

Radiation victims finally
heard by Congress — See page 11

High Country News

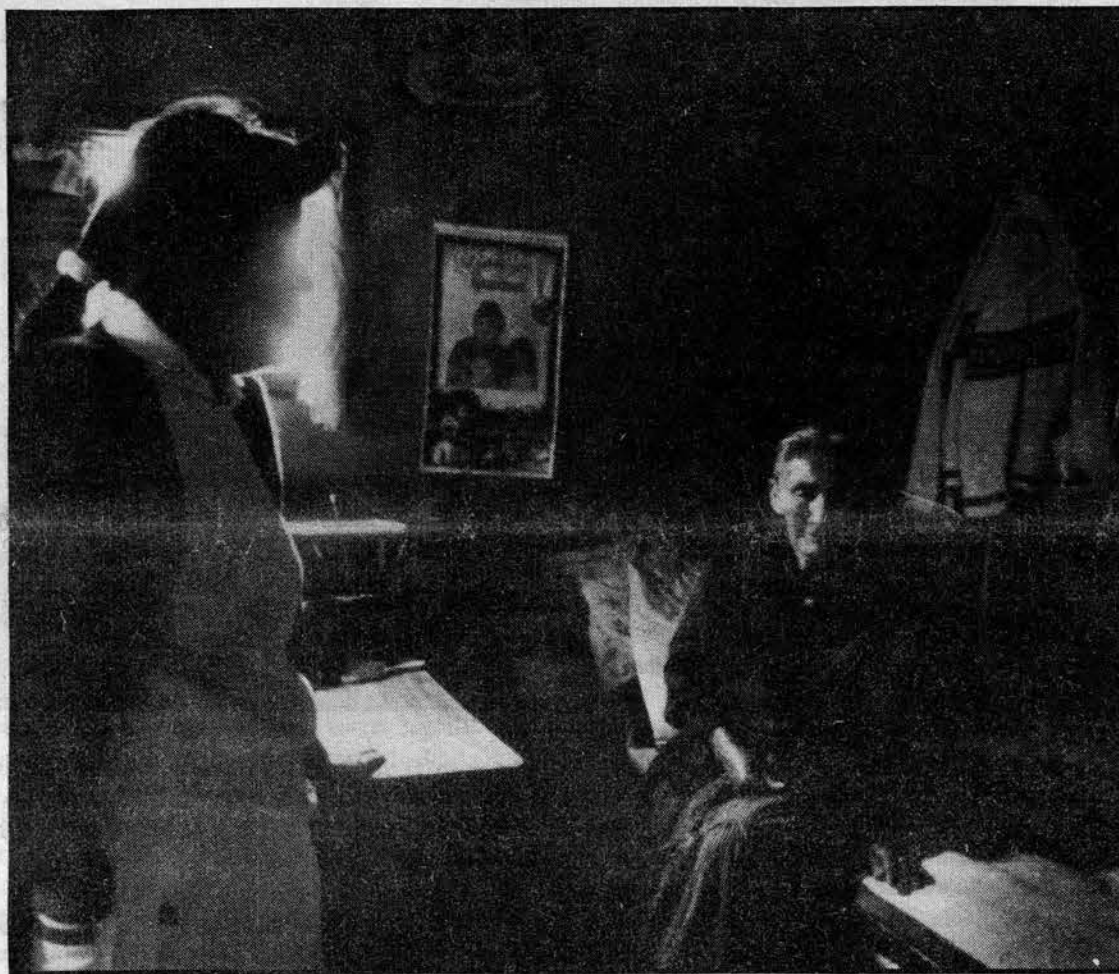
June 18, 1990

Vol. 22 No. 12

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

URANIUM HAS DECIMATED NAVAJO MINERS



Kaylyn Devaney

Elsie Tapaha, with daughter Ellen, left, lost her uranium-miner husband to lung cancer

by Tony Davis

COVE, Ariz. — Cato Johnson considers himself lucky. He spent 21 days flat on his back from an auto accident in 1966.

While hospitalized, the then-uranium miner started spitting blood, Johnson said. Doctors told him he had tuberculosis and urged him to quit the nearby uranium mines where he'd worked five years, he recalled.

So he did.

Since then, six of the other seven men who worked on his shift have died of lung cancer, Johnson said, as have two of his brothers, Chester and Billy, who also worked in the mines.

"I'd worked in the mines two years, then I started spitting a little blood. But I would just hide it," Johnson said. "It was the only job around, so you never complained."

Uranium was king in Cove during the 1940s, '50s and early '60s. The U.S. government paid numerous companies to

blast the yellowcake ore from mines in the surrounding hillsides for ultimate use in nuclear weapons.

Since the early 1970s, numerous studies by the U.S. Public Health Service and the University of New Mexico Tumor Registry have linked uranium mining to high levels of cancer among former Anglo and Navajo uranium miners. Some studies have found lung cancer rates among miners, including non-smokers, of up to five times that of the average American.

At least eight former uranium miners from the Cove area have died of lung cancer, and in this Navajo community of 1,000 just west of the New Mexico state line, many families are trying to cope with the loss of loved ones and the sight of numerous others slowly dying from lung cancer.

For widows and daughters of ex-miners, survival means Social Security checks, scrounging to find someone to help the family chop wood and raise sheep, and trying to rebuild traditions that were torn apart.

To treat the lung cancer, Cove fami-

lies have tried hospitals, medicine men and Pentecostal tent healing services. Nothing has worked.

Some ex-miners have visited doctors regularly from the time of their first coughing spell. The Public Health Service Hospital in Shiprock still regularly treats miners for cancer and other respiratory ailments. Others wait to go to the hospital until they can barely walk. Some miners' widows and families say their belief in God has kept them strong through their suffering. One of them is Fanny Yazzie, who lives in neighboring Oak Springs. She lost her husband, Clifford, to lung cancer at age 62 in 1972.

"If he hadn't been working in the uranium mines, he wouldn't have died," said Yazzie, who has raised 14 children. There are hundreds of sheep around her small cinderblock house in the heart of red rock canyon country. "But it happened."

And some families have been fighting for more than 10 years in the courts and in Congress to get financial compensation.

But in this highly traditional Navajo

town, where paved roads are a dream and outhouses a reality, many others cope by discussing uranium with their families as little as possible.

"If you have cancer from uranium mining, people know there is no cure for it," said Jasper Joe, who ran Cove's social service programs until recently becoming an assistant dean at Navajo Community College in Shiprock. "They don't want to talk about it, because they know there is nothing but death."

That's how Inez Spencer feels about her 86-year-old father who may have lung cancer from his days as a uranium miner — she never talks about uranium to him.

Spencer's father, John Walter, has a lump on his neck, the kind that has preceded lung cancer in other ex-miners.

His breath is occasionally short, he takes medication for a heart ailment and he must rest in bed after short walks.

"To me, if I even mention the mines to him, it just makes it worse," Spencer said. "I just think about the others who

(Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

(ISSN/0191/5657) is published biweekly, except for one issue during July and one issue during January, by the High Country Foundation, 124 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. Second-class postage paid at Paonia, Colorado.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

Subscriptions are \$24 per year for individuals and public libraries, \$34 per year for institutions. Single copies \$1.00 plus postage and handling. Special Issues \$3 each.

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Articles appearing in *High Country News* are indexed in *Environmental Periodicals Bibliography*, Environmental Studies Institute, 800 Garden St., Suite D, Santa Barbara, California 93101.

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Visitors

Tony Davis, who writes for *High Country News* out of New Mexico, has communicated with us by mail and telephone, and attended an HCN potluck in Santa Fe a couple of years ago. But, as with 90 percent of our freelance writers, he has never seen the paper's home base.

For a while, it seemed he never would. He was less than 100 miles away — in Glenwood Canyon — when his 1987 Nissan Sentra lost a pulley on a defective water pump that then ricocheted under the hood, taking out part after part. After an unplanned night in Glenwood Springs, Tony rented a car and trekked over McClure Pass to see our offices, and, incidentally, one of his own stories about to go to press.

Mike Clarken of Boulder, Colo., on his way home from southern Utah, where he had been hiking with friends in Escalante, Willow and Coyote creeks, reached HCN's offices with considerably less trouble.

And former subscriber John Barbee, on vacation from his job as associate director of the Peace Corps in Malawi, Africa, also got to Paonia with no trouble. He brought word of former HCN intern Tom Mullen, now working as a Peace Corps hydrologist in Malawi. We also got a letter from Mike Kustudia, who interned here in 1985 or so, and who is now with the Peace Corps in the Philippines. Mike wrote a cheerful letter, despite his tale of devastated coral reefs, logged rainforests and impoverished people.

Subscriber Jeff Reynolds came by, lugging an 11-pound puffball mushroom that his spouse, Elisa Greco, found on her birthday in the hills above the Cyprus coal mine, just north of Paonia. Elisa, who does hydrology work for the mine, says the hills are alive this spring with giant mushrooms. The mushroom was also alive with lots of bugs and emitted a sweetish odor, but nevertheless looked good enough to eat.

Potluck

Jeff said they might bring the mushroom, or one like it, to the HCN potluck, which will take place at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, June 23, in the Paonia town park. By this time, readers within 100 miles should have received their invitations. If you have not, and would like to attend, give Linda Bacigalupi a call during business hours at 303/527-4898. The board of the High Country Foundation, the nonprofit entity that owns and operates *High Country News*, will meet during the day Saturday.

Awards

Development director Linda Bacigalupi tore herself away from her mailing lists and grant proposals last month to attend the Early Warnings conference in Minneapolis, Minn., sponsored by *Utne Reader*. The three-day event brought together an international group of environmentalists, writers, publishers and researchers. They discussed the effects of changing technology on environmental coverage and put together a group of publications to lobby the paper industry for recycled printing stock.

A highlight of the gathering was the Second Annual Alternative Press Award banquet. Linda got to accept, on behalf of HCN, top honors for regional reporting. She also got to meet HCN writer Peter Carrels, who attended from Aberdeen, S.D., and former HCN editor Joan Nice Hamilton, who now is with



New interns Ken and Sarah Wright (with dog Moki) model the new HCN t-shirts. The shirts are sized from medium to extra large and are available in white or grey with black print. Cost is \$10.

Sierra magazine in San Francisco.

Unfortunately, no one from HCN was in Mexico City to receive the paper's next award — this one from the United Nations Environment Programme. HCN was included in the programme's 1990 Global 500: The Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement. The citation read in part, "It covers the environment from the environmentalists' perspective, but has a reputation for recognizing the economic as well as the ecological realities of its region."

The paper was in interesting company. The description of *High Country News* in the awards booklet came right after that of Heheng Village, of the People's Republic of China, which was honored for increasing forest cover, decreasing pesticide use and increasing food production. The HCN listing was followed by Riel Huarani of Naples, Italy, a young Iriadamant-Micmac Indian honored for establishing the Young People's Planet international organization.

The United Nations Environment Programme can be reached at P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya.

Husband-wife interns

New intern Ken Wright has been living in Colorado since 1983, and is now working toward a master's degree

in journalism at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Born and raised in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, he says he loves New England but was "born 300 years too late to live there."

After completing a degree in hydrology at the University of New Hampshire in 1982, he worked for a while in Boston, where he got his first taste of writing as a technical writer. The urban lifestyle wore thin, though, and a year later he was a ski bum in Winter Park, Colo.

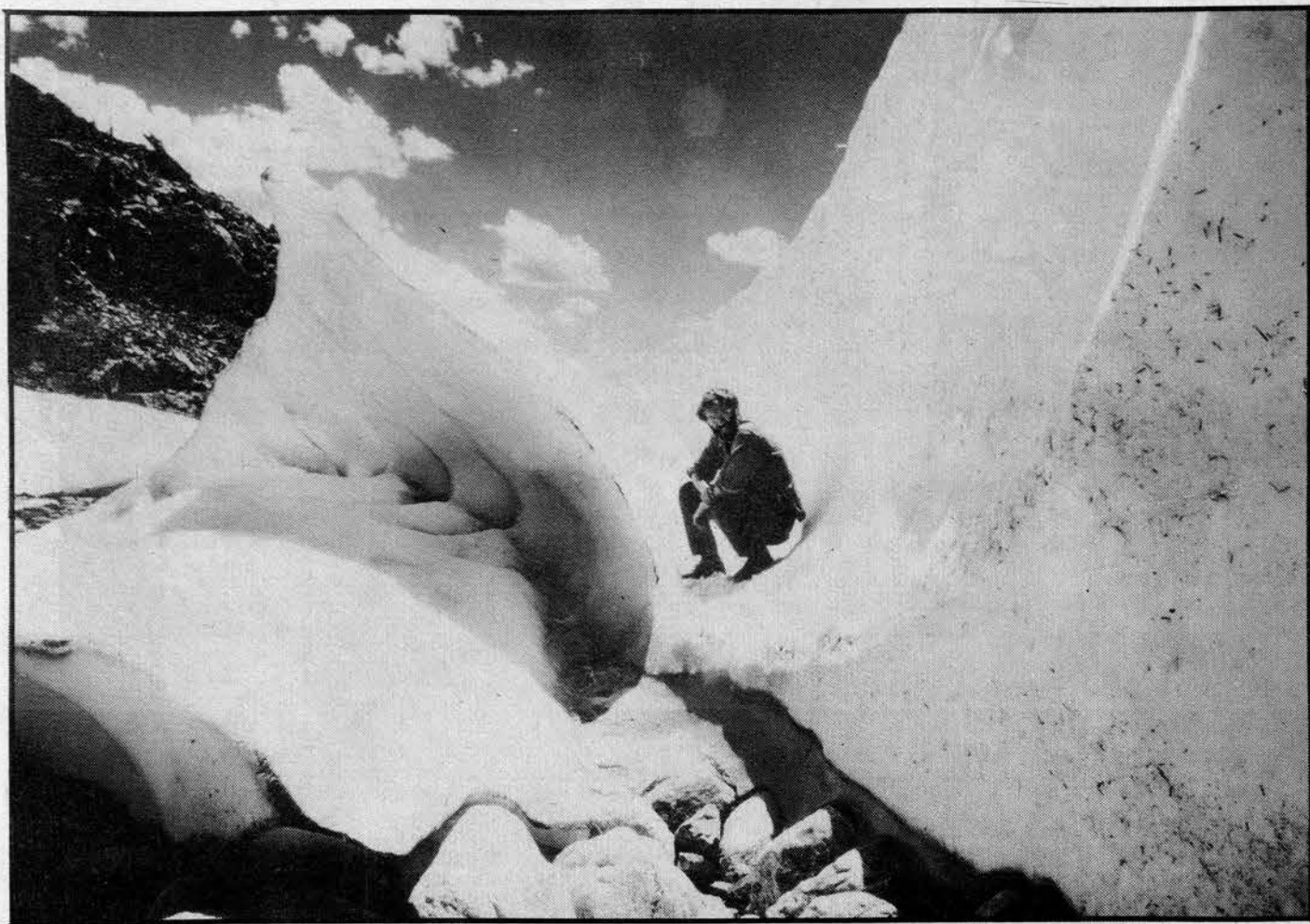
He has explored much of the Southwest, including a stint as a ranger at Natural Bridges National Monument in Utah. He has crossed Canada and wandered northern Europe. Most recently, he and his wife, Sarah, celebrated a hitchhiking honeymoon in the African countries of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Sarah didn't exactly plan it, but she is also doing some interning at HCN. A school psychologist in Jefferson County, Colo., she comes from Des Plaines, Ill. To support this summer's Paonia adventure, the couple will work as river guides on weekends on the Colorado and Arkansas rivers, jobs they worked full-time in the past few years.

— Ed Marston for the staff

Steve Ryder

WESTERN ROUNDUP



David Sumner

Summer snow formations in the Medicine Bow National Forest west of Laramie, Wyoming

Throttle your chainsaws, forest is told

A recent report on the administration of the Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming concluded that managers over-emphasize timber production at the expense of other resources.

The study marks the first time an independent committee has been asked to review the successes and failures of an individual forest plan. It also amounts to a professional indictment of national Forest Service policy as influenced by timber interests during the past decade.

Rocky Mountain regional forester Gary Cargill convened the five-person committee following complaints about management on the Medicine Bow from various local interest groups. "The Medicine Bow seemed to be the focus of attention and controversy from many sides," said forest spokesman Pat Thrasher.

Sitting on the review committee were Sidney Frissell, dean of the University of Montana's School of Forestry, Jay Hughes, dean of Colorado State University's College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Robert Lee, professor of forestry and sociology at the University of Washington, Charles Wilkinson, professor of natural resource law at the University of Colorado Law School, and Dan Perdue, state planning coordinator for Wyoming.

In language unusually strong and idealistic for an academic review, the report concluded: "The Medicine Bow National Forest operates out of a fundamental set of values and priorities, essentially found throughout the Forest Service, that imposes barriers to the best land management practices..."

"Ultimately, the Forest Service has yet to complete the transition from the agency's traditional emphasis on utilitarian values to a situation where these utilitarian concerns are fully permeated with Aldo Leopold's land ethic."

While the committee declined suggesting amendments or revisions to the existing Medicine Bow forest plan, it criticized the overall focus of the plan and pointed to problems in the forest's management.

"We find that there are several significant problem areas in the administration of the Medicine Bow National Forest. Most of these problem areas derive from an emphasis on the production of commercial wood products," stated the report.

The committee identified 11 areas needing change. Among them were management of biodiversity, clearcutting, riparian zones, roadless areas, below-cost timber sales, the sustainability of the timber cut and public involvement.

The national forest should better enforce grazing restrictions, find alternatives to clearcutting and establish a better program for monitoring the effects of timber harvesting on watersheds, said the report.

"We suggest that timber sales be planned as vegetation management projects," said the report. The vegetation units would jointly enhance wood production, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, water quality and biodiversity.

It was the hope of Cargill, who invited the team, and of the reviewers themselves that constructive criticism will help the Forest Service move quickly toward needed reform.

"This gives us the confidence of following through some of the efforts we've undertaken," said Cargill. "It reinforces our internal views, and suggests things we might not otherwise have done...such as incorporating community involvement."

Team member Lee agreed. "[Forest managers] are doing the best they can do, but they need outside help," he said. "This is a reality check for them. It's a flag. It says, 'Hey, you've not gone far enough,'" he added.

Mark Squillace, a member of the local group Friends of the Bow, testified before the review team. He was pleased with the report, but said he wanted to see more specific recommendations, such as a reduction in timber sales.

"I think what we're seeing is a change in public perception and attitudes," said Squillace. "The report essentially proved that these changing

values can be realized. We're optimistic."

Tom Troxel of the Intermountain Forest Industry Association also testified before the committee. He was less pleased. "We have concerns that the group thought the Medicine Bow was too slanted toward timber management," he said. "We don't see that bias." He added, "I don't have a problem with clearcutting. It's a really good management tool."

But Cargill said he hopes to follow most of the report's recommendations. The opinions of the committee, he said, will be incorporated into the agency's own five-year review of the forest plan.

He said he hopes to use such committees for evaluating other forest plans in Region 2, which includes Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota. The only limiting factor is the availability of qualified experts willing to donate their time, he said.

— Florence Williams

HOTLINE

A beef with Paul Newman

Timber industry workers are trying to make Paul Newman an endangered species in the Northwest. Loggers are angry at the movie star for narrating what they considered to be an anti-logging documentary, *Rage Over Trees*, which aired recently on the Turner Broadcasting Network. They have promised to boycott Burger Kings in Oregon and Washington until the hamburger chain stops using Newman's salad dressing and drops his name from its commercials. But a spokesman for Burger King said that Newman makes no money from the dressing, giving it away instead to charities. He also noted that Burger King depends on forests, using paper for "more than 90 percent" of its packaging.

HOTLINE

Forest Service withdraws oil and gas leases

Four conservation groups stopped the Forest Service from leasing public lands for oil and gas drilling on the Shoshone National Forest near Yellowstone Park. In an appeal by the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, The Wilderness Society, the Mineral Policy Center and the Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund charged that the Forest Service did not comply with the Endangered Species Act or the National Environmental Policy Act. Last month the Forest Service withdrew its decision rather than respond to the appeal. Fern Shepard, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney, applauded the agency's decision. "We are pleased that the Forest Service isn't fighting to defend these blatantly illegal leases," she said.



The case of the bubbling shoe

A 17-year-old jogger helped bring to light an environmental time bomb ticking away just three miles from downtown Salt Lake City, Utah. After accidentally running through some liquid flowing from a hazardous waste disposal site, one of the jogger's shoes began to bubble and disintegrate. The site was owned by a company called EKOTEK, which allegedly duped its customers into believing that its waste was being disposed of properly. But illegally stored hazardous waste, such as surplus napalm bombs, had been accumulating for years, AP reports. In its first-ever federal felony prosecution of environmental crimes in Utah, the U.S. Attorney General's office filed a 12-count indictment against the firm. "This case represents perhaps the most serious type of environmental misconduct," said U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. The now-defunct firm is charged with knowingly storing, burning and disposing of hazardous wastes in violation of state and federal laws. EKOTEK president Steven Self and vice president Steven Miller were named in the indictment; if convicted they could face up to 45 years in jail and a \$24 million fine.

Timber industry sues Forest Service

A timber industry coalition recently filed suit against the U.S. Forest Service to force it to comply with last year's congressional timber legislation. The law required the agency to sell 7.7 billion board-feet of timber by Sept. 30, although there has been disagreement as to whether that figure was a mandate or merely a target. With less than four months to go, the suit claims, less than four billion board-feet have been sold. Thousands of jobs are at stake, said John Hampton, chairman of the Northwest Forest Resource Council and one of the plaintiffs. "The Forest Service is not following the law and we will do everything possible to see that they do." Jerry Allen of the Forest Service in Portland said the agency has done everything possible to meet the quota, and would probably come within 5 percent of it by Sept. 30.

Wild salmon in Columbia basin said to be in great peril

Five Northwest scientific and conservation groups petitioned the federal government May 30 for an endangered species review of four wild salmon stocks in the Columbia River Basin.

At stake are not only the fish, but hatchery-based salmon fisheries, energy, irrigation and navigation throughout the Northwest.

"Our decision to seek protection of these salmon under the Endangered Species Act was not made lightly," said Bill Bakke of Oregon Trout, which led the petition effort.

"It's clear that extraordinary action is required to save them from their plunge towards extinction." Other petitioners are the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the Oregon and Idaho chapters of the American Fisheries Society and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center.

Historically, the Columbia River Basin supported salmon and steelhead trout "runs" — adults returning from the Pacific Ocean to upriver spawning streams — of 10-16 million fish annually. Today's runs average 2.5 million basinwide, perhaps 80-90 percent hatchery-produced.

The major reason for the decline is dam construction on the Columbia and Snake rivers. By one estimate, over 100 salmon and steelhead stocks — runs differing by species, migration, timing and/or drainage of origin — have already become extinct in the Columbia Basin. Another 22 species are in critical condition today.

The petitions seek review of three Snake River stocks: wild spring, summer and fall chinook salmon. 1989 runs of these stocks were, respectively, the seventh (13,000 fish), third (3,200 fish), and smallest (700 fish) on record. And most of those were hatchery-produced. The wild, or naturally spawning, component of each run is difficult to estimate, but is generally thought to be 10 percent or less of total run size.

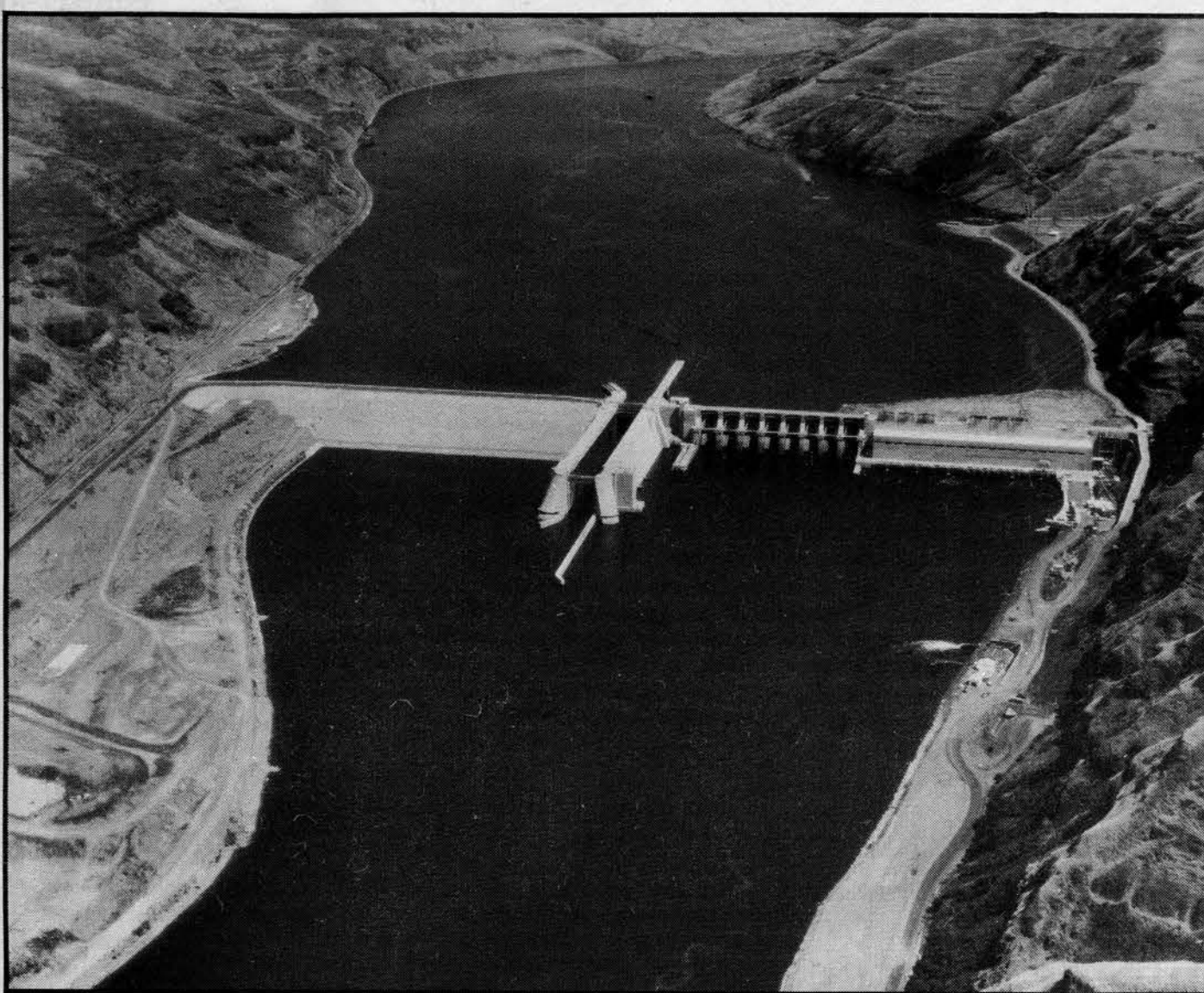
Though passage around dams, overfishing and habitat loss are all problems for these Snake River runs, fish advocates say the primary reason for their low numbers is flow. There is not enough water, thus water velocity, pushing the migrating juvenile salmon downstream each spring through the lower Snake and Columbia rivers, which are really a series of reservoir pools. Most juveniles die before reaching the ocean.

The petitions also ask for review of lower Columbia River wild coho salmon. There are large coho runs in the lower Columbia, but nearly all are hatchery-produced fish.

The petition claims that hatchery production, and the intensive commercial fishery built upon it, are major factors in the decline of wild coho. Oregon Trout's Bakke calls Northwest hatcheries, which annually release over 160 million salmon and steelhead smolts into the streams and rivers of the Columbia River Basin, "a narcotic, blocking our awareness of what is really going on."

The National Marine Fisheries Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, will conduct the Endangered Species Act review. The service has 90 days to decide if sufficient data exist to warrant listing. If so, the agency will undertake a full review, and must decide within a year whether to list any or all of the stocks. A recovery plan must be developed for any listed stocks.

The service already has one similar petition before it. On March 30, Idaho's Shoshone-Bannock tribes petitioned for



Lower Granite Lock and Dam on the Snake River in southeastern Washington

review of the Salmon River sockeye salmon run. This tiny remnant run spawns only in a few lakes in Idaho's Sawtooth Valley, 900 miles from the Pacific Ocean. In 1989, only two adult sockeye returned to these spawning grounds from the ocean.

Reaction to the petitions was mixed. Regional fishing and conservation groups urged immediate help for the fish. They asked mainly for higher flows during the spring migration from freshwater to the ocean to avert the possibly draconian consequences of listing.

"Maybe the petitions will be the cattle prod that finally makes those who run the Columbia River get serious about fish," said Ed Chaney, Idaho's pre-eminent salmon authority.

Columbia River Indian tribes, whose treaty rights grant them a unique role in salmon management, stayed silent. The tribes are strong, influential advocates for rebuilding Columbia River salmon and steelhead, but they also have a large, hatchery-based commercial and tribal salmon fishery. Since wild fish are taken incidentally in salmon harvest, endangered species listing for wild runs could reduce or shut down both the in-river and ocean tribal, commercial and sport fisheries.

The Northwest's electric energy godfather, the Bonneville Power Administration, quietly tried some months ago to discourage the petitions. But after the filing, BPA only asked for "an open, public broad-based review of salmon" and energy representation within the review process.

A utility spokesman warned that higher flows wanted by fish agencies could cost hydropower equal to five nuclear plants. An Idaho farm group voiced alarm over potential water raids on irrigation reservoirs.

Northwest politicians are inevitably viewing this petition in the flare of the spotted owl controversy now exploding around them.

Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield, R, for

one, doesn't want another runaway endangered species issue. Two months ago, he asked Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife for an immediate status report on the four runs — essentially a scientific preview of what the endangered species review is likely to conclude. Hatfield hinted he might bring all the affected Columbia Basin interests together to seek some common resolutions in advance of any listing decision.

Idaho's Chaney says doomsday scenarios are not inevitable to save Snake River salmon. "We've built a Columbia River that cogenerates energy, farms and navigation," he explains. "We can build a river that cogenerates energy, farms, navigation and fish."

"But the agencies have never done

the ground-up redesign to get us there," he continued. Instead they overlay fish flow needs on the existing system and then play Chicken Little. That doesn't make for sound regional policy in the public interest."

The opportunity for that redesign is at hand. Many of the contracts and agreements by which Columbia Basin dams and reservoirs operate are near expiration, and BPA has begun a multi-level, multi-year review of how to renew them.

"It's probably our last chance to integrate fish into the system," Chaney says.

— Pat Ford

Group says police, FBI dodge duty

Earth First! activists in California have charged Oakland police and the FBI with foot-dragging in the investigation of a car-bombing that injured two of their members. "The police have been acting as intimidators rather than investigators," said Brian Gaffney of Earth First!

Judi Bari suffered a broken pelvis and Darryl Cherney received less serious injuries when a bomb exploded in Bari's Subaru station wagon in Oakland May 24. The two were embarking on a trip to drum up support for "Redwood Summer," a protest against the rapid razing of northern California's ancient redwoods, when the bomb exploded. Police arrested the two and charged them with possession of explosives, but the district attorney postponed the initial arraignment until June 18 to give police more time to continue the investigation. Police reportedly suspect the couple of carrying the bomb after finding duct tape and wire in Bari's house. Bari is a carpenter.

Bari said she had been the target of

death threats. A few days after the bombing, a newspaper in northern California received a letter signed the "Lord's Avenger," claiming responsibility for the blast.

Earth First! has hired its own investigator to look into the case. As news of the blast spread across the country, vigils were held in several states, said Gaffney, and promises of help arrived from coast to coast. He added, "Support for Redwood Summer is stronger than ever."

— Jim Stiak



Foes hope to crush gravel quarry proposal

Clear Creek Canyon just west of Golden, Colo., is the site of a popular kayaking run, hiking trails and a two-lane traffic artery linking Boulder with western Colorado. The narrow, steep-walled canyon is also where Chicago developer O.R. Goltra intends to build the largest gravel mining operation in the state.

Goltra, a real-estate developer who owns land bordering the canyon, expects his Sheep Mountain Quarry to yield 100 million tons of gravel over the next 75 years.

Opponents of the operation say it would threaten wildlife, pollute water and air, and otherwise alter the pristine nature of the canyon. Located less than an hour's drive from Denver, Clear Creek Canyon attracts a steady flow of tourists, hikers and picnickers to Jefferson County.

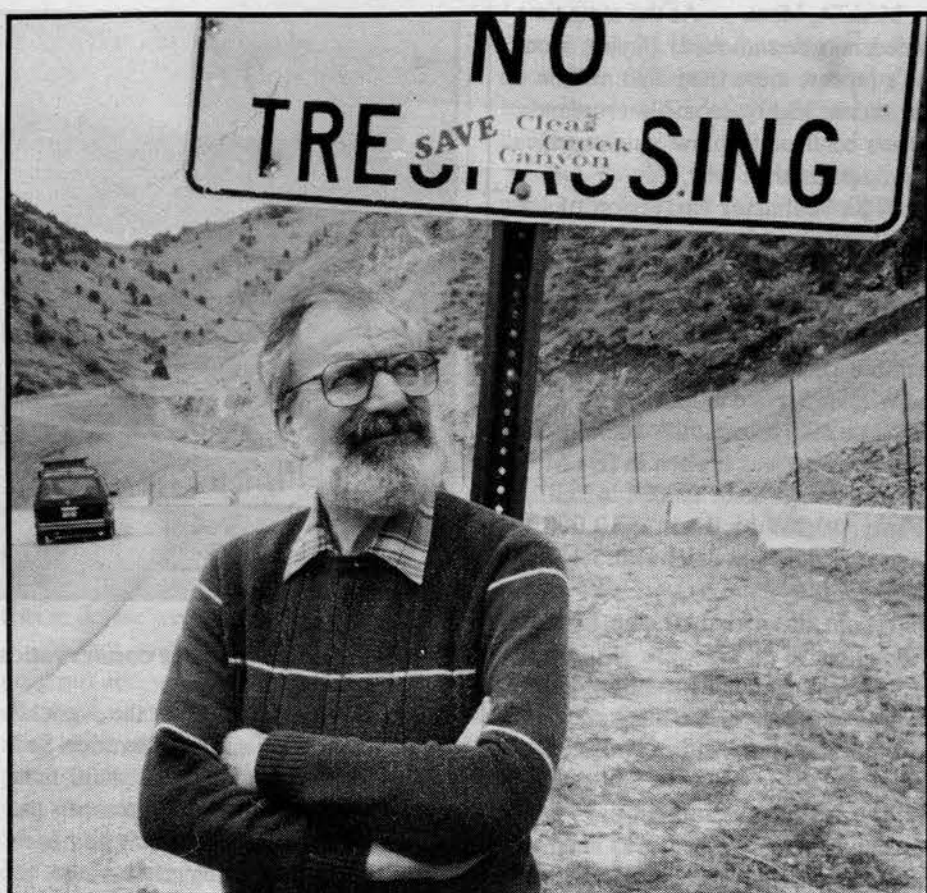
The steep streambank was once the site of Colorado's first railroad to penetrate the Rocky Mountains during the gold rush. Colo. Sen. Tim Wirth, D, calls it "the last great undeveloped canyon on Denver Metropolitan area's doorstep."

Goltra began extracting gravel from a tiny pocket of his land in the 1970s. In 1987, a Jefferson County bulldozer began carving a mining road from the canyon into the proposed quarry in exchange for free gravel. But with \$400,000 of work invested, the operation came to an abrupt halt following public outcry.

"No one else in this county got free roads built," notes resident Sharon Kent Freeman, who opposed the gravel operation.

The proposed Sheep Mountain Quarry would require up to 840 truck loads daily — about one per minute — entering or leaving U.S. Hwy 6. The operation would involve quarrying 320 acres on steep, south-facing slopes. In addition, Goltra plans a gravel processing plant in Guy Gulch, a fragile riparian area and tributary of Clear Creek, says Freeman.

A grassroots group called the Canyon Defense Coalition together with



Quarry opponent Howard Morton at the entrance to the Goltra property

the local Sierra Club have raised concerns over blowing dust, diesel fumes, heavy metal contaminants and damage to wetlands.

"The quarry will have more visual air impact than a coal-fired power plant," says coalition spokeswoman Jan Wilkins. The operation would also involve re-zoning the area from residential to industrial, a switch that does not sit well with many people who live there. They are awaiting a final decision on zoning from Jefferson County commissioners.

Goltra says he will mitigate environmental damage by offering to set aside 7,000 acres for a wildlife preserve during the life of the operation. But the preserve would only be temporary; eventually he hopes that land would be subdivided for residential homes.

The Colorado Environmental Coali-

tion says of that proposal: "To offer a temporary set-aside is to offer nothing."

Sierra Club activist Howard Morton has hiked the site of the proposed quarry, including the 8,500 acres owned by Goltra, and found the area already damaged by road-building. That helped him decide to run for Jefferson County Commissioner on an anti-quarry platform. Morton says there is no need for the gravel, especially now that proposed Denver Highway W470 appears dead after a recent voter referendum.

Says he: "Would we permit the destruction of this beautiful, pristine canyon for the narrow financial interests of a single, large landowner?"

For more information, contact the Canyon Defense Coalition, P.O. Box 509, Black Hawk, CO 80422.

— Florence Williams

HOTLINE

A deadly leak in Nevada

The discovery of jet fuel seeping into a pond at the Fallon Naval Air Station in Nevada has prompted a state investigation into the cause of the contamination. Heavy rains over a three-week period allowed the jet fuel to leach through water-logged soil into a small pond. The primary concern was to keep the fuel from then entering a ditch leading to the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, reports the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. The Stillwater refuge is a major resting and nesting area for waterfowl along the Pacific flyway. Extremely toxic, jet fuel can cause skin rashes, is harmful to the eyes and may cause cancer in humans. For wildlife, any exposure is usually fatal. Although Navy officials said the build-up of fuel occurred because of leaking underground storage tanks, whistle blowers told a different story to Nevada's Division of Environmental Protection. They said a large fuel spill occurred in February 1988, and was covered up. A pipeline malfunctioned, they said, and spilled 20,000-30,000 gallons of toxic fuel, some of which escaped near the refuge. Afterward, the whistle blowers said, remaining fuel was allowed to seep into the ground or was buried under piles of soil brought in by dump trucks.



Wolf opponents act

Farm Bureau Federations in three states have gone on the offensive against reintroducing wolves to the Yellowstone area. Bureaus in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho sent a petition, signed by over 30 other organizations, to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director John Turner asserting that no wolf shortage exists in the United States and Canada. "They're not in any way endangered or threatened," Larry Bourret, executive vice president of the Wyoming Farm Bureau, told the *Jackson Hole Guide*. With some 1,200 wolves in Minnesota, 6,000 or so in Alaska and some 40,000 in Canada, the question should be "Why are they on the list?" Bourret said. The northern Rocky Mountain wolf was placed on the Endangered Species list in 1973, and over the years a wolf recovery plan to direct reintroduction efforts was debated. An updated plan, completed in 1987, pinpointed three potential locations for reintroducing the wolf, one of which was the Yellowstone National Park area. Supporters of wolves in Yellowstone have set a goal of having 10 wolf packs with 10 members each. Interior Department spokesman Tom Wilson said the Fish and Wildlife Service has 90 days to examine and respond to the petition, but that scientific evidence must show that a species is inappropriately listed.

BLM is ripped at meeting on grazing

"Towards a Kinder and Gentler Cow" was the title of one of the workshops at eastern Oregon's 12th Desert Conference. But most conservationists attending didn't seem to believe such a creature exists. At the center of their doubts, and the conference itself, was the debate over public lands grazing.

Sponsored by Oregon, Idaho and Nevada conservation groups, the conference is held each spring at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge near Burns. This year's event attracted 170 people, who came mostly from Oregon.

Roy Elicker, of the Pacific Northwest Natural Resources Center in Portland, said conservationists were in "a state of transition" to a tougher attitude toward the Bureau of Land Management and ranchers. "From what I see here," Elicker said, "the BLM is never going to do the job."

Andy Kerr, conservation director of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, told the audience that he hopes the 1990s "will be an era of confrontation, not cooperation." He said the group won't participate in allotment management plans "except in deciding how to go about litigation."

A new BLM catch-phrase, "livestock grazing as a resource management

tool," caught a lot of flak. Conservationists said this was the approach that was damaging the public land. Kerr's and Elicker's groups, among others, called for removal of cattle from sensitive watersheds, and tightly controlled grazing elsewhere. Some people said grazing livestock on public lands should be totally eliminated.

A few ranchers attended as well. Ken Bentz, a local rancher and Harney County commissioner, admitted overgrazing was still a problem but maintained, "We've made tremendous progress" in eastern Oregon. He cited a trial project on the nearby Whitehorse Creek drainage that features grazing and fencing off critical streams.

Bentz, who has ranched for 40 years, worried about the conservationists' militancy. "We don't want to see what we have here destroyed," he said.

One of Oregon's high-visibility efforts to find common ground on grazing is under way in the Trout Creek Mountains. Last year, monitoring revealed that populations of Willow-Whitehorse cutthroat trout, a species found only in that range, had dropped by 90 percent since 1984. Habitat destruction by cattle was identified as the cause. A working group composed of

local ranchers, BLM staffers and the fishing group, Oregon Trout, developed a temporary solution: no grazing for three years in high altitude creeks, fencing 60 miles of stream and removal of 1,200 cattle from sensitive areas.

Several proposals for development concerned Oregon conservationists at the get-together. One was two 10-megawatt geothermal plants proposed for the Alvord Desert. Anadarko Petroleum Corp. of Santa Rosa, Calif., has already drilled one test well and a BLM official called the results "favorable to commercial development." Conservationists said further drilling could disrupt the aquifer feeding Borax Lake, the only home of a small fish, the Borax chub. Kerr's group and The Nature Conservancy are considering legal action to halt further development around the lake.

But Oregon Trout's Kathi Myron said her group has just protested the BLM's draft long-range management plan for the area because "it does not address our concerns for the fish."

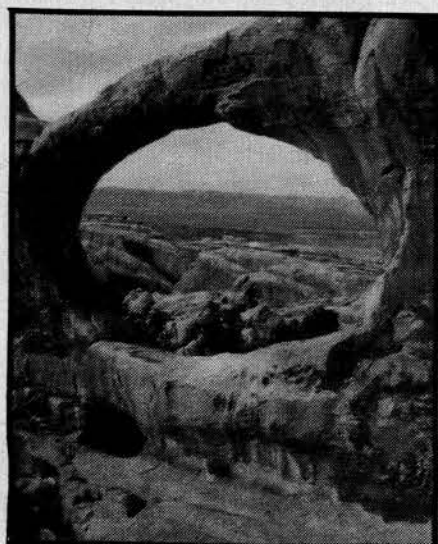
— Warren Cornwall

The writer is an HCN intern in Boise, Idaho, where he works with Northwest Regional Editor Pat Ford.

HOTLINE

Most endangered rivers

The national lobbying group, American Rivers, recently announced its "most endangered rivers" list for 1990. With the Two Forks Dam less likely, Colorado's South Platte River moved from the number one spot it held for two years to number two. The move bodes ill for its replacement, the Klamath River in Oregon. The Klamath, eligible for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers System because of outstanding fishing and boating, faces a major hydropower diversion proposed by the city of Klamath Falls. Other threatened rivers are the Penobscot River in Maine, American River in California, Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers in Idaho, Alsek and Tatshenshini rivers in Alaska and Canada, Passaic River in New Jersey, Cahaba River in Alabama, Jemez River in New Mexico and James River in Missouri. "The endangered rivers list is intended to raise the issue of river protection towards the top of our nation's environmental agenda," says Kevin Coyle, acting president of American Rivers.



Arches are multiplying

On May 2, less than one year after officials announced the 1,000th arch to be found in Arches National Park, a pair of self-proclaimed "arch fanatics" brought the number up to 1,500. But this last one wasn't easy to find. Moab, Utah, residents Steve Frederick and Chris Moore had to rope themselves between two rock fins in Devil's Garden to find number 1,500, named Swirly Slide Arch. Not just any hole in a rock will do when it comes to finding new arches. The Park Service lists four criteria: The opening must be natural; there must be a rock span; the opening between the span and nearby rock must be enough to let light pass through for at least three feet; and esthetics doesn't matter.

A green film fest

Though the first U.S. Environmental Film Festival, held April 27-29, drew only half the expected crowd, organizers say it was a success and are already planning next year's festival. Some 10,000 people came to Colorado Springs to view films on issues ranging from the Chernobyl disaster to the destruction of Brazil's rainforest. Of the 135 movies screened, 15 were premieres. Sam LaBuddé's expose of the tuna industry, *Where Have All the Dolphins Gone*, won Best of the Festival Award, and several notables, including farm-worker organizer Cesar Chavez and greenhouse-effect scientist Stephen Schneider, attended the event. One person not attending was the director of a premiere about the Chernobyl disaster. He recently died of radiation poisoning.

Taxpayers plowed by prairie-busting farmers

MALTA, Mont. — At the same time the federal government is paying Montana's farmers more than \$70 million a year to idle highly erodible croplands, farmers continue to plow native prairie for crop production.

"The Sodbuster Provision of the 1985 Food Security Act has failed to protect Montana's native prairie resources from conversion to cropland," concludes Jim Stutzman, the Montana farm bill coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Malta.

Since 1987, more than 56,000 acres of native range was broken in five Montana counties, he said: 22,008 in Phillips County, 10,209 in Blaine, 10,008 in Chouteau, 9,534 in Hill and 5,136 in Liberty.

About one-third of the farmers plowing native prairie were also receiving federal payments for idling highly erodible croplands under the Agriculture Department's Conservation Reserve Program.

The federal government pays farmers annually for 10 years to keep the erodible croplands in grass or other permanent cover.

The 1985 farm bill allows farmers to plow native prairie if they have an approved conservation plan, said Bob Graham, deputy state conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Bozeman. However, farmers could lose federal farm benefits if they plowed highly erodible native prairie without a conservation plan.

"One of the primary purposes of that legislation was to control erosion," Graham said. "Having an implemented conservation plan should do that."

The prescriptions for reducing soil erosion in the conservation plans reviewed by the Montana Wildlife Federation are of "doubtful effectiveness," said Tom France, the federation's attorney in Missoula.

"There is virtually no qualitative analysis and no serious evaluation of other non-soil values, such as watershed impacts or wildlife habitat. In short, there is little justification for labeling these efforts a 'conservation plan.'"

According to Soil Conservation Service figures, wind erosion whipped an average of 7.7 tons of soil per acre from Montana's croplands in 1987, compared to less than one ton per acre from rangelands. From 1982 to 1987, Montana lost one million acres of rangeland through plowing or other land-use changes, Graham said.

"As far as an agency concerned with conserving our natural resources, the more we can see left in range and pasture, the more pleased we are," he said.

Stutzman based his report on reviews of 4,000 conservation plans at the Soil Conservation Service's county



Some farmers receiving conservation payments also plow up prairie

offices. Neither the SCS nor the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, which administers the federal farm program payments, has figures on the amount of native prairie that has been plowed statewide during recent years.

Stutzman said he and Gary Sullivan at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge north of Great Falls selected the five counties because they had seen native prairie being broken there and because they were close to the refuges where they worked.

"We have no idea, really, what's happened in some of the southeastern parts of Montana," Stutzman said.

As a taxpayer, he is concerned that the federal government is paying some Montana farmers to put cropland back into grass while across the fence the same farmers are breaking up native prairie to continue production.

He suggested sodbuster provisions might be tightened during preparation of the 1990 reauthorization of the farm bill. Sodbuster provisions of the 1985 farm bill were in response to extensive plowing of native prairie during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Graham questioned whether 56,000 acres of native prairie had been broken in five Montana counties, as Stutzman's figures indicated. Some of the SCS officials in those counties indicated the figures included lands that had produced hay before being turned to cropland, Graham said.

"Based on our preliminary checking, it's somewhat less than what Jim's figures are indicating," Graham said.

Stutzman said he made every effort to determine when farmers were plowing native prairie as opposed to hay lands.

"I'm not saying that 56,000 acres is absolutely accurate," he said. "It might be more, might be less. I don't think it's significantly more or less."

Lands that are enrolled in the Con-

servation Reserve Program will be restored to a farmer's crop base — the basis for federal farm programs — after a decade, Graham said. He said he's heard rumors that some farmers with lands in the Conservation Reserve Program fear losing their crop base if they don't plow additional land.

"They're not losing what they think they are and don't have to do that," he said.

Don Anderson, ASCS state executive in Bozeman, said CRP lands are added back to a farmer's crop base at the end of each year and taken away as the lands are enrolled for the succeeding year.

"It's a bookkeeping thing here," Anderson said. "I just assumed it was designed maybe to reassure the producers they do get it back."

Stutzman's report indicates a continuing problem with the plowing of native range, said France of the Wildlife Federation. Farmers should not be allowed to plow native prairie while getting paid for idling highly erodible cropland, he said.

"From a conservationist's perspective, we would be better off in most instances paying farmers not to break out existing rangeland rather than paying them to restore lands that have already been farmed," France said.

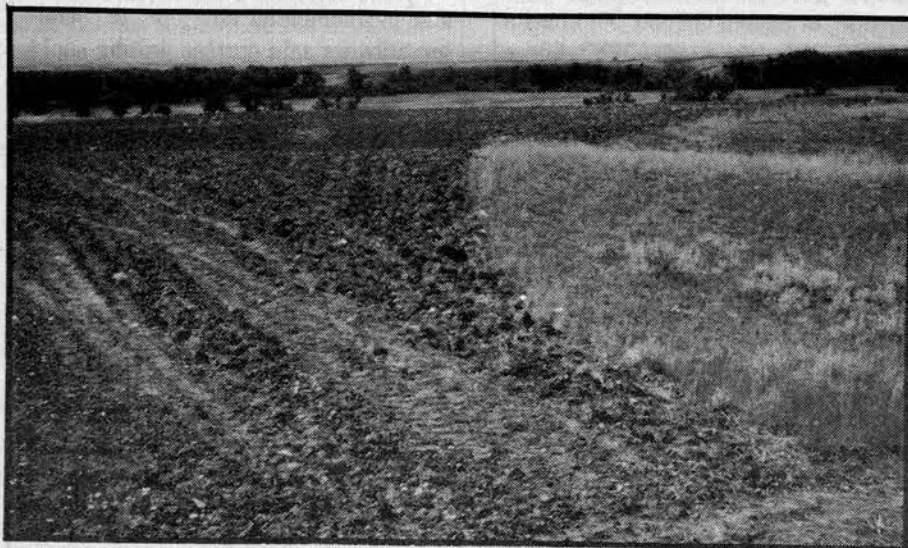
"Second, an important purpose of CRP was to reduce production and thereby increase commodity prices. This intent is defeated entirely when new acreage is opened up and planted."

— Bert Lindler

HOTLINE

Rare nest is found

After two years of searching, an Oregon State University biologist has found the first marbled murrelet nest ever located in Oregon. Kim Nelson spotted a nest of the rare bird May 18 in a western hemlock tree about 11 miles from the Pacific Ocean, in the Siuslaw National Forest. There are only four other known nests in North America, said Nelson. Three are in Alaska and one is in California. The marbled murrelet spends most of its time at sea but nests in summer in large trees as far as 50 miles inland. It is being considered for listing as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, although determination of its status has been suspended until more information can be gathered about its nesting habits. Nelson estimates there are fewer than 7,000 breeding pairs in the Northwest.



Between 1982 and 1987, Montana lost one million acres of rangeland

BLM is accused of punishing a critic

CODY, Wyo. — A retired U.S. Bureau of Land Management scientist still working on contract with the agency was abruptly fired last month, shortly after he spoke critically of the BLM in a newspaper article. Managers in the agency's Worland District office in Wyoming maintained the sudden move was a result of unexpected, mid-year budget cuts. But a district budget official and others said there have been no such cuts recently, and no other programs curtailed.

"It's obvious that they're doing this just to try to punish me for speaking the honest truth," said former BLM soil scientist Chuck Neal. "It's a direct attack on my freedom of speech."

Since several articles concerning BLM management practices appeared in the *Billings Gazette* in mid-May, agency officials have barred local staff from speaking to reporters from the newspaper. A memorandum was also circulated in the BLM's Worland District office, warning of restrictions when talking to reporters.

"This is a perfect example of how quickly the agency can summon its muscle to deal with an incredibly petty issue," said Neal, an 11-year BLM veteran. "At the same time they can spend years trying to make a tough decision that would protect public lands."

Neal retired from the BLM's Worland District in January. He was quoted in a May 14 *Gazette* article about the reversal of a local BLM decision to now allow cyanide devices to kill coyotes. Neal, who had signed the original deci-

sion, said it was overruled by the BLM's state office "purely for political reasons."

He was also quoted in a May 11 story as saying a colleague's article in the conservation publication *High Country News* was "on the up and up." That article — written by a former Worland District biologist — said politically sensitive bosses spend more time managing the agency than the natural resources it controls.

In February, Neal had been hired by the BLM on a \$4,000 contract to serve as the project inspector for a soil survey of Hot Springs County. The BLM's Worland District, encompassing the entire Bighorn Basin, had no other soil scientists to do the work.

In fact, said district BLM watershed program leader Bill Wilson, area officials only went ahead with the project after Neal offered to take the part-time post. A previous 1979 set of soil surveys was deemed unacceptable by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service at least partly due to a lack of close oversight.

But recently, Neal's \$4,000 portion of the \$19,000 contract was terminated "because we couldn't afford it," according to Worland District Manager Darrell Barnes.

Barnes said Neal's termination was solely "a dollars issue" that was "absolutely not" related to Neal's public comments about the agency. Barnes said cutting the \$4,000 expense will save some money, without hindering quality.

"I had soil courses in college, too,"

Barnes said. "I think I could run a contract if necessary. Quality won't be an issue, we just don't have the money to do it here."

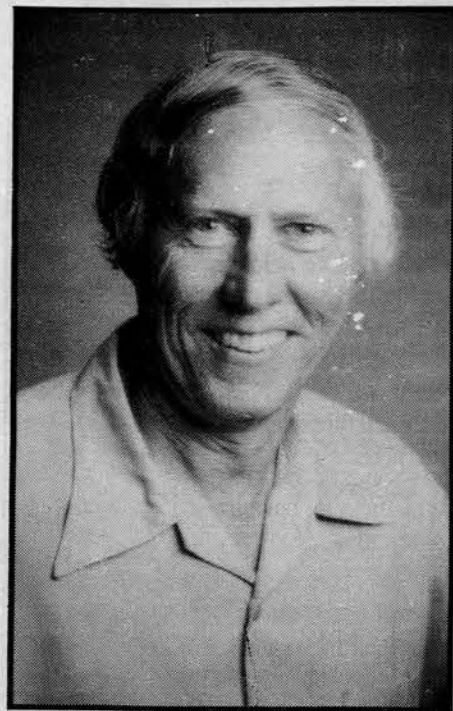
But Wilson, who oversees the budget for the Worland District's soils division, said there have been no recent budget cutbacks there. He has not had to reduce any part of his \$191,000 budget, and if he did, he said, other expenses would be dropped before Neal's contract.

"The dollars are there, as far as I know," said Wilson, who was never officially told of Neal's dismissal, despite his role as financial administrator of the project. "If there was a real budget problem, I would have been told about it because I'm the one who normally deals with it."

It is extremely unusual, several officials said, for one small segment of a particular project to be excised from a budget at the demand of agency managers.

"A local contact would be more convenient and really more efficient," said Jackson soil scientist Bill Glenn, the private contractor performing the surveys. Neal, a career scientist with a widely praised reputation, "is certainly the best qualified person to deal with this project," he said.

Calls to BLM state director Ray Brubaker and the agency's state budget office were diverted to spokesman Jay Guerin, who said the BLM has been forced to "cut absolutely everything except people." He said, though, he did



Chuck Neal

not know of Neal's dismissal, or even that Neal had been working for the agency.

Worland District Lands and Renewable Resources Chief George Hollis said officials will now work to hire a full-time soil scientist for the post left by Neal's departure. He said they will not do so until the fiscal year ends Sept. 29.

"We've got all kinds of bills to pay and we've got to reserve dollars," Hollis said. "If this timing looks like a coincidence, I guess that's too bad."

— Michael Milstein

Michael Milstein reports for the *Billings Gazette* in Cody, Wyoming.

Taos forest stages a wood products revolt

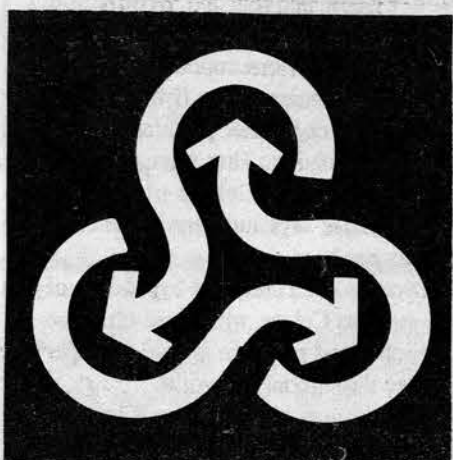
The illicit smuggling of "bootleg" recycled paper into the offices of the Carson National Forest in Taos, N.M., has inspired Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., to sponsor national legislation that may bring the first recycled paper into federal offices nationwide.

Carson National Forest purchasing agent Christina Gonzales began buying recycled office paper for the forest offices two months ago. But, to do that, she had to defy government policies that prevent the purchase of recycled paper.

Officials of the Government Services Administration say that the federal bureaucracy has contracts with office paper suppliers, that don't include provisions for recycled materials.

Last month, Bingaman introduced legislation to allow the Forest Service and Congress to begin buying recycled office paper and to require that Congress use recycled paper products.

The "National Forest Recycled Paper Act of 1990" would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a one-year pilot program for buying and using recycled paper. Under the bill, other departments and agencies of the govern-



ment could buy surplus recycled paper not needed by the Forest Service.

After the one-year pilot period, the Government Services Administration would be required to report to Congress on the results of the program and the opportunity to expand the program throughout government, according to Bingaman. Bingaman's "Congressional Recycling Act of 1990" would require Congress to buy recycled paper and paper products "to the greatest extent practicable."

Carson forest spokesman Gary Schiff said the local forest began buying recycled paper because it seemed hypocritical for an agency charged with protecting the nation's forests to use enormous amounts of paper requiring the destruction of numerous trees.

The nation's annual paper consumption would build a wall a foot thick and 12 feet high from Los Angeles to New York City, Schiff said, "and the government is probably responsible for half of that."

Gonzales said Carson officials are not worried about government reprisals for their illicit purchases of recycled paper. "Who is going to stand up and tell us not to do something that makes such good sense?" she asked.

Schiff said Taos-area recycling activists first drew attention to the hypocrisy of the Forest Service's enormous paper consumption. That inspired local forest staffers such as Gonzales and supervisor John Bedell to buck the regulations.

— Bryan Welch

HOTLINE

Coal project burned

Plans for the \$4-billion Thousand Springs Energy Park in Wells, Nev., may be going up in smoke. The head of the project, Joe Gremban, resigned his post May 21, which may scuttle the project, reports Nevada's *High Desert Advocate*, May 23. Gremban left under pressure from stockholders in his company, Sierra Pacific Resources, which is part of the consortium of companies backing Thousand Springs. Electricity produced from the plant was slated for export throughout the West. The consortium proposed building up to eight coal-fired 250-megawatt power plants in northeastern Nevada, an area the Park Service says enjoys some of the cleanest air in the country (*HCN*, 5/21/90). Although originally touted as an economic boon to a depressed area, the power plants came under attack from local governments, citizen and environmental groups in Nevada and nearby Idaho, and the Western Shoshone Indian Nation, which has disputed claims to the land there.

Supreme Court quashes state instream flow initiative

In a case brought by the state of California against the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Supreme Court decided on May 21 that the federal government, not the states, has the authority to regulate water flows from federally licensed hydropower dams.

In the case, *California v. FERC*, the state of California placed minimum instream flow requirements on the operator of a hydro project. The state's

requirements for protection of downstream fisheries were more stringent than the federal requirements. Since the Federal Power Act requires operators of hydro projects to comply with state water laws, California argued that the dam operators also had to adhere to the state's laws to protect instream flows.

In a unanimous opinion, the Supreme Court disagreed. It held that the federal government's "highly complex and long-enduring regulatory regime"

would be upset if the state were allowed to regulate the flow of water from hydro projects. The court's opinion was based upon a 1946 court decision which held that states can regulate only "proprietary" water rights.

A number of environmental groups, including American Rivers and Friends of the Earth, filed a brief supporting California's right to regulate instream flows. John D. Echeverria, counsel to American Rivers, said the most important part of

the decision was the court's conclusion that it is "better to be consistent" with the earlier decision "than to be right."

Echeverria noted that Congress may step in to overturn the court's conclusion. According to Echeverria, Rep. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, already has introduced legislation to reverse the court's decision.

— Peter Kirsch

Toxics from Canada pile up in U.S. reservoir

by Julie Titone

It's like acid rain in reverse. While the eastern United States wafts its airborne industrial pollution north into Canada, Canada dumps its waterborne industrial pollution into the West's mightiest river, the Columbia.

It's been going on for nearly a century. Ed Broch says it has to stop.

Broch is a Washington State University professor studying Lake Roosevelt, the 150-mile-long reservoir created when the Grand Coulee Dam tamed the Columbia in 1941. But he has more than a scientific interest in the chemicals, dissolved metals, organic solids and sand-like slag coming down from British Columbia factories.

"I get emotional about this," he says. "This is the largest lake in the

Northwest, the headwaters of the whole Columbia River system. And the Canadians flush their pollution down here just like a toilet."

Lake Roosevelt pollution went largely unnoticed until 1986. That's when the Washington Department of Ecology first studied heavy metals contamination in the lake.

State health officials say they don't know enough yet to advise people against eating fish from the lake. But the potential for contamination also worries Canadian environmental officials, who plan to coordinate their Columbia River research with Washington's.

Broch and other members of the Lake Roosevelt Water Quality Committee say the situation demands more stringent regulations.

They say the Colville Confederated Tribes, which own 40 percent of Lake Roosevelt's shoreline, are worried also.

They say without serious attention, the lake could become a Superfund site. "We'll probably end up with a hazardous waste dump in the bed of the lake," says Gary Passmore, director of the tribe's Environmental Trust. "No one's going to tell me we're going to put 3,000 to 4,000 chemicals in the lake and everything's going to be hunky-dory."

For 80 years, the Cominco Ltd. lead/zinc smelter and refinery at Trail, British Columbia, has spewed toxic metals and black slag into the Columbia River. For 60 years, wastewater from Cominco's adjacent fertilizer plant has added phosphate and gypsum. For 30 years, the Celgar Pulp Co. mill upstream at Castlegar has contributed wood fibers and dioxin-laden organic compounds.

Celgar, which is seeking government approval to expand, would be shut down if it operated south of the international border, says Art Johnson, Lake

Roosevelt water quality study leader for the Washington Department of Ecology.

"There's no plant in the United States that's allowed to discharge untreated (industrial) effluent," he says.

U.S. environmental officials say it would take a detailed analysis of Cominco's emissions to determine if the complex would be able to operate here. But according to Johnson, the slag alone — 300 tons of it a day — would be forbidden. "I can't imagine that being allowed in Washington state."

The swift river whisks the industrial wastes south. Along with them goes effluent from the Trail/Rosland sewage plant. That discharge receives only primary treatment, meaning nutrients such as phosphorous are not removed.

By the Canadians' own estimate, 80 percent of the algae-enhancing phosphates that go into Lake Roosevelt come from Canada. Other sources include the Spokane and Pend Oreille rivers.

Ugly algae blooms at the lower end of the lake prompted the Colville tribe, using a \$50,000 state grant, to hire Broch to study the aquatic plants.

"Early on, we pointed the finger at Spokane as the source of pollution," says Broch. "But more and more we began looking at what was going on farther north."

Passmore was startled to learn how many pollutants were coming from Canada. "We were ignorant," says Passmore, a hydrologist. "We could have done a better job informing the citizens what was going on."

Many citizens who might like to know what's going on live far from the five sparsely populated counties that adjoin the lake.

More than a million people visited the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area last year. An earlier study showed that only 32 percent of visitors live nearby, says Gary Kuiper, superintendent for the National Park Service at Coulee Dam.

The Park Service manages 50 percent of the lake's 600 miles of shore. Kuiper says his agency is "absolutely" concerned about pollution.

"We have a big constituency that gets into the water here — they don't just look at it, they use it," he says. Kuiper would like to see in-depth research of the problem, but says the Park Service is not equipped to conduct it.

The only agency regularly collecting information about the lake's water quality is the U.S. Geological Survey. It collects water samples every other month near Northport. When the agency finds levels of pollutants that exceed federal standards, it passes that information along to Washington's Department of Ecology.

Those alerts were one reason for the department's 1986 study of bottom sediments, water and fish in Lake Roosevelt.

Another reason was a 1985 report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It found that fish collected at Grand Coulee had cadmium and lead concentrations that were among the highest in the nation. Such metals can cause nerve and kidney damage in humans who ingest enough of them.

Based on their 1986 findings, Washington officials reported in 1988 that there is no serious threat to aquatic or human life due to metals in Lake Roosevelt, even though the levels of metals were the highest found in fish anywhere in the state.

They called for more research,

Canadian operations inch toward clean-up

After touring the Celgar Pulp Co. mill in Castlegar, British Columbia, environmental activist Ed Broch remarked: "By all that's right in the world, that plant should be shut down."

Rich Crozier of the B.C. Ministry of Environment makes no bones about why it hasn't been.

The pulp mill and a smelter complex 16 miles to the south are vital to the region's economy, he says. That's why the province has given them air pollution variances ever since the Pollution Control Act was enacted in 1967.

Celgar provides 400 jobs. Cominco employs 2,500 at its smelter/refinery and fertilizer plant. Another 800 people are taking home construction paychecks, thanks to the smelter modernization under way. Timber and mining businesses as far away as Montana rely on the plants.

"There are families here with four generations involved in mining and smelting," says Cominco spokesman Richard Fish. "There's an understanding of how we operate."

Still, the environmental ethic hasn't passed British Columbia by. Increased pressure to meet pollution permit stan-

dards, as well as the need to be competitive in a world metals market, have led to significant improvements at the 300-acre Cominco complex.

Since 1977, the company has spent more than half a billion Canadian dollars on modernization. By 1989, the upgrade led to dramatic drops in the dissolved metals leaving Cominco's five sewer outlets into the Columbia River. Zinc, for example, went from 8,000 kilograms a day to 1,000; lead, 250 kilograms to 50; arsenic, 10 kilograms to five.

Cominco expects to be in compliance with provincial pollution laws this year, when a new lead smelter is completely on line. Right now, officials say, half the lead concentrates are being processed in the old smelter while the new one is nursed through its "teething problems."

When Cominco has met current permit requirements, pollution problems will remain. Says Crozier: "There are two issues — slag and nutrients — left to handle."

The nutrients come from the fertilizer plant. Since 1977, the amount of phosphorous going into the Columbia has increased from 3,000 to 5,000 kilograms a day. That is estimated to be half the phosphates going into Lake Roosevelt downstream.

Three hundred tons of slag, which contain traces of toxic metals, also enters the Columbia daily. Cominco says there is nowhere else in the valley to put it.

Crozier's Waste Management Branch hasn't discussed slag with Cominco. "I guess they've been sold on the idea that it is an inert, sand-like material that happens to be black," says Graham Kenyon, Cominco's chief of environmental services.

Crozier says the effects of slag on aquatic life — both the chance of its metals leaching into water and the sand's sheer physical presence — haven't been proven. Ed Broch and environmental officials in the United States express serious concern about its potential for contaminating fish.

Worry over another pollutant, dioxins, is intensifying. That puts pressure for change on the Celgar pulp mill, where Crozier says little environmental progress has been made.

Dioxins are a chemical byproduct of mills such as Celgar, which use chlorine to bleach wood pulp that is sold to paper factories throughout the world.

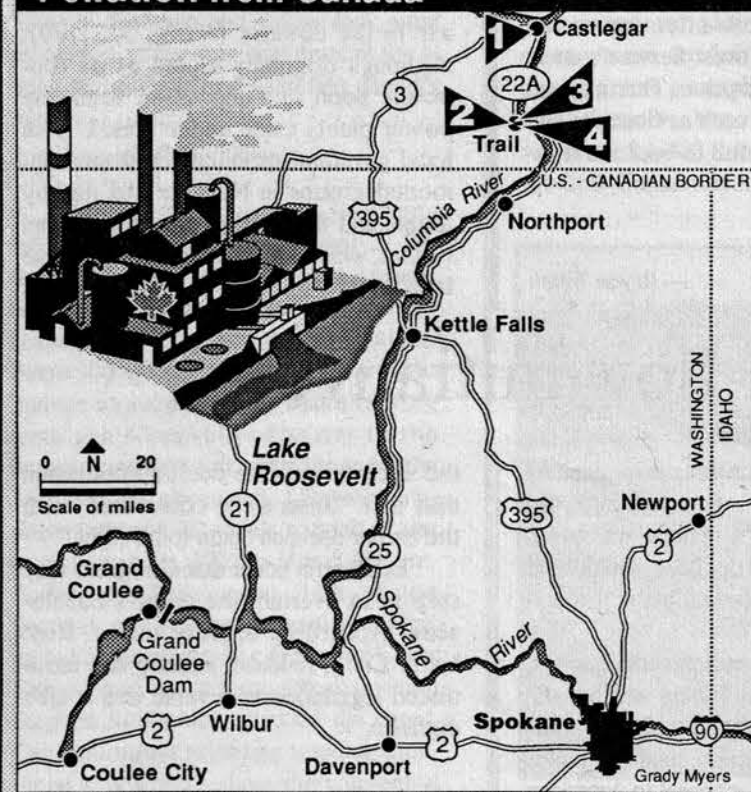
The 30-year-old Celgar mill is technologically ancient. A "Band-Aid" approach to improvements failed, says general manager Jim Browne. So employees persuaded its international

owners to build a whole new plant.

"We will be the cleanest mill in the world," says Browne. The target for opening the \$630 million facility is 1992. Before construction begins, federal and provincial officials must approve its environmental impacts. Public hearings will be held later this year.

If Celgar fails to get approval to expand, it will not be able to meet upcoming federal and provincial regulations on pulp mills. Then, Crozier says, the government would have to consider closing down the operation.

Pollution from Canada

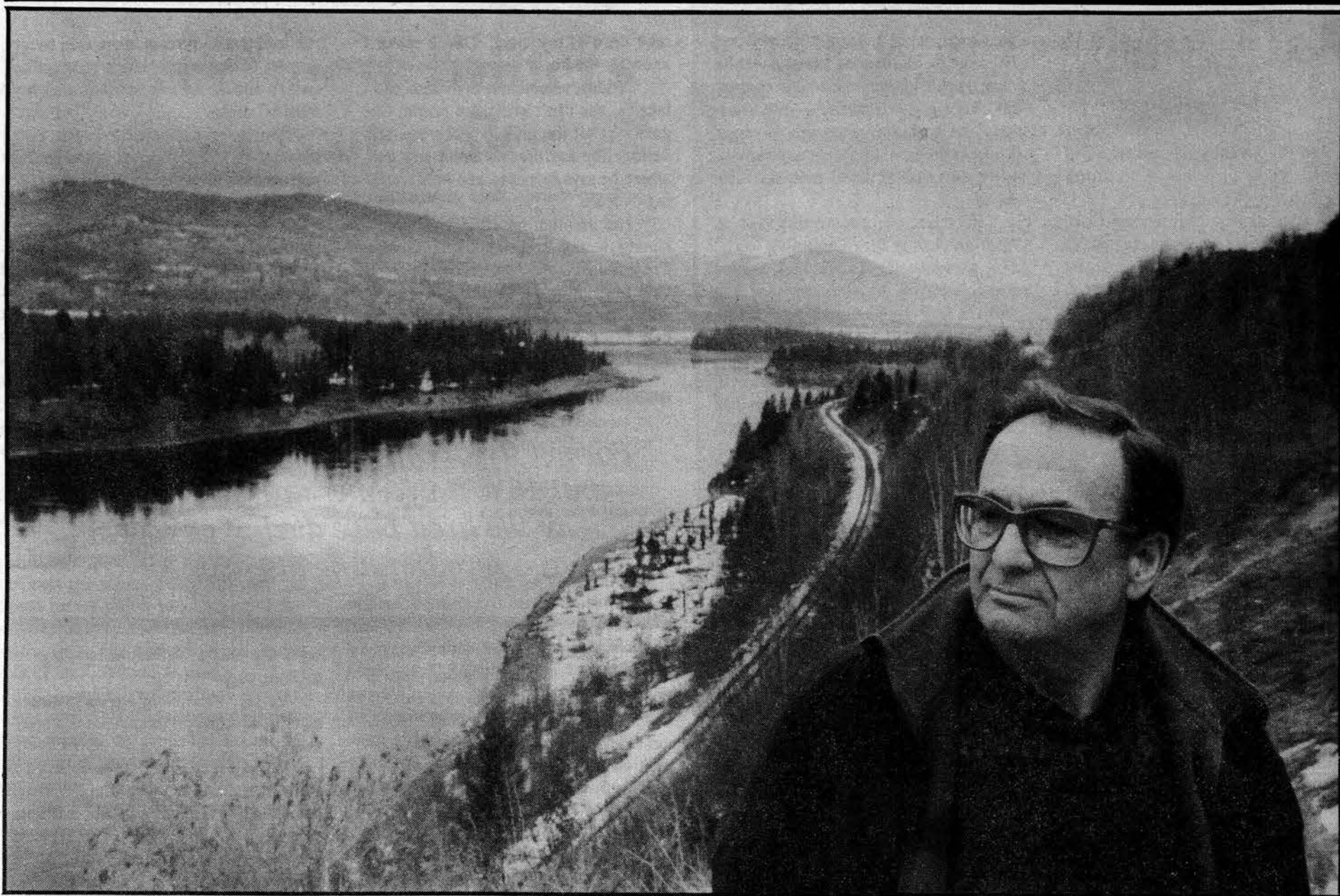


Contaminants dumped into the swift-flowing Columbia River in British Columbia settle into Lake Roosevelt, a U.S. reservoir created by the Grand Coulee Dam.

- 1 Celgar Pulp Co. mill**
chlorinated organics (including dioxin), wood fibers
- 2 Cominco Ltd. smelter and refinery**
zinc, copper, arsenic, cadmium, mercury, slag, lead, fluoride
- 3 Cominco Ltd. fertilizer plant**
phosphorus, gypsum
- 4 Trail sewage treatment plant**
phosphorus and other nutrients

SOURCE: Corporate and provincial officials

— Julie Titone



Anne C. Williams

River activist Ed Broch standing along the Columbia River

"I get emotional about this. The Canadians flush their pollution down here just like a toilet."

which was conducted last summer. The results are still being analyzed.

Meanwhile, British Columbia has done studies of its own. Its Ministry of Environment suggested in 1987 that meals of Columbia River walleye weighing over two pounds not be eaten more than twice a week. In 1989, the Canadians issued another health advisory after finding dioxins in two whitefish caught below the Celgar pulp mill.

Canada's dioxins report, as well as pressure from the Water Quality Committee, sent Washington researchers back to the lake.

There are 75 different dioxins in the world, says Environmental Protection Agency toxicologist Dr. Michael Watson. One of them, TCDD, is the most toxic synthetic chemical known. It's just as scary as can be, Watson says. While it only has been proven to cause a skin rash in humans, the EPA considers TCDD a probable cause of cancer.

The Canadians found TCDD. So did Washington researchers, in two of the four Lake Roosevelt fish they tested. Their results were enough to prompt a second study, which started this spring. But health officials said there was no reason for people to change their fish-eating habits.

That upset Ed Broch.

"They say there's not enough data to form conclusions. Then they say there's nothing to worry about," he says. "They err on the side of industry, not on the side of the taxpayer, the public."

State officials say they can't issue warnings without a sound scientific basis. The Park Service's Kuiper says it's wise to be cautious about possible fish contamination.

"Alarm would severely impact the economy," he says, pointing out that the marinas, restaurants and other tourist facilities provide many jobs.

Protecting the economy is a major reason lake water quality needs attention, says Passmore.

"In the last five years the tribe has invested millions in houseboat marina businesses on the lake. You're not going to attract anyone with cruddy water, or dioxins in fish, or algae blooms."

Passmore spearheads the lake's three-year-old Water Quality Committee. Members include representatives of the Upper Columbia River counties, the Park Service, Spokane tribes, reclamation bureaus, Indian committees and the state's ecology department.

Member Jack Tenter represents lake dwellers. A retiree who lives at Seven Bays, his complaints about algae instigated Broch's research. Having since learned about other pollutants in the lake, Tenter says: "I would not feed my grandchildren those fish."

If pollution problems can't be resolved at the regional level, as provincial officials strongly prefer, Broch says there's a "trump card" for saving Lake Roosevelt.

It's the International Joint Commission, which arbitrates environmental disputes between the United States and Canada.

The commission intervened in an Upper Columbia environmental battle 60 years ago. Back then, U.S. fruit growers sued to stop sulfur coming from Cominco smokestacks — acid rain — that was damaging their crops. According to company records, the commission imposed

controls on the smelter during growing season.

The company's solution: build a fertilizer plant to use the sulfur and keep it out of the air.

Since then, the fertilizer plant has poured phosphorus into the river. Nearly six tons of it will go into the Columbia today.

Julie Titone covers natural resource issues for the Spokane, Washington, daily newspapers.

LETTERS

LAW COMES UP SHORT

Dear HCN,

Those of us concerned about the integrity of Bandelier National Monument west of Santa Fe, N.M., and the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest have exposed a major shortcoming of existing environmental law. Our rude awakening may help others avoid wasting time and energy on quixotic environmental battles.

Timber-cutting near national parks and monuments is an increasing problem throughout the West. Recently, the Santa Fe National Forest completed another logging operation on the boundary of Bandelier, this one in a canyon upstream of the boundary of the Bandelier National Monument wilderness area. This logging operation, at Los Utes Springs, drew our attention because it devastated what was a beautiful canyon with haunting cliffs, aspen groves and peregrine falcons.

The Forest Service and its contractor cut trees on slopes greater than 60 percent, dragged the trees straight down slopes, replaced the streambed with logging roads and turned meadows

into tire-track mud flats. Not only are these activities unsightly and ecologically damaging, but they also violate specific provisions of the Santa Fe National Forest Plan and the environmental assessment that was done for the timber sale.

Representatives of numerous local and national environmental groups felt assured that given such blatant violations of the Forest Plan, the National Environmental Policy Act would give us firm grounds for a lawsuit.

We were wrong. There is no basis for a lawsuit under NEPA or the National Forest Management Act if the Forest Service violates its own guidelines or those worked out with the public. These laws require the Forest Service to do careful planning and paperwork, but they do not require that the Forest Service or its contractors follow the provisions of the plans and documents on the ground.

Congress intended that NEPA and NFMA would spawn "excellent decision making and excellent action" but agencies and courts have not interpreted the laws beyond their literal requirements for document-writing.

Tom Ribe
Eugene, Oregon

Uranium...

(Continued from page 1)

died, and I wonder about their kids. Did they go through what I'm going through?"

The countryside surrounding Cove looks as if it came out of a fairy tale, so brilliant are the reds and pinks and browns of its cliffs, tree-lined mountains, knobs, knolls and spires.

But there is little doubt among most authorities that the 200-plus mines studying the hill area are largely responsible for much of the lung cancer that has struck ex-miners in Cove and other Navajo communities. Surveys by local social service leaders have found that 40 percent of Cove's families have had at least one member suffer a uranium mining-related disease. Former tribal official Jasper Joe estimates that 16 to 24 former uranium miners in the area have died of cancer or other lung diseases.

It's been more than 15 years since the first medical studies appeared linking uranium miners in the Southwest to lung cancer.

But for Alberta King, a Navajo seamstress, talk of uranium still brings tears to her eyes, more than four years after her father, ex-miner Allen Tsosie, died of lung cancer at 45.

Her father was treated numerous times by medicine men at ceremonies stretching up to six days at the Shiprock hospital, she said.

Family members and friends brought fabrics, baskets, blankets, buckskin, food and herbs.

Although most of his family blamed

the cancer on uranium, Tsosie, a strong believer in traditional Navajo health care, thought his cancer came from natural causes and evil spirits — not uranium. The medicine man, who lives in Sweetwater, Ariz., 60 miles northwest of Cove, never talked about uranium, King added.

He relied on ceremonies such as *Naat'oi*, Navajo for "Lightning Way," that assumed lightning had caused Tsosie's cancer by striking near him when he was very young.

At one ceremony, the medicine man sucked out an imaginary "bone" from Tsosie's body, on the theory that evil, wolf-like beings called skinwalkers had planted illness-causing bones in him and under his house.

The medicine man also told Tsosie's family that the skinwalkers had picked up pieces of hair and clothing that man had thrown away. The belief was that skinwalkers buried them under his house to place a hex on him, King said.

"I think the ceremony would help him for a little while," King said. "But soon he would start feeling pain again."

Tsosie pushed an ore cart in the uranium mines for 13 years. Then he worked as a pipefitter and a foreman for the Navajo tribal construction authority until getting sick, she said.

Before cancer struck, he weighed 165 pounds. By the time he died, he weighed about 90 pounds and looked like a baby, said Daisy Reed, a friend of the family.

"He got to the point where he was hallucinating. He was seeing people in the hospital room and saying, 'What's he doing there — get him out,'" King said. "When we were alone, he told me to

take care of my mom. That's when I knew he was going to go.

"Today, sometimes, my mom can't take it, she can't even stay home. She goes out all the time to make her feel better. She has dreams about my dad, where he says he's okay, and he's watching over us."

The uranium mines in Cove were among the first to open in the Southwest. They started at the peak of the U.S. anti-Communist mood of the late 1940s, when Eastern European countries were becoming Soviet satellites and fears were rising about a Soviet military threat

rate is about 75 percent, more than twice the rate of the entire Navajo reservation and 15 times the nationwide rate, say tribal officials.

The sole private employer is a sewing factory that opened in December next to the Cove chapter house with 22 workers earning barely above minimum wage.

When they talk of the old days, ex-miners and their families tell of mines with no ventilation and of workers who wore no respirators. They tell of endless clouds of dust rising from dynamited uranium ore and of water dripping down

Former tribal official Jasper Joe estimates that 16 to 24 former uranium miners in the area have died of cancer or other lung diseases.

to the United States.

Uranium fed the production lines at U.S. nuclear weapons plants in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Hanford, Wash. Uranium from Cove and from other Four Corners communities were the country's leading alternatives to what had then been the only major source: the politically ticklish Belgian Congo, which was to rock with revolution for the next decade.

For Cove, uranium meant jobs and an alternative to raising sheep, the only real livelihood until then.

Today, with the mines long closed, livestock is again the chief income source in Cove. The local unemployment

from the mine walls and landing in drinking cups.

By far, their most common statement is: "Nobody told us it was dangerous."

"He had to walk three miles to work, and his boss would tell him to work day and night, even when it was snowing or raining," said Elsie Tapaha. Her husband, John, in 1965 was one of the first Navajo miners in Cove to die from lung cancer.

Tony Davis is a reporter for the *Albuquerque Tribune*.

Old uranium mines continue to infect reservation

Navajo tribal surveys have found more than 400 old mines in the hills near Oak Springs, Cove and Red Valley, Ariz., just west of the New Mexico border.

Only a handful of the abandoned

mines have signs saying "Danger."

The average age of the mines is 40 years, and the walls of many are cracked and could collapse at any time, said Perry Charley, a Navajo reclamation specialist who works in Beclabito, in northwestern New Mexico.

Open-pit mines are up to 30 feet

deep around Cove and neighboring communities and up to 200 feet deep elsewhere on the Navajo Reservation. Some of the underground mines are reached by gradually sloping tunnels up to 100 feet long. The Navajo tribe is so worried that hundreds of old uranium mines will collapse that it doesn't allow its own

inspectors to enter them.

"It's just how nature works," tribal reclamation specialist James Benally said. "In the winter it snows, then it heats up and water fills the cracks in the walls. Then, it freezes and the cracks expand, and the walls eventually collapse."

Tribal officials are planning a protracted, costly program to fix hundreds of abandoned mines in the area so they'll no longer threaten human safety or the natural environment.

They'll start work in the next few years. But to fix all the mines in the Shiprock, N.M., area alone, on both sides of the border, will cost more than \$20 million and take up to 15 years, Charley said.

The plan is to fill the most hazardous mines with old waste rock, so the walls won't collapse and water won't be able to get in and wash out more uranium.

Tribal equipment has detected radiation levels in waste piles of up to 13 to 20 times the natural background readings.

In addition, rainfall and streams running through the mines have washed some leftover radioactive material into neighboring arroyos, tribal officials say.

But it's not certain if the radioactivity from the mines has polluted water.

A decade ago, authorities abandoned a well serving Cove residents after tests showed its radioactivity level topped federal standards.

Tribal officials plan to test groundwater as part of their reclamation work over the next few years.

— Tony Davis



Entrance to an abandoned uranium mine near Cove, Arizona

Kaylyn Devaney

Experts knew miners were at great risk

Navajo Peter Yazzie, who died of lung cancer in 1970, never complained about conditions in the uranium mines where he worked 16 years, his widow Dolores says. But plenty of health officials were worried at the time that the mines could be hazardous. Court records and interviews show that health warnings from government agencies about the mines came early and often, but that their efforts to improve working conditions were fruitless for two decades.

"They'd sit in the mines eating dinner, they'd drink out of a creek running through the mines, but when they get home they didn't even clean up themselves," said Dolores Yazzie, who lives at the north end of Cove, Ariz., at the foot of the Carrizo Mountains.

"They had mud on their clothes. After work, they'd take them off and hang them to dry inside the house. We never would think about anything being dangerous."

The threat in uranium comes from radon, a colorless, inert gas about seven times as dense as air and a decay product of radium contained in the uranium ore. It is released into the air from drilling and blasting and decays in a few days to radioactive isotopes of polonium. Radon "daughters" attach to dust particles that enter the human nose and throat and eventually attack the lungs.

Years before the Four Corners mines opened, health researchers knew from studies of Czechoslovak and East German mines that uranium could be hazardous. Some of those mines had been active since the 1500s. A 1952 U.S. Public Health Service report said that European miners of uranium-bearing ore had suffered from damaged lungs, with many dying in the prime of life.

Medical studies found that 50 to 70 percent of all the workers in those mines had died of some kind of respiratory cancer, the 1952 Public Health Service report said. But health researchers dis-

agreed sharply over whether uranium, cobalt, nickel or arsenic in the ore was to blame. The Public Health Service's 1952 report concluded the deaths were caused by "a number of combined effects of environmental factors which are difficult to evaluate."

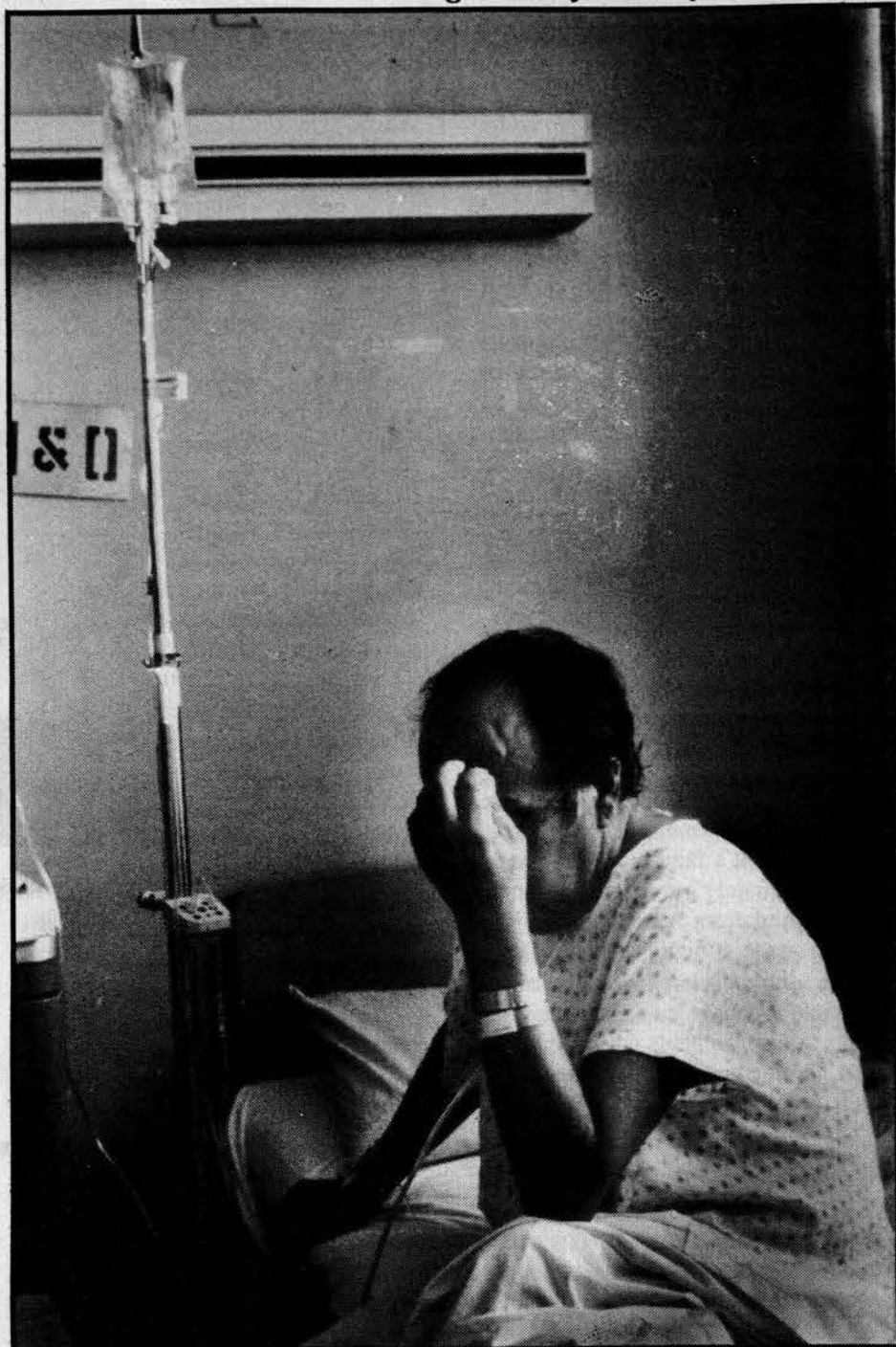
Three times in the late 1940s and early 1950s, inspectors from the U.S. Public Health Service, the Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. Bureau of Mines visited uranium mines in the Four Corners area. Each time they returned with essentially the same conclusions: Radon levels in the mines were potentially hazardous and better ventilation was needed.

They also found the Four Corners miners were breathing in more radon than were the European miners of nearly a century before. But conditions in European and U.S. mines were not exactly parallel, the health service found. Researchers said U.S. mine operations were more intermittent, and workers were not exposed to dust right after blasting.

Some American ex-miners disagree. "There were two shifts," recalls Raymond Joe, who worked off and on in the mines from 1952 to 1976. "Thirty minutes after the first shift, they blasted dynamite. While it was still smoking from the blasts, they would send us in. The smoke from the dynamite used to get us dizzy and nauseated."

In its 1952 report, the U.S. Public Health Service concluded that the mines should have no problem in reducing radon to safe levels if proper ventilation was available. But an ex-AEC official who had inspected the mines, Dr. Merrill Eisenbud, recalled recently that his supervisors in Washington decided to back off, saying that safety in privately owned mines was the state's business, not the federal government's.

"It was a tragedy that could have been avoided," recalled Eisenbud, now retired and living in Chapel Hill, N.C. In the early 1950s, the Public Health Service started a health study that eventual-



Uranium miner Raymond Joe who had part of a cancerous lung removed, has been active in the fight for compensation to miners.

ly included more than 4,000 miners. But court records show that to get access to the miners, public health researchers struck a Faustian bargain with mining companies. Researchers agreed not to warn the miners of any hazards.

In 1958, reports came into the Public Health Service of the first four lung-cancer deaths among uranium miners. Seven years later, when ex-miner John Tapaha of Cove died, a Farmington, N.M., newspaper attributed his cancer death to "a long illness."

"His whole body ached, sometimes

he would get sick, but he kept going back to work in the morning," Tapaha's widow, Elsie, said through an interpreter.

"And he just grew worse, he kept on coughing, he got sick, but he kept on working," Elsie Tapaha said. "I kept telling him to take a day off, but the boss man was telling him to get to work on time, not to miss any day."

"He got so sick he had to go to the hospital in Shiprock. From there, he went to Albuquerque. Then after two

(Continued on page 12)

House votes to aid uranium miners, downwinders

by Andrew Melnykovich

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Uranium miners and civilians exposed to radioactive fallout from nuclear weapons tests "were sacrificed to serve the national security interests of the United States," the House declared June 5.

Legislation approved by unanimous voice vote adopts that statement and orders compensation to pre-1972 miners and "downwinders" who contracted radiation-related diseases, and to the families of those who died from the diseases.

The measure also provides a formal apology from the government to the victims and their families. The miners are included in the bill because most uranium produced in the United States before 1972 went into nuclear weapons.

The bill applies to miners in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, and to fallout victims in Utah, Arizona and Nevada.

Because the measure was considered under rules that allow a quick vote,

but no amendments, there was no opportunity for Rep. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., to add Wyoming miners to the list of those eligible for compensation. But Thomas received assurances that Wyoming miners would be included later in the legislative process.

The number of affected miners in Wyoming is uncertain. Five underground uranium mines operated in Wyoming during the time period covered by the legislation.

The legislation authorizes \$100,000 for each miner or family, if the miner contracted lung cancer or certain lung diseases. The miners would have to prove they were exposed to a specified level of radon gas — which is given off by uranium — while working in poorly ventilated underground uranium mines at any time from 1947 to 1971.

Downwinders would be covered if they developed one of 13 types of cancer linked to radiation exposure and if they lived in the affected area during specified times. The payment for downwinders or their families would be

\$50,000.

The legislation "restores our nation's honor by holding the U.S. government responsible for Cold War abuses which stained our collective conscience by inflicting injuries on its own people," Rep. Wayne Owens, D-Utah, the chief sponsor, said.

Owens recalled when, as a youth growing up in southwest Utah, he watched atomic bombs detonated in Nevada light up the night sky. Later, as a lawyer, he represented people who suffered illness from radioactive fallout that the government had told them was harmless, Owens said.

Uranium miners were victims of similar neglect and deception, he said. His brother-in-law, who never smoked but worked six months in a uranium mine, later died of lung cancer, Owens said.

"Upon the heads of uranium miners was visited misery and death," he said. "The government knew beforehand ... and to this day refuses to do anything about it."

The measure drew no opposition in the House, and had the active support of many fiscally conservative Republicans, including those representing the states involved.

Similar legislation is pending in the Senate, where Wyoming Republicans Al Simpson and Malcolm Wallop have announced plans to include Wyoming miners in the bill. But Simpson says he opposes the compensation for downwinders, and has not committed himself to supporting the bill if those provisions are retained.

Although the bills authorize compensation, they do not actually allocate the \$100 million needed to make payments to the estimated 600 to 800 downwinders and 250 to 450 miners who would be eligible. The money would have to come through separate spending measures.

Andrew Melnykovich is Washington correspondent for the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

Mine safety...

(Continued from page 11)

years, they brought him back to Shiprock. That's when he got worse, he was dying. His spit was mixed with blood," Elsie said.

State government officials began to enforce lower radon levels in the mines during the 1960s. In 1971, the U.S. Labor Department for the first time started enforcing federal health standards for radon. In 1980, Jessie Harrison of northeast Arizona told the *Albuquerque Tribune* that her husband, Phillip, a uranium miner, had become a "walking skeleton" just before his death in 1971 of lung cancer.

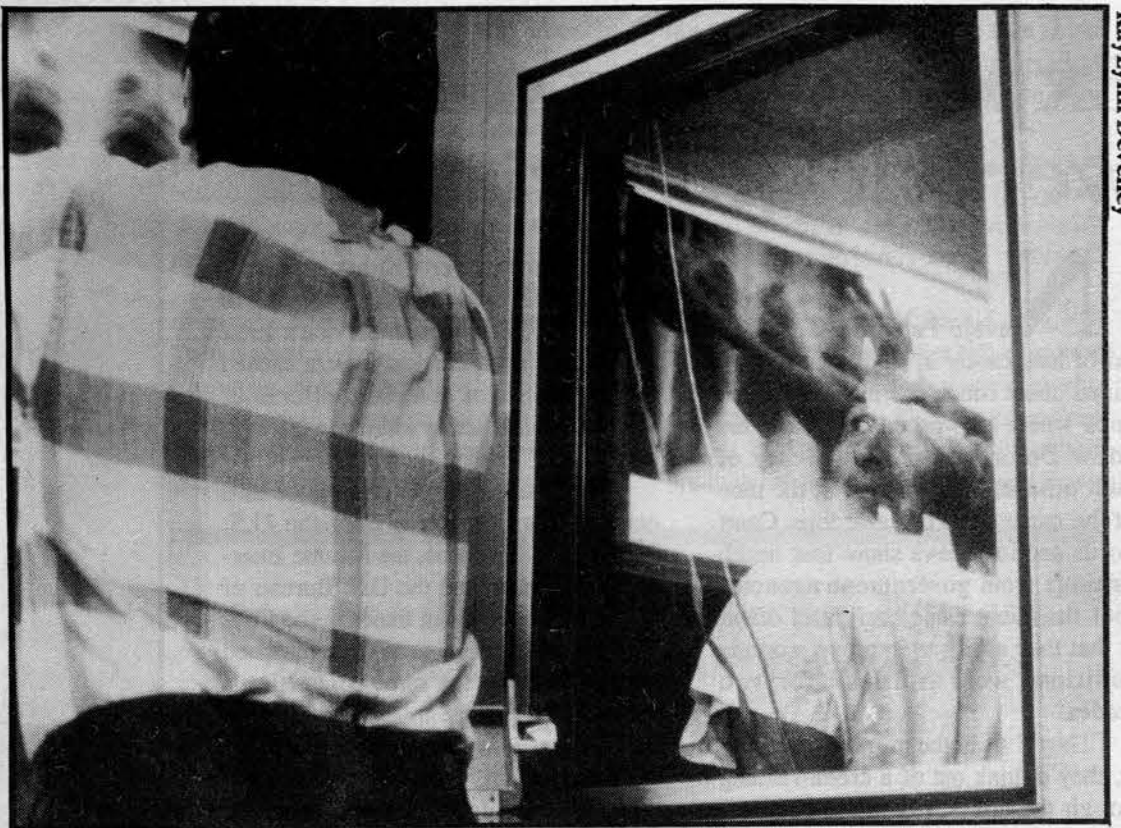
In July 1984, U.S. District Judge William Copple in Phoenix, Ariz., threw out a lawsuit filed against the U.S. government by a group of Navajo families. While the miners had proven their cancer was from uranium, the judge said, the government's failure to warn them and to adequately ventilate the mines had stemmed from "conscious policy decisions made at high government levels based on considerations of political and national security feasibility factors."

Therefore, the judge ruled, the court lacked jurisdiction. "This tragedy of the

nuclear age, however, cries for redress," the judge added. "Such relief should be addressed by Congress ..."

The Bush administration did not agree. In November 1989 in Washington, D.C., Assistant U.S. Attorney General Stuart M. Gerson testified against the compensation bill. "... Available scientific evidence does not support the conclusion that many cancers have been caused through the government's Atmospheric Atomic Testing Program or its activities with regard to uranium miners," Gerson said. The bill is particularly unnecessary for uranium miners because they could claim workmen's compensation, he added. But when claims are upheld, the payments are small, often \$100 a month.

Lawyers for former uranium miners later said that such compensation is difficult to get because most of the mining



Sam Begay, right, is examined for possible mining-related illnesses at a mobile clinic

companies are out of business.

For widow Elsie Tapaha, justice is still waiting. She said, "What I want is for the people who've done it to pay me back."

Parts of these articles by Tony Davis appeared in the *Albuquerque Journal*.

LETTERS

ON BEARS: MORE RESTRAINT, MORE HUMILITY

Dear HCN,

The article on bear "denning" in Utah (*HCN*, 3/26/90) says a lot of cute things about how, but not much about why. Does a project like the one described have any reason for being other than that it can be done, it's fun, and that there are funds available? If loving wilderness to death is a notion worth keeping in mind as a cautionary possibility, perhaps we could look on study-projects as a quicker route to the same end.

I hope these projects are entered into with a great deal of reluctance and after there is an identified threat to the animal that can be dealt with only with the help of information derived from capture-and-collar operations. Absent all that, we're left with diminished wilderness in return for a few numbers, some data, and some touching experiences.

At the very least there should be an effort to avoid duplication. Here in the North Cascades we're entering the fifth year of a grizzly-bear study of which the best that can be said is that it's so far been unsuccessful — i.e., no bears captured or photographed. It's almost certainly true that there are a few undocumented grizzlies — so far wild and unmanaged — roaming an area that has several million people within a 100-mile radius. I call that pretty exciting. For the wildlife establishment it's not the occasion to say hooray and let it be, but rather to feed them through the same research mill that has (mis)handled the bears of Yellowstone and elsewhere. That anything is likely to be learned that is new or useful if a bear is captured is considerably less clear than that damage will be done to the subject in his transition from wild to managed.

I'd say a bit more restraint, humility and respect are in order.

Phil Leatherman
Winslow, Washington

STUPID FAD

Dear HCN,

I've a comment about M. Zyni-ekki's letter (*HCN*, 2/26/90). The volcanic tuff that is used in stone-washed jeans and jackets (are shoes and socks next?) — a stupid, useless and ugly fad that makes the wearers look like they fell into a barrel of flour after having a shower with all their clothes on — is called pozzolan.

It is a kind of pumice that when mixed with aggregate and cement helps it to "set." Driving north toward Page from Flagstaff before reaching Sacred Mountain Trading Post you can still see deep holes gouged from the earth on both sides of the road, courtesy of the Wreck-the-Nation Bureau, who never bothered to fill them or restore the terrain in any way, and who used the pozzolan in the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. Another eyesore!

Katie Lee
Jerome, Arizona

Katie Lee writes and sings about whitewater rafting and the West.

DON'T STEREOTYPE

Dear HCN,

Ed Marston's recent article describing "the decayed core at the center of rural life" (*HCN*, 3/26/90) was an interesting perspective of rural electric cooperatives. Many co-ops in this region are considering the use of photovoltaic power for servicing customer loads. I believe this inclination to consider alternatives that may have economic and environmental benefits should be recognized.

This progressive approach to utility management may be the exception rather than the rule, but I think you might be surprised how many "exceptions" exist in rural America. Stereotypes are dangerous!

Kirk Stokes
Golden, Colorado

TOM WOLF'S BIASES

Dear HCN,

It is ironic in a publication that regularly bashes the federal government's management of public lands, Tom Wolf should attack The Nature Conservancy's ability to manage land in lieu of conveying that land to the government (*HCN*, 5/7/90). From the Virginia Barrier Islands, to the Ordway Prairie System, to Silver Creek, the conservancy successfully manages some of the finest and most fragile natural areas in the country. They owe neither apologies nor explanations to Mr. Wolf.

Mr. Wolf's attacks on the business people within The Nature Conservancy betrays his own biases. The MBAs, realtors and lawyers that Mr. Wolf condescendingly refers to as "sharks" are directly responsible for the preservation of the Gray Ranch and millions of other acres of irreplaceable lands. These are facts, regardless of how they may offend Mr. Wolf's sense of order.

Daniel E. Pike
Evergreen, Colorado

NO CONNECTION

Dear HCN,

Although humans have been eating bison for probably thousands of years, the recent Montana buffalo hunts outside Yellowstone Park apparently disturb some people who want us to further relinquish our relationship with the natural world ("Reporter's Notebook," April 9).

The protestors, however, seem to have peculiar notions about what constitutes "Seizing the moral high ground." Running out into the pasture, they scream about penis size and "burning babies" in Vietnam. I take it there is supposed to be a connection between that and eating buffalo, but it continues to escape me.

Chas S. Clifton
Florence, Colorado

SMART-ALEC BARB

Dear HCN,

In response to a statement by the National Association of Manufacturers in re Earth Day (*HCN*, 4.9.90), you chose to play the smart alec, i.e. "without them (corporations) we wouldn't need Earth Day." Beyond the forthcoming discussion of the merits of your case, let me say a word about the effectiveness of this sort of "cheap shot." Let's assume for the moment that you are serious minded individuals dedicated to environmental causes and programs that seek to protect and enhance the West which we all love.

Based on that assumption, you should be doing all within your power to "make friends and influence people," a tactic I find distressingly unpopular among environmentalists.

Corporations are important, corporations can and do make things happen. You will be well advised to seek out means of communication and understanding rather than to damn with one ill favored sentence the entire economic system.

In a word: start sounding more like adults and less like flower children of the '90s ...

Paul L. Parker
Wayzata, Minnesota

HALT THE CONCESSIONS

Dear HCN,

I read with interest the May 7 issue. If the permittees of the Twin Falls District of the Sawtooth National Forest in Idaho cannot get on with ranger Don Oman, perhaps the forest should put their allotments up for bids and get some permittees that can get along with the ranger.

Continuing concessions to user antagonisms will continue to prohibit effective range management.

Robert Sherwood
Battle Mountain, Nevada

BULLETIN BOARD

WHEN Nature HEALS

The Greening Of
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL



Photography By
WENDY SHATTIL & BOB ROZINSKI

Essay By
CHRIS MADSON

SURPRISING ABUNDANCE

Called the "most polluted square mile on Earth," the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver, Colo., a former chemical warfare and pesticide manufacturing facility, is alive with a surprising abundance of wildlife. Nature photographers Wendy Shattil and Bob Rozinski didn't know what to expect when they first set out to explore the 27-square-mile facility. What they found surprised them: bald and golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, osprey, white-tail and mule deer, badgers and weasels. Their discoveries are captured in a paperback called *When Nature Heals: The Greening of Rocky Mountain Arsenal*. In an essay, Chris Madson, editor of *Wyoming Wildlife*, comments on the arsenal's history and continuing environmental problems, some connected to groundwater pollution. Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., said of the arsenal: "To see nature's splendor amid this industrial folly makes me appreciate the wonderful resilience of our planet."

Roberts Rinehart, Inc. Publishers, P.O. Box 666, Niwot, CO 80544. Paper: \$14.95, 80 pages, illustrated with 50 color plates.

BLM TOUTS RECORD

A new report by the Bureau of Land Management touts the success of its range management plans. Called *The Range of Our Vision*, the report says the percentage of land classified as "excellent" and "good" doubled within the last 50 years while land classified as "poor" decreased by half. "BLM rangelands are in better shape today than ever before in this century," says BLM Director Cy Jamison. "While the trend in improving land conditions is very encouraging," Jamison added, "I think we can do even better." Jamison says three goals of the agency are rehabilitating riparian areas, increasing rangeland classified as healthy and reducing the amount of land classified as poor. Money, however, is a problem since the current range management budget is \$34.5 million. The riparian project alone is estimated to cost \$60 million over five years, and other range improvement costs are estimated at \$51 million each year until 2009. The 14-page report is available by calling the BLM at 202/343-5717.

GIVING THE ENVIRONMENT A CUT

Owners of an outdoor recreation store in Santa Fe, N.M., say they will donate at least 1 percent of their income to a "Greenback Fund," designed to help New Mexico's environmental groups. The store, called the Wilderness Exchange, sells backpacking and cross-country ski gear to outdoor enthusiasts. Pat Freeman, who owns the store with her husband Randy, says the couple identified three environmental concerns that need funding in 1990: pumice mining in the Jemez Mountains, clearcutting and steep-slope timber cutting in the Santa Fe National Forest, and environmental impacts caused by the molybdenum mine near Questa. The Freemans, who project that \$2,000 will be raised by the fund this year, can be reached at 505/986-1152.

WANTED: WILD HORSE ADVISORS

The BLM is creating a Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board to advise federal agencies about managing the West's 46,500 wild horses and burros. Nominations for the nine-member board will be accepted until July 2. Positions last two years, and one member will be selected to represent each of nine areas: veterinary medicine, humane organizations, conservation, livestock management, wild horse and burro research, wild horse and burro management, wildlife management and the public-at-large. Nominations must cite which area the nominee will represent and include a statement of qualifications, education and experience. Send nominations to: Chief, Division of Wild Horses and Burros, Bureau of Land Management, Premier Building, Room 901, Washington, D.C. 20240.

LOG EXPORTS MAY MAKE SENSE

Forest economist Randal O'Toole writes that a ban on exporting logs to Japan may accelerate the loss of old growth forests. O'Toole, writing in his *Forest Watch* magazine, says that Japanese mills get as much wood out of two logs as American mills get out of three logs. If we force the Japanese to export milled wood rather than raw logs, more trees will have to be cut, O'Toole writes. The economist also says that Japan cuts more of its own trees than it imports as logs, that Japan gets 40 percent of U.S. wood exports, that only 25 percent of our exports are in the form of logs, and that the U.S. imports twice as much wood as its exports. O'Toole, who is head of CHEC, based in Oak Grove, Ore., suggests that Japan-bashing is both racist and an ineffective way to save old growth forests.

Subscriptions to *Forest Watch* are \$21.95 for individuals and non-profits and \$27.50 to others. Make checks payable to CHEC and mail to: *Forest Watch*, 14417 S.E. Laurie, Oak Grove, OR 97267.

WYOMING'S ENDANGERED SPECIES

"The Earth used to lose a plant or animal species to extinction at the rate of one per millennium. Now we lose approximately four per day," says Donn Kesselheim, director of education for the Wyoming Outdoor Council. If you want to learn the state-of-the-art thinking about this problem and what can be done about it, a workshop is set for July 30-Aug. 3 in Grand Teton National Park. Called "Conservation Biology and Wyoming's Endangered Species," the workshop was recently awarded "Take Pride in America" recognition by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Focusing on field study, the program is designed specifically for teachers and others engaged in environmental education. Also planned is a full day of work on the Project Wild curriculum with Joe Vogler of the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish. The workshop will be led by Kesselheim, Wyoming biologist Tim Clark, who is also an adjunct professor at Yale University, and Teton Science School staffers. Two semester hours of credit from the University of Wyoming are available, and teachers can earn another credit-hour through a follow-up project in the classroom. The program was organized by the Wyoming Outdoor Council and is sponsored by the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative and the Teton Science School. For more information, write Donn Kesselheim, Wyoming Outdoor Council, 201 Main St., Lander, WY 82520, or call 307/332-7031.

EXPLOSIVE ART

A gallery in Denver is looking for art in any media for a Rocky Flats Art Show July 6-21. The Artist's Research Center Gallery says all works should be related in some way to the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant 16 miles northwest of Denver. The plant produces plutonium triggers for nuclear bombs. Art will be juried by the Colorado staff of Greenpeace and the entry fee is \$3 per piece. For more information, call Naomi or Chris Culhane at 303/297-3546.



BICYCLING YELLOW PAGES

Discovering the world on two wheels has never been easier with the help of the latest *Cyclists' Yellow Pages*, published by a group called Bikecentennial in Missoula, Mont. This easy-to-use guide can help a novice or expert cyclist plan a route through the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Information about professional cycling tour groups to ride with, hostels to stay overnight in, tourist information centers and a host of other information is provided in this 94-page guide. Bikecentennial is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the recreational cyclist. Write Bikecentennial, P.O. Box 8308, Missoula, MT 59807.

AERO CELEBRATES

AERO, the Alternative Energy Resources Organization, is celebrating its 15th birthday. The Montana-based organization, which publishes a quarterly called the *AERO Sun Times*, is dedicated to promoting sustainable agriculture, alternative energy uses and reliance upon local resources to meet local needs. A recent 45-page commemorative issue looks back at AERO's beginning and the diversity of interests that have helped shape the organization. Articles focus on energy conservation and organic farming and gardening. For more information, contact AERO, 44 North Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601.

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THE GREENING OF AMERICA

Grass-roots organizations dedicated to "green" politics have been springing up across the country for the last several years. Green politics challenge conventional politics in an effort to promote values that benefit both the environment and humans. The Clearinghouse for Green Committees of Correspondence was formed in 1984 to aid communication among groups that focus on projects such as recycling, organic farming and voter registration. According to coordinator Jim Richmond, the Kansas City-based clearinghouse is at the heart of the U.S. green movement. It publishes both a monthly newsletter, *Greener Times*, for exchanging local ideas and initiatives, and a bibliography of green literature. It also maintains a list of the central values of green philosophy, such as ecological awareness, community-based economics and respect for diversity, and is developing a nationwide political platform. For more information, contact Jim Richmond, Green Committee of Correspondence, P.O. Box 30208, Kansas City, MO 64112 (816/931-9366).

ACCESS

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED in Missouri to help save the state's remaining natural streams. A state-wide initiative petition drive seeks to place a Natural Streams Act on the November ballot that would initially protect 52 unspoiled waterways from damage by off-road vehicles and dam construction. For more information or to help in this effort, write Natural Streams Campaign, 6267 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63130, (314/647-6922). (1x11f)

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EDUCO, in Latin means: *I lead forth*. EducO programs are designed to draw forth what is right and noble in young people and adults. EDUCO courses utilize an adventure challenge format, including activities such as rockclimbing, solo time, group discussion, peak climbs, backpacking and environmental awareness exercises. Our students feel at home because they are accepted as they are, for who they are, by a staff that is skilled in leading them into a new experience of themselves. For further information on Summer 1990 courses, contact: COLORADO EDUCO Adventure School, 4817 North County Road 29, Loveland, CO 80538 (303/679-4339). (1x12f)

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Mike McClure

Hiker atop the honeycombs in the Red Desert, Wyoming

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Profile

Yvon Chouinard: A mutinous captain of industry

by Jim Robbins

Yvon Chouinard lies flat on his back in front of his cabin at the foot of Wyoming's Teton mountains. He has just spent numerous days climbing granite and ice. A cloudless blue sky now stretches out above him, and, hands clasped behind his head, a stalk of grass in his mouth, Chouinard launches into a discourse on one of his favorite subjects: greed.

"I'd like to go in with other companies and do a series of hard-hitting greed-in-America ads and put them in business magazines," says the owner of the Patagonia clothing company. The ads, he says, could feature one of Malcolm Forbes' Faberge eggs.

"A two-million-dollar egg could save several million acres of rainforest, with 800 varieties of birds and 30,000 varieties of trees." He shakes his head. "Things are so wacko."

A mutinous captain of industry, Yvon Chouinard wants to swing his guns around and level them onto the rest of the fleet as they sail the globe in search of profits. A self-styled mountain climber, surfer, globe-trotter, environmental radical and guerrilla capitalist, he has created a corporation he hopes may redefine how a company relates to people and the environment.

"It's a tool for change," says the 50-year-old of his multi-million dollar operation. "I see it as a movement more than a business."

Chouinard and his wife, Malinda, own the Lost Arrow Corporation, a conglomerate that includes Patagonia, the highly successful outdoor clothing company. Named after a wild, windswept region of Argentina, Patagonia makes some of the most rugged, most functional — and most expensive — clothing around. Although the clothes are designed to be worn on mountains, rivers and oceans, they have gained wide appeal among fashion-conscious urbanites.

The iconoclastic company is also a kind of radical United Way, giving 10 percent of its pre-tax profits to small political organizations. In 1988, Patagonia gave away almost \$450,000; in 1989, it was \$600,000. The money went to dozens of grass-roots environmental outfits such as the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, the Rainforest Action Network and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.

The group Earth First!, whose members advocate sabotaging machinery that destroys the environment, has also benefited from Chouinard's largess. When Dave Foreman, a founder of Earth First!,

was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and charged with conspiring to topple power lines, Chouinard arranged for his friend Gerry Spence, a renowned trial attorney based in Jackson, Wyo., to defend the activist.

Chouinard makes no apologies; in fact, he seems to relish controversy. He has taken some heat for his support of the group, mostly in the form of angry letters from customers. But that doesn't bother the clothier. "For every five letters I get from people saying they're mad, I get 50 saying keep up the good work."

Although Chouinard won't say if he supports Earth First! tactics such as tree-spikeing, he fully endorsed the overall concept of environmental activism. "You need mothers out in front of bulldozers. When wilderness is gone, it's gone."

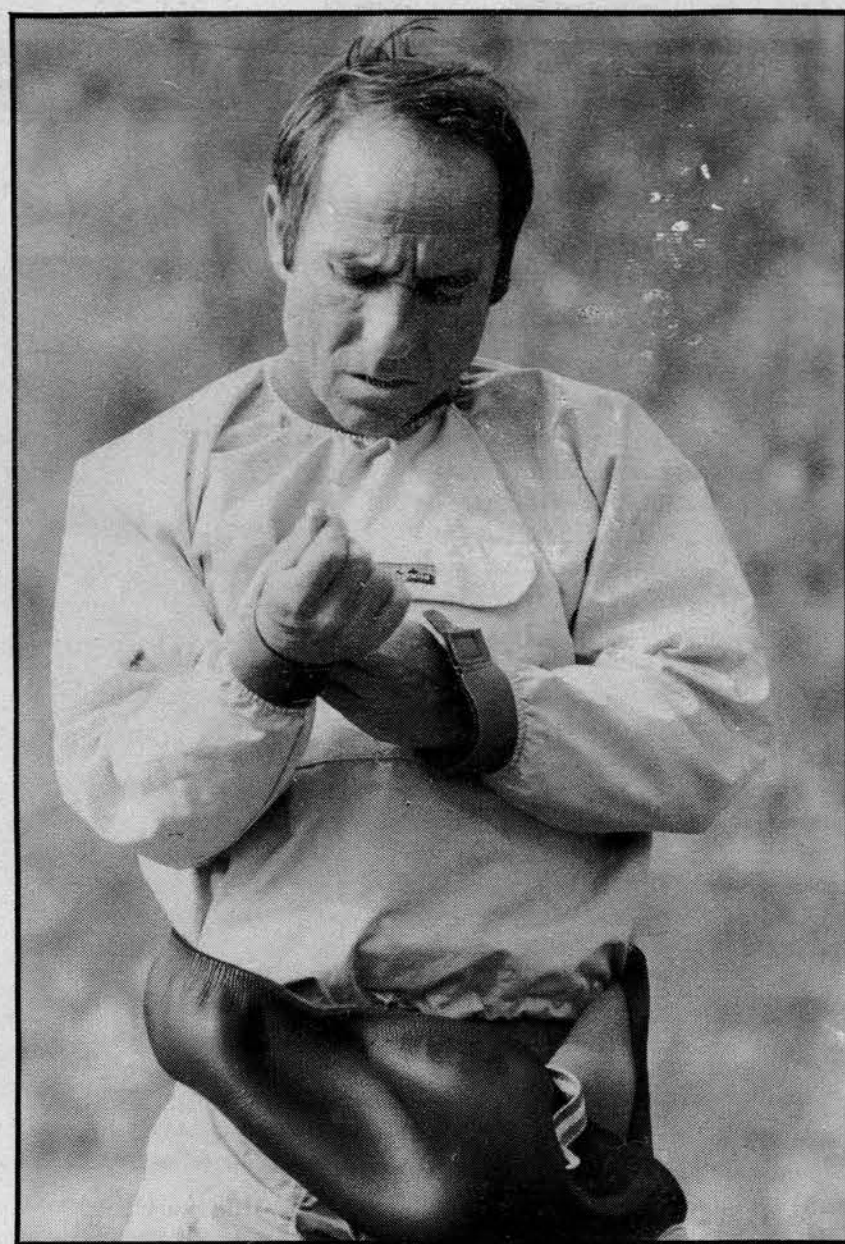
Money is not all that Patagonia gives away. It has donated foul-weather outfits to U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists working to save the California condor. It has donated rolls of Synthilla — the company's hallmark synthetic fabric — to the homeless for use as blankets.

Chouinard likes his politics to be visible. During the last presidential election, he engineered a full-page ad in the *New York Times* demanding that Dan Quayle release his school records for full public disclosure.

The clothier also uses his unconventional approach to business within the company walls. He has set up a progressive day care center at headquarters in Ventura, Calif. A cafeteria serves only natural foods. Flex time enables employees to leave in the middle of the day to surf, kayak or watch baseball; many employees go barefoot and wear shorts.

The clothing catalog has become a vehicle for the company's ideas. Models are employees or Patagonia consumers who send in exotic snapshots. In a departure from the usual catalog copy, a page last spring read: "Last summer, ... deterioration of the ozone layer produced skin cancers in record numbers, severe drought in the West and Midwest, and a hurricane stronger than any before in history. Pesticide poisoning and toxic waste were suspected in miscarriages among women and cancer among children."

The notion of business competition at Patagonia is also approached in unique fashion. The company emphasizes research and development of new products. At the laboratory, fabrics are tested for waterproof ability, strength and color fastness. But all the testing means a high price tag, a chronic complaint among wearers and would-be wearers of Patagonia.



Yvon Chouinard

Patagonia was the first in the United States to use polypropylene, a popular synthetic among outdoorspeople because it wicks perspiration away from the skin, keeping wearers dry. Now Patagonia has developed capilene long underwear, which it says wicks better and is more comfortable. Like Tang, astronauts prefer it. They've worn it on space shuttle missions.

The company is currently producing a line of "air-conditioned" clothing, specially designed so the wearer can stay cooler in hot weather. It is jokingly referred to as the "greenhouse effect" line. "We're gonna make some money on this global warming," grins Chouinard.

The same intensity that makes Chouinard a good businessman also makes him a good climber. He has found the two characteristics are not mutually exclusive.

In 1964, he and some climbing companions were the first to climb Yosemite's 3,000 foot vertical North America Wall of El Capitan. It took 10 days to climb; they spent nine nights on the face of the wall suspended in hammocks by pitons, metal wedges that climbers pound into a rock crevice. At that time, climbers often complained about the Austrian pitons, the only ones available. The metal was too soft, and they could only be used once. Then they were left in the rock.

Chouinard and fellow climber Thomas Frost forged some pitons out of the hard metal blades of a mechanical harvester. The stakes proved tough and could be used repeatedly. Chouinard began selling them to friends for \$1.50 a piece. Soon after, he founded the Chouinard Equipment Company, a division he recently sold when insurance costs against lawsuits became prohibitive.

Business acumen aside, Chouinard says he does not want to get rich. He draws a healthy salary — he won't say how much — and the rest goes into the

company or to causes. He wants time to travel and climb and kayak in remote places around the world. He spends four or so months a year working; the rest of the time he plays. He defines M.B.A. as management by absence.

"It's a model," says news anchorman Tom Brokaw, a friend of Chouinard's, of Patagonia. "[Chouinard] sees value as something to do with more than a healthy bottom line. He's a successful businessman who's putting his money where his heart is. It would have been very easy for him to run his company into 1,000 retail stores or sell out to a department store chain. He didn't."

Chouinard calls his approach to management "Zen and the art of making money."

"It's like archery," he says, drawing an imaginary bow toward the Tetons. "You forget about the target, which is making money. You pay attention to putting the arrow on the notch and draw the bow. If you do that right, the arrow always goes into the target. American companies focus on the bull's eye. They're so fixated on the target that they don't do anything else right."

"I never wanted to be a businessman," he adds, "because I thought businessmen were real greaseballs. In fact I still do."

But Chouinard believes the business world, like the political world, teeters on the brink of change for the better. President Bush will be the last president, he predicts, who is not an environmentalist.

"I think most [politicians] are wimps. If you surround the White House with five million Americans who are absolutely fed up and they say: 'You are destroying the world and we're not leaving until you do something,' that's the only way we'll have change."

If those five million Americans are wearing Patagonia, so much the better for Chouinard. ■

Jim Robbins is a freelance writer in Helena, Montana.

GUEST OPINION

Forest Service officials hear from wilderness critics

by Richard Manning

When a group of the nation's top Forest Service officials converged on Missoula, Mont., last month to talk about wilderness, lodging for Beltway bureaucrats and others was wall tents atop a wooded hill. Mules towed luggage to camp, but at least it was no Holiday Inn.

A story buzzing among the lower ranks of the participants, however, was this: One deputy regional forester at the conference was camping for the first time since she was 10 years old.

This first-ever national strategy session on wilderness seemed a sign that the Forest Service wishes to pay more attention to the issue. But if management is as out of touch with the land as the anecdote would indicate, perhaps wilderness would be better served by being ignored.

But it would be difficult to imagine another federal agency committed enough to change to spend a week with some of its most persistent critics. For at the agency's invitation, representatives of the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, outfitters and guides associations and various local groups ganged up to preach some sharp sermons.

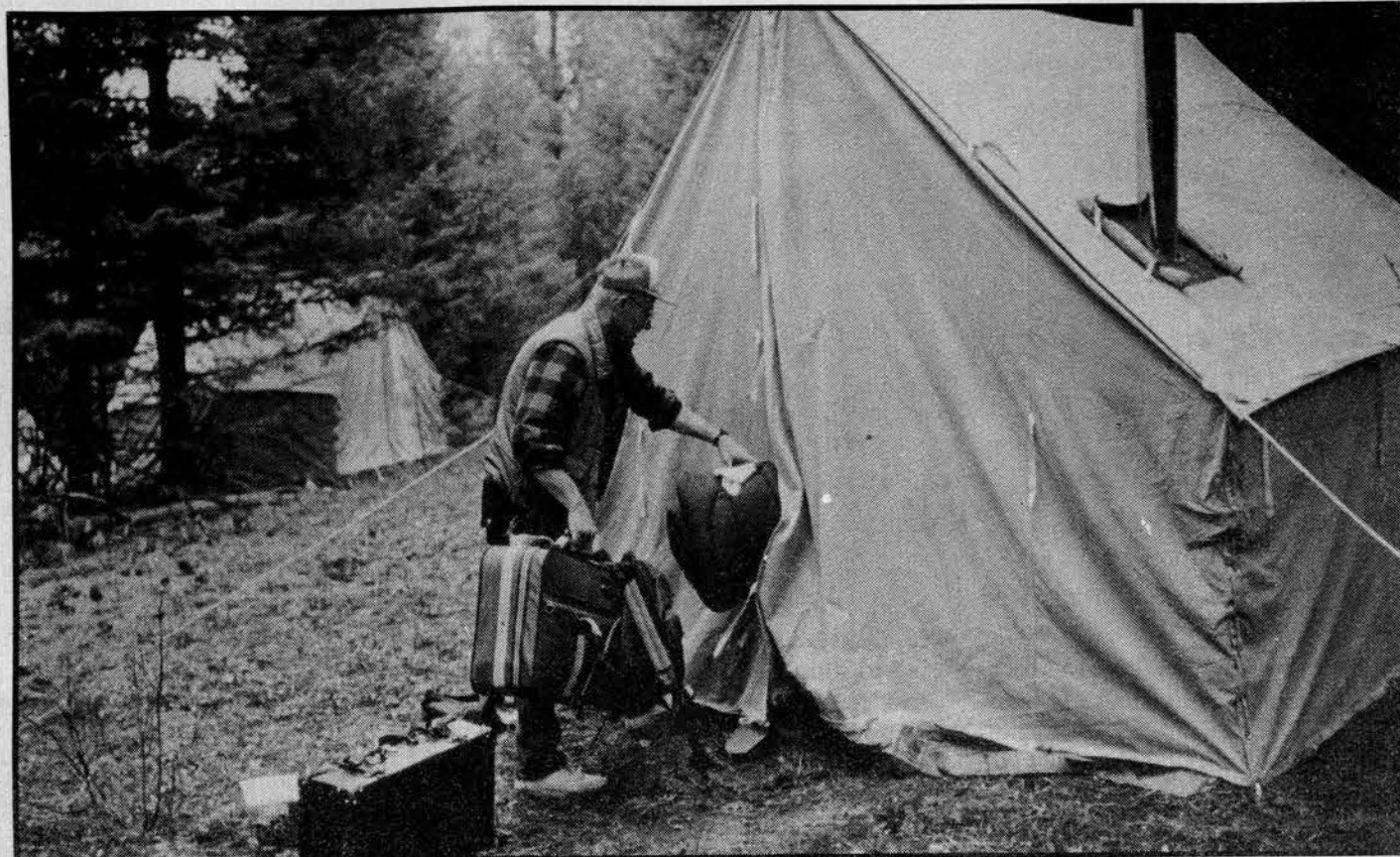
Typical of the comments was one from Arnold Bolle, a member of the national governing council of the Wilderness Society.

"I am, of course, accusing you of dishonesty," he said in a statement typical of the tenor of the session.

The agency also faced off with a batch of its own internal critics, especially in the lower reaches of the flow charts. In one encounter-group-type exercise, managers listed the reputation they would like to have. "Wilderness supporter," "champion of wilderness values," "strong environmental ethic," "considers the resource first," "willing to make unpopular decisions" were some answers.

The most popular buzz phrase of the gathering was a Forest Service rendition of the admonition to practice what you preach.

"Walk the talk," said speakers ranging up to John Mumma, who superintends the 13 national forests of the Northern Rockies Region. But as a top manager, Mumma is an exception in that



Michael Gallacher

Not the Holiday Inn: a Forest Service official checks in to his tent near Missoula, Montana

he frequently travels in the wilderness. The rule among the upper echelons is that managers never walk the wilderness at all, and on that contradiction turns the tensions within the Forest Service. That it was Forest Service staffers who told the story about the unfamiliar camper indicates some of the tensions. So were other stories going around.

One was about Mumma's decision this year to hire — for the first time — a person to oversee wilderness areas throughout the region. Mumma's bailiwick holds just over five million of the nation's 32 million acres of Forest Service land designated as wilderness.

The leading candidate for the job was Steve Morton, a fellow with a heavy background in wilderness. The competition was Liz Close from the Intermountain Region, based in Ogden, Utah. Her experience is in "marketing skills," regional officials confirm. Mumma's Solomon-like decision was to hire both at about \$45,000 a year apiece, tapping the budget for the equivalent of at least four wilderness rangers. Ground troops howled.

At least Mumma compromised. At

the national level, there has been no such honoring of wilderness expertise, a bone of contention with wilderness advocates. Anne Fege, the national head of wilderness, came through the ranks of the timber program. Elizabeth Estill, who is assistant director in charge of planning for recreation management, and the nation's other top wilderness official, came from the Tennessee Valley Authority. One wonders what dam-building in the South has to do with understanding an alpine lake in the Northern Rockies.

But, more importantly, one wonders why the Forest Service persists in assigning wilderness management to its recreation planners, as it does now both regionally and nationally. Wilderness is far more than recreation. It is as if the Vatican were to assign care of its most sacred churches to the assistant secretary for bingo.

The Forest Service has no career path for wilderness specialists, a point that Bolle pushed at the meeting. Bolle noted that oversight hearings by Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Fla., several years ago produced a recommendation for just that sort of professional development.

"Can you tell me what progress you are making in this way?" Bolle asked.

"We've made precious little progress," said Estill. "We are working on it, but we haven't made much progress."

Instead, the agency considers managers as interchangeable units, plugging in timber beasts and picnic-table planners to attend to pristine lands.

The Forest Service can argue that it really doesn't matter that people such as Estill, Close and Fege have no experience in wilderness. Managing is managing, whether the topic is timber or toothbrushes. The real issue is whether top positions get filled by go-get-'em, can-do managers who can shake loose cash and win public confidence.

To be sure, the Forest Service is changing these days and is all atwitter with the same management buzzwords making the corporate rounds. It hires facilitators and speaks of conflict resolution, marketing and "right-brain" thinking. Above all, though, it speaks of "managing the resource." That was the phrase that echoed most during the week's encampment. Manage wilderness?

The Forest Service still is thoroughly populated with the sons and daughters of Gifford Pinchot, the fellow who founded the agency on the notion that the land exists to be re-created in mankind's image. Pinchot's progeny still think of wilderness as a resource to be managed. This is a double insult to wilderness.

"Resource" implies a commodity there for our use, but wilderness is not that. The word wilderness implies a land of its own will, a place where the ineffable forces of nature play out "untrammelled by man." Wilderness is not just another place to impose our will.

The lesson of wilderness is that it is foolish to try to rule the land. Now our nation has 32 million acres of Forest Service land that would teach that lesson, if we would only learn to stay out of its way. The Forest Service, or at least its Beltway incarnation, is heading in the opposite direction. ■

Richard Manning is a freelance writer in Missoula, Montana, who writes frequently about national forest issues.



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