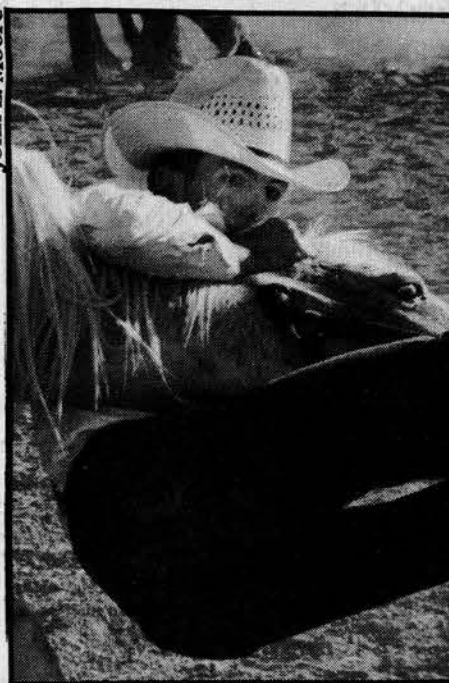
HOTLINE



Court takes on water dispute

The U.S. Supreme Court will decide who has jurisdiction over in-stream water flow at federally licensed hydroelectric projects. Environmentalists contend that both federal and state governments share jurisdiction over in-stream flow, and that hydropower developers should be required to comply with the higher set of requirements, whether set by states or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The case, *State of California vs. FERC*, involves a controversial hydroelectric project on federal land near Placerville, Calif. The power plant diverts water from a creek to run turbines before dumping water into the American River, one mile downstream. In issuing the plant license, FERC stipulated that the creek retain a minimum flow much lower than the minimum set by California's Water Board. California had set a higher minimum flow to protect fisheries. After a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that FERC has exclusive authority to set in-stream flow levels, nine conservation groups and 49 states filed friends-of-the-court briefs in support of California. Conservationists support the state's authority to set a higher minimum flow than FERC, but also argue that states do not have the authority to veto a FERC minimum flow as too high. The court is expected to issue a decision this summer.

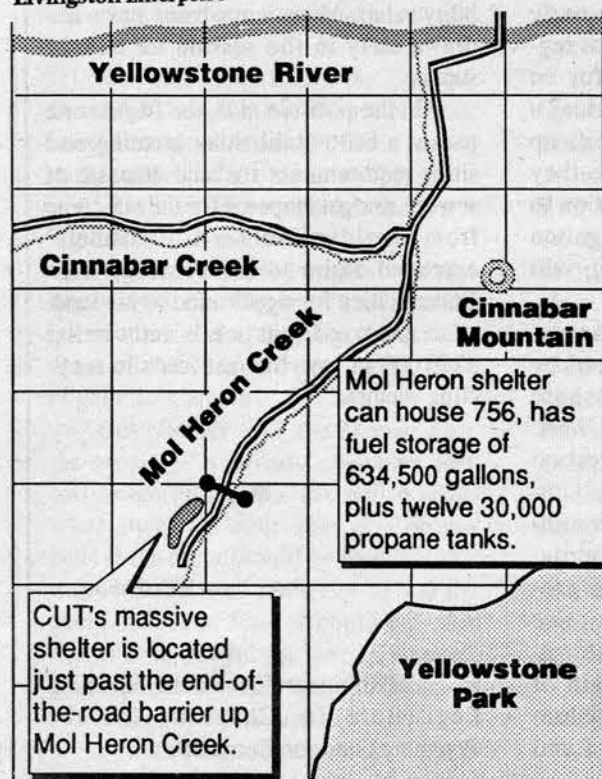
John L. Moore



Ride 'em, Vaquero

Plenty of Wyoming folks like to wear cowboy boots and cowboy hats, but apparently few want to do real cowboy work. The state is so short on the breed that ranch owners such as Georgie LeBarr have resorted to importing hands from Mexico. She is allowed to import vaqueros because the 1986 immigration law determined that no qualified Americans want the work, even though Wyoming has a 7 percent unemployment rate. "Nobody wants to be a cowboy," said Oralia Mercado, who runs Mountain Plains Agricultural Service, an organization helping owners import ranch hands. "It's hard work, it's dirty work, it's round-the-clock work. It's not something a U.S. worker wants to do," she told the *Albuquerque Tribune*. While the \$800 monthly salary paid an average hand seems paltry to Americans, Vaquero Jose Mendoza, of the state of Chihuahua in Mexico, said it pays about four times what he made back home.

Livingston Enterprise



HOTLINE

Forest plan appeals are readied

Despite 10 years in the works, the Bridger-Teton National Forest Plan in Wyoming faces certain appeal from environmental groups. The plan's oil and gas leasing provisions continue to be the chief sticking point (*HCN*, 12/18/89). Despite widespread local support for a leasing ban, Regional Forester Stan Tixier refused to amend guidelines which open 95 percent of the forest's non-wilderness land to energy development. Michael Scott of The Wilderness Society summed up the situation as "lease now, worry later, versus making a decision now and insuring protection of critical resources." The plan's timber provisions, which shift harvesting emphasis from the northern part of the forest to the southern half, also concern environmentalists, according to Louisa Willcox, program director for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Such timber production is unsuitable in the erosion-prone area, she says, and threatens important recreation areas as well as spawning grounds for the rare Colorado cutthroat trout. In addition to the coalition, The Wilderness Society and Sierra Club say they will appeal the plan.



Wave goodbye to Woodsy

A Forest Service mascot called Woodsy Owl has fallen victim to the battle over his cousin, the northern spotted owl. Officials of Oregon's Siuslaw National Forest have decided to stop using Woodsy and his "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute" slogan in the area's elementary schools. "Emotions are running pretty high on the spotted owl issue," said a Siuslaw spokesman. "Now is not the time to have Woodsy in the spotlight."

Spotted owl report hit from all sides

In a report criticized by both environmentalists and the timber industry, a panel of federal scientists has recommended saving the northern spotted owl from extinction by placing more than eight million acres off-limits to logging. This could also allow half the owls to die.

The report is the product of a six-month study by a panel headed by Forest Service biologist Jack Ward Thomas. The panel included scientists from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service.

Last September, Congress directed the Forest Service to incorporate the panel's recommendations into its plans. Such a move, estimated Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson, would reduce timber sales in the Northwest by 25-30 percent below levels called for in the new forest plans.

Timber industry representatives predicted economic chaos from the report's suggestions, with job loss estimates ranging from 6,000 to 60,000. Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood, R, suggested that the owl be exempted from the Endangered Species Act, a move that has been attempted with other species, but never successfully. Dennis Hayward of the Northwest Timber Association urged Congress to open up wilderness areas to logging.

Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio, D, said the impact could be softened by restricting log exports, which amounted to 3.6 billion board-feet in 1989, by higher cuts from private lands, and by developing secondary wood products industries. In a letter to President Bush, DeFazio urged him to use the Export Administration Act and ban the exports of logs from private, state and federal lands in the Northwest with "a stroke of your pen."

The Thomas report concluded that the owl is "imperiled over significant portions of its range," and that "current management strategies are inadequate to ensure its viability." The preferred alternatives in current national forest plans, the report noted, would result in more than 50,000 acres of owl habitat being logged a year.

Instead of the current system of

Spotted Owl Habitat Areas, each consisting of about 2,000 acres, the report calls for 193 Habitat Conservation Areas, where logging would be banned and roads built only "if no feasible alternative is possible." The HCAs would range in size from a few hundred acres in California to 676,000 acres on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The total adds up to 8.4 million acres of HCAs — 3.2 million each in Oregon and Washington, and two million in California. This is three times the acreage now set aside for the owl, according to the Forest Service.

But it would not include some of the largest and most hotly contested ancient forests, notably the Opal Creek watershed in Oregon's Cascades and the North Kalmiopsis roadless area in southern Oregon.

Environmentalists at first accorded the report a lukewarm reception. Then they cooled after studying its 450-plus pages. About 45 percent of the proposed HCA acreage, they noted, is already protected as wilderness, national parks or other reserved areas. The remaining acreage includes rocky areas, second growth, meadows, lakes, rivers and roads, as well as old growth.

In an "initial impressions" paper, Jim Pissot of the National Audubon Society wrote that only one-third of the HCAs are expected to contain the recommended number of owls — 20 or more breeding pairs. In fact, some of the proposed HCAs contain no known owls. Of an estimated 2,000-4,000 pairs now in existence, wrote Pissot, less than half will be in the proposed HCAs.

Since most of the land between HCAs will be open for logging, he added, the future landscape will be highly fragmented. The dispersal success of young owls in 2020, he concluded, "likely will be less" than their success today.

But most criticism centered around the report's estimates that if the strategy is implemented, the spotted owl population could decline by 40-50 percent. The decline would occur over the next few decades until suitable habitat regrows and their numbers rebound.

"Long-term survival is based on hope and promises," wrote Pissot.

"Short-term loss and local extirpation is assured."

The northern is one of three subspecies of spotted owls. Although recent findings "raise some questions" about whether the three are actually distinct species, the report accepted the authority of the American Ornithologists' Union on the matter.

The northern spotted owl overwhelmingly prefers old growth forests, the report noted, except in northern California, where faster growing trees and increased numbers of small mammals — the owl's favorite food — make younger forests a better habitat. Its habitat has been reduced by 60 percent, mostly since World War II.

In some areas of the Oregon Coast Range and the Cascades of northern Washington, little habitat remains, and in the Olympics, where the owl is isolated from other populations, there's a danger of a loss of genetic diversity. About 74 percent of remaining habitat is on Forest Service land, with about 12 percent on BLM, 8 percent in national parks, and lesser amounts on state lands.

Fewer than 99 pairs were documented on private lands in California and less than 30 owls on private lands in Oregon and Washington. In British Columbia, most of its habitat has been logged.

Besides setting aside land, the report calls for new silvicultural techniques to increase habitat and continued research to monitor the strategy's success.

But the panelists admitted that the owl is only symptomatic of the fate of Northwest old growth forests in general. Adoption of their conservation strategy, they wrote, would also affect "water quality, fisheries, soil, stream flows, wildlife and outdoor recreation." The strategy would also, they suggested, satisfy a "growing concern with retaining and enhancing what scientists call 'biodiversity'" and "the common-sense admonition of Aldo Leopold that 'to keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.'"

— Jim Stiak

Wyoming Legislature votes to starve pollution programs

Environmental concerns that drove the Wyoming Legislature during the 1989 sessions were relegated to a back seat in 1990. Legislators talked about pollution and waste but stripped spending from those areas.

The majority Republican party used a caucus position with very few defectors to gouge the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. State funding for the DEQ was slashed by 28 percent. Depending on how remaining funds are allocated, this represents approximately two dozen lost positions.

The DEQ was nowhere to be seen on the Republican priority list. Early in the session, many state programs and departments were contending with massive cuts from the Joint Appropriations Committee. Facing an election year and a Democratic incumbent governor, Republicans were intent on making their stated fiscal conservatism a primary issue. By the end of the session, however, pet programs had gradually been reinstated until the Legislature had actually outspent Gov. Mike Sullivan's budget by 2 percent.

In the DEQ, obviously no one's pet, it is still unclear exactly which programs will suffer the most damage as a result of the cuts. Dennis Hemmer, director of the DEQ, has expressed confidence that many of the positions can be restored from a "governor's pool" of government employees. Although most of the cuts were directed at the Water Quality Division, federal money and the governor's pool may offset most of the damage.

One of the more ironic cuts affects the Solid Waste program, where three of the 12 employees have been axed. Progressive legislation passed in 1989 (*HCN*, 5/22/89), amidst great public uproar over out-of-state dumping, will be effectively negated by the cuts.

Representatives also refused to fund six existing positions in the Leaking Underground Storage Tank program, even as they were in the process of passing a bill fine-tuning that program and committing the state to a 20-year cleanup program.

Hemmer says that he will give very high priority to finding money for that program, most likely at the expense of

the Land Quality Division.

The enacted underground gas tank bill establishes a no-fault cleanup program that gives tank owners access to state funds for cleanup and third-party insurance claims. Tank owners must register their tanks with the state for an annual fee of \$200 per tank, conduct a minimum site assessment and clean up any existing contamination before they qualify for state assistance. In addition to the tank fees, a tax of 1 cent per gallon on all fuels, both on- and off-road, will fund the program.

An apparent victory for conservationists came when legislators agreed by a narrow margin to the state's purchase of the Girl Scout National Center West. Its 14,000 acres of spectacular recreation land lie in Washakie County.

The purchase, however, was contingent on Washakie County voters approving a one-year, 1-cent sales tax to provide \$500,000 of the \$1.5 million price tag. Ten days after the session, those voters nixed the sales tax by a margin of about 200 votes. Currently The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Land

Management are negotiating purchase of the property.

A measure supported by conservationists to reinstate joint and several liability in hazardous waste cases was withdrawn early in the session for lack of support.

On the positive side, the Legislature passed a bill establishing bonding and siting requirements for land disposal of sewage sludge. Impetus for the bill came from Sheridan rancher C.L. Tibbets' expressed desire to import sludge from Eastern cities for application to his land. Also approved was a bill authorizing \$200,000 in low-interest loans to recycling ventures.

— Will Robinson

Will Robinson lobbied the Wyoming Legislature in Cheyenne for the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

Critics say agency flushes away Grand Canyon beaches

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Opposition to the way the Bureau of Reclamation runs the Glen Canyon Dam has been intense at environmental hearings held recently at Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, Flagstaff, Denver and Washington, D.C.

Of the 1,500 people testifying, most blasted the federal agency for putting electric power generation first and protection of Grand Canyon beaches and ecology last. When BuRec adjusts dam flows, water levels in the canyon can fluctuate 13 feet in a day.

Some speakers said consistent water flows through the canyon were a necessity; others went further and proposed destroying the dam.

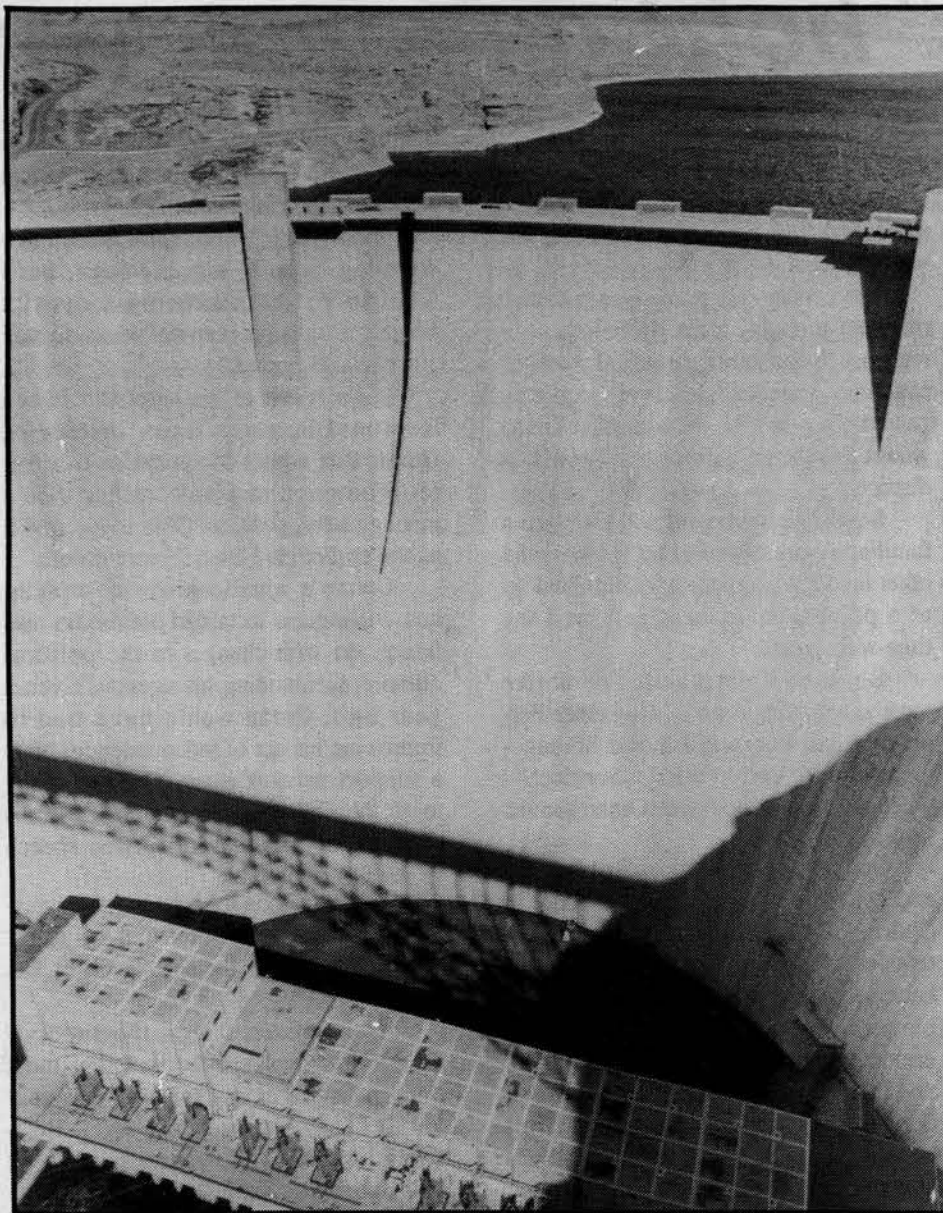
Strong testimony has been coupled with a letter-writing campaign organized by environmental groups. Some 2,000 letters oppose BuRec's dam operations, said the agency's Barry Wirth, a public affairs officer. Last month the group Friends of the River placed a full-page ad in *The New York Times* about the dam controversy.

"This has definitely become a national issue," said Roland Robison of Salt Lake City, upper Colorado region director for the Bureau of Reclamation. "Over and over we've been hearing about how we're rushing this process and that there should be an interim flow regime on the Colorado River."

Those sentiments dominated the Flagstaff hearing, the second held in the city. BuRec added a second hearing after more than 400 people crowded city-council chambers two weeks earlier, causing a near riot and confrontation with the city fire marshal, who ordered many of them to leave.

"The most pressing thing is how to slow the erosion on the beaches," said Jeff Aronson, a Flagstaff river guide. "I've noticed that some of the beaches are losing a meter every three months as the fluctuating river cuts away at the banks."

Dan Dierker, another Flagstaff river guide, said that means a consistent flow



Glen Canyon Dam: Peaking power generates 13 foot "tidal" waves

schedule on the Colorado should be established now, before the environmental impact statement process is completed.

"It may be that there is enough sediment if we start saving it now," Dierker said. "But I can't see that situation lasting indefinitely."

According to the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies Office in Flagstaff, an estimated 15.4 million tons of sand were lost from the Grand Canyon

from 1983 through 1986, most of it deposited downstream near or in Lake Mead.

When Glen Canyon Dam was built in 1963, almost all of the river's replenishment sand was cut off at the dam. Replenishment of sand from tributaries like the Little Colorado and Paria rivers and Kanab Creek is only about one-tenth of the amount received before the dam was built, researchers say.

Scientists estimate that about half of

the camping beaches along the Colorado between Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Mead have been lost in the past 25 years.

That's not the only loss. Frigid water from the bottom of Lake Powell is released year round to power the hydroelectric turbines. While the river has been turned into a blue-ribbon fishery for trout, four of the eight native fish species in the Colorado are now extinct and the other four are teetering on the brink of no return, living primarily in backwaters and tributaries of the river.

Even the trout have a rough time, often becoming stranded in backwaters when river flow is cut back rapidly.

Officials of the Western Area Power Administration in Salt Lake City and electric cooperatives throughout the West say the highly fluctuating river releases are necessary so low-cost "peaking" power can be produced rapidly during periods of high demand.

The power industry has proposed that a re-regulation dam be built about 10 miles south of Glen Canyon Dam, near Lee's Ferry. That idea has not found support by either fishing or environmental interests. Electric company officials also have said that technology can deal with beach erosion. Constructing concrete support structures along some of the more popular beaches would help, they say.

Debate continues as the Bureau of Reclamation accepted comments on the Glen Canyon Dam EIS until early this month. A draft EIS will be prepared by the end of the year.

"We're not going to make our decisions based on the opinions expressed at these meetings. This isn't a poll," Robison said. "But if you keep hearing the same thing over again, well, maybe you don't agree with it but you do need to address it."

— Mark Shaffer

The writer covers environmental and Indian issues for the *Arizona Republic*.

HOTLINE

Prairie dog hunt raises hackles

The First Annual Championship Prairie Dog Hunt in rural western Colorado is drawing the kind of outrage reserved for the siting of toxic waste dumps.

A private group called the Ten Ring Gun Club, based in Nucla and Naturita, is sponsoring the two-day hunt on private land this July.

It will pit 50 two-person teams trying to outshoot each other.

Whoever wins, the targets — prairie dogs — will die. The hunt has raised the ire of the Humane Society, Colorado's Gov. Roy Romer and Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D-Colo.

Gov. Romer told the *Denver Post* the shooting "is already creating a very bad image throughout the nation about what kind of a state this is. I do not believe the event should be held."

With no legal authority to stop the event, however, Romer could only ask the club to cancel it. Rep. Campbell blasted hunt organizers for having a "three-ring circus mentality."

Sponsors say the hunt was designed to boost tourism in a remote, depressed area and remove a nuisance population

of prairie dogs.

As the criticism intensified, hunt organizer Mike Mehew met with other members of the club to reconsider. Their decision was to proceed.

The subject was then opened up to the communities of Naturita and Nucla, both depressed uranium-mining towns. At a meeting April 26, residents voted 385 to 3 to proceed with the shoot. Sponsors said if prairie dogs weren't shot, many will be poisoned, and die slow, painful deaths.

Jim Miller of the state Agriculture Department says the damage prairie dogs do to forage and crops depends on the amount of land the animals have available to them. Ranchers traditionally dislike prairie dogs because of the burrows the animals dig, creating hazards to livestock and horses. In Colorado, Miller said, three species of prairie dogs exist for a total population of some 20 million animals.

Hunt organizer Mike Mehew can be reached in Nucla at 303/864-2269.

— Jim LeFevre



6-High Country News — May 7, 1990

Forest Service ranger refuses "promotion"

Ranchers' hold on agency revealed

by Ed Marston

District Ranger Don Oman is a quiet man. As head of the 500-square-mile Twin Falls, Idaho, district of the Sawtooth National Forest, he is also a stubborn man.

When his Forest Service superiors told him he had so angered the ranchers he was working with that he should apply for a transfer, Oman refused. Instead, he filed a "whistleblower" complaint, charging that he was being punished for doing his job.

Thanks to that action by Oman, and his subsequent willingness to talk to the press, a decades-long, informal working arrangement between the United States Forest Service and ranchers who graze cattle on the public land has become partly visible.

The controversy surrounding Oman provides a glimpse of how the agency and its rancher-permittees interact. It shows, at least for Idaho's Sawtooth National Forest, how user groups influence land management agencies.

That ranchers who use the public land have good access to the Forest Service does not automatically mean the system is bad. The Forest Service is a regulatory body, and permittees must have recourse in cases of unreasonable regulation.

But if the public lands are seen as "owned" by a variety of users — hunters, fishermen, hikers, skiers, loggers, etc. — then the Oman case reveals an imbalance. Only ranchers, the agency and possibly aides to elected officials ever got to the table where decisions about the Twin Falls Ranger District were being hammered out.

Don Oman became the center of a three-year-long struggle in the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service because he exerted pressure on the rancher-permittees who graze cattle on the Twin Falls district. According to the ranchers, Oman began pushing almost from his first day. Scott Bedke, an Oakley rancher, recalled Oman's first tour with the Goose Creek grazing allotment permittees, back in 1987:

"He told us, 'This is the worst allot-

ment I've been on.' We got off to a bad start, and things got worse from there."

Bedke said permittees on that allotment thought it was in good shape, and were proud of it.

The contentious relationship ended, ranchers thought, after three years. In response to continuing pressure from the ranchers, the Forest Service quietly passed the word this winter that Oman would soon be gone from the Twin Falls district.

Strongly encouraged transfers are a familiar story in the Forest Service and other land management agencies, and up to a point Oman's case followed the time-worn pattern.

But then it diverged. For unlike most agency employees — whether Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management or Fish and Wildlife Service — when push came to shove, Oman shoved back.

Oman's shove came after he was told by Regional Forester Stan Tixier in Ogden, Utah, that he should apply for a transfer-promotion. Instead, Oman went back to Twin Falls and filed a whistleblower complaint with the federal government. As a result of that complaint, and perhaps for other reasons, the Forest Service informed Oman in mid April that he will not be moved pending the results of the investigation.

When *High Country News* heard of the conflict, Oman agreed to an interview on the understanding that he would speak as an individual, and not as an agency official. In addition to interviews with Oman and others in and out of the agency, this story and the accompanying sidebar are based on internal Forest Service documents. They were supplied by Lloyd Smith, a Rupert, Idaho, truck parts salesman and head of a local sportsmen group. Smith obtained the documents through a Freedom of Information Act request.

An unlikely rebel

Don Oman is an unlikely person to make possible the first public, detailed look at how Forest Service user groups influence their regulators.

Utah State University Professor James Kennedy divides Forest Service personnel into a conservative old guard and a new guard, made up of relative newcomers such as former Forest Service employee Jeff DeBonis, who has organized a reform group of agency employees (*HCN*, 6/5/89).

Oman fits the description of the old guard. He grew up on a Montana ranch, trained in forest management at the University of Montana, and served on eight forests before being promoted to district ranger on the Sawtooth in 1987.

But there are anomalies. He is not a veteran of the armed forces. And he has no ambition to rise beyond an on-the-ground management job such as

district ranger. Despite 25 years with the agency, he has never had his "ticket punched" in Washington, D.C.

Oman said, "Washington is seen as a stepping stone to bigger things, but I wouldn't mind just being a district ranger. It's always been my desire to stay close to the ground."

As a result of his ambition, when Regional Forester Tixier instructed Oman this winter to apply for a transfer/promotion to a staff, rather than a management position, Oman, 46, saw it as the end of his Forest Service career.

Oman's whistleblower complaint and willingness to talk to the media also has to do with changes in the political climate surrounding his agency. Even a year ago, Oman would have had to improvise his act of independence. Now a support network exists. Before talking to *HCN*, Oman contacted Jeff DeBonis to learn the rules governing free speech by agency employees.

As one reason for blowing the whistle, Oman cited the letter that 63 forest supervisors sent to the agency chief last fall (*HCN*, 2/26/90).

Among other things, the supervisors' letter deplored the fact that most Forest Service money stays in Washington, D.C., or at the regional level. Relatively little money finds its way to forest lands administered by people like Oman and his staff of 12.

The Forest Service has also been pushing — at least rhetorically — on its employees to strengthen on-the-ground range management. The recent "Change on the Range" program puts great emphasis on recovering riparian areas, which almost everyone agrees have been badly battered by a century of livestock grazing. Letters, directives and policy statements urging riparian improvement are legion within the agency.

Finally, the Sawtooth National Forest has given its district offices more power to administer grazing permits. Oman, unlike many district rangers, can cut the number of cattle a rancher may graze, or otherwise penalize that rancher, without going to the forest or regional level.

Tradition still reigns

But not everything in the world of public land ranching has changed. Many ranchers maintain that they have certain vested rights to the public range.

Tradition, if not law, gives them clout. Some public land ranchers run cattle over land used by their families before there was a Forest Service.

Also intact are political relationships. When pushed, ranchers go over the district ranger to the forest supervisor, the regional forester or the national office in Washington, D.C. Their access is made easier by the clout ranchers carry with elected officials. Cattlemen traditionally have strong contacts with their congressmen.

Those contacts are particularly effective in Idaho, where Sen. James McClure, R, is a very strong Western senator. Ranchers can also call on the Idaho Cattle Association in Boise, and the National Cattlemen's Association and Public Lands Council in Washington, D.C.

In this case, there is no evidence that Idaho politicians interested themselves in Oman beyond routine letters of inquiry from Idaho's Sen. Steve Symms, R, and Rep. Richard Stallings, D-Idaho, responding to ranchers' complaints.

The only incident of interest came from John Hatch, Symms' assistant in Pocatello. When asked about Oman, Hatch said "no comment" and hung up.

Symms' press secretary in Washington, D.C., Dave Pearson, said later that Hatch was not authorized to speak to the press, and that the Oman case was like thousands of other routine cases, in which the senator intervenes on behalf of constituents.

A controversial cattle count

Agency employees are always subject to political pressure, and until Oct. 13, 1989, the ranchers appeared to be making little headway in their efforts to transfer Oman. But on that date, Oman made himself vulnerable by conducting what *Western Livestock Journal*, a regional industry magazine based in Denver, in a front page story, headlined, "Gestapo cattle count in Idaho." The article, by *WLJ* editor Fred Wortham, Jr., opened:

"A District Forest Service ranger, a disputed number of armed Forest Service special agents, two state brand inspectors, several other Forest Service employees, and a Bureau of Land Management representative swooped down on a cow camp in the Sawtooth National Forest in southern Idaho Oct. 13."

In the article, the head range person for the Forest Service's Intermountain Region, Randall 'Ray' Hall, deplored how the cattle count was conducted. But Hall also said it was a legitimate exercise of authority. Hall, based in Ogden, had been informed in advance of Oman's count, but not that armed Forest Service marshalls would be used.

Wortham did not interview or quote Oman or anyone else on the counting team. But he did quote ranchers and unidentified people who had witnessed the count. He also wrote:

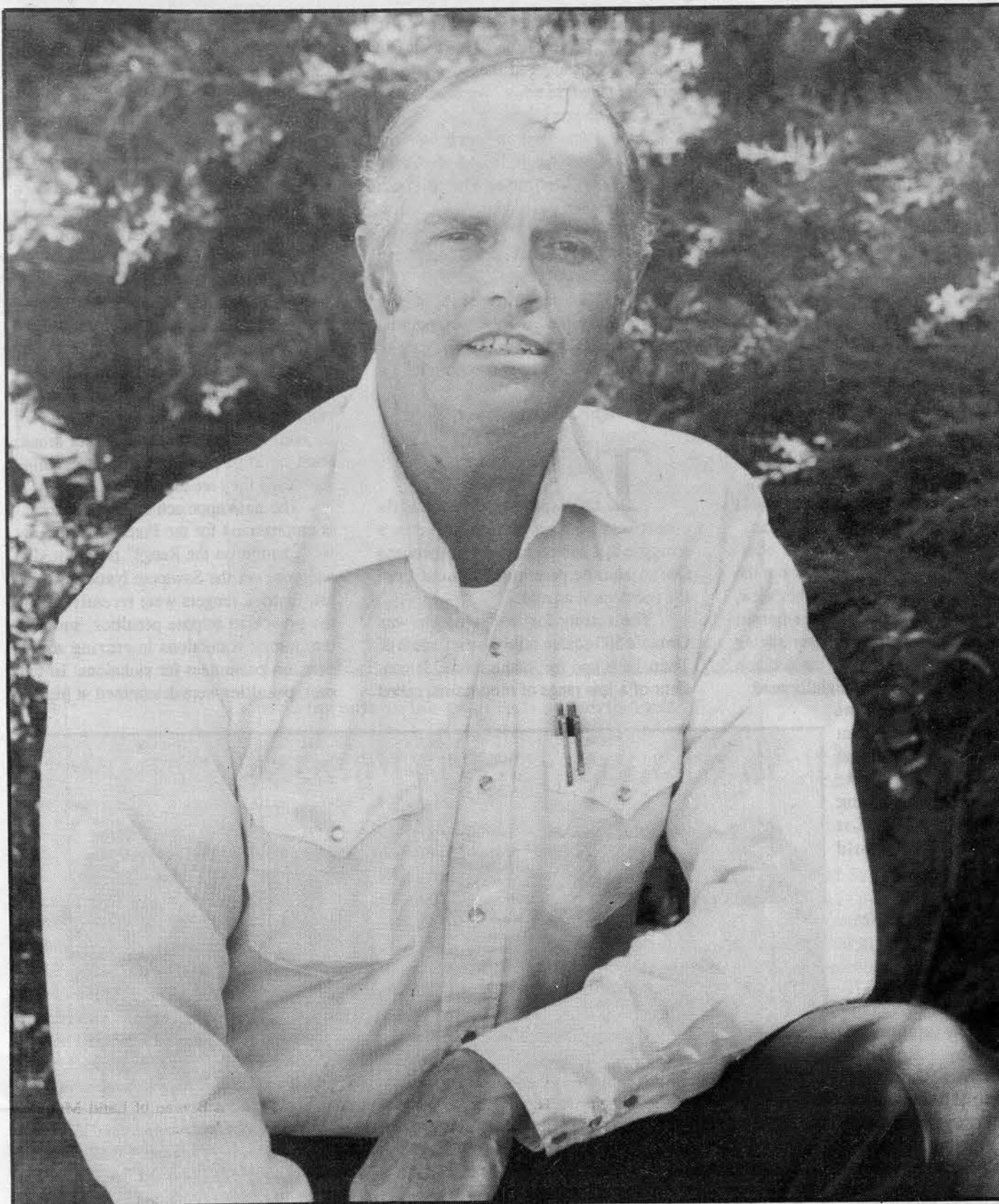
"Oman's tenure in the Twin Falls district has not been without its bumps, several people said. His actions have often sparked serious debate among the ranchers about his qualifications with regard to the grazing sector of multiple use on the Sawtooth."

Roughly the same story, complete with the "gestapo" charge from one of the ranchers, ran in some Idaho newspapers, setting off a brief letters-to-the-editor war among the ranchers and their opponents.

Oman told *HCN* that he decided to do a count when, in summer 1989, he got a tip about a permittee on the Goose Creek cattle allotment. That allotment is grazed by about 1,800 cattle owned by five ranches cooperating as the Wild Rose Cattle Association. The tip said one of the five permittees was putting more cattle on the land than the permit allowed.

Oman, who had been running the Twin Falls District for three years at the time, said he had received several threats during that period. Some were political. "I was told, 'I have all the information I need (to have you moved). Don't make





Don Oman: "I wouldn't mind just being a district manager. It's always been my desire to be close to the ground."

me bring the hammer down."

Another time "a permittee wanted to fight me out in a field. I had told him I didn't think a certain thing was true, and he accused me of calling him a liar."

In a third instance, Oman said a permittee told him on the telephone: "It's a good thing I'm 40 miles away. I'm an insane man." He wasn't outright saying, "I'll kill you," but he was threatening."

Because of the threats Oman said he arranged to bring along an armed Forest Service marshal, who brought along a second armed official.

The cattle count was sprung on the ranchers at dawn, at a high pasture where the calves are weaned from their mothers and loaded onto semis for shipping. Oman brought along a rental truck to provide secure lodging in case the counters had to spend the night, and a small plane to fly the allotment in search of cattle that hadn't been rounded up.

The ranger's written report states that after an initial angry encounter with one permittee, the day was low-key, with the head of the Wild Rose Cattle Association, Ray Bedke, telling the counters: Come back any time.

Permittee Scott Bedke, 32, the son of Ray, has a different memory of the day. "We came back (from the count) and sounded the alarm. We felt we deserved better treatment." The gathering of the cattle, Bedke said, "is our payday. It's also one of the few times we get to cowboy. And it's a family deal. Our wives come out and make a dinner. The children are there."

According to Bedke, the dawn

arrival, the rental truck, the armed marshals and the "guilty until proven innocent" attitude "cast a pall over the day. If a patrol car parked in front of your house all night, your wife and kids would wonder: What did you do wrong, dad?"

Within hours, complaints were flowing to the Forest Service and to the press from the ranchers, who saw the count as the latest hostile act from a district ranger who, they said, wanted cattle off the national forest.

For the first few months after the count, press accounts had Hall, in the regional office, deploring Oman's tactics but supporting his objective. There was also an inconclusive meeting involving Hall, Oman and the permittees. Then, in the January 1990, issue of the *Times of Idaho*, Hall was quoted as saying: "We've met with the permittees and the ICA (Idaho Cattle Association) and have reached an agreement that will ease things in the future."

Oman would go

Oman said he learned, first via the grapevine and then directly from his superiors, that he was the "agreement." It had been made, Oman said he had heard, at the November meeting of the ICA in Idaho Falls. Ray Hall of the Forest Service, permittees, ICA officials and perhaps others were there, Oman said he was told.

"When I heard about the agreement, I decided I wouldn't put up with being

transferred for just trying to do my job. It was a slap in the face to me and my people."

Oman said in his first three years as district ranger, he'd received excellent job ratings. But a few months after the count, he was told by Regional Forester Stan Tixier that "I've developed an inability to work with permittees."

"I don't look on myself as a piece of trash to be cast aside. I've given a lot of years to the agency ... I've been contacted by a number of people (in the Forest Service) who are facing the exact same problems with permittees, and they are waiting to see what happens here." Oman said he believes cattle have a place on the public land. "I'm not against livestock grazing. But it has to be done right."

Oman's superiors deny some of what Oman alleges and support some. Oman said he was told by Tixier that pressure to transfer him had come down from the chief of the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture. Tixier told *HCN* through a spokesman that Oman's charge was "absolutely not" true.

Ray Hall, Tixier's range person for the Intermountain Region (Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Nevada), spoke directly to *HCN* and was frank about the decision and the resulting dilemma. He said he initially met with the cattlemen and Oman on Nov. 8, where the cattlemen demanded Oman's transfer. Hall refused. But in early December, Hall, without Oman, met with the Idaho Cattle Association, its Public Lands Council, two permittees and others. This meeting

had a different ending.

Hall said, "The permittees demanded that I get rid of Oman. They were also asking for a full investigation of the incident by the Department of Agriculture. They said if I moved Oman, they'd withdraw their request for an investigation."

"I said I didn't like the way he did the count, but I thought his objective was correct. I said I wouldn't move him or make him a lameduck. But I also said I realized he wasn't going to be effective (as Twin Falls district ranger) and I said that within the next year, he'd be elsewhere."

Ranchers bragged about their power

"But now I may not be able to honor that promise. Now we've had other permittees say to district rangers: 'If you don't watch out, you'll be next.'"

Hall said he is convinced Oman can't work effectively with his permittees. And that handicap — Hall said — means his ability to protect the resource will be diminished. But Hall also said the agency can't appear to give in to threats. "I haven't made up my mind as to what I'll do," he said April 13.

Can a group of permittees get rid of a district ranger by refusing to work with him or her? Hall replied: "They can't just automatically get their backs up. This (with Oman) didn't just happen. It's

(Continued on page 8)

Oman . . .

(Continued from page 7)

Oman said he was once told over the phone: "It's a good thing I'm 40 miles away. I'm an insane man."

"I realized he wasn't going to be effective (as a ranger) and I said that within the next year he'd be elsewhere," said a Forest Service official.

"I don't look on myself as a piece of trash to be cast aside," Oman said.

been building over a period of time. The clash of personalities can't be overcome by talking across the table."

Hall then second-guessed his original decision to avoid an investigation by moving Oman. "I've never seen an investigation where someone didn't come out with a black eye, and often it's a black eye over an incident that isn't central to the issue. But maybe I've made a mistake. Maybe I should have let the investigation go ahead."

Finally, Hall said that if the dispute between Oman and the permittees had centered on grazing practices that threatened the range, the Forest Service would not have considered transferring Oman.

"I've never been out on the allotment, but the staff officer tells me the range is not beat out." So in his view, Hall said, the dispute is over permit administration rather than over saving the resource, and that made the decision to transfer Oman more straightforward.

Hall concluded the interview by saying that the Intermountain Regional office had been considering issuing a policy statement on grazing, and that if it were released, he would send HCN a copy.

Declaration of agency independence

The statement, signed by Regional Forester Stan Tixier, was released the following week. Without mentioning Don Oman, it addressed itself to his situation and to the agency's policy with regard to ranchers adhering to the details of their permits:

"We will administer grazing permits in a professional, business-like manner, the same as any other permit or contract. We expect complete compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit, and will not condone willful or repeated violations. We will exercise a 'rule of reasonableness' when violations are unintentional and infrequent, but only to the extent that other resources and values are not being damaged."

It also said: "We do not routinely use armed law enforcement personnel... but will do so when we have reason to believe their presence is necessary to provide for the protection of National Forest System lands and property, or for the safety and welfare of Forest Service employees, National Forest users or the public-at-large."

The cover letter on the *Policy Statement on Livestock Grazing and Permit Administration in the Intermountain Region* directed that it be sent to the state livestock associations and congressional delegations and to the general news media.

Implementation is everything when it comes to Forest Service policy. But in advance of hard evidence, this statement, which reportedly had been first issued in the week of Oman's cattle count and then withdrawn, can be read as a declaration of (partial) independence by the Intermountain Region from traditional political pressures.

One observer of the agency has no doubt of its significance. Jim Prunty,

who retired from the Forest Service in 1987 after 20 years in Idaho as a fire control technician, said the new grazing policy is "the best news I've seen out of the agency in years."

Prunty, who stays in touch with the agency and who has followed the Oman controversy, attributes the district ranger's problems to history.

Prunty said that until Oman arrived, the Forest Service never tried to enforce its regulations.

"And like anything else, if you never enforce the law, the person who tries to, catches it. Oman is trying to enforce the law and he is catching it."

The stage was set

The dispute over the cattle count was no more than a spike in a struggle that had been going on between Oman and the permittees almost from the moment he arrived.

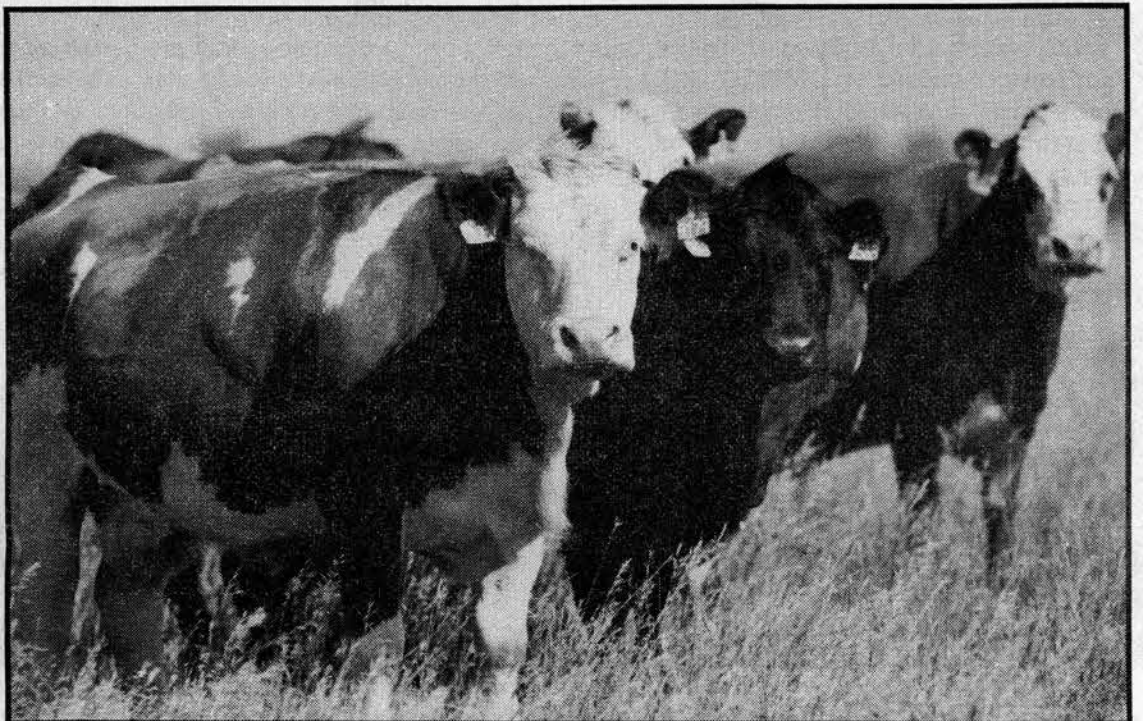
The setting for the struggle was Oman's 500-square-mile district south of Twin Falls and the Snake River. It consists of a low range of mountains, called

sediment, and build banks and soil. But if it's grazed all season, or if even a small number of cattle are allowed to leak back in there, it doesn't take much grazing to keep the riparian areas from growing back."

For the most part, Oman said, permittees weren't against good management, although a few objected to being told what to do. "The most common attitude is: We can see your point of view, but it's unreasonable to think the [riparian] unit can be 100 percent clean of cattle. We think it's OK to leave a few cattle back there."

According to Oman, such relaxed views of riparian area management were common until a few years ago. But now, he said, it is believed that riparian areas must be kept clean of cattle at certain seasons if they are to recover.

The new approach to riparian areas is emphasized for the Forest Service in its "Change on the Range" program. In addition, on the Sawtooth National Forest, district rangers were recently given the power to impose penalties, such as temporary reductions in grazing numbers, on permittees for violations. In the past, penalties were determined at higher



the South Hills, set amidst an extensive desert. It is both an oasis for wildlife, ranches and their livestock and a recreation magnet for the 100,000 or so people who live in Idaho's Magic Valley.

The district, whose elevation ranges from 4,000 to 8,000 feet, has 12 developed campgrounds, a ski area, and miles of jeep roads and hiking trails. It is also part of the range of one of the West's biggest mule deer herds, a herd of about 17,000 animals.

On the Twin Falls district, the deer must share forage with 7,000 cattle and 5,000 sheep owned by about 34 permittees, five of whom use the Goose Creek allotment.

The management of those cattle brought Oman into conflict with many, if not most, of the ranchers. The files contain page after page of reports by Oman and his range conservationists describing permittees' violations of their permits: fences would be down, watering troughs would leak or be blocked and not carry water, and waterholes would be dry.

The results, Oman said, were erosion, muddy areas and cattle in the wrong places. If troughs or pipes weren't working and watering spots became dry, cattle concentrated at the few available sources of water, where they would beat the land to death.

But most friction centered on riparian areas. "If they rest after use, they'll regrow a lot of vegetation, and can stand up to fall precipitation and spring runoff. The vegetation will catch

agency levels.

Under the present system, Oman had that power, and permittees saw him as a man who would use it.

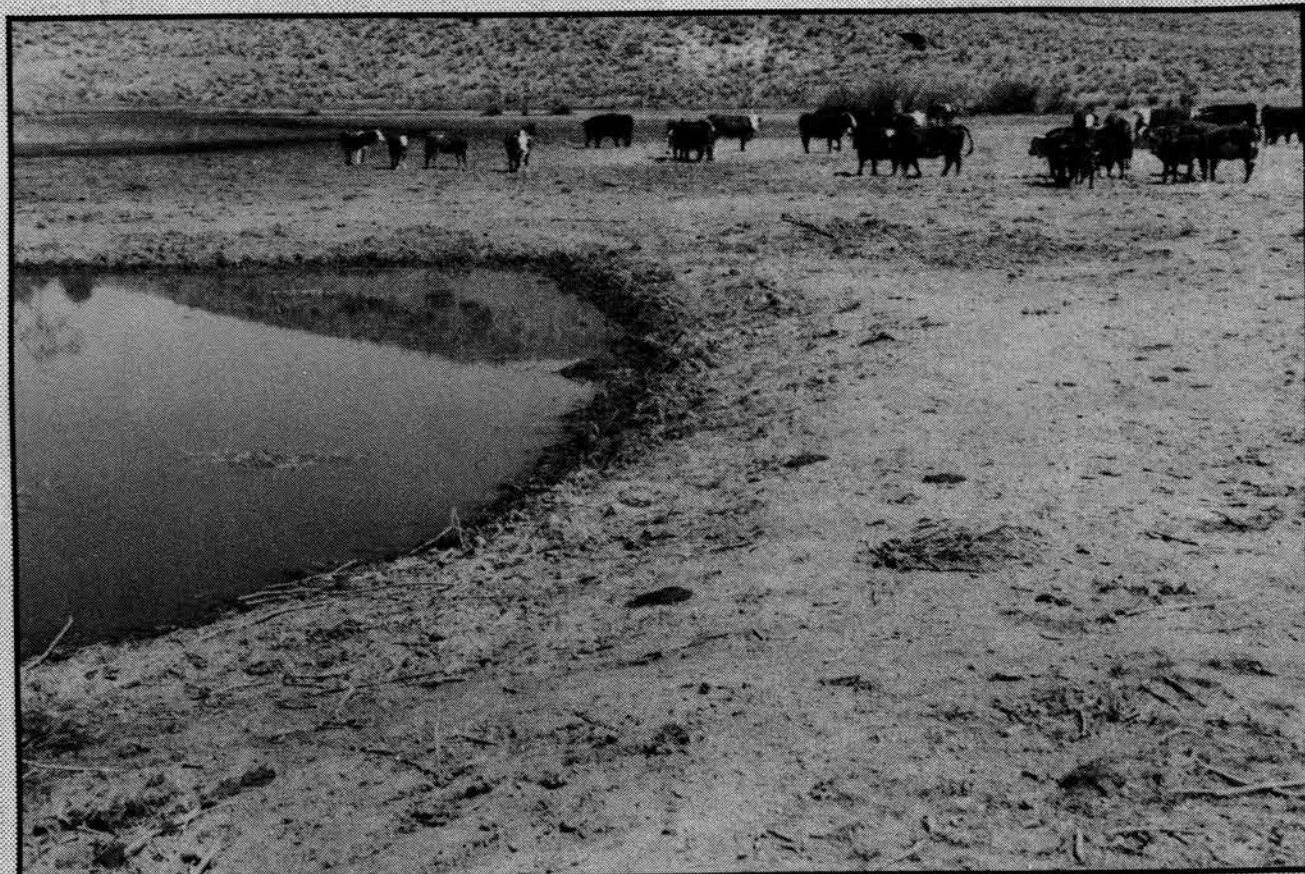
In Oman's personal view, the problem with permittees revolved around manpower. The permittees, he said, didn't have the people needed to keep the cattle where they were supposed to be, to move them in a timely manner, and to maintain the fences, water troughs, pipelines and other tools needed to keep livestock grazing compatible with other resources.

According to Oman, the neglect not only led to damaged range, but also to a waste of taxpayer money. In many cases, part of the investment in troughs and other materials was made by the federal government.

Rancher and Wild Rose permittee Scott Bedke has a different view. In an interview, he said that if the permittees moved 98 percent of their 1,800 cattle and calves, that left only 36 in the wrong pasture. "That's pretty good, but Oman would dwell on the 36. And everything was a permit violation. There was never any leeway."

Bedke said that before Oman, the Forest Service had been proud of the Goose Creek allotment, judging by how many range tours came its way. But once Oman arrived, Bedke said, "The whole relationship with the Twin Falls office deteriorated. If we said white, he'd say

(Continued on page 10)



Jim Prunty

A watering hole on the Twin Falls district in 1987

Two views of a forest: “beat to death” and “improving”

Twin Falls District Ranger Don Oman has not made many friends among the 34 ranchers who graze cows on his district. But he has attracted loyal supporters outside of the ranching community.

One of them is Jim Prunty, who retired from the U.S. Forest Service in 1987 at the age of 63. Retirement has given him more time for his passion: recording on color film and video the state of the public lands around Twin Falls, Idaho.

Prunty, who was a fire technician with the agency for 20 years in Idaho, and who earlier farmed and ranched in Idaho, is familiar with the Twin Falls district Oman administers:

“I’m against the Forest Service, but I’m for Don Oman. He’s trying to do something for the land. I’ve been around this outfit for 20 years, and he’s the only one I’ve seen who has had any effect you could see. Oh, sometimes they’ll improve a campground. But I can’t point to any other place on the Sawtooth National Forest that has shown the improvements some of Oman’s range work has.”

Prunty, who gets onto the Twin Falls district’s Goose Creek grazing allotment a few times a year, said, “It’s quite arid, and over the years it’s gone

from bad to worse. From the first settlers, the cattlemen did it their way. The Forest Service and the politicians just let it alone. They kowtowed until Oman.”

Lloyd Smith, a hunter and truck parts salesman from Rupert, Idaho, wrote letters to the editors of newspapers around Oman’s district when the controversy over the Goose Creek cattle count first flared.

Earlier, Smith had organized the Mini-Cassia Sportsmen’s Club. Smith is a lifelong sportsman who said he became interested in the politics of wildlife in 1983, when he realized that the public lands “seemed to be managed for one thing: cattle feed.”

Smith uses the Goose Creek allotment regularly: “Overall, it’s in poor condition. The riparians have been beat to death. The willows are sticks in the ground. There’s bad erosion.”

Smith said he is interested in the condition of both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land. During the grazing season, Wild Rose Grazing Association permittees put their cattle first onto the lower elevation BLM land and then move onto adjoining Forest Service land.

Smith said, “Both agencies have management plans, but neither had an on-the-ground team until Oman arrived and tried to really implement the Forest Service plan.”

According to Smith, the need for improvement of the Twin Falls district is clear to everyone who bothers to take a look. He recalled a range tour he went on with Ray Hall of the regional office of the Forest Service, three Forest Service fishery experts, and several ranchers.

“We checked out the riparian areas on the Sawtooth National Forest. At the end of the day, we all agreed that there was no management of the cattle. We saw 300 cattle where none should be. The cowboys are crying poverty and they are not maintaining their fences, the water and the herds.”

Don Oman tried to get the ranchers to do maintenance, Smith said, and “they cut him down. And then we hear them in the community bragging — ‘We just got rid of Don Oman and Ted Meliznek (Oman’s counterpart on adjoining BLM

land) is next.’ They were puffed up like a big adder.”

Prunty and Smith said that in addition to trying to get the ranchers to do better maintenance, Oman built impressive demonstration projects that fenced cattle out of some streams and a pond while still allowing access to wildlife. Prunty said he photographed and videotaped one enclosure along Trout Creek on Oman’s district.

A 200-foot-wide stretch of land containing 300 feet of stream was fenced, and the recovery there, he said, “shows that riparian areas can come back something fierce.” Prunty said the enclosure is especially impressive because of the dramatic difference between the protected stretch and the heavily grazed sections upstream and downstream from it.

In Shoshone Basin, on another grazing allotment on Oman’s district, Prunty said the Forest Service had built a watering pond.

“Over the years, cattle stood in there and trashed it. Then the Forest Service, the Izaak Walton League and the ranchers cooperated to build a fence to exclude cattle from six to eight acres. It’s astounding how the area has come back after it had been trashed to dust for years.” Here, too, the fence excludes cattle but gives wildlife access.

Prunty attributes the desertification he sees on Oman’s South Hills district and on adjoining BLM land to the lack of fire, which he said would renew vegetation. (“Don’t get me started on the importance of fire.”) And he attributes the lack of fire to overgrazing that eliminates vegetation before it can grow thick enough to burn.

Carl Nellis of the Idaho Fish and Game Department said of the Goose Creek allotment: “Maybe it’s a little poorer than the other land on the district.” And he said of grazing land in general: “The best indicator of western rangeland was the GAO (Government Accounting Office) report of a few years ago.” GAO reports have consistently rated the West’s grazing lands as in poor condition.

A different view came from Ken Sanders, a professor of range science at the University of Idaho, based in Twin

Falls: “The parts of the allotment I’ve seen are in pretty fair shape. I think it’s definitely improving. Like most western rangeland, the trend is definitely upward.”

Scott Bedke, a Wild Rose permittee whose family’s cattle have grazed the area since territorial days, said:

“This so-called devastated allotment got a 10 percent increase in grazing numbers four or five years ago because it was in such good shape. We’re not perfect. But we’re good. The Forest Service doesn’t give increases to people who are breaking regulations.”

Bedke said Wild Rose’s numbers were increased because the permittees had implemented a new plan. They had used pipelines, troughs and ponds to bring drinking water for cattle to previously dry land. In addition, permittees put up new fences so that some land could be grazed while other land was resting. The water and fences allowed the land to be used more productively, Bedke said, and led to the increased grazing numbers. The implementation of the plan, Bedke added, demonstrated the progressive nature of the Wild Rose permittees and their ability to work with the Forest Service.

Bedke said those who would judge the land should understand that it is a working landscape supporting small but vital ranching communities. “Your riparian values are probably different from mine. This is not a perfect allotment, but it’s a good allotment. It’s of this world.”

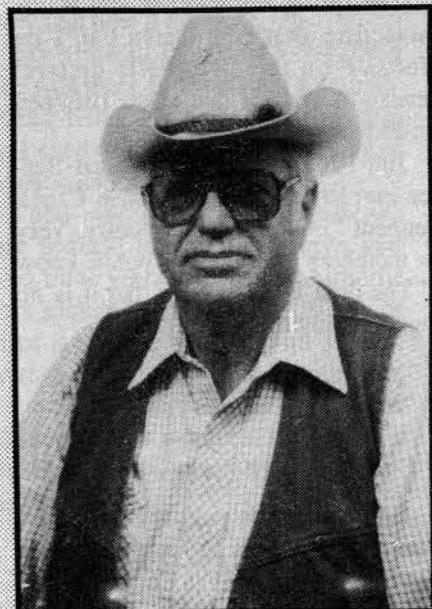
Bedke also said:

“We know there’s a whole other world (with different values) out there. But we’re tied to the land with blood, sweat and tears. We realize we’re not the only people interested in the land. But we can all get along.”

Don Oman, whom Bedke and the other permittees hope to see transferred, has another perspective on the public land the ranchers graze:

“When we reach a point where all public land managers fear for their jobs if they don’t practice good resource management on the ground, rather than fearing the consequences of practicing it, then we will have made progress.”

— Ed Marston



Jim Prunty

A rancher wrote a letter to Sen. Steve Symms accusing the Forest Service of sneaking around on the national forest.

The ranching press ran a "Gestapo cattle count" story about Oman.

Up to 17,000 mule deer share the range with thousands of cattle and sheep.

Oman . . .

(Continued from page 8)

black, and if he said white, we'd say black."

Bedke said Oman and the ranchers had conflicting agendas, with ranchers wanting to continue on the land and Oman having a different set of goals. "We are about as environmental as you get. I'm the fourth generation on this ranch. We were here before Idaho was a state and before there was a national forest. And I'd like to see my great grandkids on the ranch."

Bedke also said it is not just Wild Rose permittees who object to Oman. "Every permittee in the Twin Falls district is united. We feel our living and our way of life is threatened." In addition to objecting to Oman's agenda, Bedke said, permittees objected to his ways: "His manner was: I am the boss. He treated us like naughty sixth graders."

Ranchers fight back

Forest Service files show that while Oman and his range conservationists were pushing on the Wild Rose Cattle Association permittees to improve their housekeeping, the permittees were pushing back.

On May 20, 1988, more than a year before the cattle count, permittee Robert Whitely wrote to Idaho Sen. Symms recounting a May 9 meeting the Wild Rose Cattle Association and industry representatives had with Ray Hall. The letter said Oman had ruined what had been a good working relationship between agency and permittees. It concluded:

"The three grazing associations encouraged Mr. Hall to use his authority to either help change the attitudes of Bert Webster, Don Oman, and Ralph Jenkins or place them in another part of the USFS system. I encourage you and your office to use what influence you have to help Mr. Hall."

On Nov. 14, 1988, the Twin Falls Forest Service office met with the Wild Rose permittees. According to a Forest Service report, the following exchanges took place:

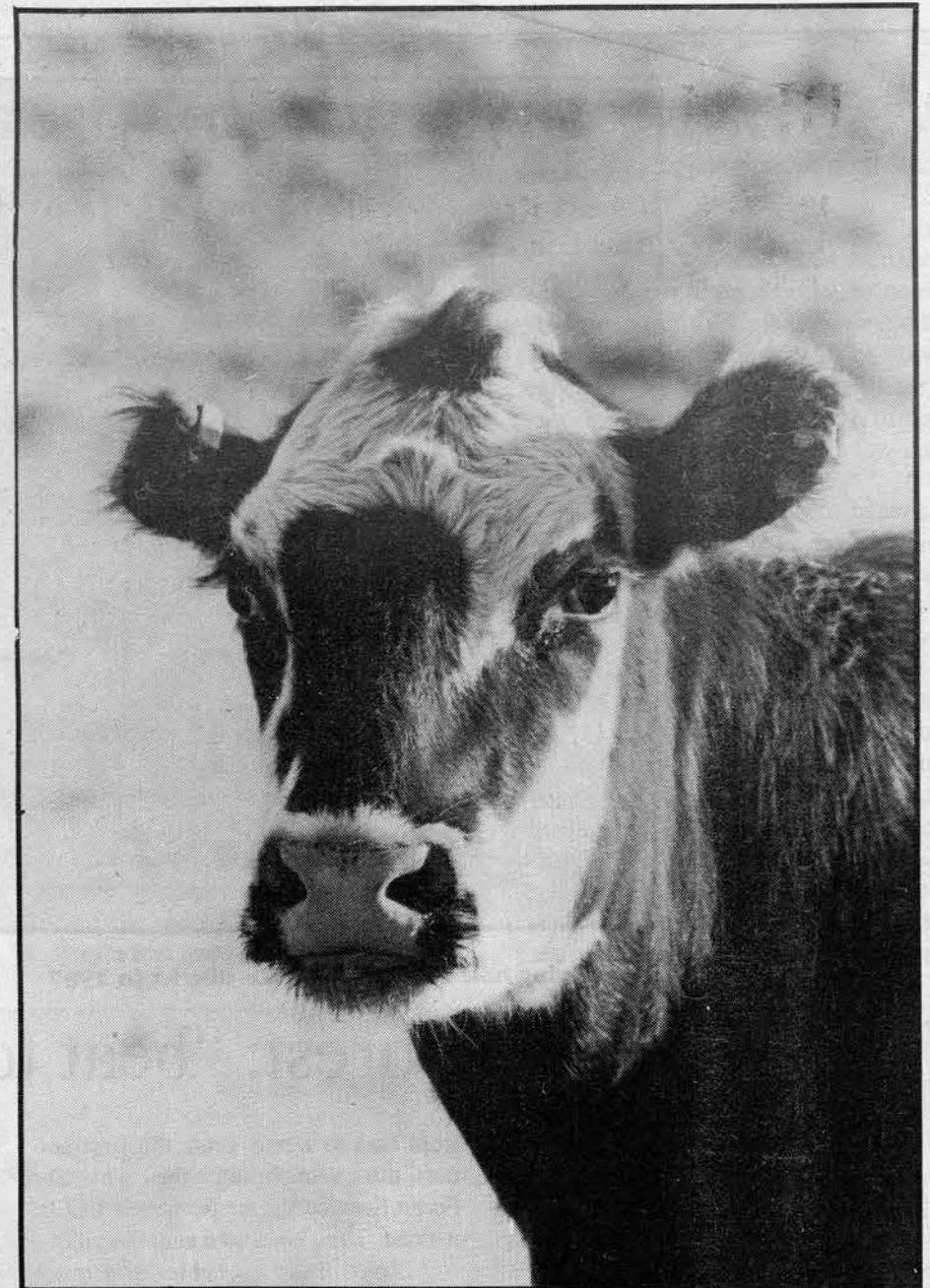
"Don Oman stated that the permittees were arrogant and possessive about the public land they graze — case in point — they did not ask for clearance before constructing addition onto holding pasture... Ray Bedke responded that it was the American way to do it; it is un-American to ask."

The concluding paragraph in the letter is: "Bert Webster (of the Forest Supervisor's staff) asked the permittees, in the future, when they can not settle the matter with the District (Oman), to come to him first, instead of going to the Regional Office or the Washington office. Mike Poulton (a permittee) said, 'Why should we? Going to the Regional Office worked.'"

Not all of the file is negative. In a June 19, 1989, letter to the grazing association, Oman concluded:

"Cattle have been well distributed on the allotment. Placement of salt away from roads has been accomplished without exception. Water developments are functioning. Riparian areas in most cases have been used moderately. Particular attention must be given to keeping the used pastures clean of cattle after you move to your next unit."

But on Aug. 23, 1989, in a report by range conservationist Ray Neiwert, this



time with the Oakley area permittees, concerning a pipeline they had put in along an unapproved route.

Neiwert, in a telephone conversation with permittee Kyle Adams, told Adams "there will be repercussions, but I guess you expected that when you decided to put in the pipe." Adam's reply was, "I guess I don't know what I expected, but I've put in a lot of pipe and never had to put up with all this archaeological crap!"

And all was not well on Oct. 6, 1989, between Oman and Wild Rose, as a letter to the association from Oman shows: "Basically, you have cattle scattered across your previously used spring range from Beaverdam Pass to the allotment boundary in Cave Gulch. Ray (Neiwert) counted 142 head of animals..."

An interesting letter came on Oct. 25, 1989, in the wake of the Oct. 13, 1989, count, from Wild Rose permittee W.B. Whiteley. He told Sawtooth National Forest Supervisor Ron Stoleson that the Forest Service had agreed that its staff would not go onto the Goose Creek national forest allotment unless the association's president is "notified in advance so that he could accompany if possible. Not once was any member of the association notified (of visits to the allotment by agency personnel).

"Monitoring stations were located without any input from the permittees and we sensed that Mr. Oman and his staff put forth considerable effort to sneak around the allotment gathering biased data that would suit the needs of Mr. Oman."

Oman denied that he or the agency had ever agreed to stay off the publicly owned allotment.

Questions remain

It is a dry spring on the Twin Forks Ranger District, as the ranchers prepare to move their cattle onto the

public land. First, the 1,800 mother cows and their calves will trail through BLM land and then, as spring advances, onto the national forest.

The questions, as always, revolve around moisture: Will there be enough spring and summer rainfall to make up for a very dry winter? But the questions are also political. The Forest Service has said that Don Oman will remain as district ranger until the whistleblower investigation he initiated is complete.

And through its new policy statement, the agency has also told the ranchers and the Idaho congressional delegation that it is going to be tough on permit violators.

The ball is in the ranchers' court, but Idaho Cattle Association president Bert Brackett and its Public Lands Council head Randall Brewer give no indication whether the ICA will renew its call on the Department of Agriculture for an investigation.

On the ground, the Twin Falls ranchers must decide whether standards Don Oman set for his district for fence and water maintenance and herding cattle can be met.

The spring will also test Ray Hall's conviction that Don Oman can't be effective on the Twin Falls district because of friction that exists between him and the permittees.

Jim Prunty, the retired Forest Service employee, said the Goose Creek allotment "is very remote country. Very few members of the general public know it." The area is still remote, but it is no longer unknown.

Ed Marston is publisher of *High Country News*. This and related stories were paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

Ex-BLMer says industry prevents resource management

From 1979-1988, Richard Kroger worked for the Worland, Wyo., office of the Bureau of Land Management. In a letter to *HCN*, he wrote: "After reading the 'Bucking Tradition' issue of *High Country News*, I had no choice but to finish (this) article and submit it to you ...

"I have taken a lot of lumps for speaking up for the resource during my 25-year career, and this may be the coup de grace.

"Then again, the time may be right that the administration wants dissension to help bring about change."

by Richard Kroger

I believe that grazing at "proper" levels is a valid use on much of our public lands. I did not always believe that. My steady exposure to range degradation by livestock in Worland made me think the only solution was one without any cows.

Now, however, I believe proper grazing management can allow recovery and still maintain the land. But before grazing can be sustainable, the BLM must be reformed, and there are major obstacles to such a transformation.

The BLM is caught between conflicting constituencies making conflicting demands. Livestock permittees bad-mouth the BLM for not giving all the forage to the cows while hunters and hikers complain about degraded habitat and lack of wildlife forage. Wild-horse lovers wail about too many roundups and ranchers about too few. Where the BLM has timber, sawmill owners complain about the lack of timber sales and recreationists about too many cuts.

Worland reflects these conflicts well. A small town, population 6,500, in northeastern Wyoming nestled between the Bighorn Mountains to the east and the Absarokas to the west, its economy depends on public lands. Livestock, irrigated agriculture and oil and gas extraction are key components of the economy.

Given strong pressure from these economic sectors, it is no wonder that weak BLM managers spend their time trying to reduce pressure and stress by taking paths of least resistance. Because the extractive industries have been the most vocal and efficient complainers to date, the multiple use mandate usually leads to multiple abuse of natural resources.

Can this change? Can the BLM become an organization that manages its 170 million acres of western land in a sound ecological manner? The answer depends on what the public wants and is willing to fight for. To be effective, however, people must understand the BLM's history and how it functions.

My time in the BLM's Worland office was spent as that district's aquatic-wetland-fishery biologist. During that time I tried to improve grazing practices in aquatic and wetland habitats.

I had worked for 12 years with two other federal resource agencies and served three years in the Army Airborne before joining the BLM at age 39. I was part of a team at Worland, and while I take responsibility for what I write here, my conclusions are based on discussions with my fellow workers, including a visit this January to see what has happened since I left.

How to succeed in the BLM

The BLM's internal problems begin with the experience of young peo-

ple who join the agency. They pursue a natural resource career because they think it will be both interesting work and a way to conserve our natural resources. After college, some are hired by federal bureaucracies such as the BLM. There they are quickly presented with a choice between their commitment to natural resources and their drive to succeed within the agency.

Young professionals begin their jobs by presenting biological data to their bosses in support of certain recommendations. They soon learn that if an issue is sensitive, data will be disregarded and final decisions made on the basis of politics. If new staff people oppose the politics, ask questions or fight for biologically based decisions, they will be labeled troublemakers and shunted through or out of the system.

My rough estimate is that 25 percent of the young professionals embrace the politics, 50 percent try to balance the politics and biology, and 25 percent fight for the resource. It is the first 25 percent who are promoted into positions of authority. They are the team players who agree to prostitute their resource convictions. They embrace political management, and their reward is to move up the career ladder and pay scale.

Some of the middle 50 percent pretend to adopt the political system as a way to reach a level where they can make a difference. But this strategy only works as long as they keep a low profile. As soon as they come out for the resource, and thereby cause trouble for their bosses, they are found out and forced into meaningless or deadend positions.

Some of the latter 25 percent — the fighters — survive and make their mark, but many are run out or transfer.

The real work at BLM

How does the BLM, which is well staffed but determined, as an agency, to avoid real work and yet keep its people busy? In my view, BLMer are

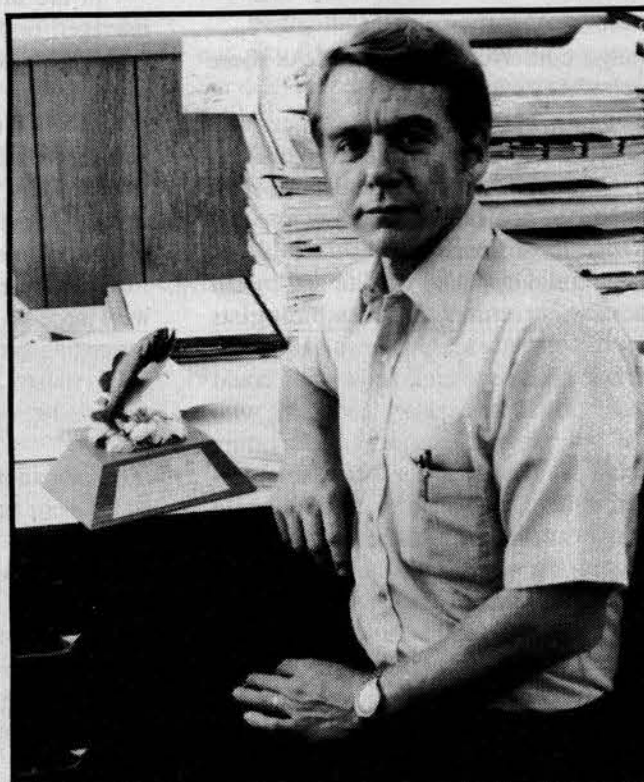
kept working on what I call *organization management*. Time is spent managing the agency instead of managing natural resources. Such issues as reorganization, safety, planning, budgeting, document review, fire-fighting, time and attendance, monitoring, career guidance and equal opportunity programs easily can eat up seven hours a day.

The organization feeds on itself and grows. Bean-counters from top to bottom are kept busy even though they manage nothing on the ground.

How does the BLM survive not doing its job? One answer is by shielding the agency's true nature from the public. Managers and supervisors give the illusion of being busy, have lots of excuses for not getting the jobs done (staff and funding shortfalls), and, most of all, people at the higher echelon learn to talk a good line about resource needs and getting the job done.

To understand how this system began, we must go back to the BLM's evolution from its origin as the Government Land Office. That agency was set up to sell the land. In the interim, ranchers were allowed to graze the land. After 1934 and the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act, the land was still for sale, but official allotments were established for grazing. Grazing permits were issued and fees collected.

After the BLM was formed in 1946, it continued to operate in this mode. Passage of the BLM's Organic Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, should have been a turning point. FLPMA provided that fish, wildlife and recreation are of equal importance with grazing, logging and mining. But improved management did not come into being because the old mentality continued to rule.



Richard Kroger

One unforeseen, and tragic, result of FLPMA was that every old-time BLMer was promoted to supervisor or manager, regardless of qualifications, as the agency grew in size. While working for the BLM, I was often asked by other agency personnel how such Neanderthals became managers. The answer, of course, was that all the good old boys had moved up the career ladder during the 1970s' expansion.

What many of these managers did was sort out the new FLPMA-era employees into team and non-team players according to the old rules. They surrounded themselves with like-minded assistants so that the agency could continue to ignore the resource and placate the ranching, logging and mining constituencies.

Back in Washington, D.C., Western ranchers and the timber and mineral industries kept pressure on Congress to assure that the BLM maintained its responsiveness. One result was the tradition of appointing ranchers of dubious distinction to run the agency. As a result, Robert Burford ruled the BLM for eight long years.

During that time, the Burford family's cattle outfit ran cows on the public's land in western Colorado.

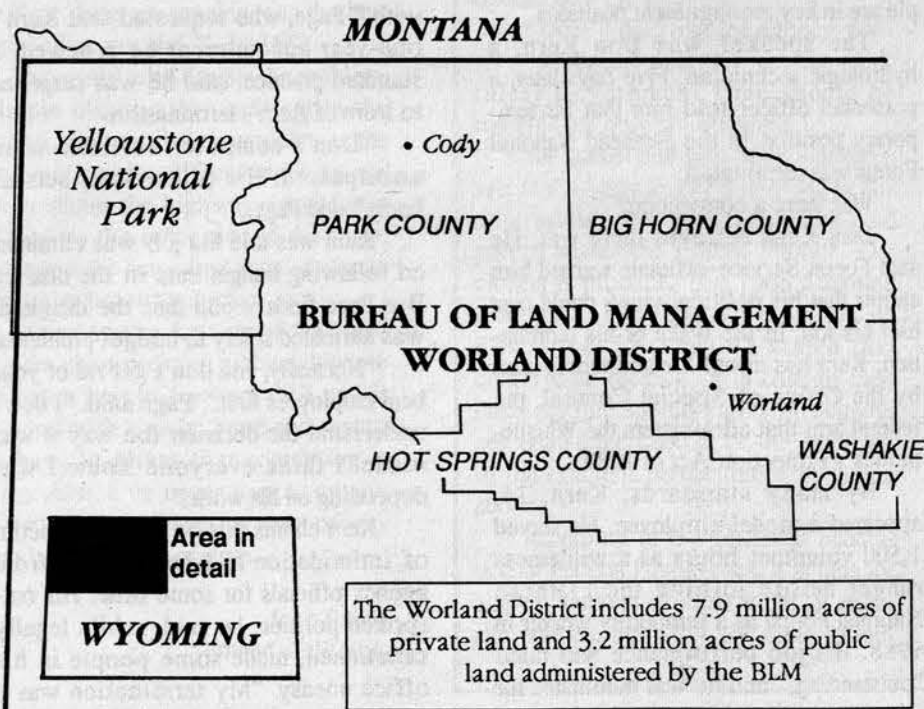
New director Cy Jamison has been talking the sound resource management line, but he has also kept Burford on as a highly paid BLM advisor. Only a change in the presidency, it seems, can shake the BLM free of its bondage to traditional exploiters of the public lands.

The few dedicated professionals can't make progress when politicians are running the agency. One obvious example of such politicking occurred when it became clear that livestock numbers needed to be cut in order to save the range. The top range-people in Washington responded by lobbying for a reduced budget so that the land could not be monitored to determine where to remove cows.

Busy work flourished

Such incidents are tragic for the range and because of what they say about BLM employees. At one time, these BLMer were idealistic, young

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Kroger...

(Continued from page 11)

range conservation graduates. At some point, they sold out.

In a system where managers are running scared and most of the staff has been brow-beaten into submission, non-political projects have great appeal. These have flourished. Wildlife biologists could inventory wildlife and install nesting structures, fisheries biologists could conduct stream surveys and install fish habitat structures, range cons could build ponds for livestock and work with the few progressive ranchers, foresters could set cuts for all the marketable timber stands, watershed staff could build erosion control structures, and mineral specialists could promote exploration and development.

Everyone kept busy, scurrying around, and after awhile, even committed resource specialists began to think they were doing their job. Nothing to significantly aid the resource got done, however, because major changes in the exploitative programs — range, minerals and forestry — were taboo.

When questioned about its failures, BLM hides behind lack of funds and personnel. But the problem is almost totally a lack of commitment to proper public land management. The public should not expect progress from an agency that adopts policies requiring five years of intensive monitoring before a small reduction in livestock can be imposed on an obviously overgrazed allotment. Even with that five-year delay, top BLM officials in Washington lobby to reduce funding for the range program, creating indefinite delay.

Hopeful in Worland

A ray of hope existed during my tenure with BLM in Worland. In the early 1980s, that office had a small group of die-hard conservationists who refused to conform and who fought with management daily for improved resource management. There was strength and support in the group, and management could not keep us all beaten down all the

time. They were forced to make an occasional good resource decision based on the internal and external stress we generated.

In the mid 1980s, a new district manager, one close to retirement who was willing to fall on his professional sword for the resource, was transferred to the Worland District. He, in turn, brought in a dedicated area manager to work for him. With the conservationists already in the office, the Worland District began to make rapid resource gains.

Adjustments in livestock numbers were made on many allotments, the timber-cutting program was nearly brought under control, and mineral exploration and mining were done in less damaging ways.

For example, many streams and ponds were protected from the ravages of livestock and excluded from public land sales, a policy not in effect in many other districts at that time. The Worland District also took seriously the Wetlands Executive Order even as other BLM districts disregarded those habitats. That small group of Worland die-hards went to the mat to protect wetlands, and we prevailed.

Our most important accomplishment, in terms of long-term potential benefits, was completing three environmentally strong resource management plans, or grazing EISs. These documents contained frank discussions of resource conditions and recommendations for required improvements. We worked hard on these documents because we hoped that if we laid a good foundation, future resource gains could be achieved through the courts if the BLM failed to follow its own resource management plans. We knew, even as we were writing them, that when the district manager and area manager were forced out, those plans would not be implemented without the courts.

Good managers booted or transferred

That is what has happened. Ranchers got the district manager booted, and the area manager transferred to the Forest Service. Whether the plans we wrote will make a difference remains to be seen.

A guide to two land agencies

To be effective, the public needs to understand the differences and similarities between the Forest Service and BLM.

The Forest Service is a nationwide organization that responds politically to cities as well as to rural areas. The BLM is a Western agency attuned mostly to ranching, logging and mining industries that still control much of the West's politics. The Forest Service is headed by an internal professional, which gives its programs continuity. The BLM has an external appointee, a political director, which maximizes non-continuity.

Another major difference is how the respective staffs respond to their agencies. The Forest Service has a very visible public relations program. One result is a high esprit de corps and pride in the organization. The staff believes they are the best, and that is why 63 forest supervisors from four regions recently revolted, and sent a very strong letter to their chief (HCN, 2/26/90). They love the Forest Service and what it has stood for in the past, and their letter was written in defense of the agency

they love and in opposition to what it is becoming.

BLM lacks any positive public relations. All the BLMers ever hear from the public is how bad the agency is; instead of pride, there is a sense of inferiority. You will never see BLM district managers banding together to improve resource management as the forest supervisors did.

Yet, as an old organization, the Forest Service tends to keep people within their designated castes. The agency discourages open discussion and maverick opinions. The BLM, a relatively young agency, supports new disciplines such as a recreation, biology, archaeology and watershed study. A lot of young, free-thinking men and women have entered the BLM and questioned established practices. Freedom of speech within some BLM offices is more acceptable than in the typical Forest Service office.

Despite these differences, the bottom line is the same. Both agencies do a poor to dismal job of managing the public land resources.

—Richard Kroger

In recent years, key range and wildlife staff have been transferred and allotment management plans and grazing decisions have been reversed. Riparian management is now being disregarded in new allotment management plans. Timber cutting has increased and proposals to bring the allowable cut into balance with available supply have been ignored.

Oil and gas development is proceeding without full enforcement of established restrictions. Increased funding for the wildlife program is being used to pay salaries for administrators and other staff instead of wildlife projects.

In a nutshell, the Worland District is a den of deception. A smokescreen hides unsound resource decisions, says a former associate.

What are the chances for change within the BLM? I suppose that agency could change as radically as Eastern Europe has changed over the past year. But barring such a shift, changes will have to be made one at a time in each

local area and district office.

That can only happen through the application of public pressure and stress on the managers. It is the only way to break the stranglehold the ranching, timber and mining industries have on the agency.

To create such counter pressure will require a lot of work from the public. But the public has allies, or at least potential allies, within the BLM. Many staff members would like to do the right thing, if they could.

But they can't do it by themselves. In the Worland District, the staff improved things by generating pressure within the agency. This system broke down when the district manager was transferred by the state director as a result of ranchers inflicting pressure. Only public scrutiny and support can change the way the agency does its work on the lands we all own. ■

Ex-employee says agency tried to gag him

A Montana Forest Service employee critical of timber practices hit the national press March 4, when the *New York Times* quoted him in an article about dissidents in the agency:

"There are a lot of good, dedicated

"... there is a lot of dead wood left over from 25 years of rape-pillage-and-plunder mentality."

people in the Forest Service, but there is also a lot of dead wood left over from 25 years of rape-pillage-and-plunder mentality. Unfortunately, many of those people are in key management positions."

The speaker was Don Kern, a hydrologic technician. Five days later, a personnel officer told him that his temporary position in the Flathead National Forest was terminated.

Was there a connection?

Don Kern believes there was. He said Forest Service officials warned him earlier that his political views could cost him his job. In the wake of his termination, Kern has asked for an investigation by the Office of Special Counsel, the federal arm that administers the Whistle-blower's Protection Act of 1989.

By many standards, Kern, 34, appeared a model employee. He served 1,500 volunteer hours as a wilderness ranger before joining the Flathead National Forest as a temporary worker in 1988. His job performance was rated "outstanding," and he was nominated for a sustained superior performance award.

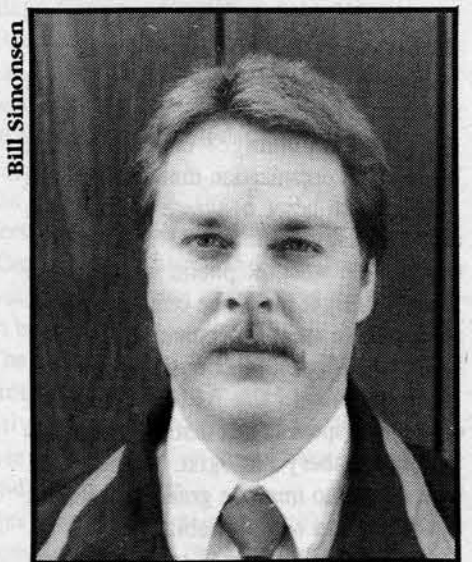
Kern's immediate supervisor, Wallace Page, a 25-year agency veteran, called Kern "the most productive employee I've ever been associated with." Page, who requested that Kern's one-year appointment be renewed, a standard practice, said he was surprised to learn of Kern's termination.

"Don's computer abilities were unsurpassed. His (dismissal) sets us back," said Page.

Kern was told his job was eliminated following budget cuts in the district. But Page finds it odd that the dismissal was attributed solely to budget problems.

"Normally, you don't get rid of your best employees first," Page said. "I don't understand the decision the way it was made. I think everyone knew I was depending on his work."

Kern claims that he had been victim of intimidation and harassment from agency officials for some time. His outspoken politics, he said, while legally sanctioned, made some people in his office uneasy. "My termination was a direct reaction to the exercising of my



Don Kern

free speech rights and the subsequent attention which was focused on the Flathead National Forest ...," contends Kern.

As an active environmentalist, Kern attended wilderness hearings on his own time, criticized clearcuts, and wrote letters to Montana papers accusing the Flathead National Forest of suppressing scientific evidence that would have limited timber sales.

He is also an active member of the organization founded last year by Jeff

(Continued on page 13)

Kern...

(Continued from page 12)

DeBonis, former Willamette timber planner and agency critic. DeBonis' Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics encourages employees to speak out against agency practices that are harmful to the environment.

But Kern believes his right to free speech was imperiled by agency officials who repeatedly told him he was "out of line." He said he was called to many private meetings with the acting Forest Supervisor Jerry Reese and the Planning Staff Officer Hensler.

Kern said he was ordered "into the woodshed" after filing a complaint against a reckless logging truck driver. At that meeting, he said, he was told by security officer Jay Diest, "If you have some problem with logging truck drivers or the timber industry, you had better leave that attitude at home and not bring it to work with you, or you won't be working for the Forest Service very long." Diest was unavailable for comment.

Kern was also called into Hensler's office after withdrawing personal funds from Kalispell's First Security Bank because of a sign in the window pro-

claiming, "This business is supported by timber dollars," he said. Although Kern was off-duty and not in uniform, the bank's assistant vice president John King telephoned then Forest Supervisor Edgar Brannon to complain.

Hensler said he was asked by Brannon to speak to Kern about the incident. At that meeting, and at least four others, he "refreshed" Kern of the federal employees' code of conduct, Hensler said. "I told him essentially that if he's going to express himself in public, he has to make sure that he's expressing his own opinions." King refused to comment.

Kern also says he has been followed by the agency's security officers and blackballed by warnings to a nearby district that he was an Earth First!er and should not be hired.

Such allegations earned him a highlighted spot in Jeff DeBonis' recent testimony before a hearing on First Amendment rights of federal employees. At the Feb. 14 hearing, held by Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., DeBonis pointed to Don Kern as an example "of how the (Forest Service) should not treat people" who exercise their First Amendment rights.

Kern has asked Rep. Lantos and Montana Sens. Conrad Burns and Max Baucus to investigate his dismissal. He has also filed a grievance with the Office of Special Counsel, part of the Merit

Systems Protection Board.

Under the Whistleblower's Protection Act of 1989, the Special Council must investigate all allegations of reprisal against federal whistleblowers, according to Jeff Cinnamond, director of legislative and public affairs. The office, made up of about 20 trained investigators, also has the authority to require corrective action. In the case of Don Kern, that could mean reinstatement as Flathead hydrologic technician, with back pay.

But Cinnamond says it is often very

difficult to prove cases of whistleblowing reprisal. Of the 250 or so cases his office receives each year, only about 10 percent provide conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, he said.

In the meantime, Kern works without pay for the Association for Forest Service Employees with Environmental Ethics. Since his termination, he has become director of the Rocky Mountain chapter, Box 3256, Kalispell, MT 59903.

— Florence Williams

LETTERS

LIVESTOCK SHOULD GO

Dear HCN,

Here are two excellent reasons to get livestock off public lands: 1) The killing of bison on the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park. According to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Dept., the only reason these animals are being killed is that they supposedly transmit disease to cattle. If the cattle were not present on public lands around Yellowstone, there would be no reason to kill the bison. Last year 569 died. We have plenty of cows, but very few bison, especially wild ones.

If, as some people believe, the bison's range is overgrazed and they must move to avoid starvation, then where are the population studies, range condition analyses, and management plans to support this? Why not remove the cows and give the bison the room they appear to need?

2) The Animal Damage Control Unit of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (ADC). This agency, under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service until 1986, exists solely to dispose of "nuisance" animals. In the West its primary mission is to protect the interests of livestock growers and ranchers. The ADC in 1988 killed 4,600,576 animals nationwide (mostly birds), including 76,050 coyotes, 6,465 raccoons, 6,350 foxes, 291 black bears, 282 domestic cats and 544 dogs. They kill using traps, poison, aircraft, guns and snares. They call wildlife in to shoot it and smoke animals out of their dens to club them. All this is done at taxpayer expense. In 1990 the ADC will spend \$29.4 million in federal money, up from \$25.6 million in 1989, and \$15 million in state funds. In Montana, the ADC killed 4,767 coyotes, 962 foxes, 24 black bears and 13 badgers in 1989 (source: USDA).

A goal of mine as an outdoorsman is to see a wild wolf and a wild mountain lion. In 1989, the ADC killed 92

wolves in Minnesota and 207 mountain lions in the West (they have killed almost all in the East). I and anyone else who takes pleasure in seeing large wild animals are being ripped off.

The ADC does do some good, like keeping birds from airports and protecting nests of endangered birds like whooping cranes. But they do a lot more harm than good. According to the chairman of the Arizona Game and Fish Dept., "The real issue with the whole ADC program is public money used to kill public wildlife, often on public land, with no public input — all to benefit a handful of heavily subsidized ranchers and farmers."

North American wildlife is already severely depleted due to habitat loss, poaching, overhunting, pesticide poisoning, roadkill, etc. The last thing they need is the ADC's war on wildlife. All this for a hamburger. Is it worth it? Let's abolish the ADC (All the Dead Critters) and Free Our Public Lands.

Philip R. Knight
Bozeman, Montana

COW CHOICES

Dear HCN,

Your issue on grazing was the best special effort yet (HCN, 3/12/90).

To anyone who doubts the problem, a simple observation will settle the question. As you drive anywhere in the West, notice the difference between growth within the highway right of way and land on the other side of the fence. You expect the ungrazed right of way to look somewhat more lush.

But when the far side of the fence has been chomped and nibbled down to golf green height (or bare dirt) and is festooned with weeds, brush and cactus, you have to guess that something is wrong. Also, I've never seen a cow trying very hard to leave the right of way to get back into the pasture.

John Bailey
Niland, California

Jeff DeBonis tells how agency employees can speak out

Jeff DeBonis worked until last February as a timber planner on the Willamette National Forest. While there, he earned a reputation as the Forest Service's most outspoken dissident, in the process charting new ground in defining the free speech rights of federal employees.

In July 1989, DeBonis, the Forest Service, the Office of General Counsel and the U.S. Attorney's Office came up with the Willamette Guidelines for Voicing Opinions and Conducting Outside Activities. The guidelines are designed to help employees determine "whether activities exceed appropriate bounds." They are posed as a series of questions:

- Does the activity impair employee discipline?
- Does it interfere with the harmony and effectiveness of co-workers?
- Does it impede the performance of the employee's duties?
- Does it interfere with the regular operation of the agency?
- Does it discredit the agency; and
- Does the activity violate work rules? Government time should be reserved for government work.

The guidelines also state that there are few if any legal precedents for determining the limitations of free speech within the Forest Service. The closest is probably the 1968 Supreme Court case, *Pickering versus Board of Education*. That ruling stated that courts must balance on a case-by-case basis the free speech rights of employees against the interest of the employer in the efficient performance of public service.

According to the National Federation of Federal Employees, it is best for agency workers to steer clear of partisan politics, but okay for them to join

non-partisan organizations, write to Congress and participate in activities as private citizens.

It all sounds complicated, but DeBonis says the rules for speaking out are really very simple.

"You really only have to do three things to protect yourself. You always have to state that you're speaking as an individual and not as an employee; you have to not be getting rich off your speaking; and you have to not lie or say anything slanderous."

DeBonis adds, however, that agency managers and supervisors may continue to pose problems.

"The rub is that most managers do not know what the free speech guidelines are," he says. "The classic example is that they tell you to shut up. That's an absolute violation of civil rights ... The other problem is that most employees believe what the managers tell them."

DeBonis also cautions that fighting the management is no easy task. "Even if the employee knows he's right intuitively, going through the courts is time consuming, costly and stressful. It's kind of a no-win deal."

Given the high costs of expressing unpopular political views, DeBonis warns temporary employees to stay low. "Temporaries are often the most interested in speaking out, but they're also the most vulnerable — management can always just terminate them. The easy excuse is that they ran out of money."

DeBonis' organization, the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, offers advice and guidance to agency dissidents. For more information, contact the group at Box 11615, Eugene, OR 97440 (503/484-2692).

— Florence Williams



LETTERS

CATTLE WILL BE CONTROLLED

Dear HCN,

Over the last several years, I have read a lot of Tom Wolf's writing — mostly because he has been a friend and co-worker for much of that time. I have learned that Tom, in addition to being a good writer, is never one to let the facts get in the way of a good story (or a good intro). Contrary to his assertion in the beginning of his piece on Pete Tatschl (HCN, 3/12/90), there is nothing in the Gray Ranch sale agreement that requires The Nature Conservancy to permit the previous lessee to stock the ranch with additional cattle. The sale agreement permitted the previous lessee to retain the few steers that were on the ranch at the time of the sale. There was certainly no agreement obligating the Conservancy to accept the kinds of increases that Tom mentioned in his article.

All of the discussions relative to grazing that have occurred so far have included limiting the stocking rate to about half of Tom's figure. Any new grazing plan would also exclude cattle from sensitive habitats (including riparian areas and wetlands). What role grazing may play in the long term management of the property has not been finally decided. It seems likely that some of the ranch's less sensitive grasslands will continue to support grazing. However, everyone who has actually been involved in stewardship planning has agreed that some reductions in the number of cattle and exclusion of grazing from sensitive habitats are necessary to achieve the Conservancy's primary protection goals.

The Conservancy has a lengthy and impressive record of working with livestock interests on grazing lands in the western United States. We have many preserves and cooperative projects in which grazing is an integral part of the management strategy. However, the preservation of biological diversity and the integrity of natural systems come first. To the extent that we can work with producers to continue traditional uses of land, these uses must be compatible with our primary goals of protecting natural diversity. No one involved in the decision-making process on Gray Ranch has suggested that we compromise those goals.

Ben Brown
Lakewood, Colorado

The writer is director of The Nature Conservancy's Rocky Mountain Heritage Task Force.

Tom Wolf replies:

On March 22, The Nature Conservancy verbally informed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that it will keep the Gray Ranch for at least two to five years and possibly longer. No explanation was offered, and none has appeared since



then. This is quite a change from a long-term understanding among conservationists that TNC would sell the ranch to the American public for management as a national wildlife refuge.

Therefore, I welcome Ben Brown's realization that I write to learn more, not just to say what I know. Since it is the only word from TNC, I also welcome Ben's commitment in print that The Nature Conservancy will not stock the ranch beyond 7,500 or so steers. Around 5,000 are there now. Last year's 15,000 was the highest in history. Combine this with dry conditions and the 1989 fire that burned 50,000 acres of the ranch, and you could cause some real hurt.

If the Gray Ranch were public, we would have public accountability in decision-making through the NEPA process. Since we now know it will remain private and (presumably) closed to the public, as it has always been, we can only hope that responsible TNC scientists like Ben will insist on the kinds of public accountability and peer review that make for good science and sound management decisions commensurate with the ranch's biodiversity values.

I regret that TNC stubbornly refuses to explain its decision to shut out the public or to say in print just what its goals are. Many people inside and out of TNC are dismayed by this behavior, which erodes our favorite conservation organization's credibility. I believe that the conservation community deserves a say in managing this world-class resource. Since when has *glasnost* hurt anyone?

In the meantime, concerns continue to mount over such issues as public access and TNC's competence to manage a 500-square-mile ranch on the Mexican border. On his last visit (March 22) to the ranch before the Big Surprise, Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Charlie Ault told me he discovered the fresh vandalism of an important archaeological site, one of hundreds scientists know exist on the ranch. Incidents like this do not create confidence in TNC's ability to police a cultural resource that could yield important information (based on a pre-Columbian perspective) on how and whether these desert grasslands co-evolved with grazing — and therefore on how and whether to continue to graze the ranch.

Many of TNC's friends are not aware of the constant struggle within the organization between the money-and-real-estate sharks and biologists like Ben. I hope his letter is a sign that the latter will prevail, and that TNC's "Thought Police" will open up the Berlin Wall they have erected around the Gray Ranch. *We are all in this together!* It's fair for all of us to continue to ask TNC "Where's the beef?"

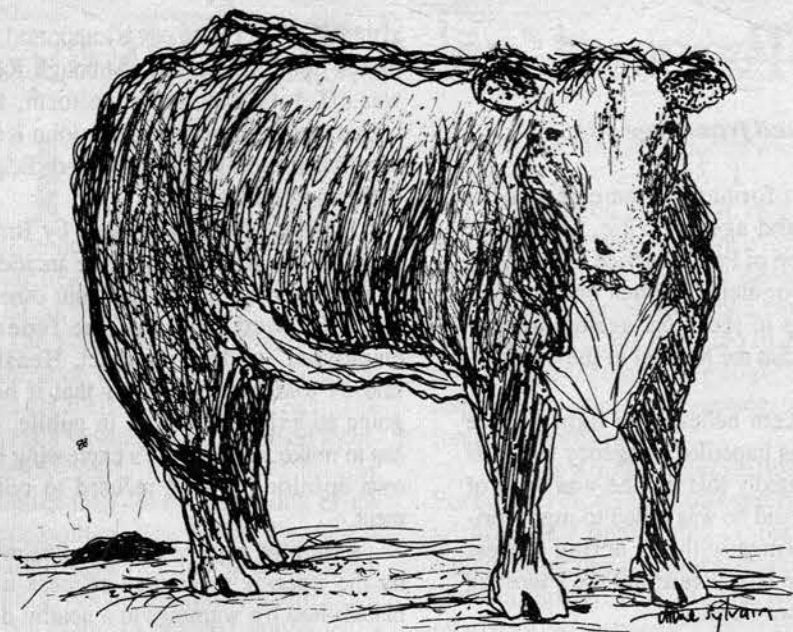
Tom Wolf
Santa Fe, New Mexico

RANCHING CAN'T BE REFORMED

Dear HCN,

A line from Ed Marston's recent article on public lands ranching (HCN, 3/12/90), fits perfectly into the "Reform" section of a book I'm writing:

"But total eviction of the cattle and sheep would not be much of a victory. The real victory will be reform of public land ranching so it becomes an asset to the West rather than its present liability." — Ed Marston



More feedback on grazing in the West

Reform is fine — except when that to be reformed is inherently impractical. Given enough hidden subsidization, special assistance and misinformation, banana plantations in Minnesota could be made to seem practical. Public lands ranching has been undergoing reformation since the early 1900s; today, little has changed.

My book mentions dozens of legislative acts and amendments, policy directives, and court rulings designed to reform ranching; some have slightly reformed the agencies, but all combined have not much changed public lands ranching. For example, though the Natural Resource Defense Council's 1973 lawsuit forced the BLM to go through the motions of preparing EIS's for 212 areas on 150 million acres, the EISs have resulted in little discernible benefit to the land.

Still, even most conservationists remain under the delusion that the solution is to study ecology and reform ranching accordingly. Does understanding (1) how bananas grow and (2) Minnesota ecology make growing bananas in Minnesota practical? Wouldn't a more reasonable approach be to decide not how but if public lands should be ranched?

If government were somehow forced to reform ranching administration to fully protect the environment and public interest, what would happen? It would quintuple the grazing fee; eliminate subsidies; end predator and pest programs; ban livestock from environmentally sensitive areas; drastically cut remaining livestock; strictly enforce all grazing regulations; disallow monopolization; eliminate "advisory" boards, unfair laws, and special political consideration ... in other words, it would essentially shut down the vast bulk of public lands ranching. What little remained wouldn't justify the infrastructure needed to keep it going!

With public lands ranching, mitigation is like putting band-aids on severed limbs. Reform is a pipe dream.

I remain bewildered that Ed Marston continues to be so staunchly enamored of ranching romanticism in the face of ranching reality. Surely, *that* many of your subscribers and contributors can't be stockmen? Ed Marston writes that ranching has damaged most public land, yet he invariably concludes that saving public lands ranching must be the bottom line. Why? Please, get serious! Ranching romanticism is pleasant and popular, but it doesn't save the environment ...

Lynn Jacobs
Tucson, Arizona

DAGGETT IS ANTAGONISTIC

Dear HCN,

Dan Daggett, in his March 26, 1990, article, wants your readers to believe Arizona ranchers "are making it clear that on public lands we can have either ranching or wildlife, not both."

Mr. Daggett was a member of what became known as the "6-6 Committee." This committee was composed of six ranchers and six environmentalists. It attempted to negotiate a compromise to Arizona's current stockkiller law. The article expressed Mr. Daggett's frustration with legislative proceedings on this bill, but does not mention his efforts as a 6-6 Committee member.

I find it encouraging that six Arizona ranchers did sit down in a spirit of cooperation with six environmentalists to negotiate a bill suitable to both interests. I can appreciate Mr. Daggett's aggravation with the legislative outcome, but to state that ranchers are encouraging either a ranching or wildlife situation on public land is not true or correct.

At the same time the 6-6 Committee was meeting, the Arizona Big Game Ranching Study Committee was discussing the feasibility of establishing a program for ranchers and landowners to recover costs associated with big game on their property. Discussions focused primarily on elk. During these meetings the livestock industry never spoke of wanting an either/or situation of wildlife or ranching on public land. The industry emphasized the need to manage habitat and the grazing animals which impact the habitat. In fact, most of the ranchers testifying spoke with pride of their personal contributions toward benefiting wildlife on their ranches.

Mr. Daggett's perception and that of the livestock industry may differ as to what measures need to be taken to restore a balance. The discussion between different interest groups should focus on these measures.

The tone of Mr. Daggett's article is antagonistic. It strains not only the good will of the ranchers who worked with him on the 6-6 Committee, but other ranchers as well. The "either ranching or wildlife" scenario exists only in Mr. Daggett's imagination. It is not a reality on Arizona's public lands. Public land ranchers are working to assure we have both.

Stephen M. Williams
Phoenix, Arizona

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Public land users denounce wilderness

by Betsy Marston

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — One freelancer said of this third annual National Wilderness Conference that covering it was his penance for writing about environmentalists all year.

Instead of talking about the need for more wilderness, or perhaps debating what ought to become wilderness, the conference in late March brought together advocates of no more "useless" acres. Useless because wilderness bars all-terrain vehicles, logging, mining, dirt bikes, and eventually, they predicted, grazing. A bumper sticker on sale summed up the prevailing attitude: "Wilderness: Land of no use."

The tone wasn't hostile, however, and the group of about 250 looked to be a gathering of ranchers — mostly prosperous, male and white.

Everyone seemed to be there, even groups with not much in common except a desire to gain access to public land for their particular recreation, industry or mission. The guru for this growing coalition, which is becoming increasingly skilled in presenting its case to politicians and the world, is Grant Gerber. He runs an outfit called the Wilderness Impact Research Foundation, based in Elko, Nev. In just three years, Gerber says, his coalition across the country has come to speak for 17 million people.

Gerber's WIRF was a key organizer of the get-together along with the Mountain States and Pacific legal foundations and hundreds of supporters such as motorcycle and snowmobile dealers and clubs.

Participants came from the American Mining Congress, Farm Bureau Federation, the FBI, Garfield County, Utah, which is fighting a long battle against environmentalists who don't want the Burr Trail paved, the National Cattleman's Association, National Rifle Association, American Petroleum Institute, Nevada Sportsmen and Outdoorsmen, United Four Wheel Drive Association, and even the Defense Department, which seeks a vast amount of Western land and air space to practice low-level flights and increase the accuracy of bombardiers.

The military spokesman talked gingerly about the Air Force's proposal to expand Idaho's Saylor Creek bombing range. It is an explosive issue that has bound together unlikely bedfellows: ranchers and environmentalists who oppose a plan that would bring 48 sonic booms a day to rural desert and canyon country. But no one in the audience questioned the Pentagon's Douglas B. Hansen, director of base closure and utilization in Washington, D.C.

Besides the user groups at the conference, who talked to each other about making common cause against federal land management agencies, speakers included politicians who dropped in to press the flesh and ask for support. Among them was Utah's Gov. Norm Bangerter, R, who advocates no more wilderness for his state. Given the birth rate in Utah, which is two and a half times the national rate, Utah needs a healthy, growing economy. That means multiple use of public lands, he said.

Former Utah Rep. Don Marriott, R, wasn't on the program, but he stopped by the Hilton to tell the group he planned to unseat Rep. Wayne Owens, D. No one at the conference had a kind word for Owens, who has introduced legislation



to create 5.1 million acres of wilderness on Bureau of Land Management lands.

Idaho Sen. Steve Symms, R, gave a major talk, asking conferees to help fight the "lockup" of wilderness. The 90 million acres of existing wilderness, he said, are "denied to most American workers, sportsmen, even wildlife managers."

Predictably, speakers talked about those who backed the creation of wilderness as elitist — anti-business, anti-Christian, anti-community and family, urban, affluent, overly educated and arrogant. What was disturbing and frustrating, several people said, was that the environmental movement had gained political power.

In Nevada, for example, Congress recently passed a wilderness bill against the wishes of some of the state's elected officials. Through a too-friendly media and clever, distorted propaganda, the conference seemed to agree, environmentalists were getting their way.

This underdog scenario was an often sounded theme. When Utah ranchers talked of a recent slaughter of cattle and burning of out-buildings, the theme took on a more violent note: The preservationists — the preferred word rather than environmentalists — are winning and will do anything necessary to keep on winning, it was said.

Why had the traditional power bases eroded? No one addressed how this amazing turnaround occurred, this dramatic reversal in the fortunes of once-powerful miners, ranchers and timber companies. The only explanation was media manipulation and urban dominance. What held this vague analysis together was a single word: conspiracy.

Van Sorensen of Elko, Nev., said preservationists don't even want wilderness in the West. What they really want is to challenge the very underpinnings of America.

Sorensen, the father of 10, whose family goes back 100 years in his community, recalled that Genesis in the

Bible instructs man to have dominion over every living thing.

Preservationists, whom he called obstructionists, want to lock up land as wild because they reject Christianity. The real goal is to create wilderness in order to worship the earth itself, he explained.

Margaret Allender, a California consultant to the mining industry, took a different tack. She told the group that organization at the grassroots level was what wilderness foes needed to do. At field hearings on the proposed California desert wilderness bill, Allender said, she helped organize opponents who outnumbered the pro-wilderness folks and surprised the politicians. Wilderness was a great concept in 1964, she concluded, but at some 90 million acres now, the movement had "gotten out of hand."

Two economists explained why they thought wilderness was of no use locally. George F. Leaming, an Arizona consultant, was hired by Garfield County to analyze the economic effects of wilderness in southern Utah counties. Leaming said his research proved that wilderness cost towns, counties and Utah billions in lost revenue.

Leaming never spelled out how he arrived at his precise figures of loss from minerals never extracted, from mechanized recreation denied, from sales revenues foregone, and from grazing prohibited — even though the Wilderness Act permits grazing. According to Leaming, Owens' 5.1 million acres wilderness bill would deprive the state of \$13.2 billion over a 25-year period and cause the loss of 133,000 jobs as well.

In answer to a question, Leaming said no benefits come from wilderness, only decline. To a question about his proof that grazing is always eliminated from wilderness, Leaming said "that is the reality" but he provided no statistics.

Another economist, Bruce Godfrey of Utah State University, presented Forest Service statistics about wilderness

users. People who visit wilderness, he said, come with their families, are mainly urban, well educated and well paid, visit a wilderness on weekends, and spend their money mostly at home.

Unlike Leaming, Godfrey allowed that the Wilderness Act really wasn't about direct economic benefit to nearby communities. The law, he said, talks about solitude and no roads.

In all the rhetoric about making money and having mechanized fun, Godfrey was the one of the few speakers who mentioned words from the Wilderness Act itself, surely one of the most eloquent laws in America.

The law talks about wilderness as a place where humans are visitors, where what counts when one visits is an outstanding opportunity for solitude, where wilderness is "devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical uses."

In an address to Forest Service officials in 1988, Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., said, "Congress does not designate wilderness primarily for recreation. The foremost purpose of the National Wilderness Preservation System is to preserve the resource of wilderness with its natural ecosystems, wildlife populations and benefits to society."

Patrick Reed, a research scientist at the University of Georgia, disputes Leaming's figures on wilderness use. In recent papers he pointed out, as no one at the anti-wilderness conference noted, that wilderness was created and will continue to be created by Congress because people have a deep and emotional need to preserve the most beautiful and intact lands for all generations.

Wilderness isn't a mistake and it isn't a conspiracy. What seemed sad in Utah was that so many people think of it as a loss, a burden foisted upon them, rather than a gift.

16-High Country News — May 7, 1990

BULLETIN BOARD

THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE STORY

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition's annual meeting May 18-20 in Teton Village, Wyo., will focus on the people, wildlife and landscape of the park and its surrounding area. The theme is "The Greater Yellowstone Story: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," and speakers include Story Clark, environmental activist in the Jackson Hole area; Tom McNamee, who will read from his book *The Grizzly Bear*; Charles Wilkinson, law professor at the University of Colorado; and Terry Tempest Williams, writer and naturalist. Lisa Morgan and the Three Rivers Dance Company will also perform "A Dance of Cranes" during the conference, and six field trips are available. Write to Gwen Arnesen, GYC, PO Box 1874, Bozeman, MT 59715 (406/586-1593).

THE THOREAU TRADITION

"In the Thoreau Tradition, A Conference on Nature and the Written Word" is set for May 24-26 in Missoula, Mont. Sponsored by Northern Lights Research and Education Institute, and by Hellgate Writers, Inc., a regional center for the literary arts also based in Missoula, the conference features writers William Kittredge, Peter Matthiessen, W.S. Merwin, Gary Nabhan, Robert Richardson and Terry Tempest Williams. For more information contact Northern Lights Institute, PO Box 8084, Missoula, MT 59807 or call 406/721-7415.

PESTICIDE WORKSHOP

The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides brings its "Pesticide Reform Workshop" to Boise, Idaho, May 12. It is one in a series designed to inform communities about pesticide use and abuse in their area. Speakers include Will Whelan, a lobbyist from the Idaho Conservation League, Darcy Williamson, citizen activist, and Jim Ellis, secretary-treasurer of the Idaho Honey Industry Association. For more information about this and other workshops, write to the NCAP field office, PO Box 8801, Moscow, ID 83843 (208/882-9532).

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The Colorado Trail Foundation invites hikers, bikers and horseback riders to the "All User Pancake Breakfast" May 19 on the Colorado Trail. The group hopes volunteers who helped build the trail and some trail users can get to know each other. The breakfast will be in the Meadows Group campground alongside the Colorado Trail near Bailey, just outside of Denver. For more information, call Charlotte Briber at 303/756-0787.

WCC TO CELEBRATE 10

Soon after it began, the coalition Western Colorado Congress fought and defeated Colorado-Ute Electric Association's plan to build a large, unnecessary powerline. These days, WCC's issues have multiplied, its members have grown to 1,200, and the group has even more victories to talk about. WCC convenes for its 10th annual meeting, "Celebrating the '80s, Challenging the '90s," on May 12 at the Palisade Community Center in Palisade, Colo. The conference features a keynote address by University of Colorado law professor Charles Wilkinson, followed by a three-member panel composed of Pat Sweeney, director of the Western Organization of Resource Councils, Pamela Lifton-Zoline, founder and director of the Telluride Institute, and Chuck Worley, local activist. Six workshops are also planned as well as a dinner talk by actor Dennis Weaver. For more information, contact WCC offices in Montrose at 303/249-1978 or in Durango at 303/259-3583.

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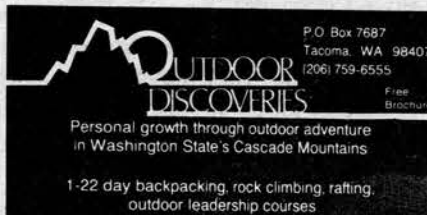
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