

High Country News

June 1, 1992

Vol. 24 No. 10

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar



Stanley Basin roundup in Idaho

Ernie Day

by Florence Williams

One day two years ago, Ron Stellingwerf emerged from his Forest Service office in Sheridan, Mont., population 700, to find the measurements of a grave scribbled on his door.

The vigilante-style warning was his neighbors' way of telling him they weren't pleased with his plan to reduce cattle numbers on the nearby Upper Ruby range. Stellingwerf, the district ranger, had hoped to improve the watershed and wildlife habitat on land leased for grazing in the Beaverhead National Forest.

Instead, a year after undertaking a draft Environmental Impact Statement intended to repair the heavily used range, Stellingwerf moved to another state. When he left, environmentalists say they were shut out of the reform process. Now they charge the district's final EIS, issued this month under a new district ranger, represents a weak compromise between the agency and ranchers.

At almost the same time, over on Idaho's Sawtooth National Recreation Area, politics has stopped another grazing-reform attempt dead in its tracks.

In March, an undersecretary of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., stopped hundreds of bound and printed copies of a pioneering study on another range from being released to the public. The study's recommended grazing cutbacks, designed to improve streams for threatened fish, were

National forest grazing cuts are stalled by politics

too harsh on ranchers, he said.

These two Idaho and Montana studies by the Forest Service represent the first full-scale efforts by the agency to control damage caused by grazing. Hundreds of other federal grazing allotments will soon undergo similar scrutiny. But if these two efforts are any indication, substantial improvements on the range may be a long way off.

Although these attempted grazing reforms took place in two different states on very different forests, the symptoms of an ailing process are very much the same. In both cases, angry ranchers at least initially refused to cooperate with Forest Service officials. Then, political pressure resulted in, or is still resulting in, numerous delays

and compromises. Finally, the federal agency's top ranks offered little support to the local staffs formulating the plans.

"The Forest Service is trying to do the right thing," says Johanna Wald, the environmental attorney whose lawsuits against the Bureau of Land Management forced that agency to re-evaluate old grazing plans. "But it's fair to say that we've seen a retrenchment, a backing off."

Life in a small town

What Ron Stellingwerf remembers most about his attempt to bring reform onto the Beaverhead's Upper Ruby is the blank stares, and then the open threats.

When Stellingwerf became district

ranger in Sheridan in 1984, he says he could see the grazing allotment had been mismanaged for years, resulting in damage to streams and wildlife at the headwaters of the Ruby River, a tributary of the Jefferson in southwestern Montana.

For one thing, Stellingwerf says, the 1970 management plan for the allotment wasn't working. The number of federally-permitted AUMs (animal unit months, equal to forage for one cow-calf pair per month) was based on the grass available after a mid-1960s sagebrush spraying program, in which 13,000 acres of sage gave way to pasture. But since then, the sage has grown back. Now there is less grass for the same number of cows.

In addition, the 10 permittees using the range largely ignored regulations about resting pastures and keeping their cows to designated areas. Streams and banks were a mess from trampling by cattle. The trail used by thousands of cows to reach the pastures was eroding enough to silt up the Ruby River. The cows, the cow-trails and the resource damage were also creating conflicts with the thousands of hunters who use the area in the fall.

To get a handle on the damage, Stellingwerf took a helicopter trip with two professional stream consultants and one rancher in 1987. The trip revealed the problems were worse than he thought, says Stellingwerf, now stationed on the Big Horn National Forest in northern Wyoming. The Upper Ruby

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Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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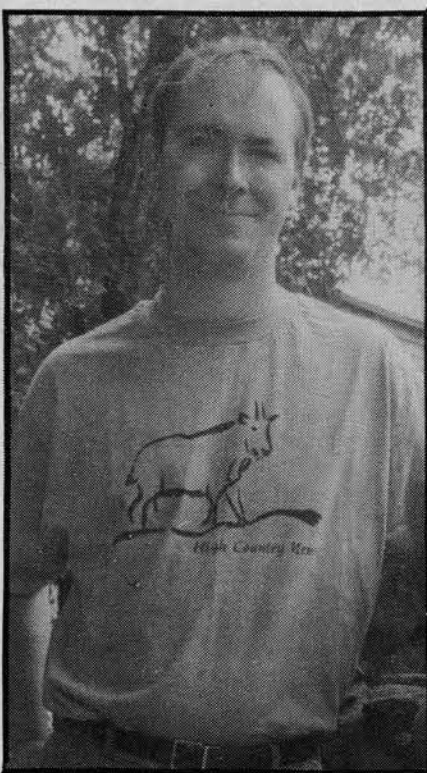
On their way through

It seems at least once a day someone pops in on their way from or to a hike, conference or both. Marlene and Lee Milner live in Colorado Springs, Colo., and were bound for a weekend symposium in Grand Junction on building, expanding and funding trails in Colorado. Lee told us a Colorado Springs coalition had just received \$30,000 in federal money for the Monument Creek Trail.

Joseph Colwell, a new Forest Service staffer in Spearfish, S.D., and his wife, Katherine, a printmaker, were moving the last of their possessions from Boulder Mountain in southern Utah, where they had lived for four years. The couple said reading *HCN* had been something of a radical act in their community, where environmentalist is known as the "E" word.

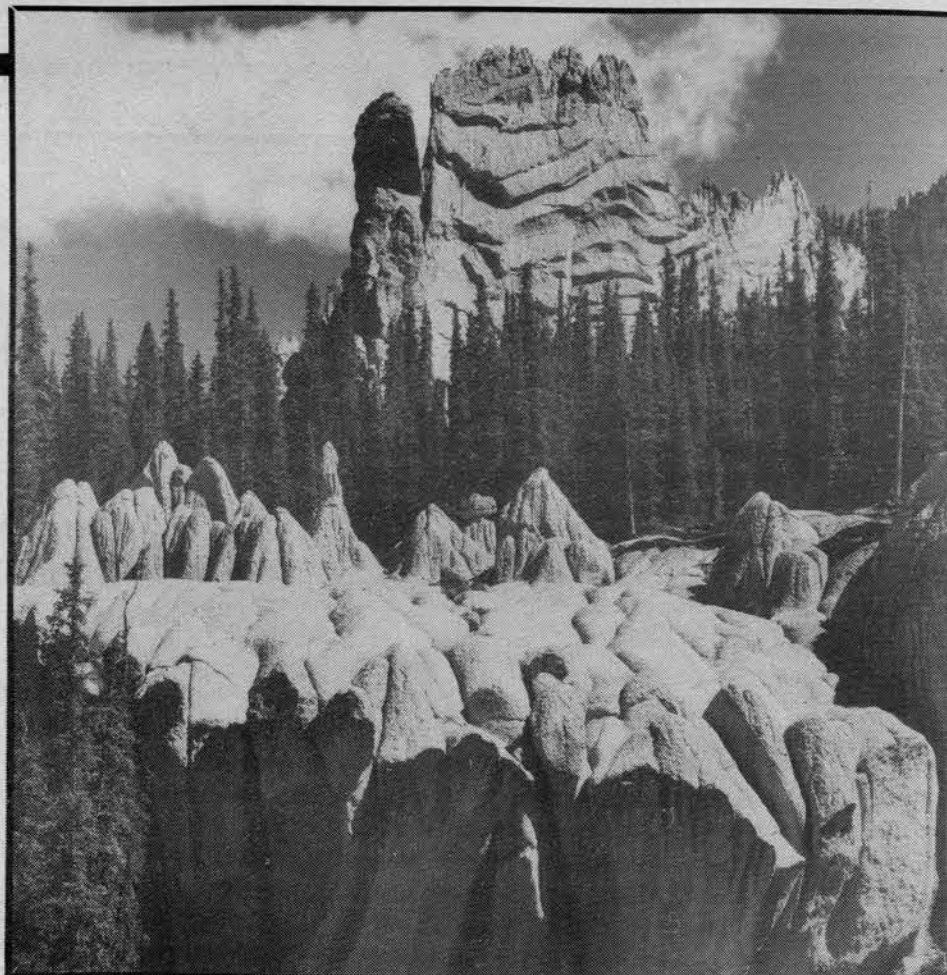
Bob and Bonnie Joslyn stopped by during a visit to Paonian Marion Stewart. She was a columnist on the 27,000-subscriber daily in Sheboygan, Wisc., where Bob works as an editor.

Outdoor educators Moe Witschard and Kristen Pozzoboni came through on their way to Santa Fe after a river trip through Desolation Canyon. Moe may return next spring when he co-leads Earlham College's mobile classroom, which roams the Southwest. And we wish him luck this June as a leader of a climb up Denali in Alaska, organized by



Cindy Wehling

Visitor "Steen" Smith models the new *HCN* T-shirt, on sale now for \$12 in small, medium, large or extra large. The mountain-goat design is in blue on a jade, 100 percent cotton, pre-shrunk shirt.



J.D. Marston

Wheeler Geologic Site in Colorado by award-winning photographer J.D. Marston

the National Outdoor Leadership School.

Firefighter Ken Miller of Wind River, Wyo., stopped in "between seasons," and we talked for some time with Sallie Greenwood, a Denverite who recently moved from Washington, D.C., where she worked for the National Geographic Society. Under dramatic skies, Sallie had just hiked the canyon country near Escalante, Utah.

On vacation from their jobs in Aiken, S.C., Benjamin "Steen" Smith and his wife, Ellen, walked in and were immediately pressed into trying on the new *HCN* T-shirt, with design by Diane Sylvain. It didn't look half bad, we are forced to admit. Steen is a civil engineer involved with low-level nuclear waste; Ellen works in communications for Westinghouse Corp.

Michael Ravitch and David Gold came by on their way from Forestville, Calif., to Brooklyn, N.Y. David is about to enter a Ph.D. program in oriental studies; Michael is writing a musical on the East German police. Checking out the new office was David Kane, a wildlife consultant from Denver, and from closer by, in Hayden, Colo., came coal miner Mike Orpi.

"It's like I moved to a new town but I never packed up," art-gallery manager Teri Shecter told us. She meant the gambling boom that has transformed Cripple Creek, Colo., during the last eight months. Teri was visiting friend Diane Sylvain and looking for property here. Teri said the Phenix Rising Gallery is one of the few establishments left in Cripple Creek that has not been "renovated" into a gambling casino.

P.S.

Congratulations to board member Jeff Fereday and his wife, Kay Hummel, of Boise, Idaho, whose new baby, Charles Russell, arrived April 2. He joins a brother, Wyatt.

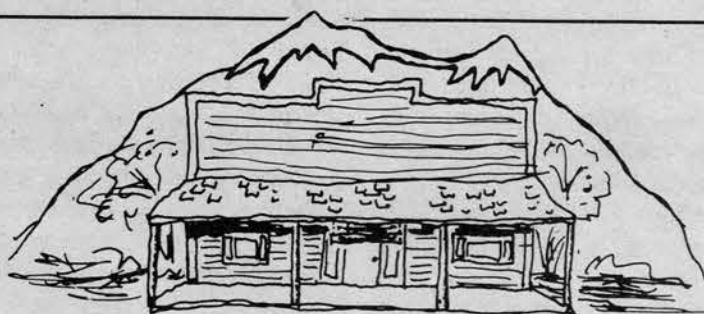
Another congratulations to photographer J.D. Marston, of Crestone, Colo., for winning the Sierra Club's prestigious Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography. Other winners have been Galen Rowell and Robert Glenn Ketchum.

Our best to former Montana journalist Bert Lindler, and his wife, Kristi DuBois, who just moved to Salt Lake City. He will work for the Forest Service editing research publications, and Kristi, a wildlife biologist, will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a wetlands project.

Welcome to a new local newspaper, *Yesterday Today*. It is written and printed across the street by private school youngsters under the direction of former *HCN* editors Larry Mosher and Mary Jarrett. The newspaper's name was the brainchild of Eli Wolcott, whose masthead beat out *Yo Dude*, the *Sunglasses* and the *Spy Glass*.

Bev and Jim Heumann would like to hear from people who have opinions about how the Park Service manages boating through the Grand Canyon. The couple serves on a Colorado River Constituents Panel as representatives of private boaters; if you'd like to pass on your concerns to them, write the Heumanns at 546 Lakeshore Dr., Boulder CO 80302.

— Betsy Marston for the staff



Join the celebration

Help dedicate the new *HCN* building Saturday, June 20

- 1:30 p.m. Open house at *HCN* building, 119 Grand Ave., Paonia, for former interns, board and visiting readers
- 3:00 p.m. Dedication ceremony at the building
- 3:30 p.m. Paradise Theatre; Charles Wilkinson, University of Colorado School of Law, speaker (reservations requested)
- 6:00 p.m. BBQ dinner in the Paonia Town Park (reservations requested)

- Please reserve _____ seats at the Paradise Theatre
- Please reserve BBQ dinner in the park for _____ adults and _____ children under 12.

(Dinner will not exceed \$10/adults, \$5 children. Vegetarian options will be available.)

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WESTERN ROUNDUP

Partisans of Logan Canyon protest a widened road

LOGAN, Utah — For more than 20 years, local conservationists have written letters, testified at hearings and held protest rallies — all to block the Utah Department of Transportation's proposal to widen U.S. 89 from Logan to Bear Lake.

A National Scenic Byway, the canyon road winds along the Logan River below 8,000-foot granite peaks of the Bear River Range. It boasts one of the last blue-ribbon trout fisheries in Utah, as well as other wildlife, including deer and elk.

With the state about to release its final Environmental Impact Statement for the canyon, opponents are mounting a last-ditch fight against the agency's plans to widen and straighten the road through the Cache National Forest. They say similar road "improvements" have scarred many of the majestic canyons along the Wasatch Range in northern Utah.

Is the problem just a need for better communication?

Conservationists don't dispute that the 28-mile-long canyon road needs some work, including resurfacing the entire road and replacement of at least three bridges. But they fear that Logan Canyon will go the way of Provo Canyon farther south, which is now in the process of becoming a four-lane highway.

"We want to keep the road on its current width and alignment. That is the real rub between us and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)," said Tom Lyon, a member of Citizens to Protect Logan Canyon, a grass-roots conservation organization.

A state transportation brochure released in March detailed its "preferred alternative." According to state officials, the roadway will be kept at its current 26-foot width for the first four miles, but from Logan Cave on through to Bear Lake it will be widened to 34-47 feet. Conservationists say that's a width they can't accept.

"The widening of the canyon is not

an extremist environmental issue; it's a mainstream issue," said Nadene Steinhoff, a member of Bridgerland Audubon Society. Steinhoff presents a slide show to local business, civic, recreation and environmental groups to muster opposition to the highway-widening project. "The top private-sector industry in Utah is tourism, so we're looking for pockets of support in the business community," Steinhoff said.

Steinhoff also organized the "Hands Across The Canyon," a silent vigil April 25 that protested UDOT's plans for the canyon highway. Between 300 and 400 people gathered near the Beaver Mountain ski area to join hands in protest against the preferred alternative.

"The protest certainly got some attention," Lyon said, "but I would have to say that the responses of the agency people that were there being interviewed were not particularly encouraging."

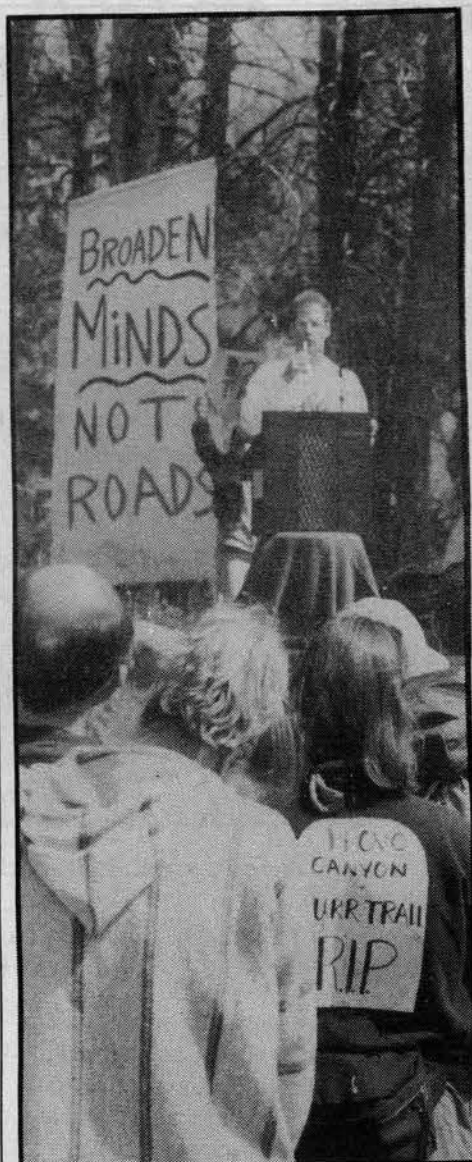
When asked about the Hands Across The Canyon protest, James Naegle, UDOT engineer for location and environmental studies, said, "My concern was they were not telling the truth very closely. There's a need for better communication."

Naegle said he is meeting with citizens and listening to their concerns to see what the public understands and what UDOT understands. "An example is the term 'Clear Zone.' It's not a bulldozed area where we wipe out everything. There's a lack of understanding. The people don't really know what we're proposing. There's a real separation between what we're proposing and what they think we're proposing," Naegle said.

As defined in the draft Environmental Impact Statement released in 1991, a clear zone is an area where "existing hazards would be removed or protected by a barrier." Conservationists fear that wherever UDOT doesn't want to wall in road hazards, they will remove them, thus producing the "bulldozed" effect Naegle implies will never happen.

Planning for improvements in Logan Canyon must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration, UDOT and the Forest Service.

Since the highway is managed as a National Scenic Byway as well as a Utah Scenic Byway, any changes to the road are required to meet Forest Service stan-



Scott T. Smith

Crowd listens to Bruce Pendery during the Logan Canyon protest

dards. The scenic quality standards are based on "retention." According to the draft EIS, "Retention is defined as repetition of form, line, color and texture that are frequently found in the existing characteristic landscape."

"Changes in the size, amount, intensity, direction and pattern of landscape qualities should not be evident," says the draft EIS.

District Ranger Dave Baumgartner of the Logan Ranger District has come under fire from local conservationists. They say he has the responsibility as district ranger to stop the widening of a National Scenic Byway in a national forest.

"Some wish we had been more vocal," Baumgartner said. "We have been very vocal in our role. We've had some good hard discussions on this issue, but they weren't public, they were other kinds of meetings. We wouldn't be where we are now (in such controversy) if it weren't for public meetings."

Before any construction can begin, UDOT has to make a Record of Decision, the final step in the approval process. After the final Environmental Impact Statement is released, there will be a 30-day comment period, Naegle said. During that time, conservationists plan to hold a public hearing on the UDOT proposal in a final attempt to get the agency to tone down construction in the scenic canyon.

For more information, write UDOT, 169 Wall Ave., Ogden, UT 84404 or Logan Ranger Station, USFS, 860 N. 1200 East, Logan, UT 84321.

— Michael Bitton

Michael Bitton is a writer in Logan, Utah.

HOTLINE

Grizzly hunt called off

Grizzly bears won't be hunted this spring in Montana, and perhaps never again. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed throwing out its special rule that has allowed a limited hunt in northwestern Montana. The proposal stems from a U.S. District Court's opinion last fall agreeing with the animal-rights group, the Fund for Animals, that a hunt was not justified. Wayne Pacelle, director of the fund, said the suit was brought to stop the sport hunting of a threatened species. The grizzly hunt started in 1975 to manage population numbers and discourage bears from roaming onto private land, according to the agency. The number of grizzly bears killed was limited by a quota: 14 male bears or six female bears a year could be killed by human causes of any kind. Only two per year were killed by hunters in the last five years, said Chris Servheen, USFWS grizzly bear recovery coordinator. The bears come out onto private ranching land east of the mountains and "that's the concern," said Servheen. The removal of the rule awaits public comment and a final decision by the USFWS within a year; until then, no hunting.

Nature Conservancy may buy Oregon ranches

The Nature conservancy may purchase three large eastern Oregon ranches from Vail, Colo., resort owner George Gillett. The organization received an extension on its exclusive option signed April 20, and now has until June 17 to act on the property. The organization is using the time to appraise the property and raise funds. If bought, the ranches would be the Conservancy's largest single land acquisition in Oregon. The land in Lake and Harney counties includes more than 185,000 acres of high-desert habitat as well as grazing rights to 900,000 acres of public land. The Conservancy plans to retain the MC Ranch as a working ranch, says the Conservancy's Cathy Macdonald, in Portland, Ore. The Kueny Ranch in the Alvord desert would be managed to preserve critical wildlife habitat, she adds, and most of the Roaring Springs Ranch near Steens Mountain would be sold and the rest exchanged with the BLM to consolidate federal holdings along the wild and scenic Donner and Blitzen River. The non-profit Conservancy has promised to continue paying property taxes and to manage the ranches to contribute to the local economy. Most neighboring ranches, however, are not pleased. Some who tried a cooperative effort to buy the land are disappointed that their attempt failed. Those ranchers question whether the Conservancy will do what it says it will.

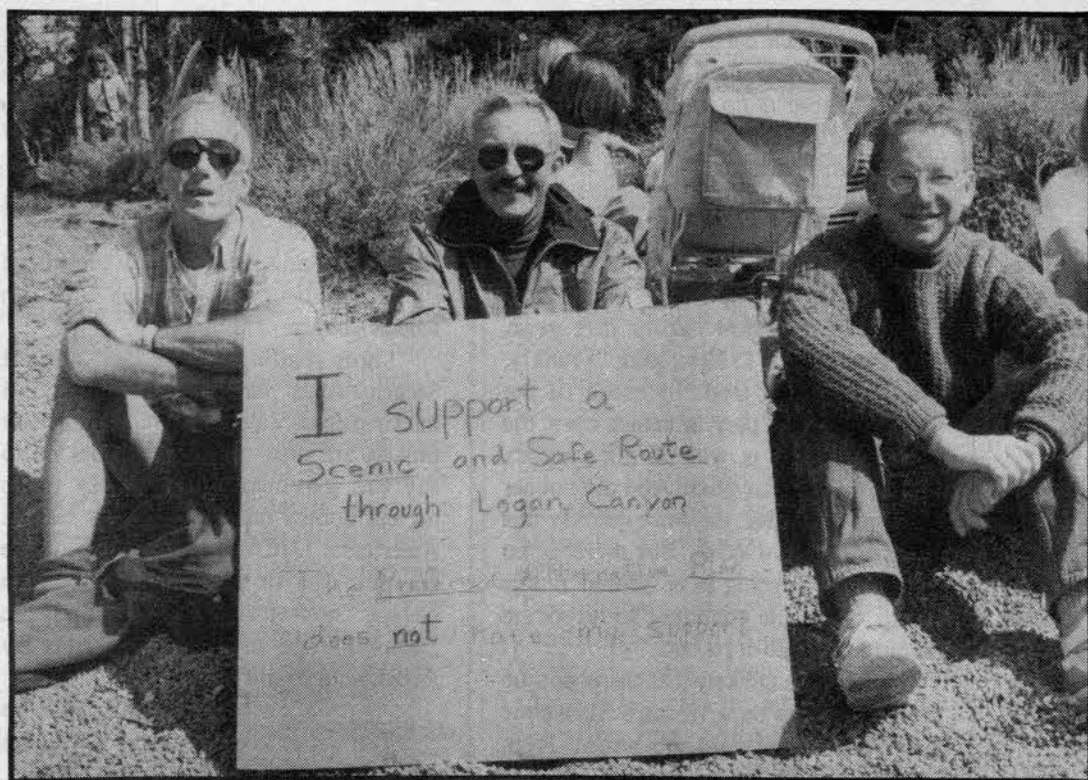
BARBS

"Turkey shoot" takes on a whole new meaning.

A Potosi, Mo., man who thought he killed a turkey tossed the bird into his trunk along with his loaded shotgun. The turkey struggled as it was pulled out of the trunk and triggered the gun with its claw, shooting the man in the leg. Larry Lands may also be fined for shooting his turkey a week before the season opened, reports AP.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers must be turning green with envy.

The Chinese Parliament recently approved the giant Yangtze River dam, which will produce 18,000 megawatts of electricity and flood out 725,000 to 1.1 million people.



Scott T. Smith

Protesters say the "preferred alternative" will scar scenic Logan Canyon

Land claims and money divide Western Shoshone Tribe

A handful of Western Shoshones have declared independence from the United States at the remote northern Nevada ranch of Carrie and Mary Dann.

In a statement signed and read by Raymond Yowell, chief, the Western Shoshone National Council declared its "sovereignty" at the Crescent Valley ranch that has been the scene of an ongoing conflict with the Bureau of Land Management (HCN, 9/9/91).

As the Danns drove a herd of cattle on to the open range surrounding their ranch in late March, Yowell announced that he had "nationalized" the family's livestock. Yowell claimed the public range as the homeland of the Western Shoshone nation, "Newe Segobia" (meaning "the people and mother earth"), and demanded direct negotiations with the State Department.

"As far as we're concerned, the BLM is no longer in the picture," Yowell said.

The move seemed to mystify the Nevada state office of the BLM. Two weeks later, the agency called off a roundup of the unauthorized livestock after Carrie Dann climbed into a loading chute to stop BLM wranglers from taking some of her cattle away.

"We didn't go out there to start an Indian war," said Maxine Shane, a BLM public affairs specialist. "We didn't go out there for a confrontation on the range. We were there under a court order. And we were stopped. It's not over. It's just back in the legal arena again."

Shane said the agency's state director, Billy Templeton, has written to Yowell for an explanation of "who owns and controls" the livestock at the Dann ranch. "As far as the BLM is concerned, we're not planning on being involved with who owns that land," she said. "That's not our authority. They'll have to deal with other federal entities on that, not the BLM."

But other Western Shoshone leaders and Nevada lawmakers responded with less equivocation.

Jerry Millett, chairman of the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, and Dale Mallotte, chairman of the Te-Moak Bands Council in Elko, both said the national council no longer represented their tribes, which constitute the majority of Western Shoshones.

"I don't know who the national council represents," said Mallotte. Each tribe is seeking to settle a long-standing conflict over historic Western Shoshone land claims.

"The national council doesn't really represent anybody anymore," charged Greg Peek, a legislative aide to Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, R-Nev., whose district encompasses all of the officially recognized Western Shoshone bands and tribes, except for a small group living in Death Valley, Calif.

As for the council's "nationalizing" cattle, Peek said, "that's just a ploy; it has no meaning."

For nearly 20 years, the Dann sisters have symbolized the Western Shoshone's aboriginal claim to 24 million acres of the Great Basin, a vast territory stretching from Barstow, Calif., to Twin Falls, Idaho, and embracing much of the state of Nevada. The Danns represented the tribal land claims in a legal plea that was denied by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1984.

But now, spurred by restive members frustrated by lack of progress on a settlement, key tribal leaders have broken ranks with the Danns and the Western Shoshone National Council, a nonprofit organization that traces its authority to "traditional governing councils."

The national council was formed in 1984 to keep the land claims alive and unify the demands of the various West-



Kit Miller

Mary and Carrie Dann at their ranch in Crescent Valley, Nevada

The Dann sisters continue to stir the pot

While the long battle of the Western Shoshones to regain land lost more than a century ago remains at a stand-off today, there are some new twists in the saga. In other developments,

- To reduce overgrazing, the BLM confiscated 161 horses from the range surrounding the Dann ranch in early March. Carrie Dann asserted the horses were "wild." But BLM wild horse specialist Bruce Portwood said that by legal definition there could be no "wild horses" in Crescent Valley. The Danns claimed all horses in the area when the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act was implemented in the early 1970s.

The impounded horses were shipped to auction under state stray laws, said Portwood, and most likely ended up "in Alpo cans."

- Also in March, a grand jury returned indictments against Raymond Yowell and other members of the Western Shoshone National Council who had organized a roundup of mustangs two years ago on public land near the Duckwater reservation in eastern Nevada. The six men, including a Utah wrangler who often works on BLM roundups, were

indicted on federal charges of selling 77 wild horses to a Texas slaughterhouse. The charges carry a maximum penalty of six months in jail and a \$500 fine.

Yowell contended that the horses had been overgrazing the range and destroying springs, and he sent a bill to the BLM for reimbursement of the cost of the roundup.

- While seeking to avoid the issue of who owns the land, the BLM has rested its case against the Danns on the alleged overgrazed condition of the South Buckhorn allotment that the family shares with six other ranchers. Although the agency admittedly has done only a " cursory" study, BLM range conservationist Tom Warren said that the allotment is in "pretty poor condition overall ... They don't need to beat the ground in to prove their point," he said.

Supporters of the Danns plan to counter the charge with their range study. Citizen Alert, a Nevada environmental group that backs the Western Shoshone aboriginal land claim, has received a private grant of \$10,000 to study the allotment.

"We hope it will vindicate the

Danns, who say they are not to blame," said Bob Fulkerson, director of Citizen Alert. The study will be conducted by Resource Concepts, a Carson City, Nev., firm that recently blasted a series of General Accounting Office reports critical of range conditions in the West.

- Meanwhile, six miles down the road from the Danns, rancher Maynard Alves is hopping mad. He said the Danns have been stealing his forage since he bought the neighboring ranch four years ago. Although Alves holds a permit for nearly 7,000 AUMs on the South Buckhorn allotment, last year he was able to use just over 10 percent of that.

"If I put all my cows out," Alves said, "they would come in so poor — little leppy cows — I'd go broke for sure." He has threatened to sue the BLM and the Danns for his losses.

Carrie Dann responded that Alves should have known he was inheriting an "Indian problem." "If 'gradual encroachment' is an okay way for the United States to take our land," she said, "I guess we've gradually encroached on him."

— Jon Christensen

ern Shoshone bands and tribes. But while the national council has steadfastly refused \$75 million awarded to the Western Shoshones by the Indian Claims Commission in the late 1970s, there have been increasing calls for a per-capita division of the fund.

At a hearing before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in late April on a settlement distribution bill sponsored by Rep. Vucanovich, the Te-Moak and Duckwater tribes proposed distributing settlement monies and expanding reservation lands.

In principle, nearly everyone supports a settlement that includes a per-capita payment, plus some land and economic development monies for the tribes. But no one has been able to fashion an agreement on the particulars. And the confusing, sometimes contradictory, and often overlapping array of Western Shoshone leaders, spokespeople, and proposals has caused Nevada lawmakers

to throw up their hands in frustration.

"That's the main problem," said Peek. "There is no unified Shoshone voice. Each of those guys sent a proposal to the recent hearing and none of them carried less than 4 million acres. We're looking at 25 million acres. That's just ridiculous. Until there's some realistic compromise, nothing will get done."

In an interview earlier this year, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., said, "Frankly, the claim being made by some of the Shoshones that they in effect own the state of Nevada is, with all due respect, not going to go anyplace. And the sooner they get off of that, the more quickly this thing will move along. But there is no way that it is going to be settled if this group of people continues to advocate owning the state of Nevada."

It appears unlikely that there will be much progress on a Western Shoshone settlement bill anytime soon. Rep. Vucanovich's staff is uncertain whether

she will even attempt to have her bill marked up in the Interior committee during this Congress. And both the Te-Moak and Duckwater tribes are now working on compromise proposals.

Not the Danns and the Western Shoshone National Council. They continue to demand recognition of their land rights and direct negotiations with the federal government.

Signs reading "Shoshone National Security Area" have been posted around the Crescent Valley ranch. Joining the protest are anti-nuclear activists, who say the government illegally tests nuclear bombs on land owned by Native Americans (HCN, 12/31/90). They are camped out in a pasture, poised to employ "non-violent tactics" to help the Danns disrupt any further attempts by the BLM to round up livestock.

— Jon Christensen

The writer is a free-lancer in Carson City, Nevada.

A hot spring melts snow, leaving the West dry

Throughout much of the West, everything to do with water is four to six weeks ahead of schedule. Snow is disappearing fast, or is already gone. Rivers have peaked, and unless the rest of spring and the coming summer are wetter than usual, much of the region will be out of water by July or August. The drought will affect everything from fire danger and what crops farmers can plant, to fish survival and hydroelectric potential. A look at some of the states reveals the following picture:

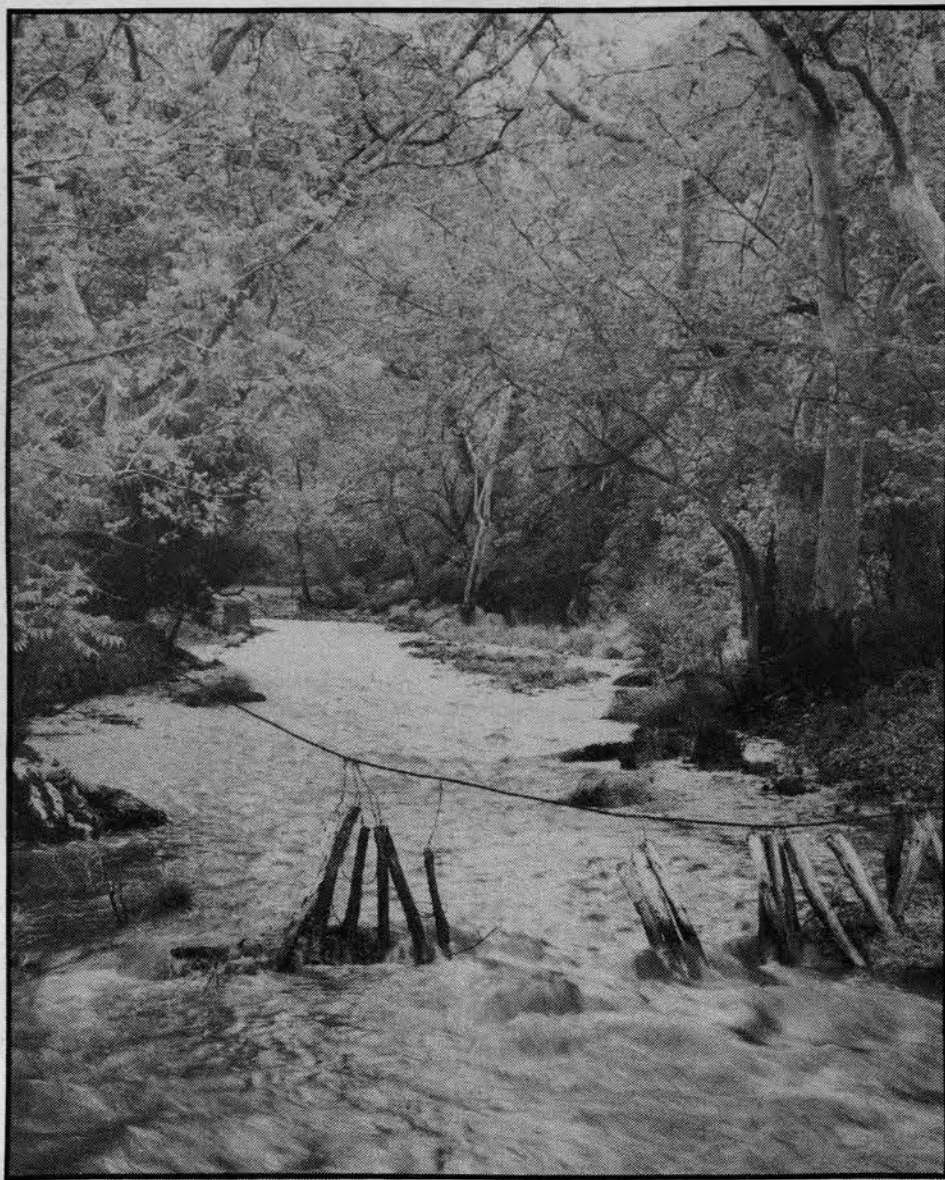
IDAHO. Southern Idaho appears to be the hardest-hit area in the nation, needing 5.8 inches of rain to break out of drought. In the last week of April, irrigation diversion caused eight miles of the Snake River to run dry. The number of fish killed is unknown, but no laws were broken because Idaho has no in-stream flow regulations. Snake River irrigators who have no water rights tied to reservoir storage could run out early.

Farmers should be able to raise grains without too much trouble, but crops that need more water, such as potatoes, sugar beets and corn, may be another matter, said Hal Anderson, of the Idaho Department of Water Resources. The Forest Service says livestock may have to get off public lands early, depending on summer rain and range conditions in August.

MONTANA. In early May the Missouri River was running about half what it normally would at this time of year. The Missouri's low level indicates how skimpy its headwater rivers have been running and how much of the mountain snowpack has melted.

"There's no snowpack out there to sustain us. Now it's up to the rains," said Mel White, chief of the data management unit of the U.S. Geological Survey. The Beaverhead, Smith, Sun, Marias, Musselshell, Bighorn, Tongue, Yellowstone and Powder rivers are in the worst condition, worse even than in 1988, one of the most severe drought years ever, added White.

North-central and northwestern Montana need four inches of rain to replenish soil-moisture reserves and produce adequate crops, range forage and water supplies, according to the National Weather Service. Southwestern and central Montana need 3.8 inches of rain.



Spring runoff in White Water Canyon, New Mexico

Dale Schickentanz

Parts of eastern Montana, however, were blessed with drenching rains in April and early May, enough to pull them out of the drought. But hydroelectric dams that normally store snowmelt water in April and May are running it through turbines as fast as it comes in. That is leading to predictions that northwest Montana reservoirs won't be full this summer. Power, not water, is what downstream users want, said Greg Delwiche, chief of reservoir regulation for the Army Corps of Engineers in Portland, Ore.

OREGON. By mid-May, snowpack in the North Cascades was 75 percent of normal and in the rest of the state it was nonexistent. The snow melted several weeks ago and the rivers have already peaked.

According to Stan Fox of the Soil Conservation Service in Portland, April precipitation was average around the state, but streamflows remained very low as the rain soaked into the dry soil rather than ran off into the rivers. Streamflows in southern Oregon have been running at 6 to 23 percent of average, and 12 to 60 percent in the central part of the state, said Fox.

Reservoirs, now half-full, won't be getting any more inflow from snow melt. Demand for irrigation water started early because of the high temperatures in February and March. May was also warmer than average. The Umatilla River, for example, has been so dry that fish are having a hard time swimming upstream. River temperatures are higher

than usual, which is also hard on the fish. "There isn't anything that looks good," added Fox.

WYOMING. As Wyoming moves into its sixth summer of drought, irrigators may have to go without at some point in the growing season. Water stored in major reservoirs over the state varied, with operators attempting to store as much runoff water as possible, the Soil Conservation Service reported. Many river basins currently are at just 20 to 22 percent of average precipitation.

By mid-May, Yellowstone National Park's moisture conditions were much drier than at the same time in 1988, when the park went up in flames. In addition, less than half the normal snowpack remained to feed the Yellowstone River.

Nearby, only 15 percent of the snowpack was left in the Wind River Basin, reports the SCS. While Wyoming normally gets spring rain, April's precipitation was much below average. April in Casper, for example, was the driest ever recorded and second warmest, according to the National Weather Service. Little precipitation was recorded around the state in May.

COLORADO. By May 18, the snowpack that feeds the Colorado River was down to 30 percent of what it usually is this time of year. Colorado's reservoirs are currently full, but they won't continue to fill for as long as usual. Unless big rains come soon, irrigators may be shut off in August.

The dryness continues a pattern that began in 1985, said Lenny Lang, who works for the Soil Conservation Service in Grand Junction.

WASHINGTON. Judging by April and May, the Columbia River system could set an unfortunate record.

"Right now conditions are worse than at the beginning of the 1928-1932 drought years," said Greg Delwiche. The dustbowl years set the low-water record for the Columbia system.

Throughout the region the outlook for water availability is grim. The pending dry summer could bring another season of fires and low crop yields to the northern Rockies and the northwest. If June and July don't bring plenty of rain, the area is in for a long dry summer.

— Caroline Byrd, HCN intern

A utility uses the Endangered Species Act strategically

Economics has created strange bedfellows in the Northwest: A power company and a conservation group have teamed up to try to add a salmon run to the endangered species list. Pacific Power, an Oregon-based utility that sells electricity to 600,000 customers, and Oregon Trout, a 2,300-member fish advocacy group, have asked the National Marine Fisheries Service to reconsider its decision not to list the Columbia River coho as an endangered species.

Wild coho were once abundant throughout the Columbia basin, with populations exceeding 600,000. But in the late 1950s, overfishing and habitat destruction threatened the coho with extinction, and hatcheries began augmenting the runs. Despite those efforts, the wild runs dwindled to about 600, prompting Oregon Trout and several other groups to petition NMFS to list the run.

In June 1991, however, NMFS decided against the petition, ruling that the wild run had so interbred with hatchery-bred fish that it was no longer a "distinct popu-

lation." That made it ineligible for endangered species protection, a finding Pacific Power and Oregon Trout dispute.

"NMFS admitted there are wild coho," says Terry Flores, regional affairs representative for Pacific Power. "Their technical committee recommended that wild coho be ruled a distinct species, but the agency ignored that recommendation."

"NMFS must either declare the coho extinct or list it under the Endangered Species Act," says Bill Bakke, executive director of Oregon Trout. "There is no middle ground."

Although Pacific Power is appealing the ruling because, says president Bob Moench, "it's the right thing to do," the utility also has less altruistic motives. The company, one of two divisions of PacifiCorp Electric Operations (which serves customers from Washington to Utah) hopes that listing the coho will lessen the impact of the listing of other Columbia River salmon, such as the Snake River sockeye.

Unlike fish in the upper river, lower

Columbia coho do not have to pass any dams in their migration. Listing the coho, therefore, would not affect hydroelectric production at the dams, or raise the rates paid by Pacific Power, one of the Bonneville Power Administration's largest customers. But it could force changes in fishing harvests and hatchery practices, and thus keep hydroelectric operation changes to a minimum.

"We think the Endangered Species Act can be made to work without economically devastating the region," says Flores.

"Customers of the electric power industry in the Northwest have spent over \$1 billion in the last 10 years to restore salmon runs, most of which has been spent to produce more hatchery fish," adds Moench. "We believe that focus must change. By taking into account all the factors that affect their survival, we can solve this problem."

NMFS is now sampling streams and doing genetic analysis of fish, says Merritt Tuttle, division chief in the agency's Portland office. What they're looking for

is evidence of distinct populations that would qualify under the Endangered Species Act. If such information comes to light, says Tuttle, the agency could change its decision. But if NMFS doesn't change its decision, say the petitioners, the issue could wind up in court.

— Jim Stiak

The writer free-lances in Eugene, Oregon.

BARBS

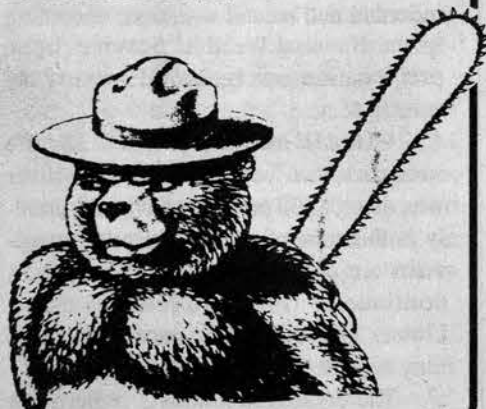
Somehow, we're not convinced that "beefy-meaty" flavor will improve airline food or TV dinners.

A scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture has discovered the molecule that gives meat its flavor. "Beefy-meaty peptide" may soon enliven cheap cuts of meat, tasteless tofu and bland frozen meals, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

HOTLINE

Idaho talks fail

Failed negotiations over wilderness in Idaho will leave the fate of 9 million acres up in the air. While environmentalists want the pristine forest land protected, industry groups support logging it. The two-year effort to resolve the debate ended last month, when pro- and anti-wilderness camps announced they had failed to reach a compromise. State taxpayers spent \$229,000 on talks, hosted by the Mediation Institute of Seattle. Progress broke down when the 16-member panel learned the U.S. Forest Service plans to remove its appeals process, which environmentalists consider their best tool for fighting proposed timber sales. "If that occurs, it would take a major chip away from us," Idaho environmentalist and panel member Craig Gehrke told the *Idaho Falls Post-Register*. This last attempt marks the third failure in 10 years to reach agreement on a wilderness proposal. Another go-around is expected to begin during the next congressional session in 1993.

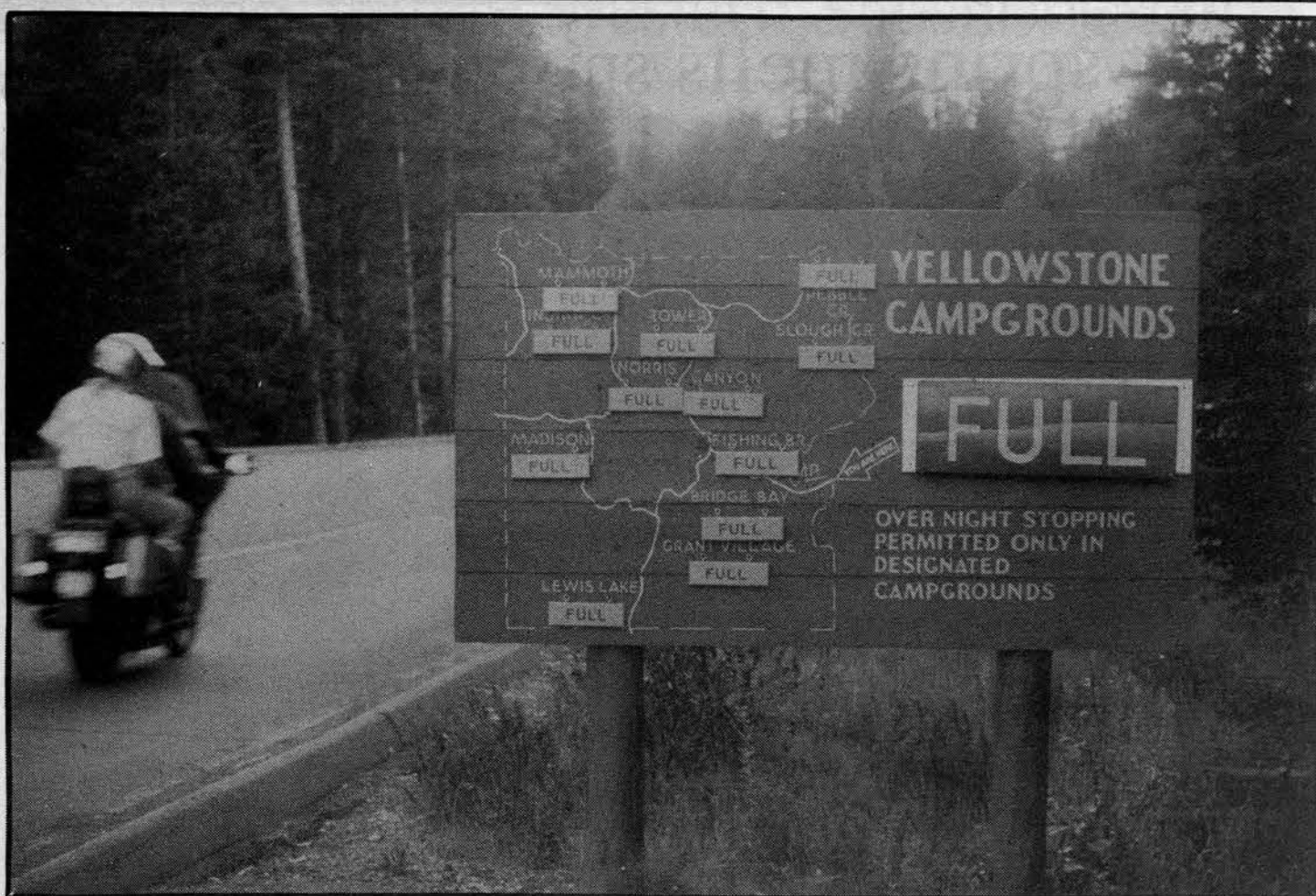


Could Smokey be sinister?

The Forest Service is fuming over an ad that portrays Smokey the Bear, a decades-old agency mascot, as a smirking tree-cutter. Agency officials say that the ad, part of a \$1 million campaign by Americans for the Ancient Forests, violates trademark protection laws. A drawing of Smokey with a chain saw appears with the caption, "Say it ain't so, Smokey," followed by the explanation that the Forest Service helps timber companies cut ancient forests in the Northwest. "There's a bear in the woods. And he's destroying our heritage," reads the ad. Bob Chlopak, director of Americans for the Ancient Forests, says as long as his group uses Smokey for non-commercial purposes, it is protected first amendment speech. "Smokey is fair game," says Chlopak. The Forest Service told AP it has not decided whether to sue.

No jeopardy opinion inspires lawsuit

Some 25 conservation and fishing groups announced plans to sue the federal government after a ruling that Columbia and Snake River hydroelectric dams do not jeopardize endangered salmon runs. The National Marine Fisheries Service issued its "no jeopardy" ruling for 1992 dam operations on April 10. But fish advocates point to statistics from Northwest wildlife agencies showing that up to 95 percent of juvenile salmon are killed on a downstream migration that takes them past eight dams and reservoirs. Only four endangered sockeye returned to Redfish Lake in Idaho last year, and there are only a few hundred threatened spring and summer chinook left. The lawsuit, filed by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, could force the dams' operators, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation, to lower reservoirs much further than currently planned. Such drawdowns would help push the juvenile fish to the ocean faster. Bonneville opposes such a plan, citing revenue lost from reduced power generation.



Dennis Davis

Yellowstone: more tourists and fewer rangers

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, Wyo. — While record numbers of travelers may again visit Yellowstone this summer, park managers say there will be fewer rangers to give them maps at entrance booths, lead them on nature walks or respond to their pleas for assistance.

Warnings of smaller staffs have become a familiar spring refrain for Yellowstone officials. Although their budget is larger than last year, they say the extra money already has been eaten up by uncontrollable cost increases, from inflation in general to the price of horse feed.

"We don't really want to be seen as coming out and whining every year and saying it's getting worse and worse, but it is," said Yellowstone spokeswoman Marsha Karle. "We're spinning our wheels without much progress."

This summer, the park will have only about half as many rangers on duty as it did three years ago, and about 20 fewer than last year.

In 1988, there were 148 summer rangers in Yellowstone, said Chief Ranger Dan Sholly. In 1989, with the ranger ranks swollen by extra money for rehabilitation of effects from the 1988 forest fires, there were 186. This year, there will be fewer than 90 working throughout the 2.2-million-acre park.

"Besides not being able to serve the public as well, there is a long-term

cumulative effect of stretching ourselves thinner and thinner," Sholly warned. "Our people have to work longer and longer hours and more and more time, and they still can't accomplish everything."

That's happening at the same time visitor numbers are booming. Since 1985, visitation has risen by about 700,000 people, about as many as live in Baltimore, Md. This year, based on that trend, park managers predict Yellowstone's annual visitation will top 3 million for the first time. That's nearly the population of Arizona.

And while more of those travelers are now arriving in Yellowstone in the spring and fall, outside the main travel season of June, July and August, park bosses are trimming the terms of summer rangers to save money.

As more travelers arrive in Yellowstone while the park's staff and services decline each year, revenue from the park's \$10 entrance fee seems conspicuously absent.

When Congress in 1987 boosted the fees to several of the nation's prime national parks, including Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks, it said the money would go back to the parks instead of into the federal treasury, as it had before. And the money now does go to the parks.

But while that money, by law, has

supplemented park budgets, Congress has sliced about the same amount out of many of them. That leaves park managers with no net increase in spending powers.

"A shell game is a good description," said Terri Martin of the watchdog National Parks and Conservation Association. "It was sold to the public as a way to supplement park budgets and provide more money for research and needs, but it's only been a way to justify budget cuts."

Yellowstone entrance stations collected about \$4 million in fee money last year. In 1989, all parks together took in \$51.4 million in fees.

That stayed in the National Park Service budget, but was offset by cuts and increased costs. A report on the Park Service issued last month noted that the agency's budget has stayed flat in real terms since 1983.

Yellowstone managers this year are cutting entrance gate staffing in the spring and fall to save money, leaving more fees uncollected. But since the park does not get the cash it collects, Chief Ranger Dan Sholly said, gate staffing actually drains park coffers.

"We want to keep the entrance stations open whether or not we collect money," he said. "But we don't get the money to do it."

—Michael Milstein

HOTLINE

Predator poisonings continue

Lambing season brought with it more illegal predator poisonings in Colorado and Utah. A dead coyote was found next to a sheep carcass on public land near Rangely, Colo., and poisoned carcasses killed a golden eagle and 12 bald eagles in the mountains east of Salt Lake City. Wildlife officials suspect the poisoners used Temik, a pesticide blamed for a string of bear and raptor deaths last year in Colorado's White River National Forest. A \$5,000 reward is still available for information on those poisonings. Predator kills continue despite a federal sting operation that

uncovered a network of poison buyers and dealers last fall. So far, only one person has been convicted; he is Ray Hall, who illegally purchased 200 pounds of cyanide from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's predator program (*HCN*, 10/21/91). Trials of other defendants in the case are about to begin. Meanwhile, federal and state wildlife officials have offered a \$30,000 reward for information on the most recent spate of eagle poisonings. But wildlife officials urge passers-by not to approach dead animals. Mark Caddy, who works for Colorado's Division of Wildlife, says, "Be careful. Just breathing the dust residue from these poisons is enough to kill a human." Anyone with information about illegal predator poisonings can contact John Griest, U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement office, 529 25-1/2 Road, Room 113, Grand Junction, CO 81505 (303/243-2778).

BARBS

Wait until Sen. Helms hears what Dennis said.

A blushing Sen. Dennis DeConcini of New Mexico hurriedly left a news conference after saying the federal deficit was like a "gigantic orgasm that is out of control — that just absolutely can't put itself together." He meant to call the deficit a "gigantic organism," reported Knight-Ridder Newspapers.

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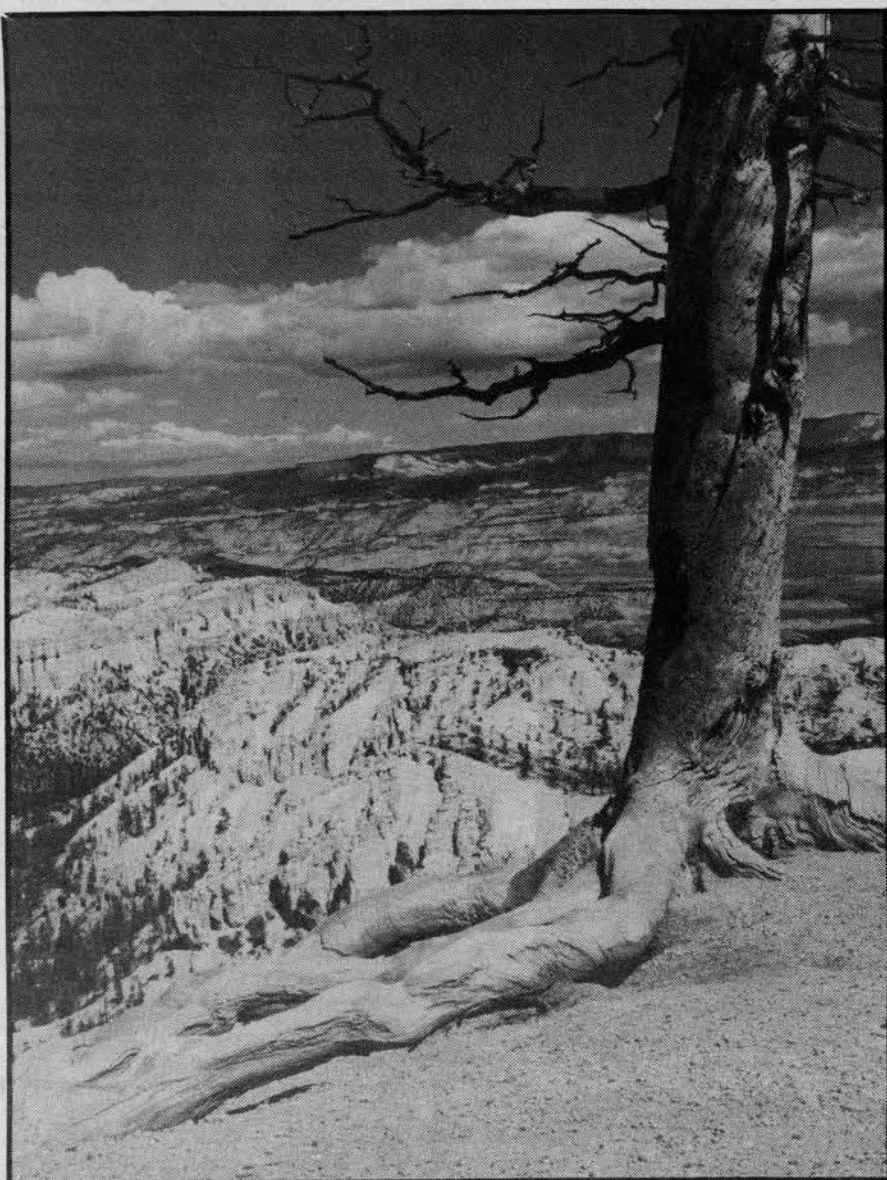
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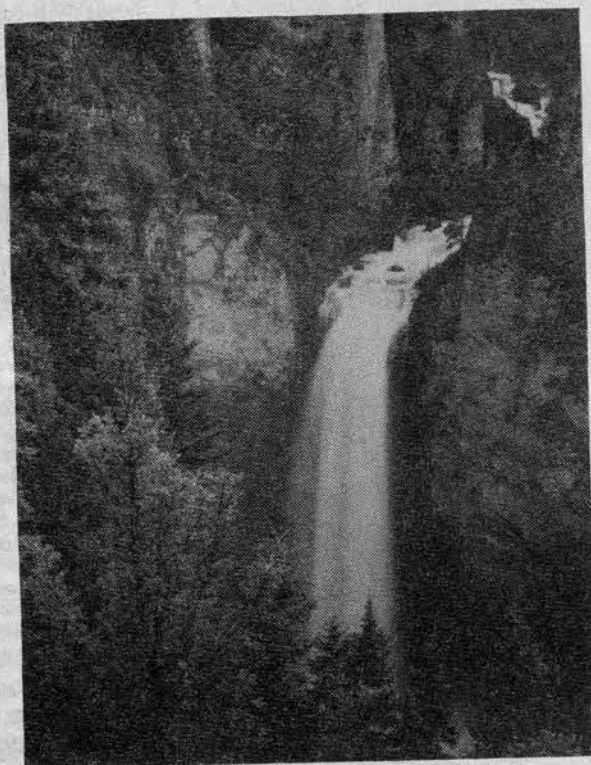
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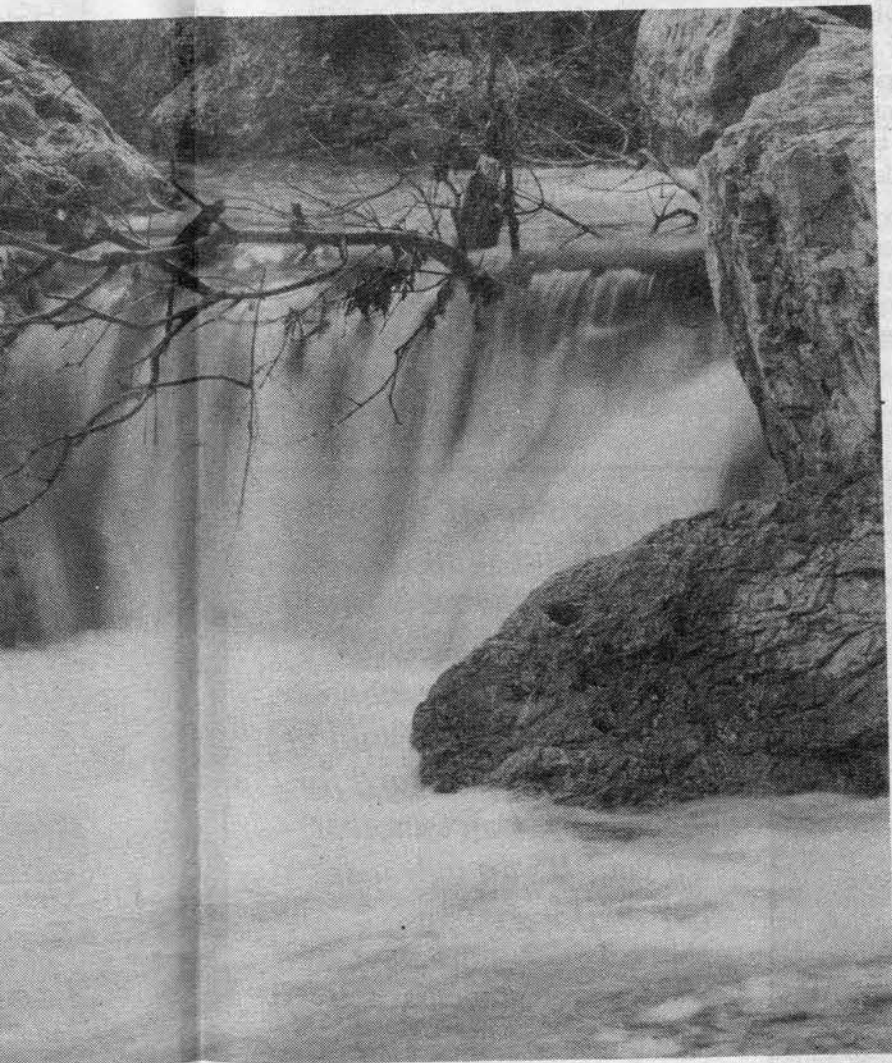
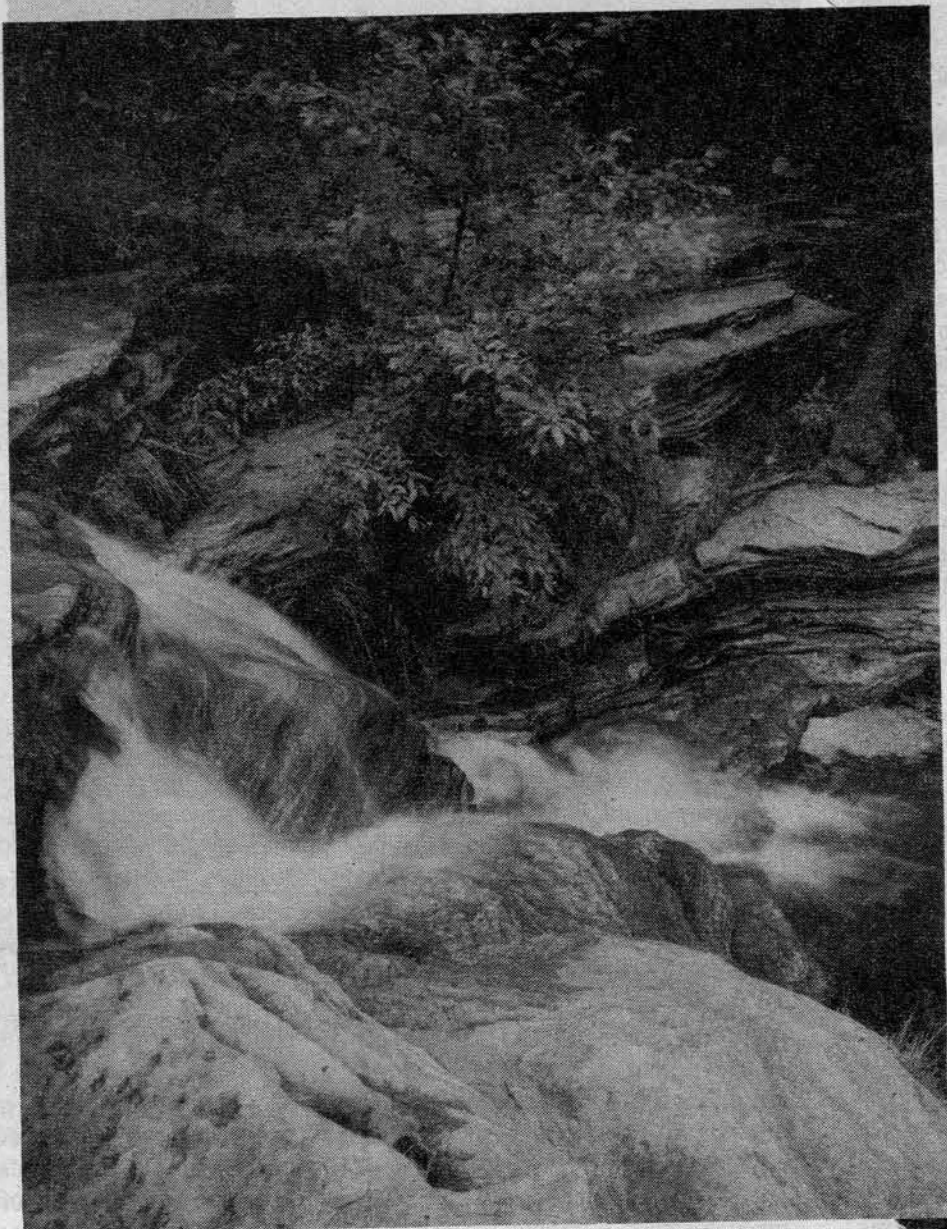
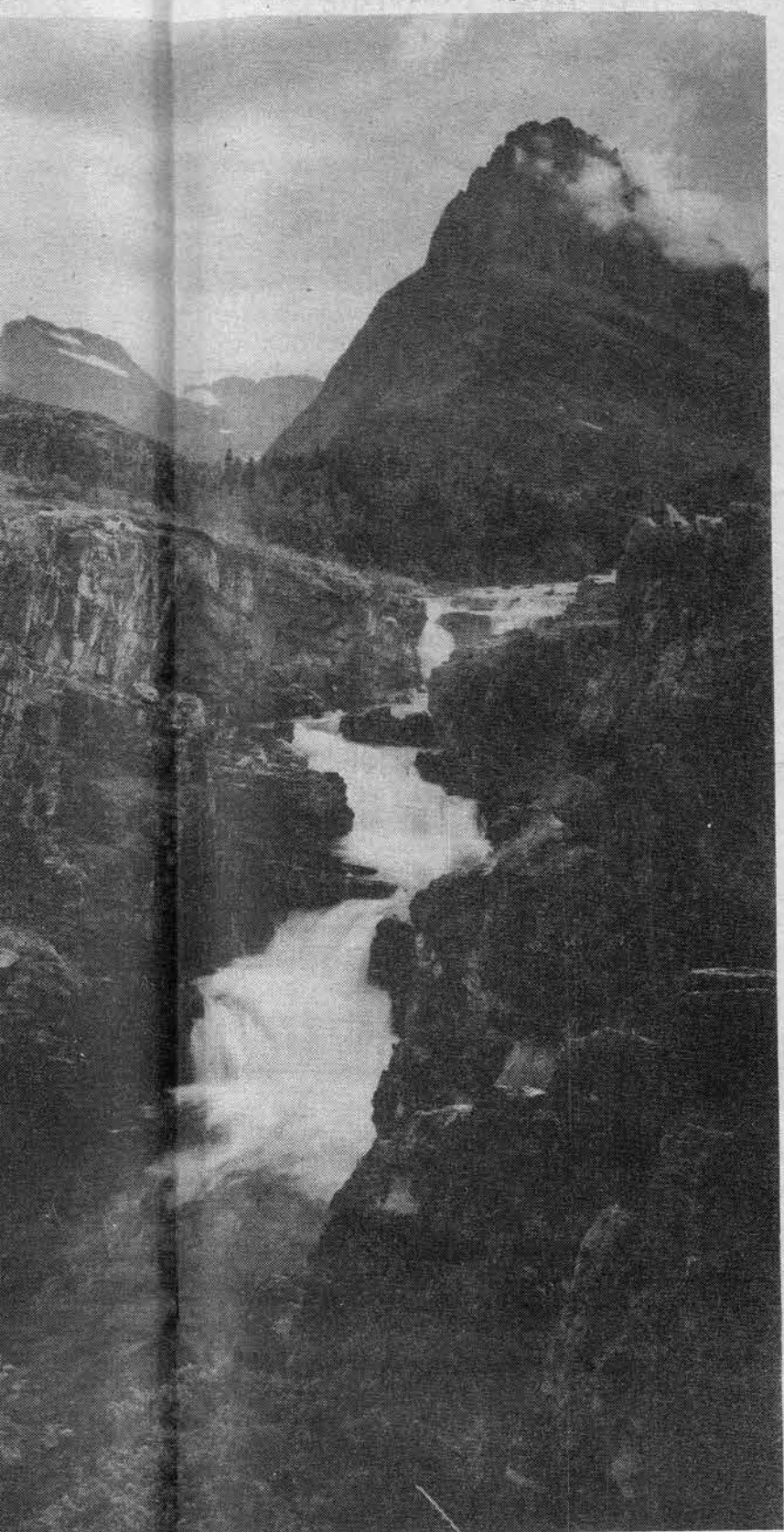
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***North of me,
south of me,
spring is in flood***

Tu Fu, 8th century

Photographs by Dale Schicketanz. Clockwise, from lower left: Little Colorado, Arizona; Tower Falls, Yellowstone National Park; Swift Current Falls, Glacier National Park; Christofer Creek, White Mountains, Arizona; White Water Canyon, New Mexico.

Two grazing EISs run into trouble ...

(Continued from page 1)

was fast losing its aspens and willows, along with their dependent species, and the water table was dropping in many of the small streams draining the allotment. The damage violated the Beaverhead's 1986 forest plan, which called for "functioning" watersheds. Something had to be done, fast.

"The problem was, when this message was carried back to the other permittees, they wanted to shoot the messenger — me," recounts Stellingwerf. Trying to build some support, he formed a cooperative committee of ranchers, conservationists and forest officials in 1988 to discuss options for grazing the Ruby in a gentler way. But by the next year, the process had so frustrated the few environmentalists that they walked out.

"They stacked the decks against us from the beginning," remembers local sportsman John Roylance. When Roylance was told his presence wasn't welcome on the committee, Greater Yellowstone Coalition representative Don Bachman resigned in protest.

"It became a monthly meeting to vilify the Forest Service," says Bachman. "It had no objectivity."

Jay Barnoski, a rancher on the allotment and head of the Ruby Valley Grazing Association, remembers it differently: "People on the committee were absolutely anti-cow, period."

After the committee's dissolution and with consensus out of reach, Stellingwerf says he had no choice but to prepare a full-blown EIS, a costly process involving detailed analysis of every aspect of grazing on the Upper Ruby. The draft of that report recommended a 44 percent cut in cattle numbers, saying only \$4,300 a year would be lost to Madison County in taxes from the reduction. But to the 10 affected ranchers and their neighbors, who had their own statistics, the cattle cut represented a great blow to an already depressed agricultural economy.

Knowing little of the latest riparian, or streamside, management doctrines of the agency, the ranchers saw the recommendations as arbitrary and unfair.

"Five years ago, we hadn't even heard of the word riparian," says Barnoski, a fifth-generation rancher. "All of a sudden, they're saying we're

doing it all wrong. So here we sit in the middle, and we don't know what we're doing wrong."

The document only further steeled the town of Sheridan against local Forest Service officials. "Stellingwerf did as biased a piece of literature as I've ever seen," says John Allhands, a Madison County commissioner and rancher.

After the draft went public in early 1991, Allhands and the other commissioners circulated two petitions to get rid of Stellingwerf. "Everyone banded together against him," Allhands says. The petitions went to the state's congressional delegation and to the Forest Service's regional office in Missoula.

One Upper Ruby rancher's father was a state senator. Another, Bill Doggett, had a son who was at the time an aide to Montana Republican Sen. Ron Marlenee in Washington, D.C. Marlenee made numerous phone calls to agency officials on behalf of the Ruby ranchers, says aide Gary Weins.

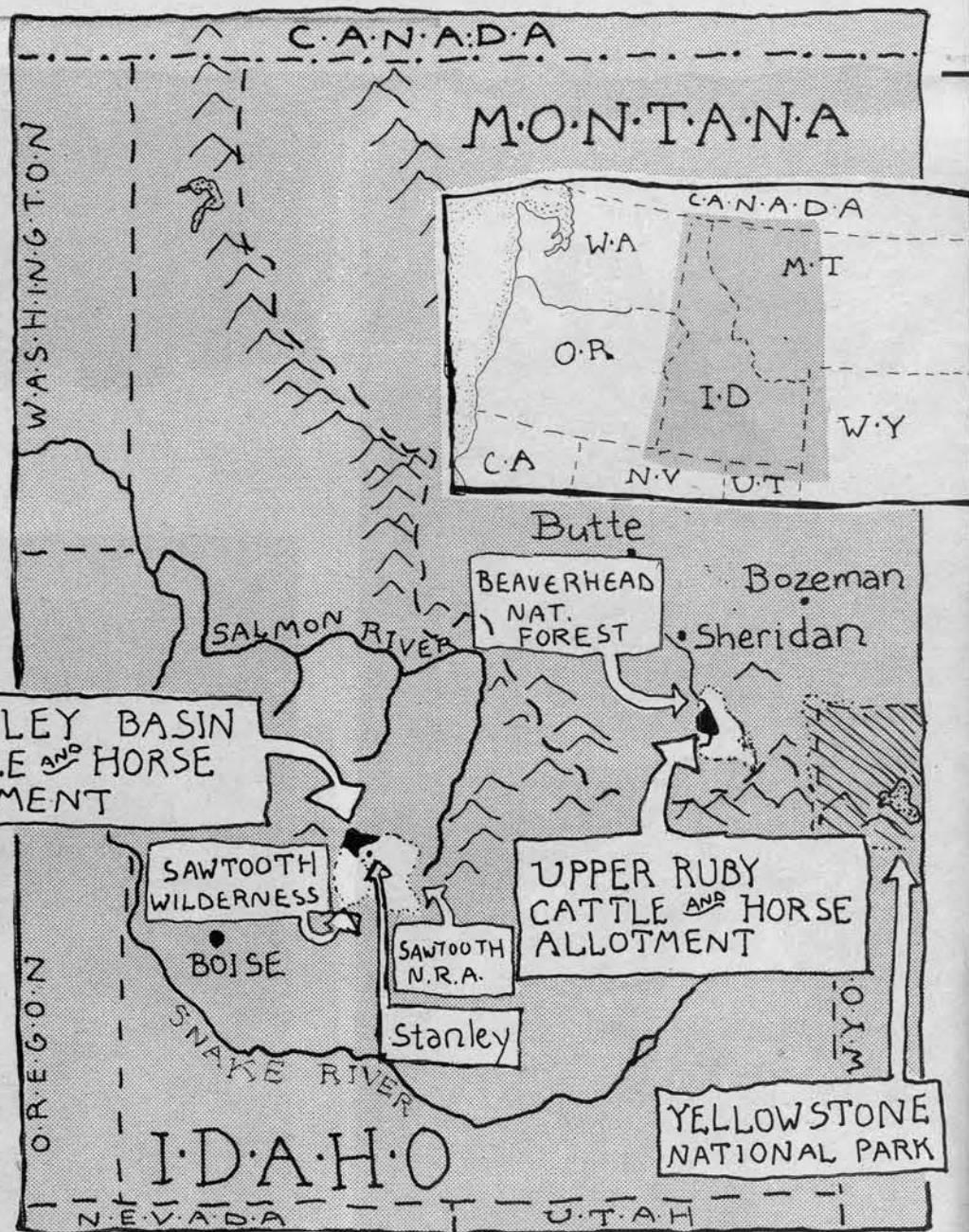
Recalls rancher Bill Doggett: "We put on enough pressure politically to make people in a position of authority recognize we weren't being treated fairly. ... Nobody would admit this to you, but the document was even criticized at the top levels of the Forest Service."

Montana's governor also got involved. A letter from Gov. Stan Stephens to Beaverhead Forest Supervisor Ron Prichard, Stellingwerf's boss, read: "The (draft) EIS had created more controversy than it solves ... public acceptance is of equal importance ... The resulting livestock reductions are unacceptably severe."

While the locals readily take credit for Stellingwerf's transfer to Wyoming one year ago, the former district ranger says he left on his own, partly because of the threats to him and his family and partly because he knew he was no longer effective. "My staff and I were the enemy," he says.

Stellingwerf wasn't the only one taking heat. Local environmentalist Roylance one fall videotaped hundreds of cows trespassing into off-limit pastures. He held his camcorder in one hand and his shotgun in the other because of threats to his life.

"I was out on a limb, a big limb,"



Diane Sylvain

says Roylance, an avid hunter and former board member of the Montana Wildlife Federation. "I never went anywhere without a gun. I used to think something could be resolved with these people, but in light of their blatant disregard for the law and the (1970 allotment management plan), I don't know. I tell you, it's an ugly war."

The 10 Upper Ruby ranchers, who herd their cows together, do have a long history of violating regulations. In the Sheridan Forest Service office, fat files hold the grazing field notes of frustrated rangers, such as "Two hundred trespassed cows in one pasture, 350 in another."

As recently as 1991, when a new grazing agreement was under way, some cows were still in the wrong pastures and some permittees failed to maintain fences, leading rangers to write, "The current situation is causing unacceptable damage."

The West watches

When Stellingwerf's replacement assumed the hot seat in May 1991, he

wrote the permittees, saying, "I am making a plea for help." The new acting district ranger, Mark Petroni, who is also the ranger on the neighboring Madison District, came in with a conciliatory, even submissive, approach. A year later, Petroni has succeeded in patching things up in Sheridan.

Following an agreement among ranchers, the governor and the Forest Service, Petroni gave the ranchers a team of technical specialists to help them write their own proposal for the final EIS. Their subsequent recommendation, "alternative J," would maintain the current levels of AUMs.

"The Forest Service is a different place with Petroni there. We can work with him," says Doggett, whose grandfather settled in Madison County a century ago to dig gold and whose 2-year-old grandson lives on the ranch.

In addition to the ranchers' alternative, the final EIS contains a new alternative preferred by the Forest Service. Like the draft, it recommends a significant cut in AUMs. But rather than



Florence Williams

"I was out on a limb, a big limb. I never went anywhere without a gun. I used to think something could be resolved with these people, but in light of their blatant disregard for the law ... I don't know. I tell you, it's an ugly war."

— John Roylance,
environmental activist

reduce herd size, it shortens the grazing season by three weeks in the fall. It also sets up new guidelines for monitoring the impacts of cattle on streams.

But critics say the new guidelines are fuzzy, making it more difficult to tell the ranchers when it's time to move off. The plan also eliminates previous standards for all wetlands that are not surface streams, saying that unhealthy areas will be allowed to deteriorate further.

"That bothered me," says Dan Svoboda, the Beaverhead's forest ecologist. "There shouldn't be sacrifice areas." Svoboda also says he is "skeptical" the current permittees will adhere to the standards that do exist. "They haven't been good in the past, but if they can't get it together, hopefully we'll further reduce the season."

Says Tom France, attorney for the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula: "The Forest Service backed away from changes needed to make the allotment comply with the (riparian and wildlife) guidelines specified in the Beaverhead forest plan. They've dug into a middle position. They should have gone farther." France says NWF may appeal the plan.

Don Bachman says the plan relies too heavily on expensive water tanks and sage-burning programs. "They're trying to adapt the resource to the cows instead of the cows to the resource. I'm disappointed."

But ranchers say they are more or less satisfied. "There are no surprises here," says Doggett. "It remains to be seen what effects the (EIS) will actually have on the ground."

Whatever the result, one thing is certain: The Sheridan District is being watched, both by ranchers across the West fearful their allotment may be next, and by the dozens of other forest service offices preparing to tackle their own AMPs (allotment management plans). At least 450 separate grazing allotments will undergo some study this year to examine if improvements are needed and what they should be.

Says one former ranger: "A lot of districts are looking at (the Upper Ruby) to see how flat they can fall on their faces. They're not going to give other districts much encouragement to show they can do things differently."

Stomping on salmon

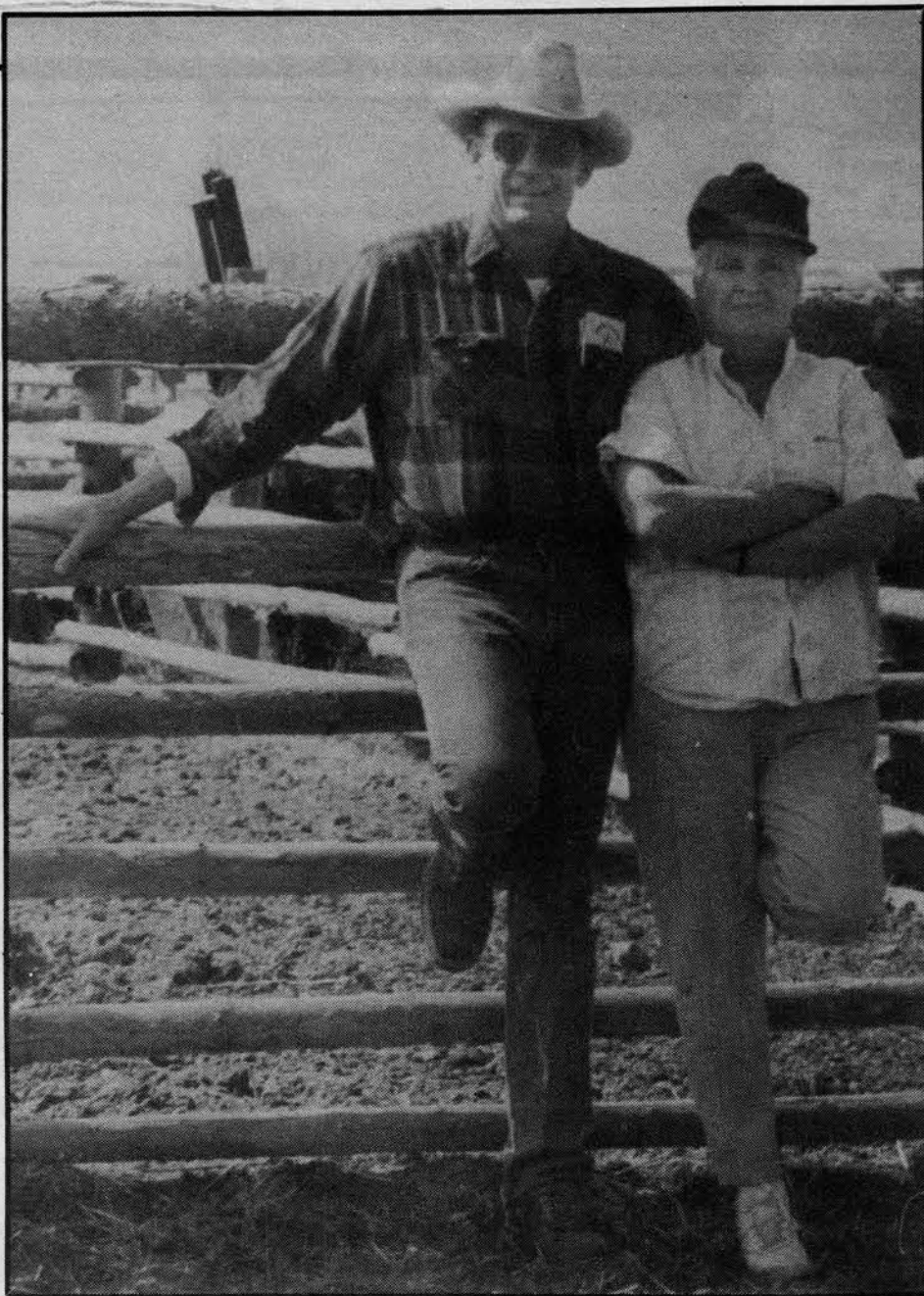
If the Upper Ruby failed to provide an example of a good process, the EIS on the Stanley Basin Allotment on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area looks even worse.

The Idaho Conservation League (ICL) is so fed up with delays that last week it filed a notice of intent to sue the agency, charging mismanagement of creeks, adjacent to grazing pastures, that endangered fish use to spawn.

On the allotment's Marsh Creek in the Salmon River drainage, a handful of beleaguered chinook return to their birthplace to lay eggs each summer. The fish that make it there have survived eight dams on their trip from the ocean and odds of 95 percent mortality. But once in Marsh Creek, the perils aren't over; the threatened salmon and their eggs face 200 private cows mucking about the stream.

The Sawtooth rangers recognized the danger to the fish, and, in 1990, began the Forest Service's first-ever Environmental Impact Statement on a grazing allotment. The draft recommended a sharp two-thirds cut in cattle numbers on the Stanley Basin allotment, just northwest of Stanley, Idaho, in the heart of the Sawtooths.

Over 70 miles of streams, or 140



Ranchers Bill and Marilyn Doggett

"We put on enough pressure politically to make people in a position of authority recognize we weren't being treated fairly. ... Nobody would admit this to you, but the document was even criticized at the top levels of the Forest Service."

— Rancher Bill Doggett

miles of streambanks, carve the allotment. More than half of these, which eventually flow into the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, fail to meet the forest's guidelines for habitat quality. The grazing season coincides with the incubation periods of chinook salmon, listed last month as threatened, and of steelhead, bull trout, kokanee, cutthroat and brook trout. Most of these species are valued by the recreation industry based in Stanley and by the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribe.

"Cattle grazing would be eliminated in high recreation use areas and a majority of the degraded streamside areas," proposed the agency in its draft EIS.

Eighteen months and many more supporting statements later, the agency had completed the document, printed it, and was ready to release it.

Despite that, today, on the eve of a new grazing season, hundreds of copies of that document sit locked in a storeroom of the Forest Service in Twin Falls. The ban on the EIS was put there by the office of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, which wanted more input from ranchers.

The lockup occurred because back in March, James Moseley, an undersecretary of Agriculture in charge of national forests, became alarmed by the document. He told *HCN* in May: "I saw this as a test case. It was indicative of other grazing reviews that are going to happen. I felt we ought to make sure it's done correctly, that the Forest Service has explored all potential solutions, not just a reduction."

Also in March, Ed Waldapfel, public affairs officer on the Sawtooth in

Twin Falls, received a phone call from Idaho Republican Sen. Steve Symms, who asked, "What was the agency's position on the EIS? Did it want the document released?" After consulting with Forest Supervisor Jack Bills, Waldapfel told Symms the forest wanted to stick by the document and send it out.

The Sawtooth's response apparently carried little weight. Moseley says he sent the EIS back with verbal instructions to hold it until the forest could "take a closer look" at other options.

On March 24, Supervisor Bills issued a memo that he was holding the document so permittees could add an alternative of their own, much like what the ranchers did on the Upper Ruby.

"It was a shock, kind of a body blow to those of us involved in the EIS," says Sawtooth range conservation officer Seth Phalen.

"It was frustrating," agrees Carl Pence, the head ranger on the recreation area in charge of making the final decision on any new grazing plan. "I would like to have published that EIS with a 60-day allowance for public response. It would have added credibility to the whole process. I knew the delay would cloud the NEPA process we're in," he says, referring to the federal law mandating how environmental decisions are made.

"In Idaho, the livestock industry carries disproportionate weight," says Cathy Baer, who runs a business floating anglers down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. "In Stanley, there are 27 operators for Middle Fork trips. The

river is the mainstay of this region."

Most of the ranchers who use the Stanley Basin, however, live in nearby Challis in Custer County, which is more dependent on agriculture.

"Basically, the (draft EIS) was not done with a good economic or scientific basis," says Roy Chivers, who manages a large ranch for a Florida-based permittee.

Chivers says the draft EIS failed to address the possibility that better management, rather than a reduction in numbers, could correct some of the problems. Supervisor Bills has now provided the ranchers with their technical team of experts, at the forest's expense. Chivers says the team is looking into Allan Savory-style grazing methods that claim to improve the range with no loss of cattle.

But area ranger Pence says even this cooperative effort remains fraught with tension and disagreement. At a meeting several weeks ago, Pence was told by an angry rancher that he is no longer welcome in Challis.

"Emotions are pretty high," he says. "The ranchers are not happy with me. The working relationship is tense."

Environmentalists are also unhappy about the newly mandated cooperative team. They fear it will lead to a compromised decision when the EIS finally goes public.

"Why don't I get a technical team for my point of view?" asks Jonathan Marvel, a Hailey, Idaho, architect who would rather no cows grazed on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, where he frequently recreates.

Agrees Baer: "What we're experiencing at this point is another example of the the power structure gone amuck and some frustrated Forest Service personnel attempting to do their jobs correctly."

To end the delay, ICL has sued to force the agency to release the finished EIS, and prohibit cows from entering the critical stretches of salmon habitat in the meantime. But at the moment cows are expected to hit the pastures as usual later this month.

ICL's Michael Medberry says the agency, by not acting, has violated the Endangered Species Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Sawtooth Forest Plan.

"Legal action is the only antidote for the high-handed political meddling that has kept the Forest Service from issuing a grazing plan which protects salmon habitat," he says.

On the Sawtooth, as well as on the Upper Ruby, both ranchers and environmentalists say they didn't have enough input. ICL's Medberry worries that high-level policy directives have replaced orderly and open communication. He says the failures point to a serious violation of the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, under whose aegis EISs are written. The act requires even-handed public involvement.

Regardless of what the Sawtooth's new EIS and record of decisions will be, few observers expect to see a final document before November in this election year. And then, Sawtooth officials say, they expect appeals and lawsuits from both sides.

In the meantime, the fish will be back in July. "We know there's going to be continued resource damage," adds Bills, "but we have to give our permittees time to adjust." ■

Florence Williams is a staff reporter for *HCN*. This article was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.

OPINION

The road gang wants to wreck Logan Canyon

by Tom Lyon

After 13-plus years of controversy and several hundred thousand dollars' worth of study, the Utah Department of Transportation has finally set forth its "preferred alternative" for highway construction on U.S. 89 in Logan Canyon.

But the preferred alternative demonstrates that UDOT, after all these years and all this study, has simply not grasped what the controversy is about.

The agency has slighted the public concerns voiced in hearings and in hundreds of written comments and letters. It plans to go ahead with what it apparently always wanted to do: build the straightest and fastest highway through Logan Canyon that it can get away with.

The preferred alternative is built on one simple idea: move as many cars through Logan Canyon as possible in a given time. Safety? Logan River and its banks? Trout? Roadside trees? Aesthetics?

The proposed saving in time from Logan to Garden City will be five minutes.

The details are appalling. In the "Upper Middle Canyon" the road will be 9 to 11 feet wider — for a total roadway width of 47 feet. From the Summit to Garden City, the preferred alternative proposes a three-lane highway for most of the distance, leaving the present alignment by as much as 200 feet — and 670 feet in one case — in order to straighten curves. The 47-foot width and "clear zone" again apply.

The preferred alternative is preferred by the highway builders, but I cannot believe this is what the public has in mind for this beautiful canyon. Again and again, the majority of people testifying have made it clear that the integrity and beauty of Logan Canyon and the safety of motorists are the chief values to be preserved.

Logan Canyon is the only remaining major canyon along the Wasatch Range in which the highway is not the dominant feature of the landscape. It is the only remaining canyon where the traffic moves more or less with the lay of the land, where a motorist can see natural slopes and forests instead of road cuts.

Logan Canyon is something very rare and special; it is not just an engineering problem, but an intact place that allows for an experience fast disappearing in our time. This fact is widely recognized by the public, by national magazines and by the U.S. Department of Transportation, which categorizes Logan Canyon as a Scenic Byway. But apparently it is not recognized and not understood by the Utah Department of Transportation.

One element in the Logan Canyon controversy is



Citizens for the Protection of Logan Canyon

A stretch of the Logan Canyon highway that may be widened

more than a little disturbing. It is the apparent assumption on the part of the agencies that they alone understand the project.

Several years ago, when the project was first proposed, Utah's transportation department and the Federal Highway Administration, along with the Forest Service and the consulting firm CH2M Hill, formed an "interdisciplinary team" to discuss possible impacts. Environmentalists were included on this team. Unfortunately, the team was disbanded before the discussions bore any fruit.

The environmentalists learned by letter that their volunteer services would no longer be required. This action was high-handed, but it was also wasteful. The involvement of environmentalists, several of whom were trained in areas relevant to the proposed project, could have saved many tedious weeks, months, and perhaps years of controversy. At least we would have been talking.

After a January 1991 hearing in Logan, a Utah transportation department spokesman made it clear that decisions about a preferred alternative would not be made on the basis of public opinion. It would be decided by representatives of the state, the Federal Highway Administration and the Forest Service. These agencies came up with what they first called, in simple honesty, the "agency alternative," then "composite alternative," and finally its present title, "preferred alternative."

In response to a letter asking for a public hearing on the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the regional forester wrote: "We recognize the environmental and scenic qualities of Logan Canyon and are working to protect them. We are also aware of the need to effectively accommodate forest users and other travelers on this important transportation corridor. We are

confident that continued discussion with all interested parties will lead to a selected alternative that is acceptable. Thanks again for taking time to let us know how you feel about this important project."

Translated, this seems to mean "Don't worry yourself about it. We know everything we need to know. Please go away."

Just before a protest vigil on April 25, an official of the Forest Service spoke to me. Indicating the assembled crowd, he said, "You know, 90 percent of the people interested in this project don't really understand the issues."

I beg to differ. The issues of Logan Canyon are value issues, and people understand them very well indeed. In the April 26 *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah's transportation department allowed that it might, after all, hold a hearing on the final Environmental Impact Statement, "just to explain to people what we're really proposing." That doesn't sound like a hearing to me. A hearing is where you listen. The premise of a hearing is that public opinion actually counts for something.

Not to sound too melodramatic, there is only one chance left for Logan Canyon, and time is truly running out: concerned citizens must come forth again and try to make the message understood.

Now is the time for defenders of the canyon to stand up and demand a public hearing. A real one. Perhaps, if enough spirited people come to the defense of Logan Canyon, it can be saved. We'll never know unless we try.

Thomas J. Lyon is an English professor and a charter member of Citizens for the Protection of Logan Canyon, which can be reached c/o Bruce Pendery, 755 Canyon Road, Logan, UT 84321.

LETTERS

OPEN MINDS AND DIRTY HANDS

Dear HCN,

I found your March 23 issue on grazing and the responding letters very interesting. I find myself in agreement with those who wish to find practical solutions to the problems we face on public lands. It is easy to sit back and complain about grazing problems but it takes something more to roll up your sleeves and do something on the land.

I would like to find people who would be willing to form a working group to better manage public and private lands which make up my southern New Mexico ranch. All I ask is that people have an open mind and do not mind getting their hands dirty. I have tried this before, but most people lack either an open mind or the dedication to the land.

Jim Winder
Deming,
New Mexico



TRACKING THE MONEY

Dear HCN,

All the discussion about range fees hides the fact that most of the money paid to the BLM by the rancher ends up coming back to the cattlemen as range improvements.

Using California as an example, the BLM collected \$355,307 as range fees in 1990. Of this, \$133,154 was paid to the state, which (under California law) was

paid to the individual counties to be used by the county grazing boards. \$177,753 went to the U.S. Treasury but then came back to the federal grazing boards to be used for range improvements. Only \$44,599 actually stayed in the federal treasury to help pay for the dozen or more BLM range cons we have in this state.

Elden Hughes
Whittier, California

The writer chairs the Sierra Club's Desert Committee.

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REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Moab BLM marches to a southern Utah beat

by Ed Marston

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — The setting could not have been more bland: a meeting room in the Mesa State College student center. But the action was dramatic. Attorney and grazing activist Joseph Feller was beginning to cross-examine Bureau of Land Management employee John Shive, and Shive was so angry he could not understand, let alone answer, a relatively straightforward early question from Feller.

Instead, he sat there, a large man, arms crossed, feet planted on the ground, glaring at Feller. Earlier, under examination by a friendly attorney, Shive's anger had worked for him. He had shown pictures of healthy-looking range, saying, disbelievingly, "Mr. Feller describes this as devastated, as a moonscape, as a war zone."

How, his manner and words seemed to ask, could a pipsqueak environmentalist from some law school in Arizona have created this lengthy legal proceeding? How could the attorney's three-year-long nagging of the Moab, Utah, district of the BLM have ended in a trial of sorts? Why should people who have managed ground for decades have to justify their actions to those who do not live in southern Utah and know nothing about cattle or grass?

Shive has a right to surprise. Six attorneys, several scientific witnesses and other experts, and assorted hangers-on had spent two weeks in Grand Junction to plead a case that — at most — involved \$2,500 a year worth of public grass.

One would expect such a low-rent issue to be easily settled. But important principles are at stake. The public-land ranching industry hates to surrender public range. And for environmentalists, the grass is in a special place — five canyons that feed into Comb Wash in southern Utah. It is a scenic drainage, rich in archaeological artifacts, potentially rich in riparian habitat and wildlife, and adjacent to the well-known archaeological area of Grand Gulch.

Feller and his allies — the National Wildlife Federation and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance — were in Grand Junction to evict the cows from Comb Wash's canyons. The BLM and the American and Utah Farm bureaus were there to stop the eviction.

In addition to the almost instinctive, cat-and-dog nature of these fights, there are irritations added by the special history of southern Utah. In 1980, something of a war was fought for control of the Moab District of the BLM. The key battle occurred July 4, 1980, which the San Juan County commissioners celebrated by mounting an American flag on a county bulldozer. The bulldozer proceeded to carve a road up the streambed of Negro Bill Canyon, then a BLM wilderness study area. The "roading" was designed to make the canyon, located just outside Moab, ineligible for wilderness status.

The Moab BLM district manager had fought for several years against the many San Juan County residents who did not accept federal control of public lands. And he reacted strongly to the felonious roading act. But politics intervened, and the Carter administration caved in. S. Gene Day was transferred, and the Moab office of the BLM fell into the hands of top staff who are only sympathetic to oil and gas, uranium and grazing interests.

So when Feller, who teaches law at Arizona State University, began to involve himself in the 65,000-acre grazing allotment that includes Arch, Road, Mule, Owl Creek and Fish Creek canyons and Comb Wash (HCN, 3/12/90), the Moab BLM got its back up. Staff there had had no plans to reform grazing practices on the Cedar Mesa allotment; Feller's pressure strengthened their resolve.

Shive was anchor man on the line-holding, and the hearing room confrontation was another chapter in the Feller-BLM struggle.

Judging by the testimony, the Moab BLM has felt so secure in southern Utah's bosom that it has not made even a pretense of instituting good grazing practices. Under Feller's cross-examination, Shive and a fellow BLMer, Nick Sandberg, said the range had not improved since 1985. Vegetative objectives had been set in 1985, but when conditions stayed the same or even declined, the BLM simply revised its objectives downward to meet the reality.



The BLM grazing plan was based on a clipping study by range scientist C. Wayne Cook, in which he cut vegetation to mimic grazing and determine how closely vegetation should be grazed. Feller's cross-examination of the BLM showed that the grazing allowed at Comb Wash exceeded Cook's recommendations.

In addition, the BLM witnesses were unable to cite any evidence to show that they had taken non-grazing resource issues into account. The existence of Anasazi archaeological sites, "areas of critical environmental concern" and wilderness study areas had apparently not influenced or modified grazing practices.

Feller tried to involve himself in grazing at Comb Wash because of his attraction to the area's beauty. In his March 12, 1990, HCN article, he said Comb Wash "parallels Comb Ridge, a spectacular 500-foot-high sandstone rib that bears a striking resemblance to the cliffs of Zion National Park."

His efforts, he believed, were rebuffed by the Moab BLM, so he took to lawyering. His first victory came in 1989, when an administrative law judge in the Interior Department ruled that the BLM had to consult with Feller and other affected interests when it made decisions on grazing in Comb Wash.

Following that win, the BLM set up a Coordinated Resource Management Program. A CRMP is supposed to bring interdisciplinary expertise to bear on disputes, and to draw the grazing permittee and other interested parties together in a search for compromise. But Shive testified that the BLM team had no BLM archaeologist, although the area is rich in sites; no wildlife person; and no riparian or hydrology experts. The only BLM expertise on the CRMP was range and administration.

The process lacked another ingredient. Consensus groups work best when someone is holding feet to the fire. Judging by Shive's attitude during his testimony, the BLM had no intention of pressuring the grazing permittee to compromise. Perhaps for lack of pressure, the consensus-seeking effort petered out. No meeting has been held since January; the one before that was in October.

In addition to using Shive to show that, since 1985, the BLM had not improved the land, and had no plans to achieve improvement or consider other values, Feller turned Shive's efforts at counterattack back at the agency.

Shive's counterattack had been directed at Grand Gulch. The biological condition of Grand Gulch is a key weapon in the hands of Feller and his fellow attorneys, Tom Lustig and Beth Wendel of the National Wildlife Federation in Boulder. The winding canyon, which Feller's witnesses said shares geology and splits a

watershed with Comb Wash, is almost inaccessible to cows, and in 1972, the grazing permittee had voluntarily surrendered the permit. Grand Gulch has now been free of cattle for 20 years.

The result, according to Feller witness Dr. Robert Ohmart of the Center for Environmental Studies at Arizona State University, has been resurrection. Ohmart said the stream had rebuilt itself, that bedrock only shows now in a few places, and that willows border 90 percent of the stream in the 13 miles he had walked.

Even more surprising, Ohmart said, the salt-tolerant exotic, tamarisk, or salt cedar, was beginning to die. Ohmart's theory is that tamarisk is being driven out because the broad, bare gully produced by overgrazing and erosion has been replaced by a narrow stream. The new, narrow stream has reintroduced spring flooding, and each year the flooding washes salt from the soil, perhaps weakening the tamarisk. Even without the salt reduction, Ohmart said that, in a healthy riparian area, he believed willows and cottonwood would eventually out-compete the non-native tamarisk.

Ohmart also theorized that the recovery of the riparian area had started slowly. But after 10 years or so, willows were strongly re-established and recovery took off rapidly.

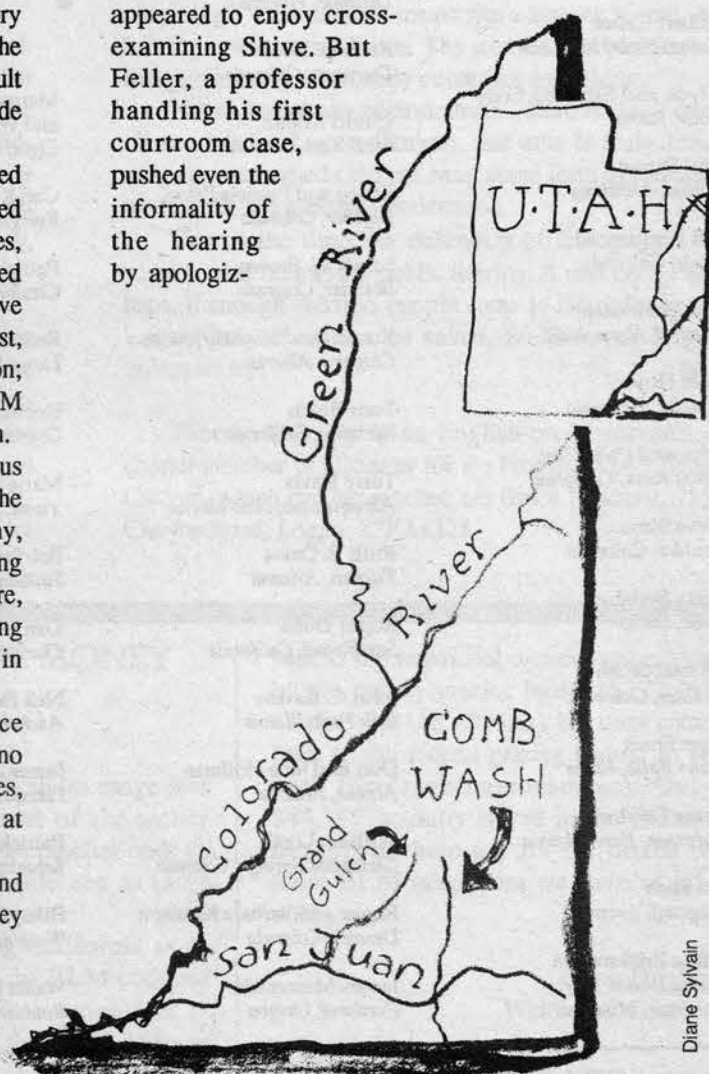
But Grand Gulch may never completely recover. Over the past century, Ohmart said, the Grand Gulch stream had dug itself into a 40-foot-deep and relatively wide arroyo with continuously eroding banks. Today, he testified, the high cut-banks are no longer eroding. And at the bottom of the deep cuts, narrow streams guarded by willows, cottonwoods and sedges are flowing. The vegetation is catching dirt and building up the stream bottom. Almost everywhere, he said, the stream no longer flows over bedrock, as it once did. As a result, the streambed is rising. But he doubted if it would ever fill in the 40-foot-deep arroyo.

Feller and Lustig also submitted scores of photos, taken at 100- to 200-yard intervals, to show the resurrection, and to argue that a similar healing could occur at Comb Wash and its canyons if cattle were removed.

To refute this, Shive submitted five photos of Grand Gulch showing degraded conditions. He argued that Grand Gulch, despite 20 years of rest, looked very much like Comb Wash. How long, Feller asked, had it taken Shive and his fellow BLM employee to collect the five photos? Altogether, Shive said, about eight hours.

Feller did not ask Shive why he had spent eight hours in Grand Gulch and only brought five photos of degraded conditions into the hearing.

The attorney/intervenor appeared to enjoy cross-examining Shive. But Feller, a professor handling his first courtroom case, pushed even the informality of the hearing by apologiz-



ing to the witness who followed Shive. BLM staffer Nick Sandberg, Feller said, was doing the best job he could under difficult conditions. Feller said he regretted that, for the most part, BLM managers responsible for Comb Wash's condition did not take the stand to defend their management.

BLM officials on the stand got little legal support. The BLM's attorney barely participated in the proceedings. For the most part, the ball was carried by Glen Davies, representing the Utah Farm Bureau.

Davies did an excellent job on the details of grazing management. But the bureau's concern, he said during a break, was to keep grazing going in Comb Wash, should the BLM be ordered to do an Environmental Impact Statement. The Farm Bureau fears that a suspension of grazing during the EIS process would set a precedent for other allotments. "We can lose a battle (eventual reform of grazing in Comb Wash) and still win the war (continuing grazing during preparation of an EIS)."

Legally, the heart of the hearing is the charge that grazing in Comb Wash is doing "irreparable harm" to the land. The harm is so serious, Feller and Lustig argue, that it cannot be fixed by a new grazing system. It can only be fixed by removing the cattle.

They are asking that cattle be removed from the part of the allotment that contains the riparian areas, reducing the permit by roughly 10 percent, or 250 AUMs.

According to Feller and Lustig, this legal challenge is a first, and is therefore historic and potentially precedent setting. Moreover, the two sides are building a scientific case that may be useful elsewhere. Grazing is notoriously slippery. Its negative impacts — downcutting of streams, extinction of riparian vegetation and associated wildlife, interruption of the hydrologic cycle, invasion by salt-tolerant plants, and erosion of soils — are subtle over the short term but enormous over the long term. Those effects were put under the microscope in Grand Junction.

Ohmart's testimony on the revival of Grand Gulch and the degraded state of Comb Wash and its canyons was the main weapon for Feller and Lustig. Against Ohmart, the permit holder threw Catherine Vandemoer, a Ph.D. hydrologist who works for the Council of Energy Resource Tribes, or CERT, in Denver.

Vandemoer is a fierce fighter. As an employee of the Wind River Reservation's Arapahoe and Shoshone tribes, she fought the state of Wyoming's water buffalos for 500,000 acre-feet the tribes had been awarded by the Wyoming Supreme Court, but denied control of by the Wyoming state engineer. The tribes wanted to use some of the water to establish

a fishery. Backed by environmentalists, including NWF's Lustig, Vandemoer formulated the fishery plan and was the lead, out-front person in the tribes' struggle to bring the Wind River back to life.

Now employed by CERT, she brought the same spirit to Grand Junction, this time in opposition to NWF, but again on behalf of Native Americans. The grazing permit for Comb Wash is held by the Ute Mountain Utes of Colorado, with the White Mesa Indian group in Utah benefitting from the permit. A cattle company run by an Anglo with close ties to the White Mesa Indians actually runs the operation.

In a brief interview after her testimony, Vandemoer said it is unconscionable for rich environmentalists to seek to remove even one cow from an allotment controlled by an Indian tribe. But her testimony was all about science. She argued that it would be useless to remove the cattle. She said Comb Wash tipped into its present physical state 100 years ago as a result of geology, climate change and land use.

Streams throughout the Southwest entrenched, or dug themselves deep into the ground, creating gullies and arroyos, she said. Whatever the initial cause, and whoever was to blame, she said, removal of cattle today would not bring back the streams in Comb Wash and its canyons. A cycle had begun, and only geologic time and a shift in climate could cause recovery.

There was much more. She testified, much like a professor teaching a class, for over a day about soil types, the piping of water by cracks in the rock so that erosion was accelerated, the damage caused by severe rainstorms and resulting runoff, and the endemic but natural existence of salt in the soils. She also testified that the geology of Grand Gulch was so different from Comb Wash that comparisons were meaningless. She used hydrology, geology and climate to explain the condition of Comb Wash without any reference to the effects to grazing.

Her testimony was key to the defense, but she was not cross-examined. Lustig convinced Judge Rampton that the other side had not prepared him for the direction her testimony took. The judge postponed cross-examination until July.

The most striking aspects of Vandemoer's testimony was her pessimism about recovery. Her conviction that changing grazing systems would not bring back the land fits the culture of southern Utah, which would much prefer to eke out a living from a degraded natural resource than shift to a new economy. Those who push on southern Utahns to alter the way they use the area's natural resources are fiercely resisted and fiercely resented. Present uses and attitudes are as deeply entrenched as the region's streams.

Environmentalists are often painted as nay-sayers who stop progress and development. But at Comb

Wash, environmentalists are the boomers and boosters, arguing that both ecological and economic progress are possible. One of Feller's witnesses, for example, was outfitter Jim Hook of Bluff. He testified that he alone was losing \$18,000 a year because Comb Wash is so trashed he can no longer take clients there.

BLM practices were also defended by range science professor James Bowns of Southern Utah University in Cedar City. He too said that any degraded conditions that existed in Comb Wash — streams running on bedrock, deep gouges in the land, salt-tolerant invader species, lack of willows and cottonwoods, annual plants indicative of overgrazing rather than the perennials that indicate a healthy ecosystem — were due to soil types, drought, rain that fell at the wrong time, history and other factors. But Bowns, a good-natured witness who seemed to enjoy Feller's cross-examination, and who successfully walked the line between science and partisanship, did say that as a scientist, he was curious to see what would happen if cattle were removed from the riparian areas.

Two things are surprising about Feller: one is how far he has pushed the grazing issue; the other is how far he has to go.

After the trial concludes in Salt Lake City this summer, Judge Rampton will make a decision. He is an administrative law judge and his decision will undoubtedly be appealed by one side or the other to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. From there, it can be appealed to a federal district court.

So on the one hand, it is Kafka's Castle — an endless paper trail, with the Farm Bureau on hand to ensure that cattle keep grazing while paper is processed.

On the other hand, Feller has created a sort of Scopes trial for grazing. The two sides have brought together very credible witnesses. A transcript will be produced, and videotapes already exist of almost all the testimony. There are also numerous slides and photos of the land.

So something new is coming into existence: a scientific forum which will let us judge grazing in the Southwest's riparian areas, as well as an example of a legal process that can test grazing in other places. Feller has even helped write a book — *How Not to Be Cowed*. People who send the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance \$3 can learn how to get themselves into the same apparently endless but informative paper chase he is involved in. SUWA can be reached at 1471 S. 1100 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84105.

The BLM's Moab District is at P.O. Box 970, Moab, UT 84532; Feller is at the Law School, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287. ■

Ed Marston is publisher of *High Country News*.

LETTERS

CONSERVATIONISTS HAVE A VISION OF THE LAND

Dear HCN,

I had expected something more balanced (special grazing issue, March 23) even though, admittedly, it was only the author's second visit to Oregon. At first I was amused, as a quick analysis showed grazers described as being "attractive, energetic, charismatic, beneficent, competent and brilliant." I eagerly awaited the adjectives I would find describing those of us in the environmental community. Finding none, I did a quick memory scan of my cohorts to see if they really were so ugly, lethargic, lackluster, warmongering, incompetent and dull as was implied. Couldn't come up with a one that fit that description.

My amusement by all this outlandish bias was beginning to wear thin by the time the Oregon High Desert Protection Act, a proposal put together over 10 years by a broad-based coalition of Oregon citizens, was described as the "slam dunk" approach. I think it was meant to be derogatory, though a good slam dunk is often the result of careful and well-planned teamwork beginning way back court. But, I digress. The reason for this vilification is that this act dares to propose

to Congress that they re-evaluate the place of livestock on those acres of our publicly owned lands deemed to be remarkable enough for national recognition as parks and wilderness areas.

There is much to respond to in this issue, but I will limit my letter to the charge that conservationists have no vision of the land. I know of no one who believes the simple removal of cows from our arid lands will restore the landscape to pre-settlement days. We are very aware that too much has changed. Many of those in the conservation camp have natural sciences in their background and, contrary to this article, don't need to be educated about the land by ranchers.

What we do envision is a desert landscape complete with wildlife, not just bighorns and other game animals but a full complement of arthropods, lagomorphs, reptiles, amphibians and rodents, from beaver to pocket mice. These were the original grazers, and they were here in hordes. Bear and wolf, among the original predators, need to be restored.

We envision a landscape where private land is fenced in and public lands are without fences and without traps, without pipelines and mud holes. We envision an ecosystem with a vegetation mix healthy enough to bounce back from natural catastrophes and kept in dynamic flux by natural fires. We envision free-flowing streams that can support fish.

We envision an end to tax money being spent to modify the desert to suit cattle. No more millions for "range improvements," wildlife budgets that only mitigate livestock damage, and Animal Damage Control which annually kills thousands of legitimate desert dwellers.

An end to abusing the land will be enough in some cases and we are open to what good science tells us may be necessary to restore the more difficult areas.

Alice Elshoff
Bend, Oregon

A COW IN EVERY POT

Dear HCN,

I was somewhat disturbed that the book review so grossly missed the point of Jeremy Rifkin's new book (*Beyond Beef*, reviewed by Ed Marston). Mr. Rifkin's thesis is not "beef is bad." Quite the contrary, since Rifkin extols for pages explaining that cows are wealth. His point is that, while the U.S. human population is approximately 250 million, cows number only approximately 120 million, and it is obvious that in any wealth redistribution scheme there are not going to be enough cows to go around. Quite simply, over half of the people aren't going to get one.

Not to worry at HCN, however, for with my wish that HCN maintain financial stability, I am sending a donation of one cow. Since this particular cow is an exceptionally nice cow, I would suggest that you immediately place my name amongst those of your Publisher's Circle.

Gary Boyce
Crestone, Colorado

FROM HCN TO ANDRUS TO GEHRKE

Dear HCN,

Thank you for sending the \$50 honorarium for use of my guest opinion on the salmon issue. I appreciate your generosity, but I do not accept payment for things I do in the course of meeting my responsibilities as governor of Idaho.

Because your publication is "a paper for people who care about the West," you will be pleased to know that I have endorsed the check over to the local chapter of The Wilderness Society, whose effective director, Craig Gehrke, continues to contribute significantly to the resolution of Idaho environmental problems.

Cecil D. Andrus
Boise, Idaho

The writer is governor of Idaho.

ESSAY

Everett Ruess: 'I have really lived'

by James Bishop Jr.

*Say that I starved; that I was lost and weary;
That I was burned and blinded by the desert sun;
Footsore, thirsty, sick with strange diseases;
Lonely and wet and cold, but that I kept my dream.*

— Poem by Everett Ruess
Sedona

A belated hats off to you, Everett, wherever you are. Old desert rats bet you're still out there somewhere, holed up at Keet Seel, Grand Gulch or Betatakin.

Or perhaps you're crossing Monument Valley with your mules, Pericles and Pegasus. Didn't a Navajo medicine man have a vision of you at the foot of Navajo Mountain?

This would have been Everett Ruess's 78th year, had not this singular artist and writer vanished into the loving and lonely reaches of the Arizona-Utah borderlands when he was not yet 21.

Thanks is owed to author W.L. Rusho, whose research into Everett's letters to his parents in California has created a vivid, eerie reconstruction of his brief encounter with life. The book, *Vagabond For Beauty*, is one of the "cult books" of this or any year, in company with LaFarge's *Laughing Boy*, or Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*. It has inexplicably gone out of print.

For us, in this latest age of anxiety, Everett left behind a gift, a story more alive than ever, a spirit that burns as radiantly as the sun above the Painted Desert where he camped so often.

Through his legacy of letters and blockprints, we have rare glimpses into ancient Indian cultures and the development of the Southwest.

Far more striking than fiction, his story, played out against landscapes that give film directors lumps in

their throats, is a tale of idealism and independence, youth and freedom, romance and mystery — but most of all, beauty.

Everett believed that life on Earth is precious and beautiful to its core, and that we should cherish it always.

A fragment of each of us is out there with him in those inner voices whispering that our lives can be different, that we should dare to be true to ourselves, and that we postpone our dreams at our peril.

"I've seen almost more beauty than I can bear," he wrote from a camp near Flagstaff in 1932. "Such utter and overpowering beauty as nearly kills by its piercing glory."

A few months later, after a foray through Canyon de Chelly, he wrote his brother Waldo, "I require it to sustain life ... nature's impact sometimes is so far beyond my powers to convey that it almost makes me despair."

On his solitary travels, Ev made many friends: outlaws who envied him his intuition, Indians who showed him ancient ruins and herbal medicines, and legendary guides like the Wetherills, who introduced him to secret trails.

And there were also archaeologists who were spooked by his daring climbs up steep escarpments to Anasazi ruins, and ranchers on the Mogollon Rim like the late Clay Lockett, who camped with him in Oak Creek Canyon.

All that good fellowship was fine, but he never dallied long. After a few days, he was off again toward "the end of the horizon," once writing a friend that the "desert is glorious now, with marching clouds in the blue sky and cool winds blowing. The smell of the sage is sweet in my nostrils and the luring trail leads onward." He was 19 years old.

Despite one fearful adventure after another, Ev managed to paint and write constantly. He traded prints with Ansel Adams, saw his poetry published, and wrote



Sentinels of the Wild by Everett Ruess

hundreds of touching letters to friends and family.

Just before he vanished, his letters began to reflect a kind of futility: "I have loved the red rocks, the twisted trees, the red sand blowing in the wind, the slow sunny clouds crossing the sky, the shafts of moonlight on my bed at night ... I have really lived ... I have been flirting pretty heavily with death, the old clown."

Unless he returns to tell it himself, we'll never know his fate for certain, but it appears that he began to realize that his love of wilderness, his quest for oneness with nature, had him trapped. He knew he could never go back.

"Often as I wander," he wrote Waldo, "there are dream-like tinges when life seems impossibly strange and unreal. I think it is, too, only most people have so dulled their senses, they don't realize it."

A guide found his mules at the bottom of a canyon near the Colorado River in 1935, and some footprints that fit his boot size. A year later, a trapper saw the inscription NEMO on Indian ruins. (Jules Verne's Captain Nemo cruised the world trying to escape the frustrations of civilization.)

In 1957, some rusted cooking gear was dug up during the Glen Canyon Archaeological Survey prior to the filling of Lake Powell, along with a box of rusty razor blades from the Owl Drug Company of Los Angeles — always his favorite brand.

The last known sign of him was in 1983 when a boatman spotted another "NEMO" carved into the chinking of an Anasazi ruin by the San Juan River. The lack of leads hasn't stopped some people from searching, but all they've found is his spirit.

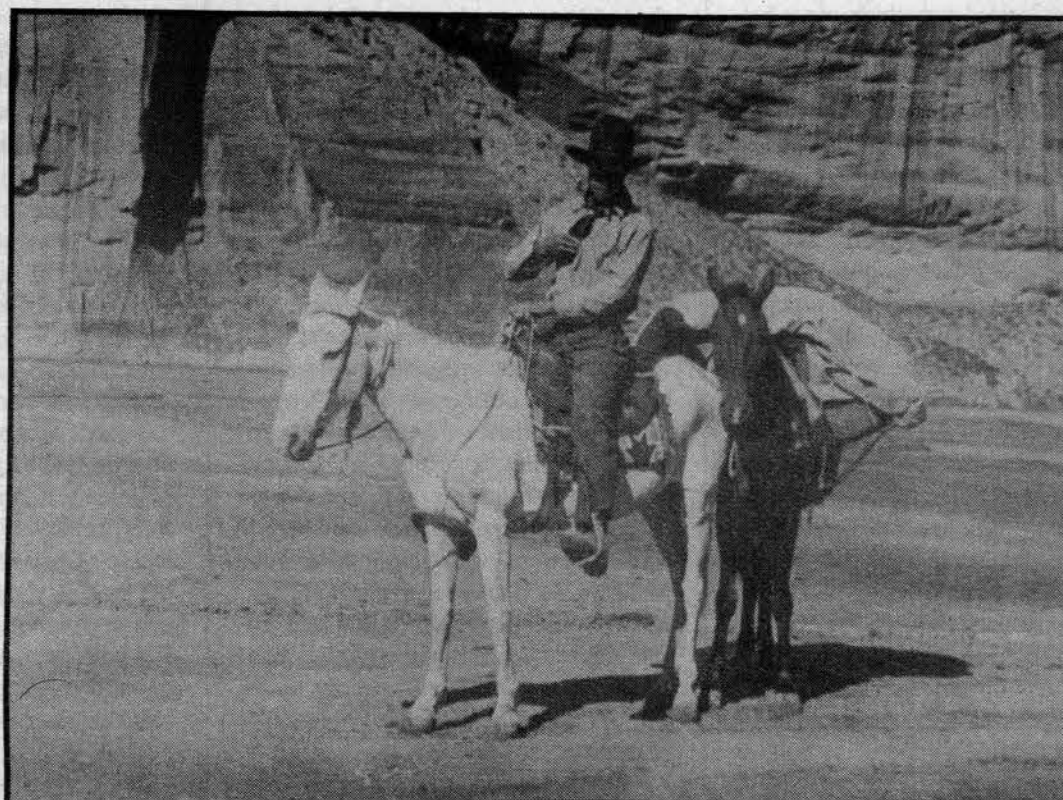
"Hunter, brother, companion of our days," wrote the late Edward Abbey. "That blessing which you hunted, hunted too, what you were seeking, this is what found you." ■

James Bishop Jr. is a writer in Sedona, Arizona.

"Music has been in my heart all the time, and poetry in my thoughts. Alone on the open desert, I have made up songs of wild, poignant rejoicing and transcendent melancholy ... I have loved the red rocks, the twisted trees, the red sand blowing in the wind, the slow, sunny clouds crossing the sky, the shafts of moonlight on my bed at night ... I have rejoiced to set out, to be going somewhere, and I have felt a still sublimity, looking deep into the coals of my campfires, and seeing far beyond them. I have been happy in my work, and I have exulted in my play. I have really lived."

— Everett Ruess

April 18, 1931, letter to brother Bill



Everett Ruess in Utah

Peregrine Smith Books