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High Country News

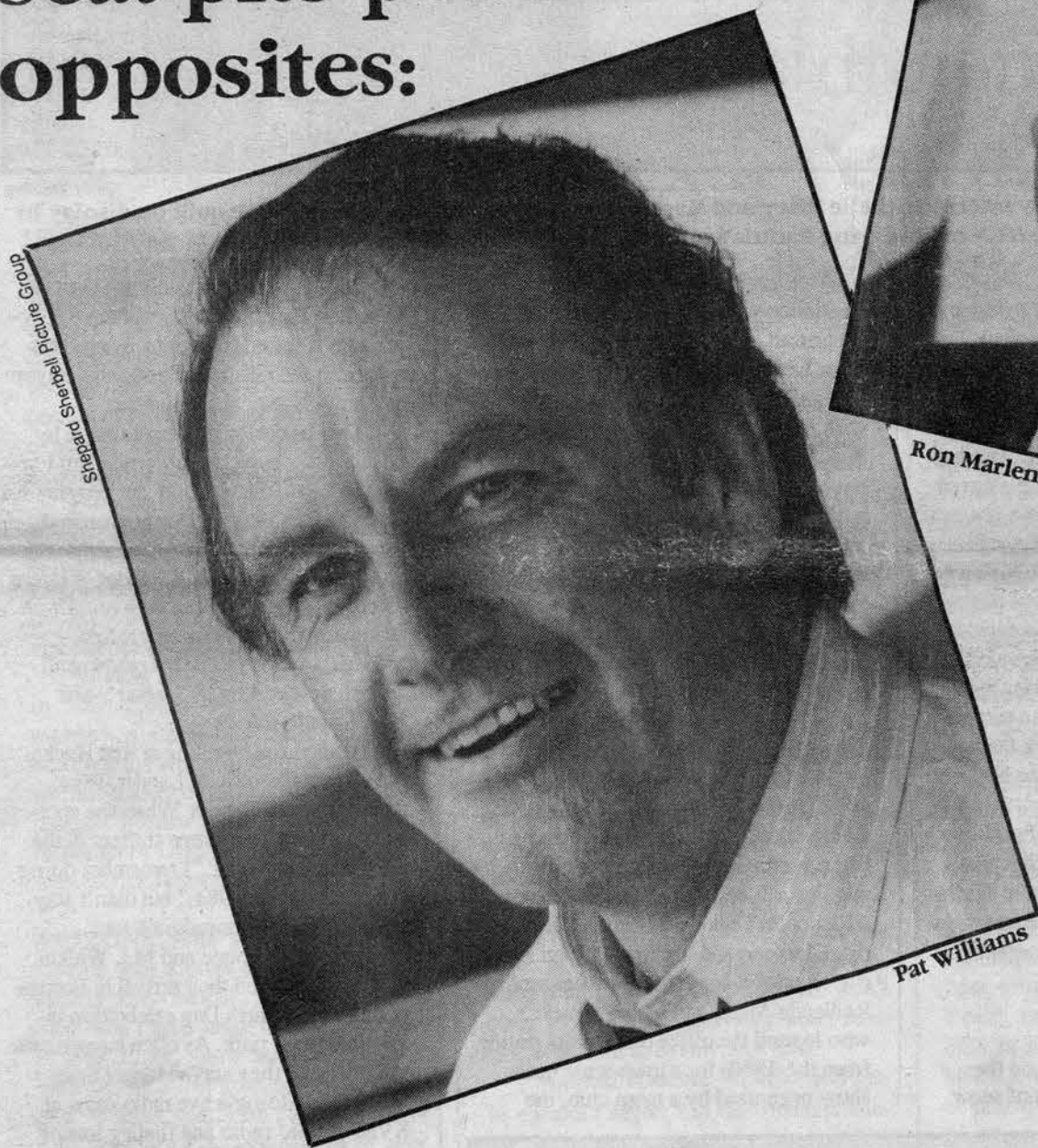
May 4, 1992

Vol. 24 No. 8

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

The race for Montana's one congressional seat pits polar opposites:



Pat Williams



Ron Marlenee

Pat Williams, Democrat, vs. Ron Marlenee, Republican

by John Balzar

THREE FORKS, Mont. — Politicians, environmentalists and business leaders agree, the 1992 congressional campaign in Montana is likely to result in the most important — and interesting — election in perhaps a generation.

By the vagaries of the 1990 census, Montana is losing one of its two congressional seats. Instead of two congressional districts — one for the conservative high-plains ranchlands and another for the more liberal Rocky Mountain forest lands — Montana's diversity will be compressed into a lone, statewide district. It will be the most heavily populated single congressional district in the country. A legal decision to keep the two seats was recently overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.

What elevates the race to a landmark is that neither of Montana's two veteran incumbents has so far stepped

aside. The two men, from their upbringing to their values and bases of support, are almost polar opposites.

"This is the most important political event in Montana in more than 20 years, a defining moment, as it were," says Missoula Mayor Dan Kemmis.

Will it be Republican Ron Marlenee, an eight-term flinty conservative from Scobey, out on the eastern plains? Or Democrat Pat Williams, a seven-term urbane liberal educator from Butte, in the Rocky Mountains? The difference between the two is stark.

This is war

Here is Ron Marlenee speaking to a gathering of supporters about the special interests that want to take over Montana: "Defenders of Wildlife, they want to set predator control policy ... Representatives from Connecticut want to set grazing policy; Willie Nelson, farm and tax policy. The Animal Liberation Front

wants to deal with animal research.

"The Fund for Animals from New York City wants to come in and tell us how to run our state fish and game ... The world's foremost toxicologist, Meryl Streep, wants to set chemical policy ... Ted Turner and Jane Fonda, land use and dietary policy ... EPA, the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act ... The Americans with Disabilities Act ... the two-headed spotted alleywalker, mascot of the hot-tub liberals ...

"Folks, this is not a skirmish, this is an all-out war," adds Marlenee. "The Congress of the United States is involved in a hostile takeover of your community, your farm, your home ..."

Here is Pat Williams speaking to his supporters about the enemy he sees:

"There are those who believe that government can only get in the way, that it has no appropriate role in improving the individual lives of our citizens.

"That crowd is not new. They were against child labor laws when govern-

ment came in and righted that terrible wrong. They were against the first federal aid to education bill ... They were against the Montana pension reform act ... the plan which Franklin Roosevelt brought to Washington and which became Social Security ... When Montana showed America how to create set-asides for great scenic areas of this country by marching to Washington with petitions to create Yellowstone National Park, they were against that. They were against the setting aside of Glacier National Park. They were against this great American political invention called wilderness set-asides ...

"There is a thing, interestingly enough, that they're not against. There is a government action that these nay-sayers, these national Republicans, are for, and that is any kind of a legislative action that will continue to line the pockets of the rich at the expense of the mid-

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Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

(ISSN/0191/5657) is published biweekly, except for one issue during July and one issue during January, by the High Country Foundation, 119 Grand Avenue, Paonia, CO 81428. Second-class postage paid at Paonia, Colorado.

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

Subscriptions are \$24 per year for individuals and public libraries, \$34 per year for institutions. Single copies \$1 plus postage and handling. Special Issues \$3 each.

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

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New at the paper

Newest intern Mark Tukman walked into *High Country News* looking for a shower and a place to pitch his tent. He'd just driven across the Great Basin from San Francisco, and says, "As I dropped down onto the east side of the Desotoya Mountains east of Fallon, Nev., I could see the whole 40-mile length of the valley below. No concrete, no cars, no clutter. It was like being on a roller coaster; I whooped and hooted for about 10 miles."

After graduating from Cornell University in 1990, Mark moved to Telluride, Colo., where he spent a year working and enjoying the San Juans "on foot, ski, and snowboard." Last June he moved to Alaska for the summer; then in the fall he moved back to the San Francisco Bay area, where he had grown up.

Mark plans to get a master's degree in natural resources, forestry, or biology, but isn't sure when or which. In the meantime, he has pitched his tent about seven miles from town near a stream at the edge of the Gunnison National Forest. "The place has views of the West Elks and there's no one around. Once the snowmelt slows, the fishing should be great," he tells us.

Michelle Riley comes to *HCN* with a long background in environmental education, including a B.S. in environmental science from Florida International University in Miami. After five years working for Dade County Parks in Miami as a naturalist, she fled the urban sprawl to work for the National Park Service at Dinosaur National Monument in Utah.

Last autumn she moved to Paonia to focus on her free-lance art, which ranges from traditional beadwork to nature illustrations. Michelle joins *HCN* as the first intern whose interest lies primarily in graphics.

Visitors

One minute hail bounces on the roof, the next minutes flurries of snow

compete with shafts of sunshine. Yes, it's the erratic weather of spring and with it have come lots of visitors.

Salt Lake City subscriber Sarah Wright dropped in after looking the area over for land, and biochemist Scott Silber and his wife, Wendy Colby, and son Jeremy, 21 months, visited during a scouting trip for an alternative community.

Visiting overnight were former

Neighborhood Neighbors.

With a docile dog leading the way, Farley Sheldon came to visit from Old Snowmass, where she directs development for the Rocky Mountain Institute, founded by Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins, Farley's daughter. Also along were Farley's son Paul and his wife, Christi Peralta, who were set to lead an evening of international folk dancing in the area.



New interns Michelle Riley and Mark Tukman pose in front of an antique quilt on display in the *HCN* office during Paonia's annual quilt show

Cindy Wehling

HCN editor Marjane Ambler, now a free-lance writer, and her husband Terry Wehrman, who pushes snow and runs other heavy equipment at Yellowstone National Park. They were on vacation with Marjane's dad, Ed, and stepmother, Sue. Terry told us that snowmobiles have helped boom winter visitors to the park, a few of whom manage to crash into bison. He also said solitude is habit-forming: The dozen or so winterkeepers at Lake, for instance, can go two weeks without a get-together.

Also stopping in were Bill Patric, a staffer with the Mineral Policy Center in Bozeman, Mont., Maggie Woodcock of Cleveland, Ohio, Wade Davis, a Los Angeleno whose son goes to the University of Colorado, and artist Marcia King, a New Yorker. Visitors from closer to home were Gary Sprung, a long-time member of the High Country Citizens Alliance in Gunnison County, Brad Burritt, a farmer, and his brother John Burritt, an adobe-home builder from nearby Redlands Mesa, and Marilyn Packer, who loaned the office three quilts dating from the 1850s for a town-wide quilt show organized by a mesa club, the

Subscribers John and Irene Gawne from Oak Park, Ill., with children Rebecca and Nicholas Zika, came by on their way from the Grand Canyon and Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

Two Berkeley professors came by on their way back to California: Jim Parsons and Paul Starrs. Both are geographers. In fact, Jim, who is now retired, was Paul's thesis advisor. Jim wrote the article, "Letters on a hill," about Western towns' propensity to put their initials on nearby mountains. The article first appeared in *Landscape* magazine, and was later picked up by *Harper's* and *High Country News*.

Headed for climbing at Red Rocks, Nev., Lynne Wolfe, of Lander, Wyo., passed through Paonia. When she spotted our crew of envelope stuffers in the *HCN* office she said, "I remember doing that in Lander in 1981," but didn't stay to stuff a few for nostalgia's sake.

Melissa Crabtree and M.J. Walker visited *HCN* upon their arrival in Paonia to sing at the Earth Day celebration in Paonia's town park. As often happens to visitors here, they stayed longer than anticipated, doing a live radio show at KVNf public radio and finding lots of people in town to play music with them.

Allen O'Bannon, from Lander, Wyo., also stopped in to visit *HCN* on his way down to Utah; he, too, has not left Paonia. On a similar migration path, Tom Hafnor and Jesse Wilmes came by on their way down from Wyoming to Utah. They did make it out of town.

Celebrations

Rebecca Hunt and Marcia Goldstein stopped in to tell us that in 1993, Colorado celebrates the centennial of women's suffrage in the state. To prepare for the event, a group called the Colorado Committee for Women's History wants a broad-based coalition of interested people to get involved. You can call Hunt at 303/759-9046 or Goldstein at 303/377-6315.

Another celebration, by the way, is closer at hand. It's the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Sierra Club this May. Congratulations!

— Ed Marston and Betsy Marston
for the staff



Farley Sheldon and Nanuq, who has been featured on television and in newspapers as the "dogter" of Amory and Hunter Lovins

Cindy Wehling

WESTERN ROUNDUP

This year, the West gets wetter as you head south. In the north, Idaho, Oregon, eastern Washington, Montana and parts of Wyoming are deep in a serious, long-running drought. In the south, Arizona and New Mexico are wet.

And in the center, Colorado and Utah are so-so, a bit below normal. The exception is Nevada, the Great Basin state, which is ready to blow away.

As a result of the spotty year — the warmest on record — you can find a little of everything in the West. In Arizona, wildflowers are the best ever and reservoirs are almost overflowing. In Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park, usually snow-blocked roads are open and grizzlies have emerged early from their dens in search of food.

The reason is the warm current off the coast of South America called El Niño. It caused a strong high-pressure zone of clear, dry weather to sit out the winter over southern British Columbia and Montana. The high pressure forced the jet stream to split, carrying storms south to Mexico, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, and north to southeast Alaska and western Canada.

UTAH. Utah's weather and water supplies typify the split: Snowpacks improve dramatically as you go south into red rock country. Snowpacks in the La Sal and Blue mountains were over 110 percent of average, and Zion National Park had 279 percent of average precipitation by the end of March. But northern Utah's snowpacks were some of the lowest on record.

Forecasts for March through July stream flows — snow available to melt and fill the streams — are "astronomically low" in northern Utah, said Randy Julander, hydrologist with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Salt Lake City.

El Niño still hadn't released its grip in March, usually one of the wettest months in the West. Salt Lake City reported the warmest March on record, while National Weather Service meteorologist William Alder described March in southern Utah as more typical of a tropical rain forest than a desert.

ARIZONA. The southern track of storms was a boon to Arizona. The state's reservoirs are crammed so full they won't hold more water, according to Ron Jones, snow survey specialist with the SCS in Phoenix. Arizona has had "a great year," he said, and snow hangs on in the mountains yet to melt. Because of the heavy precipitation and large snowpacks, state and federal officials have been on flood alert, especially at a construction site on the aging Roosevelt Dam above the Verde Valley.

The southern end of Arizona, in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, has had an exceptionally wet winter. Starting in December, the rainfall was above average; by January it was almost double the normal rate, and February and March were five times the average, said Caroline Wilson, an interpreter at Organ Pipe.

NEW MEXICO. New Mexico is also in good shape, with average to well-above-average snowpacks. The snowpack in the southwest part of the state, at around 200 percent of average, equals the second highest level on record, said Ken Martin, of the SCS in Albuquerque. He said New Mexico benefitted from southern California storms and El Niño. Unlike states to the north, a major storm in early March increased the state's snowpack.

NEVADA. But on the other side of Arizona, Nevada is "probably in the worst condition in terms of water availability" said Michael Hudlow, hydrologist for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. The storms out of California that hit southern Nevada did nothing for the state's water supply. Las Vegas got more rain in March than it usually gets in a year, but there is no storage in that part of the state, said Loren Spencer, state conservation engineer for the SCS in Reno.

This is the "worst year of the six-year drought," said Spencer. "Some of the farmers and ranchers are going to be drying up and blowing away." Farmers using the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District water will get only 35 percent of their normal allotment and some suburban wells in Reno housing developments are drying

wetlands also helps plants establish roots. Thus, the wet years following a drought often have very high productivity. Malheur's dry spell is "not out of the ordinary" and is "not a disaster" said Ivey. "There is no normal in this part of the country."

IDAHO. In Idaho, 1992 may also be the state's driest year in over a decade. Water supplies in the state are patchy, says Ron Abramovich, snow survey hydrologist with the SCS in Boise. Central Idaho is hardest hit, and stream runoff for central and southern Idaho has fallen to less than half of average. Snowpack measurements on April 1 were some of the lowest on record throughout the state. The result will be some of the lowest water availability for water users on record, said Abramovich.

West's drought logs a sixth year in places

up, reports the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.

Lakes, wetlands and wildlife refuges are also hit hard by the continuing drought. Washoe Lake, which is south of Reno and is shallow even in a good year, dried up last summer for only the fourth time in the 20th century. It is expected to dry up again this summer. Lake Tahoe, the main reservoir for northern Nevada, hit a 100-year low this spring, according to Spencer.

OREGON. Oregon also "doesn't have any water right now" said Stan Fox with the SCS in Portland. "We're on our hands and knees begging for some." Snowpacks are 20 percent of normal, and March was hot and dry with near-record high temperatures. The snow is melting a month early, and snowline, usually at 3,000 feet this time of year, is up at 5,000 feet now, according to Fox. The reservoirs won't come close to filling and what water there is will be used up by July, Fox said.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, in eastern Oregon, had the warmest winter since the refuge started recording data in 1939, said Rick Vetter, assistant wildlife biologist. From December on, temperatures never fell below zero and the three lakes in the refuge were frozen for only a month instead of the usual two and a half. Two of the three water sources that feed the closed basin refuge are flowing at historic lows. The third, Silver Creek, is not running at all.

The implications of the six years of drought for wildlife habitat are mixed. One result is that part of the refuge that is usually irrigated, as well as the private wetlands, will be unavailable to birds. That crowds the birds onto the refuge's remaining wetlands. With concentration comes greater competition for food and increased predation, and production of young by marsh nesting birds could be half that of normal, said Gary Ivey, wildlife biologist.

On the other hand, Ivey said, the drought is part of the "normal" drought-flood pattern typical of the area, in the northern part of the Great Basin. The dry periods help free nutrients that are otherwise trapped on lake bottoms. Drying the

WASHINGTON Washington is in better shape but still hopes for more rain, according to Bill Weller, water supply specialist for the SCS in Spokane. Snowpack levels in the North Cascades are close to normal, but farther south water supplies are as low as in Oregon. On April 1, when snowpacks should be at their peak, they were at 55 percent of average statewide. Snowpacks had been 81 percent of normal at the beginning of March, but March was unusually warm, with no precipitation, and snowpacks began to melt a month early, Weller said. However, because the reservoir storage around the state is near normal, Washington is in a better position than neighboring states.

MONTANA. Montana, especially the central part of the state, is suffering from "the winter that never was," said Jerry Beard, snow survey specialist with the SCS in Bozeman. Snowpacks are well below average across the state, with the central river basins at near-record lows. Montana shared the same weather pattern as the other northern states: Lots of snow in October and November, followed by four months of exceptionally high temperatures and low precipitation.

Winter temperatures were 11 degrees warmer than usual in Glasgow, in eastern Montana, and Great Falls had the warmest December-through-March period in 100 years. The change from the usual below-

zero temperatures may have been a relief to some, but the warmer weather spells disaster for ranchers and farmers.

Ski resorts such as Big Mountain closed earlier than scheduled, grizzly bears are emerging from their dens early, and fires are already starting as Montana braces for a sixth summer of drought.

WYOMING. Wyoming also has an "extremely low snowpack with a very warm spring," said John Kremer of the Soil Conservation Service. Spring in Jackson Hole is six weeks ahead of schedule, reports the *Jackson Hole News*, and a five-kilometer run was substituted for the usual cross-country skiing leg of Jackson's annual Pole Paddle race. More important is the looming shortage of irrigation water and the high chance of forest fires this summer, said Kremer.

March dumped snow on Wyoming, which brought the statewide snowpacks to 71 to 82 percent of normal, and reservoir capacity around the state is close to normal. The March storms and a lack of spring winds have helped the Wind River Basin farmers: "Ground moisture is in good shape now here," said Fran Fox, a Crowheart area irrigator. Nonetheless, farmers and ranchers are faced with a season of conserving, said Terry Gonzales, snow survey specialist in the Casper SCS office.

Mammoth, at the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park and at its lowest elevation, had its driest year of the six-year drought this year. The winter's trend for the northern Rockies is expressed in the precipitation percentages for Mammoth: 103 percent of average in October, 101 percent in November, 96 percent in December. Then came the collapse: 11 percent, 23 percent and 26 percent for January, February and March respectively. For Yellowstone as a whole, the snowpack is 78 percent of normal. But hope for more moisture exists, said Marsha Karle, assistant public affairs officer, since Yellowstone receives much of its precipitation from April to July.

COLORADO. Colorado is in the enviable position of being "average." Statewide, snowpacks are 93 percent of normal, with southern Colorado in a little better shape than the north, according to Benjamin Adams, snow-survey specialist for the SCS in Lakewood. Wet March snowstorms that rolled across southern and central Colorado missed the northern basins. Statewide, the reservoir storage was at 109 percent of average on April 1.

The El Niño winter of 1992 goes down in history as the warmest since 1895. The National Weather Service is reluctant to predict what the rest of the spring has in store for the West, but we leave April with the northern part of the West praying for rain.

— Caroline Byrd, HCN intern

A useful way to view water in the West is to look at river basins. Every spring, the Soil Conservation Service measures the snowpack that feeds the rivers at sites throughout each basin. The average is based on records from 1961. As of April 2, snowpack in some major basins was at the following percent of average accumulated precipitations:

Green River, Utah — 92
Upper Colorado River, Colo. — 86
Upper Rio Grande River, Colo. — 89
South Platte River, Colo. — 91
Lower Yellowstone River, Mont. — 85
Missouri River, Mont. — 71

Salmon River, Idaho — 71
Snake River above
Palisades Dam, Idaho — 58
Yakima River, Wash. — 86
Lower Columbia River, Ore. — 79.

— C.B.

HOTLINE

Ten rivers in trouble

The conservation group American Rivers unveiled its list of the 10 most endangered rivers of 1992. Topping the list is the Columbia and Snake river system, where salmon have almost disappeared despite fish ladders, turbine screens, hatcheries and trucking fish around the dams (HCN, 3/9/92). Ranking fifth is the American River in California, where the Army Corps of Engineers has proposed a 40-story flood control dam on the mainstem of the river. The proposed dam would flood at least 34 miles of primitive wildlife habitat and destroy scenic and recreational values, says American Rivers. Ranking sixth is the section of the Colorado River that flows through Grand Canyon. Despite interim water-flow regulations set by Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan last August (HCN, 8/26/91), the Washington, D.C.-based American Rivers said only permanent protection can help the river corridor. In 10th place is the Blackfoot River of Montana, known as an outstanding trout stream and popularized in the book *A River Runs Through It*. It is threatened by timber harvesting, grazing, poor agricultural practices, water diversions, mining and over-fishing. Fifteen other threatened rivers were noted; in the West they include the Animas and Gunnison rivers in Colorado, Clavey River in California, Elwha River in Washington, the Illinois and Klamath rivers in Oregon, Rio Conchos River in Texas and Mexico, Verde River in Arizona, and the Virgin River as it flows through Utah, Arizona and Nevada. For more information, contact American Rivers, 801 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20003 (202/547-6900).



Diana Haker

We really like bears

People like bears a lot more than is realized, says Yale biologist Stephen Kellert. In one of Kellert's studies, a significant majority of Americans said they were willing to set aside millions of acres of national forest land — despite the possible loss of jobs and building materials — to protect grizzly bear habitat. Bears generally found strongest support from the college-educated, women and the young, he added, and are least popular with rural people who owned land or whose living depended on forest products. At an international conference in Missoula, Mont., last month, Kellert criticized federal and state agencies for spending millions of dollars on bear management but doing little to measure public opinion. "It would be ironic, given the current plight of the bear, if ignoring public attitudes unwittingly contributed to the bear's decline and precarious future," he said. Through his research, Kellert says he found that most North Americans view bears as "especially intelligent, culturally significant, highly appealing and — relatively speaking — similar to people."

Idaho river basin denied protection

BOISE, Idaho — To many, the Henry's Fork of the Snake River in eastern Idaho is known as a fly-fishing mecca. The placid, meandering stream attracts anglers from throughout the world to sample its legendary green drake hatches and scintillating setting — the mighty Teton Range looms in the background and a rich variety of wildlife abounds.

So when the state Water Resources Board proposed a ban on hydroelectric development for 146 miles of streams in the Henry's Fork Basin, few expected it would face rough sledding in the 1992 Idaho Legislature. But the Henry's Fork plan proved to be the environmental donnybrook of the legislative session. In the end, farm and hydropower interests banded together in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives to kill the board's plan 44-40.

The plan had easily cleared the Senate, and survived an arch-conservative House committee by a single vote. But in the final showdown, the Henry's Fork plan went down.

It was a major victory for the Idaho Farm Bureau, the irrigation lobby and hydropower developers, who had fought unsuccessfully to amend the plan. It was a tough defeat for the Henry's Fork Foundation and Idaho Rivers United.

"I guess we should consider it a bitter victory because now the people of eastern Idaho realize how out of touch their legislators are with their constituents," said Wendy Wilson, executive director of Idaho Rivers United.

Wilson said her group, the Henry's Fork Foundation and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition will support federal wild and scenic protection for the basin's high-quality waters, such as Birch Creek, Falls River and Teton River. "There's such a national constituency for the Henry's Fork. If the state won't protect it, the feds will," she said.

Maybe so, but Republican lawmakers said the pro-development legislature is wary of moving too fast to protect the

state's natural resources.

"It wasn't that we weren't concerned about the environment, but there's a feeling that maybe we've gone too far, too fast," said Republican Rep. Golden Linford, a Rexburg potato farmer, who led efforts to amend the plan. "I think this was a backlash against the strong environmental movement that's taking place."

Linford and others scrambled in the final days of the session to pass a bill that gives interim state protection to most of the 146 miles of streams proposed for permanent protection in the water board's plan. Senate Republicans who supported the original plan as well as Democrats tried to kill the bill, but Senate President Pro Tem Mike Crapo of Idaho Falls pushed it through by a 21-19 vote.

A Republican candidate for Congress, Crapo urged the Senate to give the water board another chance to write a more balanced plan. But Sen. Laird Noh, who had supported the original plan, called the legislation "interim re-election protection for those who didn't vote for the Henry's Fork plan in the first place."

Even though that bill passed, a number of eastern Idaho lawmakers will face challengers in the primary or general election from citizens who supported the water board's plan for the Henry's Fork Basin. If Crapo wins the Republican primary, he will likely face Democratic State Auditor J.D. Williams for the congressional seat vacated by Democrat Richard Stallings. As the water board's lead lobbyist on the Henry's Fork plan, Williams has already committed on the issue; he plans to make it a key point of debate in the campaign.

The Henry's Fork plan was intended to provide state protection for a variety of high-quality streams while protecting existing uses, such as irrigation. Last year, lawmakers passed a similar plan for about 140 miles of the Payette River, a nationally known whitewater stream.

Friends of the Payette, a grass-roots group, joined with whitewater boaters, recreation-minded businesses, landowners and environmentalists throughout the state to overwhelm lawmakers with letters and phone calls in support.

Wilson used the same technique for the Henry's Fork this year, but ran into stiff opposition from eastern Idaho lawmakers in the House. Nearly all are farmers or ranchers who have close ties with hydro developers and irrigation districts that oppose new layers of protection for the basin.

It did not seem to matter that a majority of the 114 people who testified in the board's five public hearings supported the plan, or that a majority of the 249 people who submitted written testimony supported the plan.

"I was very, very impressed with how eastern Idaho citizens rallied for this cause," Wilson said. "The problem was, it fell on deaf ears."

However, eastern Idaho lawmakers also were heavily lobbied by the power structure of the "Upper Valley," as the area is known. Fremont County commissioners opposed the plan because they seek to build a hydro project above Mesa Falls on the Henry's Fork, even though the federal dam-ban prohibits it. Commissioners touted the project as a way to expand their tax base. "You can't build a tax base on tourism," said former commissioner James Siddoway.

Language in the plan encouraging the transfer of vested water rights to in-stream flows to improve the blue-ribbon trout fishery also struck a raw nerve among farmers and irrigators. As a result, Water District No. 1 — the most powerful irrigation conglomerate in the state — opposed the plan, calling it a "lock up." So did the Idaho Farm Bureau and the Idaho Water Users Association, two powerful lobbies at the capitol.

— Stephen Stuebner

The writer is a reporter in Boise, Idaho.

HOTLINE

The jury is out on whether bison are culprits

The debate continues over whether bison migrating out of Yellowstone National Park risk spreading brucellosis to cattle in Montana. After testing 213 of the 268 bison killed in Montana since June 1991, scientists were surprised to discover that only 12 percent were infected with the disease, which causes cows to abort their calves. Past tests on killed bison have produced figures hovering near 50 percent (HCN, 4/8/91), and Montana livestock officials have used those figures to justify killing bison leaving the park. Stu Coleman, chief of resource management at the park, said, "From the preliminary information it appears that biologically there may be a very low risk of brucellosis transmission." Montana Department of Livestock veterinarian Owen James said the tests were not conclusive. "We're in the same boat we were in a year ago," he told AP. Two days after disclosing the 12 percent figure, the first aborted bison fetus was found in Yellowstone. Since aborted fetal material or contaminated afterbirth is the primary way that brucellosis is spread, the discovery has added more fuel to the debate. Test results are due in May.

Site is not holy, says Vatican

The Vatican, one of the University of Arizona's partners planning to build an observatory on Mt. Graham, recently announced that the mountain has no religious significance to Native Americans.

In an eight-page statement, Father George Coyne, S.J., the Vatican's observatory director, denied San Carlos Apache elders' claim that Mt. Graham is an ancient sacred site and a place of current spiritual practice. Citing "lack of documentation and material evidence," Father Coyne said that Emerald Peak, where telescope construction is already under way, lacks religious legitimacy.

"This land is a gift from God to be used with reason and to be respected," he said.

Anthropologist Elizabeth Brandt, who has studied Arizona's sacred sites for 20 years, disagreed. "I've never seen so much evidence detailing a sacred site. No competent scholar could have missed these materials," she told *The Circle*, a Native American newspaper.

Ernest Victor, a member of the San Carlos Apache council, told *The Navajo-Hopi Observer*, "Apaches

used these mountains before Catholics were here ... it is as if they are saying that theirs is the only religious group."

Apache elders maintain that the project has already destroyed one religious site, and that further development will destroy both a sacred heritage and medicinal herbs that grow nowhere else.

Also at issue are habitat for the endangered Mt. Graham red squirrel and the legality of the project's exemption from federal environmental and cultural protection laws (HCN, 9/9/91).

After four original partners dropped out, the university's remaining partners are Germany's Max Planck Institute for Radioastronomy, Italy's Arcetri Observatory, and the Vatican. Proponents of the \$200 million project say the seven-telescope observatory, which may be completed by the end of the decade, will produce valuable scientific data, and is compatible with both the endangered squirrel and religious ceremonies.

— Rita Clagett,
HCN intern

Navajo Nation challenges proposed asbestos dump

NAGEEZI, N.M. — A 160-acre asbestos waste dump planned for this small reservation community in northwestern New Mexico has created fear, anger and an on-going political battle that centers on health risks to Navajo people and protection of sacred land.

Navajo people have accused Insulation Contractors Unlimited of Farmington, N.M., of environmental racism for planning to build a waste dump in their community.

The issue has galvanized grass-roots activists, traditional Navajo medicine men, environmentalists, political leaders and the legal experts of the Navajo Nation in a "paper war" that hinges on complex regulations determined by the New Mexico courts and environment department.

They say owner Roy B. Fourr, also the chair of the local Republican party, has targeted for his dump site a rural Navajo-speaking community that cannot effectively fight back because of a lack of education and political clout.

The turmoil began last summer when ICU applied for a permit from the New Mexico Department of the Environment to construct an asbestos waste landfill on private land 35 miles south of Farmington.

The 160-acre parcel, leased to ICU by Donald C. and Archie Lou Adams of Farmington, is in a "checkerboard area" near a mix of tribal, federal and state lands, including plots owned by individual Navajo families.

The permit, approved in late February, will allow ICU to bury up to 50,000 cubic yards of waste annually for 25 years in 200-foot-long trenches 50 feet deep and 20 feet wide. The asbestos, arriving from across the country, will be buried in plastic bags and the trenches will be covered by a minimum of three feet of dirt, according to company plans.

From the beginning, Navajo Nation President Peterson Zah and local residents voiced opposition to the plan, citing the desecration of sacred sites and the known cancer risks associated with asbestos.

Huerfano Mountain, one of the most sacred mountains to Navajo people, lies within four miles of the proposed dump. From Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle, as the mountain is known to Navajos, sprang forth the tribe's earliest ancestors, according to the Dine creation story.

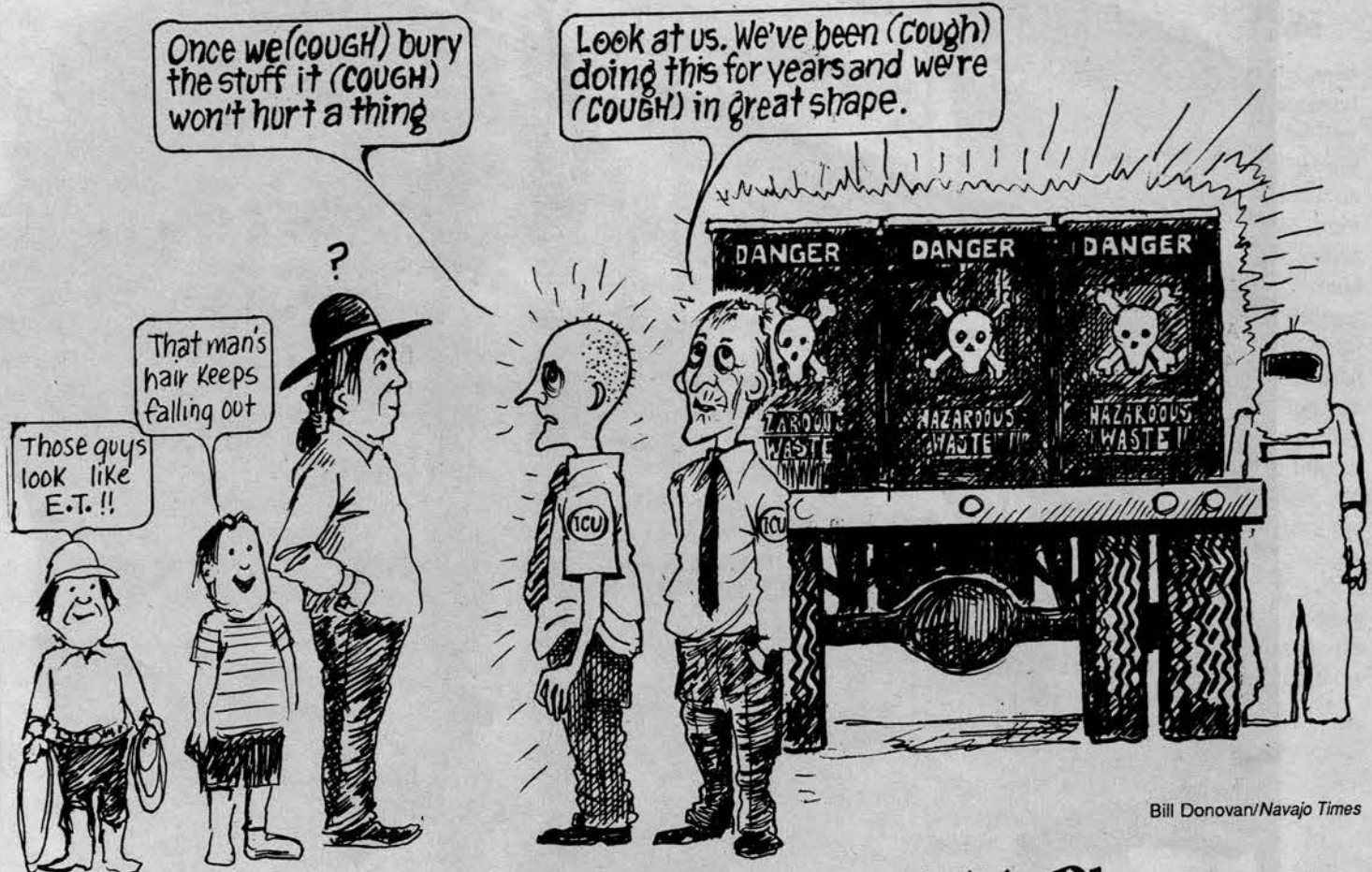
"Placing an asbestos disposal site right next to Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle would be an affront to Navajo tradition and religion," President Zah said. "That's like burying hazardous waste in the front lawn of a local church."

The tribe says it is also outraged by ICU's plans to fence off burial sites of their grandparents on what is now private land owned by the company and surround the graves with asbestos waste.

Johnny Russell Jr., whose great-grandmother is buried there, said, "ICU is trying to destroy our people. They should just dump it in their own backyards."

Traditional elders from the area took their arguments to state Gov. Bruce King and environment secretary Judith Espinosa in Santa Fe last fall. For some of the elders — many of whom only speak Navajo — it was the first time they had ever seen the capitol.

"We told Governor King and Secretary Espinosa that environment, health and religion are not isolated issues for Navajo people," said Lori Goodman, a spokeswoman for Dine Citizens Against Ruining our Environment. "They are all



Proposed Asbestos Disposal Site Plan

meshed together in our culture.

"Our land is all we have, and our beliefs and way of life depend on the land," she said.

Shawn Adams, ICU's director of environment — and son of the landowners — said he believes the dump site is not close enough to interfere with cultural practices.

"The landfill is four miles away from Huerfano Mountain. I think that zone is more than adequate for them to practice their religion," Adams said.

He also maintained that there is no significant health risk to Navajo people.

"They don't understand asbestos — it can't hurt anybody when it's in the ground," Adams said. "If it is properly disposed of, it's not dangerous or hazardous."

But Navajo Environmental Protection Administration officials and toxics experts who have studied asbestos-related diseases say that the site could pose dangers to nearby residents.

"It is a certainty that as time passes, wind and rain will erode the plastic in the trenches and deadly asbestos will be released into the local environment," said Peter Montague, director of the Environmental Research Foundation in Washington, D.C. "It will blow around and contaminate people, wildlife and domestic animals."

Montague said people who live near asbestos sites run the risk of contracting asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma, a cancer of the membrane that surrounds the lungs and internal organs.

ICU has been cited in the past for numerous violations in handling and storing asbestos at its Farmington warehouse and at an El Paso Natural Gas Co. work site in Blanco, N.M.

According to state documents, ICU left unprotected asbestos on the ground and failed to adequately dampen it to prevent it from blowing into the air, among other violations.

Meanwhile, the Navajo Nation continues to fight the construction of the dump.

Last month, President Zah announced a plan to block the landfill through political and legal battles with the New Mexico Environmental Department.

Zah said he has asked Gov. King to intervene in the matter to stop construction of the landfill.

"We have respect for (non-Navajo) sacred sites and we are asking for the same respect," he said.

John McKean, King's press secretary, said last week that, while the governor is opposed to the asbestos dump, he has not found a legal foundation for denying the permit. King, however, has asked the Navajo Attorney General's Office for help in finding grounds to veto the permit.

Zah said the Navajo Nation's legal counsel has also filed an appeal with the New Mexico Court of Appeals to reconsider the environment department's approval of the operation.

If the legal challenges fail, ICU will receive a five-year permit as soon as it meets conditions required by the state to complete additional archaeological studies, identify more burial sites and submit plans for emergency response and rodent control.

Company officials say they will meet the conditions within 30-60 days and begin construction as soon as possible.

As a last resort, the Navajo Nation is

considering blocking access to the site.

Acting state Deputy Attorney General Charleen Greer said there is no evidence that the state ever obtained a legal right of way for what is known as State Route 7575, a dirt road maintained by the county.

The state so far has been unable to produce any documents in court proving it was granted legal right of way. Meanwhile, other avenues to block the company are being attempted elsewhere. Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., has proposed an amendment to a bill in Congress. The measure would prohibit any asbestos waste from being stored within 17 miles of Sacred Huerfano Mountain.

So far, the company remains unfazed. Shortly after receiving a conditional permit, ICU moved a trailer onto the site and began site preparations. The dump site is now fenced off with signs that read "WARNING! No Trespassing — Private Property."

— Valerie Taliman

Valerie Taliman, a Navajo, writes on Native American issues from Reno, Nevada.

HOTLINE

Suit delays water project

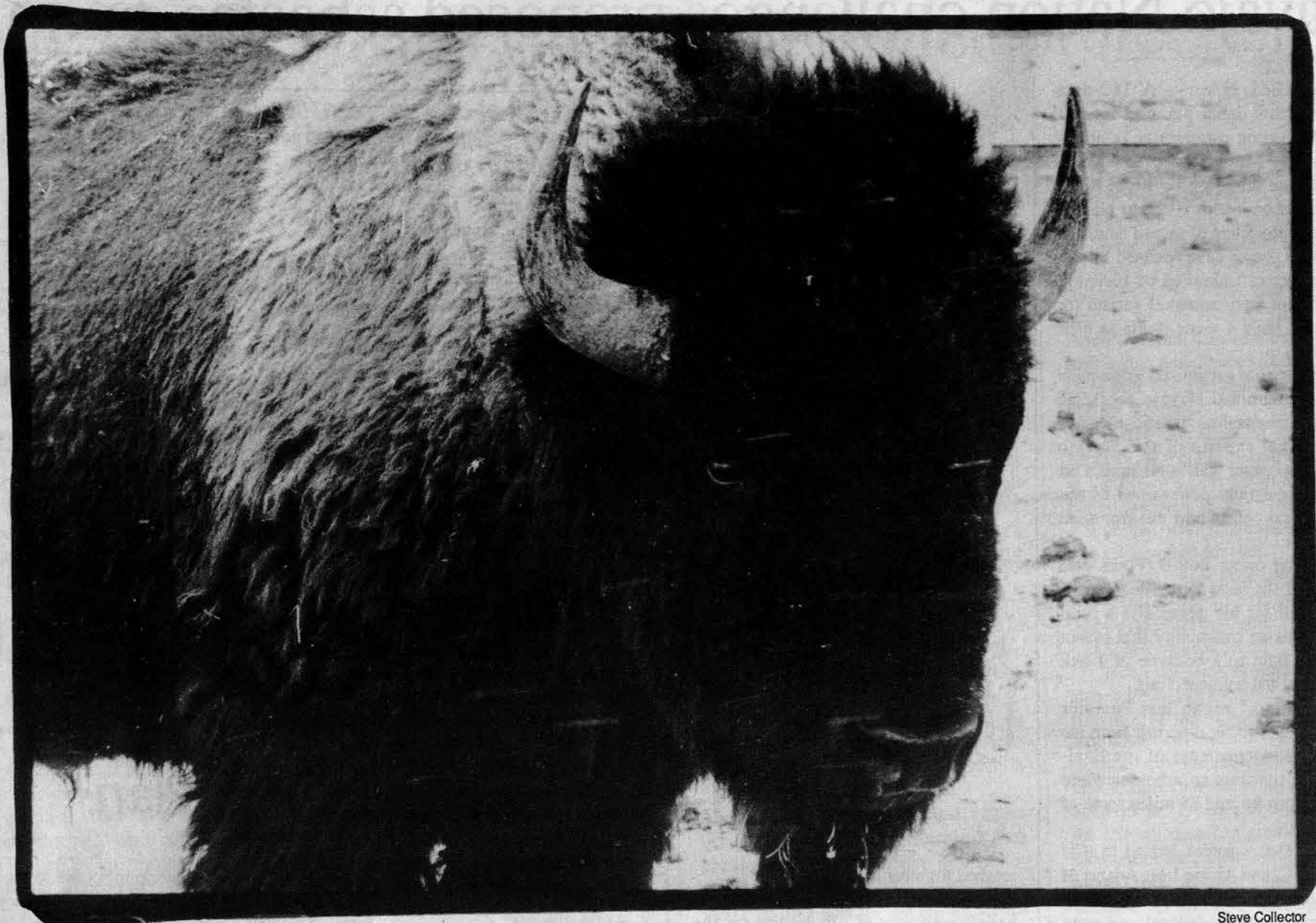
In a victory for environmental groups, the Bureau of Reclamation announced in April that it would re-study the impacts of the proposed Animas-La Plata water project in southwestern Colorado. The \$640 million dollar project would be the most expensive water project in Colorado history. If built as planned, the network of dams and canals would irrigate 80,000 acres of farms and supply water to the Southern Utes, the Ute Mountain Utes and the Navajo tribes. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund filed suit in February to force the bureau to supplement its earlier studies with new looks at endangered fish, water quality, wetlands and the area's growing rafting industry, which is dependent on the Ani-

mas River. The federal agency said it would take all the steps demanded by the five environmental groups represented in the suit. The new studies could result in a modified project if new cost-to-benefit figures emerge. "Everyone admits that Animas-La Plata is an economic white elephant," said attorney Lori Potter. "Now the bureau has to see if it can justify any version of the project without cooking the books."

BARBS

Next, boeuf-burgers.

The National Cattlemen's Association suggests that members create positive images by changing their jargon. Recommended substitutions are growth "promotants" for hormones, "livestock market" for stockyard, "go to market" for slaughter, and "neuter" for castrate, says *EcoNews* in California.



Steve Collector

Indians hope buffalo can revive tribes' fortunes

A hundred years after the West's wild buffalo herds were wiped out, a coalition of Indian tribes is attempting to bring the great animal back to Indian lands.

Early last year, a group of 19 tribes and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, calling themselves the Native American Inter-Tribal Buffalo Cooperative, asked Congress for \$3.9 million to help fund a project to raise buffalo herds on reservations. The number of interested tribes has since risen to as many as 30 nationally.

This fall, Congress appropriated \$400,000 in seed money to the cooperative. "(That's) enough to start moving," said Mark Heckert of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, the Colorado-based, non-profit organization responsible for disbursing the start-up money. Heckert hopes to get matching funds from private and corporate donors that will allow the tribes to build self-sufficient herds within three years.

"We'll probably need about \$300,000 per tribe over a three-year period to get the tribes going," says Heckert.

Currently, the combined number of buffalo owned by members of the cooperative is 1,500 head. Heckert aims to increase that to 20,000.

In addition to funds, the buffalo cooperative plans to pool information on everything from herd management to marketing. Heckert says that one of the cooperative's first tasks is to set up a few model herds, both to provide training and to show Congress and other funding sources that buffalo are a vital economic and cultural asset.

A potential model exists in Fort Hall, Idaho, where the Shoshone-Bannock tribes have maintained a 300-head herd since 1964. Marvin Osbourne, who co-manages the herd, says that his program offers everything that buffalo need: 2,300 acres of land with good grass and "plenty of fresh, clean water." The Shoshone-Bannock sell buffalo meat as well as traditional art created from buffalo parts, such as hand-painted buffalo skulls, at a

trading post on their reservation. Each month they slaughter three buffalos and sell the meat to a local restaurant and grocery store.

Buffalo meat is high in protein, low in cholesterol and can be raised without chemicals, says Osbourne. Already, non-Indian producers sell about 10,000 head a year to health-conscious consumers.

**The Lakota sing
to release the
buffalo's soul to the
spirit world so the
animal can be
reborn and
the cycle of life
completed.**

What the Shoshone and other tribes lack, says Osbourne, is access to the growing market. He says Indians need to learn how to compete with large, non-Indian producers, like cable television mogul Ted Turner, who has a "huge ranch and a big name."

The cooperative is developing a market plan to sell buffalo products at a fair market value. It wants to set up shared slaughter operations, develop tribal cottage industries such as the Shoshone-Bannock trading complex and establish joint ventures with private business. "We want tribes to benefit, not the middlemen," says Heckert. A major meat-packing corporation has expressed interest in a joint venture with the cooperative, he says.

Providing valuable advice to the cooperative is Duane Lammers, part-owner of the Triple 7 Ranch in South Dakota, who manages a herd of 1,500 buffalo. Lammers, who has worked with buffalo since 1977, started out ranching buffalo and cattle simultaneously but has since dropped cattle.

"Buffalo have a better return per acre than cattle," he says. "They need little or no hay, require no help calving and have reproductive and production rates equal to those of cattle."

This was once common knowledge to Native Americans. Before white settlers reshaped the landscape of America's grasslands, almost every facet of Indian life depended on the buffalo.

"Buffalo were our economic base at one time. They provided everything: clothing, shelter, meat," says Fred Dubray, a representative of the Cheyenne River Sioux, who have raised buffalo for 25 years on their reservation in Eagle Butte, S.D. "We understand we can't turn the clock back, but the buffalo can provide the same things it did with a modern twist."

Dubray says that, in addition to the economic benefits of bison, the initiative will renew cultural ties. "The importance for cultural revival is the most significant part of the program," says Dubray. "The buffalo is a symbol of strength and unity. Keep them strong and they keep our people strong."

Buffalo parts are used in ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, and the animal plays a major role in the Sioux creation story, which tells of a white buffalo calf that roamed the earth before humans. The white buffalo is said to have brought the sacred pipe to the Lakota people.

When the Lakota kill a buffalo, they believe the animal is giving them a gift and, because it gives of itself so generously, every part of it is meaningful for ceremony and food. When the buffalo is slaughtered in the traditional manner, the Lakota sing to release the buffalo's soul to the spirit world so the animal can be

reborn and the cycle of life completed.

Ron Goodman, a professor at Sinte Glesia College in Mission, S.D., says that until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed by Congress in 1978, Indians could be jailed for performing traditional religious ceremonies. "We are in the process of healing spiritual wounds," he said. "The return of buffalo is a crucial part of that process."

Buffalo can also repair some of the damage done to the prairielands when the buffalo disappeared in the 1880s, says Goodman. "Buffalo and prairie are the left and right hand of one being," he says. "They participate in each other's existence."

Lammers agrees. He notes that buffalo have a more positive impact on grasslands than cattle and are able to coexist with wildlife. "Bison have evolved with deer and antelope," he says. "(They) eat grasses and leave the forbs and shrubs for deer and antelope."

Because they are more mobile than cattle, buffalo also tend to be less damaging to riparian systems. While patrolling his herd by helicopter in winter, Lammers has observed his neighbor's cattle leaving tracks in the snow around one water source. In the next pasture over, buffalo tracks cover the entire pasture.

Heckert says that because buffalo evolved on the plains, they are well-suited to harsh winters. Their thermal neutral zone, the lowest temperature at which they do not expend energy to keep warm, is 50 degrees below zero, close to that of polar bears. They can withstand the two- to three-day blizzards that hit the prairies and are able to find food beneath deep snow by using their horns.

Mark Heckert, technical services director of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Association, can be reached at 750 Burbank St., Broomfield, CO 80020 (303/466-1725).

— Amy Onderdonk

The writer, a former HCN intern, lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Lujan forces another management transfer

Galen Buterbaugh, Rocky Mountain director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may be the latest pawn in the Interior Department's response to a congressional investigation.

Buterbaugh, 58, was asked this month by the Department of Interior to move to the Southwest director's post in Albuquerque. The transfer is the latest in a series of musical desks involving senior officials of the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife that some observers charge is politically motivated.

Last summer, Lorraine Mintzmyer, director of the Rocky Mountain region of the park service, was transferred to the smaller mid-Atlantic region. She testified before a congressional subcommittee that the move was punishment for preparing a

document to protect Yellowstone that was criticized by the pro-development Bush administration (HCN, 10/7/91).

Mintzmyer's attorney, Carl Hartmann, says he has no doubt Buterbaugh's transfer was engineered to make such personnel shuffles appear customary.

"(The Interior Department) gave Lorraine a phony explanation when they moved her," says Hartmann. "Now, they are moving the people in Fish and Wildlife to make it look like a policy. They need to have it planned and executed by this summer, when the committee continues its investigation."

Mintzmyer, whose transfer was part of a three-way rotation of senior officials, testified that she was told her move was triggered by a department policy of moving people with more than 10 years experience in one place.

This was also the reason given to the *Rocky Mountain News* last fall by an Interior spokesman. "Secretary (Manuel) Lujan inaugurated a policy of moving senior executives who have been on the job for more than 10 years so a fresh perspective can be brought to bear," Steve Goldstein told the paper.

When Mintzmyer, who has resigned and is now filing a lawsuit against the Interior Department, looked into the 10-year policy, she found out it does not exist. In fact, her attorney points out, the department is expressly forbidden from moving officials based on time triggers.

The Federal Operations Handbook on senior executive policy states: "Agencies should not impose arbitrary time-in-job limits to trigger moves."

Goldstein now recants the Denver paper's quote, saying he was told of the

10-year trigger by officials in the National Park Service, not Lujan.

Following allegations that disgruntled Bush appointees illegally orchestrated the transfers of Mintzmyer and Forest Service regional director John Mumma, the House Subcommittee on Civil Service is investigating the Interior Department and its personnel policies. One source close to the case says the subcommittee, chaired by Gerry Sikorski, D-Minn., has gathered over 10,000 documents since September.

"There is speculation within the agency that the Mintzmyer transfer and (mine) are connected," says Buterbaugh, a 10-year veteran of the region, "and that they used the (10-year trigger) excuse with her at the beginning and are doing it to us to show that they didn't just pick on her."

Fish and Wildlife spokesman Phil Million says no connection exists between the Mintzmyer swap and the one involving Buterbaugh. "The move is unrelated to any personnel action in the Park Service," says Million. Rather, he says, the transfers will serve the agency's "fluid mission and ever-changing needs" by bringing fresh perspectives to the regional offices.

Buterbaugh, who may resign rather than accept the move, says he doesn't understand the department's motives. "What strikes us is the idea that they're doing it for no reason," he says. "Our understanding is that (Fish and Wildlife Service Director John) Turner opposed the move. Both Turner and (assistant secretary of Interior Mike) Hayden recommended to Lujan that they drop the idea, but he wouldn't back down."

Turner fought Lujan on the transfers for two months, reported the *Wyoming Casper Star-Tribune*. Turner reportedly cited Buterbaugh's work-in-progress, such as the agency's wolf reintroduction plan, scheduled for public comment this summer.

Galen Buterbaugh's replacement in the Rocky Mountain region will be Ralph Morganweck, currently an assistant to the director in Washington, D.C. Michael Spear, the regional director in Albuquerque for over a decade, will move to Washington.

— Florence Williams,
HCN staff reporter



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Colorado Historical Society/George Mellen, early 1880s
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Vol. 24, No. 8

HOTLINE

Bill would tax cyanide

A proposed tax on mining companies could help fund environmental restoration. Recently introduced by Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., the bill would institute a 50-cents-per-pound tax on cyanide, used to separate gold from lower-grade ores. His bill, the Cyanide Mining Impact Relief Act of 1992, could generate as much as \$75 million per year to clean up abandoned mines. In Montana alone, clean-up costs are estimated at nearly \$1 billion. The Sierra Club, one of 16 environmental groups supporting the bill, says it is an excellent interim solution to problems of mine waste and adds more impetus to reforming the 1872 Mining Law. The Bush administration, however, joined industry leaders and Western Republicans in opposing the bill, saying it would devastate the U.S. gold mining industry and cost thousands of jobs.

Forest Service nabs resort

Cooking the books helped Vail and Beaver Creek ski areas avoid \$300,000 in fees to the U.S. Forest Service. Federal auditors recently found that Vail Associates, operator of the biggest ski resort in the nation, underpaid its landlord agency between 1985 and 1987. The resort kept two sets of books, auditors found, one for determining payments to the IRS and the other for paying the Forest Service. In calculating user fees, the resort allegedly underreported its percentage of skier revenues from the mountain, which is 90 percent federal land. Resort officials disputed the auditors' conclusions, but lost two administrative appeals and paid up, according to the *Denver Post*. Forest Service staffer John Korb said the company may owe up to \$900,000 "when this is all over." A Vail Associates spokesperson said the company might still sue in an effort to overturn the Forest Service assessment.

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Please send resumé and references by May 29 to Alaska Center for the Environment, 519 W. Eighth Ave, Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907/274-3621). Starting date: early July.



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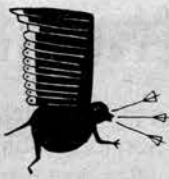
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES

If you fantasize about being Indiana Jones, the Forest Service, in partnership with CEHP, which stands for "conservation, environment and historic preservation," may have just the program for you. Called Passport in Time, it allows the public to join Forest Service archaeologists, historians and cultural-resource specialists in unearthing the past. The program began in the Great Lakes area in 1988, and has expanded so broadly that this year volunteers can select from projects on 54 national forests in 26 states. Projects in the West include surveying Anasazi sites from AD 700-1200 on the north rim of the Grand Canyon, finding the Ute trail in Colorado, rebuilding a 1930s-era fire lookout in Idaho, excavating a 19th-century mining town in Montana, and locating tepee rings in the grasslands of Wyoming. Basic training in archaeological techniques and other necessary background information will be provided, but some projects request people with specific skills such as photography, carpentry, drafting or engineering. Housing and living conditions vary from remote campsites to motels, and each project has its own requested time commitment and physical fitness requirements. For more information, write Passport in Time Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 18364, Washington, D.C. 20036.

TOWNS AND TREES

A free directory produced by the New Mexico-based Forest Trust briefly lists 20 organizations that protect the environment while enhancing local, forest-based economies. In 12 states from Vermont to California, these groups include economic development organizations, environmental groups, tribal agencies and forestry consultants. All attempt to help rural communities make a living from nearby forests while minimizing damage to the environment, and many belong to the Committee for Sustainable Community Forestry, a loose affiliation of non-profit groups and small businesses. To receive a copy of *Forest-Based Rural Development Practitioners*, or to be included in future editions, contact Kit Brewer, Forest Trust, P.O. Box 519, Santa Fe, NM 87504 (505/983-8992).

COLORADO WATER MADE SIMPLE

A handy guide called *Colorado Water*, first published in 1975, now has a fifth edition with new sections on groundwater and surface water, plus recent trends in water management. Published by the League of Women Voters, *Colorado Water* is useful for teachers, water managers, elected officials and citizens interested in how water is moved and used in Colorado. To order, call 303/863-0437. Single copies cost \$5; discounts are available for bulk orders.



HAKER '86

GO WITH THE FLOW

In what seems an unlikely collaboration, Trout Unlimited and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are co-sponsoring a conference on enhancing and maintaining instream flow Oct. 2-3 at Snow King Resort in Jackson Hole, Wyo. The gathering will address many aspects of stream protection, from legal and administrative strategies to discussions of case histories involving the Colorado River, Columbia River and the Central Utah Project. Registration forms for the conference, called "Tools and Strategies for the Enhancement and Maintenance of Instream Flow," will be available in early July. A copy of the proceedings from the 1989 Western Regional Instream Flow Conference is \$10 from Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 1212, Jackson, WY 83001.

BUREAU LOSES BIG BUCKS

The Bureau of Reclamation oversees 238 projects throughout 17 Western states. After determining its maintenance and operation expenses for irrigation and power, the agency bills water users for about 79 percent of its costs. But when the Inspector General's Office recently audited BuRec, it discovered that the agency lost \$6.5 million through carelessness in fiscal year 1990. BuRec underestimated its costs, failed to bill users and didn't charge for delinquent payments, the audit concludes. Unless changes are made, the agency will continue to lose \$3.9 million annually. The Inspector General recommended that



BuRec review its budget and decide to collect user fees aggressively. The audit report, issued in December 1991, is available from the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of the Inspector General. Be forewarned: The 23-page report is marred by bureaucratic jargon. For a copy of *Recovery of Operation and Maintenance Program Expenses, Bureau of Reclamation*, report no. 92-1-269, call the Interior Department's public relations office, 202/208-4356.

CELEBRATE COLORADO AWARDS

Gov. Roy Romer is looking for nominations for "Celebrate Colorado 1991," the state's third annual environmental achievement awards. Individuals or groups are eligible in nine award categories including youth groups (non-school), school groups (elementary through university), individuals, government, businesses, constituent organizations, civic and citizen organizations, media, and special achievement in pollution prevention, a new category this year. Winners will be honored at an awards ceremony in July in Denver; nominations are due by May 15. For an application or more information, write Celebrate Colorado, Governor's Office, 136 State Capitol Building, Denver, CO 80203-1792 (303/866-2471).

NEWS FROM OWENS VALLEY

In the early part of the 20th century, Los Angeles, with the help of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, mugged and nearly murdered the Owens Valley in eastern California. For the past 70 or so years, the Owens Valley has been struggling to regain its sovereignty from Los Angeles. Those who wish to follow this continuing effort may want to read the *Owens Valley Water Reporter*, a four-page monthly tabloid published by the Inyo County Water Department. In a low-key style, the slight newspaper reports on vegetative restoration, the new cooperative management agreement between Inyo County and Los Angeles, efforts to reform the operation of seven Southern California Edison hydroelectric projects, and the like. To see a sample or to be put on the mailing list, contact Heidi Walters, editor, *The Water Reporter*, Inyo County Water Department, 163 May St., Bishop, CA 93514 (619/872-1168).

— Ed Marston

TWO WIN AWARDS

The National Parks and Conservation Association, together with the Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Co., recently gave awards to two outstanding conservationists. Isaac "Ike" Eastvold received the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas award and \$5,000 for his successful efforts to protect a proposed unit of the national park system. Eastvold founded the Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs and spearheaded the establishment of Petroglyph National Monument near Albuquerque in 1990. Christine Shaver, chief of the policy, planning and permit review branch of the Park Service's air quality division, received the Stephen Tyng Mather award for her efforts to secure data that documented air pollution in the Grand Canyon. Nominations for the \$2,500 Mather award, which recognizes Park Service employees who risk their jobs or careers for the practices of good stewardship, come from the ranks of agency employees.

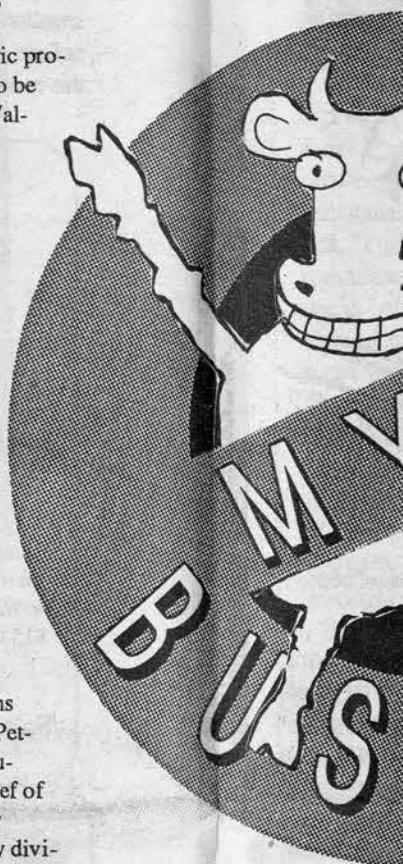
POLITICS ARE US

Western Colorado Congress (WCC), a coalition of environmental and other grassroots groups, says it wants to bring the political system back to the people. That's the focus of the annual meeting May 15-17 in Ouray, Colo., with guests Wade Rathke, organizer for the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now; Dan Cantor, a national organizer for the recently formed New Party; and Chuck Malick, WCC's lobbyist in Denver. Highlights for the weekend include a "town meeting" to involve everyone in a dialog about how to reconnect citizens to the political system, a silent auction, and community action booths and displays. Contact Western Colorado Congress, P.O. Box 472, Montrose, CO, 81402 (303/249-1978).

SUPPORT FOR WOLVES IN IDAHO

A survey conducted by Boise State University's Survey Research Center found that 72.4 percent of 809 randomly selected Idahoans supported bringing back wolves to their state. "The issue of wolves in Idaho is one of the most emotionally intense natural resource controversies facing the state," said John Freemuth, biology professor at Boise State University. The positive response has prompted Boise State researchers to speak out. They want people to focus on policy questions once wolves are restored to Idaho, not just the question of whether wolves should be brought back at all. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's current plan is to restore wolf populations in Idaho by allowing "natural recolonization." For details write John Freemuth, Department of Political Science, Boise State University, 1910 University Ave., Boise, ID 83725.

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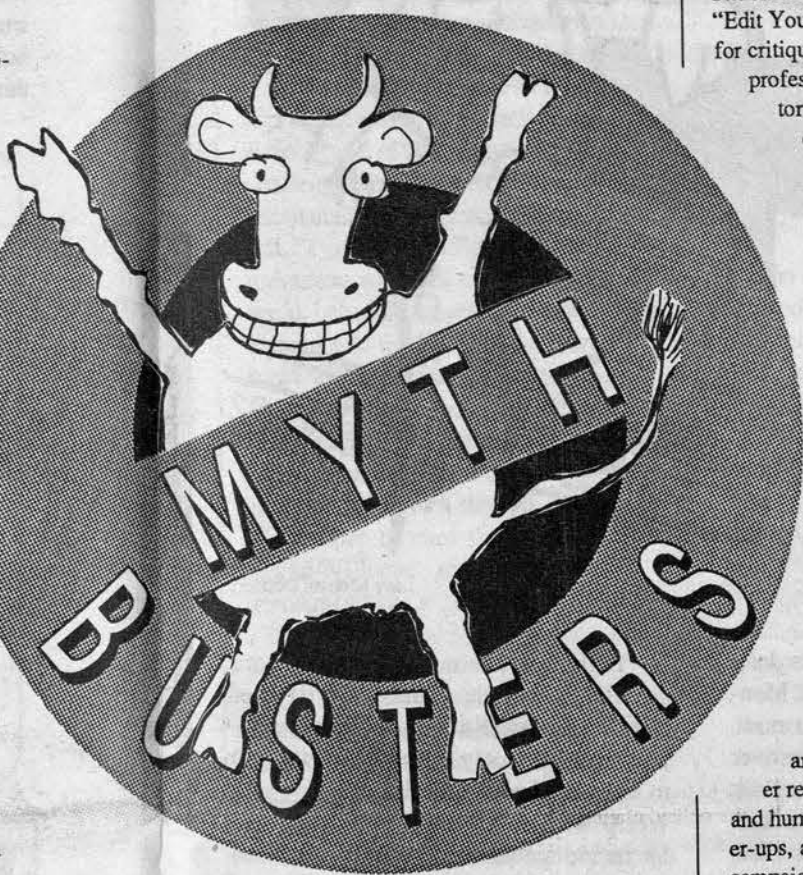
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WHO YA GONNA CALL?

The Montana Stockgrowers Association is sponsoring a public relations project called Mythbusters to brighten the image of the cattle industry. "We're looking for an honor guard — a select group of industry supporters," states the application form. These 20 people will be trained for a one-year stint of speaking to groups, talking to the media and writing letters to the editor. The program is designed to "negate some of the unfounded concepts that ranchers are harming natural



resources," said Joyce Lancey of the Montana Stockgrowers. Jim Almond, a Billings banker who heads the program, says Mythbusters will point out where grazing on public lands has created healthier range and enhanced wildlife populations and aesthetics. The National Cattlemen's Association initiated the Mythbusters program in several states last year; Montana's is funded by a grant from the Montana Beef Council. For more information, contact the Montana Stockgrowers Association, 420 N. California St., Helena, MT 59601 (406/442-3420).

WATER FOR THE GUNNISON RIVER

In western Colorado, three federal agencies and the Colorado Water Conservation Board are planning long-term protection of streamflows through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument and the Gunnison Gorge. The agencies, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, encourage the public to attend scoping meetings to discuss the complex issues involved. Meetings will be held in Gunnison, Montrose and Delta, Colo., on May 19, 20 and 21 respectively. For information on times and specific locations, contact Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction Projects Office, P.O. Box 60340, Grand Junction, CO 81506 (303/248-0618).



WRITERS AT WORK

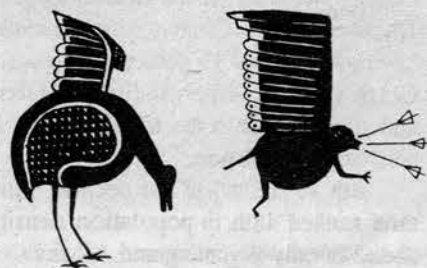
Writers may find useful workshops to attend at the annual Writers at Work conference held in Park City, Utah, June 21-26. The conference offers an opportunity for professional writers and participants to exchange ideas and gain feedback on their writing. This year's instructors include Robert Finch, editor of *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, who will teach a workshop on writing personal essays, and Judith Freeman, author of *The Chinchilla Farm* and *Set for Life*, who will offer a workshop on writing novels. In addition, C. Michael Curtis, senior editor of *The Atlantic*, will give a workshop called "Edit Yourself" to teach students techniques for critiquing their work using the criteria of professional editors. Betsy Marston, editor of *High Country News*, will also conduct a week-long workshop in nonfiction writing, covering topics ranging from investigative reporting to television documentaries on environmental issues. Interested writers can obtain more information by writing to Writers at Work, 2100 Emigration Canyon Rd., Salt Lake City, UT 84108 (801/298-9936).

MINTZMYER TO SPEAK IN WEST YELLOWSTONE

Lorraine Mintzmyer, former National Park Service Rocky Mountain regional director, will be a keynote speaker at the Greater Yellowstone Coalition's annual meeting May 29-30. Mintzmyer recently resigned after being isolated and humiliated by fellow Park Service high-ups, an aide said (*HCN*, 4/20/92). The campaign against her stemmed from her defense of the environmentally oriented Yellowstone "vision" document against administration and development disapproval (*HCN*, 10/7/91). J.D. Williams, Idaho state auditor, also will speak at the conference, called "Doing it Right in Greater Yellowstone." Panel discussions will cover issues such as sustainable development, the state of Yellowstone's grizzly bears and protecting the geothermal wonders of the park. Afternoons include natural history field trips and workshops. For more information, contact the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, P.O. Box 1874, Bozeman, MT 59771.

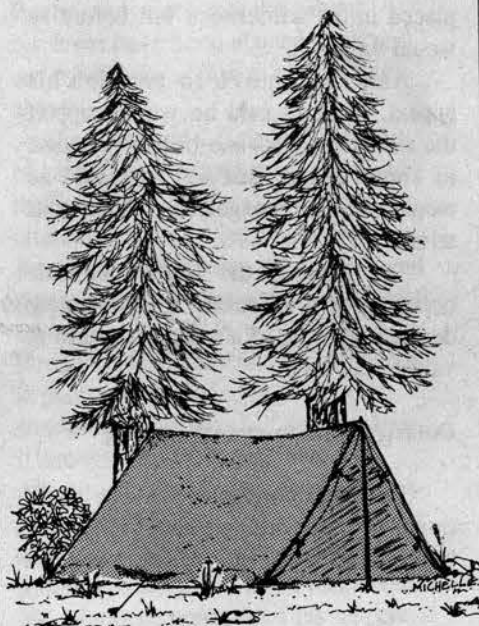
OUR FRAGILE LEGACY

Ever wonder why an old book comes unbound, why the Parthenon is crumbling, or why grandpa's forgotten shirt, resurrected from the closet after 20 years, falls apart at the seams? An exhibit at the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colo., called "Our Fragile Legacy: Preserving What Matters," examines how objects decay and what we can do to postpone the inevitable. The exhibit includes ancient artifacts, such as a mural fragment from an Anasazi kiva, as well as personal keepsakes from modern times. Weekend lectures and workshops include "The Lowry Kiva Mural Story," a lecture on the discovery, interpretation and preservation of the painted plasters at Lowry Pueblo, May 16; and "Keeping Your Keepsakes," a hands-on clinic about preserving personal belongings, July 16. Call The Anasazi Heritage Center at 303/882-4811.



HOW IMPORTANT IS CLEAN WATER?

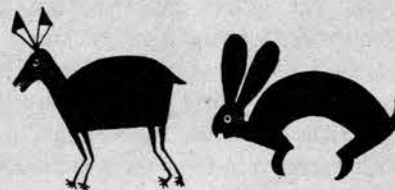
Proposed expansion of a platinum and palladium mine could degrade the excellent water quality of Montana's Stillwater River, warns Jim Milligan, director of the Northern Plains Resource Council. The Stillwater Mining Co., a Chevron subsidiary 78 miles southwest of Billings, has applied to the Montana Board of Health for an exemption from the state's water non-degradation policy. According to the policy, when existing water quality is higher than established standards, that high quality must be maintained unless it is necessary for "economic or social development." If the Board of Health grants an exemption, the mining company would increase its discharge of pollutants into the river. The resource council says chromium levels would increase by 500 percent, nitrates by 714 percent, dissolved solids by 830 percent, and ammonia by 400 percent. Most significantly, Milligan says, whatever the state decides could set a "dangerous precedent." If allowed, an exemption would be the first granted in Montana. Milligan says the platinum mine is one of five that have recently applied for exemptions that would degrade the East Boulder River. The Board of Health will release a draft of new water quality rules, including an interpretation of the state's non-degradation policy, and will accept public comments on the rules until a public hearing is held May 15 in Helena. For more information, call the Northern Plains Resource Council at 406/248-1154 or Abe Harpestad at the Montana Board of Health at 406/444-2459.



Michelle Riley

DIAL-A-CAMPSITE

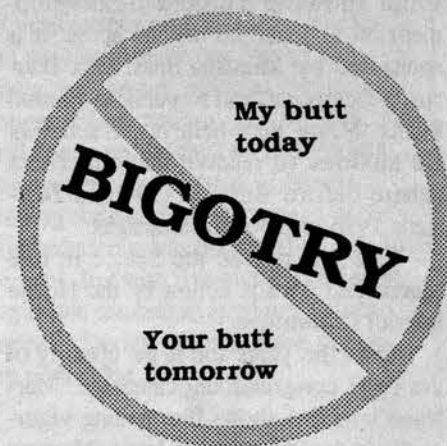
Planning a vacation in a national forest in the West may be easier, thanks to a two-year-old program of advance reservations. Family-size sites can be reserved up to 120 days ahead, and group sites 360 days ahead, with camping fees at family sites ranging from \$4 to \$12 per night. Fees for group sites also vary depending on site and group size. In two years, the program has more than doubled, with 70,000 bookings in 1991. But, the Forest Service says, most campgrounds still offer some spaces on a first-come, first-served basis, and primitive sites without water or trash service are still free and separate from the reservation process. Campers can make reservations at more than 11,000 locations nationwide by calling 800/283-CAMP Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (PST) and on weekends from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The number for hearing-impaired callers is 800/274-7275. A fee of \$6 is charged for each reservation.



GETTING TO KNOW YEW

Here are two works about a tangled situation that's pitted lives against trees to create the Northwest's latest boom industry. *The Yew Tree: A Thousand Whispers* is a 319-page book about a venerable plant that's being sacrificed to the war on cancer. Subtitled "The biography of a species," it covers the myth, history, biology and politics of the tree. The Fortingall yew, perhaps the oldest plant in Europe, is purported to have once shaded the infant Pontius Pilate. We also learn that yews were almost eliminated from Europe to make longbows, the "atom bombs" of medieval times. Author Hal Hartzell, who fell in love with the yew while planting trees for the Forest Service in the 1970s, devotes three chapters to taxol, the anti-cancer drug found in the yew. He shows how the federal government spawned a situation in which a single pharmaceutical company profits handsomely by cutting down the world's last stands of native yews. Hopefully, synthetic taxol may bail out the trees. *Taxol and Yew* is a 56-minute videotape that covers much of the same ground, sliding smoothly between Celtic ballads and congressional hearings. Producer David Heine spent several years on the yew trail interviewing most of the principal players in the taxol industry, often capturing them in moments of self-aggrandizing glibness. *The Yew Tree*, in paperback, is \$19.95, while *Taxol and Yew* is \$24.95 for individuals and \$45 for institutions. Both are available from Hulogosi Communications, P.O. Box 1188, Eugene, OR 97440 (503/343-0606).

— Jim Stiak



A LIBERAL AGENDA

The five-year-old Western States Center, a non-profit group based in Oregon, aims to build progressive communities in the West. The center focuses on training and supporting grass-roots leaders and groups in Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. New major projects include compiling a directory of progressive western leaders, investigating the "Wise Use" movement, and researching campaign contributions in Western states. The center's recent 12-page newsletter covers the effects of state and local budget cuts, the new Americans with Disabilities Act, and a group called the Oregon Citizens Alliance, whose "Abnormal Behaviors Initiative" would allow people to discriminate against others on the basis of sexual orientation. For more information, contact Western States Center, 522 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 1390, Portland, OR, 97204 (503/228-8866).



Original Mimbres Art from the Edith L. Watson Collection, Western New Mexico University Museum, Silver City, New Mexico

Polar opposites ...

(Continued from page 1)

dle class," says Williams.

For voters, Marlenee puts it succinctly: "Montana is at a crossroads. This is a watershed election ... what philosophy will prevail? Pat and I have cancelled each other's votes time after time after time. This time, you make the choice."

Wilderness is key

No issue in Montana's sole congressional election has the national profile and so cleanly divides the candidates as the future of 6 million acres of potential wilderness, a cumulative area the size of Vermont.

For a dozen years, the issue has polarized the people here, as timber companies have sought to cut trees on roadless lands, and conservationists have worked to protect still-untouched roadless areas. A landmark 1982 court decision resulted in the restriction of development of roadless federal lands.

A bill is now pending in the Congress that would protect about 1.2 million acres in Montana as wilderness while allowing multiple-use development on at least 3.8 million acres. It is sponsored by Montana Sens. Max Baucus, a Democrat, and Republican Conrad Burns. Many here believe the senators are anxious to resolve the wilderness debate before Burns's 1994 and Baucus's 1996 re-election campaigns.

The bill passed the Senate in late March and awaits action by the House Interior Committee.

Over the years and at the opening of the 1992 congressional campaign, Marlenee's record shows him pulling vigorously in the direction of less wilderness and more resource extraction. He has said repeatedly that if a wilderness bill passes, it must settle the debate over roadless lands once and for all. The problems facing Montana are the three W's, Marlenee says: "welfare, wilderness and wolves."

Williams's record and his opening position in the campaign generally found him tugging in the opposite direction.

As in almost all elections, this one squeezes the two candidates toward the center, but few Montanans have much doubt about the implications of their November vote.

"In the next few months, Montanans will be deciding which road to take ... the road to make Montana a playground, or the road to productivity and jobs," says Dave Whalen, the leader of the local Elks club in Dillon and a Marlenee supporter.

Tom Boland, a Great Falls attorney who supports Williams, sees the choice this way: "Why aren't we promoting Montana for what it is, the proverbial last best place? Everybody else is trying to clean up the mess of the industrial revolution. Why should we in Montana try and make this a new rust belt?"

Polls and experts agree: Montanans not only know the candidates well, most have already made their choices in this two-man race. Polls show the undecided vote at this early date may be less than 10 percent. Williams may have a thin edge because his First District on the western side of the state is the most populous to start out with and is growing faster.

In an appeal to undecided voters and in an effort to temper his hard-hewn image, Marlenee has aired early television ads portraying himself as a reasonable centrist, a man with his roots in the topsoil of Montana, somebody who could balance its interests against the demands of extremists on both sides. He said he wanted some important limits placed in the wilderness bill before he would support it.

Also, in a move to broaden his appeal, Williams said he would support the wilderness/land-use bill in the name of compromise. But he, too, said he would insist on changes to strengthen its terms.

The timing of the wilderness battle occurs against a backdrop of changing demographics in Montana and a turn in values nationally.

Demographics are changing

The trend here is clear: The traditional resource industries of the state, those that favor development over

preservation, are retrenching or in some cases growing only slowly. On the other hand, the tide of retirees, second-home seasonal vacationers and would-be urban refugees is rising, particularly in the west in the Flathead Valley and in the river valleys emerging north out of Yellowstone. Along with this shift comes a different, if not always logical, view of what Montana should be.

Drive south through the storied valley of the Madison River from Three Forks. The signs of the change are clear. Real estate "for sale" signs beckon to the get-away dreams of city dwellers. Great ranches are being chopped up and offered as ranchettes. Like Florida in the '50s, Montana in the '90s is in the midst of a land boom.

Add to that increasing tourism and the growing national concern over dwindling wildlands, and you have a formula that adds urgency, as well as significance, to the wilderness debate.



Larry Michael Dobson

"Ten years ago, the wilderness decision could have been made by the Montana delegation. Ten years from now, Montanans may have no influence over that decision, or very little," says Rick Hill, the state Republican Party chairman. For that reason, environmentalists hold hope for a House deadlock on the bill this year.

In the last decade, a significant population shift has occurred in Montana. Ranching counties in the plains to the east have lost significant numbers of

Politically, demographics are more difficult. Going clear back to the days of Rep. Jeannette Rankin, a pioneer suffragist and the only member of Congress to vote against both World War I and World War II, Montana has been known for its independent streak in its selection of public officials.

Voters do not register by party. But in a 1991 sampling, the Montana Poll by the University of Montana found that voters identified themselves this way:

- Democrat, 34 percent
- Independent/Democratic Leaning, 11 percent
- Independent, 19 percent
- Independent/Republican Leaning, 7 percent
- Republican, 29 percent.

In an interview, Marlenee reflects on the modern arithmetic and why this election is so crucial to his basic constituency: Yes, recreation and retirement are on the upswing, the ranchettes are coming while the timber and mining and farming interests he champions are struggling. Outsiders may not sympathize, but the old-timers here might still.

"I suppose we are threatened by the march of time and by the fact that we have kept Montana a desirable place to live," he says. "You come to places like Dillon and you see the faces, the faces of people who are native to the land. Other than that, the West has disappeared, the faces gone ..."

Williams, too, reflects on the stakes in November during a break on the campaign trail. "Montana in many ways is the brow of the last hill in America. And Montanans are deeply interested in the direction of the state's environment. The challenge is to keep it the last best place while people can still live and work here and not have to move away." ■

The writer covers six Western states for the *Los Angeles Times* from Seattle, Washington.

*"Montana in many ways
is the brow of
the last hill in America."*

— Rep. Pat Williams

people. Valley County on the Canadian border north of Fort Peck, for instance, lost 20 percent of its population between 1980 and 1990. Custer County surrounding Miles City lost 11 percent. Fergus County in the center of the state lost 8 percent. The oil bust in Glendive contributed to a 19 percent drop in Dawson County's population.

In the mountain-and-valley regions to the west, on the other hand, Flathead County surrounding fast-growing Kalispell outside Glacier National Park grew 14 percent, as did Glacier County. North of Yellowstone Park, Gallatin County, which includes Bozeman, grew 18 percent. Park County, which includes Livingston, grew 13 percent. Lewis and Clark County, which includes Helena and the Rockies to the north, gained 10 percent in population.

But at the end of the decade, Montana ranked 48th in population density, ahead of only Wyoming and Alaska.

Issues, geography divide Marlenee and Williams

by Todd Wilkinson

Ingomar, Mont., population 19, lies in the heart of Ron Marlenee country. This arid place on the high plains, where pronghorn and cattle easily outnumber humans, sits on the fringe of the state not far from the Dakotas. There is no sprawl of public wildlands, no national parks, no debates over clearcuts on the national forests, no Hollywood movie stars and certainly very few liberal Democrats.

In saloons like Jersey Lilly's, a legendary Ingomar watering hole friendly to antelope hunters and wranglers, visitors can meet some of the citizens who elected Marlenee to eight consecutive terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I just don't feel that Pat Williams represents eastern Montana," says rancher Janet Mysse of the Democrat who will challenge Marlenee, a Republican, for Montana's lone congressional seat in the fall. "I just wish that Pat and the environmentalists would leave us alone. We feel we're being taken over and pushed around, told what to do by the government with our private property."

If Marlenee had only to appease the rural, anti-government sentiments in his home district, observers say his election might be a shoo-in. But come November, he must also convince voters in Williams's more populous stronghold, the mountainous western district dominated by contentious public-land issues.

"This race is a good symbol for a dozen statewide contests going on in the Rocky Mountain West," says Jim Maddy, executive director of the League of Conservation Voters in Washington, D.C. "A 200-year heritage of unspoiled public lands is at risk ... If extremists like Marlenee win, I don't think it is doomsaying to suggest the whole idea of balanced use and professional management in the public domain is in jeopardy."

Marlenee's distaste for government regulation has been interpreted by some critics as being downright hostile to conservation groups, whose members he once categorized as "prairie fairies." His antagonism toward natural resource laws may be unrivaled, even in the ultra-conservative West. Recently, a gossip magazine popular on supermarket racks surveyed environmental groups ranging from The Wilderness Society to Greenpeace, and named Marlenee as an "Enemy of the Earth" deserving to live next to a toxic-waste dump.

"Environmentalists," says Marlenee's campaign manager Will Brooke, "are like disciples in a religious sect. If you don't believe in their religion, you're a heretic." Dressed casually in blue jeans, red flannel shirt and cowboy boots at his campaign headquarters in Bozeman, Marlenee, former auctioneer, laughs when told that some view him as "the Antichrist of landscape protection."

He says he is proud of stands such as including trying to block plans for restoring wolves to Yellowstone National Park and supporting the Bush administration's proposal to withdraw the right of citizens to appeal timber sales. He has also been linked to the forced removal of federal forester John Mumma. On the national front, he was one of only a few congressmen to vote against the Clean Air and Clean Water acts, and says he'll try to overhaul the Endangered Species Act this year

because it overly restricts industry.

Perhaps his greatest triumph over the green lobby was his courting of the "Wise Use" movement in killing the benchmark Yellowstone "vision" document last year. It would have established new standards for ecosystem protection. In a letter to former regional Park Service director Lorraine Mintzmyer, who testified in Congress that conservative politicians forced her to gut the plan, Marlenee wrote: "I won't mince words. As you can see ... I'm opposed to the

environmentalist. "His attitude toward public lands and resources is to limit any kind of federal management and turn it over to developers," said Arne Bolle, dean emeritus at the University of Montana's School of Forestry in Missoula, who found the ads unconvincing.

The League of Conservation Voters accused Marlenee of pulling a "green scam" to gloss over his voting record. "I think the environmental activists got upset when they saw me portrayed as I am," Marlenee said in a recent interview.

"These people are surrounded by public lands, and they're damn bitter."

— Rep. Ron Marlenee

Vision Document — period ... Rest assured, I'll do everything I can to make sure this document is either scrapped or completely re-written."

Rep. Gerry Sikorski, a Democrat and chairman of the House Civil Service Subcommittee, called for a special hearing to determine if Marlenee and Sens. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., and Larry Craig, R-Idaho, pressured the two government employees into acting against their wishes. So far, the trio has escaped reprimand.

"Sikorski and the liberal Democrats went on a witch hunt," Marlenee says. "Pat Williams has stated that it was the tip of the iceberg. It turned out to be the tip of an ice cube. I'm sure he had a hand in that."

Marlenee does not consider the application of political pressure meddling. Rather, he says it is part of using influence and connections.

"To achieve the goals of the (Bush) administration, subject to influence by congressional and senatorial members, they (Bush administration appointees) are going to make the changes in management that they deem necessary," he says.

Earlier this year, the national environmental community was stunned when Marlenee began running advertisements depicting himself as an envi-

"The key difference between the two men is that Pat has a deep and abiding love for the environment," said Williams's campaign manager Joe Lamson. "It is the key reason that people live here. But he recognizes that the natural resources have been abused in the past and it will take action to reverse those abuses."

Lamson said Marlenee's only act of genuine conservation occurred when the Forest Service proposed a logging clearcut in front of his chalet near Bozeman. Marlenee said he had the cut stopped because it might create a "wind shear" problem at the adjacent Bridger Bowl Ski Area. Lamson said Marlenee in past years has tried to prevent any statewide wilderness bill from making it through Congress and he tried to defeat protection for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Yet just a few days after a recent poll showed 55 percent of Montanans favor the latest wilderness bill, Marlenee announced his support for the package to create 1.2 million acres of designated wilderness and open as much as 4.5 million acres to development. On this sensitive issue, Williams risks offending the multiple use community if he opposes the plan and will attract the ire of environmentalists if he supports it, because it is considered a poor compromise.

"Pat never met a wilderness bill he didn't like, while Ron would just as soon see that no more

wilderness is created," said Brooke. "Why should citizens have to bear the economic impacts of more wilderness in small logging towns? These people are surrounded by public lands, and they're damn bitter. They don't want their forests put off limits to logging and enjoyable recreational activities such as snowmobiling, riding trail bikes and all-terrain vehicles."

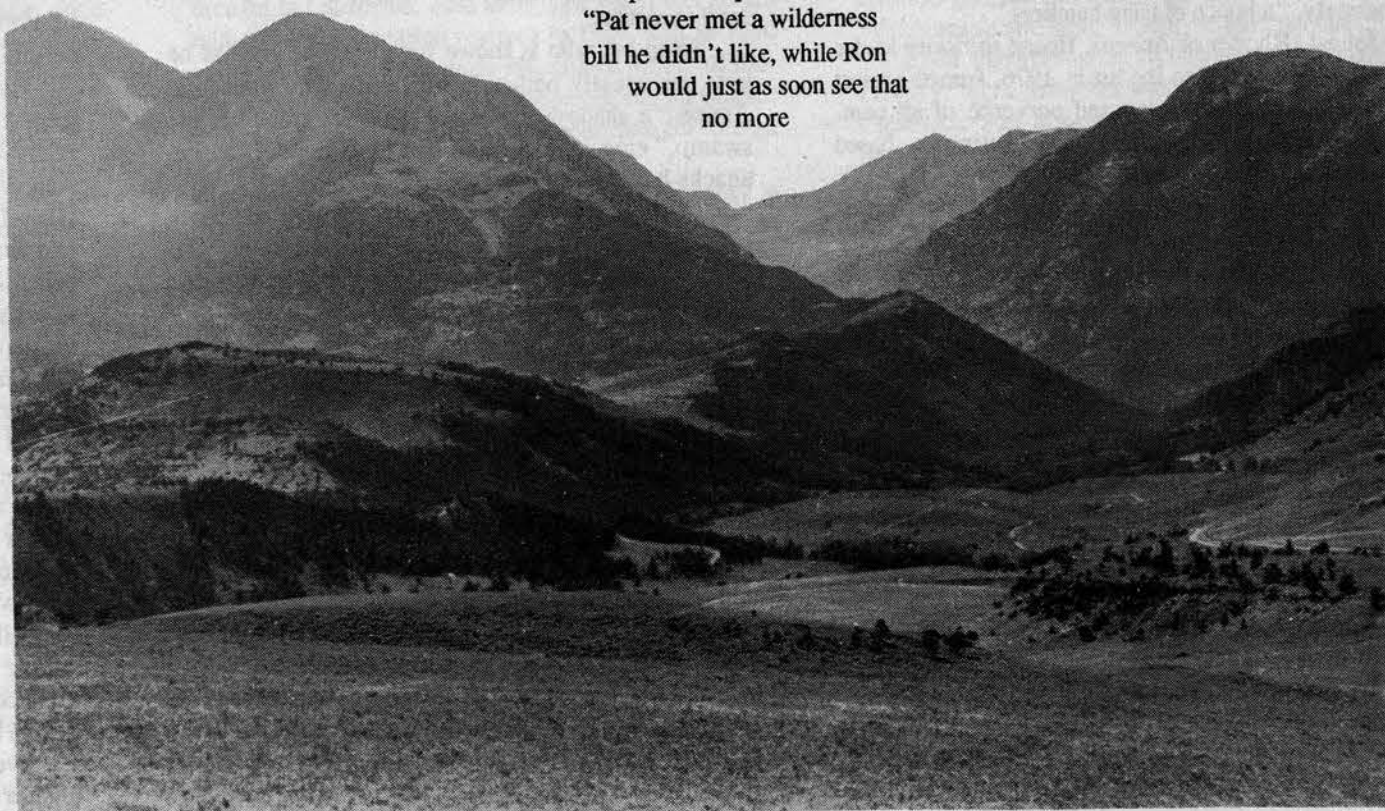
Both Williams and Marlenee oppose gun control. However, Marlenee's views have been far more vocal. A member of Safari Club International, a big-game hunting and conservation organization, Marlenee has led calls for enacting hunters'-rights legislation to prevent animal-rights activists from protesting in the woods. For him, it is a patriotic issue.

During efforts last year to outlaw semi-automatic weapons, he stormed into a Capitol Hill news conference totting a mock Uzi machine gun and fired blanks to draw attention to his pro-gun stand. While both Marlenee and Williams say they defend the constitutional right to bear arms, they diverge radically over whether private property should take precedent over protecting natural features such as geysers.

Williams said he was befuddled by Marlenee's unwillingness in the late 1980s and again in 1991 to support an initiative for permanently protecting the geysers and hot springs of Yellowstone. Marlenee said he could not support the bill because it infringed on private property rights, namely upon the new-age Church Universal and Triumphant, which wanted to tap hot water for heating a greenhouse.

In clearcutting a swath of resentment through people who consider themselves environmentalists, Marlenee may have made one enemy too many, watchers of Montana's state congressional race say. The most recent poll conducted by the Lee Enterprises newspaper chain showed Williams leading the race with 44 percent of the vote. Marlenee was projected to win 36 percent. But with five months remaining in the campaign, anything still can happen. Twenty percent of the voters are undecided.

Todd Wilkinson lives in Bozeman, Montana, where he writes about Western issues.



Dan Hollow

Crazy Mountains, which aren't included in the current wilderness bill

Members of Congress find that Dirty Dozen mudball sticks

by Richard Conniff

Off and on for the past two decades, the small but influential group known as Environmental Action has issued a biannual "Dirty Dozen" list, timed for the elections and targeting the most rabidly anti-environmental members of Congress. It is strong medicine, and seldom sugar-coated. "Every one of these guys is an enemy of the environment," says the Washington, D.C.-based executive director, Ruth Caplan. She calls Bill Dannemeyer, who represents Orange County in California and is now running for the Senate, an "environmental Neanderthal." He professed to be thrilled. "They have honored me with this status," he said.

In case anyone thought Caplan's characterization was overdrawn, Dannemeyer said shortly after the invasion of Kuwait that "Saddam Hussein is a marginal threat to the United States compared to the environmental party," a group he estimated to include 12.9 million Americans, including contributors to such subversive organizations as National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

But hardly any other member of Congress shared his insouciance. In an era when even strip-miners grasp at environmental credentials, most in Congress have become adept at recording meaningless pro-environment votes, or at introducing foredoomed environmental legislation, as a defense against critics in future campaigns.

For this kind of obfuscation, the "Dirty Dozen" label has become a dreaded antidote. It is pithy and unmistakable in its meaning, difficult to refute in public debate, and devastating in a 30-second attack commercial. If the phrase has a comic-book ring, this is not altogether unsuited to the level of political debate in the nation's capital.

The potential of the Dirty Dozen list for wreaking rhetorical havoc has caused congressmen over the years to denounce Environmental Action as "left-wing radicals," "political amateurs," and even, somewhat desperately, "a bunch of baby-butchers."

John J. Rhodes of Arizona, House minority leader when he was named to the list in 1976, fumed against "the most flagrantly unfair and perverse of all campaign practices ... the publication of ratings ... based upon votes on narrowly selected bills ..."

Columnist Art Buchwald clucked in mock sympathy: "Mr. Rhodes is, of course, right. There should be an investigation of any organization that monitors the voting record of congressmen. A congressman's vote is a private matter between himself and his wife ..."

The Dirty Dozen themselves are not alone in criti-

cizing the list. The *Rocky Mountain News* once complained, after a Colorado congressman made the list, that Environmental Action had "stooped to bad taste," doubtless evoking cries of horror on the banks of the Potomac, where bad taste had hitherto been only an ugly rumor.

More recently, Environmental Protection Agency chief William Reilly suggested dubiously that the Dirty Dozen list "may have its place and undoubtedly is responsible for some progress." But he said that honoring the winners of Renew American's "Search for Success" campaign "emotionally has a little more resonance to me." For the more genteel elements of the environmental movement, the list is unduly confrontational.



Diane Sylvain

If the Dirty Dozen list has at times played a role in defeating Neanderthals, it has just as surely antagonized some survivors. For Environmental Action, this is merely how hardball politics is played.

"Evil incarnate"

Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson, for example, still bristles at having been named to the Dirty Dozen in 1990 when, as he puts it, "I worked my ass off" on the Clean Air Act. Environmental Action replies that he worked mainly to weaken the bill and extract greater profits for the utility and coal industries of Wyoming. Not wanting to forego an opportunity for heightened rhetoric, it characterized the Wyoming Republican as "evil incarnate."

Simpson, who is known for giving as good as he gets, or usually better, in turn calls Environmental Action "a shadow group that wanders around in the swamp," creeping out at election time to make partisan attacks based on spurious criteria.

In fact, the people who put together the Dirty Dozen list operate year-round out of a roomy old ship captain's house near Dupont Circle, a short taxi ride from Simpson's office in the capitol.

Founded in 1970 by the organizers of the first Earth Day, Environmental Action has about 20,000 members, putting it far down on the list of major environmental organizations in this country. In 1990, it spent almost \$470,000, plus another \$735,000 through the affiliated Environmental Action Foundation, most of it for research, education, and lobbying efforts on toxic chemicals, transportation, energy, and solid waste issues. It is, however, almost certainly best known for the Dirty Dozen.

Congress first riveted its attention on the list in 1970, when seven of the original Dirty Dozen failed to win re-election, and again in 1974, the Watergate year, when the list helped send eight congressmen to defeat. Such pro-environment figures as Wayne Owens, now a representative from Utah, and Tom Harkin, now a senator from

Iowa and brief presidential candidate, faced Dirty Dozen incumbents and used the epithet to gain election to Congress. On the other hand, Robert Kasten, now a senator from Wisconsin, received active campaign support from Environmental Action against a Dirty Dozen incumbent, and later went on to make the list himself.

Results from the Dirty Dozen list diminished in the late 1970s, and for a time in the dark early years of the Reagan administration, Environmental Action abandoned the device. Since its revival in 1986, the Dirty Dozen list has been a factor, though not necessarily the decisive factor, in defeating from one to four congressmen per election cycle.

These results are respectable enough at a time when Political Action Committee (PAC) money almost guarantees that incumbents will get re-elected. Recent results may also understate the list's influence.

"The target," says Daniel Becker, a Sierra Club lobbyist who used to work for Environmental Action, "isn't just the 12 who are named. It's the other 523 who don't want to be on the list. A lot of congressmen weigh heavily how they vote on the environment, and this is one of the reasons."

In looking over the criteria for the Dirty Dozen, the most important and disappointing discovery is that these 12 nasty specimens are not, in an absolute sense,

the bottom of the congressional barrel. If the Dirty Dozen were actually the 12 worst adversaries of the environment, the same names would tend to come up year after year.

This would be a bore, though perhaps more accurate, and it would diminish both the news value and political impact of the list. As Environmental Action sees it, there is a rich enough supply of anti-environment badness in Congress to vary the menu, depending on which issues have figured largely in recent debate. The menu also varies, more problematically, according to the group's impression of which races a Dirty Dozen designation is most likely to influence. Thus North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms, class of 1978, made a rare return appearance for a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990, when circumstances seemed ripe for his defeat.

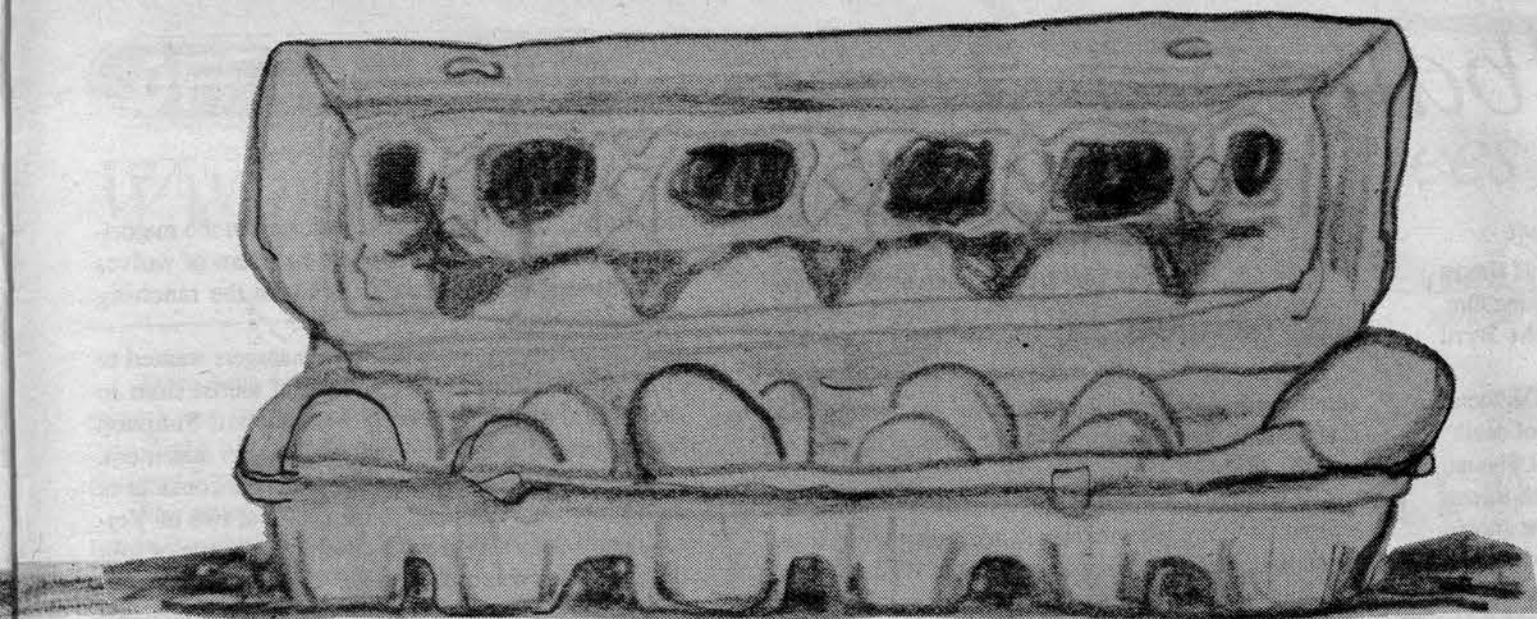
But if the Dirty Dozen is undeniably a political tool, it would be hard to argue that it targets people fairly — with one exception. When Environmental Action revived the list in 1986, after a long hiatus, the Dirty Dozen consisted entirely of congressmen who had received large contributions from nuclear and petrochemical industry PACs. Eleven Republican senators made the list, in a year when Democrats were trying to regain control of the Senate.

Among those listed were Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, who had voted with environmentalists 75 percent of the time that year; Wisconsin's Robert Kasten, credited by the League of Conservation Voters with voting the right way 67 percent of the time; and New York's Alphonse D'Amato, with a 54 percent rating. All three were re-elected and, over the next few years, sided with environmentalists significantly less often. If hardball was in fact the game being played, it is worth adding that four of that year's Dirty Dozen were defeated, and that return of the Senate to Democratic control brought renewed attention to the environment.

Even so, the 1986 list was the sort of partisan blunder that antagonizes people who might otherwise be open to environmental persuasion, while also undermining the credibility of the Dirty Dozen.

"A congressman's vote is a private matter between himself and his wife ..."

— Columnist Art Buchwald



The group's criteria have evolved since then to concentrate more even-handedly on voting records and actions in committee. But Congress has also evolved in response to vote-rating systems like the Dirty Dozen and the League of Conservation Voters' scorecard, making it more difficult to sort out what a member of Congress is up to on the basis of voting record alone. Decisions that benefit large contributors or other special interests increasingly get made behind closed doors, in the hope that they will remain secret).

"We're victims of our own success," Ruth Caplan says. "As we really hang them on their votes, they tend to hide them more." Final floor votes are often the legislative equivalent of photo opportunities, designed to play to a particular audience after the real business is already accomplished. In compiling the Dirty Dozen, Environmental Action thus concentrates on the preliminary haggling and relies on reports from unnamed congressional staffers, and recommendations from environmentalists in the home district.

On the 1990 list, two names suggest how well this system works, and how dismayingly rich and varied the source material for the Dirty Dozen really is. The first of the two, William Dannemeyer, is an ultra-right-wing polemicist, who grandstands on environmental issues, but plays little part in actually shaping the law. The other, Alan Simpson, is sometimes mistaken by his adversaries for a moderate because he can be charming and funny. But his environmental outlook matches Dannemeyer's, with the significant difference that Simpson usually sounds intelligent and often gets his way.

Renaissance man of bigotry

Dannemeyer, first elected in 1978, has the physique and the personality one might expect from a former municipal judge who also served in McCarthy-era Army counter-intelligence. At 62, he has a jutting chin and clear blue eyes set deep in a handsome, craggy face. He is a Lutheran elder and the author of a book, *Shadow in the Land — Homosexuality in America*. He has spent much of his career in Washington pursuing an obsessive public campaign against homosexuality, at one point publishing a clinical description of sex acts in the *Congressional Record*. He also once advocated restrictions on AIDS victims to prevent them from spreading "spores" and causing birth defects.

In 1990, a *Washington Post* columnist labeled him "the renaissance man of bigotry" after Dannemeyer likened Nelson Mandela to convicted murderer and rapist Willie Horton.

The fate of the earth is properly no more than a side issue amid these vital questions of our day, but Dannemeyer nonetheless manages to give it his best. In principle, he acknowledges, "We are indeed stewards of this planet and our natural resources. We have a responsibility to future generations of Americans."

He adds that he is a catch-and-release fisherman and has planted his home in Fullerton with fruit and macademia nut trees. "I do not spray my fruit trees with any compounds," he says. "Not that I don't trust them. It's just that I would rather not have them on my fruit. I mention this to let you know that I love trees and the outside air as much as anybody."

Then he veers off into what is left of the ozone. Southern California faces a number of obstacles to its ultimate paved-earth destiny on account of endangered species, among them the least Bell's vireo, the black-tailed gnatcatcher, and the Stephen's kangaroo rat. Measures aimed at protecting such creatures cause Dannemeyer to berate environmentalists for "an

unwillingness to strike a balance."

"Do you know how you tell a Stephens's kangaroo rat from any other kind of rat?" he inquires. "You've got to kill 'em and perform an autopsy." (This is undoubtedly true if one assumes the average person cannot distinguish, say, between a 16-ounce Norway rat and a four-ounce kangaroo rat with a feathery tail, enormous eyes, a habit of hopping on its elongated hind feet, and an abiding fondness for bathing in dust.) He proposes that the government list humans as an endangered species, so we can enjoy the protections extended to such animals.

He has also proposed amending the Endangered Species Act "to say that if Americans must be forced to set aside lands for innumerable animals, then the land should be one geographic location, a sanctuary for all of these animals to congregate, rather than provide tens of places dotting the landscape and disrupting the economy." (It could be like an Indian reservation, or maybe, with the idea of killing two or more birds with one stone, on an Indian reservation, in South Dakota, say, where they could call it "Nature's Death Row" and charge \$20 admission, and where the Mexican long-nosed bat, the Hawaiian goose, the Puerto Rican parrot, the desert tortoise, and the sperm whale could get on with their sordid lives and leave God-fearing heterosexual Americans alone.)

"I'm not saying 'slaughter the animals,'" he says. But he cites the divine creation of man and the biblical directive to subdue the earth, and suggests that animals must give way to the advance of civilization and to human need. A visitor inquires if it doesn't perhaps overstep this biblical directive to obliterate whole species, which Genesis also attributes to divine creation, and if government protection of endangered species might not incidentally serve human need. But Dannemeyer sets his jaw and invokes a higher theology: "Then you come into conflict with the rights of private property."

Talking out of two sides of one's mouth at the same time is an essential political skill, and Dannemeyer characteristically takes it to an extreme. Though fiscal conservatism has caused him to vote against every federal water project he has ever seen, he blames environmental obstruction of water projects for the current drought in California. And though he voted to cut \$25 million for conservation research in 1989, and in 1990 introduced a bill to eliminate \$80 million worth of federal assistance for state conservation efforts, he blames environmentalists for American dependence on foreign oil.

Dannemeyer argues that there is enough energy in offshore oil deposits, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and nuclear power for us to "comfortably survive our energy appetites" without conservation. People who resist developing these resources, he says, "would rather send our sons and daughters to the sands of the Middle East to fight and die" for foreign oil. Hence his characterization of "the enemy from within," the godless "environmental party," as more dangerous than Saddam Hussein. All of which makes any reservations about the unfairness or unduly confrontational aspects of the Dirty Dozen label seem suddenly absurd.

The enemy from within

By coincidence, Alan Simpson, assistant minority leader in the Senate, fits Dannemeyer's definition of "the enemy from within." He is a dues-paying member of the Sierra Club.

Talking out of two sides of one's mouth is an essential political skill.

"I'm a member of Planned Parenthood, too," Simpson says. "There are a lot of things I do that aren't in the norm, I guess, if you're a Republican from Wyoming." But when asked if he would call himself an environmentalist, as does his friend and fishing pal, President George Bush, he bridges deftly to an unrelated topic.

The Clean Air Act of 1990 was the major issue in determining the current Dirty Dozen, and the long debate served as a showcase for the differing styles of both Dannemeyer and Simpson. Though he sits on key subcommittees of the House Energy and Commerce

Committee, Dannemeyer's chief contribution to the debate was to propose a "clean airwaves" amendment, imposing \$50-million penalties on broadcasters of pornography. One lobbyist commented that he hadn't "seen anything as entertaining since Jim Watt."

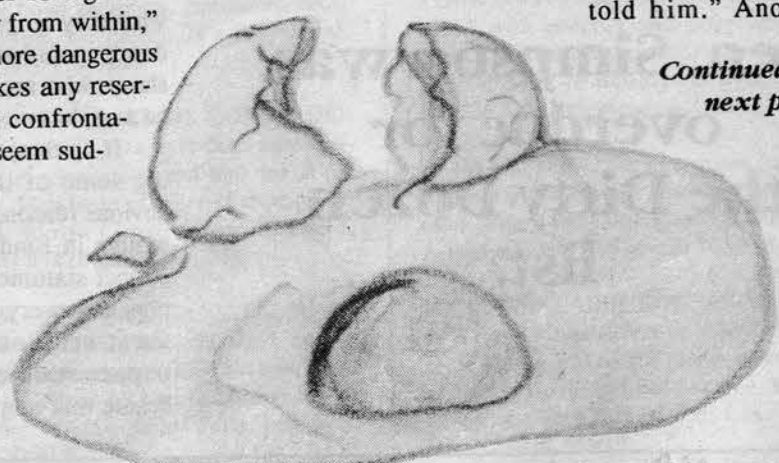
Simpson, by contrast, was a key player in shaping clean air legislation in the Environment Committee. While critics characterize him as shilling for industry, they also acknowledge that, having gotten much of what he wanted in committee, Simpson then went out on the Senate floor and protected the compromise deal from assault by other conservatives.

For example, Dan Weiss of the Sierra Club credits Simpson with blocking a last-minute White House effort to gut the bill's acid rain provisions: "He called John Sununu and said, 'Don't you dare do that.'"

Even Environmental Action's own lobbyist, Leon Lowery, says Simpson was effective in moving the Clean Air Act through the Senate. At one point, the entire bill was threatened with a White House veto because of a proposed amendment from Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia to compensate coal miners put out of work by the legislation. Idaho's Steven Symms (Dirty Dozen classes of 1976 and 1986) voted with Byrd in the hope of sinking the bill.

"Simpson walked over and talked to Symms," Lowery says. "I don't know what he told him." Another

Continued on next page



The mudball that sticks ...

Continued from previous page

witness describes the 6' 7" Wyoming senator as almost picking Symms up by the belt buckle and shaking him. Symms then changed his vote, sending the Byrd amendment to a 49-50 defeat.

(Simpson prefers to recall how he won Democrat Joe Biden's vote, walking "right into the jaws of death" as Biden conferred with Byrd to tell him that Sununu was on the phone with the White House veto threat. What he said to Symms, he recalls, was that he should make his stand against the Clean Air Act at some other time. "But this is one the President wants." I was telling him passionately not to let things die here." He denies resorting to belt buckles. Symms, he says, "could pick me up and throw me halfway to the Washington Monument.")

None of this sounds like grist for the Dirty Dozen, but environmentalists say Simpson works in wondrous, and complex, ways. A resident of Cody, Wyo., he cultivates a disarming stage-Western personality, using down-home cowpie humor in much the way another shrewd congressman once passed himself off as "just a poor country lawyer." Simpson shares some of George Bush's privileged background; both come from wealthy families and met when they were senators' sons in Washington. He also does his homework thoroughly and can be balefully effective peering down at a witness over the tops of his reading glasses. An acquaintance on Capitol Hill says his style is to crush an adversary with a withering remark, then phone his victim to pass a joke or extend a dinner invitation. "People fall for that," the acquaintance adds. Simpson himself has said, "You can open a door with humor and drive a truck right through."

A key amendment introduced by Simpson would have stripped the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of authority over radionuclide emissions, concentrating it instead in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Simpson got the amendment through the Environment Committee by couching it as a way to end bureaucratic duplication. A fight on the floor of the Senate ensued.

Environmentalists argued that Simpson's talk of "dual regulation" disguised his real intent of shifting control of radioactive emissions to an NRC standard which was far more lax and based on 30-year-old research. Lowery of Environmental Action notes that the EPA standard for individual radiation exposure, 10 millirems annually, translates to three additional cancer deaths per year for every 10,000 people exposed, whereas the NRC's effective standard of 500 millirems means more than 140 additional deaths.

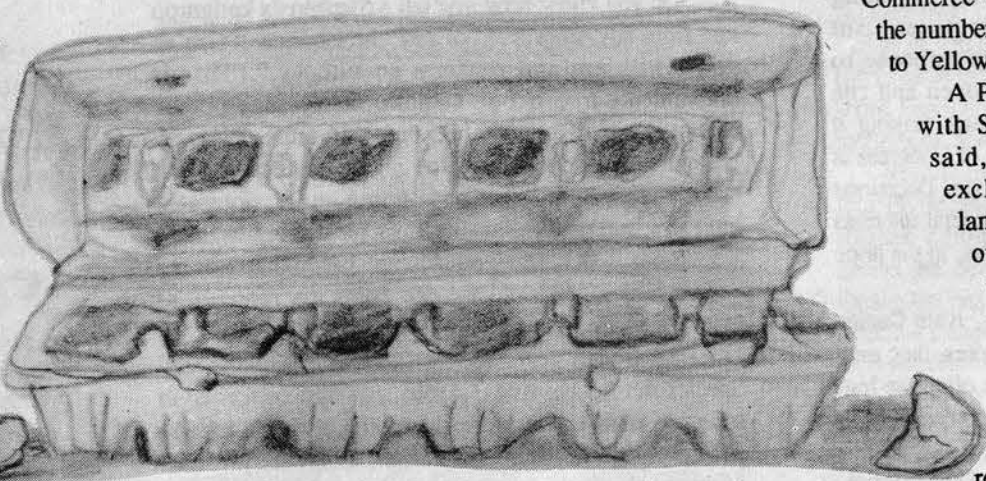
Simpson's amendment would also have eliminated the right of state and local governments to set their own emissions standards. "States' rights" being a buzzword to match "dual regulation," the amendment met a decisive defeat. Simpson quickly came back with an alternative amendment, compromising EPA authority but not actually eliminating it. With the help of lobbying by medical professionals, who raised the spectre that nuclear medicine in the United States might otherwise come to an end, the compromise amendment became part of the final bill.

Simpson also worked hard to loosen a provision of existing law that makes coal-fired power plants install scrubbers to meet emissions standards. The final compromise fell short of this goal, but achieved the same

result: By encouraging utilities to switch to very low sulfur coal, the Clean Air Act is likely to increase demand for Wyoming coal by as much as 60 million tons a year. The Sierra Club's Weiss cites this home-district effect to explain Simpson's crucial phone call to Sununu. He also adds that motives matter less than results, and that overall the Clean Air Act will result in a 10-million-ton reduction in sulfur emissions, most of it in the Midwest and the East.

But at the same time, sulfur emissions will actually worsen in many Western states, according to environmentalists, because Simpson and other Western senators "cut a sweet deal" for local utilities as the price of their support.

Annual emissions in Wyoming alone could rise by 152,000 tons, though the utilities themselves said they



needed only a 120,000-ton allowance. "What you're doing," said Bob Yuhnke, an attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund in Denver, "is improving eastern air quality at the expense of the West." Simpson replied that Wyoming's sulfur emissions standards were already stricter than the federal government's, and that the extra allowances merely gave the state room to grow.

Simpson also fought off language that would have enabled such national parks as Yosemite, Sequoia, Big Bend and the Grand Canyon to protect themselves from the West's worsening smog and haze problem. In what one congressional staffer describes as "probably the lowest point" in negotiations, at two o'clock in the morning on the last day of the joint conference, Simpson and Max Baucus of Montana effectively killed visibility protection.

"They shouted about it," the staffer recalls, "and insulted House members who were arguing for it. Simpson said, 'I'm sick and tired of you guys who aren't from the West telling us what we should do.'"

Reps. Henry Waxman of California and Ron Wyden of Oregon pointed out that their states, while not so rich as Wyoming in Marlboro Country folderol, are actually also Western, but to no avail.

No issue causes Simpson to roll out the Western persona faster than the national parks, and though his backroom influence on the park system is little noted, it is almost enough by itself to qualify him for the Dirty Dozen.

On the subject of wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park, for example, he says: "I live 52 miles from there and I know a little bit more about Yellowstone Park than most of the people who write me those ringy letters. Lived there all my life, and my family's lived there since 1897 ... I always bridle at the paternalistic approach to the poor old folks in Wyoming who don't know how to protect a park that is right next to them and that they cherish ... that we're not really very sharp, just sitting there thumbin' our lips into the sunset. That's very tiresome, and this is a classic on wolf reintroduction, because I want to know what they're going to do to the moose population, the deer population, the elk population, and the mountain sheep, who are already stressed." The Park Service, he says, has never answered these questions.

If, in fact, there has been a delay in answering some of these questions, there is one obvious reason: Every year, the House has written in funding for an environmental impact statement on wolf reintroduction, and every year Simpson has written it back out. An environmental impact statement would move the debate one step closer to actual rein-

troduction. And while surveys indicate that the majority of Wyoming residents support the return of wolves to Yellowstone, Simpson's friends in the ranching community don't.

On the other hand, when park managers wanted to close down Fishing Bridge, a kind of tourist slum in the middle of prime grizzly bear habitat, Simpson forced them to do an environmental impact statement. The Park Service argued that bear-human contacts at the facility were resulting in the deaths of two of Yellowstone's 200 or so grizzlies every year, a rate of loss the population could not sustain. Over 15 years, grizzlies had also injured or killed 10 people in the area. To compensate for the loss of Fishing Bridge, the park planned to create an equal number of beds elsewhere in the park, at Grant Village. But the Cody Chamber of Commerce worried that the move would cut into the number of tourists using Cody as a gateway to Yellowstone.

A Park Service staffer recalls meeting with Simpson to negotiate the issue. "He said, 'You bastards are systematically excluding the public from their public lands.' I can still see him peering right over his half-glasses to say that. He's very much the polite gentleman in the hallways, but he doesn't pull any punches in private meetings."

The result was a compromise satisfactory to no one in which Yellowstone was stuck with both the remnants of Fishing Bridge and the new

facility at Grant Village.

The bottom line in all of this is that Simpson was, if anything, overdue for the Dirty Dozen. Despite his intelligence and easy wit, despite the appearance of reasonableness and readiness to compromise, hardly anyone in Congress takes a harder or more consistent line against the environment.

Indeed, even Dannemeyer, of whom an American Enterprise Institute scholar recently remarked, "Right field doesn't even begin to describe him in some respects. He's really out in the bleachers," ranks higher than Simpson in the League of Conservation Voters scorecard. In 1990, Dannemeyer's anti-spending fixation caused him to vote with environmentalists twice against water subsidies, earning a 25 percent rating. Simpson's rating was just 8 percent, up from zero in 1989.

If congressmen profess outrage at the Dirty Dozen label, it is largely because it cuts through in a sound bite to this sort of truth, and because the sound bite commands a growing audience.

Though it cannot hope to match the money or influence of industrial lobbyists, the environmental movement has rapidly gained power and political skill in Washington. The Dirty Dozen list may be one of the harsher aspects of this power. But if the Simpsons and the George Bushes of the world can use their twin personalities to get what they want, showing their vindictiveness one moment and their kinder, gentler selves the next, why shouldn't environmentalists also have their good cops and their bad cops? Perhaps regrettably, it is the way Washington works nowadays.

Thus the grudging compliment the purveyors of the Dirty Dozen lists value most comes from one of their victims on the 1990 list: "They know how to play the game."

Richard Conniff is a free-lance writer who often covers environmental issues.

Sen. Simpson was overdue for the Dirty Dozen list.

OFF THE WALL

Wyoming Farm Bureau spikes trees in Oregon

by Dan Whipple

There have been a number of recent news items about a new group that's been formed in favor of "multiple use" on the Medicine Bow National Forest.

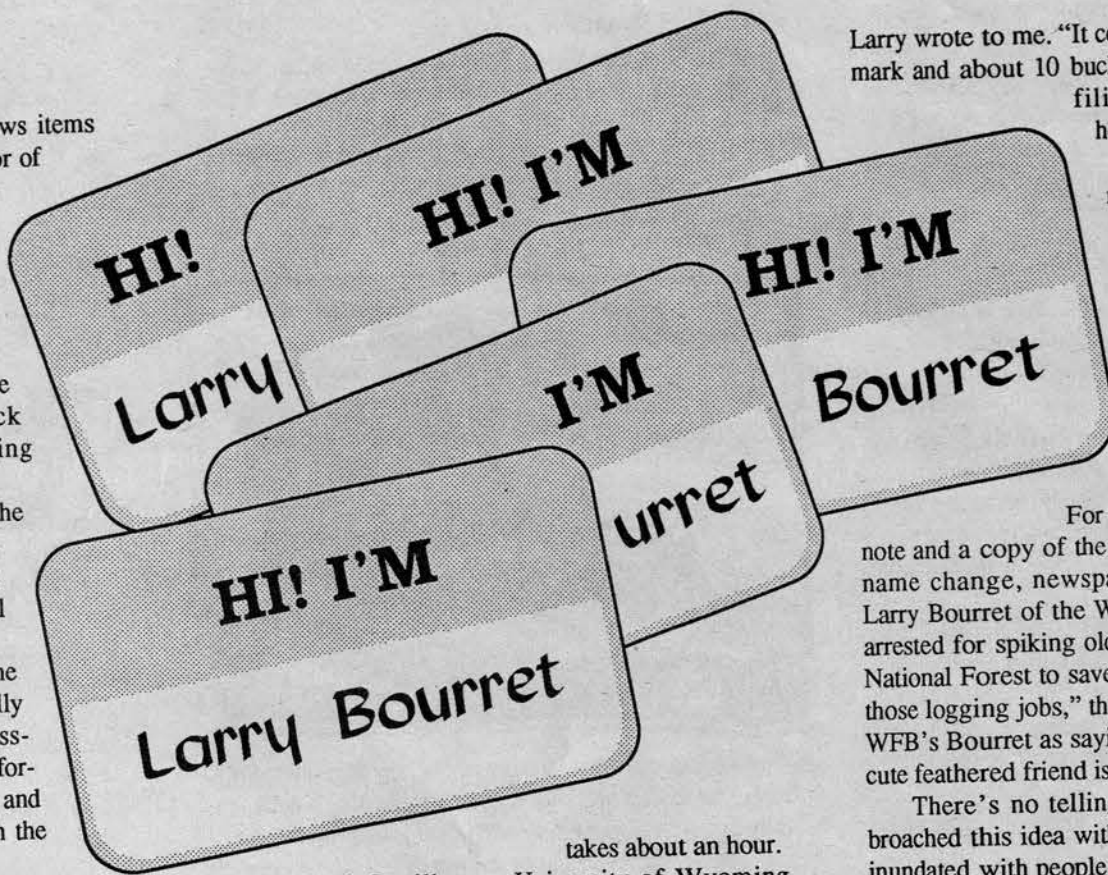
The group was formed by Wyoming Farm Bureau executive vice president Larry Bourret and three of his cronies, Carolyn Paseneaux of the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association, Sharon Nichols of the Wyoming Trucking Association and Jack Ratchye, formerly of the Wyoming Mining Association.

The group named itself the "Friends of the Bow." This is a nice enough name, but there is already an environmental group, based in Laramie, that has been using it for several years.

The new Friends of the Bow believe the place would be a lot friendlier if it eventually becomes the Medicine Bow National Grasslands. The old Friends of the Bow likes the forest pretty much the way it is, what with trees and a few woodland creatures cavorting through the glade.

Bourret noted that if the original Friends of the Bow liked their name so much, they should have registered it. "That's our legal name," Bourret said. "If that other group in Laramie didn't care enough to do the simple things we did, that's their problem. It costs 10 bucks for a trademark and 10 bucks for a non-profit corporation filing. It takes about an hour."

I think Bourret and the other members of the fake Friends of the Bow are on to something here, and I'd like to encourage them in their efforts. So I and 30 or 40 of my friends are all changing our names to Larry Bourret. We checked. It's perfectly legal and it only



Larry wrote to me. "It costs about 10 bucks for a trademark and about 10 bucks for a non-profit corporation filing. It only takes about an hour."

So Larry went and incorporated his own non-profit group in Oregon, and called it the Wyoming Farm Bureau. Larry has been deeply involved in preservation of the spotted owl in Oregon's old-growth forests. He is an impassioned environmentalist, and his tactics sometimes fall on the extreme side.

For instance, shortly after I got his note and a copy of the legal documents confirming his name change, newspapers accurately reported that Larry Bourret of the Wyoming Farm Bureau had been arrested for spiking old-growth trees in the Willamette National Forest to save the spotted owl. "The hell with those logging jobs," the Eugene *Register-Guard* quotes WFB's Bourret as saying at his arraignment. "A single cute feathered friend is worth the pack of 'em."

There's no telling where this will stop. Since I broached this idea with my acquaintances, I have been inundated with people who want to change their names to Larry Bourret.

If you're interested just write to me, Larry Bourret, care of this newspaper. Or you can write to my wife, Carolyn Paseneaux. ■

Larry Bourret, formerly Dan Whipple, works in Wyoming for the *Casper Star-Tribune*, where this column originally appeared. Dan was a staff reporter and then editor of *High Country News* when it was based in Lander, Wyoming.

takes about an hour. Mark Squillace, a University of Wyoming law professor who is a member of the real Friends of the Bow, hasn't yet agreed to change his name to Larry Bourret, but I would urge him to consider it. Certainly, no one in Wyoming is going to argue about Larry Bourret offering his services to public interest groups.

One of the new Larry Bourrets is a former Wyomingite who now lives in Eugene, Oregon. He is enthusiastic about his new name and went so far as to do some additional checking. Bourret discovered that the Wyoming Farm Bureau had not registered or trademarked its name in Oregon. "Kind of hard to believe,"

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TETON SCIENCE SCHOOL is holding a staff reunion during its 25th anniversary celebration June 26, 1992. For information, contact Colleen Cabot, P.O. Box 3543, Jackson, WY 83001 (307/733-4747).

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OTHER VOICES

National parks are not worlds unto themselves

by Tim Graham

Once upon a time there was an area of great natural diversity and beauty. Laws had been passed to preserve the unique natural values of this area for future generations; a conscientious steward was appointed, and staff hired to care for the area.

One day an old man came in, carrying a small black box. The old man said, "In this box is an important resource. I am entrusting its care to you. I will be going now, but the next generation will be along soon, and they will want to see the contents of the box in exactly the same condition as when I gave it to you for protection. So guard it carefully, and treat it properly."

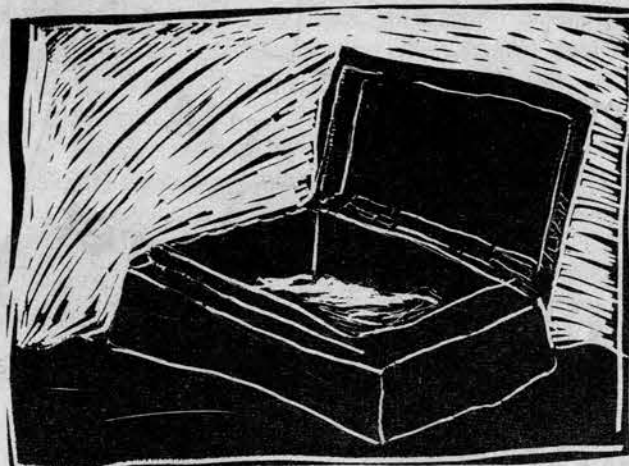
The steward said, "I'll keep this thing in the black box. It must have been safe in here up till now, so it will stay safe." So he set the box on his desk and went about his other duties.

A year passed, and still the box sat on the steward's desk. One day, a young couple showed up at his door and asked to see the contents of the box. "We have heard of this resource and are excited to experience it personally," they said. The steward opened the box, and it was empty. The couple asked if this was what was being protected. The steward replied, "Well, I don't know, I never knew what was in the box for sure."

The steward then called the old man who had brought the box in. "What was in that box?" the steward asked.

"Ice," the old man replied.

The National Park Service is directed by law to protect lands "for the enjoyment of future generations." This is a mandate to maintain national parks as natural, functioning ecosystems. But how to do this has been debated both within and outside the National Park Service for years. The belief of a majority of the American public,



and the management strategy of the agency, has been to take a hands-off approach on the premise that if nothing is done, park systems will remain healthy and "unimpaired."

Most national parks do not represent complete ecosystems, and no national park is a closed system. Activities beyond the boundaries can, and often do,

have serious impacts on animals and plants living in national parks. Parks may need to manipulate components of park communities and ecosystems to keep the incomplete systems inside parks functioning properly. For example, water and air in parks are greatly influenced by activities outside the park boundaries. The National Park Service must promote careful land, air and water stewardship beyond their boundaries to fulfill their legal mandate.

If the steward in our parable had taken the time to ask a few questions about the box and its contents, or had done some research into the properties of the contents of the box, he would have been able to take better care of his charge. The lesson is clear: We cannot assume that because we have drawn a line on a map around an area (put it in a black box), that the biological and physical resources within that area are protected.

To protect our national parks, we must know what lives in the them and understand community and ecosystem processes. We can then develop long-term monitoring plans for each park to document changes and prevent undue human impacts. Most national parks are fairly healthy, but time is running out. Ecological research and active resource management are needed now if we are to fulfill our obligation to present and future generations. ■

Tim Graham is a plant ecologist who works for the National Park Service.

A writer must know when it is time to move on

by Philip L. Fradkin

Ah, yes. Environmental reporters are relieved of their beats and quit their jobs. That is a very familiar story, indeed (HCN, 9/23/91, 12/16/91).

In the early spring of 1975, Mark Murphy, the metropolitan editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, called me into his office and told me that he was taking me off the environmental beat.

He said that I was not objective, that the managing editor could no longer trust my stories, and that I had done a poor job on a recent story. There was no appeal, and Murphy would not elaborate further. That was that on a non-union newspaper.

I had initiated the environmental beat in 1970, when I returned from covering the Vietnam war for the *Times* and saw that no one else was writing about the emerging subject. I asked Bill Thomas, who was then metro editor, if I could specialize in environmental reporting. He said no, but he would gladly give me whatever mail he received on the subject. I persisted and produced enough stories of merit to be eventually given the title of environmental writer.

I had a wonderful time. The newspaper was a veritable writer's dream-come-true. Direction was minimal. Time, money and space were not hindrances. I traveled the West and made it my beat.

It didn't seem to matter that I occasionally trod on the economic toes of the Chandler family, who controlled the newspaper and had their fingers in many other economic pies in southern California.

I did hear that a few people with large economic interests had complained to Otis Chandler, the publisher, about my coverage of issues that pertained to them. But Chandler still sent out reprints of my stories, and my environmental articles were nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

It was true that I was becoming disenchanted with the limitations of the newspaper format, and I had done a poor job on the story that Murphy cited. And yes, as Murphy pointed out, I had put a parking ticket on my expense account. I got the ticket when I couldn't find a legal space in time to make an interview appointment.

Even so, I was shocked when Murphy gave me the word. There had been no warning. I felt betrayed, but by whom and for what?

At the time Robert Gottlieb was researching a

book on the *Times* titled *Thinking Big*. He asked me if I thought I was a victim of economic interests. I told him that I had no evidence of such, that I was a victim of something, but I didn't know of what.

Like the two reporters in HCN's recent stories, I chose to leave the newspaper, although I was assured by Murphy that I was more than welcome to stay and write about anything but the environment. A few months later I was notified that I had received the media award from the Southern California Chapter of the Sierra Club for my work in 1974. I don't think that award would have endeared me to my editors had I remained at the *Times*.

After a brief hitch in state government as assis-

It is not a perfect world and each publication has its version of the truth

tant secretary of the State Resources Agency, which has overall responsibility for most of the environmental agencies and programs in California, I went to work as western editor of *Audubon* magazine. Again, I was creating a job. There had been no previous western editor.

When I first met Les Line, the editor of *Audubon*, I asked him what were the sacred cows. I knew there must be some and only wanted them identified so that I could save time. He said there were none. I was suspicious. Such animals are always lurking within the verdant fields of journalism. Their presence is known intuitively by the best editors and reporters.

At the *Times* I had been asked to include the developer's viewpoint in a few stories. I did so. Line asked me to include the Audubon viewpoint in stories where the National Audubon Society had not been central to the issue. I did so. I was no fool.

For five years on a part-time basis with *Audubon* there was less direction, great opportunities to travel from Alaska to Baja California, and more time to develop stories in even greater depth than I had been able to do at the *Times*. I was in heaven, except that environmental orthodoxy began to rankle and bore me.

A short time after I was given a whopping raise, I got a letter out of the blue from Line stating that money was short and that they had to eliminate my

job. But he was sure that I could earn as much money free-lancing articles for *Audubon*. I said no, and went my way. A few years later Line told me that he had been miffed because I had taken longer than expected to complete a book on the Colorado River — although I had written it on my time, not his.

As I look back on those two experiences — and this may be of some consolation to the reporters from the *Missoulian* (Dick Manning) and the *Idaho Statesman* (Steve Stuebner) — those editors were right to relieve me of my beats. My loyalties and interests were not focused on them, the publications they edited, or the institutions the publications represented. My loyalty was to my vision of the subject matter that I wrote about, and it still is.

So I began to write books, because they allow exploration of a subject in even greater depth and with more stylistic freedom. Also, a writer needs to exhibit less institutional loyalty to a book publisher, since it is usually a one-shot deal.

But I had my difficulties with Eastern book publishers, as I did with a metropolitan newspaper and a nature magazine, and as I would have with *High Country News*, had that been my place of employment. (Consider the sacred cow that Larry Mosher, the interim editor of HCN, last summer lanced with his editorial favoring a compromise on a wilderness water issue.)

What I tell students in my advanced nonfiction writing class at the University of California at Berkeley is that it is not a perfect world, and each publication has its own version of the truth. Thoughtful writers have the choice of compromising or going their own ways. Each writer can only hope that editing will improve the intrinsic value of the story, rather than promote the politics of the publication and the institution that he or she works for.

I only regret that the three of us did not see the writing on the wall and bail out before the Mandarins of Management zapped us. But we have company. The two editors who relieved me of my beats later fell victims to their hubris and the politics of their institutions, and were fired by their respective bosses. ■

Philip L. Fradkin is the author of *A River No More*, *Sagebrush Country*, and *Fallout*. A collection of the writer's environmental articles will be published by the University of New Mexico Press in the spring of 1993.