

INSIDE: Money can't buy you a wilderness/6

High Country News

August 24, 1992

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

LEAVE IT TO THE BEAVER



Leonard Lee Rue III

A beaver walks over an old dam

by Stephen Stuebner

FAIRFIELD, Idaho — It's a typical summertime morning on Corral Creek, and the streamside community is dancing with life.

A red-tailed hawk screeches as it takes off from its nest atop a tall cottonwood tree. Mallards flush from the creek and quack as they pull into flight, zooming around the thick cottonwoods and willows. Red-winged blackbirds issue terse calls in the alder bushes, and even in the worst drought of southern Idaho's history, mosquitoes scout for fresh blood.

But Corral Creek is by no means a wildlife preserve. It is one of Jon Mellen's grazing pastures on his 10,000-acre Hot Springs Ranch. What makes this pasture different is the presence of a colony of beaver that moved into lower Corral Creek last fall. In just six months, they've turned the previously gouged creek bottom into a wetland brimming with wildlife. It also serves as a new grass-producing area for Mellen's livestock.

"Yep, them beaver been busy in here," says Lew Pence, an aw-shucks kind of guy who works for the Soil Conservation Service. Lean and leggy, Pence strides across the spongy meadow,

observing the diverse plant life. Pence wears his white cap with an orange "Beaver" insignia on the front. It's an Oregon State University booster cap, but for Pence it's also a booster cap for real beaver. He is constantly amazed at how beaver can transform land. "Just look how far the water table has risen in here already," he says, grinning.

Thirty feet from the creek's edge, Pence and Mellen inspect some new willow shoots sprouting in the wet, mucky soil. Pence reaches down to inspect grass and sedges coming up thickly in the shadow of old-growth cottonwoods. Even though Mellen's cows grazed the area earlier this spring, new grass shoots

out of cow hoof prints.

"Without the sub (higher water table from beaver dams), you wouldn't have any regrowth here at all this year," Pence says.

Mellen and Pence inspect a few beaver dams choked with mud, rocks and sticks. One is nearly as tall as Mellen, who stands about six feet. A trickle of water pours over the beaver dam into Corral Creek, past the boundary fence and onto his neighbor's property.

"The water behind the dam is just a fraction of the water that's stored here in the riparian area," Pence says. "Water runs downhill whether it's in the creek or

in the soils, so you've got this whole floodplain saturated with water. If the water flushed out in the spring, it'd be gone already."

Mellen is one of about a dozen ranchers in a four-county area of south-central Idaho who are bullish on beaver. While many scorn beaver because they cut down trees, choke culverts and clog irrigation ditches, ranchers like Mellen find that beaver are a valuable tool in restoring riparian areas, the green strips of vegetation that border creeks, ponds and lakes. Prolific dam-builders, beaver raise the water table and create lush meadows, expanding the area in which nutrient-rich plants and grasses grow and then put more pounds on a cow.

"I've seen some more land inundated with water than I had before, but the overall effect of raising the water table has so many benefits, it far exceeds the value of the land lost," Mellen says.

Back in 1986, Pence and some progressive ranchers in Blaine, Camas, Gooding and Lincoln counties launched the nation's first-ever Beaver Committee. Its aim was to help restore riparian areas and wetlands, reduce soil erosion and improve the productivity of the land for livestock grazing. So far, they have planted about 100 beaver in 25 different creeks. Still in its early days, the project

Continued on page 10

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Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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To visit, or not to visit

The following column should test even those who love reading about visitors. As you will see, it's been a busy summer.

Whether or not *HCN* should have a visiting column has inspired a fair amount of correspondence. Mary Vant Hull from Bozeman, Mont., writes that the column adds to the "family" feeling, and Elizabeth Rothman of Seattle, Wash., says she loves the column because it brings *HCN* down to scale.

But a correspondent with an illegible signature and a Denver post mark says it is trite and too much like an Ivy League school's magazine about who is doing what.

Becky Holmes of Helena, Mont., says she doesn't care about the names of the visitors, but is interested in the occupations and "whys" of people visiting and working there. She likes the diversity.

Visitors

Jim and Peg MacQuean from Charlottesville, Va., stopped by on their way to Dinosaur National Monument. He's an attorney and she is a registered nurse. In the office at the same time was Darrin Coldiron, a sociology student from the University of Montana. His field is the Rainbow Family, which he has now joined.

Eric Anderson and Katie Callaghan of Berkeley, Calif., stopped by on their way from the Telluride Bluegrass Festival to the Wallowa Mountains of northeast Oregon. Andy Teetzel of Healdsburg, Calif., said he liked the new office.

Wayne Ranney, a free-lance educator, and Suzana D'Oliveira, both of Flagstaff, came through on their way to a 40th birthday party in Boulder, Colo. And two subscribers from suburban Moab, Utah — Castle Valley — came by. Eric Thomson and Lynn Forbes Thomson run the Castle Valley Inn there.

The most distant visitors were Kat-suhiro Harada and Masaki Morita, both reporters for the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, or *Nikkei*, newspaper. It is a national Japanese paper with 3 million circulation. They were in town to write about *HCN* as part of a series on the American West.

On their way to the Havasupai Reservation in the Grand Canyon were Ann Moss of the National Park Service and Jesse Shapins, a planner and landscape architect from Boulder.

Water attorney Wray Witten of Denver stopped by to change his address. He leaves soon, and permanently, for Ethiopia on a project for the Water and Sanitation Consultancy Group, to provide drinking water for rural villages.

Also on the move was Owen Perkins, returning to Colorado from Baltimore, Md. And John Bowen and Carol Moston, both from Roslindale, Mass., getting into Western ways, said "howdy" and thanked subscribers Deb Johnson and Rex Welshon for the great road trip tips.

The Steiner family from Tempe, Ariz., came through on the way to Steamboat Springs. On his way to the Earth First! Rendezvous in southern Colorado was John Wulfers, proud bearer of a new Masters in environmental studies from Evergreen State College. Curtis Landgraf was on his way to the Rainbow

gathering from Salt Lake City.

Barbara and Clyde Howse of Kalamazoo, Mich., curious to see where their daughter Kristin had interned, stopped to say hello. From the Moab area came Linda Wittkopf, Jay Nethercott and Laura Lee Houck, with son Peregrine, 16 months. It was Peregrine's first visit to a newspaper office.

Paul Rogers, a cover-to-cover reader with the Forest Service, was in the area as part of his ecosystem research. And long-time subscriber Richard Herrman of Golden, Colo., who is retired, took time out from a trip to Telluride to visit. Dan Bailey came by from Dixon, Missouri, to subscribe. He had been at the Malachite Farm in Gardiner, Colo.

Pat O'Driscoll, a reporter with the *Denver Post*, was fortunate enough to be in town during the Paonia Library's 10 cent book sale. In addition to bargain hunting, Pat wrote about the Rainbow Family.

Sean Cassidy, professor of communications at Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, Texas, was on his way from Texas to Alaska, and his route led through *HCN*'s office, from which he pilfered back issues.

His visit coincided with that of Joe Feller, a rancher of sorts, and a professor of law at Arizona State University in Tempe.

On a Saturday came a geography class led by professor Dan Sullivan of Denver University. They were on their way back to Denver after a tour of the Southwest. They discussed what they had seen with *HCN* staff at a mini-seminar.

Roger and Nicholas Brown of Gypsum, Colo., came by to film the *HCN* office and discuss grazing. The father and son are doing a documentary on grazing to correct what they see as some mistakes in National Audubon's documentary, *The New Range Wars*.

Wade Davis, a junior at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and a resident of Los Angeles, came to the office, following in his father's footsteps. Wade Davis Sr. had visited the office a few weeks earlier.

David Eisner and Nancy Terrill, both attorneys and subscribers from Boulder, stopped by with their children, Jessica and Cully, on their way home from southern Utah. Homeward bound from the Grand Canyon were Kari Van-meter-Henderson and Scott Henderson. She is a planner for Fort Collins, Colo.; he is a computer consultant.

Carol Buchanan of Norwood, Colo., stopped by on her way to Boulder with a petition to place on the November ballot a ban on spring bear hunting in Colorado. She'd collected 700 names thus far. Carol, a native of western Colorado, recently wrote a letter to *HCN* saying that she wanted public-land grazing stopped. She said that in the Norwood area, which is near Telluride, ranchers sell their high-mountain pastures to developers for millions of dollars, and then push on the Forest Service to provide them with more public-land grazing "because they want to keep being cowboys."

Mistakes

Kay Lani Noble of Falls Church, Va., says that our July 13, 1992, Bulletin Board, titled "Lewis and Clark, Revisited," should have dated the original expedition 187 years ago, instead of 87 years ago.

And Kay Hummel from Boise, Idaho, reminds us that it's the Bonneville Power Administration. We've referred to it as an "agency." And while the Snake River has been drained dry in places this

summer, as the June 1 issue said, Kay said it is incorrect to say that Idaho has no minimum stream flow legislation.

We regenerated Terrence Moore, a photographer, as Terri Moore on his photos in the recent electricity issues. And *HCN* is trying to contact Vanesa Naumann and John McComb. We used their photos in the electricity issues and now wish to pay them.

The June 29 special issue on electric energy unburied a corpse PacifiCorp had hoped was permanently interred. Like a bad penny, media relations manager Leslie Blythe told us, the photo of the firm's Glenrock, Wyo., plant, with black smoke apparently coming out of the stacks, keeps turning up. The photo first appeared in the March 1, 1976, issue of *Time* magazine with the headline: "King Coal Comes Back: Wealth and Worry."

PacifiCorp said then and says now that the photo may have been doctored, and at the least gives a wrong impression of the plant's operation. Ms. Blythe sent us a new photo of the plant, which shows a wisp of white steam coming out of one stack. It has been added to our photo file.

In the same issue we moved the AMAX Henderson mine from near Silverthorne, Colo., to Silverton, Colo. And writer Jon Christensen says that his article in the June 29 issue, "Selling nuclear power, yet again," misspoke when it said that it has been more than a decade since a new nuclear plant came on line in this country. In fact, according to the Utility Data Institute, 1991 was the first year since 1967 that no new nuclear plants entered service in the United States. But orders for new plants have been rare since 1973.

Information wanted

Jon Gregg of La Grande, Ore., just sent us the Baker City, La Grande, John Day and Canyon City telephone book, so we are set there. But we are still in need of the following: Phoenix, Ariz.; Washington, D.C.; Boise, Missoula, Bozeman, Whitefish, Dillon and Sheridan, Mont.; Reno, Nev.; Albuquerque and Santa Fe, N.M.; Portland and Eugene, Ore.; Moab, Park City and Salt Lake City, Utah; Seattle and Olympia, Wash.; and Cheyenne and Dubois, Wyo.

While we wait for those books to arrive, thanks to R. Holmgren for Provo, Utah; Ed and Babs Sanders for San Juan County, N.M.; Jim Case for Southern Utah; Janet Marcus for Tuscon, Ariz.; Erik Moeller for Durango, Colo.; U.C. Schwartz for Southwest Wyoming and Rock Springs and Green River, Wyo.; Julie Drenz for Bismarck, N.D.; John Moran for Colville and Chewelah area, Wash.;

Barbara Blackburn for Sedona and Verde Valley, Ariz.; Ilse Asplund for Prescott, Ariz.; Laurie O'Conner for Harney County, Ore.; Glenda Bradshaw and Phyllis Lefohn for Helena, Mont.; Charles Nimick for Pittsburgh, Penn.; Eliot Kalman for Rock Springs, Rawlins, Green River and Fremont County, Wyo.; Overton Power District #5 in Overton, Nev., for Las Vegas, Mesquite and Moapa Valley, Nev., and St. George, Utah; Vicky McLane for Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Chas Clifton for Brookside, Buena Vista, Pueblo and Cañon City, Colo.; The Inn at Ojo, N.M., for Taos, Ojo Caliente and Chama, N.M.; and Brenda Schussman for Ogden, Utah.

—Ed Marston, for the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Are forests burning because of Smokey?

BOISE, Idaho — Tens of thousands of lightning bolts kicked off a bevy of wildfires throughout the drought-stricken West in early August, torching about 400,000 acres in seven states.

It was the first major "fire bust" of the 1992 season, but conditions are ripe for one of the most destructive fire seasons in this century. "We are nowhere near out of this," said Arnold Hartegan, public affairs chief for the Boise Interagency Fire Center in Boise, the nation's firefighting nerve center.

"The last six years of drought, combined with temperatures in the triple digits and the potential for more lightning, could make for an explosive situation," Hartegan said.

Dozens of range and forest fires have charred homes and ranch buildings in Idaho, Nevada and Oregon, and forced hundreds of rural residents to temporarily flee their homes. One firefighter in Idaho was killed by a falling tree, the only fatality reported through early August.

Fire officials say extremely dry conditions in forests and grasslands have caused unpredictable fire behavior. Many blazes grew from a few hundred acres to thousands in a matter of hours. "It is very extreme," Roy Hayes, a Bureau of Land Management fire boss, said of the drought conditions. "I saw fuels that in most years would be a natural fire break — things like cottonwoods and evergreens along the river — burn up quite rapidly."

Hayes said the fires require massive resources — smokejumpers, hand crews, helicopters toting water buckets and tanker planes dropping retardant — to



Smokey's rules may be contributing to forest fires

bring under control. Such resources can cost millions of dollars per day, but officials say it is too early to estimate the West-wide cost so far.

Environmentalists blame the U.S. Forest Service's "10 a.m." fire policy (controlling the fire by 10 a.m. the next day) throughout this century for creating a powderkeg: thick stands of mature trees, some dying from insect infestations. Research shows that in the past forests burned on a cyclical basis, ignited by lightning or Indians. Professional land managers, ranchers and loggers ended that cycle.

"Fire suppression has caused a real problem in the forests," said Mike Medberry, public lands coordinator for the Idaho Conservation League. "The main thing is to treat fire as an acceptable part of land management."

But fire officials say they have to protect citizens from getting killed. "Everyone wants to have their home in the hills, but it's complicating the firefighting situation immensely," Hayes said.

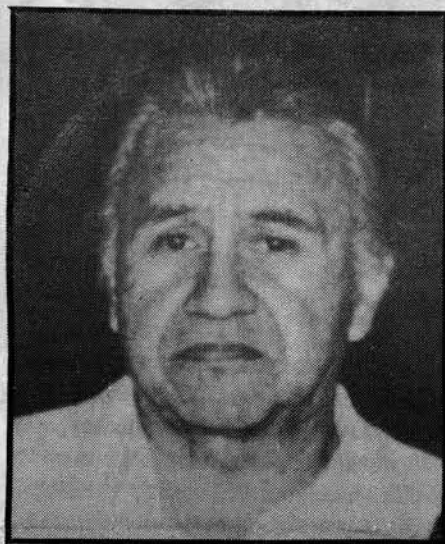
— Stephen Stuebner

Stephen Stuebner is a free-lance writer in Boise, Idaho.

HOTLINE

Grizzly Park moves ahead

With the go-ahead from Montana health officials, construction has begun on the controversial Grizzly Park just outside of Yellowstone. Visitors will soon see bears in natural-appearing habitats if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves the developer's plan for the animals' captivity. Environmentalists say the new theme park may attract wild grizzlies and provide a low-quality, crowded habitat for bears used to roaming 45 square miles. Park promoter Lewis Robinson, a real estate developer, contends wild bears will not be attracted to the site. Out of sympathy for the "99 percent of people who never get off the pavement when visiting Yellowstone," Robinson has included an IMAX movie theater, shops, restaurants and a luxury hotel in the multimillion-dollar complex (HCN, 4/20/92).



Billy Frank Jr.

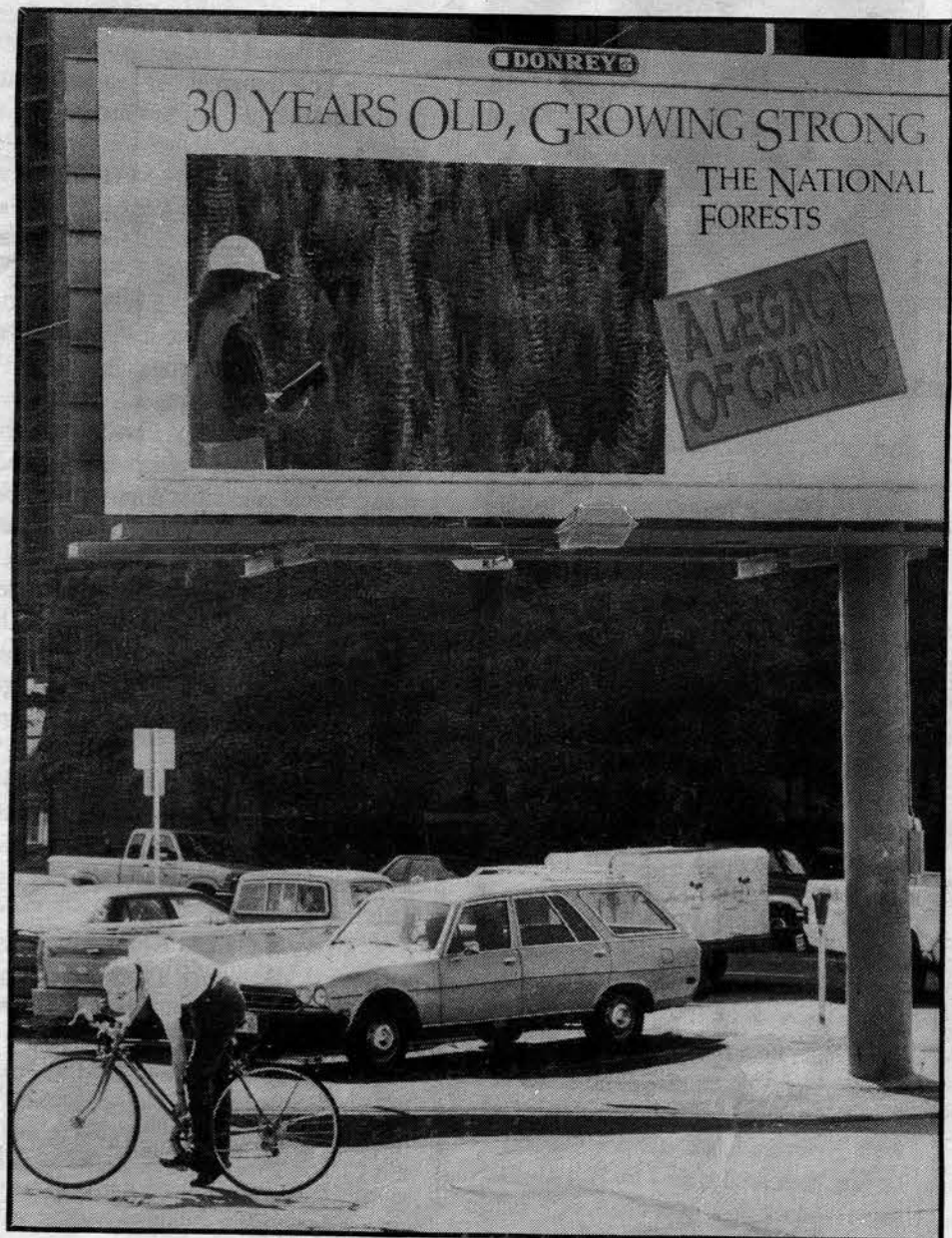
From arrests to accolades

Billy Frank Jr.'s 40-year fight to save salmon has finally drawn national recognition. In June, Frank, a Nisqually Indian from western Washington, received the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism from Johns Hopkins University. Previous winners include former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and President Jimmy Carter. The honor belongs to everyone who has stood up and worked for treaty Indian fishing rights, the needs of salmon and a clean environment, said Frank. He became well known during the 1950s and 1960s when he was arrested more than 40 times for refusing to obey state fishing regulations. His stubbornness paid off. In 1974, U.S. District Judge George Boldt granted Washington Indian tribes rights to 50 percent of the salmon resources in the state. Frank, now 61, is chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and the pioneer of a more cooperative approach to negotiating natural resource disputes. But says friend Steve Robinson: "If it came down to the only way to preserve Indian rights, I don't think Billy would hesitate getting arrested again."

BARBS

"You've got a cougar in your garage." "No," corrected Mary Jane Menzel, "we've got a Buick."

Actually, she had both: a car and a tranquilized 120-pound mountain lion that had escaped from Idaho wildlife officials. The cougar was cornered near the Buick and returned unharmed to a drainage near Coeur d'Alene, reports the Idaho Falls Post-Register.



Anne C. Williams/Spokesman-Review

A billboard war for old-growth forests

Spokane drivers are caught in a public-relations crossfire over the health of the nearby Colville National Forest.

Washington's timber industry has responded to billboards showing clearcuts put up by the Inland Empire Public Lands Council (HCN, 7/13/92), an environmental group, by putting up pro-industry signs. One big sign above a busy intersection shows a woman in a hard-hat overlooking a 30-year-old stand of Douglas-fir trees. The photo is stamped, "A Legacy of Caring."

Such even, uniform trees exhibit a "pristine" beauty lacking in unmanaged forests, said Ken Kohli, a spokesman for the Intermountain Forest Industry Association in the Spokane Spokesman-Review.

Inland Empire's Dave Crandall says the industry's billboards are an "attempt by big business to gloss over the real state of the (national) forests."

— Mark Dooley

HOTLINE

A controversial wilderness bill

In New Mexico, desert peaks, dinosaur remains and a 25,000-acre lava flow may become federal wilderness if a proposal by the Bureau of Land Management is approved by Congress. Selecting the 23 areas — 487,186 acres — took the BLM more than 15 years. Although both the New Mexico Cattlegrowers and the Sierra Club have endorsed the proposal, not everyone is happy. Jim Norton, Southwest regional director for The Wilderness Society, says, "It leaves out many important lands with biological, scenic and recreational values, and shows the typical anti-wilderness bias of the BLM." From the other side, the bill is being stalled by the attempts of Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Rep. Joe Skeen, R-N.M., to open wilderness to more industry and "allow ranching to not be inhibited by anything wild," says Norton. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., and Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., support the wilderness act's more restrictive existing regulations on grazing and water rights. For more information, contact the BLM at P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-7115.

A plan for jobs and trees

Making political choices they say are "difficult but right," Sens. Brock Adams, D-Wash., and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., have proposed a logging ban on 8 million acres in the Pacific Northwest. The measure, introduced in June, would protect old-growth forests while also recognizing the importance of timber jobs and local economies, say the senators. Adams told Congress that a sustainable ecosystem with healthy salmon and wildlife habitat, water quality and recreational opportunities will yield more jobs in the long-run. "The people of the Pacific Northwest deserve better than the same old scare tactics that serve only short-term political needs and the timber industry's quarterly profit reports," Adams told AP. Industry and labor groups condemned the proposal, calling it destructive to small towns. The bill, however, allocates \$700 million for retraining workers and helping timber communities adapt to logging cutbacks.

Tribes at risk

A recent Bush administration ruling that appears to allow the Bureau of Indian Affairs to declare Indian tribes "extinct" has angered native peoples. The ruling was buried in an agency decision in May denying recognition to the Miami tribe of Indiana. Although the tribe signed a congressionally ratified treaty with the U.S. government in 1954, the BIA ruled that it had not maintained tribal political influence over its members since then. According to the ruling, tribal status can be denied even if the group is recognized by treaty. But Eddie Brown, assistant secretary of the BIA, said the news stories have "grossly misinterpreted" his finding in the Miami case and that the ruling does not mean the BIA can extinguish tribes at will. Arlinda Locklear, the Miami's attorney, disagrees. "The BIA can now roam and reconsider the tribal status of any tribe it chooses," she told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. "It's a shocking conclusion."

'Takings' law ignites brawl in Arizona

A new law designed to protect private property rights in Arizona may result in weaker environmental, health and safety regulations.

"(It) may well be the most potentially damaging anti-environmental law in the country," says Michael Gregory, director of Arizona Toxics Information, a group that fights pollution.

One of three states in the nation to pass such legislation, Arizona's is toughest. It commands state agencies to assess whether proposed regulations affect the value or use of private property. If they do, the state must determine compensation to all affected landowners.

The bill was supported by the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Cattlegrowers' Association, real estate developers and logging and mining industry groups. Gov. Fife Symington signed the bill despite opposition by consumer, public health, civil rights and environmental advocates and the state's three largest daily newspapers.

The Sierra Club launched a major referendum drive in June to overturn the law. The newly formed "Take Back Your Rights Committee," hopes to gather the 53,771 signatures needed to bring the measure to ballot in November.

"This is a completely stupid law," says committee chair Joni Bosh, who notes that just compensation is already guaranteed in the federal and state constitutions. "The agencies don't have the manpower or time to do this (added layer of analysis). The law will weaken new

regulations because the state will say, 'Is this worth the risk of being sued?'"

The new legislation orders the state attorney general's office to write guidelines by January, telling state agencies how to determine if proposed rules may require compensation.

Critics charge the law will cost the state a fortune in litigation brought by landowners demanding compensation. Another concern is that the law narrows the context in which regulations may be written. It calls for new rules "only in response to real and substantial threats to public health and safety."

"What about margins of safety?" asks Jim Lemmon of the Arizona Public Health Association, a non-profit advocacy group. "This legislation does not take that into account. It conflicts with existing regulations set up for the greater good. It's set up for the government to be sued," he adds, "either for not protecting the public or for not paying enough to private interests."

Similar bills were considered last year in 27 states, but failed except in Delaware and Washington. Colorado's Gov. Roy Romer vetoed a property rights bill.

Arizona's law is part of a national movement. Former President Reagan issued an executive order in 1988 for all federal agencies to consider "takings" conflicts when drafting new rules. Unlike Arizona's bill, however, the order had no legal force.

"What we're looking for is for gov-

ernment to be more responsive to people's rights under the fifth amendment," says Arizona Rep. Mark Killean, the Republican who introduced the legislation. "The public in general doesn't want the government to grow by leaps and bounds. This bill is not designed to stop regulations but to get them to look before they leap," adds Killean, a rancher and real estate developer from Mesa.

But attorney David Baron of the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest says the bill goes beyond simple circumspection.

He says the law contains a number of absolute restrictions on what state government can do to protect public health and safety.

Baron says the law could prevent such regulations as buffer zones around schools when spraying for pesticides. "If the state tried to adopt that rule now, agribusiness would say, 'hey, wait a minute, you didn't prove a real and substantial threat.' That response was (the industry's) very intent in passing this bill."

Some state agencies say they are uncertain how the law will affect them. But the Arizona Department of Fish and Game estimates that implementing the legislation will cost it up to 8 million dollars a year annually in litigation, administration and compensation, says legislative liaison Richard Stevenson. "With those kinds of costs, we could lose our eligibility for receiving federal funding," he says.

— Florence Williams

Minority students explore green careers

As he headed toward the rock precipice overlooking West Elk Creek nearly 2,000 feet below, Willie Guillory stopped and craned his neck toward a stand of trees nearby. He listened intently for snapping branches, using his field-glasses to search the trees for signs of the bighorn sheep herd that has been seen here on Dillon Mesa.

"You get this feeling sometimes that the sheep just have to be around, like they're watching you," he whispered. "It's all a matter of patience and luck."

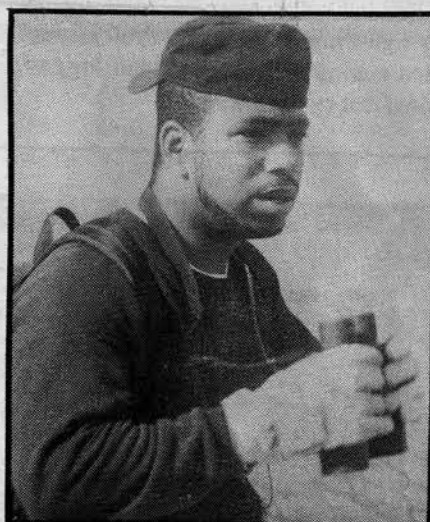
Guillory's job this summer is to find and observe bighorn sheep in Curecanti National Recreation Area near Gunnison on Colorado's West Slope, where dams and reservoirs bisect some 32,000 acres of arid mesas. The research is important in itself, but in a way, Guillory, a 21-year-old African-American, and his sponsoring organization, the Student Conservation Association, are also under a microscope.

Guillory, along with 21 other college students, is part of an effort to bring skilled, motivated professionals from minority backgrounds into natural resource work.

In 1990, the SCA hired Hispanic and African-American administrators to attract minority students in high school and college into the predominantly white field of conservation.

Now, two years into the program, SCA follows the development of 22 college students, aged 17 to 24, from historically black colleges such as Grambling State University in Louisiana and Howard University in Washington, D.C. Because the program provides year-round tracking, mentoring and job placement assistance, it's more than just a summer job. Some students, such as Guillory, receive funds to offset tuition costs.

The rationale for this personal atten-



Peter Donaldson

Willie Guillory

tion is threefold, said the program's assistant director, Jose Vargas. "We want to provide long-term direction for these students to encourage their continued involvement. The groups that we're recruiting from are underrepresented in government and private conservation organizations, and we want to present those organizations with the most skilled, most qualified people to fill their positions."

For Guillory this attention has meant a lot.

"They've done so much for me," Guillory says of the SCA. "I'm going to owe them my life. When I graduate I'll have so many opportunities for jobs, I'm confident I'll be able to work almost anywhere."

When he's not searching the backcountry for bighorn sheep, he lives near Gunnison, Colo., with a population less than 2 percent black. It's not the society he has been accustomed to. But Guillory says: "I look at it as a challenge rather than like, 'oh, man, I'm the only one here.'"

Guillory, who attends Grambling

State University, had been heading toward optometry. But when he heard a talk at the school by Raquel Jones, the program's coordinator and also an African-American, he changed his mind.

"I heard myself up there," Guillory says energetically. "I was taking classes I didn't like and I wasn't doing well. I was just going through the motions, and then I heard Raquel say that had been her experience as well."

Although Guillory's move from the sweltering lowlands of Louisiana to the open sagebrush mesas of Curecanti was definitely a culture shock, he says he couldn't have asked for a better location or better work: "I'd hate if I had to sit at a desk or in front of a computer all day. I mean, just look at this place."

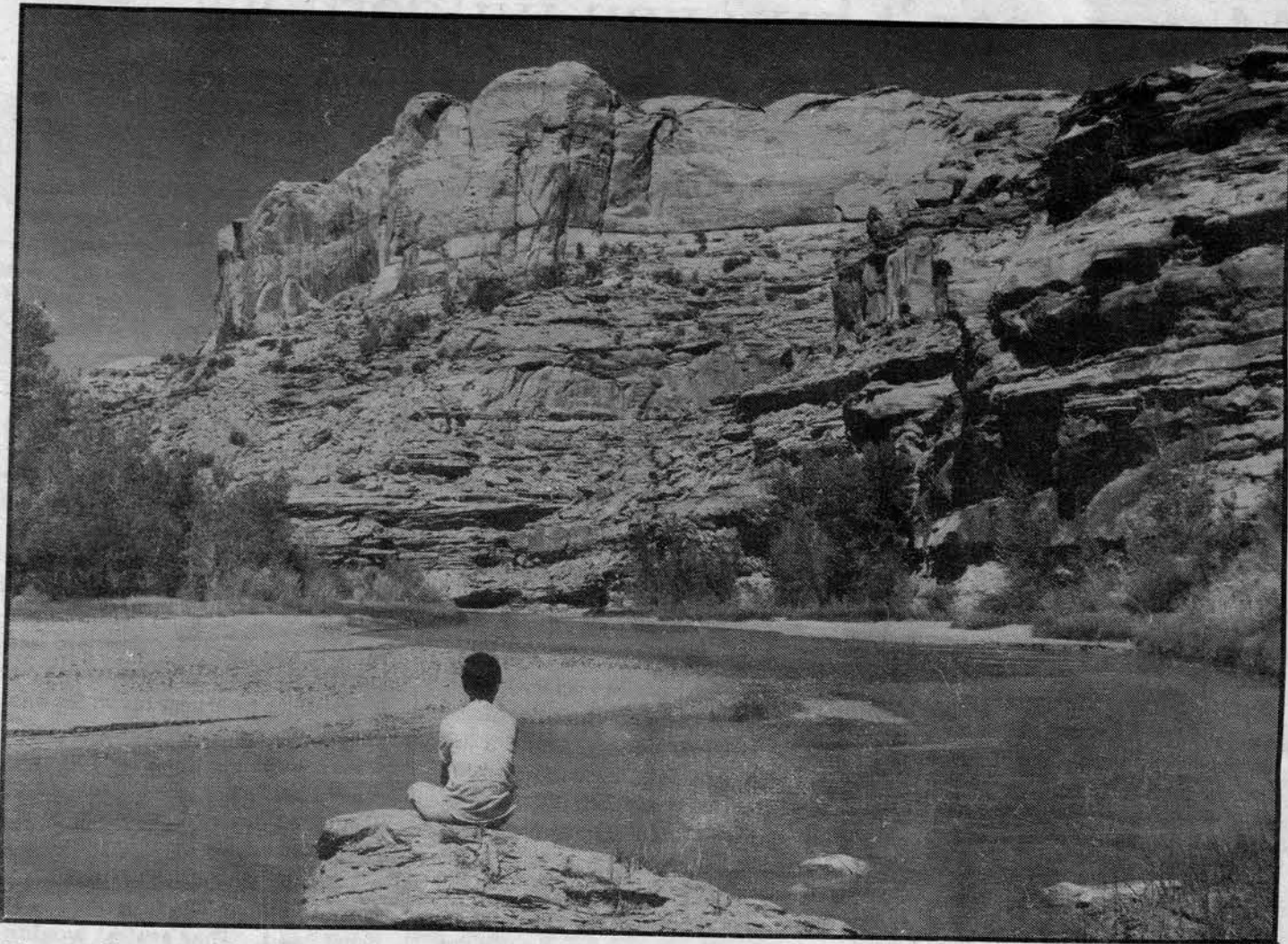
At nearby Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, another young black student is coping with big changes. Monica Washington, a 19-year-old sophomore from Washington, D.C., felt jolted by the move from the crowded East. It's sometimes lonely being the only person of color, she says, but she's enjoying herself and her research categorizing plant species and monitoring peregrine falcons.

Washington says the year-long program will help her establish professional contacts. She hopes to put her education and her summer experience to work as a veterinarian.

"Everyone keeps telling me veterinary medicine is such a hard field to get into, but I'm confident I can do it," she says.

For more information about the SCA's Conservation Career Development Program, contact Raquel Jones at the CCDP Headquarters, 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1260, Arlington, VA 22209 (703/524-2441).

— Peter Donaldson, HCN intern



The Escalante River in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Jack McLellan

Happy ending to Utah grazing conflict

After nearly two years of negotiations, a large portion of the Escalante River drainage in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area has been permanently closed to grazing.

In an unusual agreement, Arthur and Ivan Lyman of Boulder, Utah, agreed to sell their grazing rights for 330 cow-calf pairs to a private group acting on behalf of the National Park Service.

The 55,000-acre allotment in southern Utah, which includes a popular hiking area, had been the focus of conflict in recent years. Hikers complained about cattle destroying vegetation in the narrow canyons and of the degradation of the area's wilderness qualities. In the spring of 1990, 16 cows and five calves were shot and two cabins burned on the allotment. The case remains unsolved.

While the Park Service manages Glen Canyon National Recreation Area overall, the Bureau of Land Management oversees grazing. In an attempt to reduce conflict with hikers in 1990, the BLM changed the date for removing cattle from the allotment from June 15 to April 1.

But by the summer of 1990, the Lymans had had enough. "We were having to spend a lot of time down there," says Arthur Lyman. "We didn't feel like it was feasible for us anymore."

That's when they contacted Larry May, assistant superintendent of Glen Canyon NRA, to see if the Park Service was interested in buying their grazing permit.

May said the government technically cannot buy something it already owns. He told the Lymans that they could either donate the grazing rights or he would try to find a private buyer.

May had been searching for a benefactor for more than a year when the Conservation Fund offered its help. Funded by grants and endowments, this six-year-old organization works to protect land and water resources, often using innovative solutions when outright acquisition won't work.

The group serves as the "technical arm" of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, which has, since 1977, made \$196 million in grants and gifts for conservation. In May, it reached a settlement with the Lymans for an undis-

closed sum. The BLM and Park Service officially closed the Escalante River allotment to grazing as of April 1, 1992.

Larry May calls the settlement a "win-win situation." Brant Calkin, executive director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, also commends the Lymans for working with the Park Service. "The canyons are going to be in a more natural condition. Everyone comes out ahead in the deal."

But Calkin is concerned about the means used to reach this beneficial end. "I don't think a resource-based decision should require payment of private money." If the Park Service and BLM had the courage to make the decision to close the allotment and stick to it, he says, they should feel confident that the decision would withstand an appeal.

Lyman, too, has mixed feelings about the settlement. He is pleased that it set a precedent that grazing permits have monetary value. "When you go to acquire (grazing permits), you don't just go to the BLM and say 'we want to put X number of cattle on the range.' You buy them from other ranchers for a lot of money. When conservationists want to take cattle off the land, they have to realize the value of these permits."

He says he regrets, however, that closing the allotment eliminates a small but viable income for the government. He is also concerned that people will assume that the cattle shooting drove them off the allotment. "We're not running scared," he

says. In fact, the Lymans recently leased an adjacent allotment upstream of the one now closed.

The negotiations were applauded by Garfield and San Juan county commissioners, who sent letters of support for the concept to the Conservation Fund.

In all, over 900,000 acres within Glen Canyon NRA are grazed, with more than 50 permittees holding the 72 permits. May says the Park Service has no plans to continue such allotment closures. "We are charged with the management of grazing within the NRA." It is not the agency's intent, he says, to systematically seek permit cancellations.

—Alexandra Murphy

The writer graduated from the University of Montana environmental studies master's program.

BARBS

You may have seen this under its original title: "How Grand Coulee Dam Decimated the Columbia's Salmon Fishery."

As part of its 90th anniversary celebration, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will show a video: "The Columbia: A Fountain of Life."

It's black, gooey, and free to farmers who don't mind the smell.

"Bring on the biosolids," say Washington state farmers. Seattle has begun trucking sewage sludge to some of the state's wheat farms, and so far they've given it a hearty welcome. "You'd have to eat five pounds of the stuff" to be harmed, said a county health official in the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*.

And you thought fishing was safe and relaxing.

So did angler Dan Clark of Magna, Utah, until he landed a one-pound piranha in the Jordan River. "When I swung it up on the bank, it chewed through my 14-pound test line," he told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The second piranha ever caught in the state, it was probably dumped by an unhappy fish owner, speculated wildlife officials.

HOTLINE

Boards not bugs

The Forest Service recently arrested 16 loggers outside of Forks, Wash., for salvaging downed timber in northern spotted owl habitat. Two weeks earlier, officials arrested 21 people for cutting fallen timber in a protest against the Forest Service's policy of leaving naturally felled trees in the forest. The protesters say they would rather use the trees than watch them rot and feed insects. Members of the Northwest Independent Forest Manufacturers and the Washington Commercial Forest Action Committee, both timber industry groups, undertook civil disobedience because the Forest Service is incurring a "tremendous amount of waste," activist Larry Mason told Associated Press. The agency currently stipulates that logging can occur only if it benefits spotted owl habitat. Fallen trees contribute to soil richness and provide burrows for the owl's prey, says Colleen Adams, a spokeswoman for the Olympic National Forest.

House okays fee hike

The U.S. House of Representatives recently approved a 33 percent increase in grazing fees on public land. If the Senate, which has rejected similar measures in the past, approves it this time, ranchers next summer will pay \$2.56 per animal unit month instead of the current \$1.92. This is the fourth time in one and a half years the House has voted to raise the price of grazing cattle and sheep, and, once again, ranchers and some Western lawmakers are vigorously opposing the increase. "We're talking about clobbering the small business people of the West," Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., told Gannett News Service. But the bill's supporters disagree. "This is an obscene subsidy that goes to some of the wealthiest individuals in the country," Rep. Chester D. Atkins, D-Mass., told Gannett. The House passed the measure as part of an Interior appropriations bill.



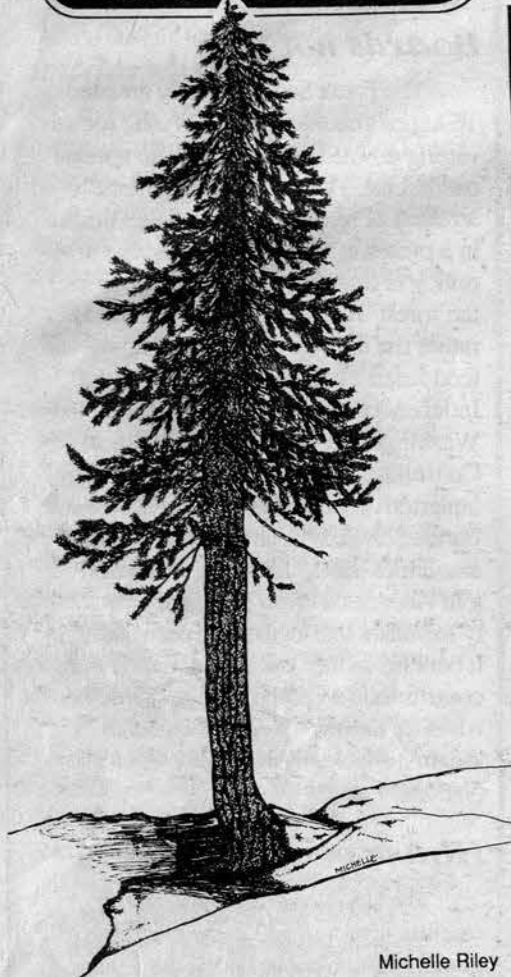
Louisiana-Pacific

L-P sued again

A former Louisiana-Pacific supervisor in Olathe, Colo., says he was fired from the waferboard plant in February because he refused to keep breaking pollution laws. In a complaint filed in federal court, David Horan says that when he told plant manager Dana Dulohery there was no legal way he could increase production, Dulohery told him to do it any way he could. Horan's attorney, Ron Gregson, says Horan then requested written instructions to "increase production illegally," and was fired two days later. Horan, who joined L-P in 1984, says L-P began telling him in 1989 to toss away charts, falsify data and remove a pollution monitor from the smokestack. L-P attorney Andy Loewi says the charges against the company are "totally unfounded — Horan was terminated for poor job performance." Loewi says the resignation of Horan's immediate supervisor and demotion of plant manager Dulohery are unrelated to Horan's complaint. Horan's suit seeks a monetary settlement for lost wages and assurance that the plant will enforce pollution-control measures in the future. Six months ago, a federal court awarded four families \$2.3 million because L-P's air pollution forced them to abandon their homes (*HCN*, 4/6/92).



HOTLINE



Michelle Riley

Almost a millennium old

The oldest known Douglas-fir took root in a "boot-ripping lava bed" in New Mexico 930 years ago, according to scientists at the University of Arizona's tree-ring research lab. The find last summer may shift the search for long-lived trees from mountain slopes to lava fields. Before this discovery the oldest known Douglas-fir, located at Nine Mile Canyon in Utah, was 912. The new oldest Douglas-fir known stands with other firs on the second youngest of five lava flows at the El Malpais National Monument, about 60 miles west of Albuquerque, N.M. Scientists Thomas Swetman, Rex Adams and Henri Grissino-Mayer cored Douglas-firs in the area, about two miles south of the monument's ice caves. Why Douglas-fir are capable of germinating on lava is still a mystery. "There's something peculiar about this lava that allows these trees to grow where they shouldn't be at all," said Grissino-Mayer. "The sites are protected from fire, there's no competition from grasses, shrubs or other trees (only Douglas-fir grow on El Malpais lava), there are no grazing predators and no one logging or hiking in to collect firewood."

A whole lot of shaking

The earthquakes that hit Southern California and Nevada in June may have left everyone except Department of Energy officials nervous. Despite a 5.7 magnitude earthquake centered 12 miles from the agency's proposed nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain, federal officials are not alarmed. "It was well within our expected seismic events," said Carl Gertz, Yucca Mountain project manager, in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. DOE says a repository on the site would be built to withstand a 6.5 magnitude earthquake centered within two miles of the dump. Opponents of the project, including the state of Nevada, say recent events bolster their concerns. "Placing 70,000 metric tons of the most dangerous substance known to man, high-level radioactive nuclear waste, in an active earthquake zone defies common sense. But that is exactly what the Department of Energy intends to do at Yucca Mountain," Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., told the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. A study by the U.S. Geological Survey calls the area a "major earthquake risk zone."

Money can't buy you wilderness

DUBOIS, Wyo. — Wyoming ranch owner Stephen Gordon believes the pastoral Brent Creek drainage about five miles south of his ranch is one of the most picturesque areas in the state.

So when the U.S. Forest Service proposed logging the valley, Gordon offered to pay the agency not to. It was perhaps the first time anyone has offered to pay the Forest Service to leave trees standing.

He sent Shoshone National Forest officials a \$100,000 check as a down payment to cover "lost profits" if logging plans are halted. He further pledged to pay up to \$300,000, give up his grazing rights and donate a scenic easement on his ranch in exchange for a promise to leave Brent Creek alone.

But the agency sent Gordon back his check, and turned down his offer. Managers say they must supply local sawmills. The forest has fallen below its annual logging quota since 10 percent of the forest's timber burned in 1988 forest fires.

"He means well, he's got good intentions," said District Ranger Brent Larson, who oversees the Shoshone National Forest's Wind River District. "But in essence, he is proposing the creation of a de facto wilderness area. We can't do that."

A transplant to Wyoming from the East Coast, Gordon is known as a wealthy recluse who appreciates the serenity of the West. He did not return numerous phone calls, and was upset with Forest Service officials who made his cash offer public. "He does not want his name in the paper," Larson said.

Gordon's offer illustrates a growing free-market attitude toward environmen-

tal protection. Just this spring, Defenders of Wildlife announced it would pay \$5,000 to Western landowners with endangered wild wolves reproducing on their property.

The offer is part of the strong sentiment against logging in Brent Creek, an area about 25 miles southeast of Yellowstone National Park that includes elk and grizzly bear habitat.

Biologists from both the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have argued against cutting trees there. They say the drainage is a critical migration corridor for elk in an already heavily logged area of national forest and is becoming more important to the recovering Yellowstone-area grizzly bear population.

"We feel pretty strongly the area should be left alone," said Wyoming Game and Fish biologist Tom Ryder.

Other locals fear the ruin of the area's pristine scenery. Since a big sawmill shut down in Dubois in the 1980s, costing many jobs, the town of 900 has built itself back up as a recreational and tourism center.

"I'm not against all logging," said Bud Betts, who leads guests from his Absaroka Ranch along trails through Brent Creek. "But I can't agree to something that's going to turn my trail rides into slash piles and piles of dirt and mud."

But small sawmill owner Darwin Wilson said, "Sometimes I've got to get some timber to keep my business going."

National forest managers say their multiple-use mission requires them to support firms like Wilson's. Larson said he and other Shoshone managers have made "verbal commitments to industry"

to allow a certain amount of logging. If logging in Brent Creek falters, "We would fall short of meeting our commitment."

Forest Service officials did reclassify Brent Creek from a timber-priority area to a wildlife-priority area and reduced the size of the area slated for "treatment" — agency lingo for logging — from 2,500 to 1,000 acres. They say they will make loggers adhere to strict guidelines to protect wildlife, particularly grizzlies, though the harvest areas are not zoned as grizzly habitat. And they note environmentalists have already lost appeals of plans to build roads into the area.

But the Forest Service also has dismissed a public "working group" of environmentalists, timber industry representatives, biologists and interested local folks like Betts and Gordon, which was to recommend a logging option for Brent Creek to Supervisor Davis. Larson said it was evident the group was heading toward an "anti-timber" conclusion. That, he said, forced his agency to step in and make a decision.

But the Sierra Club's Meredith Taylor, an outfitter who was also on the panel, said, "They saw we wouldn't want them to cut as many trees as they wanted, so they pulled the rug from under us."

While admiring Gordon's cash offer, Taylor said, "We shouldn't have to pay the Forest Service to manage properly."

— Michael Milstein

Michael Milstein, a frequent HCN contributor, reports for the *Billings Gazette* from Cody, Wyoming.

Did agency let itself be logged blind?

MESA, Ariz. — A Wilderness Society official charges that the U.S. Forest Service tried to cover up illegal timber cutting on the Kaibab National Forest by an Arizona company. Kaibab Forest Products has admitted harvesting trees that were supposed to be left standing.

"I suspect that there may have been a carefully orchestrated Forest Service coverup," said Jim Norton, Southwest director of The Wilderness Society.

Norton said it is "inconceivable" that the Forest Service didn't know about the illegal cutting long before Forest Service officials asked Agriculture Department inspectors to review the case last summer.

"The Forest Service is required to go out after a sale to make sure no trees were stolen," Norton said.

On July 24, the Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General announced it was filing a recommendation for criminal action with the U.S. Attorney in Phoenix. The Forest Service is part of the Agriculture Department.

The inspector general has been investigating illegal timber cutting by Phoenix-based Kaibab Forest Products for more than a year, said agency spokesman Tim Danaher.

The Kaibab National Forest, north of the Grand Canyon, includes some of the last remaining old-growth ponderosa pine trees in the Southwest. Environmentalists have pressured the Forest Service to reduce timber sales there to protect the northern goshawk and the endangered Mexican spotted owl.

Norton said forest officials failed to respond to repeated requests for documentation concerning several timber

sales. "I feel like I have been stonewalled by the Forest Service," said Norton, pointing to two denials of Federal Freedom of Information Act requests concerning timber cutting on the Kaibab. The requested documents were part of an investigation, said forest officials. Norton also alleged a "cozy relationship" between the North Kaibab Ranger District and Kaibab Forest Products. He said former District Ranger Lawrence Michalsky prevented environmentalists from participating in timber planning meetings.

"This district was completely unwilling to allow the public to participate at all," Norton said.

Michalsky, who now works on the Tonto National Forest, declined to comment.

Cathie Schmidlin, a Kaibab National Forest spokeswoman, would not comment on Norton's allegations other than to say "Norton and The Wilderness Society are entitled to their viewpoint."

Schmidlin, however, refused to release the amount of timber sold to Kaibab Forest Products off the Kaibab National Forest in the last five years. "I can't release any information regarding past sales because of the investigation going on," she said.

Don Olson, president of Kaibab Forest Products, said he didn't know the exact number of trees illegally removed, but estimated that "hundreds" are involved. Environmentalists close to the case estimate the number is in the thousands and that financial damage is in the millions of dollars.

Olson said the trees were cut by "mistake" and that the company has

taken steps to prevent the practice. "We know we are liable for that and we are ready to settle upon the penalty and get this thing closed," he said.

Olson said the trees were cut by a mechanized harvester whose operator did not see the painted marks left on trees by Forest Service personnel indicating the trees should be left standing.

The government, Olson said, had been allowing 50 to 60 million board-feet of timber to be cut from the forest a year, but two years ago that number was reduced to 30 million board-feet a year, as the Forest Service set aside more forest for the goshawk and Mexican spotted owl.

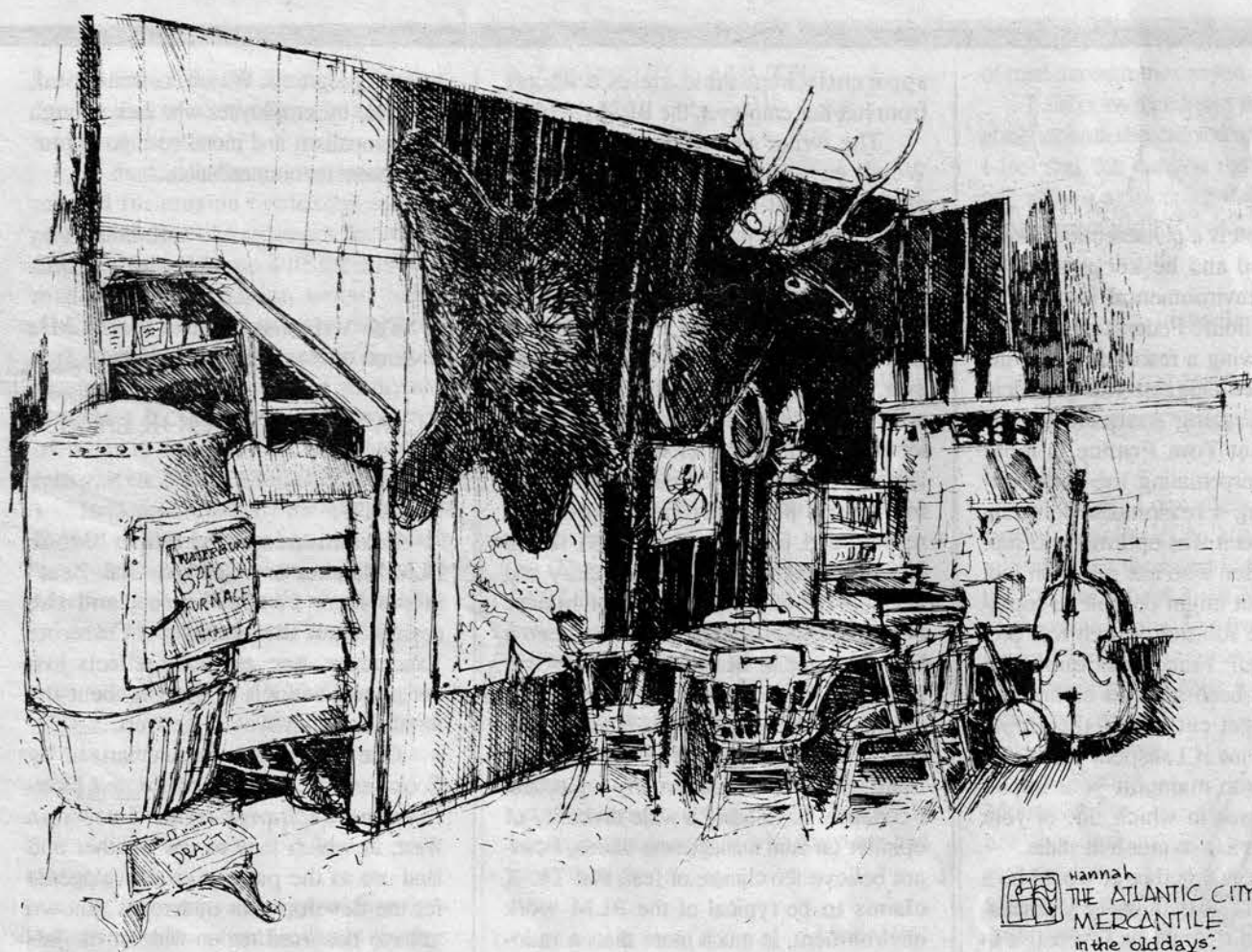
— John Dougherty

John Dougherty is an environmental reporter in Mesa, Ariz., for *Tribune* newspapers.

BARBS

Let's replace the 'o' word with "height-disadvantaged plants."

New Mexico Gov. Bruce King, responding to complaints from the state's Farm and Livestock Bureau, said he wanted the word "overgrazing" removed from the promotional radio spots about New Mexico's forests. "When we (update the tapes), we'll be going over the scripts with a fine-toothed comb, wearing our most politically correct hats and make some changes," King spokesman John McKean told the *Albuquerque Journal*.



 **Hannah**
THE ATLANTIC CITY
MERCANTILE
in the "old days".
Hannah Hinchman

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LETTERS

GIVE THE RANCHERS SOME CREDIT

Dear HCN,

The fact that your article on the Upper Ruby (HCN, 6/15/92) focused on the politics of the controversy indicates the nature of the problem. Range management, a subsistence of ecology, is an imprecise science.

Many grazing strategies can be justified by different research. From the 1950s through the 1980s, the Upper Ruby permittees have implemented various changes and managed to significantly improve the range, including riparian areas — most dramatically early on, when the area was recovering from its worst condition. Now that the ecosystem is generally in better condition, improvement is slower, but the Upper Ruby is still in much better shape than the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone Park. A person can only wonder how it compares with what it looked like when fire and bison made their periodic visits.

Though I think you generally do a careful, balanced job, the Upper Ruby article is full of errors, significant omissions and distortions. Your statement that "streams and banks were a mess from trampling by cattle" may apply to specific sites but gives an inaccurate impression of general disaster. Your implication that cattle grazing and trailing cause sedimentation of the river contradicts the findings of the five-year Ruby River Study, which found that less than 5 percent of the sediment in the river was attributable to livestock use. Though I don't necessarily feel that elk numbers are a valid indicator of ecosystem integrity, the increase in elk numbers from 3,000 to 8,000 since 1980 sheds doubt on your statement that wildlife have been damaged on the allotment. Moose have also increased. Your reporting that aspen are dying out is irrelevant. Their decadence is natural, occurring both in grazed and ungrazed areas due to the success of fire suppression these past 90 years. In the fat file of field notes from which you selected the quote about trespassed cows, numerous notes also comment on permittees' cooperation. If the negative comments outnumber the positive, I think you probably notice the same syndrome among your letters to the editor.

As for the politics, your headline indicates your bias. It implies both that no cuts are being made this year and that something other than politics was the impetus for the proposed larger cuts. With even a cursory perusal of the EIS, a person learns that the preferred alternative recommends a 27 percent cut in AUMs starting this summer. Though this is less than the 44 percent reduction Stellingwerf tried to justify, a more thorough reading of both the draft and final EIS shows that many parts of the draft were significantly flawed. Besides noticing some basic flaws in the draft EIS, I think that the ranchers were frustrated that Stellingwerf wasn't listening to them at all.

They felt that he was bending to political pressure from various groups, some of which want to completely eliminate livestock grazing from the national forest. Once it became apparent that a resource-based determination wasn't being made, they also resorted to the political process. The fact that they knew a couple of politicians is hardly a crime, though the fact that you reported both relationships incorrectly could lead a casual reader to think there was a conflict of interest. The state senator's son's permit is not on the Upper Ruby but one adjacent to it and the aide to Rep. Ron Marlenee is a nephew to Bill Doggett, not a son.

Bill Doggett is a conscientious steward of the land and he keeps an open mind toward environmental issues. The fact that the Wildlife Federation came no closer to achieving a resolution with the permittees when Doggett was president of the Ruby Grazing Association convinced me that Tom France is more interested in perpetuating the controversy than finding a reasonable solution. But then I guess it was optimistic to suppose that a person who has never set foot on the allotment might be able to recognize a creative solution, much less present one himself. France has earned the money he has been paid to orchestrate the effort to get cattle off the Upper Ruby. Forgive me if I suspect that it was harder for you to maintain your impartiality on an issue in which one of your board members has so much at stake.

I don't know whether it would be a valid measure of objectivity or journalistic integrity, but it might be instructive to tally up the times your story answers a "why" question and see whether environmentalists or ranchers get more coverage (maybe try it on your March 23 issue, too). For instance, you explain why Don Bachman left the cooperative stewardship committee, but not why the committee refused to seat John Roylance. The reason was that Roylance didn't seem to represent anyone but himself. The seat he was nominated to fill had been vacated by a representative of the Montana Wildlife Federation, but Roylance's complete opposition to any cattle on public lands and his offers to shoot holes in any new water tanks contradicted the publicly stated positions of the Montana Wilderness Federation.

I wonder what you meant by the statement "the Upper Ruby failed to provide an example of good progress." If it means both sides are disappointed in the conclusions of the final EIS, you may be right. But sometimes the fact that neither side is entirely happy means that a useful compromise has been reached. Maybe the biological basis for determining riparian standards and cattle impacts described in the final EIS is sound. The 27 percent cut should be significant enough to allow riparian areas to continue to improve. I think the permittees should be given credit for being willing to manage the resource, emphasizing other qualities that the public wants and not just maximizing grass production. I just hope that they are given at least five years to show what they can accomplish under the new management plan, without having to constantly fight the political battle.

Alan Carroll
Twin Bridges, Montana

THE BLM WELCOMES
CRITICISM AND GOOD
SCIENCE

Dear HCN,

I read the anonymous letter (HCN, 4/20/92) from the career Bureau of Land Management employee with, I must confess, a certain degree of incredulity. I also have been a career BLM employee for more than 20 years, also mostly in the arid West. My experience does not square with the views expressed. The "BLM staffer" has concluded that most of the West cannot support livestock production, but he (or she) wrote anonymously because of a fear of reprisals from the "wrong rancher." This person, whom I shall call "Dr. X" (the letter mentioned a Ph.D. in range ecology) has

apparently kept these views a secret from his/her employer, the BLM.

The writer's perception is poignant. We all experience some frustration and disappointment in both our personal and work environments. Perhaps an improved ability to communicate factual information to both critical and receptive audiences would help relieve the frustration and stress evident in Dr. X's comments. However, the issues Dr. X raised in the letter are not new ones, and are of course a matter of national debate. Dr. X's opinion is a minority position in the range profession, but that is not really the point of my response. I frankly am appalled that a BLM professional can accept a salary and yet deprive his/her employer of his/her best professional opinion. I have been a line manager in BLM for over 10 years, and I can tell you that this attitude is the worst kind of disloyalty. I have never criticized any of my staff for giving me their frank recommendations on any topic, and I certainly have heard a wide diversity of opinion on land management issues. I cannot believe the climate of fear, that Dr. X claims to be typical of the BLM work environment, is much more than a rationalization. It may avoid the awkward necessity for Dr. X to defend the opinions expressed in the letter, it may avoid having to "rock the boat," but the cost in personal integrity is more than I would care to pay.

Dr. X raised the issue of myths, and it does seem that much of the debate is a battle of mythology. As an example, Dr. X raised the old chestnut that "the Great Basin never had bison." I am enclosing an article (Bureau of Land Management *Inside Track*, November-December 1991) that discusses a recent excavation of the Baker Archaeological Site in eastern Nevada. It mentions the large quantity of bison and elk bones that were found.

I think that good science is the best ally of the BLM's rangeland management program. Neither I, nor the range management professionals that I know, claim to have all the answers. We invite constructive debate and the involvement of concerned people in improving our land-man-

agement programs. We are not well served, however, by employees who lack enough professionalism and moral courage to provide honest recommendations.

H. James Fox
Washington, D.C.

The writer is chief of the BLM's Division of Rangeland Resources.

COWS MAKE POOR LAND
WORSE

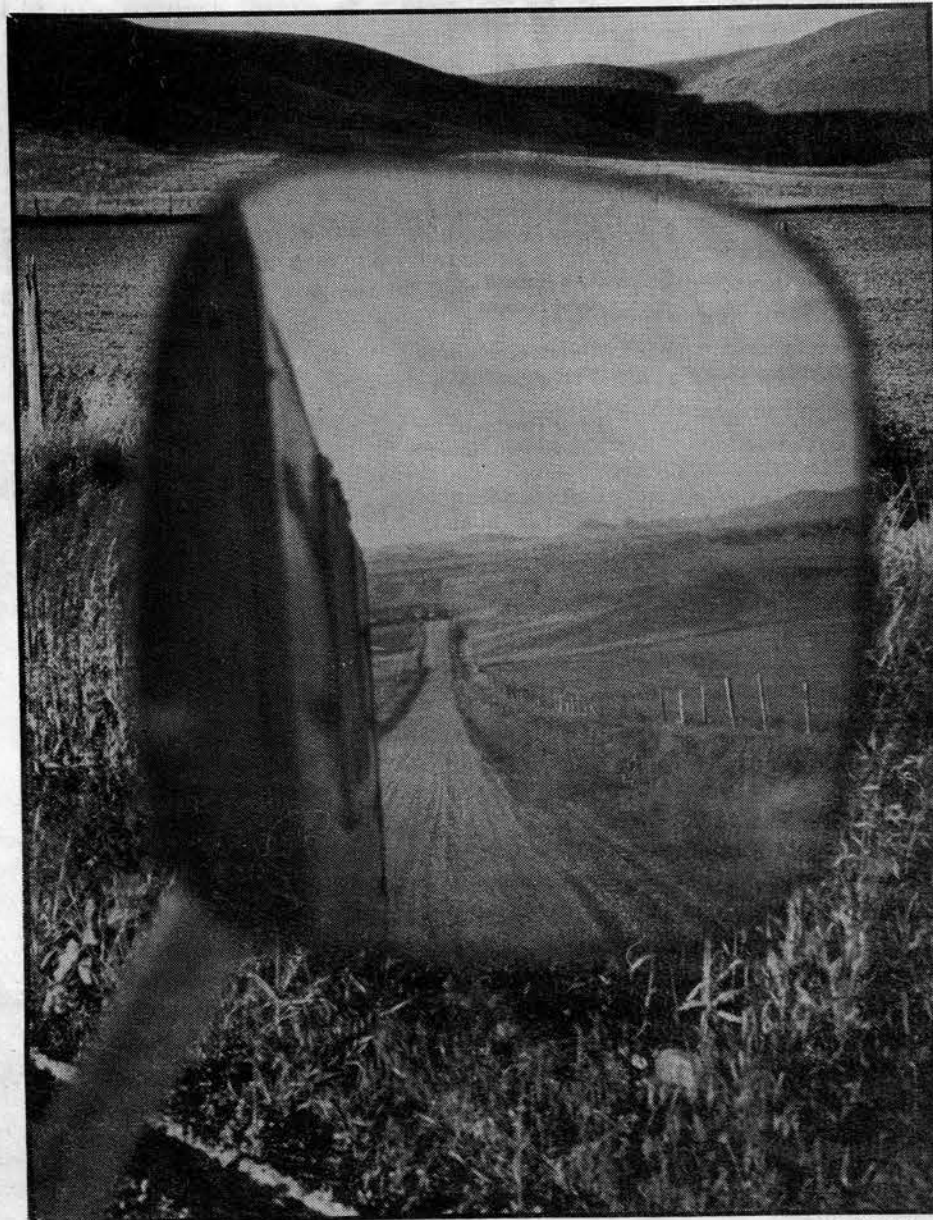
Dear HCN,

In reference to the article "Moab BLM Marches to a Southern Utah Beat" in the June 1, 1992, issue, and the description of the testimony of Catherine Vandemoer, her testimony reflects just one of two schools of thought about the formation of arroyos in the West.

One view has been summarized by Cooke and Reeves in *Arroyos and Environmental Change in the American West*, in which they review weather and land use as the putative causative agents for the development of arroyos, known to have occurred region-wide in the latter half of the 1800s. Weather information (i.e., intensity of rainfall events) is, to say the least, spotty and not very useful, whereas it is known that rapacious grazing practices began about this time, and that grazing of riparian zones has dramatic negative effects on stream channel stability.

The other view has, as its chief proponent in Colorado, Stanley Schumm of Colorado State University. Schumm uses model watersheds, mostly a big sandbox tilted at various angles to mimic stream gradient and with "rainfall" sprinkled on it, to show that the accumulation of sediment in a river valley triggers a round of down-cutting.

Ironically, one of his favorite examples in support of this idea is the known down-cutting cycles in Douglas Creek in western Colorado. The first cycle is known — and is cited in his paper — to have begun after 10,000 cattle were brought into the Douglas Creek drainage



Somewhere in rural Montana

David J. Spear

in the 1880s, followed the next year by a combination of severe drought and hard, infrequent rains.

In short, a landscape may indeed be primed for erosion cycles by strictly physical factors like sediment accumulation, but poor land use will set it off and make the final condition worse than it would have been. It seems to me, therefore, that Vandemoer's testimony is an exaggeration of one view of reality and moreover does not address the question of what to do about the problem. Or rather, it chooses to avoid this question.

In Douglas Creek, by the way, one far-sighted rancher is using beaver combined with modified grazing practices to restore a horrifically degraded stream channel at low cost and with apparent great success.

Kirk Cunningham
Boulder, Colorado

THE LAND NEVER MATTERED

Dear HCN,

HCN has done a fine job of investigating two aspects of public-lands grazing: environmental damage and subsidies to permittees. Unfortunately, considering these issues hardly prepares us for the management decision of bureaucrats.

The USFS EIS for the Upper Ruby (HCN, 6/1/92) in southwest Montana cost \$150,000, paid for by all taxpayers. Procedural compliance with NEPA has probably been achieved. To no one's surprise, acting Ranger Petroni selected continued grazing for the Upper Ruby, and the cows are already on the range.

None of the grazing schemes would result in healthier upland and riparian vegetation than the no-grazing alternative. Based on actual grazing fees, the only alternative with a positive "present net value" was the no-grazing alternative, yet it was never seriously considered.

A Forest Service ranger or supervisor would view the no-grazing alternative as a confirmation of "he who manages least manages best," something the ranger cannot afford to admit.

The savvy bureaucrat goes with the status quo: The permittees are happy, the heat is off, the land never mattered, and the subsidies have been going on longer than anyone can remember. It is no accident that the chosen grazing alternative calls for lots of monitoring. That means bureaucratic growth. The health and growth of bureaucracies is the key to understanding public-land grazing decisions.

Richard A. Producers
Butte, Montana

WHY HATE COWS?

Dear HCN,

I commend you on the March 23 special issue. I think you did the West a service by the balanced coverage you gave both sides of the grazing fight.

As an 11th-generation rancher and farmer, I try to understand the concrete-jungle paranoia of the Jeremy Rifkins. Is a cow the focus of their hate because she is big, fat and looks dumb? Or would they hate anything that represents the status quo? Or maybe they are just frustrated "cowboys." It seems they want to replace the cow with an earth scorched by wildfires and covered with knapweed and Scotch thistle. Maybe they should leave an improving situation alone, or else do something positive like help fight the exotic weeds that will take the whole West no matter who owns it.

Jim Bentz
Drewsey, Oregon

A MULTIPLE ABUSE GROUP

Dear HCN,

Candace Burns's article on the new coalition, Grassroots for Multiple Use (HCN, 6/15/92), was a bit shallow. This particular multiple abuse group has publicly advocated more dams, diversions and hydroelectric projects in the pristine Henry's Fork basin of Idaho. GMU's vice president, Philip Nisbet, recently bemoaned the fact that the proposed Henry's Fork Basin Plan did not include a component for placer mining as an approved use.

The "recreationists" that belong to GMU include off-road vehicle organizations such as the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a charter member of the Wise Use Movement (see the published Wise Use Agenda and Members, 1988).

The reason these multiple abuse groups have "been written off as the criminals who abuse public lands" is because that is exactly who they are and what they do.

Marv Hoyt
Idaho Falls, Idaho

NO SUICIDE SQUAD HERE

Dear HCN,

I am writing in regards to your recent issue in which your publisher referred to the People For the West! organization as a suicide squad, wanting no reform on our public land (HCN, 5/18/92). This spring, our local chapter of People For the West! organized two tours of public-land winter range for wildlife in New Mexico.

We discussed the burning of oak to increase feed for wildlife and livestock. We examined the black sage and discussed the thermal cover needs of wildlife. We stopped at timber sales to look at the aspen rejuvenation.

The San Miguel County chapter of People For the West! worked with the Forest Service and Game and Fish to build a campground near the Pecos River after the Forest Service closed other campgrounds due to mine tailings. Other chapters are doing the same thing. If we do not want reforms, then why would we be building campgrounds and sponsoring tours?

There are problems on our public lands and some reforms are needed, but these reforms must be reasonable, common-sense reforms. The public must help our land management agencies do a good job to care for our land and all the resources of these lands.

We must all work together to help our public lands be as good as they can be. We're all human and make mistakes, but together we can keep from making more.

Randy Schofield
Tres Piedras, New Mexico

CANYON DISASTER

Dear HCN,

The Logan Canyon article (HCN, 6/1/92) by Michael Bitton brings back memories that are not at all pleasant. Many years ago I signed a petition while in Glenwood Springs to try to keep I-70 from going through Glenwood Canyon.

As you are well aware, the Glenwood Canyon fight was lost. If Mr. Bitton has time to look at a "disaster" in a canyon, he should take a look at Glenwood as it is now. There are a few, how few I don't know, who remember the canyon as one of the most scenic drives available anywhere in Colorado. Today it is mostly bridges and tunnels. As I remember, it will have cost \$500 million to build some 12 miles

of road through the canyon.

I am convinced that they could have gone around the canyon and left it alone. I feel that the canyon route was "selected" as an engineering tour-de-force and not for practical reasons.

James W. Coats
Idaho Springs, Colorado

YUCCA MOUNTAIN IS 'GOOD ENOUGH'

Dear HCN,

Robert R. Loux states that Jon Christensen's article (HCN, 1/10/92) "seriously misrepresents the issues ... at Yucca Mountain." Loux's April 6 HCN piece is guilty of the same faults. His oversimplified and inaccurate assertions about the purported geotechnical unsuitability of the Yucca Mountain site are beyond my endurance as a geologist on the project.

At this stage, DOE can only say that its repository siting guidelines have not disqualified Yucca Mountain, and that this location is suitable for further characterization. Loux states that not even DOE will argue that Yucca Mountain is the best site. There are many geoscientists on the project who will argue that it is a very promising site, but DOE is not charged with determining whether or not Yucca Mountain is the "best" site. There is no such thing as a "best" site. The implied 100 percent technical consensus is not achievable.

Overall, the criterion that has to be addressed is whether the performance of a repository site is good enough to comply with regulatory requirements. These requirements are drawn up by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, under the premise that meeting them is the appropriate criteria to judge whether or not the public's health and safety are protected. The chimera of a "best" site is exactly that, an illusion.

The fact remains that Yucca Mountain possesses some intriguing geologic attributes relevant to isolating nuclear waste: 1) an arid climate that has been arid for a very long time; 2) the opportunity for disposal in the dry rocks of a thick unsaturated zone (rocks that contain moisture but are not saturated with enough water to carry radionuclides away; 3) zeolitic minerals that act to retard movement of radionuclides, which are a component of the rock layer being studied; 4) a 300-foot-thick rock layer above the water table but below the repository layer. These geologic and hydrologic conditions are receiving careful study to see if they really are advantageous for isolating waste.

Loux seeks to co-mingle the DOE's nuclear defense programs and the civilian radioactive waste program responsible for studying Yucca Mountain. These are completely separate programs that are under totally different regulatory structures. Each originated under very different conditions. The environmental problems at various DOE weapon production sites are real enough, but they are unrelated to characterizing Yucca Mountain. To lump them into the debate, however, muddies the water and makes good political hay.

I object to Mr. Loux's intimations



that DOE has claimed that the area around Yucca Mountain is "contaminated" with residuum from atmospheric fallout and therefore is somehow worthy of condemnation with a repository. Area 25 of the Test Site, where Yucca Mountain is located, was set aside for non-weapons related nuclear testing programs in 1959. DOE makes no claim of surface contamination in this area as rationalization for why the site is under study.

His other argument tries to rationalize the state's contradictory positions with respect to the Nevada Test Site and Yucca Mountain. On the one hand, an underground nuclear test program at the Nevada Test Site is supported, or at least tolerated. On the other, the Yucca Mountain project is condemned. The underground

test program causes uncontrolled releases of radionuclides into the soil and rock upon each detonation. A geologic repository is an engineered facility designed specifically to contain and isolate radionuclides for many millennia using the best technology we have to offer. The logic is somewhat baffling.

Mr. Loux may speak for the political system of Nevada, but is mistaken if he presumes that an honest reading of the geologic data marshaled to date can be pressed into service for his argument.

Thomas W. Bjerstedt
Henderson, Nevada

MINTZMYER REPRESENTED SPECIAL INTERESTS, TOO

Dear HCN,

Your June 15 coverage of Lorraine Mintzmyer's address to the "Greater Yellowstone Coalition" and the text of her remarks were revealing. I had to read between the lines, but, like I said, it was revealing.

I think that Mintzmyer and her soulmate, John Mumma, no longer work for the government because they represented special interests. These special interests want to control lands adjacent to national parks without compensating those who are injured. These special interests are opposed to any timbering and see manipulation of governmental processes as the means to their ends. They do not want to operate in the light of public scrutiny, which is one of the jobs that congressmen and senators perform for their tax-paying constituents. What Mintzmyer appears to call "political interference" is also known as smoking out some deviant bureaucrat.

The environmental lobby, in and out of government, represents only a small minority, and it is the American system preventing them from monopolizing public lands policy. Whether it is a vision document, forest fires, or introduction of wolf packs into national parks, we and our elected representatives all have a say.

Mintzmyer should be careful when advocating her administrative "sunshine act." If properly enforced, it would restrict private communications between environmentalists and their favorite government officials too. That is a two-way street some people may fear to tread.

John D. Atkins
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Leave it to the beaver ...

(Continued from page 1)

appears to be working.

"I think beaver, in conjunction with proper grazing management, are the most economical way to bring these badly eroded riparian areas back to health," Pence says.

The new, expanded wetlands also provide multiple benefits for wildlife, particularly songbirds, waterfowl, aquatic insects, rodents and fish. A study in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon found that up to 350 different species of wildlife depend on healthy riparian areas for food and shelter. A study of a beaver pond ecosystem on Summit Creek in central Idaho, for example, showed that three times as many small mammals (153) resided in the beaver pond habitat compared to non-ponded habitat (50).

Mellen has 6,000 acres of deeded ground that butts up against the Soldier Mountains. Aspen-lined Corral Creek drains the east slopes of the steep-faced mountains. He leases another 4,000 acres of state and Bureau of Land Management and for livestock grazing. Mellen has an intensive management program, using 22 pastures, New Zealand electric fence and two ranch hands to move the cattle in and out of each pasture in short order.

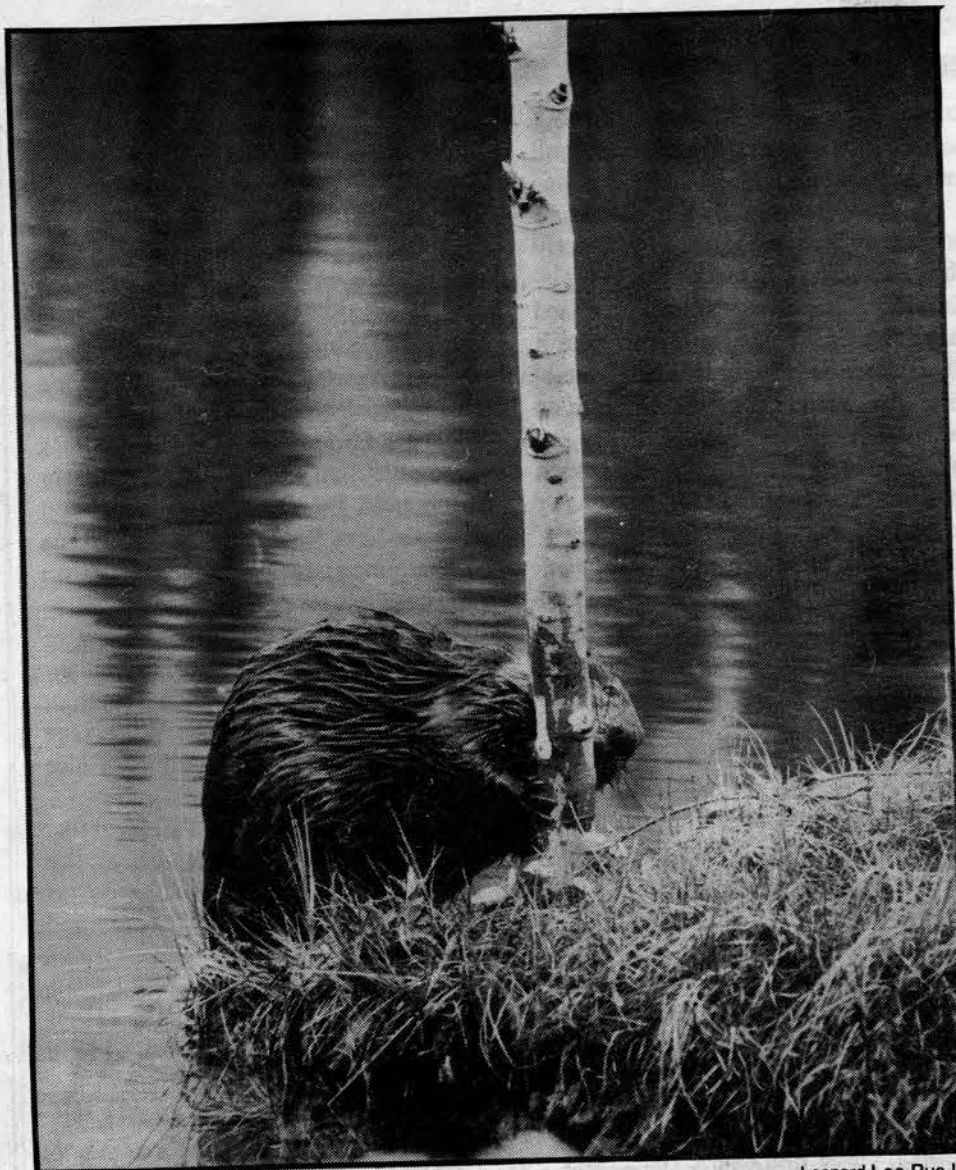
"I've doubled the productivity of the land with the New Zealand fence and the beaver," Mellen says. "We've

averaged two pounds per day per head with the rotation. But if you just turned them loose, you might get only 1.5 pounds per day per head. Of course, not everyone has the quality of pasture land that we do ..."

A native of Mackay, Idaho, who used to catch fish out of beaver ponds in the Big Lost River, Pence has a Darwinian theory about why beaver — if allowed — thrive in the creeks of central Idaho. He figures beaver played a pivotal role in the riparian ecosystems of the Great Basin streams as they evolved over time. Once white trappers moved into Oregon, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho and trapped out the beaver in the 1820s and 1830s, they wiped out a vital component of the streams, he says. Records show that trappers harvested more than 25,000 beaver in Snake River tributaries during that time.

Then settlers brought cattle into the West in the 1880s and exacerbated the imbalance. Cows tend to concentrate in stream bottoms, which means stream banks erode, soil compacts, vegetation is trampled, water quality is degraded, and streams lose their ability to store water.

Pence figures that man needs to bring the beaver back to restore streams to their natural productivity. Beaver are a "keystone" species, meaning their dam-building and wetland-creating activities serve as a foundation for many other species. The term traces back to a rock

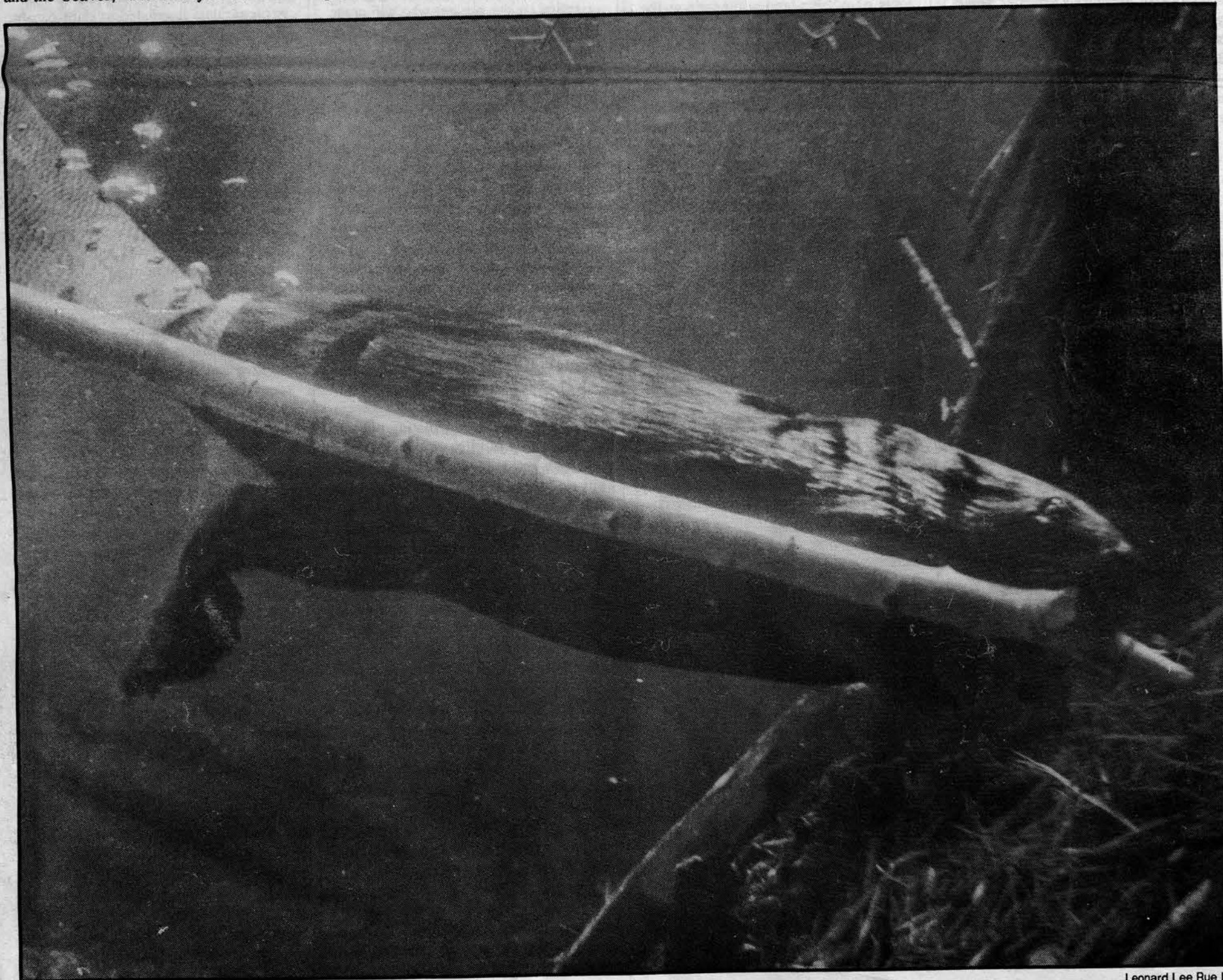


Leonard Lee Rue III

A beaver cuts down a tree

arch. Remove the keystone, and the arch collapses. "You can't bring those areas back without the beaver, since they're the ones that built them in the first place," he says.

Rich Neal is energetic, almost as active as a beaver. In the mid-1980s, Neal and his father-in-law, Nick Purdy, decided to tackle the widespread prob-



Leonard Lee Rue III

A beaver dives with a sapling

lem of downcut stream banks along Copper Creek on their Lava Lake Ranch near Carey. Located near Craters of the Moon National Monument, the plush ranch is an island of green surrounded by the austere landscape of volcanic upheaval.

The combination of overgrazing and ferocious spring runoff had scoured Copper Creek to the depth of eight to 10 feet, dropping the stream's water table and curtailing grass production along the banks. During spring snowmelt, the creek would rise sharply, and then diminish to a trickle for the rest of the summer. The ranchers decided something had to be done.

Neal installed about 30 small dams in Copper Creek to slow the stream, raise the water table, enhance the growth of grass and reduce soil erosion. Then that year's heavy spring runoff blew out 70 percent of the small dams. Neal decided to call in Lew Pence, who suggested moving beaver into the aspen-lined stream. Beaver dams would have the same effect as man-made ones, Pence promised, except beaver would do a better job — for free.

Six years later, Neal and Purdy hosted a tour of the Lava Lake Ranch to herald the work of those toothy, prolific varmints. "With the help of the beaver and controlled livestock grazing, we've come a long ways toward solving our problem," said Purdy, who started work on the ranch in 1949 as a 9-year-old. "I feel livestock and fragile riparian areas can co-exist, but ranchers must be educated and informed."

Delmar Vail, Idaho director of the Bureau of Land Management, singled out the Purdys' Lava Lake Ranch as a prime example of good livestock management that helps wildlife. "This is a showcase example of good management," Vail said. "We know how to do it; we know what's possible. Now, with some education and a little peer pressure, we hope these kind of examples become the norm."

Vail awarded the Purdys, along with Pence's Soil Conservation District and the Wood River Resource Conservation

food and dam-building supply, mainly aspen and willow shoots. Once the livestock knock down the grass, he moves them to a new pasture, he says.

Denzel Ferguson, the Oregon author of *Sacred Cows at the Public Trough*, emphasized the importance of protecting the beaver's food supply from livestock. "If the rancher cares enough to bring the beaver back into a riparian area, he should have the smarts to know he can't graze the hell out of it," he said. "If you overgraze the area, you'll lose the beaver because you've taken away its food supply."

Ferguson said ranchers should keep close watch on their livestock to ensure cows don't feed on the woody vegetation that beaver need for food, dens and shoring up dams. "There's a lot more to this than just bringing in the beaver," he said. "You have to change your management practices and protect the beaver's habitat."

Ferguson applauds ranchers for using beaver to restore riparian areas and for reintroducing a critter that historically played an important role in stream ecosystems. "As a critic of public-lands grazing, I support the use of beaver and encourage it."

In Idaho's worst drought year in modern times, the work of beaver can get some people in trouble. Ranchers like Purdy and Mellen, for example, may come under fire from their neighbors for holding back too much water in their beaver ponds. Downstream water users have complained to Idaho Fish and Game officers that beaver dams are holding back more water than the ranchers' water rights allow. But Mellen says he figures his neighbor is probably getting twice as much water as he used to, since beaver ponds store the run-off and release it gradually over the summer.

Complaints like this have emerged before. The Oregon Supreme Court ruled on a case in 1939 that resonates today. Fifty-three years ago, Harney County rancher Lloyd Johnson filed a civil complaint against his upstream neighbor,

'I don't know why some people have such a contempt for beaver,' Pence laments.

and Development Council, a national riparian award from BLM Director Cy Jamison.

Neal and Purdy aren't the only ones who have tried to build small dams in streams without beaver, and have failed, Pence notes. He believes that concrete and rip-rap work poorly in a dynamic stream ecosystem. Floods often shift small creeks into new channels or the water descends with such force that it ruins man-made dams.

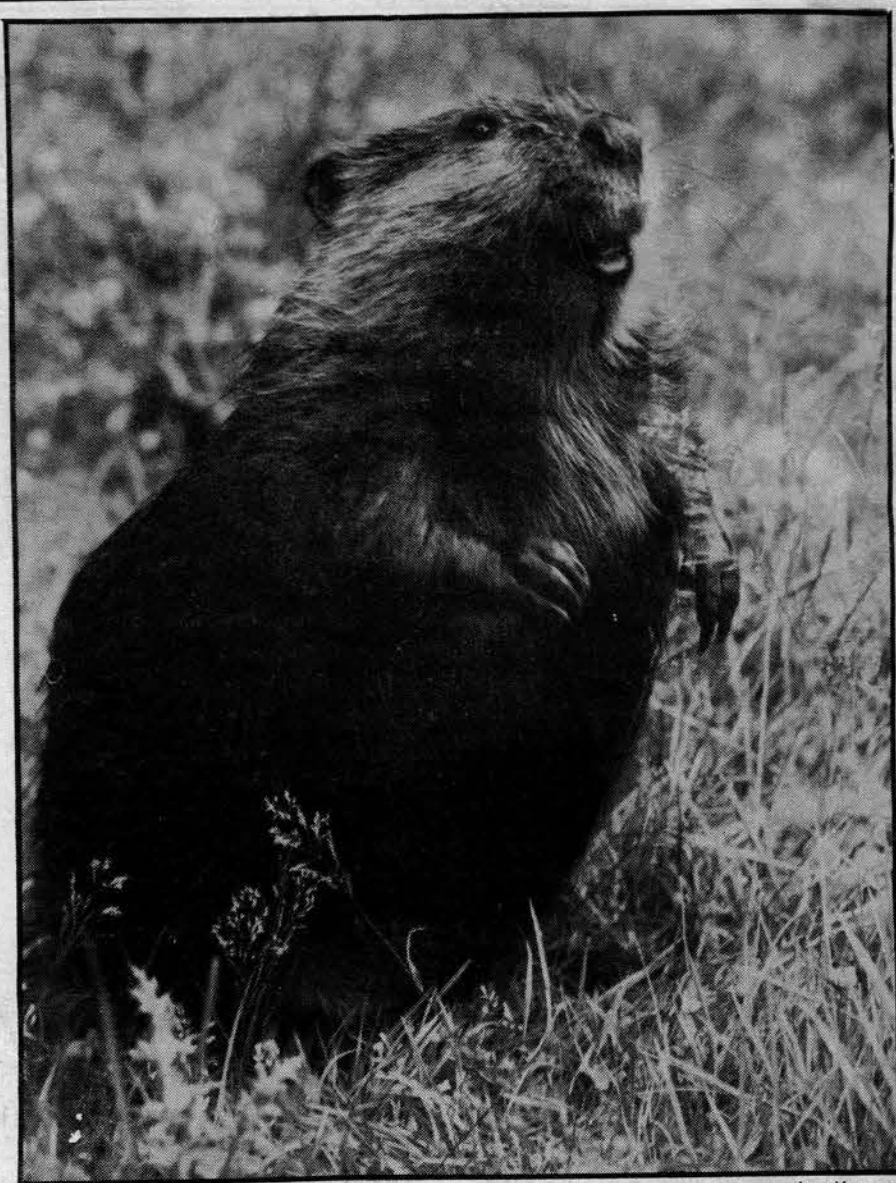
"A permanent fix doesn't fit the system," Pence says. "The streams evolved as dynamic systems that change over time. There's really nothing permanent about them. So if they didn't evolve that way, they can't be fixed that way."

Plus, the cost of installing multiple dams costing \$20,000 each is too expensive for the typical rancher, he says. Purdy spent about \$150 to transplant a colony of beaver into Copper Creek, and the beaver did the rest of the work for free. Purdy manages his livestock to ensure that they do not eat the beaver's

Paul Stewart. Johnson had asked Stewart to dynamite his beaver ponds and release the water downstream, and Stewart refused. "Why, if those beaver dams were blown out, as soon as the water had drained, you wouldn't have any more water down there than you've got now, and my ranch would go back to sagebrush," Stewart was quoted as saying in a Dec. 22, 1941, article for *Oregon Fish and Wildlife Magazine*. The article was titled, "Beaver on Trial."

In the county lower court, Johnson won the case, and Stewart was given five days to dynamite the beaver dams. If not, he faced a three-month prison term in the Harney County jail. Stewart appealed to the state Supreme Court, arguing that the benefits of reduced soil erosion from the beaver dams outweighed Johnson's plea for water. "All my client wants is the right to protect his land," Stewart's attorney argued.

The Oregon justices overruled the lower court. "To deny our water users the right to control such streams and pre-



Jerg Kroemer

Beaver 101: Where they live, what they eat, how they survive

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*), the largest rodents in North America, build dams for shelter and protection from predators.

Each fall, beaver colonies gather branches, logs and twigs from aspens, willows, poplars or cottonwoods, and build new dams for winter shelter. During this time, they also build a lodge for winter habitation.

Beaver have sharp front teeth that grow constantly. In the fall, they cache tremendous amounts of wood in the lodge for food during the winter. The lodge is usually located in a portion of the beaver pond that's least vulnerable to predators. The entrance is below the water line. Walls are caked with mud for insulation after the pond freezes.

Beaver dig burrows in stream banks for housing and feeding stations. They also drag large logs into the pool for food when the pond freezes over.

Although they cache whole branches, beaver only eat the bark. They also eat roots, lily bulbs and other plants available on the stream bank or lakeshore.

Beaver give birth to two to six kits in late May or June. New colonies are established after a young beaver leaves home in the second year due to overcrowding in the home lodge.

Adult beaver measure nearly four feet long. Their fur is dark brown. They also have an extra coat of chestnut-colored guard hairs, which give them a shaggy appearance and a golden sheen when the fur dries.

Their hind feet are webbed, and their telltale tails are flat, paddle-shaped and about a foot long. The tail supports the animal when it works on the land and helps it swim and dive. They slap the flat tail on the water's surface when they dive into the depths of the beaver pond.

—S.S.

vent the erosion that would soon take place would mean the utter destruction of much of our most valuable lands throughout the state. It is shown that if the erosion is permitted to continue, the water would be drained from the lands bordering on the creek and they would become dry and worthless," the justices ruled.

Stewart's support of the beaver ponds is strikingly similar to the value ranchers see in them today. The Oregon rancher said he had more than 150 beaver on his ranch and dozens of ponds. "The thing that pleased me most," Stewart said, "was the effect the beaver dams had on the water table of my cultivated lands. The level of the groundwater was raised, and I got at least a 50 percent increase in my hay, grain and alfalfa crops ... Those beaver were worth plenty

of money to me."

Stewart argued as Mellen does today that his neighbor got more water for a longer period of time during the growing season because of the beaver dams.

But the water rights fracas is only one of many criticisms leveled at the beaver. "I don't know why some people have such a contempt for beaver," Pence laments. "They've got this inherited Big Bad Wolf syndrome, and it's hard to get people to let loose of that. Heck, there's even some people in my agency that think I'm crazy as hell!"

Pence admits that misguided beaver will cut down valuable trees in city parks, that they build dams in culverts

Continued on next page



Diane Sylvain

Trappers came within a few pelts of eliminating beaver

Spurred by the money to be made from beaver pelts for hats and felt clothing in Great Britain and France, trappers began moving into the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Northwest in the early 1800s.

Two events occurred near the turn of the 19th century that lured trappers and mountain men to the West. Alexander Mackenzie, a fur trapper employed by the North West Co. in Montreal, blazed a trail to the Pacific in 1793 through what is now southern Canada. Along the way he found mountain streams rich in beaver. When he reached the end of his journey at the mouth of the Columbia River, an idea struck him: He would try to expand the fur trade from north-east Canada and the Midwest to a continental scale.

Mackenzie returned to London and penned the book *Voyages from Montreal*, boasting of his voyage. President Thomas Jefferson read the book and began to develop his vision of expanding the United States to the Pacific Ocean. In 1804, Jefferson convinced Congress to buy the Louisiana Purchase, a huge expanse of land stretching from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, for \$23 million. It figured out to about 4 cents per acre.

The same year Jefferson dispatched the Lewis and Clark expedition, to seek an inland waterway to the Pacific. Though the pair discovered that no route existed, they returned with glowing reports of abundant game and beaver. Clark wrote of "emence numbers of beavers" in the Three Forks area of the Missouri River.

The word was out, and the race for beaver was on.

Many would-be mountain men tried to ply the beaver trade in the early 1800s, but ran into stiff opposition from the natives. John Jacob Astor, a British immigrant, had slightly better luck bypassing the Indians and sending the ship, "Beaver," from New York to the mouth of the Columbia in 1810. He established a fort at Astoria, Ore., and his men began trapping in the reaches of the Columbia, Willamette, Spokane, Snake and Clearwater rivers. But the Indians were hostile, and men feared the wild and unsettled country, wrote Carl Burger in *Beaver Skins and Mountain Men* (E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968).

Later, the chance for gain overcame fear. William Ashley ran an ad in a St. Louis newspaper in 1822 seek-

ing 100 young men to trap in the Rockies.

Legendary mountain men such as Jim Bridger, Tom Fitzpatrick, Jedediah Smith and William Sublette answered the call. William Ashley and Andrew Henry, an experienced fur trapper, established a fort on the present-day Henry's Fork of the Snake.

"Beavers were as thick as fleas on a dog, and the pelts piled up in the store room at Fort Henry," Burger wrote.

At the time, trappers were paid \$200 to \$400 per year salary. Ashley's men were paid on a commission basis, pocketing the proceeds from half of the year's catch. At the peak of the trade, pelts fetched \$4 per pound or about \$6 per beaver. The trappers called the pelts "plew," French for pelt.

It was a romantic existence for the wild and free mountain men. By 1825, fur companies decided to hold annual rendezvous to trade furs, drink whiskey and fight.

During the trapping season (spring, summer and fall), the mountain men perfected their craft. They'd stick a tree limb in the mud in the shallow end of a beaver pond and coat it with castoreum, a heavily scented secretion from glands in the groin of male and female beavers. This attracted the beaver to the limb, and ultimately, to a leg-hold trap, set underneath the limb in the water. The trap's weighted anchor chain pulled the beaver underwater and drowned it.

But increasing numbers of fur companies and free trappers stripped the creeks and rivers of beaver. Virginia Ricketts, a Blaine County, Idaho, historian, said the Don McKenzie party came to the Big Wood River near present-day Sun Valley in 1819, and trapped 7,392 beaver in 13 months. The Hudson Bay Co. came to the same area in the mid-1820s and took thousands of pelts each year.

By 1834, pelts were becoming scarce in the Snake River country as well as in much of the Northwest. The same year, Europeans started making hats out of silk. In a year, the Hudson Bay Co.'s annual harvest fell from 2,000 pelts to about 220.

The heyday of beaver trapping was over. The last rendezvous was held in 1839 on Horse Creek, a tributary of the Green River. Saved by silk, remnant pockets of beaver survived.

—S.S.

Leave it to the beaver ...

(Continued from previous page)

and plug irrigation ditches. Some argue the beaver can be bad for resident trout and spawning salmon, a point that William S. Platts of Boise made in *Idaho Wildlife* magazine in the early 1970s. Platts argued that beaver dams can block migrations, raise stream temperatures by impounding water, reduce water quality, and if a dam washes out, smother spawning beds with silt and mud. "The author found ... that over 90 percent of the eggs and fry in the spawning nests were killed within a few days after the silt started spreading downstream," Platts wrote.

However, in streams located on steep mountain grades, beaver can serve beneficial purposes by creating holding areas for fish, boosting food supply and providing more fishable area, Platts said. "The general conclusion is that beaver are seldom entirely harmful or beneficial" for fish, he wrote. Beaver should be trapped out of an area when they cause damage to a fishery, but what to do depends on whether the beaver or the fish are more desired, he said.

Where beaver overeat the local food supply, they should be trapped out as well, Pence says. The Beaver Committee has a year-round permit with the Idaho Fish and Game Department to remove "problem beaver." When pelt prices are high, experienced trappers are easy to find. But lately prices have fallen to \$9 per pelt. "Right now, they're not worth skinnin'," observed Fairfield rancher Hugh Koonce, another beaver believer.

Koonce says it's important to use experienced trappers because some Fish and Game officers "couldn't catch a cold, much less a beaver."

Pence drives his white government-owned Dodge van toward Galena Summit, north of Sun Valley, and talks about spreading the good word on beaver. Although he works on beaver projects only about two days a month, he's traveled to Colorado, Washington, Wyoming and Montana to give his slide presentation on beaver. "I'm not asking for a whole bunch of credit. I'm just trying to spread the word that this is a good thing," he says.

Pence pulls the van over and checks

a series of beaver dams on the Big Wood River. A pair of mallards swims around in one of the larger ponds. Killdeer issue their ear-splitting shriek as he walks near their nest. Thick pockets of willows surround the ponds next to the steep-rising Boulder Mountains in the Sawtooth National Forest. The lush meadow used to be an old sheep driveway, Pence says. He remembers it as little more than a trampled dust bowl when he was a kid. Nature's resilience, aided by beaver, has reclaimed the area to a mountain meadow. "Now it's damn near moose habitat," he says with a chuckle.

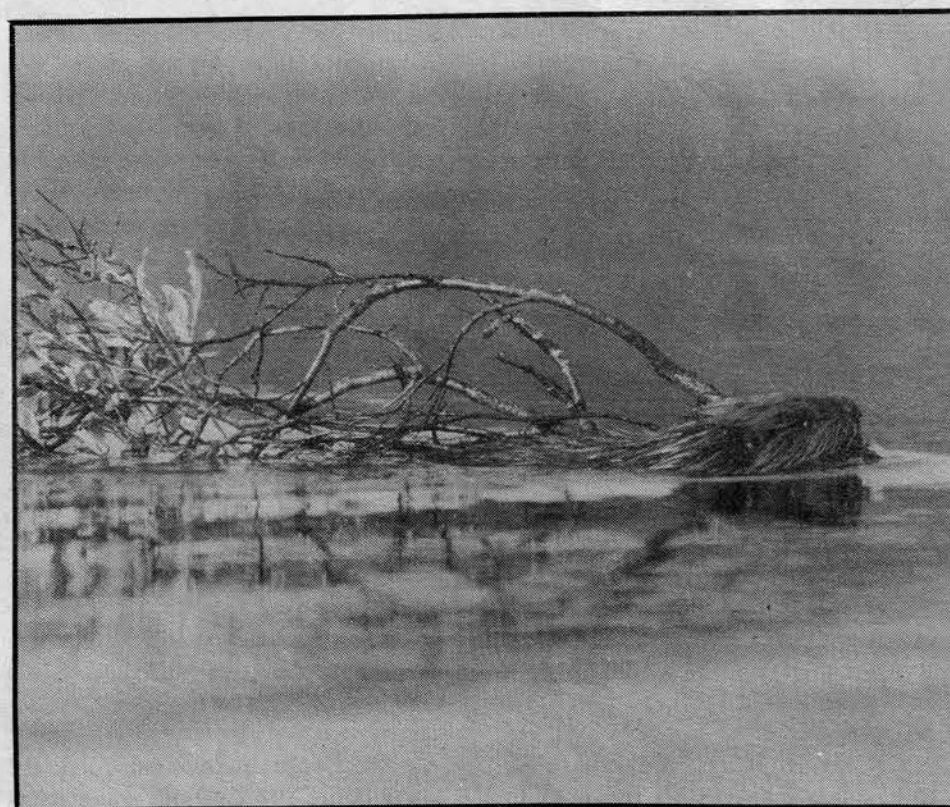
Pence inspects the willows. He sees a few branches clipped off at an angle, almost as if someone had pruned them with a knife. He looks at the beaver dams, assembled with hundreds of small willow branches, both green and dead ones. There's mud and lots of rocks. "I've even seen a half-gallon wine bottle in a beaver dam," he says.

This area isn't grazed today, but the beaver dams provide many benefits. Butterflies flutter atop the willows. Snipes wade into a pond and dip their bills into the water for food. Small fish dart out of sight into the bank for cover. "The beaver have created one hell of a wetland here," Pence says. The ponds will serve other benefits, such as slowing down the Big Wood's flow during spring snowmelt, depositing sediment and improving water quality, storing water for sustained water quantity, and providing pleasant views for recreationists visiting the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Pence didn't have anything to do with the beaver's work here, but he's fascinated by the meadow nevertheless. The beaver advocate with the beaver hat is an undying supporter of the toothy critters. To him, it's a modern experiment to give the land back to the beaver and see what happens.

"I say, just let it work. If we're wrong, why, we trapped them out once, we can do it again."

Steve Stuebner is a free-lance reporter in Boise, Idaho. Lew Pence can be reached at the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, 131 Third Ave. East, Gooding, ID 83330. 208/934-4149.



Len Clifford

A beaver tows a branch to be stored for winter food

Unclassifieds

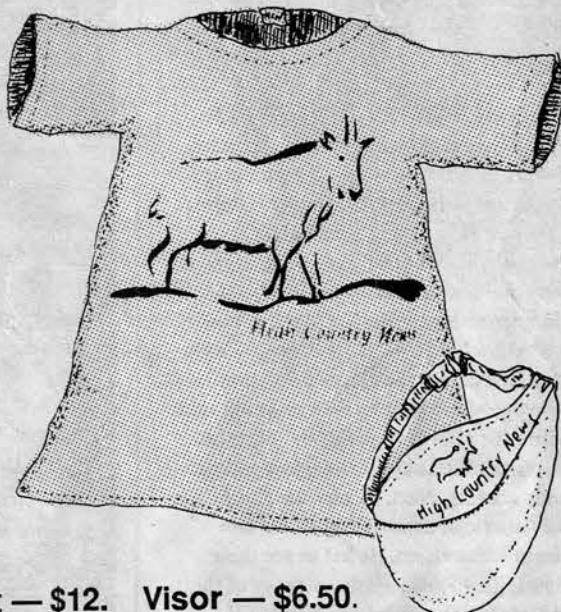
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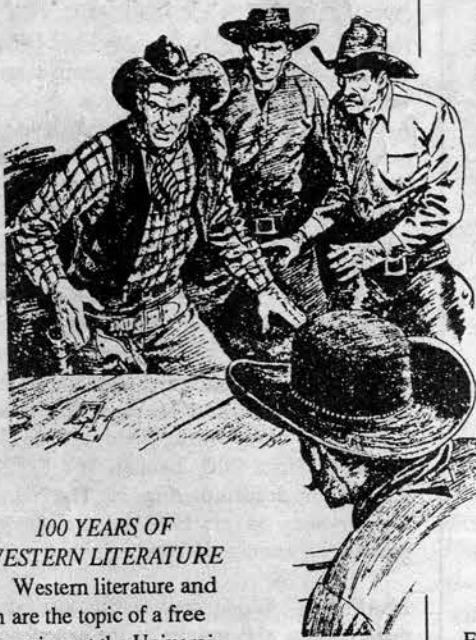
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Animals are worth more alive than dead, and more people are realizing just that. The first National Watchable Wildlife Conference and Symposium, set for Missoula, Mont., Sept. 9-12, expects to have 500 participants. Forging a common vision about observing wildlife is the gathering's focus, which brings together conservationists, natural resource managers and representatives from communities across the country. The more than 50 speakers include Sara Vickerman of Defenders of Wildlife, John Hunt of the Center for the New West, and John Turner, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Sponsors include the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the national Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Department of Defense, Defenders of Wildlife, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Falcon Press of Helena, Mont. Write the National Watchable Wildlife Conference, P.O. Box 497, Green Mountain Falls, CO 80819-0497, or call Melody Meyer at 719/684-2102, or Debbie Tewell at 719/687-0160.



100 YEARS OF WESTERN LITERATURE

Western literature and film are the topic of a free symposium at the University of Wyoming in Laramie Sept. 24-26. The gathering will feature panel discussions about pioneers in American literature, Western films in American culture, contemporary and traditional Western literature, and novelist Max Brand's life and career. Also on the agenda is the premiere of award-winning producer Ric Burns's new PBS documentary about the ill-fated Donner Party, and a viewing and discussion of the classic movie *Shane*. The symposium concludes with a cookout and hayride at the Vee Bar Guest Ranch. Called *100 Years of Western Literature*, the symposium is presented by the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center and sponsored in part by the Wyoming Council for the Humanities. Discussions will be led by Western writers and historians including Jane Tompkins, William Bloodworth, Louise A. Jackson, Richard S. Wheeler and Melody Graulich. For more information, call the University of Wyoming Conferences and Institutes at 1-800/448-7801 or 307/766-2124. The registration deadline is Sept. 10.

AN ECOLOGICAL WEB

Capturing a forest's grandeur in vivid photographs and lucid prose, *The Olympic Rain Forest, an Ecological Web* testifies to Washington state's unique ecosystem. Authors Ruth Kirk, an award-winning natural history writer, and Jerry Franklin, a professor of ecosystem analysis, show how the interactions of glaciers, salmon, elk, natural decay, and other factors created this ancient community. They also detail the effects of decades of logging and roads on the forest's lowlands. Only a few untouched river corridors and preserves remain on state and corporate land. Those areas, about 250,000 acres, exist in patches, and only one is larger than 10,000 acres. Say the authors, "We can plant trees but not forests. They plant themselves." University of Washington Press, P.O. Box 50096, Seattle, WA 98145-5096. Cloth: \$35.00, Paper: \$17.50. 128 pages. Illustrated with diagrams and 146 color and black-and-white photographs.

— Mark Dooley

DESIGN CONFERENCE

This year's Design Conference at Snowmass Village, Colo., is intended to help architects and builders bring their plans into step with nature. Speakers include Nat Reed, the former assistant secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Ralph Trapani, who is overseeing construction of the new highway through Glenwood Canyon, Colo.; Michael Reynolds, who builds houses out of old tires and similar materials and Amory Lovins, the energy expert. "Architecture/Environment: Man in Harmony with Nature," runs all day Friday and Saturday, Oct. 9 and 10. The tone is informal: "No neckties or bowties allowed," the invitation says. For information, contact the American Institute of Architects, Colorado Chapter, 1459 Pennsylvania St., Carriage House, Denver, CO 80203 (303/831-6183). Registration is \$150 for non-members, and less for AIA members and students. Registration deadline is Sept. 15.

WATCHDOG NAILS AN INDUSTRY

The New York-based Council on Economic Priorities recently evaluated the environmental practices of 25 forest companies and found them wanting. In its 42-page investigation of Plum Creek, for example, the non-profit council says the company's mills failed to comply with air pollution permits in 1991, and increased formaldehyde and ammonia emissions 90 percent from 1988 to 1989. Plum Creek, the largest private timber-owner in the Northwest, also logged trees three times faster in 1987 than the annual growth rate on its land. Plum Creek officials respond that they are logging sustainably and experimenting with a "kinder and gentler" form of logging. The council's environmental profiles, which include 25 other timber-based corporations such as Weyerhaeuser, Scott, Fort Howard and Georgia Pacific, are available for \$20 each by calling 1-800-729-4CEP.

BEYOND WESTERN STEREOTYPES

The West is a place of boiling summers, frigid winters and wild rivers. The stereotypical Westerner is as tough and leathery as the land. *Denver Post* reporter Jim Carrier's newest book, *West of the Divide: Voices from a Ranch and a Reservation*, gets behind the easy images to take a first-hand look at two Colorado ranching families, both deeply rooted in the West. First, he spends three months with the Spans, who have been ranching near Gunnison for four generations, and there he witnesses conflicts over scarce water and public-lands grazing. Next, he joins the Knights, a Native American family living on the Ute Mountain Reservation. He lets us see their daily struggle to maintain the integrity of their culture while being inundated with MTV, Twinkies and camera-flashing tourists. From cattle breeding with the Spans to sun dances with the Knights, Carrier invites readers to share the rituals essential to each family. Fulcrum Publishing, 350 Indiana St., Suite 350, Golden, CO 80401. Hardback: \$19.95. 174 pages.

— Peter Donaldson

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Organic farmers and gardeners can find a wealth of information and supplies in an annual catalog from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply. The company offers both garden and field-crop seeds, equipment ranging from insect vacuums and compost turners to the home-size Pest Pistol Powder Duster, a large selection of natural fertilizers, soil amendments and pest-management supplies. The well-indexed catalog also offers suggestions on which products to use for garden problems such as erosion. Catalogs are \$2 (refundable with order) from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, P.O. Box 2209, Grass Valley, CA 95945 (916/272-4769).

— Cindy Wehling



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WOLVES IN COLORADO?

A Boulder, Colo.-based group named Sinapu, after the Ute word for wolves, hopes to overcome hurdles blocking the wolf's restoration in the state. The group's all-volunteer staff uses donated office space to inform the public about wolves, protect future wolf habitat and lobby government agencies. The latest issue of Sinapu's seasonal newsletter, *Colorado Wolf Tracks*, discusses current obstacles to the wolf's return and outlines efforts to obtain federal funding for a wolf-feasibility study in Colorado. To receive Sinapu's newsletter, contact Sinapu, 1900 Allison St., Lakewood, CO 80215 (303/237-6280).



Allen Messick

LIGHT MY FIRE

Setting fires in the wilderness is the theme of a symposium at the University of Montana in Missoula March 30-April 1, 1993. Called "Past Lessons and Future Opportunities," it will bring together managers, educators, researchers and other persons interested in using fire as a management tool. The gathering will address wilderness values and the evolution of natural-fire programs, as well as how fire relates to recreation, air quality and threatened and endangered species. Presentations in poster format are invited on scientific, technical and managerial aspects of fire in wilderness, parks and natural areas; and proposals can be sent to William Fischer, Intermountain Research Station, P.O. Box 8089, Missoula, MT 59807. For more information, contact Conferences and Institutes, Continuing Education Center, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

A GRAZING HANDBOOK

In addition to topo maps and tents, visitors to national forests may want to pack in a handbook titled *Participating in Livestock Grazing Decisions on the National Forests: A Citizen Handbook*. The handbook tells people how to get involved in decisions concerning livestock grazing on national forests, and is a companion publication to *How Not to Be Cowed*, which deals with grazing on Bureau of Land Management land. In addition to common-sense advice, the national forest handbook includes copies of laws, court cases, regulations, manuals and the forest plans. It tells you how to file Freedom of Information Act requests, how to find allies within the agency, and how to build public support. It is available from Leslie Glustrom, 1025 Clubhouse Dr., Prescott, AZ 86303. The cost is \$5 but will be waived for those who cannot afford it.



CAPITOL HILL

High Country News — August 24, 1992 — 15

Old Faithful becomes a bargaining chip

by David Hackett

Even before the debate grows heated, the hot pots and geysers of Yellowstone National Park could become the first casualties of the congressional battle over reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

Political fallout from the fight already has contaminated a bill intended to protect Yellowstone from geothermal development outside the park. The measure stalled in the Senate on a property-rights dispute that illustrates tactics some conservatives in Congress will employ during next year's Endangered Species Act debate.

Unfortunately, the geothermal protection bill, officially entitled "The Old Faithful Protection Act," came along at a time when property-rights enthusiasts were eager to raise awareness of their agenda. So, instead of sailing through Congress, the bill became a dry run that threatens to run Yellowstone dry.

The Old Faithful Protection Act was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives last November. From there it went to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, where U.S. Sens. Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., Conrad Burns, R-Mont., and Larry Craig, R-Idaho, blocked it. They said the bill endangered private property rights.

In the process, a four-year moratorium against geothermal development around the park was allowed to lapse. Not long thereafter, the Church Universal and Triumphant began pumping hot water from a geothermal well located on its land in Montana just a few miles north of the park. No one knows whether pumping outside Yellowstone will damage attractions inside the park, but pumping around geothermal fields in other parts of the world has resulted in the destruction of unique ecosystems.

The church drilled its well in 1986, tapping an underground geothermal aquifer that feeds La Duke Hot Spring. It lies across the Yellowstone River from the church compound. When the church tested the well, briefly, at 400 gallons per minute, some nearby residents reported it stopped the flow at the surface of the spring almost immediately.

As approved by the House, the Old Faithful Protection Act would have required the church to cap the well while allowing it to pipe water from the surface of La Duke Hot Spring across the Yellowstone River. The legislation also would have banned geothermal development on public and private land within 15 miles of the park for at least four years.

The trio of senators disapproved, however, and were going to propose that the federal government spend nearly \$500,000 to build the pipeline as compensation for taking the church's property. That plan was scotched when the state of Montana announced that the



White Cone Geyser spews steam in the Lower Geyser basin

Robert Bowen

church has no property right at the well. The three senators settled upon compromise language in committee shortly thereafter, but it remains to be seen whether a final bill can be written and passed in the relatively few legislative days remaining in the 102nd Congress.

The politics of the Old Faithful Protection Act are bizarre when considered in isolation. The church, whose members believe an apocalypse is near, is not particularly popular in the region, and almost anything involving Yellowstone Park is a network-news issue. It would seem Burns, Craig and Wallop have little to gain politically by blocking any bill to protect the park at the same time federal dollars get channeled to a controversial religious group.

Their behavior makes much more sense when viewed in light of the impending bare-fisted legislative brawl over the Endangered Species Act. Addressing his fellow committee members during a discussion of the Old Faithful bill on June 24, Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., said, "I have a very strong feeling that this is going to be the real crux of the reauthorization debate next year on the Endangered Species Act — the question of the impact on private property."

"I happen to be a supporter of the Endangered

Species Act, but I think we are negligent, those of us who are supporters, in not getting that subject out here and getting some kind of a discussion and understanding of it. Let me tell you, the public support for endangered species will disappear pretty quickly when the impact begins to hit on a broad, 50-state basis."

At the heart of the property-rights dispute, commonly called the "takings" issue, lies the U.S. Constitution. Devotees of the takings theory insist that a host of federal laws and regulations violate the spirit of the Constitution by usurping individual property rights without adequate compensation. The takings theory, which gathered momentum during the Reagan years, holds that virtually any law which prevents a property owner from using his property in the manner he deems most appropriate amounts to an unconstitutional, compensable "taking" of private property.

Despite longstanding legal precedents that clearly establish the right of government to impose limits on property owners in the broader interest of society, the property-rights crusaders in Congress think their theory is a winner. ■

David Hackett is the Washington, D.C.-based correspondent for the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

ESSAY

Too many groups, too little maturity

by Stephen Forrester

The American environmental movement is at a crossroads. An essay by Theodore Roszak, called "Green Guilt and Ecological Overload," captures the essence of what's going on. Roszak's essential point is that guilt is becoming a less effective weapon for the environmental movement.

I appreciate that analysis because it describes a visceral response that I've been having to the behavior of some environmentalist leaders. I have been content to identify the root emotion as righteousness. Too many discussions with environmentalists boil down to a matter of who is the more righteous. And righteousness is a byproduct of guilt.

The dilemma which Roszak describes is one of those curious contradictions in contemporary American society. One of my favorite contradictions is the fact that our news media have grown more simple-minded at the very moment when mere citizenship and partici-

pation in the economy demand greater sophistication and mastery of information.

In a similar vein, the environmental movement is running on an outmoded motivation at the very moment when the Earth's environmental problems are becoming distressingly apparent. Even without the recent satellite photos comparing Pacific Northwest forests with tropical rainforests one could be impressed with the grim state of the planet.

Look at what we are discovering about what went on behind the Iron Curtain. Communism was, among other things, an excuse for despoiling air, water and soil. The devastation left behind by the regimes of Eastern European communism is breathtaking.

Aside from his important point about the diminishing returns of guilt, Roszak's most important argument was about the Balkanization of the American environmental movement. There are too many organizations with too many aims that are deemed to be of paramount concern.

I've talked about that phenomenon on many occa-

sions with leaders of various organizations. Over the past two years I've kept up a correspondence with George Frampton, president of The Wilderness Society. A good friend at the Sierra Club gets a regular badgering.

My argument is that the environmental movement needs a J.P. Morgan. If you remember economic history, it was Morgan who assembled many smaller steel companies into U.S. Steel.

In a variation on that old truism about war being too important to be left to the generals, the problems which plague the environment are too important to be left to competing environmentalist organizations.

It will be more than a shame if the environmental movement does not move to another stage of maturity. Too much is at stake. I am a firm believer that it won't be the bomb that gets us. We will perish at our own hands. We are already doing a good job of it. ■

Stephen Forrester is editor of *The Daily Astorian* in Oregon.

ESSAY

Let's stop dirt-bike noise and 'the end-is-here' noise

by Randal O'Toole

Lately we've been hearing about the "wise use" movement and all its affiliates. In many ways, this movement is patterned after the environmental movement, using environmentalist tactics to counter environmentalist goals.

In the short run, I don't think the wise-users will have much influence, but they should give environmentalists pause to reconsider some of our long-run strategies.

One major segment of the wise use movement is the Blue Ribbon Coalition, which includes many off-road vehicle users. Like many environmentalists, I hate ORVs.

When snowmobiles, motorbikes, three- and four-wheelers and dune buggies disturb the peace of the outdoors, my mind gently turns to thoughts of piano wire.

But I have to admit that off-road vehicle users are there for the same reasons that I am: scenic beauty, the chance to see some wildlife, the peacefulness (when the machines are turned off) of a stream or lake. These people ought to be our allies, not our opponents.

So what is it that environmentalists don't like about ORVs? Some will say they cause erosion, but that isn't true for snowmobiles, and it isn't necessarily true of other ORVs, if they stick to trails that are built to their standards.

I know what I hate about ORVs. They are NOISY. I go to the forest to get away from urban noise — why do these people have to bring it with them?

The noise makes me mad, and it makes me think I wouldn't like the people who ride the ORVs — they probably smoke, watch "Wheel of Fortune," and do lots of other things that suggest there is a vast cultural gap between me and them.

Of course, I have no idea whether this is true. They may be very nice people. There may even be some friends of mine among them, and certainly many could be my friends.

There is something deeper underlying the noise factor. Among many primates, including howler monkeys, chimpanzees and humans, noise is a way of marking territory or asserting dominance. Whether I am cycling through the city or hiking through the



Stephen R. Wenger

A dirt biker roars through the Bookcliffs area near Grand Junction, Colorado

woods, the sudden noise of a loud motor vehicle makes me irrationally angry.

Pacifist that I am, I invariably imagine myself smashing windshields and beating up the occupants. Of course, if I actually tried anything, I would be the one to be hurt, so I just keep my anger bottled up — saving it for the next public hearing.

So I suspect that much of the environmental opposition to ORVs is hormonal. Loud, unexpected noises will make anyone irrational — the adrenaline gets them ready for fight or flight. Since most people who hear ORVs don't run or do battle, the anger doesn't go away.

When not suffering from an adrenaline rush, I imagine that the cultural gap between me and ORVs may not be so wide after all. They probably love beautiful scenery and dislike stripmines and clearcuts as much as I do.

Even if there is a big gap, the public lands belong to them as much as me. In my heart I still want those noisemakers out of the forests, but this is cultural egotism at its worst.

Why should I be unwilling to share the national forests with other people just because their values differ from mine?

At the very least, environmentalists should wel-

come ORVs provided they muffle their motors and stay on trails or in areas that won't erode. But environmentalists haven't taken this position, instead arguing that as many areas as possible should be completely closed to ORVs, even opposing efforts to build trails that won't erode when ORVs use them.

As a result, a major national forest user group has been driven into the arms of the industry.

Environmentalists always seem to do this. To get people's attention, we blow up issues out of all proportion: Everything is "the end of the world," "the end of nature," or "the end of something-or-other." World-saving solutions have to be equally dramatic — mere mufflers aren't enough. So the solutions impact a lot of other people.

Environmentalists end up alienating people who could be on our side. This is a shame because it is unnecessary. I hope we can start building bridges to those whose values differ from ours and see if we can find solutions to problems that will meet everyone's needs. ■

Randal O'Toole is a forest economist with Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants, which is based at 620 Dimick Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045.



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