

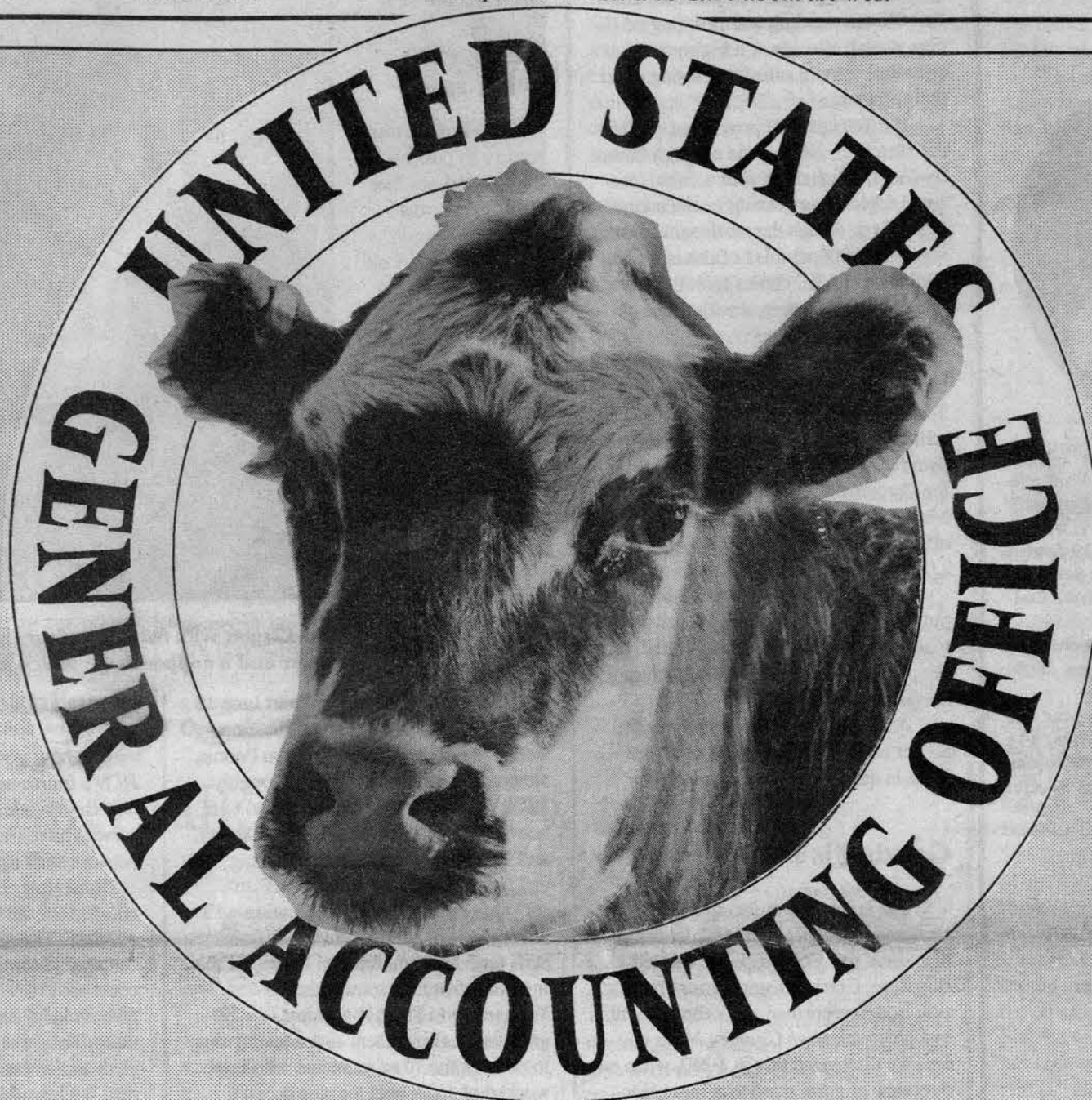
High Country News

April 20, 1992

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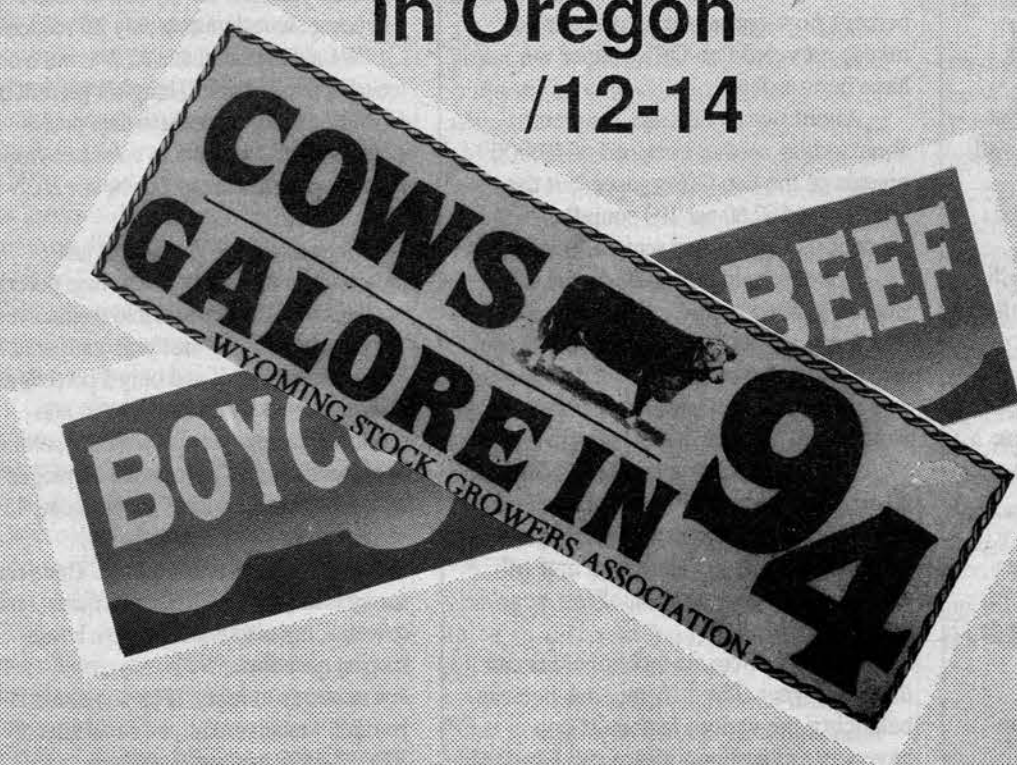
A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar



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Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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A best seller

It is an accepted journalistic rule that bad news and conflict sell newspapers. A plane crash that kills 200 people sells more papers than a plane crash that only kills 100 people. Jerry Brown and Bill Clinton shouting and pointing fingers at each other draw a bigger audience than the two calmly differing over their programs.

But you couldn't prove that rule by the March 23, 1992, issue of *High Country News*, which dealt with a calm, measured approach to grazing in the inland West. Even though the mailroom crew sent out 15,000 samples of the issue, in addition to 11,500 copies to subscribers, *HCN* has been swamped with requests for additional copies.

By April 6, the issue had achieved modest best-sellerdom. We had sent out 350 issues in response to telephone and written orders. But that number was dwarfed on the sixth by bulk orders from the Oregon office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Washington, D.C., office of the Forest Service, which ordered 2,000 and 500 copies respectively.

Those 2,500 copies sent associate publisher Linda Bacigalupi 70 miles over the hill, page negatives in hand, to the printer in Glenwood Springs, to run another 3,000 copies.

Additional copies are available for \$3 per issue up to 9 copies and \$2 per issue in quantities of more than 10.

Grazing is hot

The articles have also inspired numerous telephone calls and letters to the editor, many of which are printed in this issue. Grazing inspires more reaction from readers than any other natural resource issue *High Country News* covers. We discovered this in 1990, when an overview of grazing led to a large reaction, which in turn led to the issue that featured Twin Falls, Idaho, District Ranger Donald Oman and his troubles with ranchers and his agency.

Oman is still at his Twin Falls position, and in a recent letter said that things are going well for him and his district. He is something of a survivor: since the controversy began, both the regional forester and the forest supervisor have moved on, but Oman is still on the job at the Sawtooth National Forest.

New intern

New intern Rita Clagett grew up on the East Coast, until, she says, she came to her senses and moved out West. Through a series of fortuitous choices she landed in the one-stop town of Jensen, Utah, where she worked for the National Park Service interpreting a wall full of dead archosaurs at Dinosaur National Monument. She then worked in what she recalls as a "politically unstable" branch office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But she especially enjoyed her field research, which involved electro-shocking endangered fish on the Yampa and Green rivers.

Between jobs in Jensen, Rita wrote a book that hasn't been published, gathered wild asparagus in season and chased rainbows with her camera. Before coming West, she worked as a zookeeper and conservation educator in Florida, and was known to close friends as "Medusa." Her educational background in anthropology and zoology, experience working for the federal government, and preference for the wild over the tamed give her a zeal for issues

covered by *High Country News*. But while she relishes this opportunity to hone her long-dormant journalistic skills, she says she wants to be a poet when she grows up.

Celebrate with us

We hope as many readers as possible will mark down June 20-21, 1992, as a weekend they will spend in Paonia, Colo. That is the weekend on which we will dedicate the new *High Country News* building. On Saturday afternoon, there will be a talk by a noted speaker, a ceremony, an outdoor barbecue and a dance. On Sunday, there will be hikes into the surrounding countryside.

Visitors may wish to combine attendance at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, which will run from June 18 through 21, with the building dedication. Telluride is a three-hour drive from Paonia, although culturally the towns are roughly 1,000 light-years apart. Paonia is also two hours from Aspen, five hours from Denver, and 90 minutes from Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction.

Our hope is that the dedication will attract former board members, former staff members and former interns. At the moment, former interns Florence Williams and Steve Hinchman — who are now staff members — are attempting to contact the 70 or so interns who have worked at *HCN* over the past decade. But we've lost addresses for many former interns. If you know any, or if you are one who is not on our current subscriber list, please contact us.

On recycled paper

Our printer tells us that somewhere in the middle of this run of *High Country News*, we will run out of the 40,000 pounds of recycled offset stock we bought last year, and he will have to switch to the unrecycled paper we formerly used. By the next issue, all of the papers will be on the 35-pound, 72-bright, unrecycled Mandobrite, instead of the 40-pound, 79-bright, 54 percent (9 percent post-consumer, 45 percent de-inked) recycled Eco-Offset paper we have been using.

About two months ago, we were about to buy another truckload of 40,000 pounds of the Eco-Offset paper, but the price — at \$60.60 per 100 pounds — brought us to a halt and sent us shopping.

Our determination to find a recycled stock is guided by last year's survey, in which a huge majority of respondents told us that recycled, non-chlorinated paper was important, and that a higher cost wouldn't affect their intent to resubscribe.

Many readers also put their money where their concerns were. We received \$6,812 in contributions from 424 readers, enough to cover more than half of the \$11,700 additional cost of last year's recycled paper.

Happily, there are more choices out there this year. The difficulty has been in balancing the various factors. If you have any suggestions, please call Linda Bacigalupi at 303/527-4898.



Rita Clagett with two of her four captive-bred pets, a corn snake and a gopher snake, which lacks black pigment

Cindy Wehling

Keep in touch

By now you should have received *HCN*'s fourth annual reader survey. We hear from readers all year long, but the surveys have increased the dialog between staff and readers.

Last year, 1,900 subscribers returned the survey, for a 20 percent response. The surveys were filled with contacts: potential readers, teachers who could use *HCN* in their classes, and your favorite local environmental organizations. They were also filled with story ideas and comments on past *HCN* stories. We learned a great deal from them.

We also probably irritated some of the respondents. More than half those who asked that we not exchange their names with other groups did not give us their names and addresses. If this extra mail disturbs you, please use this year's survey to try again — even if you think you have responded to this question in the past. On the other hand, if you miss the mail we send your way through our exchanges, let us know and we'll put you back in the loop.

Last year's survey also told us that more and more *HCN* readers want their very own copy. In 1986, we estimated that each copy of *HCN* was read by 3.5 people; in 1989, the number dropped slightly, to 3.3. Last year, the survey told us each copy was being shared among only 2.5 readers.

We also learned that *HCN* is not a coffee-table publication. Thirty-six percent of *HCN*'s subscribers use it in their professional work; 22 percent in volunteer work and 4 percent are students who use *HCN* in coursework.

High Country News is not just preaching to the choir. Sixty-nine percent of all respondents considered themselves "environmentalists" last year compared to 89 percent in 1986, and only 5 percent are also employed by environmental non-profits. Eighteen percent work for schools or universities; 31 percent are employed by federal, state or local government; 45 percent work in private industry.

That was last year's survey. This year's survey is mostly about editorial quality and coverage, but also contains some house-keeping questions. We hope you will take a few moments to reply. If for some reason you didn't receive one, call circulation at 303/527-4898 and we'll send one to you.

— Ed Marston, for the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Sen. Wirth's decision stuns environmentalists

The announcement by Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth that he will not seek a second Senate term this year has been met by environmentalists with a mixture of regret, despair and some soul-searching.

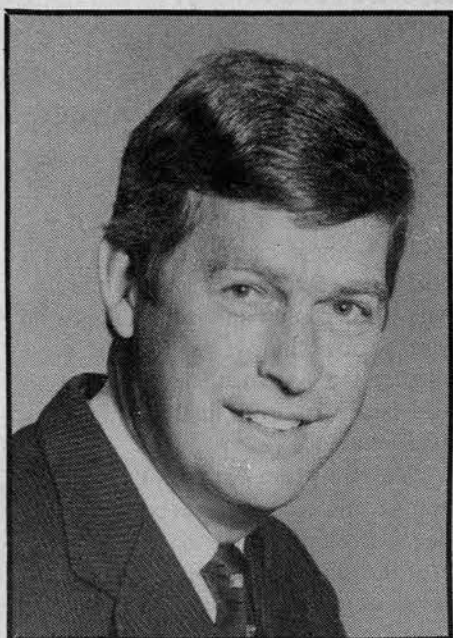
Wirth, a Democrat now in his 18th year in Congress, has stood out among the conservative Western delegation. He was instrumental in designating some wilderness in Colorado, including Indian Peaks near Boulder. Other accomplishments include writing energy amendments to the 1990 Clean Air Act, organizing a filibuster to prevent drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and passing legislation to start cleaning up the Arkansas River.

"We're losing one of our best friends in the U.S. Congress. Period," said Darrell Knuffke of the Wilderness Society in Denver.

Yet Wirth has come under heavy fire from the state's environmental community for his recent wilderness compromise with Republican Sen. Hank Brown and for his support of the Animas-La Plata water project near Durango.

In a recent statement to the press, Wirth, 52, cited his frustration with his critics as one of the reasons he will not run.

"When something as relatively straightforward as a Colorado wilderness



Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth

bill cannot get through the gauntlet of negatives through which it must pass, I cannot help but be discouraged..." he said.

The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club stand among the most vocal critics of the bill, which passed the Senate last August but remains stuck in a House committee. The environmental groups, buoyed by committee chair George Miller, D-Calif., object to the

proposal's failure to secure water rights in protected areas.

Abandoned by some of his strongest environmental allies, Wirth may have felt his support eroding on the eve of a tough campaign. "For the last year, especially, I have felt my own strength diminished," said Wirth, who also spoke of his frustration with dirty campaigning and congressional "gridlock."

"The reaction from the environmental groups (to the wilderness bill) was a contributing factor to his decision to get out," speculates Tom Dougherty of the National Wildlife Federation.

Said one local reporter who has covered the controversy this year: "The environmental groups overreacted. They were crazy not to accept the compromise. This guy's a lefty in a conservative state. He's gotta play the game."

Maggie Fox, director of the regional office of the Sierra Club, said mistakes were made all around.

"I don't think any of us realized the level of frustration he's felt on the wilderness bill," she said. "After eight years of getting nowhere, he thought he found a solution. I told him 'How the heck do you think we can support this?' We hit on him hard and he was furious."

"He was surprised and hurt by the

level of criticism," Fox continued. "After all he's done, he wanted us to like it. But the hurt was mutual. We felt it too. It was a tragedy. But no matter how bad the feelings were, never did our support for him as a candidate waver."

Fox said going to hear Wirth's retirement announcement in Denver was like going to a funeral. "It's the end of an era."

Contending to replace Wirth on the Democratic ticket are third-term Colorado Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell, former Boulder County Commissioner Josie Heath, and former state governor Richard Lamm.

— Florence Williams

The writer is a staff reporter for High Country News.

HOTLINE

Lorraine Mintzmyer quits

National Park Service Mid-Atlantic Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer, who told a congressional committee she'd been harassed by higher-ups, resigned April 4. The former Rocky Mountain regional director said last fall that her work on a protection plan for Yellowstone was squashed and watered down by industry-friendly Bush appointees in the Interior Department (*HCN*, 10/7/91). Speaking through her legal counsel, Mintzmyer said her job position and responsibilities had been undermined since her revealing testimony. "She has been a target in the past, and at present, of special interests and their flunkies among the officials in the Department of Interior. She has been isolated, humiliated, and it has been made clear to others that she is a pariah," said her attorney, Carl Hartmann, in a recent letter to Rep. Gerry Sikorski. Sikorski's subcommittee on civil service plans to wrap up its investigation of wrongful transfers this summer.

Report criticizes agency

A host of development pressures and other problems threaten the nation's parks, and the National Park Service is not doing its job to protect the "crown jewels," says a report released early this month. Known as "The Vail Agenda," the findings grew out of the agency's 75th anniversary symposium in Colorado last fall. A team of Park Service officials, outside academics and conservationists examined the agency's deficiencies and made recommendations for improvements. They said the agency's biggest weaknesses include a lack of direction and leadership from upper management, inattention to the need for scientific data to make important resource decisions, and poor morale among underpaid staff. "The agency is beset by controversy, concern, weakened morale and declining effectiveness," said the 55-page report. A prescription for the agency's next 75 years includes a beefed-up science and research program, better housing and pay for rangers, and a clearer definition of goals such as resource protection. Agency chief James Ridenour took the criticism well. "The budget plan we submitted to Congress this winter already includes proposals to incorporate many of the symposium's recommendations in our working agenda," he said. For information about the report, call George Berklacy, Park Service public relations, 202/208-6843.

An old-timer talks about new times

SHERIDAN, Wyo. — When Lloyd Todd joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1957, choices were much simpler than they are now.

"At one time, we'd have said this is how much timber we're going to cut, period," he says. "Then there might have been an article or two in the paper, and I might have taken a cussing or two, but that would have been it."

Last month, Todd retired as supervisor of northern Wyoming's Bighorn National Forest, where in the last five years he has presided over some of the most complex land management issues in the region.

In that time, he launched a process that may lead to a drastic reduction in logging to maintain environmental standards in the Bighorn forest. And he began new plans for use of the prehistoric medicine wheel atop the rolling Bighorn Mountains, an action that drew heavy criticism from Indian tribes and escalated into the biggest frustration of his job.

In the final five of his 35 years with the Forest Service, Todd has taken more than a few cussings and criticisms, from local folks and the highest-ranking elected officials in Wyoming. Some like him, some revile him. But he thinks that's an improvement.

"It's a good change that people are more interested and involved in what's happening," he says. "Hell, we don't know it all."

There's no doubt, he says, that Forest Service decisions are now far more political than they used to be. That's been especially clear since Bighorn managers realized they cannot find enough timber to meet logging goals — forcing a change in those goals to be announced this summer.

Wyoming's congressional delegation has called a decrease in Bighorn logging "absurd" and panned a decision by Todd as "wholly unacceptable." Gov. Mike Sullivan wrote to tell Todd that it "is simply not acceptable" for Sheridan's Wyoming sawmills to have shut down for a lack of timber.

But Todd wrote back later that he did not want to accelerate logging "to meet a short-term... objective and simultaneously compromise or jeopardize my land stewardship trust with the public."

While politics may have pervaded personnel changes in the Forest Service lately, Todd says they had nothing to do with his retirement. However, he does

**'People who use
this national forest
need to recognize
that changes
are coming.'**

— Lloyd Todd

not deny there has been political pressure to retain logging rates.

"I don't think it was unreasonable pressure. It wasn't out of place." Rather, it illustrates a fundamental change in the way the Forest Service works, Todd says. Rather than gearing decisions toward ranching and timber interests, the agency today is accountable to a constituency that also sees natural values in multiple-use national forests.

It's a continuation, he says, of changes set in motion when Forest Service founder Gifford Pinchot established management schemes for national forests in 1905, charging for grazing and logging. That created vehement resentment among cattlemen and other users who "didn't want to be told what to do."

"In 100 years, we will still see cattle grazing and a timber program, but it's going to be in different form," predicts Todd, whose cowboy hat looks more comfortable on him than his Forest Service uniform. "Our people who use this national forest need to recognize that changes are coming."

"If they don't change, they're not going to survive," Todd says.

Despite his stand on logging, the supervisor could never fully please either sawmill managers or environmentalists. The Sierra Club sued over the forest's regeneration standard — the amount of time trees needed to grow back — and a court-imposed injunction limiting logging remains in effect. Todd says he never expected to make either group happy.

Most frustrating, Todd says, was that he could never reach a consensus for management of the ancient medicine wheel, a ridge-top stone structure considered sacred by Indian tribes.

"We saw it as a site that was getting trampled and beat up" by increased visitation, Todd says.

But when Bighorn managers opted to draw up new plans to guide the site, Native American tribes saw it as an attempt to convert a religious shrine into a tourist attraction. Suggestions of a new parking lot, restrooms and improved access exploded into an inter-cultural battle.

"It's as much my fault as anybody's," says Todd. "There are cultural differences I haven't understood. I've really tried, but somehow it has never jelled."

That dispute depicts the new scrutiny national forests are facing on subjects other than the usual logging and grazing. Even as some interests communicate — Bighorn fishermen and cattlemen met in Sheridan recently to find common ground — solutions may be long in coming.

Todd calls himself an "old-school" forester pulled by tides of change. Future forest heads like Deputy Bighorn Supervisor Larry Keown, a likely choice to succeed Todd, may try to ride those tides.

"We need to find room for everyone up there," Todd says. "It's begun, but it's not happened yet."

— Michael Milstein

The reporter works for the *Billings Gazette* in Wyoming.

Will gateway zoo lure Yellowstone's grizzlies?

If a local developer has his way, ground-breaking for a multimillion-dollar "Grizzly Park" will begin June 15 in the tiny town of West Yellowstone, Mont. Live grizzlies are the centerpiece of the 87-acre theme park, which will also include motels, restaurants, stores and a theater.

But some of the town's 950 residents fear that Grizzly Park won't help the threatened animals and will forever change their community. Environmentalists say grouping captive bears in the heart of prime grizzly country could attract and disturb the 200 wild bears that roam the Greater Yellowstone area.

The theme park's promoter is Lewis Robinson III, a 14-year resident of West Yellowstone. He says the bear exhibit will be part of a non-profit research and educational facility that attracts "profitable entities." Because bears are the primary draw, Robinson says he will encourage the new businesses to donate 5 percent of their profits to grizzly research at the facility.

Robinson says the exhibit will house mostly captive bears from other zoos but will also provide refuge for Yellow-

stone's nuisance bears. A \$10 million landscaping scheme will simulate wild grizzly habitat with scree slopes for digging, upended tree roots for scratching and a log-filled pond for bears to play in. Fencing and dry moats will separate and protect visitors from the bears, which will live on approximately 29 acres.

Robinson says that Grizzly Park will also house an interpretive center and a large-screen IMAX theater that shows Yellowstone Park from the perspective of a grizzly. He says he sympathizes with the "99 percent of people that never get off the pavement" when visiting Yellowstone.

Some residents, however, wonder what will happen to traffic and congestion in their town when more of Yellowstone's 3 million annual visitors make West Yellowstone part of their destination. Last autumn, the town formally approved the development with what David Gaillard, a member of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, called a "joke of a public process." According to Gaillard, the developer dominated the first hour and a half of the town meeting with presentations. "By the time Robinson was finished, it was late so most people left before public comments were made," he says.

Gaillard worries that the developer is not committed to spending the time and money necessary to eliminate risks to wild bears. For example, the odors associated with live bears in captivity might attract and draw wild grizzlies into unsafe proximity with residents and tourists, he says. Gaillard also worries that Yellowstone might remove nuisance bears from the wild more readily, which "may as well be a mortality as far as the Yellowstone ecosystem is concerned."

Finally, Gaillard questions the morality of putting "as many as 27 grizzlies in close quarters when one wild grizzly needs about 45 square miles." He says that caging wild grizzlies undermines the rare value of a wild animal in its wild environment.

Bear specialists in Yellowstone

National Park, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Montana Fish and Game Department have expressed similar concerns, especially about the captive bears attracting wild bears.

Dick Knight, head of the publicly funded Interagency Bear Study Group, says sanitation planning will be critical. Just a few years ago, West Yellowstone's garbage cans were a magnet for wild bears. The town now deters the animals from coming to town by requiring bear-proof dumpsters. Knight says whether the proposed park will disturb wild bears is "all a matter of facility management."

Yellowstone Park spokeswoman Joan Anzelmo says she has concerns that Grizzly Park may cause too much traffic. "But the gateway tourist communities are going to grow anyway," she says, "so it would be best if the development is well-planned." So far, Anzelmo says, the developer has given Yellowstone managers ample opportunity to participate in Grizzly Park planning. She cautions that if the theme park becomes a problem for wild Yellowstone bears, the park's mission to keep its bears ranging free and wild will always be the first priority.

"We are not going to change our systematic bear management plan to accommodate a developer," she says. But, Anzelmo says, "as an absolute last resort, if all other options are exhausted, there's a slight possibility that a Yellowstone bear might end up in Grizzly Park."

Developer Lewis Robinson says he doesn't understand why his Grizzly Park has generated such controversy.

"I've got the best people in the world working on this," he says. According to Robinson, his architects have designed bear habitats for many leading zoos, his planners designed the resort community of Beaver Creek, Colo., and the consultant for the interpretive center designed acclaimed traveling exhibits about wolves and bears. His bear consultants include Gary Brown, who was

chief ranger at Denali National Park for eight years, then assistant chief ranger and bear specialist at Yellowstone for 10 years, and Charlie Robbins, a specialist in bear nutrition at Washington State University.

Robbins says that the bear center could provide an excellent research facility for nutritional studies, and he hopes that university research could eventually be incorporated into Grizzly Park.

While some people fear that the scent of captive females in estrus will attract wild bears to town, Robbins says it's unlikely. He says male bears follow trails of scent left by females in heat. Even if a male bear sights a female, he will continue to follow her scent trail nose to the ground. Other bear specialists generally agree, but say that male bears may also follow scents in the air if no other strong scent trails exist. The developer, Lewis Robinson, also suggested that captive female bears could be given a birth-control pill to prevent them from going into estrus.

Of course, a developer is out for profit, says biologist Robbins. "But if he follows through with all the research and public education facilities he's promised, a lot of good things can come out of Grizzly Park."

Because Grizzly Park will be built on private land, public involvement is limited to making comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before April 28. The developer must apply to that agency for a permit to house grizzly bears, a threatened species. Scott Jackson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office in Montana says the agency will review all public comments and, if necessary, attach conditions to the permit to ensure the well-being of the bears.

Send comments regarding the federal permit to Dale Harms, State Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fed. Bldg., 301 So. Park, Box 10023, Helena, MT 59626.

— Ann Vileisis, HCN intern

HOTLINE

North Dakota county says no

In North Dakota, Grant County has said no to nuclear waste. On March 10, more people than those voting in the last general election turned out to recall the three county commissioners. The officials had accepted and spent a \$100,000 grant from the Department of Energy to study locating a high-level radioactive waste dump within their county (HCN, 1/10/92). David Bertch, a founder of the Citizens Against a Nuclear Waste Dump in Grant County, which spearheaded the effort to recall the commissioners, said he's glad it's over. "At first they (the commissioners) tried to write us off as environmental extremists and radicals. They even called us bully boys." The commissioners were ready to accept the next level of Energy Department funding for a "Monitored Retrieval Storage" facility when the recall election stopped them, Bertch said. The three new commissioners, Larry Grade, Leslie Roth Sr. and Wendell Dawson, were backed by the citizens' group. "The heavy voter turnout was just an expression of the outrage with the DOE and all the others," Bertch said. "This should send a message: They should dump their waste responsibly, and coming to rural, food-producing areas is not responsible. It makes a difference when people get involved."

BARBS

If GM would give its directors new cars every month, it could get some of that market share back.

General Motors Corp., which lost one-third of its market share in the 1980s, allows members of its board of directors to get a new, free car every three months, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

It's enough to make you cry.

Tough environmental rules may prevent Defense Technology Corporation of America from manufacturing tear gas in Casper, Wyo., according to the *Casper Star-Tribune*.



An 800-pound grizzly bear under study at Washington State University peers at student Jackie VanDevelder. Washington State researcher Charlie Robbins is a consultant to the developer of Grizzly Park.

Paul VanDevelder



The Elk Creek Dam in southeastern Oregon, not quite completed

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Should this dam rise, or fall?

A half-completed dam in southern Oregon, shut down in 1987 because of environmental concerns, may face resurrection later this year. But the state's governor and environmentalists want to tear down the dam.

In 1962, Congress authorized the Elk Creek Dam in the Rogue River basin as part of a three-dam complex designed to provide hydropower, recreation, irrigation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and flood control.

Congress delayed funding the dam for 25 years. When it finally appropriated money in 1985, the Oregon Natural Resources Council and others filed suit in U.S. District Court to halt the project. They charged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers failed to comply with the National Environmental Protection Act.

An injunction was granted in 1987 by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, and later upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. It

froze the dam at 83 feet, one-third of its designed height, although the project had already cost just over \$100 million.

The Corps now says it wants to complete construction of the dam and manage it for flood control on an interim basis. This would mean storing water behind the dam "when the demand for additional conservation develops in the region," says the agency's new environmental impact statement.

In late January, the Corps asked the Justice Department to let it resume construction now that it has improved its environmental studies.

In the meantime, Oregon's Governor Barbara Roberts has called for the Corps to remove the partially completed dam and restore the area. She says the dam could harm anadromous fish (including wild stocks) and wildlife.

Andy Kerr, conservation director of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, says the Corps' latest proposal falls short. "The flood control benefits proposed by the Corps are skewed, as they assumed that there would be a lot more development in the flood plain than happened," says Kerr. "What you have is simply the Corps trying to justify a project which probably didn't make sense in 1962 and certainly doesn't today."

The Corps' recommendation to finish the dam is expected to cost another \$85 million. Choosing to abandon the dam and safely secure it would run an estimated \$6 million, while removing the dam altogether would cost an estimated \$15-\$20 million.

— John Vincent Rosapepe

The writer free-lances from Portland, Oregon.

Rock art records assault on Indian culture

Conservation work was recently completed on the Big Kachina rock art panel along the banks of Utah's San Juan River.

In June 1991, someone pounded obscenities into the rock face with a balpeen hammer, destroying much of the artwork created here by the ancient Anasazi people. In some places, letters 3/4 of an inch high were hacked into the stone.

Before rock art conservationist Kate Hoage could work on the panel, someone else tried to remove the offensive graffiti. "They took rocks and tried to abrade the words out, causing much more damage than the original vandalism had done," Hoage said.

The Bureau of Land Management is continuing its investigation of the crime. Hoage said she was able to disguise the

obscene words with pigments but left the depressions unfilled.

"The vandalism was unfortunate and not acceptable," said BLM archaeologist Dale Davidson. "However, this vandalism now needs to be considered part of the history of this panel."

— Damian Fagan

The writer lives in Moab, Utah.



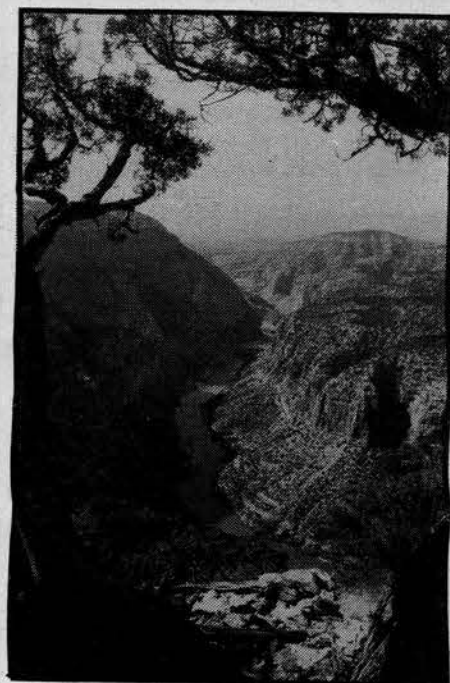
Segment of Kachina Panel, San Juan River and Butler Wash, Utah

R. Paul Firnhaber/GeolImage

HOTLINE

Beach party cleanup

Volunteers picked up 33 tons of trash in the semi-annual cleanup of Oregon's beaches March 15. Organized by the state parks department, it was the seventh spring cleanup of Oregon's 400 miles of coastline. The autumn effort, run by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, is now in its eighth year. This spring's catch included a television, automobile hood and bumper, hot water heater, truck engine, bicycle, dead cow, six hypodermic needles and a loaded .22 caliber pistol — the last found by a first-grader. The turnout of 6,283 people more than doubled the previous record, and included a busload of French tourists who happened upon the event, pitched in and vowed to take the idea home with them. Many participants, however, came back with almost empty bags, perhaps a result of recently adopted U.S. and international laws that forbid garbage dumping at sea.



Kent and Donna Dannen

A stretch of the Green River in Dinosaur National Monument

All is quiet, for now

Monitoring quiet is as important as monitoring noise, according to two specialists with the National Park Service. When measuring noise levels at Dinosaur National Monument in northwestern Colorado, park staffers Kerry Moss and Mary Ann Grasser found that Dinosaur's 11 decibel noise level was quieter than a sound studio's 18 to 20 decibels. A whisper is 15 to 30 decibels. Except for the occasional airplane flying over the 211,142-acre park, the loudest noises recorded were made by rain, thunder, the crack of lightning, hail and elk rubbing against the suitcase-sized monitoring device. The Park Service began sound tests at Dinosaur National Monument when the park was threatened by oil and gas mining on adjacent lands. "We can't generally appreciate that we're losing a resource until it's too late," Grasser told the *Rocky Mountain News*. "The quietness is as important as the clean air." Moss and Grasser are also conducting sound tests at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Colorado National Monument.

BARBS

Shot to hell ... or to heaven?

A Des Moines, Iowa, businessman loads the ashes of dead hunters into shotgun shells, then blasts the shells into the sportsmen's favorite hunting grounds. "There's no end to this," Jay Knudsen told AP. "We're putting ashes into lures for fishermen, duck decoys for hunters..."

HOTLINE

How much is enough?

A federal judge will consult experts before accepting a corporation's plea bargain for committing environmental crimes at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver. Rockwell International wants to pay the government \$18.5 million, but U.S. District Judge Sherman Finesilver said he will discuss the fine with environmental scientists and corporate financiers before reaching a decision June 1. For comparison, he also wants federal prosecutors to look at the penalties assessed against Exxon Corp. for the Alaska oil spill, reports *The Denver Post*. According to U.S. Attorney Mike Norton, who directed the grand jury probe and proposed the plea bargain with Rockwell, the \$18.5 million penalty would be the biggest hazardous-waste fine in U.S. history. It amounts to 3 percent of Rockwell's total 1991 corporate profit, he added. Rockwell pleaded guilty March 26 to five felony and five misdemeanor violations of federal hazardous waste laws and the Clean Water Act. The proposed plea bargain capped a two-and-a-half-year investigation of the Department of Energy facility, which was raided June 6, 1989, by the FBI (*HCN*, 6/19/89). Rockwell has admitted that it stored hazardous wastes without a permit, stored the waste in containers that leaked, and that it allowed hazardous wastes to reach reservoirs that supplied drinking water to nearby cities. Almost 2 million people live within 30 miles of the plant. Even though they pleaded guilty, Rockwell's top executives expressed no remorse. Rockwell's chief corporate lawyer, Charles Harff, said, "All the facts gathered during 30 months led to charges that, under similarly intense scrutiny, could be brought at almost any aging industrial facility, particularly those in the DOE's nuclear weapons complex."

Utah Navajos sue state

Navajos living in San Juan County, Utah, have filed suit against the state for mismanaging their oil royalty trust fund. They say the state neglected its trustee duties, allowing the fund to lose more than \$50 million since 1960 (*HCN*, 12/16/91). The class-action suit filed last month seeks restitution of the missing money and establishment of a new trustee. A state audit last year found that the royalty money, designed to help alleviate poverty for Navajos in San Juan County, had been squandered and stolen by tribal officials. Both the tribe and the FBI are investigating the allegations. In the meantime, Utah's Navajos hope the suit will return needed funds to the reservation. "If we could invest the money, we could use the interest for education, recreation and health," says County Commissioner Mark Maryboy.

BARBS

That's too mild a term to describe groups so unreasonable they expect a river through a national park to have water in it.

A spokesperson for Colorado Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell told the *Montrose Daily Press* that the Sierra Club and Wilderness Society were "national yahoos." The two groups oppose Campbell's bill creating Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in western Colorado because of a lack of water rights.

Incarcerated river may be parolled

In the late 1950s, the Army Corps of Engineers began building dikes along the banks of the Snake River in Wyoming to keep water from flooding the town of Wilson and nearby ranches.

Now, some 30 years later, the Corps and Teton County hope to embark on the nation's first program to let water through these barricades. Within two years, federal and local officials expect 1,800 acres of property beyond the dikes to once again gurgle with rushing streams.

Technically it's called a Section 1135 wetlands restoration demonstration project, says Dale Smelcer, study manager with the Army Corps in Walla Walla, Wash. In plain language, it's giving something back to mother nature.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says there are 164 bird and nearly 50 mammal species — from shrews to moose — directly associated with wetlands in Jackson Hole," says Kim Springer, Snake River representative for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition conservation group based in Bozeman, Mont. Most are "negatively affected" by levees, Springer adds.

"Over the years the areas behind the levees have gotten quite dry," Smelcer explains. "It changes the vegetation from a wetland zone to a drier zone."

"You had cottonwoods as predominant vegetation in the past — now you get spruce coming in and some other types of vegetation that adapt to the drier conditions."

That change isn't good for spawning fish and other living things, says Springer. "Something like 80 percent of our breeding birds are associated with cottonwoods. It's prime habitat for all our wildlife. We're trying to restore some of the dynamic system that used to be there."

Whether it has been seven years of unusually dry weather or the dikes themselves which have caused the deterioration is still unknown. But the demonstration project — expected to cost the Corps \$360,000 and the county \$120,000 — will show how such areas can be brought back to life.

The proposal is relatively simple — breach the western dike a mile north of the Wilson bridge and install a headgate capable of controlling water flows. The meandering Snake is relatively constricted at this point, and the chance of it wandering away from the outlet is considered small.

The headgate would control the flow of water — up to 200 cubic feet per second but usually much less than that — into a series of ponds at the new Tucker Ranch development. Once a series of pits from which gravel was mined, the area is being converted into a residential subdivision.

From the Tucker ponds, water will



Garth Dowling/Jackson Hole News

The Snake River would flow into old creek beds under a proposed rehabilitation plan

flow south, outside the dikes, in a series of abandoned river channels and ditches. Along the way it will recharge the water table, keep marshes wet and preserve the riparian vegetation important to animals.

Channels that are home to spawning Snake River cutthroat trout would benefit. Bald eagles, an endangered species that populates the Snake, would take advantage of revitalized creeks.

The water would flow south for approximately three and a half miles until it rejoins the Snake at its confluence with Fish Creek. The project

It's giving something back to mother nature

boundaries extend approximately a half mile west of the dike, and the supplementary flows from the Snake would occur during the summer and fall.

In addition to the property beyond the dikes, the project would also preserve a stand of cottonwoods on a river island by preventing erosion. Island erosion has increased since the river has been confined by the dikes.

Smelcer said the project is precedent-setting. "This will be one of the first ones," he says. "There are some others in the process in the United States to my knowledge, but this is the first one of this particular type."

Altogether the rehabilitation project will cover 1,800 acres, 960 of which are classified as riparian. It will involve numerous landowners and requires their cooperation.

"We will be working with all the property owners to direct the water so it doesn't do any damage," Smelcer says. "Some people might think they might get flooded out — that's not the case. I think most everybody realizes it's an

asset to their property."

The county will have to obtain easements from landowners, but water rights might not be needed because the project proposes only "non-consumptive use."

Obtaining the landowners' approval, however, may be difficult. Constructing canals on private property is an act some fear will lower their property values. Since the county is not willing to condemn land for the easements, landowner opposition could still kill the project.

But one of those who sees the value of water is developer Mike Potter. "We bend over backwards to recreate habitat and aesthetics," he says. "Here it's really turning something back to close to what it was originally, and the value is tremendous."

Potter, who must keep a keen eye on the salability of lots that approach \$500,000, sees water as an amenity. "Running water, the beauty of it, the sound of it, the waterfowl, the reflection of trees — it's all aesthetically very positive," he says.

Potter said a key to developing sensitive property is restraint on the part of future owners. "There's no question purchasers of these types of properties are extremely sensitive to the need for wildlife habitat, the merit of it and the enjoyment of it."

The rehabilitation project was authorized in a 1986 law that turned over operation and maintenance responsibilities for the dikes to the Corps. As part of that responsibility, the Corps is assessing environmental impacts from the levees and could propose more projects like the one under way.

Springer says the transformation of the Army Corps from a dam-building agency to one that restores the environment is beneficial. "We felt victorious that they were doing mitigation," she says.

— Angus M. Thuermer Jr.

The writer works for the *Jackson Hole News* in Wyoming.

Unclassifieds

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY offers adult summer workshops in ecology and conservation. Located at a historic ranch in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains, Audubon Camp in the West hosts week-long ecology sessions running June 27 through August 8. University credit available. Hiking, canoeing, and visiting Grand Teton National

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"OUTDOOR PEOPLE AD-Venture" lists 60-word descriptions of active, outdoor-oriented singles and trip companions nationwide. \$3/issue, \$12/ad. **OUTDOOR PEOPLE-HCN**, P.O. Box 600, Gaston, SC 29053. (7x1p)

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE, a workshop awarded national "Take Pride in America" recognition, will be offered again at Grand Teton National Park August 3-7, 1992. What does glaciation in Wyoming tell us about the consequences of climate change in the past? What is the likely impact of climate change upon biodiversity? Open to the public and designed especially for those interested in environmental education, it offers graduate academic credit from the University of Wyoming. A major emphasis will be given to field study, using Jackson Hole and the adjacent Teton Park area as an outdoor classroom, and to the development of materials by teachers for use in their own teaching. Since the 1992 workshop is in its alternate format with mostly new content, alumni from previous workshops are welcome to re-enroll. Contact: Donn Kesselheim, Wyoming Outdoor Council, 201 Main St., Lander, WY 82520 (telephone 307/332-7031). (1x7b)

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THE COMPLETE MOUNTAINEERING GUIDE

Toe jam, lie back, undercling and mantel, the fifth edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* explains these classic climbing holds and shows them in easy-to-understand line drawings. But that's just a small part of a large book that is packed with information about the essentials of camping and hiking, mountaineering safety and rescue techniques. The clarity and comprehensiveness of this new edition make it a good introduction for people new to mountaineering or anyone wanting to move into new areas of climbing. Editor Don Graydon had lots of help — dozens of members of the Mountaineers, a non-profit group now 12,000 strong, which was founded in 1906 in Washington. *Freedom* details the intricacies of climbing big walls like Half Dome or El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and also explains the physics of belaying, the relative strengths of knots and even how to choose an expedition team. We found one oops: the mislabeling of a bergschrund for a hanging glacier. Cheaper than most climbing harnesses, this is an essential piece of mountaineering gear. The Mountaineers, 1011 SW Klickitat Way, Seattle, WA 98134. Paperback: \$22.95. 447 pages, illustrated.

— Caroline Byrd

Illustrations from *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, of climbing a rope. Starting bottom left: a) leg-raise b) stand-up c) rest

A FOREST HEALTH REPORT

The health of northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington forests is in crisis, with over 3 million acres affected by insects, infections and fire over the last decade. A possible prescription is contained in the Forest Service's *Blue Mountains Forest Health Report: New Perspectives in Forest Health*. Agency observers call the report significant because it repudiates decades-long management practices that suppressed fires and selectively harvested trees such as ponderosa pine and western larch. The result was a large population of firs that were susceptible to insect infestations and fire. The report supports managing forests as ecosystems and recommends making decisions for the long-term health of the forests rather than "short-term outputs and services." The findings, however, appear to contradict the agency's plans for the future. The Forest Service intends to triple its eastside salvage sales in 1992 by offering 534 million board-feet on the Malheur, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman, Deschutes and Ochoco national forests. The accelerated timber salvages will provide a temporary boost to local counties' economies and services. However, many environmental organizations are skeptical of the Forest Service's ability to implement new integrated forest health program in conjunction with accelerated timber salvage sales. "What drives the Forest Service isn't concern for forest health, but getting out the cut," Wendell Wood, conservation coordinator of the Oregon Natural Resources Council said. All parties concerned about forests on the east side agree that management practices need to change in order for the ecosystem's health to be restored. For copies of *The Blue Mountain Forest Health Report*, contact U.S. Forest Service, 2517 SW Hailey Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801 (503/276-3811).

— John Vincent Rosapepe

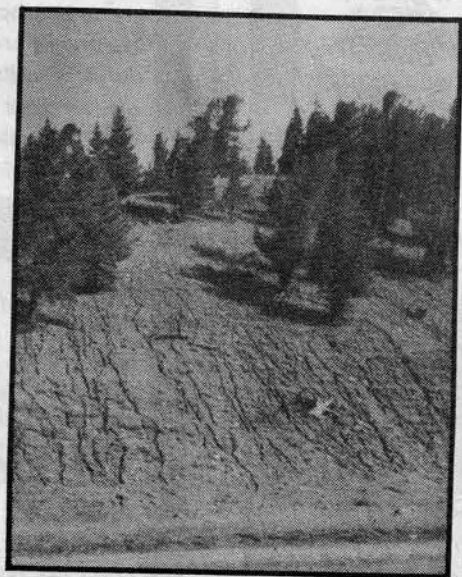
MONTANANS WANT REFORM

Many people in Montana support reform of the 1872 Mining Law, according to a survey commissioned by the Northern Plains Resource Council. The survey, conducted in December by Greenberg-Lake, an analysis group based in Washington, D.C., found that 88 percent surveyed support updating patenting provisions of the mining law. Companies are now allowed to buy public land and the minerals it contains for as little as \$5 per acre. Sixty percent polled agreed the mining law needs revision since companies are not required to pay federal royalties; 77 percent said hard-rock mining should be regulated as strictly as coal mining; and 75 percent opposed hard-rock mining if it damages other "important natural resource values." Seventy-eight percent don't want mining companies excluded from the state's water quality law, which prohibits a company from degrading pristine water areas. Five mining companies applied for this exemption during the past year and a half. But Gary Langley, executive director of the Montana Mining Association, dismissed the survey and the resource council. "I think they're a bunch of radicals that want to stop mining, and they took a loaded poll," he said. The telephone survey of 501 randomly selected registered voters likely to vote in the general election has a margin of error of 6 percent. For more information about the survey, contact the Northern Plains Resource Council, 419 Stapleton Building, Billings, MT 59101 (406/248-1154).



ELK AND THE PARK

If ranchers are criticized for overgrazing the range, a former range ecologist says, then Yellowstone National Park officials should face the same criticism. Bob Ross, a retired range ecologist for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, says elk have severely overgrazed Yellowstone's northern winter range. He called for soil and vegetation inventories of the area to determine how many animals should graze there. "All the tall producing grasses have been grazed out ... all that is left is junk," Ross said in the *Montana Standard*. Park Service researchers disagree. Even though the elk herds on the northern range grew from 3,200 in 1968, to 19,000 in 1988, before being cut in 1989, Mike Coughenour, a researcher at Colorado State University, reports that grazing did not reduce plant productivity. Because the elk graze at lower altitudes in the winter, they eat mainly dead plant tissue, he says. Douglas Houston, author of *The Northern Yellowstone Elk: Ecology and Management*, agrees that elk aren't the real culprit. He says Congress, expressing the same concerns as Ross, directed the National Park Service to study whether the range is overgrazed. The report will be published this spring, says Norm Bishop, NPS research interpreter. A version of the report to Congress, called *Ungulate Grazing Effects on Yellowstone's Northern Winter Range — A Digest*, will be available this spring. Summaries of the annual meetings of research and monitoring on Yellowstone's northern range, or final reports on winter-range enclosure studies are available now from Research Division, Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. Ross's report was printed in the January/February 1992 *Montana Stockgrower*, P.O. Box 1679, Helena, MT 59601.



Erosion in the park

Bob Ross

STORM ON THE RANGE

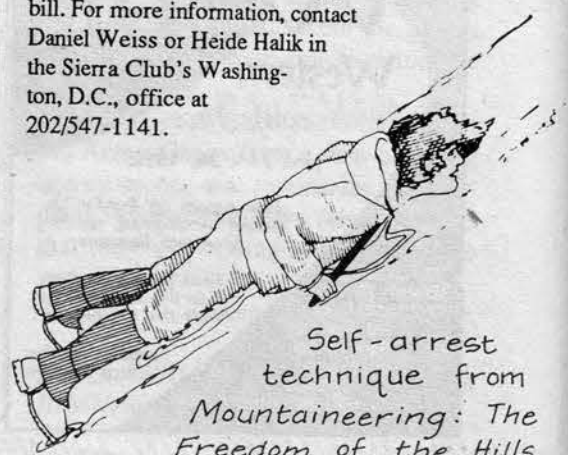
"Storm on the Range: Societal and environmental implications when ranches die" is the title of a one-day forum April 27 at Colorado State University's College of Natural Resources in Fort Collins. The forum features Kirk Koepsel, a staffer with the Sierra Club; George Wallace, associate professor of natural resources and wildland management at Colorado State University; Ken Spann, a Colorado rancher; Tom Hoots, retired forest supervisor of White River National Forest; Dan Baharav of Baharav Environmental Consulting; Fred Wortham, editor of *Western Livestock Journal*; Pat O'Toole, rancher and Wyoming legislator; and Ed Marston, publisher of *High Country News*. For more information, contact Rick Knight (303/491-6714), Harold Goetz (303/491-6620), or George Wallace (303/491-5165).

NATIONAL BOTTLE BILL INTRODUCED

Two congressmen introduced a bill Feb.

28 that they say would ensure the recycling of at least seven out of every 10 beverage containers sold in America. Sponsored by Reps. Edward Markey, D-Mass., and Paul Henry, R-Mich., the National Beverage Container Re-use and Recycling Act requires consumers to pay a 10-cent deposit on each bottle purchased. The 10 cents is returned when an empty bottle is turned in at a collection center. Markey said the bill combats "multiple problems of

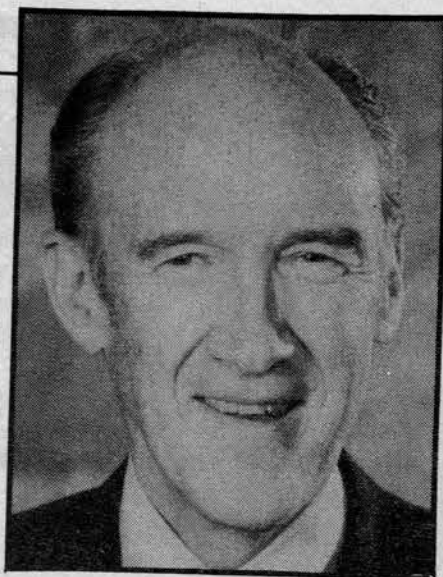
shrinking landfill space, skyrocketing waste disposal costs and misspent energy and natural resources." Daniel Weiss, Washington director of the Sierra Club's environmental quality program, supports the bill because it will reduce solid waste and litter, create jobs in the bottling, distribution and recycling industries, plus save energy and natural resources. The bill now has some 60 co-sponsors. Markey and Henry encourage citizens to urge their representatives to support the bill. For more information, contact Daniel Weiss or Heide Halik in the Sierra Club's Washington, D.C., office at 202/547-1141.



Self-arrest technique from *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*

STARTING OVER AT FISHING BRIDGE

Yellowstone National Park is seeking comments on the relocation of 310 campsites that were eliminated when Fishing Bridge campground closed in 1989. The Park Service says a new environmental impact statement is needed because events have outrun a 1988 study. Park Superintendent Bob Barbee says the agency now recommends moving the campsites away from Yellowstone Lake, since increased trout spawning in tributary streams is attracting more grizzlies to the area. One 1988 alternative proposed a new 310-site campground on Weasel Creek in the heart of critical bear habitat; the other added some sites to an existing lakeshore campground and to camping areas that were later damaged by the 1988 fires. The Park Service's new proposal suggests splitting the 310 campsites among Grant's Village, Canyon and Norris campgrounds, all well-removed from prime grizzly fishing grounds. David Gaillard, Grizzly Project coordinator for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, supports the agency's change in direction. But he also wants to see the Fishing Bridge area restored, revegetated, and all structures and people removed before construction of new campsites begins. For a scoping brochure detailing issues and alternatives, and to submit comments by April 30, write Superintendent, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190 (307/344-7381).



Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson

A PROFILE OF ALAN SIMPSON

In tragedy, the hero brings on his own downfall. So it was with Wyoming Republican Sen. Alan Simpson, according to a profile in *The New Yorker* March 16. The powerful and popular Republican whip triggered his fall from grace last year, says writer John Newhouse, when he vilified CNN's Baghdad correspondent Peter Arnett, labeling him an Iraqi sympathizer. Simpson's sharp tongue and confrontational style landed him again in the political outhouse during the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings. He personally attacked Hill and also assailed National Public Radio correspondent Nina Totenberg in a widely publicized parking-lot encounter. Newhouse revisits these incidents and interviews many Simpson observers both on and off the Hill, including the third-term senator's family and friends. The article paints a portrait of a once-successful, passionate leader who is plagued by an anger he can no longer control. *The New Yorker*, 20 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036 (202/840-3800).

— Florence Williams

LEAVE NO TRACE

The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service are cooperating in a new interagency program called Leave No Trace. Developed in conjunction with the Lander, Wyo.-based National Outdoor Leadership School, the program is designed to promote minimum-impact camping skills and wildlands ethics for backcountry users. NOLS has developed the program's educational materials, which help train agency personnel in minimum-impact techniques so they can teach other staff and wildlands visitors. For free Leave No Trace information and materials, call 800/332-4100.

WASHINGTON SEEKS FORESTRY REFORM

Washington state's attempt at forestry reform, up for public comment this week, includes proposals to regulate the size of clearcuts, examine the cumulative effects of timbering on watersheds, and protect forest-



ed wetlands.

While timber representatives say the rules will cost thousands of jobs and millions in lost income, others voiced different objections. The state departments of wildlife and fisheries say wetlands need bigger buffer zones, and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission says the reform package does not do enough to protect wetlands and wildlife. Kim Josund of the Washington Environmental Council notes that the state's rules are being presented in misleading ways. While the timber industry objects to a proposal to limit the size of clearcuts to 240 acres, a fact sheet from Public Lands Commissioner Brian Boyle's office says there is no cap of 240 acres. "These proposals can be improved during the public comment period," said Commissioner Boyle. "We strongly beseech the people to comment, raise questions, and participate in the public hearings." Hearings are scheduled for Tuesday through Saturday, April 21-25, in Spokane, Yakima, Everett, Kelso and Ocean Shores, respectively. For more information, contact the Department of Natural Resources at 206/753-5317.

SYNAR VS. SIMPSON

This may be "the conservation gathering of the year in Wyoming," says the Wyoming Wildlife Federation of its 46th annual rendezvous in Jackson April 24-26. Set to spar over grazing fees and public-rangeland reform are Oklahoma Rep. Mike Synar and Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson. Other themes of the rendezvous, titled "Charting Our Wildlife Legacy," include the role of outdoor writers in educating sportsmen about conservation ethics, trends in wildlife and fisheries populations in Wyoming, and the credibility of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The keynote speaker for the rendezvous is John Mumma, the forcibly reassigned regional forester of the U.S. Forest Service. Also on tap is a special showing of this year's winners of the International Wildlife Film Festival, workshops and field trips. For more information contact the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 106, Cheyenne, WY 82003 (307/637-5433).

TREES GAIN STANDING

Forest protection activists are finding a new source of legal help through the Boulder, Colo.-based Land and Water Fund. Its program, called Adopt-a-Forest, links national forests with attorneys who volunteer to familiarize themselves with the issues, personnel and geography of a forest. Then, when local activists need legal advice or assistance with appeals, they can readily contact a knowledgeable attorney. According to Kate Zimmerman, the Fund's director of public lands, the attorneys can also help educate citizen activists about Forest Service policies and actions early on, when their participation can still make a difference. Too often, she says, people "wait until they see the bulldozers." Stephanie Lake, an attorney who adopted Arizona's Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest last fall, has already helped citizens' groups to file an appeal against the Campbell Timber Cut (HCN, 2/23/92). Lake also plans to help the groups evaluate a new forest-management plan. The Land and Water Fund has linked an attorney to each of Colorado's seven national forests, to all five forests in Arizona, and to two forests in New Mexico. The Fund plans to extend the Adopt-a-Forest program to all seven Rocky Mountain states. For more information, call the Land and Water Fund at 303/444-1100.



CUB BORN TO SAVE BEARS

United for Bears, a new coalition of environmental groups and concerned citizens, is circulating petitions to put the issue of spring bear-hunting on the November ballot. The coalition says it is not anti-hunting, just against hunting bears in spring when black bears with dependent cubs can be killed. Colorado wildlife officials estimate that as many as 20 nursing cubs were killed last spring, leaving up to 50 orphaned cubs to starve to death or be eaten by predators. Those numbers may rise this year since the state's wildlife commission extended the hunting season for two weeks, through May 31. CUB says it needs 80,000-90,000 signatures of Colorado-registered voters on petitions by August to guarantee a place on the ballot. The initiative also seeks to end the controversial use of bait and hounds in black bear hunts but allows for fall bow and gun seasons. "We are not saying don't hunt bears, we're saying do it in a responsible fashion," said CUB spokesman Michael Smith. Groups supporting CUB include six regional Audubon Societies, the Colorado Environmental Coalition, Biodiversity Legal Foundation and the Coalition for Responsible Trapping Laws. For more information, contact CUB, 841 Front St., #202, Louisville, CO 80027 (303/666-8211). On another front, Boulder Audubon Society sued the Colorado Wildlife Commission last month in an effort to stop the spring bear hunt. Last week Denver District Judge Connie Peterson denied an injunction that sought to stop this year's hunt pending the outcome of the suit. Ruling to continue the hunt, she said the commission "has gone to extreme lengths to balance the interests of the public."

A LOT OF DUCK EGGS

Western lawmakers flunked the League of Conservation Voters' annual environmental voting test. According to the Washington, D.C.-based group's 1991 scorecard, 11 of 24 Rocky Mountain representatives received scores of zero. The league determined scores in part by analyzing votes cast on several issues, including preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness and raising grazing fees on public lands. Wyoming and Arizona scored lowest. Wyoming Rep. Craig Thomas, R, scored zero, and Malcolm Wallop, R, tied for last in the Senate, scoring seven. Wyoming Republican Sen. Alan Simpson fared little better with a score of 13. In Arizona, Reps. Jay Rhodes, Bob Stump and Jon Kyl, all Republicans, scored zero, while Sens. Dennis DeConcini, D, and John McCain, R., each ranked 33. Other elected officials also fell near the bottom. Republican Utah Sens. Jake Garn and Orrin Hatch each scored 13, while Idaho Republican Sens. Steve Symms and Larry Craig ranked 13 and 14. In the House, Montana's Rep. Ron Marlenee scored zero along with Nevada Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, New Mexico Rep. Joseph Skeen, Utah's Rep. James Hansen, and Oregon's Rep. Robert Smith, all Republicans. Three Republican Colorado representatives, Wayne Allard, Joel Hefley and Dan Schaefer also received zero scores. A few Westerners ranked high: In the House, Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., scored 92; David Skaggs, D-Colo., scored 85; Jolene Unsoeld, D-Wash., scored 85; James McDermott, D-Wash., scored 85; and Wayne Owens, D-Utah, scored 77. Three Oregon representatives, Les AuCoin, Ronald Wyden and Peter DeFazio, all Democrats, also scored 77. In the Senate, Washington's retiring Brock Adams, D, led the way with a score of



87,

while Tim Wirth, D-Colo., and Max Baucus, D-Mont., followed closely

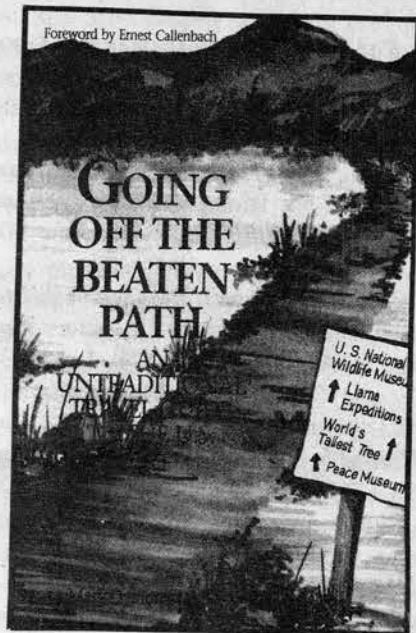
behind with scores of 80. The League of Conservation Voters is a 20-year-old, non-partisan organization dedicated to holding elected officials accountable for their environmental politics. The league is located at 1707 L Street, NW, #550, Washington, D.C. 20036.

FOR THOREAULY WESTERN WRITERS

"In the Thoreau Tradition — A Conference on Nature and Culture" features an impressive array of fiction and non-fiction writers in a week-end of seminars and readings April 30-May 3 in Missoula, Mont. The conference is sponsored in part by two non-profit Missoula organizations, the Northern Lights Research and Education Institute, and Hellgate Writers, a regional literary arts center. Sessions on Hispanic cultural traditions; women, culture and nature; and nature and the Western imagination will highlight cultural and biological diversity. Speakers include Rick Bass, Denise Chavez, Ray Gonzalez, Jim Harrison, William Kittredge, Richard Nelson, Simon Ortiz, Antonia Quintana Pignio, Marilynne Robinson, Pattiann Rogers, Frederick Turner and James Welch. For more information, write Northern Lights Institute, P.O. Box 8084, Missoula, MT 59807 (406/721-7415 afternoons) or Hellgate Writers (406/721-3620 mornings).

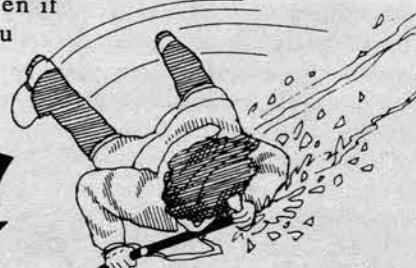
RECYCLING IN MONTANA

The Montana Environmental Information Center in Helena, Mont., has begun a statewide hotline (1-800/823-6342) to answer questions about recycling. Primarily funded through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, the hotline is designed to help people reduce solid waste through recycling. MEIC staffers will answer questions concerning where to take recyclables, what can be recycled, and what recycling efforts are taking place within the state. Recycling fact sheets are also available from MEIC, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624.



GREEN TRAVEL GUIDE

Travelers who prefer a less-traveled road may benefit from *Going Off the Beaten Path: An Untraditional Travel Guide to the U.S.* Written by Mary Dymond Davis, it is packed with descriptions of excursions to lesser-known but environmentally significant sites in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Whether you are interested in alternative energy, resource-conserving structures, arts and crafts or kayaking, Davis provides an informative historical and ecological background for each destination. Untraditional places found in the guide include the birthplace of George Washington Carver in Diamond, Mo., the Oomingmak Musk Ox Producers' Co-Op in Anchorage, Alaska, the Peace Wall in Berkeley, Calif., and the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association in Kimberton, Pa. Even if you



lack wanderlust, the book is a useful reference for locating conservation-oriented groups and projects as well as areas of social and cultural interest. The Noble Press Inc., 213 W. Institute Place, Suite 508, Chicago, IL 60610. 457 pages. Paper: \$15.95.

BOOK NOTES

'Disaster, disaster on the range,' reports say

by Steve Johnson

Over the last five years, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has been asked by various members of Congress to investigate the Bureau of Land Management's handling of livestock grazing on the nation's public lands.

Without exception, the nine reports that resulted criticized the BLM. The GAO found that the public lands were still being overgrazed (1988), that cattle were favored over wildlife (1989 and 1991), that land management planning was not occurring (1990), and that grazing of excess numbers was common (1990).

The most recent of the GAO reports on grazing, released in November 1991, examines BLM's management of the desert lands of five Western states, an area of nearly 20 million acres. It includes the Mojave, Sonoran and Chihuahuas deserts in California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. Of all these states, Arizona has the largest area of BLM-managed land, some 6,677,000 acres.

The GAO found that:

1) Current livestock grazing in BLM's hot desert areas "risks long-term environmental damage while not generating grazing fee revenues sufficient to provide for adequate management";

2) There is "evidence of damage occurring on BLM lands as well as evidence of livestock grazing's adverse impacts on several wildlife species";

3) "Some damaged lands may take decades to recover if they recover at all";

4) "The economic benefits derived from livestock grazing on BLM lands in the hot desert areas are minimal" and "represents a small fraction of national (livestock) totals";

5) "At a local level, BLM documents indicate that local economies do not depend on public-lands ranching for economic survival. The primary economic benefits accrue to about 1,000 operators who hold livestock grazing permits in these areas";

6) Due to staff shortages, "BLM primarily relies on livestock operators to provide counts of the livestock that grazed an allotment during the grazing season." However, 40 percent of the allotments surveyed by the GAO had no counts provided.

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT'S HAPPENING

The most serious finding was that the BLM is not collecting and/or evaluating data that measure the impact of livestock grazing on many desert lands. The GAO found that no monitoring is occurring on 48 percent of all allotments. Of the 52 percent that had monitoring data, 38 percent have not been evaluated.

"Without proper evaluation of collected monitoring data," wrote the GAO, "BLM does not know the impact of current grazing activity and is in no position to change the number of livestock grazing on public lands." Without such data proving that grazing is damaging the land and its dependent wildlife, BLM is reduced to depending on voluntary reductions by the operator. If the rancher chooses not to reduce his livestock numbers, BLM can do nothing until the necessary data are gathered.

By federal law, BLM must ensure that its 165 million acres of public lands are managed to provide "harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources of the public lands without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment ..."

Without adequate funding, such laws mean nothing. That could explain why Robert Burford, a rancher and the head of the BLM under the Reagan administration, repeatedly cut BLM's funding for monitoring. From 1980-1988, high BLM officials appearing before congressional committees repeatedly stated that the agency needed no funding increases.

When the 27,000 or so ranchers whose cattle and

sheep graze the public lands of 16 Western states were successful last year in defeating the efforts of Congress to raise grazing fees, they further ensured that the BLM would remain largely an agency shell.

The ranchers' frantic efforts to keep their low grazing fees could backfire — at least on our 20 million acres of desert lands. Unless higher grazing fees and other funding increases allow the BLM to do its job as required by law, the GAO's latest report recommends that Congress consider a halt to all grazing in hot desert areas.

The grazing of livestock could be one of the most sustainable of all agricultural activities. But when cattle are permitted to graze year-round on desert plants that did not evolve in the presence of such heavy demands, the result is destruction.

One of the strongest proofs that BLM is failing miserably at desert management is the number of endangered, threatened and candidate species in the Mojave, Sonoran and Chihuahuas deserts. From infor-

'Some damaged lands may take decades to recover if they recover at all.'

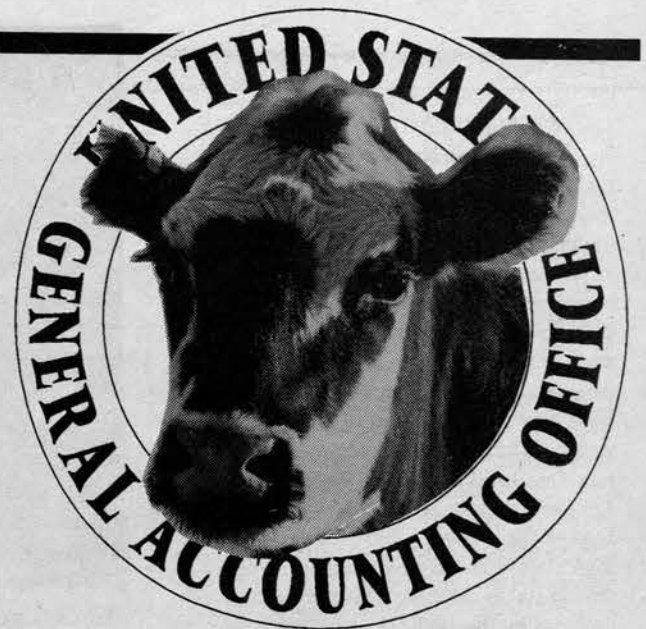
— GAO

mation furnished by the BLM, GAO found that 240 such species are now at risk.

Even if there were a growing demand for beef, instead of a decline in U.S. consumption of about 33 percent since 1976, such destruction of land and wildlife belonging to all of us could not be justified. Even at the inflated livestock numbers used by the GAO, which appeared roughly double the actual number usually claimed by BLM, GAO calculated that the 20 million acres of land in five states produced only about 1.6 percent of total U.S. cattle numbers, and 3 percent of the sheep.

In all of the desert states, the value of red meat production from the public lands was less than 1 percent of personal income, according to GAO.

Most of the 1,048 livestock operators whose livestock graze the public lands of the hot desert states are able to meet their costs. Many, according to GAO, "are able to continue ranching because they supplement their income with money from outside sources." Despite the minimal economic bene-



fits realized, GAO found that ranchers "highly value the ability to maintain a traditional ranching lifestyle."

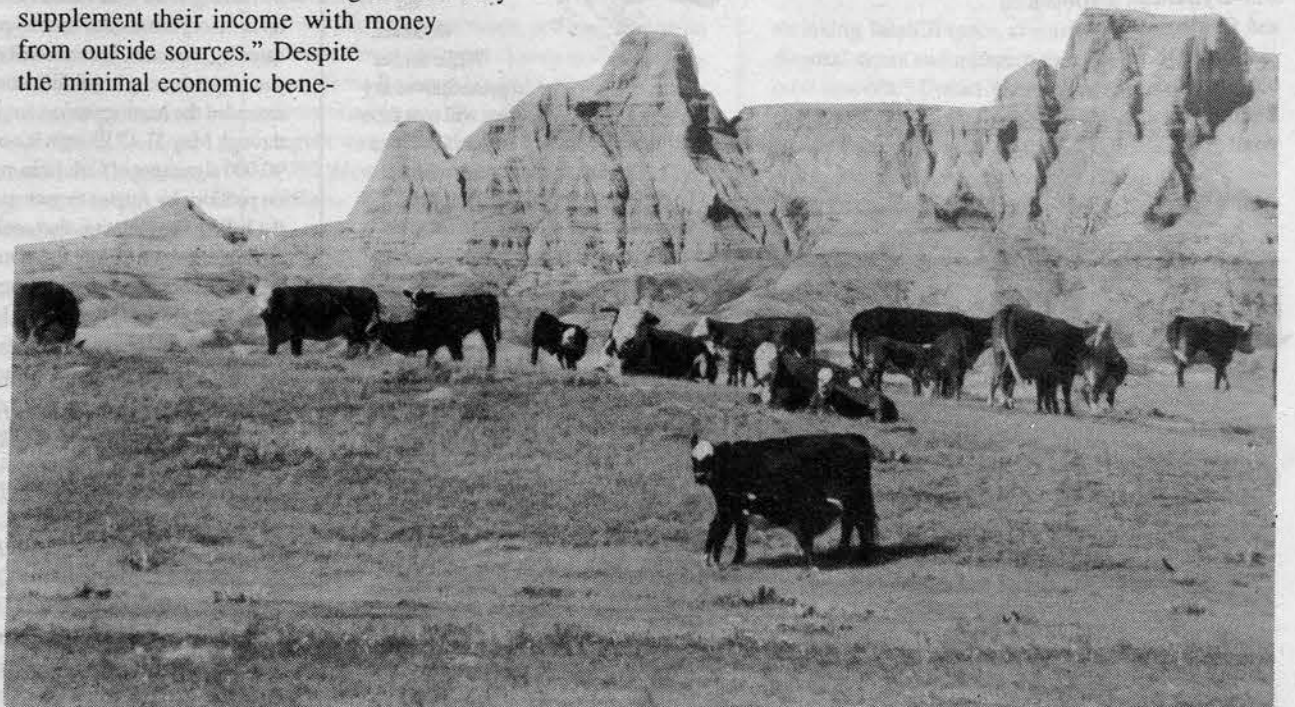
While lifestyles are important, few of us are lucky enough to have them perpetuated at the expense of public money, public land and wildlife. When combined with the widespread damage done to land belonging to all of us and wildlife, it is time for the desert cowboy to ride into the sunset.

The nine GAO reports are available from the U.S. General Accounting Office, Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (202/275-6241). The first copy of each report is free.

THE REPORTS

- 1) *Rangeland Management: More Emphasis Needed on Declining and Overstocked Grazing Allotments* (GAO/RCED-88-80, June 10, 1988)
- 2) *Public Rangelands: Some Riparian Areas Restored but Widespread Improvement Will Be Slow* (GAO/RCED-88-105, June 30, 1988)
- 3) *California Desert: Planned Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Objectives Not Achieved* (GAO/RCED-89-171, June 23, 1989)
- 4) *Rangeland Management: Improvements Needed in Federal Wild Horse Program* (GAO/RCED-90-110, Aug. 20, 1990)
- 5) *Public Lands: Limited Progress in Resource Management Planning* (GAO/RCED-90-225, Sept. 27, 1990)
- 6) *Rangeland Management: BLM Efforts to Prevent Unauthorized Livestock Grazing Need Strengthening* (GAO/RCED-91-7, Dec. 7, 1990)
- 7) *Public Land Management: Attention to Wildlife Is Limited* (GAO/RCED-91-64, March 7, 1991)
- 8) *Rangeland Management: Forest Service Not Performing Needed Monitoring of Grazing Allotments* (GAO/RCED-91-148, May 16, 1991)
- 9) *Rangeland Management: BLM's Hot Desert Grazing Program Merits Reconsideration* (GAO/RCED-92-12, Nov. 26, 1991)

Steve Johnson runs Native Ecosystems Inc., in Tucson, Arizona.



Peter Carrells

Firm says: Range better, GAO reports worse

A Carson City, Nev., consulting firm called Resource Concepts has labeled three GAO grazing reports misleading and inaccurate.

After the firm's 26-page technical review of the GAO's work was published in February, 16 senators and the chair of the U.S. House public-lands subcommittee asked the U.S. General Accounting Office to respond to the criticism. A point-by-point response will be ready by May 3, the deadline the lawmakers set for the federal agency, said Bob Robinson, assistant director at GAO.

Western politicians were quick to heap criticism on the federal agency. "The basis for the GAO work is pathetic," Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., told AP. "They're always looking at a glass that's half empty, not half full."

"If this is the best of their work products, they may not be needed," said Rep. Richard Stallings, D-Idaho.

Environmental groups defended the GAO. Its reports on overstocked grazing allotments, riparian-area restoration and the federal wild-horse program are technically accurate and objective, said the Sierra Club *National News Report*. Dan Heinz, a former Forest Service range conservationist and district ranger who is now a Sierra Club member, said the Resource Concepts report was a case of "kill the messenger."

"It's basically a denial that there's any problem with our public rangelands — which hurts ranchers the most," Heinz said. "This paranoia and denial that there's a problem doesn't help anyone."

For the third year in a row Congress is expected to consider a proposal to increase grazing fees on federal land from about \$1.92 per animal unit-month to as much as \$8.70. Opponents say this would drive thousands of ranchers out of business. An animal unit-month is the amount a cow and calf or five sheep will eat in a month, or about 780 pounds of dry forage. The 1988 and 1990 GAO reports and Resource Concepts attack are seen as skirmishes in the continuing battle over what ranchers should pay the

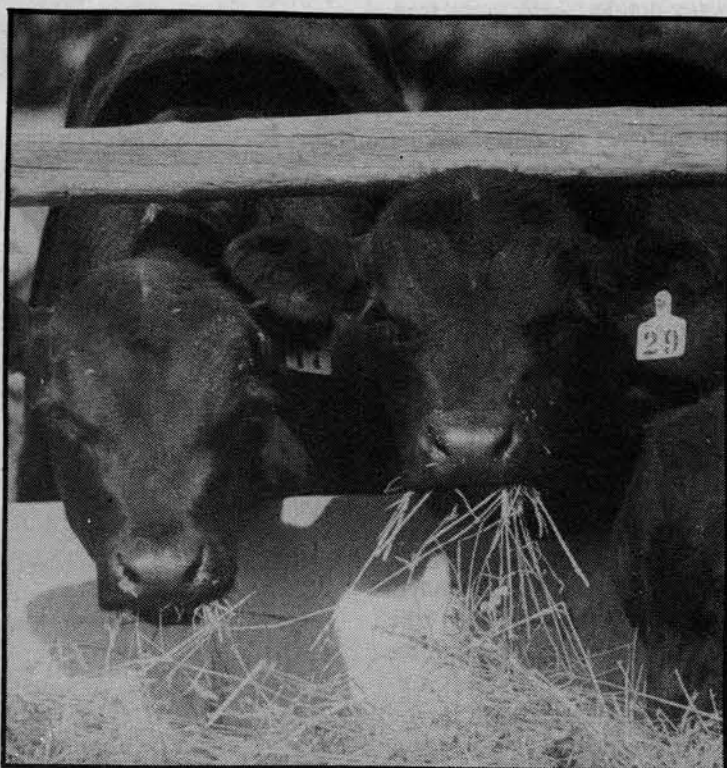
government for the privilege of grazing animals on public land.

John McLain, an owner of Resource Concepts and co-author of its GAO critique, called GAO's characterization of livestock grazing on public land "deceptive." The report lists names of 17 other range-management consultants, range ecologists and professors in range studies in Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho and other Western states who agree with McLain's findings. Resource Concepts Inc., founded in 1978, employs 40 engineers, resource specialists and support staff.

McLain concludes that the GAO reports, titled *More Emphasis Needed on Declining and Overstocked Grazing Allotments*, published June 10, 1988, *Some Riparian Area Restored but Widespread Improvement Will be Slow*, published June 30, 1988, and *Improvements Needed in Federal Wild Horse Program*, published Aug. 20, 1990, are heavily biased against livestock grazing.

"Each of these GAO reports reviewed as case studies in this report was plagued with technical problems that were dramatized by sensational journalistic style," he said.

McLain said that questionnaire responses from employees of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management employees provided a "slanted view" of rangelands. And while the GAO was asked to assess progress the agencies were making to improve the



Cindy Wehling

range, the GAO focused on livestock grazing, he said.

"This sensationalized description of the questionnaire results plays well into the hands of those who wish to discredit public rangeland grazing," McLain said.

In its report on riparian areas, the GAO looked at 22 projects in 10 Western states. This was not enough, McLain said, to know what is happening. He wrote that GAO's erroneous conclusions imply livestock overgrazing is the sole source of damage to streambank areas.

"The GAO report only reflects the most liberal philosophy which holds that all impacts of mankind on nature must be reversed," McLain said.

In the wild horse program report, McLain wrote, "the GAO recommendation is biased against cattle." The GAO report "repeatedly slandered" BLM employees' integrity, he continued, "by GAO insistence that the BLM was driven by the wants and needs of the livestock permittees."

Rep. Joe Skeen, a New Mexico lawmaker incensed by the Resource Concepts

report, said GAO's findings "are proof that you can't sit in a cubicle and come up with answers to problems on public lands."

The General Accounting Office stands behind all its reports, said deputy director Alex Silva. Staffed by 5,000 employees, the non-partisan investigative agency has held government programs accountable since 1921. Last year it spent \$400 million to do its job, and although it's the accounting office, only about 15 percent of GAO employees are accountants, Silva pointed out. Economists, mathematicians and geologists, among many other specialists, work for the agency, which the press has dubbed "John Q. Citizen's public watchdog."

To compile its reports, GAO relies on on-site work, Silva said. For the three reports under attack, GAO looked at the land, talked to people on the ground and worked out of regional offices, such as Denver and San Francisco, he added. If GAO doesn't have sufficient expertise to examine an issue, it hires consultants.

While Resource Concepts and some Western lawmakers complained that the GAO was too hard on ranchers, former Forest Service staffer Heinz said the agency didn't go far enough. "GAO reports are softening the situation excessively," he said. "They just aren't hard-hitting on the land abuse that's going on out there."

Rose Strickland, chair of the Sierra Club's grazing subcommittee, agreed. "This brouhaha is just another example of the cozy coalition of ranchers, range consultants and Western politicians that has successfully blocked the efforts of federal-land managers to correct chronic grazing management problems," she said.

"Simply denying that grazing management problems exist is an old strategy that won't work in the 1990s," said Johanna Wald, an attorney with the National Resources Defense Council.

Resource Concepts Inc. is based at 340 N. Minnesota St., Carson City, NV 89703.

— Melinda Merriam

Former intern Melinda Merriam works on her orchard and her free-lancing in Paonia, Colorado.

Compromise could make the West's grass more valuable

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Relentless pressure from Capitol Hill to increase fees charged to ranchers who graze livestock on public lands may have finally convinced the Bush administration to play ball.

David O'Neal, U.S. Interior assistant secretary for lands and minerals management, said the Interior Department recently floated a proposal to increase federal-grazing fees because critics in Congress are threatening to wreak havoc in Western ranching communities.

"We're getting beat up every year," he said, speaking of efforts by Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla., and other members of Congress to substantially increase grazing fees. "How much can Western legislators, who do not control the House and the Senate, do battle year after year after year?"

Conservationists remain skeptical, however, that what appears to be movement toward compromise by the administration is anything more than a public relations stunt in an election year.

"We have to talk meaningful reform and that means overgrazing has to end," said Nancy Green, a Wilderness Society

spokeswoman. O'Neal said he does not believe overgrazing is a problem.

U.S. Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan ignited speculation about compromise several weeks ago. He said he favors a concept in which ranchers would be charged fair-market value for public-grazing allotments while receiving credits for improving the land.

Interior Department officials still describe Lujan's proposal as no more than a "broad concept." The Bureau of Land Management has appointed a staff committee to develop the idea, O'Neal said. Meanwhile, Wyoming GOP Sen. Malcolm Wallop has announced that he wants the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to begin hearings on the issue in May.

O'Neal said the administration still believes the existing grazing fee formula is fair "but if, in fact, there is a need for a better way to evaluate what the price of an AUM (animal unit-month) ought to be, we ought to be looking at it."

An AUM is the amount of forage consumed by one cow and her calf, or one horse or five sheep. Asked whether a need for a better way exists, O'Neal replied, "There is a need from the

standpoint that there is a lot of people like Mike Synar whose primary push is to get cattle off public land."

O'Neal sounded much like a man who might broker a compromise, though he insisted otherwise. Rather than compromise, O'Neal said, the administration wants to settle the grazing-fee debate by satisfying ranchers, Congress and the public. "That would be wonderful and if you call that a compromise, it's a compromise," he said.

Pam Neal, a spokeswoman for the National Cattlemen's Association, is clearly uninterested in compromising. She said she sees Lujan's proposal as a way to demonstrate to the public that the existing system is fair.

"I think our problem is that the Synar forces have the agenda of 'live-stock free by '93,'" she said. "That's why there is no room for 'compromise.' The only way this is ever going to end is with a general knowledge by the public and the media that (the existing system) is a fair deal."

O'Neal said he, too, thinks public education is needed to prevent "throw-away environmental votes" in Congress. "What I don't want to see happen is a

group of congresspeople that aren't from the West vote on something, not knowing that they're going to throw 60 percent of our small ranchers out of business," he said. "We believe (the existing system) works fine. But there are those who don't feel that way. So, I guess the first thing is educational and then from that educational process we can come to a compromise."

The Wilderness Society's Green said she is skeptical that Lujan's proposal will ever bring real change. "We've always been interested in examining incentives to get the job done right, but agencies should require that the job be done right," she said. "Incentives should not be necessary."

Until the BLM produces a detailed plan, O'Neal said, he is unable to discuss how Lujan's idea would function. "What I usually see come out of something like this is a hybrid," he said. "We go in with the best intentions and all of a sudden what comes out of it is a combination of something else that will really work."

— David Hackett

The writer covers Washington for Wyoming's *Casper Star-Tribune*.

LETTERS

AN ANONYMOUS BLM
STAFFER SAYS CATTLE
DON'T BELONG
IN THE WEST

Dear HCN,

I can't tell you my name or where I live, because like most career BLM employees, I fear losing my job if the wrong rancher were to find out what I have to say. But I will tell you a little about myself. I have worked for the BLM for more than 20 years — all in the arid West — Nevada, Oregon, Utah. I've lived in small rural communities and had ranchers as my neighbors. Like most people, they are nice folks. I don't have a vendetta against ranchers.

But I do have a Ph.D. in range ecology and I've worked with rangelands all my career. I got into range because I liked agriculture — I grew up on a farm in New England, so I have nothing against raising animals. But I have learned the hard way that the Bureau of Land Management does not manage the land for the public, and in the long run it doesn't even manage the land for the rancher. Most of the West, I'm convinced, cannot sustain livestock production. The precipitation is too erratic and too little. And in trying to keep cattle on these ranges we are destroying the land's ecological life support systems.

Unfortunately, it has taken me many years to realize that range management will never solve the problems facing the West from livestock because we are ultimately ignoring ecological principles to try to sustain an industry which does not ecologically fit the West. Now I am too old to shift careers, and I wait for the day when I retire, and then perhaps can speak the truth without fear of reprisal.

Someone said it a while back in *High Country News*, but the cow is simply the wrong animal for this landscape. We can spend lots of money trying to make the land fit the cow, but in the end, it only delays the inevitable decline. And anyone who tells you differently is lying to keep their job — just as I would lie to you if you were to interview me — or simply doesn't understand range ecology.

You have to keep in mind all those reports by range people that suggest that we can raise livestock in the West are written by people who have a vested interest in keeping cows on the land. They are not unbiased reports any more than foresters who tell us that the forest needs to be logged to be healthy are unbiased in their views.

You wrote about the various working groups in Oregon. I've worked on such groups myself. But you didn't tell in your story that to make these

proposals work, it is necessary to manipulate the landscape more and more. We wind up building more pipelines, more water developments, more fencing, and more juniper control — all this effort to try to keep cattle on the ranges. Then the BLM turns around and tells everyone how livestock have "improved" the rangelands. Cattle have not improved the landscape. We have only mitigated the worst abuses — often at great public expense — another part of the story which was not mentioned in any of the stories.

One of the ranchers quoted talks about how cattle improved things for wildlife. There are more deer in Oregon than when the first explorers went through there, he says. That's absolutely correct. But deer are like pigeons in the city. They thrive on human disturbance. I am surprised that you permit such quotes to get into your newspaper without adding perspective. While you quote the rancher talking about the abundant deer, how about adding something about how sage grouse are nearly extinct now. Or that Lahontan cutthroat trout is on the way out. Or that the willow flycatcher is going extinct because it requires riparian zones to live. Or that the black-footed ferret is wiped out because we have killed off all the prairie dogs that are its food. It's very deceptive to allow anyone to suggest that livestock grazing has been a positive influence on wildlife. Wildlife is more than deer and a few other species that Fish and Game departments have promoted — for the most part these species are ignored by my agency and it seems by HCN as well.

Your reporting was in-depth on the ranchers, but not on the ecological parameters of the landscape. Why nothing about how the Great Basin never had bison? Why nothing about the amount of riparian areas — the tens of thousands of miles that have been devastated by livestock? Why didn't you really look into assertions made by ranchers that they are economically important to rural economies? In reality they are usually a very small part of the local economy, but you helped to perpetuate those myths.

Those myths are repeated so many times that many people believe them. For instance, Allan Savory's notion that we need to graze grasslands or they will deteriorate is based upon anecdotal evidence. Most of the research done — even

the biased research done by most range scientists

— cannot demonstrate any convincing evidence

to support his assertions.

Ranchers who say that the Savory method works are reporting that management — any kind of management — is better than none.

And that is



Bob Gregor

usually what they practiced before. Again, such assertions need to be examined closely and I don't see *High Country News* doing the kind of in-depth questioning that a good reporter would do.

As a person who must deal with the consequences of your reporting, I must say that I find your special issue another setback. In reality, most of the West is simply not suited for livestock production and this is an underlying question that you neither asked nor reported on.

Range issues are complex. They are not easy for most people to understand. Unfortunately the misinformation reported in HCN as fact only obfuscates the truth further.

I would bet that if most BLM employees were free to talk without retribution, you would find that my colleagues agreed with my assessment: The livestock industry still controls the management of the vast majority of the public lands, and even the best livestock management is not as good as having no cattle at all.

You may not realize it, but people like Lynn Jacobs and Denzel Ferguson are much closer to the truth than Doc Hatfield and Fred Otley. It's too bad you chose not to interview them.

Someday I hope you come by my BLM office — I'll tell you who I am then. Thanks for doing something on the livestock issue. I only hope you provide a more balanced perspective in the future.

A BLM staffer
somewhere in the West

STILL RESOLUTELY
ANTI-GRAZING

Dear HCN,

Just finished reading the March 23 special issue of HCN, concerning public-lands grazing. It was good, it was well written, it was well researched; it did not change my mind.

A decade ago I would have swallowed hook, line and sinker the ranchers' new-found concern for the environment and other people's views for the public lands. I was gullible and uninformed, but today am well informed and very skeptical and battle-scarred.

Ten years ago I was not against livestock grazing the public lands, though I knew overgrazing was a real problem. My complaint was with

all the baggage the rancher brought with him to our public lands, such as: (1) ADC-taxpayer funded (\$30 million last year) killing of wildlife on public lands; (2) Huge game-damage claims filed each year by ranchers to state wildlife agencies for forage damage on their private lands, while at the same time they graze public lands for next to nothing; (3) Dictating what species would be allowed to inhabit the lands and in what numbers, to mention just a few.

I thought the rancher could compromise with the rest of America on these issues, but after years of being insulted by angry, red-faced ranchers in public meetings and getting little cooperation from BLM and Forest Service personnel, not to mention inane and uninformed responses from elected officials, I am in no mood for compromise!

I will attend the BLM field trips and the work groups and play along with Allan Savory's work-session structure, but I totally agree with Lynn Jacobs:

"Most times when a rancher suddenly wants to be your friend, he has more than friendship in mind."

My long-term goal will always be an end to livestock grazing on the public lands so wildlife can do the necessary management. Maybe not by '93 but someday real soon.

Carol Buchanan
Norwood, Colorado

THORNY, PAINFUL ISSUE

Dear HCN,

I would like to express my appreciation to you for the March 23 issue on grazing. About the only thing an amalgamous community like Moab can agree on regarding grazing is to accept that it is a thorny, painful, emotional and possibly terminal issue in the West. Thank you for providing information that can lead to, and help in, informed opinions and decisions.

Presenting even semi-successful moderate or compromise solutions to the grazing issue is a real service to your readers. It is encouraging to hear about cooperation in the midst of land-use battlefields.

Mary Anne Cunningham
Moab, Utah

The writer is a commissioner of Grand County, Utah.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Dear HCN,

The March 23 issue of *HCN* should be considered required reading for all folks concerned with public-land grazing today. The articles run the gamut from the traditional rancher's position to the extreme anti-grazing position so everyone can find themselves represented. Having a position somewhere in the middle of the two extremes, I found particularly encouraging the reports on the progress made by Oregon's working groups. These groups have found what may well be the working resolution to the "range wars," bringing those of a broad spectrum of interests together to work on public-land management.

I am the co-founder of the 6x6 group mentioned in the review of Lynn Jacobs's book, *Waste of the West*. The name "6x6" was derived from the fact that we started in 1988 with six environmentalists and six ranchers to seek an alternative to the polarization existing between the two communities. I feel complimented that Lynn perceives our group as such an essential threat to his obsession to drive cattle from the West.

While Lynn denounces this group as a sell-out to cowboys, the objectives are quite the opposite. Having members from Earth First!, the Sierra Club, the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, the Forest Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, our objectives are to express concerns, hear all points of view and then, when possible, to seek out commonalities. Currently, a Forest Service range officer is making it possible for our group to actually serve as members of an interdisciplinary team for an allotment which previously had no management plan. Members of 6x6 will have to make on-the-ground decisions about what should be done to improve natural resources. By becoming a part of the decision-making process, we believe we are contributing more to benefit public lands than we would by remaining outside the process and verbally assailing it.

Having served on a host of interdisciplinary teams for the Forest Service, I find being accused of selling out to ranchers highly amusing. I'm sure many of the ranchers with whom I've participated on these teams would question such claims, considering my stringent beliefs regarding such concerns as riparian-area protection, predation prevention and frequent monitoring. I frequently encounter reluctance from the more traditional ranchers even to consider my concerns because of my Sierra Club affiliation. However, I've found their resistance softens when they realize I'm not out to terminate their grazing permits. I just believe that we "publics" have a right to a voice in planning how public land is to be managed.

Far too many "ranch bashers" have no idea of what they really want public land to look like, nor what sort of activity should be permitted there. They just believe that livestock have to be bad and that *good range management* is an oxymoron. Like many others with serious concerns about public-land grazing, I started my involvement with no background in range or wildlife management. This resulted in a rather uneducated approach to interdisciplinary team participation. Following completion of a series of university ecology, botany and range courses, as well as holistic management, I believe my contributions to the teams are now of more value.

For years, polarization between environmental and ranching communities has been used as a tool by both camps to no avail. Continued confrontation and conflict have resolved nothing.

Oregon's working groups offer hope for working on solutions together. Much the same objectives gave birth to Arizona's 6x6 group and more recently to similar groups in Nevada and Colorado. Accelerating the range wars will prove counter-productive to saving the West. Why not put our energy into working together and give peace a chance?

Bobbie Holaday
Phoenix, Arizona

RIGHT SUBJECT, WRONG CONCLUSION

Dear HCN,

I was pleased to see your coverage of the livestock issue (4/6/92). I hope that you will continue to do in-depth reporting for, as most people know, livestock production impacts more of the West (in total acres) than any other single human use, and as a consequence really should be the major environmental issue of the region.

Few articles in conservation-oriented newspapers and magazines address livestock issues. Even when they do, we often get articles like the "Eco-grazing" piece which was published in an October 1991 *High Country News* extolling the virtues and the presumed "ecological" need for grazing sheep.

Few groups devote much time to dealing directly with livestock production. Ultimately, it would be more effective, and provide long-term solutions to issues of concern if the source of the problem were defined and dealt with directly, rather than working on a host of separate, but interrelated issues.

The issue of wolf reintroduction in the West is a livestock issue. The shooting of bison wandering from Yellowstone Park is a livestock issue. The potential extinction of Arctic grayling is a livestock issue. The recovery of Pacific salmon is, in part, a livestock issue. The designation of wilderness, particularly on BLM lands, is effectively a livestock issue. The construction of dams on our Western waterways is all too frequently a livestock issue. And so it goes.

Any honest review of Western environmental issues would overwhelmingly show that livestock production has tremendous ecological costs that are pervasive and widespread — perhaps so pervasive and widespread that most of us do not even recognize them as a problem any longer.

We take for granted that our rivers should dry up during irrigation season, that ranchers have a right to shoot predators on our lands, that it is up to the public to pay for protecting its riparian zones from someone else's livestock, that it's perfectly legitimate for privately owned livestock to consume the vast majority of the forage that would otherwise support publicly owned wildlife. We quietly accept the premise that fences should define our horizon.

I disagree with the basic premise that working groups, at least as they are now set up, are a solution to grazing issues. Having participated in a few of these working groups, I can speak from experience that they begin with an assumption that livestock grazing is desirable and should continue. Until we analyze these underlying assumptions, the range of solutions is necessarily limited to more or less maintaining the status quo with minor adjustments.

A more fundamental question that is not addressed is whether livestock grazing is really appropriate in any particular location, given its natural ecological limitations, evolutionary history, true ecological costs (almost never articulated), economic costs of mitigation (never mentioned) and

the extent of past grazing abuses.

Secondly, there is seldom a discussion about whether the "tools" necessary to correct past abuses are really desirable. Is it really "better" to have more pipelines, fencing, stock ponds, juniper removal programs and other manipulation that is often the result of these working-group decisions?

This is really the domestication of our rangelands; no different than turning our forests into tree farms.

Third, should the public pay for such "improvements" even if it would reduce livestock impacts? For example, it was not mentioned in the article about the Trout Creek working group that the BLM is planning to spend \$400,000 on range developments on just this one allotment to reduce livestock impacts to riparian zones. And this cost does not even include the salaries of the BLM and other personnel involved in the development and monitoring of the

Readers react to a special issue on grazing



plan. The net receipts to the federal government for grazing this area amount to less than \$10,000 a year. Just the maintenance cost of one proposed pipeline will be more than double this figure annually. Does the public really benefit by spending its money to protect its lands from someone's privately owned livestock operation?

Fourth, there is often an underlying assumption by those supporting working groups and livestock use of our rangelands that, if we don't support the livestock industry, all the West will become like Vail or Jackson. This, of course, assumes that Vail or Jackson are undesirable places to live. I leave that to the thousands of people who choose to live in Vail and Jackson to decide whether it is such a bad fate rather than live in Burns or Ely. But even if it were undesirable, there has been no real examination of the assumption that support of public-lands grazing prevents Vails or Jacksons from developing. After all, the ranchers in these areas had and continue to have access to public-lands grazing. Is public-lands grazing really a way to stop or slow such development or are there better solutions — assuming such a goal is desirable?

Until these questions about the desirability of range developments, evolutionary history, conflicts with other resource uses, ecological costs and eco-

logic costs are fairly evaluated, the question as to whether working groups are a "solution" cannot be answered. I hope future issues of *High Country News* bring these questions to light as they have done in their recent fine issue on working groups.

George Wuerthner
Livingston, Montana

George Wuerthner is an environmentalist and free-lance writer.

ABOUT THE JUNIPER

Dear HCN,

As an off-and-on reader of *High Country News* since the days of Tom Bell, I'd like to commend the recent issue on grazing as one of the paper's best jobs yet — and it has produced many good ones. My reaction may stem in part from my having been ranch-raised in southwestern Colorado, an area that at certain elevations abounds in mixed stands of piñon pine and juniper. And that brings me to the point of this letter.

Recently I was asked to write a foreword to a fine, short book by Scott Thybony called *Pinon-Juniper: Intimate Forest of the Southwest*. It is a warm, personal reaction to that particular environment. In it Thybony touches briefly on chaining out trees as an element of range management. He finds the practice devastating and

fruitless.

I gather from various references to junipers in *High Country News* that both the Bureau of Land Management and the ranchers of southeastern Oregon believe chaining is good range management, clearing the way to better forage, reduced erosion and less sedimentation of streams.

It may be that the difference in your and Thybony's accounts rises from a difference in the forests. The Oregon stands may be straight juniper. Thybony's stands are of mixed piñon rather than only juniper. In any event, I'll feel more comfortable when I start to write if I know I've dug a little and am not just skimming. I'll very much appreciate your reactions. Meanwhile keep up your good and essential work with *High Country News*.

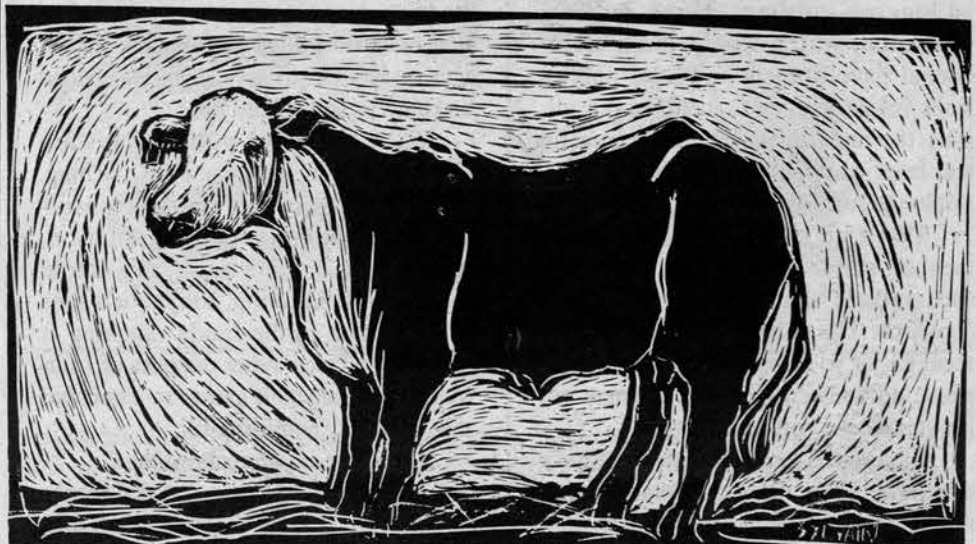
David Lavender
Ojai, California

The writer is a Western historian and author.

Dear David Lavender,

I should have been more explicit about the junipers in the articles on Oregon range. All juniper removal was done with chainsaws or fire. I asked repeatedly about chaining and was always told: "We don't do it here."

Ed Marston



LETTERS

PUBLIC-LANDS RANCHING HASN'T A SINGLE REDEEMING FEATURE

Dear HCN,

I'd like to say a few things regarding Ed Marston's March 23 HCN special issue, "An Alternative to the Bumper-sticker Approach to Grazing," including his review of my new book, *Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching*.

First, I respect and appreciate Ed Marston. His sincere desire to promote the welfare of the West and its inhabitants is evident. Few have done more to educate people on public-lands ranching or to try to solve its many problems. His review of my book is mostly a fair portrayal.

Peppered throughout his book review and special issue, however, are personal observations sometimes so premeditated that they border on distortion. While Marston wants to save the Western wild, he seems to want just as badly to save the Western ranching lifestyle, which to him perhaps still maintains some romantic vision of the West. While I commend Marston's good intention, his misrepresentation needs to be addressed. Through several book excerpts, Marston suggests that I am rigidly opposed to — even afraid of — communicating with public-lands ranchers. Such is not the case. I promote honest communication, and only advise activists to beware of false or one-sided relationships because calculated co-optation is used increasingly by the grazing industry to neutralize opposition. Not compromising doesn't necessarily mean not communicating.

Marston also states that I don't "worry about the fate of ranchers and their families, or about the fate of their communities," and implies that I would "slaughter an entire economic group." As if ending public-lands ranching would doom permittee families to impoverished lives in the city streets and destroy rural Western communities! My book contains scores of pages detailing why this would not be so and discusses various alternatives that would protect permittees.

Throughout his special issue, with doves and olive branches Marston promotes the "cooperative approach" to public-lands ranching. So it is unfortunate that he labels me "an obsessed ideologue," says I "share prejudices," and pegs me a "counterpart" to James Watt. By these and past statements Marston seems to pigeonhole me and like-minded individuals as well-meaning but potentially dangerous extremists. And lest I spread my radical reality, HCN has declined to print my last three letters — letters I considered thoughtful and pertinent. I therefore stopped sending letters to HCN, until now.

So, how does taking a firm stand on an issue necessarily make one wrong? I recall HCN taking very strong positions on logging, mining, energy, military expansion, water development, recreational development and other public-lands issues. But not ranching — ironically the most environmentally harmful and least quantitatively justifiable pursuit in the rural West.

This kind of inflexible, middle-of-the-road stance may be less responsible and realistic than a perceived radical approach. The middle road may at first seem easier to travel, but it often brings worse unforeseen obstacles and may not get you where you want to go.

I sympathize with Ed Marston's dilemma. Like all Americans he was raised on cowboy mythology. He now

lives (like most rural Westerners) in a "ranching area." His local political and social reality are influenced by ranchers. Friends and acquaintances are ranchers. Some HCN subscribers, supporters and even writers are ranchers. Ranching interests pressure him in diverse ways. And he appears to believe that ranching somehow represents and protects the real West.

High Country News is a high-wire balancing act — trying to save both the West and the Western ranching lifestyle, to please both environmentalists and ranchers. At times Marston seems almost desperate to find this elusive balance. I admire Marston's concern but submit that he needn't worry that ending public-lands ranching will destroy the Western ranching lifestyle, much less rural Western communities.

First, only 16 percent of the West's stockmen use public lands. So even if all public-lands ranching was terminated, at least 84 percent of Western stockmen would continue ranching unaffected.

Second, federal permittees derive an average of only one-third of their forage needs from public land. So if public-lands ranching was ended, probably most ex-permittees would continue ranching on the two-thirds private range they already use.

Third, and perhaps most important, few permittees are the poor ol', helpless, dusty cowpokes they pretend to be. Of course there are some small-timers, but as a whole ranchers are the most materially, politically, and socially powerful group in the rural West! Many are millionaires; most hold assets that dwarf the average American's. Probably one-fifth to one-third of all politicians in the rural West are ranchers, and most permittees carry enormous socio-political clout. Additionally, many if not most permittees derive most of their income from sources other than ranching — other businesses, investments, (non-base-property) real estate sales, inheritances, political office and influence, etc. — so public-lands ranching is not necessary to maintain their accustomed lifestyle anyway. Comparatively few ex-permittees would be driven from their comfortable country lifestyles simply because they could no longer graze their cows on public land for a few months each year.

Fourth, there are many good alternatives that could — and surely would — be used to protect ex-permittees once public-lands ranching was ended. (And no, little of their land would be sold to developers.)

The problem is more romantic image than substance. The question is one of control and abuse of public lands and associated power structures, not lifestyle. Public-lands ranching has no economic, production, or environmental justification, only an unnecessary call to save a misunderstood and misrepresented lifestyle.

HCN and other publications are filled with problems caused by ranching. After more than 100 years of unsurpassed environmental degradation, multibillion-dollar waste, and untold injustice and suffering, maybe it's time to admit that public-lands ranching is simply a bad idea. After decades of fruitless reform, maybe it's time to admit that it is inherently unreformable.

What's so extreme about that?

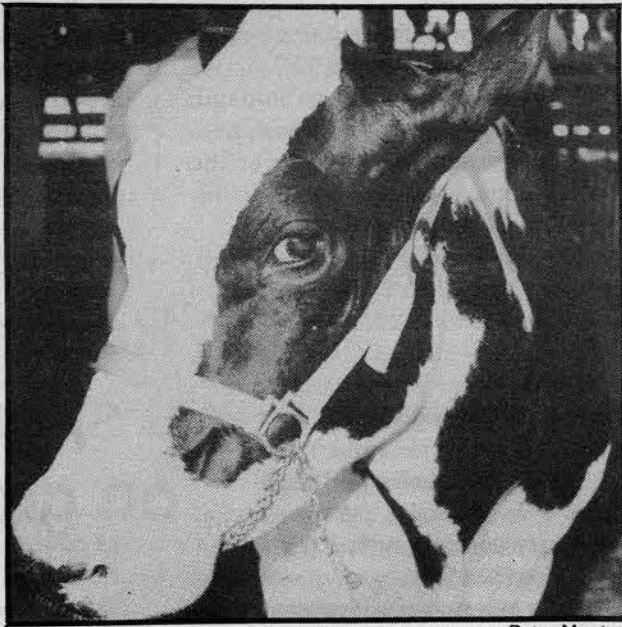
Lynn Jacobs
Tucson, Arizona

SOME SMALL DISSATISFACTION

Dear HCN,

I very much enjoyed Ed Marston's series of articles on public-lands grazing in Oregon in the March 23, 1992, edition of *High Country News*. The individual pieces reflected a great deal of careful thought and effort and the product as a whole presented a reasonably balanced, nonpartisan view of the issues.

I feel compelled to write, however, to register some small dissatisfaction with the quotation attributed to me in the story titled "Working Group's solution draws heavy



Betsy Marston

fire." Although the text of the statement is correct, I believe you misrepresented the context and the tenor of the remark in a slight, but significant fashion.

My statement, as you properly noted, was from an earlier story in the *Oregonian*. The reporter for that paper asked me about the precedential legal implications of our threatened legal action over grazing impacts on Lahontan cutthroat trout in Willow and Whitehorse Creeks. In response, I stated, "It will definitely have an impact on other grazing allotments..." as you reported in your story. I was not, however, describing any "wider campaign" planned by either myself or the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF), as your article perhaps suggests.

As a matter of course, SCLDF's lawsuits often have larger political or strategic ramifications for our clients. SCLDF will also follow up on any given lawsuit where doing so will promote compliance with state and federal environmental laws. SCLDF has a firm policy, however, of only bringing lawsuits that are legally justified by the facts of the particular case. Thus, our notice of intent to sue over grazing in Willow and Whitehorse Creeks was not motivated by the possibility of strategic gain, but by the BLM's failure to take even the first step in complying with the Endangered Species Act (i.e. — consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) in its management of the grazing allotments.

Adam J. Berger
Seattle, Washington

The writer is an associate attorney with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

WHY CONTINUE WITH COWS?

Dear HCN,

Your recent copy on grazing (4/6/92) was another in a string of excellent special issues — thanks and congratulations. Here's my two-cents-worth of personal comment.

First off, there seems to be some curious rationalization running through much of the "continue with cows" sce-

nario: since removing cattle would not solve *all* the problems, let's just forget about that idea straightaway. Too traumatic. Using this logic, since quitting the bottle doesn't solve *all* of an alcoholic's problems, we shouldn't make radical suggestions such as abstinence.

Then there's the perceived need for an environmentalist vision of what our public lands ought to look like. Got any good footage from, say, 10 centuries ago? Guess not. Here are a few generalizations which sound good to me:

1) *Lots of land that is left the hell alone.* Some management is and will be needed to heal things up for relative stability, but extraordinary efforts to re-create a vanished landscape might prove as destructive as the old path of exploitation. Flora and fauna, including stubborn exotics, must at some point be left to their own devices. If that's ignorant or ostrich-like on my part, I plead guilty; there's often sand in my hair.

2) *Wolves, grizzlies, jaguars, condors, etc., etc. returned to portions of their former territory.* Oops, this might mean some of that management stuff — as I was saying, a necessary evil (to be minimized and phased out).

3) *Cattle, maybe?* Well, sure, OK, in suitable areas. If springs, streams and meadows aren't trampled and filled with cowshit, if we see no more pictures of severed and stacked mountain lion heads, find no more coyote carcasses hanging from barbed wire fences or gunner-stuffed helicopters, hear no more demands for a predator-free federal feedlot. Ranchers could get a hefty leg up on their public relations problem by gutting and skinning the ADC (Animal Damage Control), and prominently displaying its repulsive hide for the public's edification.

And so forth. My prejudices are obvious, but they sit well in my stomach due to what I've seen on the ground. I hope that the working-group effort proves to be a stunning success, and that a cooperative and relatively painless solution to the grazing conflict can be arrived at. The chances of this are probably slim, but good-faith reporting such as yours goes a long way toward keeping that door open.

John Wahl
Flagstaff, Arizona

BUILDING A COMMON VISION

Dear HCN,

Thanks for producing such an insightful look into the minds of cattle producers, environmentalists and governments on the issue of public grazing lands (HCN, 3/23/92). It is good to know that us northerners are not alone in our trials and tribulations over public lands and that there are solutions if people are willing to work at it. Those calling the West their home have to fight hard to preserve the best of what we have left and begin fixing up the many excesses of the past.

Sometimes we have to be stubborn and tough but we often find that, once we cut through the rhetoric on both sides, there is a common concern about the health and future of the land. That at least gives me some optimism.

The Alberta Wilderness Association is venturing deep into the heart of cattle country for its annual meeting in the hope of building a common vision for the public lands. While our governments and legal systems distinguish us from our United States friends, there are common feelings about the land that were eloquently expressed in your special issue.

Please send 100 copies of your March 23 special issue so we can distribute it at our annual meeting.

Cliff Wallis
Calgary, Canada

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Blowing the whistle while covering your ass

by David Hackett

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some survival tips for whistleblowers: Copy everything, take notes, know who your friends are, test the system but don't trust your boss. And always tell your family before you fight the good fight.

Veteran whistleblowers compare their world to a lawless frontier town. To enter it unprepared for battle against corruption and the status quo is to condemn oneself and one's family to unnecessary hardship.

"Never whistleblow thinking someone will take care of you," said Hugh Kaufman, a renowned whistleblower and an engineer for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "If there is an issue going the wrong way, 99 out of 100 times it's going wrong because someone in power is enjoying it for the money or the ego gratification, and they will use everything they can to keep it wrong."

Kaufman and his fellow whistleblowers distilled such insights from their collective experience during a recent conference for government employees of environmental, wildlife and natural resource agencies. The conference, held April 4-6 at Georgetown University, was sponsored by the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental

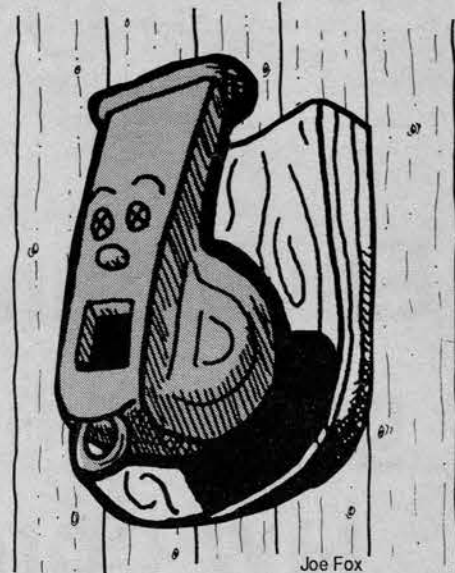
Ethics (AFSEEE) and the Government Accountability Project (GAP). Both aim to safeguard natural resources by promoting scientific integrity and professionalism in government.

The need for government whistleblowers has never been greater, according to GAP and AFSEEE. Government agencies responsible for managing land, air and water are fraught with lawlessness, scientific fraud and abuse. Kaufman and Louis Clark, executive director of the GAP, conducted an afternoon workshop in which they preached to prospective whistleblowers a philosophy of armored idealism.

Blow the whistle, by all means, they said, but cover your ass and be ready for fire from above. The first lesson, said Clark, is to know when to blow the whistle. Sometimes a whistleblower has to go public right away, but often he or she can quietly build a record, gather supporting documents and even work within the system.

"In a sense you are testing the system to see if it might actually work," Clark said. "There is a sense that you as an employee owe loyalty to your agency," and so the first effort should be to work from within.

If that is unsuccessful, Kaufman and Clark advise obsessive documentation.



Make two copies of every document, letter, memo and note pertinent to the problem, leaving all originals in the office.

"If you're dealing with documents that could be captured (from your property) in a scam by law enforcement, keep two copies and an inventory with one set in a protected place," Kaufman advised.

Kaufman and Clark said a diary is one of the whistleblower's most effective weapons: Be meticulous, factual and unemotional in compiling it.

"Assume it will be published on the front page of the *New York Times* and

don't put anything in it that you wouldn't want in the *New York Times*," Kaufman said.

In addition, the whistleblower's family must know what is happening from the start, Clark said.

Congress and the press can be useful, but Kaufman and Clark said congressmen and reporters are best approached through an intermediary who can maintain the whistleblower's cover.

AFSEEE, which is dedicated to reforming the U.S. Forest Service, is a player that can help Forest Service employees blow the whistle without blowing their careers, according to founder Jeff DeBonis, who wants to see similar groups involved with other federal agencies.

Phil Doe, a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation employee, said such groups are sorely needed. "A lot of people believe, regardless of political persuasion, that the taxpayer deserves an even break and they sure as hell aren't getting it," he said. "What you want is honesty and integrity to surface within these agencies." ■

David Hackett covers Washington, D.C., for the *Casper Star-Tribune* in Wyoming.

LETTERS

STRAW-MAN ARGUMENT

Dear HCN,

Bravo to Robert Loux for rising to the defense of Nevada against nuclear dangers (*HCN*, 4/6/92). My commentary, "Nevada speaks with fissioned tongue," was meant to spark debate about this hot subject. And it certainly did among my friends, family and colleagues. It's great to see state officials join this discussion. But Mr. Loux sets me up as a straw man for arguments I never made.

Most importantly, I did not call for the state to "accept" high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain in exchange for a halt to nuclear weapons testing at the Nevada Test Site. I called for state officials to stop holding up site-characterization studies of Yucca Mountain, which they have since done under court order. I also suggested that they support a moratorium on nuclear testing. Slim chance. Perhaps such a "deal" is beyond today's realpolitik. But state officials seem to lack no enthusiasm for making more "deals" of a nuclear nature for the Nevada Test Site. Asserting that nuclear testing is inevitable and that Yucca Mountain is the only nuclear threat we need to worry about "dealing with" is pure Nevada politics.

I would like to see Nevada's leaders, including Mr. Loux, director of the state's Agency for Nuclear Projects, address the consequences of ongoing nuclear-weapons testing with half the zeal with which they repudiate a radioactive waste dump that is still hypothetical. Despite the political ramrod of the site selection, Yucca Mountain is being studied in the open. Critics have ready access to Department of Energy findings that they say could derail the project. The nuclear industry, through mandatory contributions to the DOE's nuclear waste fund, even pays for state watchdogs such as Mr. Loux.

Unfortunately, despite our much trumpeted "victory" in the Cold War, nuclear-weapons testing remains cloaked in a veil of "national security" that keeps it safe from such fully informed public debate.

Jon Christensen
Carson City, Nevada

HOLD THE ADJECTIVES

Dear HCN,

I was a bit disappointed by the March 9, 1992, *HCN* article titled "Salmon: Can a new plan save the fish?" I find the continuing reference by authors to turbines "shredding," "slicing and dicing," etc. salmon a bit overdramatic and inaccurate. An estimated 6 percent of the fish passing through hydroelectric turbines on the Columbia River are actually struck by the turbine blades and killed. However, they are likely not "shredded" by the blades. A greater portion of the fish are killed by what is called water shear and pressure change. In all, an estimated 10-to-20 percent of the fish passing through the turbines are killed directly by all causes.

I would much prefer it if authors would cut the dramatics and simply state that passage through hydroelectric turbines kills some of the fish. I don't believe we need to "whip up the constituency" with misleading dramatics, causing the hydro side constituents to cry foul, resulting in distracting arguments over terminology. The point to be made is that some salmon are killed passing through turbines. Given the number of dams and turbines on the Columbia River, the total cumulative impact on Snake River salmon is dramatic enough without misleading language ...

Finally, there is not yet a planned harvest rate for Columbia River fall chinook for 1992. The 55 percent harvest rate used in Mr. Stuebner's article is apparently the recommendation from the Northwest Power Planning Council. Harvest rates will be determined in the near future by

OFF THE WALL

FOREST BARE

FOREST BEAR STRAYS ON TO A NEARBY RANCH.



the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Columbia River Compact. The 55 percent rate may seem high to Mr. Stuebner, but it is lower than recent harvest rates on this stock of chinook.

by JOE FOX



Robert R. Vreeland
Seattle, Washington

The writer works for the National Marine Fisheries Science Service.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

by Jim Stiak

From modest beginnings 10 years ago, the University of Oregon's public-interest environmental law conference has boomed.

More than 200 speakers arrived for this year's event, presenting 86 panels on topics from eco-tourism to eco-feminism, free trade, biodiversity, Alaskan native rights and African environmental law. Several thousand international scholars, local high school students, silk-tied scientists and torn-denim Earth First!ers filtered through the four days of talks in the middle of March.

The conference has become a venue for a singular sort of eco-theater, with the best acts returning year after year. David Brower, baritone elder statesman of the environmental movement, delivered an opening address, and Lou Gold descended from southern Oregon's Bald Mountain — still unlogged 10 years after he decided to protect it — to talk about ancient-forest ecosystems in what he called his "home court."

Sam LaBudde, an Earth Island Institute biologist and the first to film the killing of dolphins by the tuna industry, showed a packed house his videotaped tour of international carnage.

LaBudde's camera first visited Taiwan, a country he called "the black hole of endangered species trade." There, street-market vendors peddle skeletons of monkeys, selling their parts as medicines and aphrodisiacs. Penis soup, made from rare tigers, is a standard fare in Asian restaurants, LaBudde said. He showed 40 walrus lying dead on the beach of a wildlife refuge on a remote shore of Alaska. Hunters in speedboats pick off the mustached mammals, said LaBudde.

Biodiversity
NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS
eco-theater
environmental law
eco-TOURISM
ECO-feminism
FREE TRADE
ancient forests

Environmentalists gather at Oregon law conference

LaBudde's camera then zoomed in on polar-bear hides hanging in the sun. In "60 Minutes" style, LaBudde struck a deal with a local resident, trading "about \$20 of Alaskan homegrown" for an eight-pound walrus tusk. The tusk trader was later arrested in a federal sting operation.

"It's open season on wildlife," concluded LaBudde. "We're going through the bounty and biodiversity of this world like the proverbial bull in the china shop."

With the Endangered Species Act up for reauthorization this year, National Wildlife Federation attorney Robert Irvin predicted the "fight of the century" over its renewal. Opponents, he warned, are stronger than ever.

Two of those opponents ventured

into the lion's den for one panel. Valerie Johnson of the Oregon Lands Coalition, a pro-timber group that is part of the national pro-development Alliance for America, told an audience of 200 that the Endangered Species Act was "one tool in a radical, lock-it-all-up toolbox."

If decisions about salmon in the Northwest follow those being made about the spotted owl, she predicted, we won't have access to enough resources to support our people.

While she was speaking, two dissidents pinned up a sign reading "Moonies for stumps" — a reference to the allegation that pro-timber groups are funded by Sun Yeng Moon's Unification Church.

"We have absolutely zero to do with them," said Johnson, to a chorus of cat-

calls and hisses.

Doug Robertson, a county commissioner in timber-dependent Douglas County, Ore., declared that the Endangered Species Act, "in its current form," will not work on a long-term basis. There are simply too many threatened species to deal with, he said, and congressional support for the law is eroding.

But the act is flexible, said the Wildlife Federation's Irvin. Of more than 120,000 projects reviewed for possible conflict with the act, only 34 were halted, he said. More than 200 species have been helped by the law, but more than 3,800 are awaiting listing decisions. What it needs, he said, is a budgetary increase from the \$39 million a year it now receives to the \$4 billion it would take to do the job right. That's about what Americans spend on video games, he pointed out.

The conference brought together legal eagles from six continents, including a young Russian who is studying in New York to become "the first environmental attorney in what was the Soviet Union."

Conference organizers made an attempt to bring in people of color, flying panelists in from Ghana, Kenya, India and Peru. The attendees, however, like the constituency of the environmental movement, were overwhelmingly white. Some speakers, in fact, accused the movement of de facto racism. People of color suffer most from pollution, said Robin Cannon of the Southwest Network for Economic Justice, but conservation groups ignore it until whites are affected.

The writer free-lances from Eugene, Oregon.

BOOK NOTES

A prairie of time to mourn a wonderful, ordinary man

by Jim Carrier

HERMOSA, S.D. — I noticed the resemblance right off: the yellowed bluestem and the cured buffalo grass, which gave the prairie the look of a blond turning steadily gray.

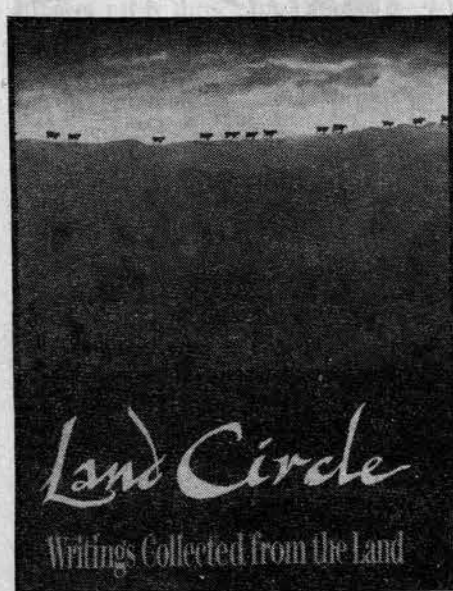
Just like Linda Hasselstrom, who stood nearby scattering alfalfa cubes to her cows.

She wouldn't be offended by that. More than most people in the West, she knows how life reflects the landscape, with all its wrinkles. Rancher, writer, woman: Linda Hasselstrom is as honest a mirror as I've seen.

"The hairs bother me. Not the gray ones on my head, but the black and white ones on my chin and upper lip ... But I'm a poor redneck ranching woman in a dry year; I can't pay to have hairs taken off my chin when all the strong and wonderful women I know let them grow."

From a small spread near the Black Hills, Linda Hasselstrom produces beef and wisdom that feed — and resonate in — our guts. Essays and poems with startling names like "Why One Peaceful Woman Carries a Pistol" and "Butchering the Crippled Heifer."

She is not easily slotted: a proud beef eater who chairs an environmental group; a flower planter who expects of a man a kitten-loving jeaned Jupiter; a toyer in witchcraft who can't get her 85-year-old rancher father to partner with



Land Circle:
Writings Collected from the Land
Linda Hasselstrom. Golden, Colo. Fulcrum Publishing. 349 pages. Cloth: \$19.95.

her, or read a word of what she's written.

Her latest book, *Land Circle*, is subtitled *Writings Collected From the Land*. That's where her philosophy was formed, on subjects from animal rightists to ironing. That's where she learned to deal with the death of George Snell, her husband and companion of 15 years.

"George's poem/required few words./Even dying, he kept it simple:/ 'Be happy, Watch the sunsets.'/ What kind of philosophy is that/to get me through the next forty years?"

The work has made Linda, nearing 50 and menopause, more than ever a speaker for women. "They think I've got it all figured out. That I'm brave and courageous. I see myself fumbling around, trying to see where I'm going."

"I enact the ritual of grief enacted by every other woman who has found a man she could live a century with, and watched him die young, watched helplessly through hours of frustrated rage and love."

Where calving and wildfire occupied her previous work, it is now death and our strange attitudes toward it. George, who beat Hodgkin's disease with X-rays, died of cancer caused by the rays. Her journals of ranch rhythms are broken by long trips to Denver's VA hospital.

"Here was a man who was a pretty ordinary, good man. He became extraordinary by getting a fatal disease at a young age and deciding it wasn't going to get him. I wasn't trying to make him a hero. I was trying to show that being told you're going to die doesn't have to ruin your life. It gave meaning to his life. It ought to give meaning to the rest of us."

She wondered after how she could ever have worried about a few chin hairs. She learned, from him, to say "No."

"George quit playing by the rules. You couldn't nag him into doing something he didn't want to. I say 'no' a lot better, and I say to women, you don't have to do it. Just say, 'I'm writing a poem this afternoon. I'm not going to bring a dish to the church supper.'" ■

Jim Carrier writes for *The Denver Post*.



Author Linda Hasselstrom

Ken Norgard