High Country News

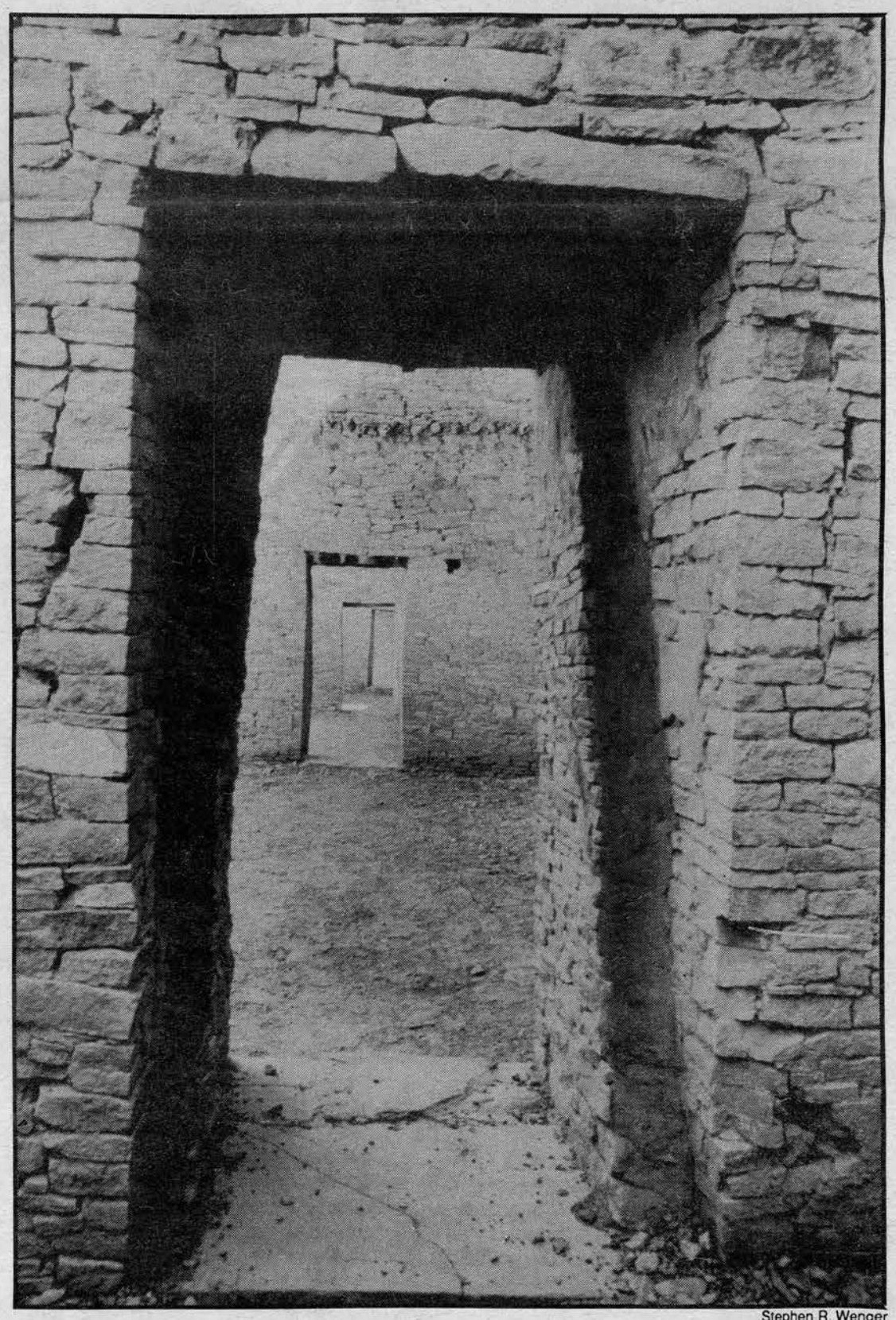
November 30, 1992 | Vol. 24 No. 22 | A Paper for People who Care about the West | One dollar and fifty cents

INSIDE:

Pressure builds to change remote park

by **Tony Davis**

CHACO CANYON, N.M. — After Rick Floyd took some pottery pieces home to Oregon from Chaco Culture National Historical Park a few years ago, his luck went bad. He pulled a muscle in his shoulder while windsurfing. His washing machine flooded a closet and drenched books about his beloved Southwest. He started having fights at work.



A series of doorways connects rooms of Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon

Stephen R. Wenger

Guilt-ridden, he stuck the black-and-white Anasazi pottery shards into an envelope, along with an apologetic letter, and mailed them off to the canyon. The letter said:

"I have had a recent string of bad luck and figure that sending these pieces back to you may help," he wrote. "I have come to understand that they hold much more significance and beauty when sitting in the open desert sands than they do when stored in a box with my rock samples. Please put them back where they belong!"

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Dear friends,

In the neighborhood

Practicing what they preach, Bill Bryan and Suzy Hall of Off the Beaten Path found themselves in Paonia last week. The two were in the Four Corners area scouting locations for their clients. Off the Beaten Path, based in Bozeman, Mont., specializes in custom-made trips in the West. In a previous incarnation as an environmental activist, Bill was a founder of the Northern Rockies Action Group. He is now on the board of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

When historian Donald Worster (*Dust Bowl, Rivers of Empire, Under Western Skies*) came to western Colorado, but not to Paonia, staff decided to motor 70 miles to Grand Junction to hear the Hall Distinguished Professor of American History at the University of Kansas speak. Although he complained about how hard his hosts at Mesa State College had worked him (six talks in two days), he gave a lively final talk on the passing of the *Shane* era in western history and the beginning of a more diverse view of the West's past and present.

Gag order

For interns, the work day is often spent writing disconnected articles about far-flung places. But everything came together for Zaz Hollander recently. She had just finished a Hotline describing a Forest Service gag order and was on to a story about the Willamette National Forest when an agency spokesman told her: "I'll have to talk to some higher-ups and get back to you on that." He "got back" in the form of a generic fax.

Corrections

While it is true that Kit and Jon Christensen of Carson City, Nev., have a new baby, it is not true that her name is Lucille. The name, according to a birth announcement, is Lucia Rachel Miller Christensen. In an accompanying note, Kit writes: "Apparently *HCN*'s credibility is so good that most people assume ***we*** got the name wrong."

We also apologize to activist and freelance reporter Steve Thompson in Montana. Last month we dubbed him "Steve Forrester."

Because a last set of corrections never got into the last election story, we are aware of errors that no one has yet called us on. The story on Montana says that Rep. Pat Williams carried six of the seven Indian reservations. It should have said that Williams did well in rural counties with Indian populations. In South Dakota, Democrats have a 20-15 lead in the state senate, not a 20-15 percent lead.

Reader Bruce Plank called from Utah to say that Wayne Owens lost the U.S. Senate race to Bob Bennett, and not to William Bennett. But Plank also wondered: Could the former drug czar have taken over an already strange state?

The article on the Grand County, Utah, election to change the county's form of government mistakenly attributed a quote to Commissioner Manuel Torres. The quote warning visitors to bring their "six-shooters" to Moab belongs to former commissioner Jimmie Walker. Its source is the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Are we faster?

Maggy Woodcock of Shaker Heights, Ohio, tells us she noticed a "remarkable" improvement in mail speed. The 11/16/92 *HCN* reached her on 11/17/92, while in the past issues had arrived long after the issue date. Has anyone else noticed a change?

— Ed Marston for the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP

'Wolf' is killed in the North Dakota badlands

Clarence "Buzzy" Lindley was riding his son's roping horse in the Little Missouri River badlands of North Dakota Nov. 6 when something "chomped" the back leg of his horse. "The horse just blew up, and when we went down, it was still after him. My ol' heart was pounding ... I could see those big teeth," he said.

Lindley said he managed to grab his saddlegun, a lever-action Winchester 94, and shot the animal once through the neck, killing it. The animal looked like a wolf.

Lindley said he left the body — "You couldn't get a horse close to him" — then rode back to his hunting camp. His hunter friends retrieved and skinned out the large male animal, which had a flawless black and gray pelt, he said. The leg of the horse, Lindley said, was examined and treated with antibiotics for a broken blood vessel.

North Dakota game wardens Daryl Kleyer and Kurt Aufforth got wind of the incident, which had quickly become a local legend. They contacted Lindley and took the hide and head to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife office in Bismarck, N.D., where a lab will determine its species. Aufforth described it as a "canine-type animal, very wolf-like, maybe a wolf or wolf-hybrid, good-sized, about 125 to 140 pounds, very robust."

In the late 1980s, two wolves were shot in Aufforth's former warden district in south-central North Dakota. "Those were more coyote-like in appearance, and were shot, I'm convinced, as big coyotes," he said. "This one is a dark black and gray." Aufforth said they may have migrated down the James River from Canada.

Aufforth said the hunter's adventure was "so unheard of that it's hard to fathom. At this point, I have no basis to disbelieve his story. But we are continuing to investigate the matter." Anyone who kills a wolf, an endangered species, is subject to criminal prosecution.

At least one official with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would like the story kept quiet. David Kraft, who works in the agency's Bismarck office, said, "We all know what this issue is like: It's one of those that's a lose-lose ... I wish nothing would show up anywhere in the press."

Meanwhile, in Ashland, Ore., a lab continued to examine a large canine killed by a Wyoming coyote hunter south of Yellowstone National Park this fall. A report was expected in late November.

The hunter claimed that the animal ran with a pack of coyotes, and that he shot it because he thought it was the biggest coyote.

— Pat Dawson

Pat Dawson free-lances from Billings, Montana.

HOTLINE

A showdown in Nevada

The long-running range war between the Bureau of Land Management and Western Shoshone ranchers Mary and Carrie Dann escalated recently. On Nov. 19, the BLM began a surprise roundup of "unauthorized livestock" on the South Buckhorn allotment that the Danns share with six neighboring ranches in Crescent Valley, Nev. Under cover of a snowstorm, BLM agents blocked dirt roads leading from the ranch to the allotment, while wranglers on horseback and in helicopters scoured nearby canyons for livestock. But members of the Dann family and a band of a dozen or so supporters quickly set up their own roadblock. When law enforcement officers arrived to move the protesters, they found Clifford Dann, 56, had soaked himself with gasoline and was threatening to set himself on fire. Carrie Dann said her brother said, "If I'm gonna be spiritually dead, I'm gonna take my body with me." Before Clifford Dann could act, police doused him with fire extinguishers and tackled him. He was arrested for assaulting federal and local officers and taken to Reno for arraignment. The BLM offered to call off the roundup if the Danns would agree to take the livestock off the allotment themselves. But, the Dann sisters and "the resistance," as their supporters dubbed themselves, decided to continue nonviolent efforts to thwart the roundup. "Our stand is that this is Western Shoshone land," said Carrie Dann. "We won't back down."

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Protection proceeds at a snail's pace

Although listing a species as threatened or endangered should be based on science, the process frequently runs aground in the muddy water of politics. Delays, which are limited to one year by law, are frustrating for biologists and devastating to a species that may be on the verge of extinction.

In the case of the Bruneau Hot Springs snail, federal biologists recommended listing it as endangered nearly seven years ago. Finally, last July, environmentalists filed suit in federal District Court in Boise, Idaho, to speed the process.

At least one agency biologist, Charles Lobdell, who works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Boise, says he wasn't surprised that the fate of the snail landed in court.

"I knew that somebody would sue us sooner or later," he says. "The bottom line in this court case is that the whole process is afoul."

In 1985, Lobdell says, when his office submitted a proposal to list the snail, agency officials in Washington, D.C., sent it back to Idaho for more public comment.

"They shouldn't have sent it back," says Lobdell. "We did it right the first time."

Then in 1990, Congress approved $400,000 for a two-year study of the snail, which lives only in warm stretches of Idaho's Bruneau River. These warm areas are disappearing because of agricultural wells downstream that deplete groundwater. Although the studies provided valuable information for the snail's eventual recovery, Lobdell says they were "irrelevant" to the actual listing and only added to its delay.

'They shouldn't have sent it back. We did it right the first time.'

— Charles Lobdell

However, Georgia Parham, who works in Washington, D.C., for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, says the agency was right to ignore the one-year deadline. She says the agency needed time to gather additional information before making a decision.

The suit against the agency was filed by the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, representing the Idaho Conservation League and the Committee for Idaho's High Desert. A tentative settlement was reached Nov. 18, when the Department of Interior agreed to submit a decision on the Bruneau snail by Jan. 15, 1993.

Environmental groups filed a similar suit in October, charging that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service illegally delayed a decision on the listing of five species of snails found only in Idaho's Snake River basin (*HCN*, 1/28/91). Listing the snails could mean a death sentence for proposed Snake River hydropower projects and agricultural diversions along the river, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials.

The historic range of the ancient snails has already been damaged by development, and they survive only in isolated sections that are clean and free-flowing. A proposal to list the snails was sent from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's regional office to the Washington, D.C. office in December 1990, where it has languished.

Lobdell says this delay is not a matter of gathering new information, but is "something higher than the Fish and Wildlife Service." Agency spokeswoman Georgia Parham called the delay "standard" and necessary for sorting data prior to listing a species.

The Idaho snails represent only a fraction of plant and animal species that may go extinct. Out of a total of 3,800 plant and animal species that have been nominated for protection, decisions on at least 90 of the candidate species are now past due, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials.

*— **Kristy Ratliff,** HCN intern*

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Glen Canyon law may draw foes together

by **Steve Hinchman**

Two days after Bill Clinton's election, an unlikely group met in Farmington, N.M., to talk about radically changing how decisions are made in the West.

The conspirators were long-time enemies who came together to see if they could cooperate on one of the region's most contentious battles: the operation of Glen Canyon Dam.

It was a long shot. The 20 participants — federal energy officials, National Park Service staffers, managers of nearby rural electric co-operatives, mayors and council members from several Colorado Plateau communities, rafters, environmentalists and Native Americans — had never met off the battlefield and they carried no official directives.

The meeting was conceived by two of the major opposing forces in the region: Ken Maxey, assistant administrator of the Western Area Power Administration, and Jim Ruch, vice president of the Grand Canyon Trust. Previously, the two spent much of their time on lawsuits and political campaigns in the ongoing clash between energy production and environmental protection on the Colorado Plateau.

Both wanted the meeting for the same reason. "The last 12 years on the Colorado Plateau were marked by polarization, rancorous debate and rejection of differing perspectives," Ruch said. "It was consuming huge amounts of time and money, and all we had gotten out of it was the ability to wreck each other's trains."

Maxey added, "It's in our mutual best interest to learn how to communicate and work with one another, rather than engage in constant litigative action. Before we get to the next crisis, let's build a process to talk to one another."

But years of fighting had bred extreme hostility and mistrust. While the group quickly agreed that as a result of the many conflicts, the region had turned over its destiny to outsiders, no one was sure the other side could be trusted.

Run by a professional mediator, the get-together focused first on tearing down negative perceptions that prevented communication and cooperation.

Then, as they got to know each other, participants started trying out some radical notions. Staff of the Western Area Power Administration, which coordinates operations of Glen Canyon Dam, indicated that they wanted more involvement from environmentalists. Rafters and environmentalists said that they wanted to look for ways to integrate ecological sustainability and economic development in small towns on the plateau. And Farmington, N.M., Mayor Tom Taylor and several other representatives of plateau communities agreed that their towns needed to start looking at alternative economies before their resource base was depleted or their environment wrecked.

Putting those ideas into action, however, will be the hard part. The group closed by recommending that the region create a new cooperative process to resolve disputes, starting with the fight over Glen Canyon Dam. The 1992 Grand Canyon Protection Act limits Western's operation of the dam to protect the canyon below. But the act also says that peaking power lost by changing dam operations must be replaced. That amounts to about 400 megawatts, which is the size of a big coal-fired power plant.

Taking that challenge, participants proposed to draw from all stakeholders in the Glen Canyon Dam issue (both inside and outside the room) to found a special collaborative. That collaborative would have a dual mission: first, to find a mix of efficiency programs, renewable resources and new power plants to replace lost peaking power from Glen Canyon Dam; and, second, to design pilot projects that will improve environmental, energy and economic conditions in Colorado Plateau communities.

Most people left the room feeling that they had taken a small but powerful first step. "We have a long way to go to build up a solid trust level," said Ken Maxey, "but we did find that the other side is human and that there are some values we share."

By the time he returned to Western's administrative headquarters and briefed the staff, Maxey said agency excitement was running high. "Western as a whole is prepared to enter into dialogue and a collaborative process on this, and we hope to get to the point where we can collaborate on other issues."

Maxey, Ruch and several others from the Farmington group are preparing a plan to be released in January that will lay out a strategy for organizing and funding a collaborative, and which will set the ground rules for research, dialogue and decision making.

But the group cautioned that only a tiny portion of the region's players met in Farmington. For cooperation to work on a large scale, more people from all sides of the dispute must come together to build friendships and trust. "We need 12 meetings like this a year," said rafter Rob Elliott. ■

HOTLINE

Randy Bradbury

Oil rig

Memo ignites controversy

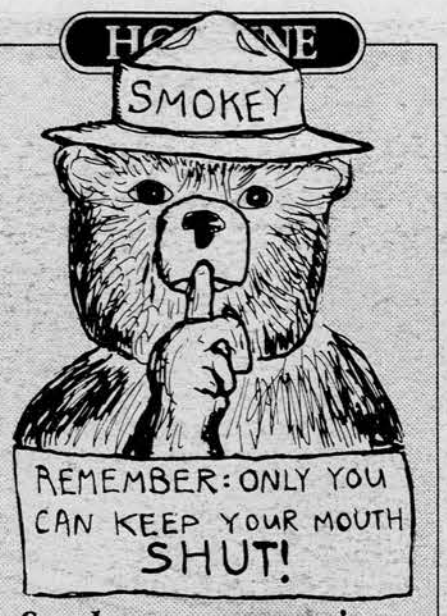
A memo directing supervisors of three national forests to place oil and gas leasing above other programs has drawn an angry reaction from environmentalists. In an Oct. 13 memo, Regional Forester David Jolly said because "our oil and gas leasing target is of particular concern" in fiscal 1993, money from other programs should be "reprioritized" to meet this target goal, reports the *Billings Gazette*. "They're revealing that development is their top concern," said Michael Scott of The Wilderness Society. The memo's most immediate effect will be in the Beartooth Mountains of southwestern Montana. The Forest Service released a draft environmental impact statement in September that could result in oil and gas leasing of 99 percent of available lands in the Custer National Forest. "This plan would be a giveaway of the Beartooth Mountains to the petroleum industry," said John Colburn, chairman of the Sierra Club's Montana Chapter.

"Bubbly black stuff"

The dark waters of the paper industry thwarted plans for a bicentennial float down Oregon's Willamette River. In honor of the 200th anniversary of the arrival at the Willamette by New England merchant sailors in 1792, a handful of water lovers hoped to promote canoe and raft floats down the wide river. But a trial float made it less than a quarter of the way, to the town of Halsey. There, effluent from two pulp mills soured the river experience. "It was this bubbly black stuff," says rafter Mel Jackson. "You couldn't see the bottom anymore. People didn't even want to touch the water."

BARBS

Down-home, Western hospitality. In a speech to a wise-use group called the Blue Ribbon Coalition, Sen. Steve Symms, R-Idaho, told how to handle endangered species that wander onto private land. "That's where you get the old term, 'shoot, shovel, and shut up,' " reports *The Salt Lake Tribune*.



Smokey says mum's the word

A recent Forest Service memo bans agency employees from talking to all national media without first consulting a public affairs official. The policy, outlined in an Oct. 8 memo from Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson, "is vital to avoiding surprises in the media," said J. Lamar Beasley, deputy chief of administration for the Agriculture Department. Opponents call it a "gag order" that suppresses employee opinion, AP reports. "It is clearly an attempt to control media coverage," said Jeff DeBonis, a former forester who heads the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics in Oregon. "(A)gency officials are trying to harass individuals who are simply exercising their First Amendment rights." Reps. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., and Jolene Unsoeld, D-Wash., joined AFSEEE in criticizing what they say is a dangerous direction for the Forest Service's media policy. "They are suppressing their employees, politically manipulating them with a few hacks up on top," said DeFazio.

Bush signs energy, water bills

Just days before his failed reelection bid, President George Bush signed two major environmental bills into law. He had threatened to veto both (*HCN*, 11/2/92). The $2.4 billion water bill that Bush signed Oct. 21 includes funding for projects in 17 states. Both Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan and California Sen. John Seymour, a Republican who lost his seat to Dianne Feinstein, lobbied the president to veto the measure. They objected to a section that breaks agriculture's grip on cheap federal water from California's Central Valley Project. But the president decided to side with the bill's other benefactors. Utah, for example, will receive $922 million to complete the Central Utah Project, and Arizona gets an assurance that flows from Glen Canyon Dam will be managed to protect the Colorado River corridor in Grand Canyon National Park. The president also signed The National Energy Policy Act of 1992, even though he promised last year to veto any energy bill that did not allow oil and gas drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Other provisions of the wide-ranging bill promote nuclear power, oil and gas production, clean coal technologies, oil shale and alternative fuel for cars and trucks, as well as new energy efficiency standards for many household appliances.

Can wolves coexist with cows?

The U.S. Forest Service may put cows back on land that the Arizona Game and Fish Department is studying for possible reintroduction of the endangered Mexican gray wolf.

Earlier this year a state study picked the sparsely populated Blue Range Primitive Area and surrounding lands in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest as the best of four possible sites for wolves. In part the area was picked because of its low potential for conflicts with ranchers.

But the reintroduction effort may collide with the Forest Service if the agency lifts a 10-year grazing ban in the area. In 1983, the Forest Service removed cattle from the 61,348-acre Sandrock grazing allotment, which sits in the heart of the Blue.

"The Sandrock was the most horrible grazing disaster that I've ever seen on any national forest," recalls Nick McDonough, who was Apache-Sitgreaves supervisor at the time.

But McDonough says that when grazing was suspended he promised local ranchers that the Forest Service would re-evaluate the allotment's status in 10 years.

Frank Hayes, a Forest Service district ranger, says ranchers are reminding him that it's time to keep that promise. His office is now analyzing the condition of the allotment to determine if some level of grazing is appropriate.

That worries wolf advocates. "It would be much simpler to reintroduce the wolf in that area if the Forest Service didn't allow grazing to resume," says Bobbie Holliday, director of Preserve Arizona Wolves (PAWS).

Hayes denies, however, that the wolf reintroduction plan is hastening the Forest Service's analysis. "There's no basis to the rumors that we're doing this because of the wolves," he says, noting that the agency is considering the impacts of grazing on future wolf reintroduction in its study. "One of our concerns is that there may be an inadequate prey base for the wolves."

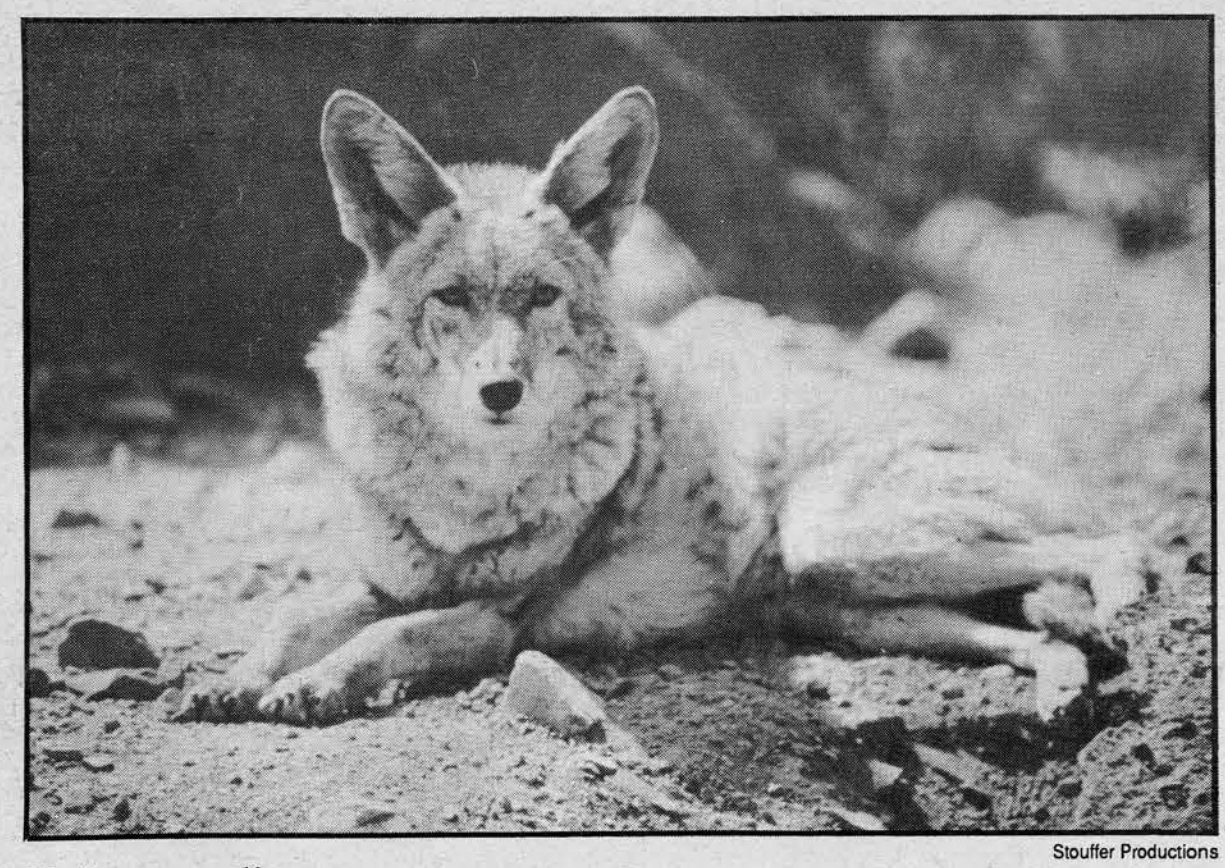
The Arizona Cattle Growers' Association made the same assertion to the Game and Fish commissioners earlier this month. But a state study found that the Blue has the second highest density of wild ungulates — 6.9 per square mile — of the four potential reintroduction sites.

Former supervisor McDonough, now retired, says resuming grazing on the Sandrock would be an economic disaster. To support just 50 or 60 head of cattle — the allotment's carrying capacity, according to McDonough — taxpayers would have to dole out $1 million to reconstruct pasture fences, he says.

The Forest Service is not seeking public comment on the Sandrock allotment yet, but interested parties can write to Frank Hayes, Clifton District Ranger, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, P.O. Box 698, Clifton, AZ 85533. The state wolf reintroduction plan is expected sometime next year. If approved, it will be dovetailed into a wolf restoration plan the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering for the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

— Jeff Burgess

Jeff Burgess lives in Tempe, Arizona.



Stouffer Productions

Mexican gray wolf

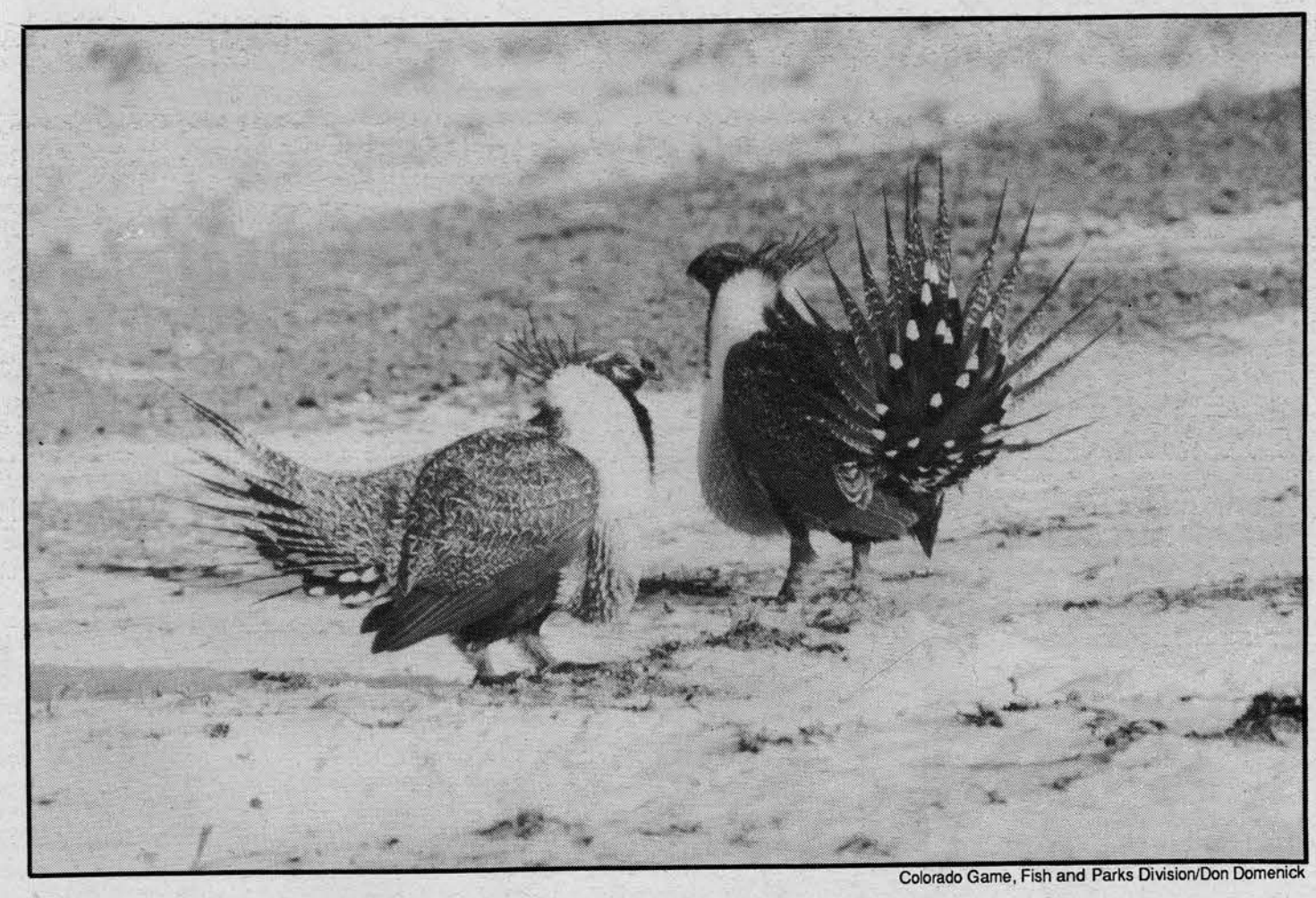
HOTLINE

Sturgeon galvanizes agencies

Idaho and Montana officials are racing to devise a plan to revive the Kootenai River white sturgeon before it becomes protected under the Endangered Species Act. Protection could affect power generation at Montana's Libby Dam, and restrictions there would decrease power production throughout the entire Columbia River basin. The giant white sturgeon — which can live 80 years and grow up to 10 feet long — have not successfully reproduced since 1974, when Montana's Libby Dam started cutting off spring flows on the Kootenai River. Last June, after a coalition of Idaho environmental groups filed to list the sturgeon as an endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave the region one year to come up with a recovery plan. Otherwise, the agency said, it would list the Kootenai sturgeon as endangered and require strict protective measures. An initial recommendation from federal and state fish biologists would increase spring flows on the Kootenai eightfold. The recovery team — the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration and federal and state fish agencies — is currently looking at how that would affect power operations and will release a draft plan in January. In the meantime, an August accident at a Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, fish hatchery killed 560 of the 800 sturgeon in captivity.

Help asked for bull trout

Three Montana environmental groups petitioned the federal government Oct. 28 to declare the bull trout an endangered species in five Western states. The group told the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the two strongest bull trout populations in the United States — the Flathead basin population in Montana and the Lake Pend Oreille population in Idaho — are in an "extremely serious" decline, according to new research. The request, filed by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, the Swan View Coalition and the Friends of the Wild Swan, asks for emergency protection of trout habitat in Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Nevada. Mike Bader, executive director of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, said the bull trout is the chief indicator of water quality in the region. "The fish are not making it right now," he said. "The population is crashing." Earlier this year, the state Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes closed much of the Flathead and Swan rivers to bull trout fishing. Environmentalists say threats to the trout include logging, road building, mining, cattle grazing, irrigation, pesticide use, dam building, poaching, introduction of non-native species, stream course diversions, home sites and drought.



Colorado Game, Fish and Parks Division/Don Domenick

Sage grouse in the snow

Is BLM running down a rare species?

On the wet meadows of western Colorado's Chance Gulch, a rare game bird's dance floor may soon be too hot to trot.

These sage-covered hills and grassy draws support the last stable breeding population of the Gunnison sage grouse. The rare subspecies of 600 birds has adapted to specific "strutting" grounds where the male birds engage in their spring mating dance. But a federal uranium tailings dump under construction could destroy the birds' habitat and cut their small population in half.

The dump is part of the Department of Energy's Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) project. The project was created to transport low-level radioactive wastes away from populated areas around the country. In this case, tailings from a closed uranium mill outside the city of Gunnison, Colo., had contaminated groundwater, forcing the Energy Department to supply residents of 20 homes with bottled water.

The cleanup plan calls for trucks to carry loads of radioactive waste six miles across public lands to the proposed dump. But the partially constructed road cuts through a breeding ground, called a lek, where grouse perform their mating dance.

"Once their display areas are disturbed, they won't go back," warns Jessica Young, a doctoral student at Purdue University studying the Gunnison sage grouse. Because trucks will pass through grouse mating grounds every 90 seconds for three years, Young says the disruptive presence of both the trucks and the road itself will devastate this rare population. As evidence, she cites a Colorado Division of Wildlife estimate on the number of grouse in Chance Gulch lost to the road building and trucking: 300 grouse — half the current mating population.

The state Division of Wildlife protested building a road in this sensitive area, but the Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency overseeing protective measures for the grouse, elected to allow road construction. The BLM has also decided not to follow state suggestions regarding the creation of new habitat for the displaced birds. State wildlife officials say they're concerned that the agency's management plans for the area may compromise what birds remain after trucking begins next year.

The BLM's mitigation plans for the displaced birds include minimizing trucking during the spring when the birds are breeding. It also says new grouse habitat will be created on 150 acres of overgrazed BLM allotments that have been cleared of livestock for the next seven years.

Under the BLM plan, once the cattle are removed, water will be piped from springs onto the allotments. The agency then expects the birds to find the new area and recover their former breeding strength and numbers. After the grouse are established, livestock will be returned to the allotments and cattle and grouse will share the streamside meadows. "Our plans contain a strong management mandate for sage grouse in this basin," says Barry Tollefson, a BLM staffer in Gunnison.

Colorado biologist Clait Braun is not persuaded by the BLM's reasoning. "The only reason they're removing cows is so they don't get hit by trucks," he says. Braun studied sage grouse for the Colorado Division of Wildlife for 25 years and fears the BLM's proposed habitat improvements won't be adequate.

"The recovery plan won't positively affect the sage grouse, (and) won't make a difference," says Braun. Overgrazing in riparian areas has destroyed the land's ability to sustain any vegetation other than sage and removing livestock won't rehabilitate the soil, he adds.

Both Clait Braun and Jessica Young say that the birds may soon be candidates for threatened or endangered listing under the Endangered Species Act. If the grouse is listed, the BLM will be required to come up with a new management plan to provide for the birds' recovery. Braun believes that the agency's only option at that point will be to suspend all grazing rights in Chance Gulch until the sage grouse populations can recover. And grouse recovery will continue to be affected by trucking activity, says Young. "Even without constant use, the population will be devastated," she says.

Last August, the Audubon Society petitioned the BLM to halt ongoing haul road construction until the agency could complete an environmental impact statement detailing the project's effects on the grouse. The BLM refused, saying an EIS was unnecessary because the project would not "result in significant impacts to the human environment."

"That just goes to show where their sympathies lie," says James R. Guadagno, president of the Black Canyon Audubon Society in western Colorado. The group says the agency has demonstrated "severe neglect" in failing to reflect the importance of this population as breeding stock.

"There are plenty of places where mine tailings can be dumped," says Guadagno. "But there are only a few places where sage grouse find it possible to breed, and these places can be selected only by them."

For more information, contact the BLM, 216 N. Colorado St., Gunnison, CO 81230, or the Black Canyon Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1371, Paonia, CO 81428.

— Zaz Hollander

Zaz Hollander is an *HCN* intern.

HOTLINE

Mooning leads to a trial

Three Earth First! members who allegedly "mooned" Forest Service law enforcement officers last August pleaded innocent to charges of creating a "safety and convenience hazard," reports AP. The three were protesting logging on Idaho's Nez Perce National Forest. Federal prosecutors accused them of creating a hazard by blocking a Forest Service road used by fire-fighting equipment. Vincent Collins, Allison Slater and Erik Ryberg were arraigned in a Moscow, Idaho, federal court Oct. 7 and are free on their own recognizance until trial begins Dec. 1. The activists say when they dropped their pants as a send-off to a fellow Earth First!er, they were not on an access road. If convicted, all face up to six months in jail and a $5,000 fine.

HOTLINE

It's a bird, it's a plane

No, it was a mock-up of the ark of the covenant. In central Utah's Castle Valley earlier this month, all 7,000 pounds of it tumbled down a sandstone pinnacle only to smash into pieces at the base of 400-foot Castle Tower. The destruction was all for the sake of a movie called "Slaughter of the Innocents." The Bureau of Land Management allowed crews from Camay Court Productions to film the ark-dropping to the dismay of a local environmental group. "This whole thing is more like 'slaughter of due process,' " said Ken Rait of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. The group has long proposed wilderness designation for the Castle Tower area, and it filed an appeal earlier this fall with the BLM and Interior Department requesting that the film crew go somewhere else. The request was denied, but it stirred up opposition in nearby Moab, where residents appreciate the income generated by location filming. But some residents of Castle Valley were also not pleased to have helicopters from Hollywood hover over their backyards. "This is just part of the pollution that goes along with industrial filming," says Jack Campbell, a Castle Valley resident. Another resident, Dennis Willigan, said he watched with horror as a Camay Productions 'copter nearly dropped a piece of the ark on a neighbor. "That helicopter was just hanging with a huge chunk of debris over my neighbor's daughter. She couldn't even see it, but if it had gone down she would have been dead."

Joy Warren

Wolves gain adherents

Bringing back wolves to Yellowstone National Park is supported by more than a 2-1 margin nationwide, according to a study conducted by University of Montana professor John Duffield. The study also found that 94 percent of Yellowstone visitors spend about $1,700 each to view the park's wildlife. This number is growing, along with sentiment in favor of wolf reintroduction, says Duffield, who is preparing a report to Congress on the subject. The total dollar value of wolf support, based on what visitors say they would pay to see wolves, approaches $33 million per year. Another survey, however, shows that in Yellowstone's surrounding communities, only 51 percent of residents favor wolf recovery. Duffield says hunters and ranchers, who oppose reintroduction, would lose less than $2 million per year in livestock deaths due to wolves. "These results don't judge fairness or equity," he told the *Billings Gazette*. ... "But the values to society as a whole of reintroducing wolves far outweigh the costs."

Unclassified

HIGH COUNTRY NEWS classified ads cost 30 cents per word up to 50 words. Rates increase after that. Display ads 4 column inches or less are $10/col. inch if camera-ready; $15/col. inch if we make up. Larger display ads are $30 or $35/col. inch. We reserve the right to reject ads. Send ad with payment to: *HCN*, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428, or call 303/527-4898 for more information.

WANTED: RAFTING CHAPTER MANAGER for Friends of the River, a grass-roots environmental organization devoted to saving rivers. Manage daily operations and programs, particularly on-river fund raising and public education. Requires coordinating volunteers and equipment on/off river; and bookkeeping, writing and communication skills. Based near Sacramento, Calif. Monthly salary starts at $1,800 with a generous bonus program and benefits. Apply to Jeff Mischinsky, 2835 Cascade Place, Davis, CA 95616 before Dec. 31, 1992. For more information call 916/928-6262. (2x22p)

THE GENTLE SURVIVALIST — Walk softly yet self-sufficiently on Mother Earth. Native American preparedness teachings and earth wisdom balanced with latest developments. Simplify life, alleviate environmental illness with positive Harmonic Ecology insights. Unique/spirited eclectic eight-page monthly. $17 — $2 sample. Write: Box 4004, St. George, UT 84770. (1x22p)

OUTDOOR SINGLES NETWORK, established bi-monthly newsletter, ages 19-90, no forwarding fees, $35/1 year, $7/trial issue and information. OSN-HCN, PO Box 2031, McCall, ID 83638. (6x16p eoi)

TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA, non-profit environmental law firm, seeks an executive director with strong management, leadership and fundraising abilities. Salary DOE. Résumés to Hiring Director, Trustees for Alaska, 725 Christensen Dr., #4, Anchorage, AK 99501. (1x22b)

MOAB, UTAH: House for rent in La Sal Mountains. Views from Arches to Needles and beyond. Located on large ranch 20 miles from town. Year-round access, excellent skiing, biking. 303/984-2729. (2x22p)

LAND LETTER... the newsletter for natural resource professionals. Special introductory offer. Write 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209, or call 703/525-6300. (24x1p)

SAMOYED OWNER looking for offspring sired by Echo's Arctic Prince. Dam was Princess Pandora, owned by Sunshine Lawley of Paonia, Colo. Litter was born Dec. 16, 1984. Write: Muffin, 1951 Wagstaff Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84117. (1x22p)

AMERICAN WILDLANDS, a non-profit conservation organization in Bozeman, Mont., will be hiring a silviculturist/forester to monitor and comment on Forest Service activities in the Northern Rockies. BA in silviculture/forestry required. Prior Forest Service experience strongly preferred. Send for detailed position description and/or send résumé with cover letter to the attention of Denise Boggs, American Wildlands, 40 E. Main #2, Bozeman, MT 59715. Closing date Jan. 10, 1993. (1x22b)

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, Three-Week Climbing Camp for teens who know they like climbing and want to become proficient in all aspects. Intensive instruction and as much climbing as can be packed into three weeks in the Tetons, Winds, and City of Rocks. For all ages: Four-Day Grand Teton Course includes training and ascent of 13,776 ft. Grand Teton. Write or call for complete course brochure. Jackson Hole Mountain Guides, 307/733-4979 (JHMG), P.O. Box 7477, Jackson Hole, WY 83001. (3x21p)

ELK SANCTUARY. Please help preserve and improve grasslands for elk and deer winter range. Natural migration path of game. Present situation is to hunt the game. We prefer to see them have a safe, natural environment. Financial aid is required to accomplish this. For more information write: WAB, P.O. Box 1012, Hotchkiss, CO 81419. (3x22p)

HISTORIC (1871) ARIZONA RANCH has double-wide in spectacular setting. Three bedrooms, two baths, great birds, wildlife, hiking, 5,000 feet in Chiricahua Mountains. Low rent for light caretaking when owners are away. Bear Spring Ranch, Box 425, Bowie, AZ 85605 (602/847-2249). (2x21p)

Vol. 24, No. 22

BULLETIN BOARD

INVEST YOURSELF

For those willing to spend a summer, a semester, or even a year volunteering their skills full time, a little book called *Invest Yourself* offers a catalog of opportunities to "care deeply in ways beyond your common experience and ability to comprehend." The book, now in its 46th year of publication, is a product of a non-profit fund. Projects are listed worldwide, many of which provide room and board and even a small stipend. Areas include community service, education, counseling, the environment, construction, organizing and health care. The book indexes projects and organizations, aiding the search for an ideal volunteer assignment. Interspersed with opportunity descriptions are the commentaries and reflections of full-time volunteers. "One thing of value we *can* give to the world is ourselves — in any way, size, shape or form that we choose," writes volunteer day care teacher Julie Williams. Opportunities in the West include aiding migrant farm workers in Arizona, teaching on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico, and undertaking conservation projects in backcountry areas throughout the region.

The Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, P.O. Box 117, New York, NY 10009. 128 pages, black-and-white photos. Paperback: $6.

— Mark Dooley

MAINTAINING THE GILA'S DIVERSITY

A small group in New Mexico has set itself a large task: protecting the 10,000 square miles that make up the huge Gila ecosystem. The Greater Gila Biodiversity Project, a non-profit group based in Luna, N.M., engages in everything from habitat mapping to legal action in pursuit of "taking back the Gila" from grazing, logging and mining interests. The ecosystem stretches over three national forests in New Mexico and Arizona, and it includes the world's largest ponderosa pine forest and a wide variety of wildlife, including the northern goshawk and Mexican spotted owl. The Gila remains intact, but development pressures are increasing. For more information, contact GGBP at P.O. Box 117, Luna, NM 87824 (505/547-2744).

HOLISTIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Ranchers and others interested in cows, grass and the environment will meet Thursday, Dec. 10, at the annual meeting of the Colorado branch of Holistic Resource Management. Speakers include Doc and Connie Hatfield, ranchers from Brothers, Ore., Allen Nation, a writer and editor for the *Stockman Grass Farmer*, and Kirvin Knox, a dean at Colorado State University. The meeting will be held at the Red Lion Inn in Colorado Springs. Registration is $50; pre-registration is $40. For information, write Colorado HRM, P.O. Box 3012, Montrose, CO 81402; or call Debbie Burch at 303/249-6047 days or 303/874-8135 evenings.

BIODIVERSITY IN BOZEMAN

The Montana Wilderness Association's 34th annual convention has invited a diverse group headed by Douglas Chadwick, author of *A Beast the Color of Winter*, to discuss biodiversity in Bozeman on Dec. 4-5. Panel discussions will examine biodiverse views from around the world and their implications for public-lands management. Erik Stone of the Teton Science School, and Mark Shaffer, biologist with The Wilderness Society, are speakers along with Peggy Trenk, executive director of the Western Environmental Trade Association, Jim Riley, vice president of Inter-Mountain Forest Industry Association, and Doug Hannold, attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund; Brian Kahn, director of the Nature Conservancy; Herbert Pollard with the Idaho Fish and Game Department; and Mike Bader, director of Alliance for the Wild Rockies. For more information call the Montana Wilderness Association, Box 635, Helena, MT 59624 (406/443-7350).

Vicki H. Mayea

Burrowing owl

HOW NOT TO SAVE THE GRIZZLY

A biologist who once worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has blasted a federal recovery plan for the grizzly bear. Mark Shaffer, who now works for The Wilderness Society, says the draft plan will fail because it ignores scientific guidelines.

In a 15-page report, *Keeping the Grizzly Bear in the American West*, Shaffer says, first, up-to-date population studies of the bear must be completed for all potential recovery areas. Existing populations may be larger than anyone knows, but population growth rates may be declining. "The point is, we don't know because the agency with the legal responsibility for managing the species doesn't know," Shaffer says. Second, he says, population requirements for delisting the threatened grizzly are too low. A population of several thousand bears is needed to ensure viability for several centuries, he says, but the government plan protects 1,200 grizzlies, at best. Third, Shaffer criticizes the government's chosen method of estimating population size, which relies solely on sightings of female bears with cubs. He proposes a panel of experts to determine a more reliable monitoring system. Shaffr also says the crucial element for grizzly recovery is habitat protection, which, he continues, is not sufficiently covered in the draft plan. He warns that designating isolated wilderness areas for grizzly bears will prevent populations from achieving genetic diversity. He finds no merit in the draft plan's proposal to maintain genetic diversity by transferring grizzly studs from one area to another every 10 years. Shaffer suggests creating a continuous protected area to link public and private lands into one recovery zone.

"By weaving back together the big remaining pieces of functional wilderness, we can keep a viable ecosystem in the Northern Rockies and all the species it supports. If we don't, the grizzly will just be among the first to go," Shaffer concludes.

For a copy of *Keeping the Grizzly Bear in the American West*, send $3 to The Wilderness Society, Attn: publications, 900 17th St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20006, or call 202/833-2300. For a copy of the second draft of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan, write to: Fish and Wildlife Reference Service, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110, Bethesda, MD 20814, or call: 1-800/582-3421.

— Kristy Ratliff

STILL A FREE LUNCH

A 19th century law designed to encourage the development of a fledgling industry now costs taxpayers a bundle, according to a new report from the National Wildlife Federation. Called *The Last Free Lunch on the Old Frontier: Hard Rock Mining and Reform of the 1872 Mining Law*, the report outlines the many ways the 120-year-old law allows land speculators and mining corporations to acquire, sell and mine public lands without adequately compensating the public or protecting the environment. The 35-page report charges that potential revenue is lost through low patent costs, royalty deferments and preferential tax code treatments. Writers Gina Rogers and Catherine Carlson cite the effect of the mining law on 2,000 acres of Montana's Custer National Forest. The Manville Mining Co. and Chevron Resources will acquire claims that contain a $32 billion platinum-palladium deposit for just $10,180. The report is available from the National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-2266 (202/797-6800).

NORTH TO ALASKA

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is looking for volunteer interns. This Fairbanks-based, grass-roots, non-profit organization is involved in several issues ranging from protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from development to wolf management and forestry in interior Alaska. Interns would help do research and writing as well as grass-roots organizing. Contact Larry Landry, Intern Coordinator, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, 218 Driveway, Fairbanks, AK 99701 (907/452-5021).

LOOK AN EAGLE IN THE EYE

A Colorado foundation has found that bringing raptors into classrooms is a great way to focus students' attention on environmental issues. The non-profit Raptor Education Foundation (REF), founded in 1980, brings owls and eagles to schools, state fairs and sportsmen's groups all over the country. REF also provides educational packages and publishes *Talon*, a quarterly magazine. For more information, contact REF, 21901 E. Hampden Ave., Aurora, CO 80013 (303/680-8500).

GO WILD

The Colorado Division of Wildlife offers a week-long symposium next June for people who want to teach Project Wild courses on rafting, fishing and fly-tying, range and stream ecology, and geology. The Outdoor Adventure Workshop is set for June 19-25, 1993, at the Ponderosa Resort near Poncha Springs, Colo.; graduate credit is available. Contact Glen Hinshaw, education coordinator for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, at 303/249-3431.

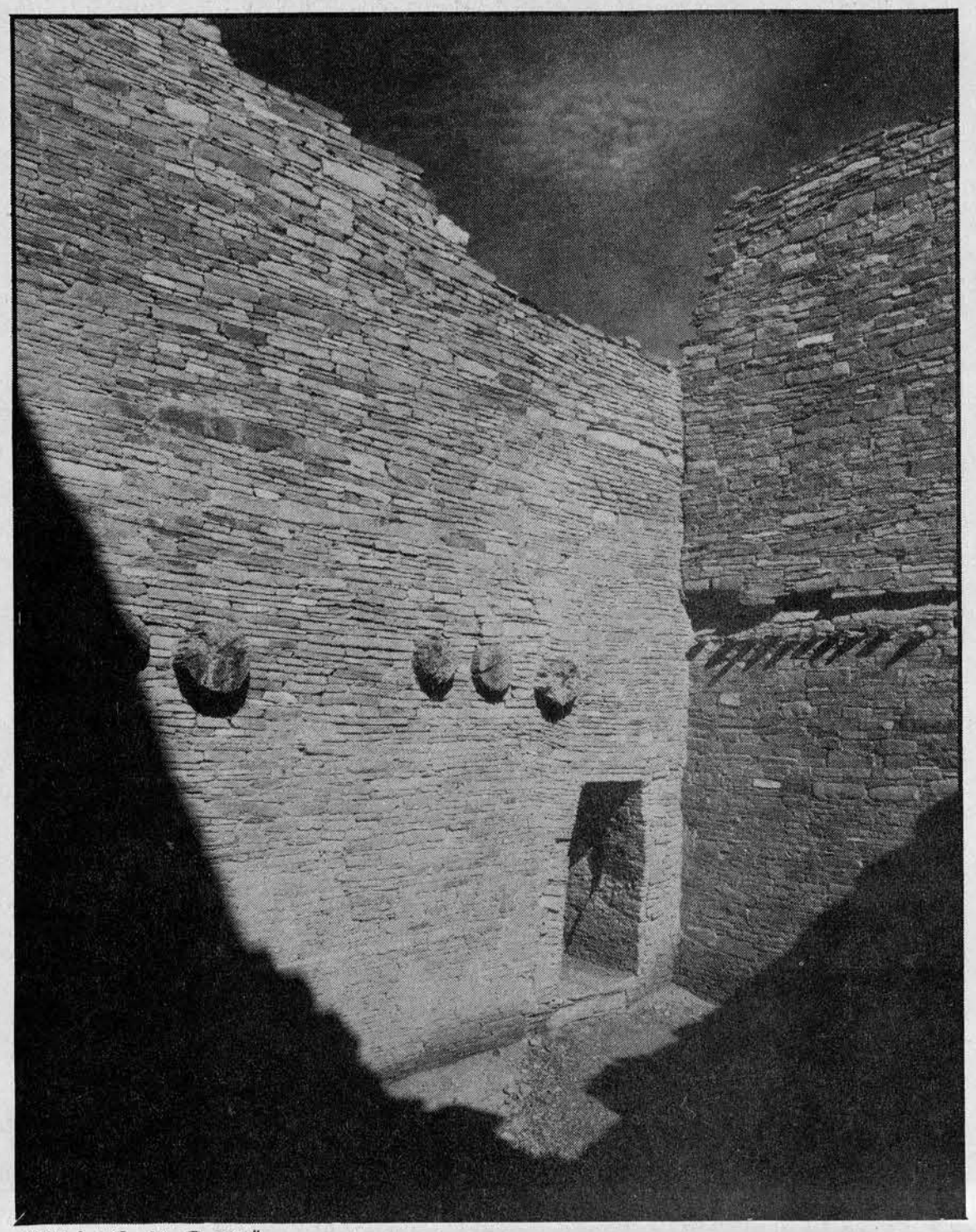
THE FUTURE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

Because of the controversy generated, the deadline for written comments on the BLM's *Draft Stateline Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* — an all-encompassing 20-year plan for managing 3.7 million acres of public land surrounding Las Vegas — has been extended until Dec. 31. At hearings this summer, wildly divergent alternatives made the plan a lightning rod for criticism from both environmental and wise-use camps. The plan will set the stage for the future of southern Nevada, the growth of its towns and cities, prospects for agriculture and mining, recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, and the survival of threatened and endangered species in the Mojave Desert. Alternatives proposed in the draft include cutting the acreage available for livestock grazing from 2 million to 1 million acres; eliminating grazing on up to 28 sensitive allotments and designating 1.5 million acres as areas of critical environmental concern; developing management plans for desert tortoises, bighorn sheep, woundfin minnows, dune beetles and peregrine falcons; severely restricting ORV events and mining activity on more than 2 million acres; consolidating utility corridors and rights-of-way; and creating an extensive network of trails, byways and recreation areas.

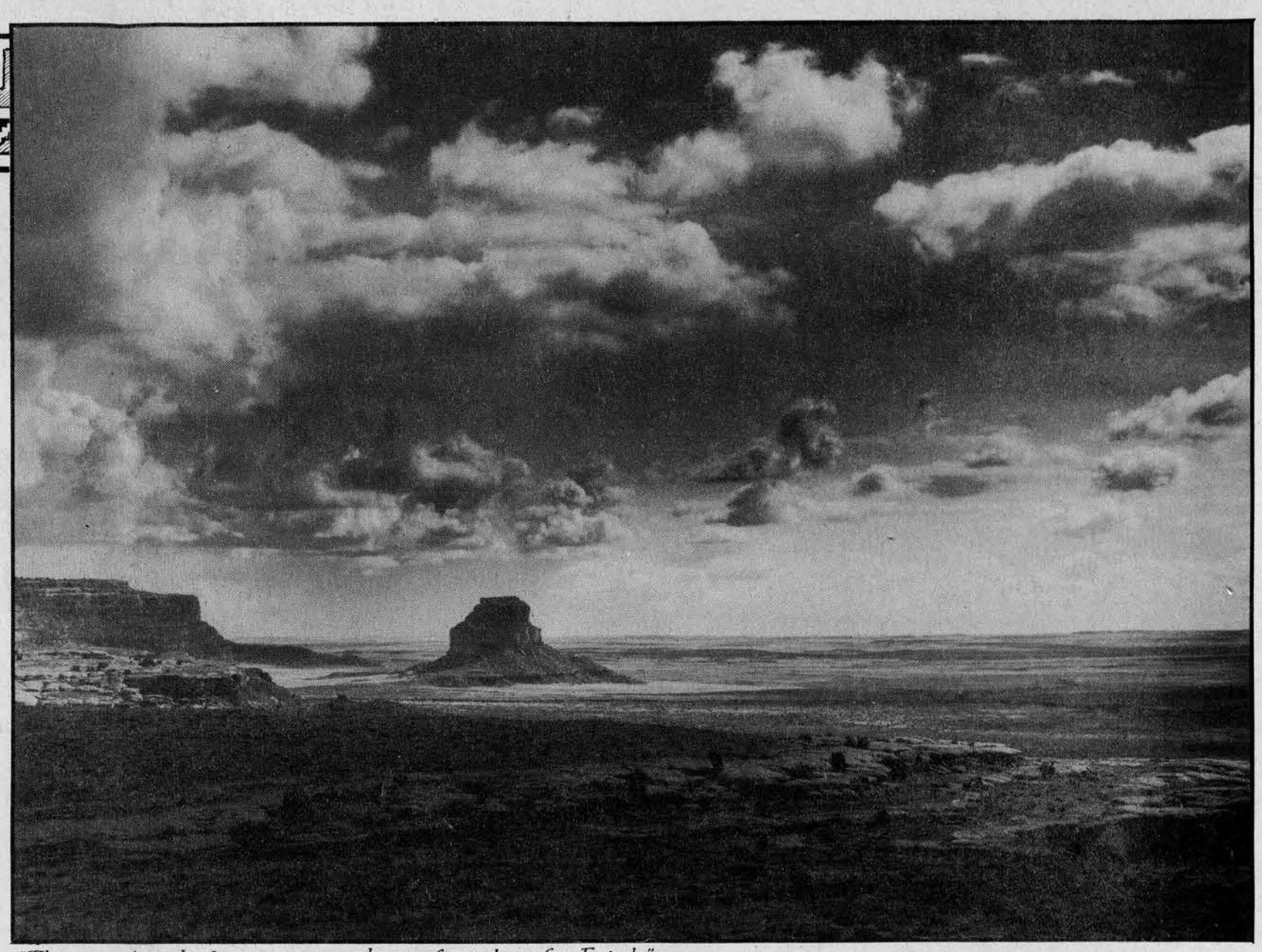
For more information, contact Jerry Wickstrom, Team Leader, BLM Las Vegas District, P.O. Box 26596, 4765 Vegas Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89126 (702/647-5000). Written comments on the plan should be submitted to the Stateline Resource Area Manager at the above address and must be postmarked by Dec. 31.

— Jon Christensen

Chaco



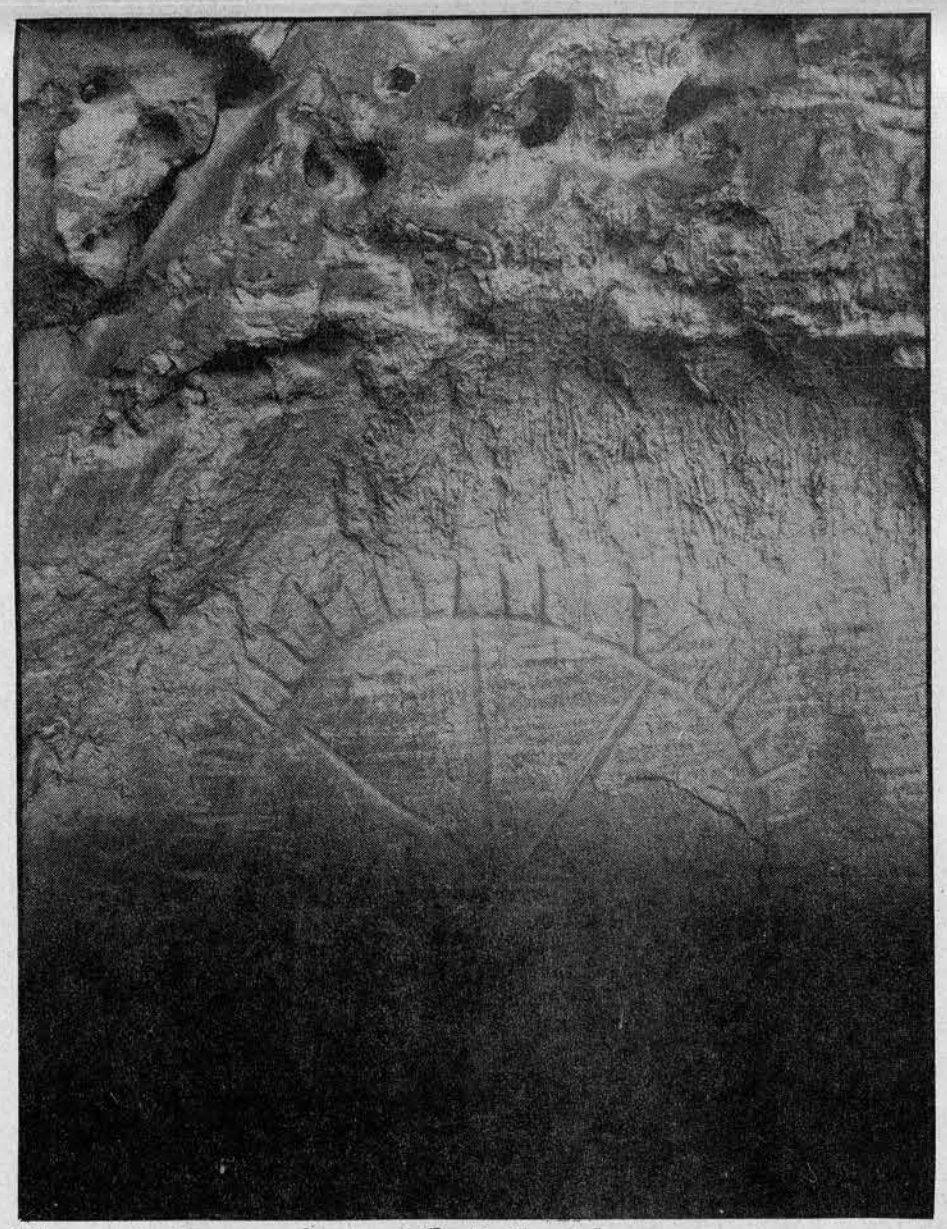
"Flight. Pueblo Bonito"



"The canyon's end. along ancient pathways. from above Ca Fajada"

All photos are from the book Chaco Body. photographs by Kirk Gittings. with poems by V.B. Price. Artspace Press: distributed by the University of New Mexico Press. Albuquerque. NM 87131-1591. Cloth: $40. Paper: $19.95. 88 pages.

"Flight, Pueblo Bonito"



"Rising darkness, northwest of Pueblo Bonito"

"Threatening storm, Pueblo Alto"

"Passing thunderhead, the Great Kiva at Casa Rinconada"

My first visit to Chaco on a moonlit night in 1978 marked the beginning of a spiritual journey which continues to this day ... Over the succeeding 12 years and some 50 trips, I lugged my view camera and tripod over countless miles of sand and rock, exploring much of the region. Chaco became for me a place for retreat and renewal. It is ironic that a place so seemingly steeped in death (dead cultures, ruined buildings, burials, etc.) could make me feel so very alive.

- Kirk Gittings

photographs by

Kirk Gittings

Cloth: $40; paper: $19.95; 88 pages.

Pressure builds on Chaco...

continued from page 1

The problem was, nobody at the park knew where the fist-sized shards belonged because they didn't know exactly where Floyd got them. Returning them to the wrong place would take them out of context, a cardinal sin in archaeology.

The shards now sit in a box at a museum in Albuquerque. Floyd, however, got lucky, met the woman of his dreams and moved with her to Arizona.

This is just one of many signs of increased visitation and trouble at a park often called "The Rome of the Anasazis." It's as renowned for its remoteness as it is for its collection of ruins, lying 25 miles from the nearest trading post.

Today, however, the park is a battleground, with tourists, environmentalists, business interests and Navajos jousting over whether to build a paved road to a park now served only by dirt roads.

Even without a paved road, Chaco's visitor load has doubled in the past two decades to 78,000 a year. A paved road would double annual visitation again in a few years, the Park Service has said, and raise it to 250,000 by 2025.

While 78,000 is a blip compared to the 3.9 million a year who trooped to the Grand Canyon in 1991, it's still brought plenty of problems.

The shards that Floyd took were among thousands that have disappeared in the past few years. Regularly, tourists illegally tromp on ruins by day and illegally sneak into them by night. The park's buildings and plumbing are decaying. Water lines break once a week, the visitors' center's foundation is shifting and causing cracking and the well water smells bad and must be treated to drink.

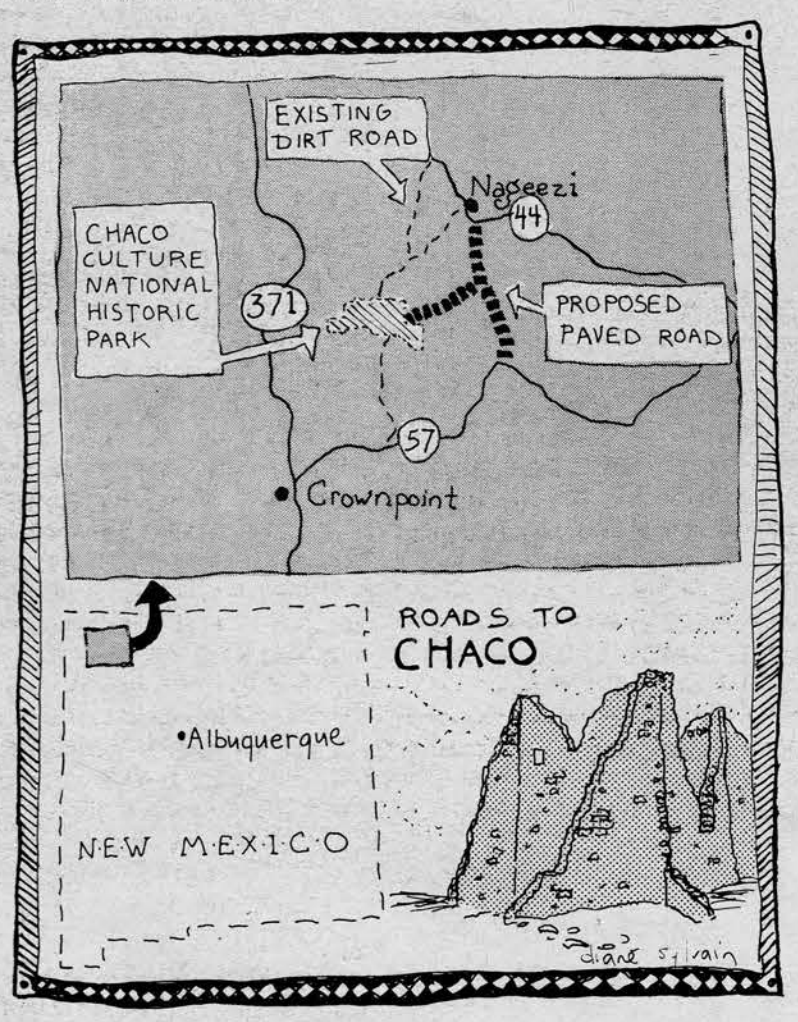
John Cunningham

Chetro Ketl in Chaco Canyon had more than 500 rooms and was five stories high

The ruin walls are crumbling, the kivas have been invaded by New Agers and people have occasionally left cremated human remains in the canyon for burial.

People pressures also have dimmed the luster of the "Sun Dagger," a solar calendar that put Chaco on the map when an artist discovered it in 1978. For years, the sun's rays marked the changing of the seasons by passing through spaces between three eight-foot-tall sandstone slabs onto petroglyphs carved behind the boulders.

Researchers who climbed 500-foot Fajada Butte to study it have helped cause erosion that has altered where the sunlight strikes the marker and wrecked it as a calendar.



Then there's the graffiti, like the chalk-colored "A" with a line through it that someone etched into a rock towering 1,000 feet above the ancient Anasazi village of Una Vida. At the north end of the park, chiseled-in slogans like "BIG SHOT" blot out tube-like structures, spirals and stick figures on the rocks near the ruin of Penasco Blanco.

Finally, the 40-person staff that manages the park has declined since a decade ago, although it's risen slightly since 1989. Everyone from park superintendent Lawrence Belli down agrees Chaco needs more staff to cope with people pressures.

"Chaco is at a crossroads," said Belli, in a masterpiece of understatement.

Belli is caught between government and business leaders in Farmington, Gallup, Grants and Milan who want a paved road and activists who don't.

Tourism interests see a road as a magnet, to generate more customers for their motels and restaurants. Navajos, to whom dirt roads are grim reminders of poverty, see a paved road as a lifeline.

"(The town of) Grants and us are starving to death. We need all the business we can get," said Warren Mathers, mayor of Milan, located 60 miles south of Chaco in the old uranium belt where 8,000 jobs disappeared during the 1980s. "We're just greedy."

Opponents, however, have turned the road fight into a clash over how far this once-proud Anasazi center should move toward late 20th-century civilization.

While some of Chaco's staffers privately oppose a paved road, Chaco superintendent Belli supports it as part of a tradeoff.

The new road would dead-end at the park and allow the state to close off other dirt roads that carry trucks and other traffic through the park today, Belli says. Most important, the park could close off the four-mile main road that runs through the canyon and now is part of the state road. After that, it could restrict motor vehicle access to the canyon's heart to shuttle buses.

Park Service studies show that cars traveling over the dirt road have damaged ruins at the park's north end by sending out vibrations.

"It would be good and easy to stop the paved road now, but in the long term it would be worse," Belli said. "It's now a state highway going through here. We now have semis driving through the park that we have to let through. If there's ever coal mined around here, we'd have to let the heavy equipment in."

The dirt road's defenders say the Park Service's position smacks of the old "Parks Are For People" mentality of the 1960s, in which the agency rewarded increasing attendance at individual parks with more staff.

Chaco's remoteness is part of its mystique, they say. It screens out people who only want to notch another national park on their belts, and lets in those who really can appreciate it.

"If you pave the road, Chaco will simply become one more attraction like a Holiday Inn, where you go to and leave," said Arizona archaeologist R. Gwinn Vivian, a longtime student of Chaco whose father, archaeologist Gordon Vivian, worked stabilizing Chaco's ruins in the 1930s and '40s. "Why not preserve Chaco as something different?"

Chaco indeed is something different, as even the most fervent backers of paving will admit.

As Yosemite and Grand Canyon wilt under population pressures, Chaco remains a symbol of remoteness. You can't take a shower, find an ice machine, buy a can of soda pop or plug your RV into an electrical hookup there.

The road from the canyon to the Navajo trading post of Nageezi is so rocky when it's dry that park officials have to fix five flat tires for tourists a month. It's so mucky when it rains that school buses serving surrounding Indian settlements occasionally get stuck.

Even in Nageezi, you're still an hour from Farmington and more than two hours from Albuquerque.

"It's an experience where you leave the present and enter a different frame of mind," said National Parks and Conservation Association Rocky Mountain regional director Terri Martin. "You go into the past, into a place incomprehensible to the mind at first. It takes a while to get to the point that 5,000 people used to live there. A dirt road is part of that transition."

The conservation association supports building an all-weather gravel road to replace the dirt road, but not a paved road. Yet even without a paved road, Chaco exhibits a sense of vulnerability that makes some visitors feel guilty.

The reddish-brown ruins, most 800 to 1,000 years old, stand open and accessible to anyone willing to walk a few hundred feet from a parking lot. The ruins have long since lost their roofs and sit exposed in a highly unnatural state above ground. They were excavated less than 100 years ago and now lack the protection the dirt they were buried under gave them.

"I'd been wanting to come out here for years, but the closer I got, the more intrusive I felt," said Kerry Williams from California, a low-income housing developer who stood in the visitor's center parking lot last summer. "It's like walking into someone's home."

Last June, an anonymous letter-writer sent the park a few pottery shards she'd taken from the canyon grounds earlier that month.

"The guilt has been a great punishment and it feels good to return the artifacts. Incidentally, I would have returned the items to the park the day we left, but we had two flat tires about 20 miles south of the park. I believe this to be 'Instant Karma,' so to speak."

A few years ago, Santa Fe jazz artist Rusty Crutcher appealed to the guilt factor with a dreamy New Age record called *Chaco Canyon*. It mixes synthesizers and keyboards with calls of coyotes, owls and meadowlarks he'd recorded in the canyon.

"He was trying to allow people to visit without actually visiting it, so they don't feel they have to go," said Margo Covington, Crutcher's business manager.

The park's visitor register is split 50-50 between people who say "Pave It" and those who say "Bad Roads Bring Good People."

To Californian Ken Griess, driving into Chaco on the dirt road was a nuisance.

"It's not fair to have a bad road to keep people out," said Griess as he exited the grandeur of Pueblo Bonito, Chaco's biggest ruin. "Why have it if you don't want people to see it?"

As far as superintendent Belli is concerned, the fight over a paved road is blotting out public awareness of the park's growing problems. Belli said that the fight over the road makes it difficult to interest congressional representatives in the need for more staff just to stay on top of current problems.

On a recent drive through the park with ranger Rory Gauthier, however, problems paled compared to a glowing sunset sinking over the canyon's cliffs.

Gauthier had to stop his wagon twice in two hours — to pick up a littered tin can and to order someone to move his parked car from a treacherous hillside.

Gauthier predicted that a paved road would bring more vandalism, artifact

continued on next page

New Agers flock to Chaco

CHACO CANYON, N.M. — It is their Camelot, this Stonehenge of the Southwest, where a few thousand ancients may have built a non-hierarchical society whose monuments honored commoners rather than kings.

Chaco Canyon, home of the Anasazis, today has become a spiritual playground for New Agers. It's a place where people regularly — and illegally — leave prayer sticks, crystals, corn meal, jewelry, pottery, flowers and even a few wooden figurines inside the floor vaults and fireboxes of the great kiva at Casa Rinconada. It's also a place where people occasionally hold unauthorized chanting and drumming ceremonies.

"We're trying to re-awaken the spirituality that native peoples had before we came and destroyed it all," said Pooter, a New Age man who works for Santa Fe's Bear & Co. book publishers. "If you go to a spiritual place and leave a crystal there, you can connect at any time, and visualize the place no matter where you are."

Some non-New Age Anglos and Pueblo Indians — who think of Anasazis as their ancestors — would like to tell New Agers where they can take their spirituality.

Two years ago, the Zia Pueblo northwest of Albuquerque tried unsuccessfully to persuade the National Park Service to close off Casa Rinconada, the only Chaco kiva the public is allowed to enter.

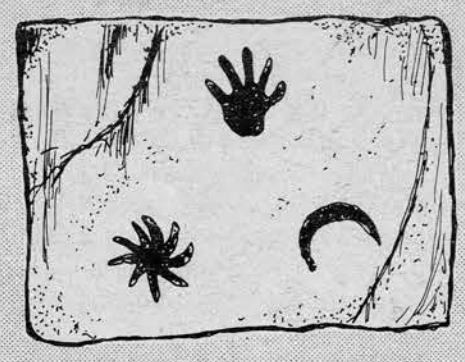
"It's like a journey back into the underworld where we originated," said Celestino Gauchupin, the Zia Pueblo's natural resources manager. "Only in a certain frame of mind can we go in there. We have to be specially dressed, have moccasins, carry our corn meal and ask for permission to enter."

Park Service officials choose their words carefully when discussing the New Agers. Many violate park regulations against abandoning property when they leave crystals and disturb other visitors when they chant and pound the drums, officials say.

Just as many, however, do nothing more intrusive than sit and meditate. "These people are not from a bizarre sect. They come from middle-class to upper-middle-class Anglo White America," said Dabney Ford, Chaco's chief archealogist. "They're the people who check you out in the stores. They own the stores."

Since the Harmonic Convergence drew 1,000 to the canyon in 1987, scores of New Agers have flocked to Chaco. They see it as one of several "power spots" around the world, offering emotional, physical or spiritual sustenance, or all three.

Many believe that Chaco was spiritually and culturally linked to the Mayans and other ancient Mexican and



Central American tribes, says Barbara Clow, author and acquisitions editor of Bear Publishing.

Her company has published many bibles of the New Age, including *The Mayan Factor*, whose author, Jose Arguelles, wrote that the Aug. 26, 1987, date of the Convergence was a critical date for global humanity to set its future course.

"Since 1987, there has been constant ceremony at sacred sites all over the planet," said Clow, who adds she doesn't approve of celebrations that violate park rules. "I go back to Teotihuacan, a big pyramid complex north of Mexico City as big as Giza in Egypt, and there's 1,000 there every spring for the equinox ceremony."

For herself, visiting Chaco and other sacred sites around the world has been a gateway to altered states of consciousness, Clow said.

"I was camped at Chaco, and in the middle of the night, I dreamed I was driving a spaceship, and I landed it on the mesa of Chaco Canyon," said Clow. "I had vivid, full-color dreams of ancient civilizations. It's like I'm in a movie theater."

Santa Fe author Charles Bensinger, one of the Harmonic Convergence's organizers, contends the canyon's culture was a model of democratic society.

In his 1988 book, *Chaco Journey*, he quoted pioneer Chaco archaeologist Edgar Hewett as noting that the tools the Chacoans left behind included few sharply honed axes, spear heads or other obvious tools of war.

"The great community houses of Chaco Canyon are an expression of the domestic life of a race at its best," Hewett wrote in the 1930s. "They were built by free men, of their own volition, in their own time and way, as homes for their families ... They memorialize the lives of people, not of kings."

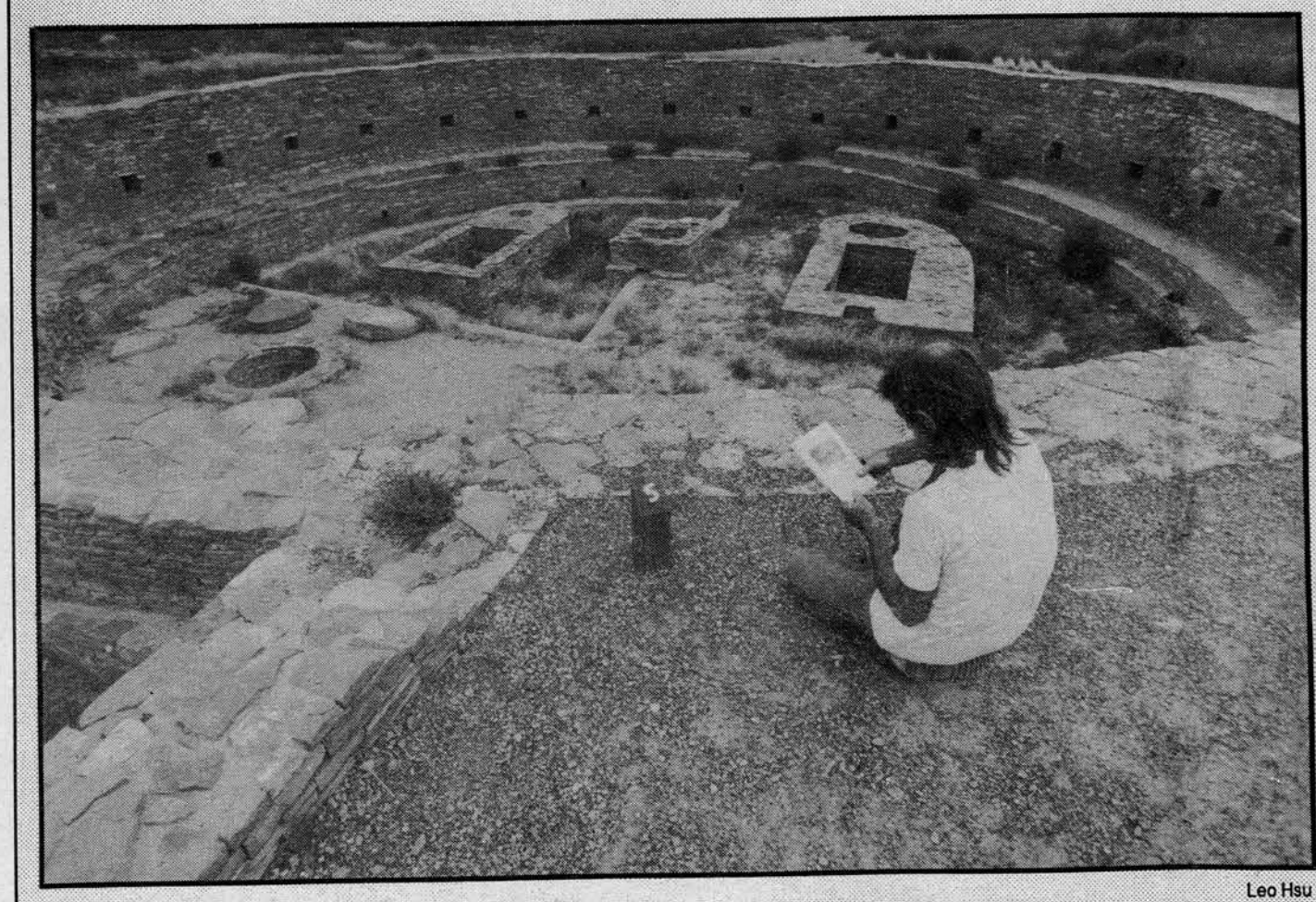
For Santa Fe tour guide J.D. Arnold, however, an encounter last May with a youthful New Age lecturer at Casa Rinconada brought negative waves.

"He was giving a lecture to his group, mostly women in their 20s, about the kiva's resonance. His voice was getting louder and louder, kind of rude, and some of us wondered why doesn't he keep his voice down a little bit?"

Then, the lecturer arranged his followers in a choir-like formation, walked over to the travel group and invited them to join the New Agers in chanting, Arnold recalled.

"I said this is inappropriate," Arnold recalled. "This is a sacred site for someone else's culture, and I don't think you're respecting it."

— *T.D.*



Leo Hsu

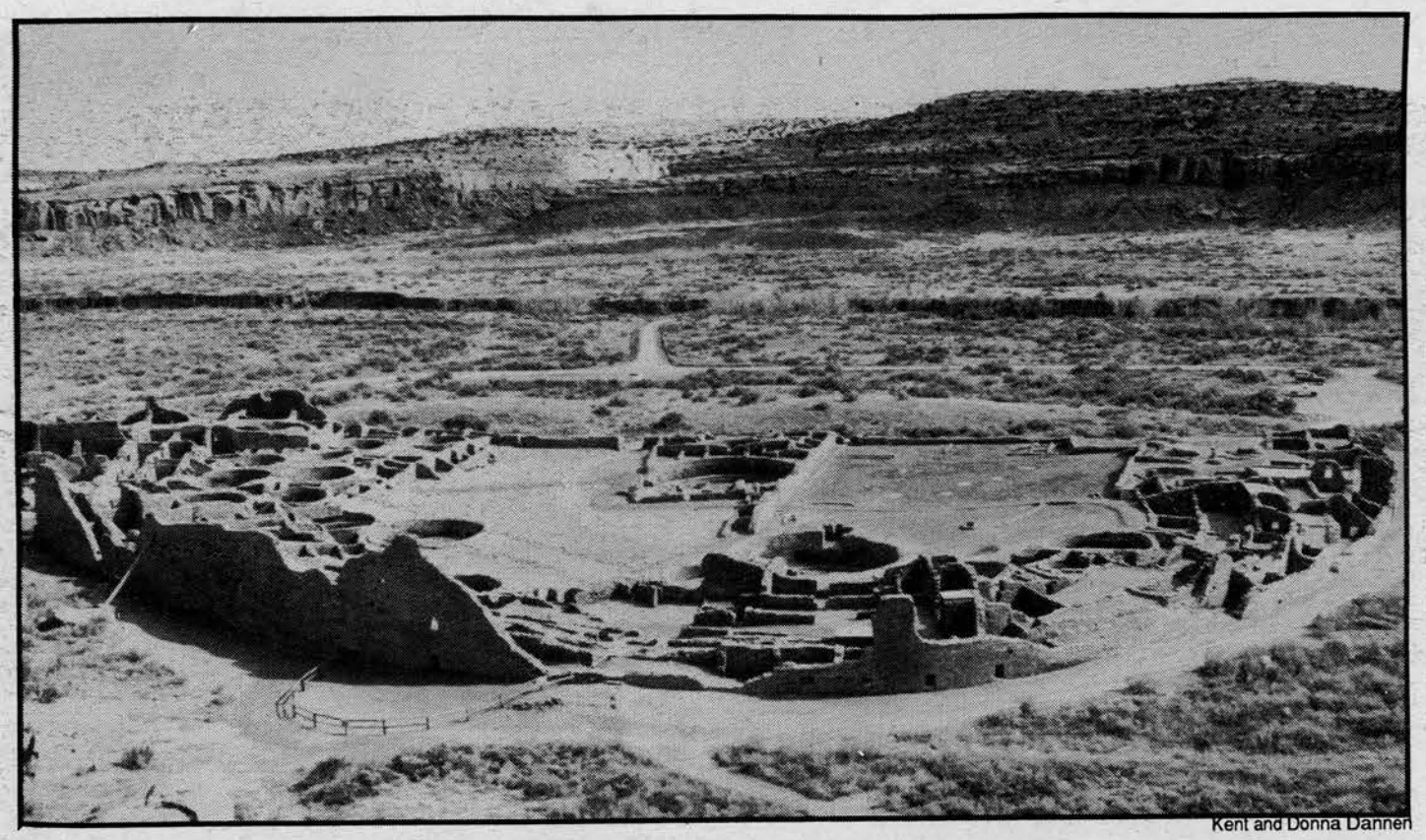
A visitor to Chaco Canyon studies a guidebook near a large kiva at Chetro Ketl

Pressure builds on Chaco...

continued from previous page

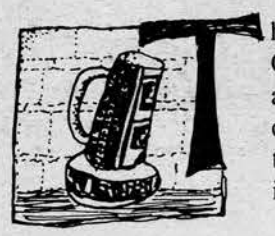
thefts and other crime. When a reporter asked him to cite the benefits of more visitors, he shook his head, half-smiled and said, "There must be some. Let me think about it."

He said nothing more.



Kent and Donna Dannen

Pueblo Bonito ruin in Chaco Canyon



The furor over Chaco's roads and remoteness carries more than a little irony.

Nine hundred years ago, the place was a beehive of activity for 2,000 to 6,000 Anasazis. Today, various experts say the Anasazis used the canyon as a spiritual, religious, cultural or commercial center. The biggest of six villages built at the height of the canyon's flowering, Pueblo Bonito, had 600 rooms and 40 kivas and towered the equivalent of four to five stories.

It was and is harsh, arid, rugged country, with sagebrush, grass and greasewood dominating plant life on the mesas. Reddish, pinkish and brown, skyscraper-like canyon walls line both sides of a cottonwood-dominated wash.

Roads? Chaco was the nexus for 400 miles of them, averaging 30 feet wide and hooking up 75 communities in what is now the Four Corners area.

Archaeologists, ethnologists, New Agers and others spare few superlatives in praise of this culture. It built thick, massive walls of rubble and stone, designed a grid of dams and canals to capture runoff and linked a trade network extending as far south as Mexico.

By the 12th century, however, the Chaco civilization had collapsed, a victim of drought, food shortages and — perhaps — too many people.

Navajos came to Chaco in the 1600s and remained in small numbers into the 20th century. Archaeologist Vivian, now associate director of the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, was reared in the 1930s at Chaco in a Navajo hogan. Until the 1950s, the then-Chaco Canyon National Monument had no full-time staff. A superintendent ran the place from Crownpoint 60 miles south.

"It was tranquil, a moving experience to be there virtually alone," said Russ Butcher, the National Parks and Conservation Association's Southwest director who first visited Chaco in 1958. "There was no visitor's center. We walked on a mesa top, we looked at unexcavated sites. You could really feel the spirit of the Anasazi."

The big boom hit Chaco in the 1970s and '80s. New Agers were lured after the "Harmonic Convergence," a 1987 gathering in which 1,000 people chanted, played drums and otherwise held ceremonies to usher in a new era of world peace and harmony.

More mainstream visitors were drawn by newspaper stories and countless television documentaries singing Chaco's praises. Today, only 20 to 30 percent of Chaco's visitors come from within New Mexico. Many come from Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Thailand and other foreign countries.

Yet visitors and activists agree: Chaco remains a place where one can still slip away quietly by oneself and meditate, where one can soak up the

Chaco is being buried once again

Chaco Culture National Historical Park's most intriguing dilemma isn't roads.

It's protecting 1,000-year-old sandstone ruins from crumbling while satisfying the public's desire to see them.

Near the great Casa Rinconada kiva, at a site called B.C. 59, walls cracked and bulged last month because of seeping water. The site once was a 20-room, five-kiva house that was part of a dense, 50-home settlement of long ago.

"It's getting bad. The walls are thin," said Jimmy Yazzie, a Navajo from neighboring Nageezi who has worked laying stones and mortar for a Chaco ruins stabilization crew. "One day it's going to fall over. It's not strong enough."

One thousand years ago, roofs protected the Anasazi buildings. They are long gone.

Now, freezing and thawing cycles in the winter commonly cause cracking. A couple of walls in the park's 4,000 ruins fall each winter.

Stabilizing the ruins with new mortar and stone keeps them intact, but at a cost.

"The more maintenance, the more they become Park Service ruins instead of Anasazi ruins," chief archaeologist Dabney Ford says.

B.C. 59 will be covered with dirt — backfilled — because the Park Service lacks the money to stabilize all the ruins, Yazzie said.

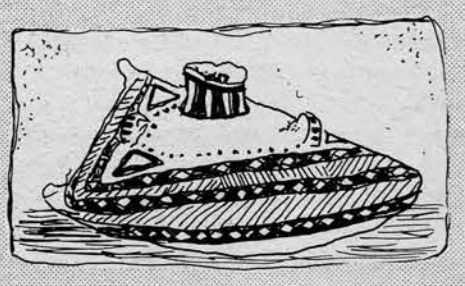
More and more, the Park Service plans to backfill similar ruins around the park, although major, heavily visited ones such as Pueblo Bonito will have only small parts covered, superintendent Lawrence Belli says.

Then, only mounds will stand where the old buildings once were.

— T.D.

Leo Hsu

P. Tso works to stabilize Pueblo Bonito



memory of a thousand-year-old culture.

"The sounds of living things, in fact, seem to be absorbed by the canyon silence before they become sounds," archaeologist Vivian wrote 10 years ago in a essay called "The Silence of Chaco."

nce the road goes in, however, look for large-scale development.

German developer Pacifinco Inc. wants to put a Holiday Inn-style resort, accompanied by a restaurant and possibly a golf course, on Navajo tribal land just outside the park's boundary. Pacifinco's spokesman on the reservation, self-styled entrepreneur Collier Greyhat, is a loquacious man who talks of using Chaco's past as a selling point. He vows to put Chaco on the national map.

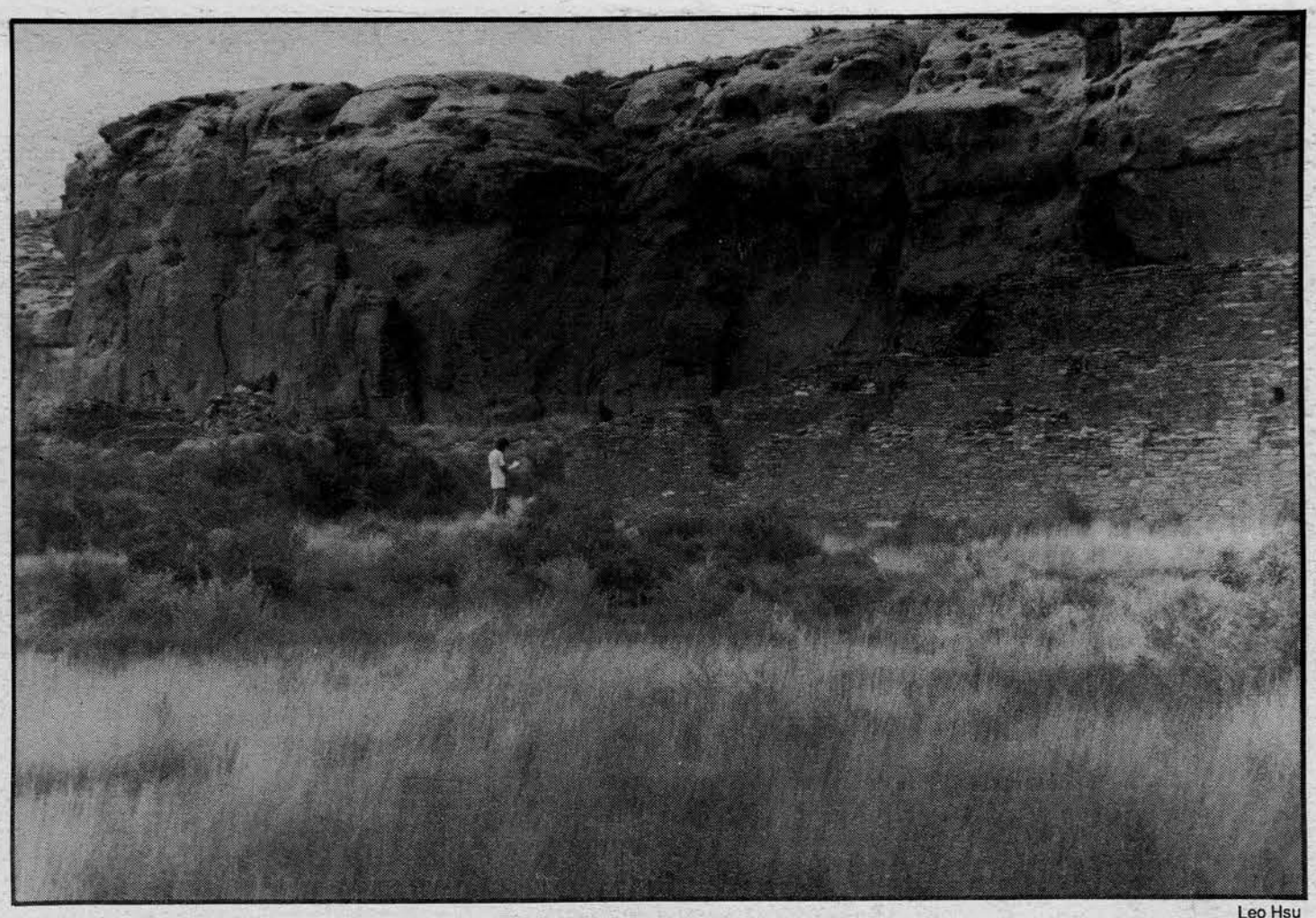
He said Pacifinco's general manager, Horst Klemke, was pushing this project and other Navajo economic development schemes because he came to the reservation several years ago and felt sorry for the tribe's economic plight. Pacifinco has promised to train Navajos to work at the resort, from top management down to bus boys.

"His approach, the way Klemke saw the whole thing, was that the reservation is kind of a Third World country," said Greyhat, who lives in Page, Ariz., and is Navajo public relations director for Pacifinco's American subsidiary.

Tribal officials are cool to that idea, and any plan to develop close to the park could be stymied by water shortages. It's 3,000 feet down to the best and closest supply. That water is so fouled by rotten-egg-smelling hydrogen sulfide that Chaco officials have to spend 10 cents a gallon filtering it to make it drinkable.

The tribe, however, leaves little doubt that a paved road will lead it to push to build a hotel-motel complex in neighboring cities on the reservation, such as Nageezi, Crownpoint or Torreon. Its officials, who note that the reservation today has only 700 hotel rooms on 25,000 acres, have little patience with those who question paved roads.

"If you lived here, you'd understand why a paved road is worth its weight in gold," said Duane Beyal, a spokesman for Navajo tribal president Peterson Zah in Window Rock, Ariz. "Most of the reservation has no paved roads to begin with. In the winter, the weather gets bad, school buses and ambulances can't run and police can't respond to emergencies."



Leo Hsu

The main structure of Chetro Ketl lies against a cliff wall

That's not all. Three companies, one each from Texas, Missouri and Albuquerque, have filed lease applications to strip-mine coal from neighboring Bureau of Land Management land. Two companies have floated proposals to build coal-fired power plants within 50 miles of the park, although the current energy glut has put most new coal projects on ice.

The biggest fear among activists and some park officials is that progress will turn Chaco into a New Mexico version of southern Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park. There, 675,000 annual visitors glide into the park on a paved entrance road from U.S. 160 to see an equally rich set of Anasazi ruins.

Tourists often must wait for clogged parking lots to empty before they can visit ruins. Two major ruins are open only to guided tours.

"I was glad Chaco didn't have motels or strip malls like Cortez (which lies just west of Mesa Verde)," said Philadelphian Mo Bernstein as he pulled into Chaco's parking lot after driving from Mesa Verde. "We don't come here to see people like ourselves."

Chaco officials say restricting public access to major ruins would be a last resort.

They've already closed the park's off-trail areas to the public, and hope that changing the road system, introducing shuttle buses and some other minor restrictions will save Chaco from its popularity.

"In one way, I hate to see change and I hate to see us start restricting areas," said Dabney Ford, Chaco's chief archaeologist. "It's one thing to go to Pueblo Bonito with a tour and another thing to go by yourself and spend 30 minutes looking at the walls."

As a resource manager, however, she hates seeing ruins deteriorate or get vandalized. Her job is a juggling act between protecting ruins and educating the public.

"You can't do both things completely," she said. ■

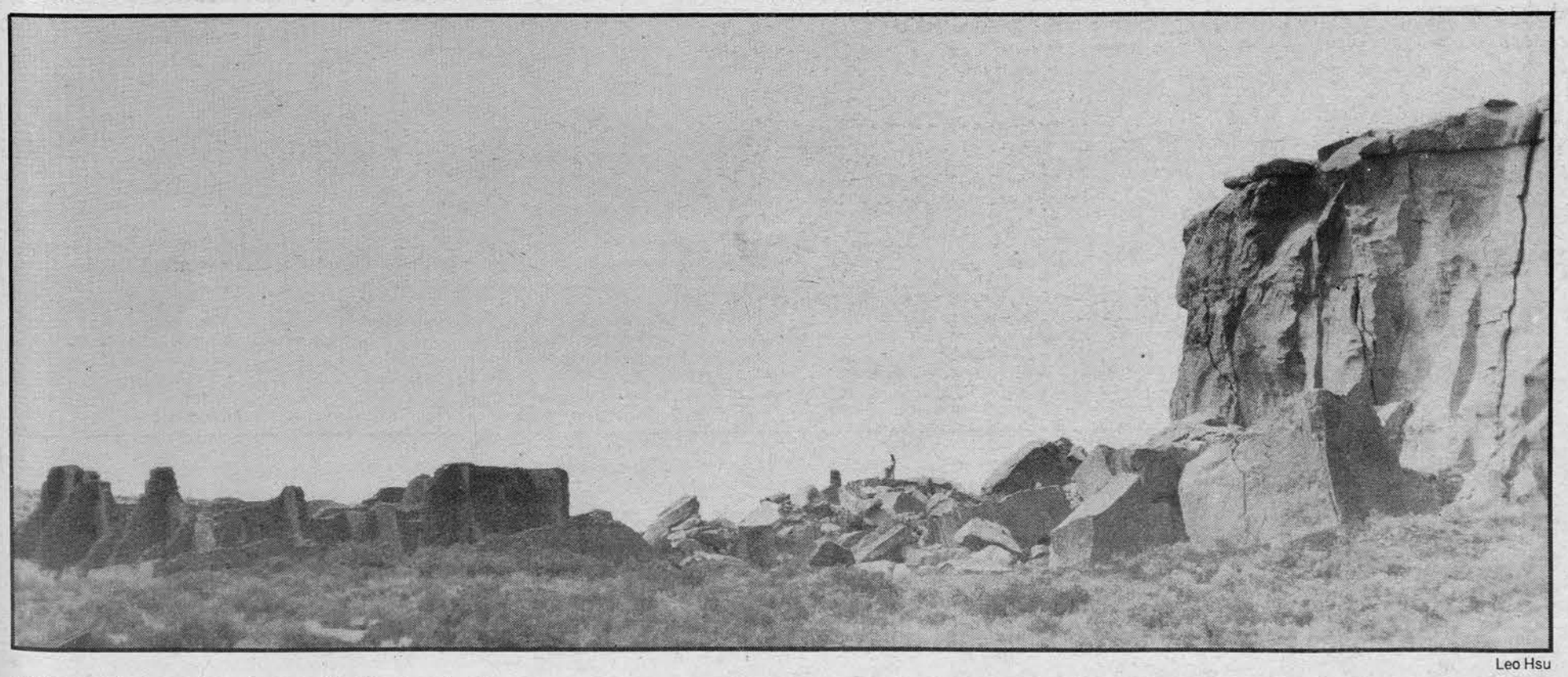
Tony Davis is a reporter for the Albuquerque *Tribune*.

Keep in touch with Chaco

The New Mexico Highway Department is starting a study of a paved road from Chaco Culture National Historical Park east to N.M. 509, which goes north to connect with N.M. Hwy 44, the main road linking Farmington and Albuquerque.

For comments on the road and other matters regarding Chaco Canyon, write: **Lawrence Belli**, superintendent, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, Star Route 4, Box 6500, Bloomfield, NM 87413; **Frank Esparza**, public involvement coordinator, state Highway Department, Box 1149, Room 115, Santa Fe, NM 87504; **Russ Butcher**, Southwest Representative, National Parks and Conservation Association, Box 67, Cottonwood, AZ 86326.

— *T.D.*



Leo Hsu

Cliffs stand above decaying Pueblo Bonito structures

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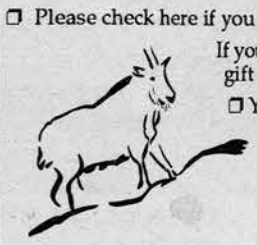

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ESSAY

How the New World stole the god of Columbus

by **Richard Rodriguez**

Five hundred years after Christopher Columbus set foot on the Americas, Indians are alive and growing in number from the tip of South America to the Arctic Circle. If you do not believe me, look at brown Mexico City.

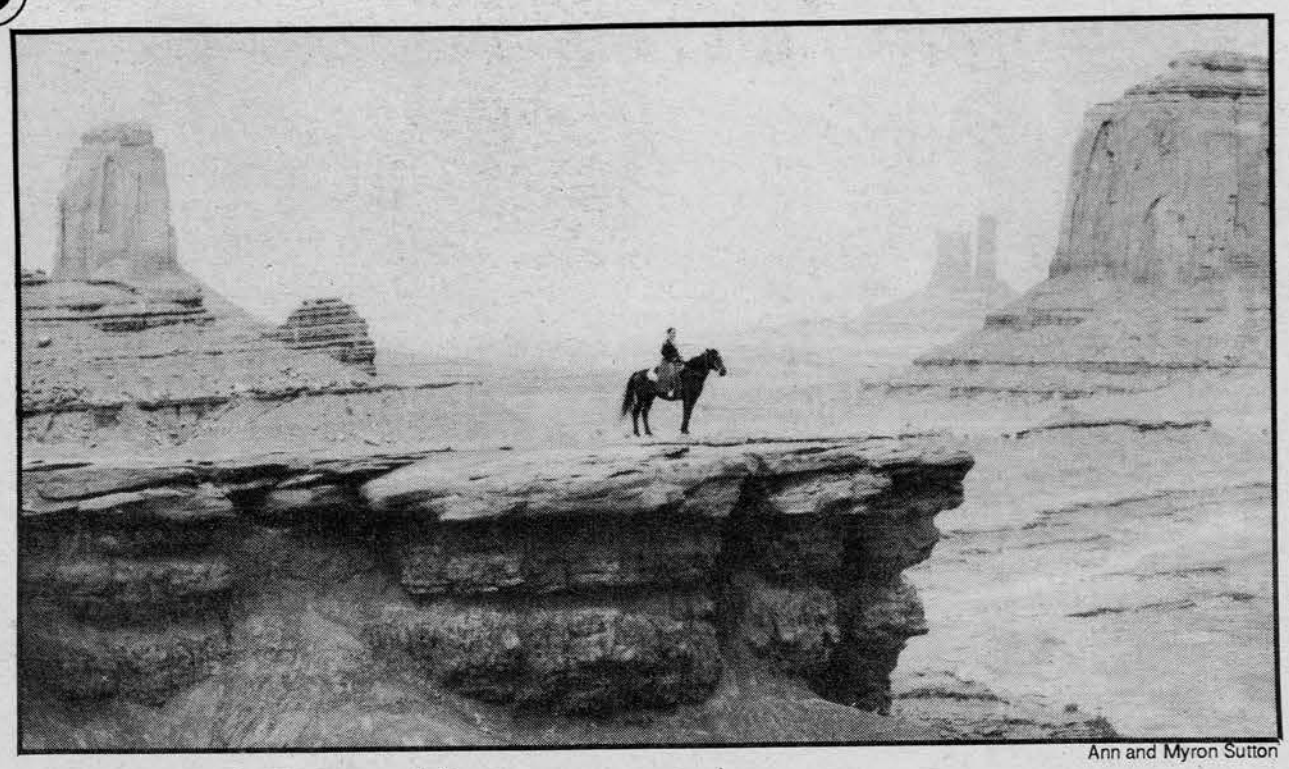
The other day I was walking past a theater where a movie on the life of Columbus was showing. Clustered by the doorway were picketers with signs which compared Columbus to Hitler. All of the picketers I saw were white.

What is there about the Indian that makes white people think of death? In the European version, that is to say, the male version of history, the Indian is supposed to have died — been slaughtered by the conquistador, or lost his soul to the padres, or died of disease.

A few years ago, Robert Redford sponsored an international environmental conference at his Sundance Institute. The opening session was crowded with journalist and government types. In came the Indians in their feathers and bells.

The Indian has become the mascot for the international ecology movement. The industrial countries of the world romanticize the Indian who no longer exists, ignoring the Indian who does, the Indian who is poised to chop down his rainforest, for example, or the Indian who refuses to practice birth control.

A few months ago, an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* by a man with a German surname declared 1992 a year of mourning. There should be no celebration of the 500th anniversary, the man with the German surname said.



Ann and Myron Sutton

A Navajo woman in Monument Valley

We know, from our history books, that Indians died from their contact with the Europeans. But those who tell you only this cannot account for the tens of millions of Indians who are alive today. I am, for example, of Mexican ancentry. I am mestizo, of mixed Spanish and Indian blood. I am alive and I count my life to be the result not simply of the European's will on my ancestral Indian mother but of her interest in the European, too.

Oh, the poor Indian! The white lament is that the Indian lost her soul when the European arrived, lost her gods, lost her purity, lost her virginity. But in 1992 it is Europe that has lost its God. The religion of Spain — I mean Roman Catholicism — is now centered in the Latin Americas. Christianity is an Indian religion. The Indian has stolen your God!

Do not pity the Indian in this year of Columbus. Spanish is an Indian language now. The capital of the Spanish-speaking world is Mexico City, not Madrid.

Shirley MacLaine imagines her dead lives as Indian lives and blond divorcees troop down to the New Mexican desert to get in touch with Indian spirits. And college students romanticize brujas (witches) and the Indian arts of death.

But if the pale face romanticizes the dead Indian, there remains also a fear of the live Indian. Americans say "they" keep coming over the border. Americans use water imagery to describe the life force from the South they cannot control. The border is out of control. "The border is being flooded by waves of illegals."

The trouble with those who criticize Columbus too much is that they assume Columbus and his fellow Europeans alone decided the history of the Americas. The Indians were hapless victims.

In fact, the Americas are alive with Indians. Go to Peru and you will see the new revolutionary front — the Shining Path Maoists who are descendants of the Incas. Go to the Guatemalan mountains and you will see Indians who are evangelical Protestants. They are headed this way; they are coming to the secular United States to convert you!

Look around your home town. Look at the brown faces around you. The Indian is alive. He commutes between his Mexican village and his job in downtown L.A. She is a nanny in San Diego. The Indians are the new Mormons. The Indian is a gay man living in San Francisco. And the Indian Virgin Mary — the Virgin of Guadalupe — is, we Catholics say, the patroness of the Americas.

Five hundred years ago, the European met the Indian and vice versa. But what is 500 years? Who among us can say how the story of Columbus will end?

■

Richard Rodriguez is an editor for the Pacific News Service and author of *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father.*

LETTERS

BANS AND BIGOTRY ARE NOT THE ANSWER

Dear *HCN*,

Regarding Kraig Klungness' tirade against ORVs (*HCN*, 11/2/92), I was tempted to respond point by point. But responding in kind to his half-truths, off-the-cuff impressions and just plain bias would be futile.

My impression of Kraig's reasoning is that we should all dress in bark, have perfect bodies, never age and walk everywhere. I hope he's never driven a car for recreation — if he has ever so much as enjoyed the view from an automobile, that would be hypocrisy. Doing so would be "high-consumption industrial recreation" of the type he despises. Furthermore, if Kraig is a hiker, I hope he walks from his home to the trailheads, dresses in animal skins he harvested with his bare hands, and eats pine nuts he picked from trees along the trail.

While it's hard to specify Kraig's most bogus point, that about ecological preserves is a good example. Since when does the lack of roads equate with biodiversity? Here in Colorado, I see no difference in the ecology of our legal wilderness and that of road-accessible backcountry. The same animals, plants and insects live in both places. Roads are a symptom, not a cause. The more famous extinctions (or near extinctions) in our time have little to do with road access. Did we need roads to kill all the passenger pigeons? Are not eagles and wolves shot from helicopters and airplanes? Extinction and biodiversity are complex issues. Reducing them to the bubba factor is not only unfair, but is a form of bias that's as toxic as racial or sexual bias.

While I dislike reading such trash, it's good to see the reasoning of those people who, rather than trying to get backcountry users to work together, continue to anger and divide us. Motorized recreation is here to stay. It must be regulated and managed, just as backpackers in high-use areas need the same. I'm tired of reading why things are bad. We all know that horses and hikers shit, ORVs use gas and mountain bicycles cause erosion.

Blanket bans and bigotry are not the answers. Let's get on with solutions that work. Randal O'Toole was attempting to do just that. I'm sad to see Kraig's negative reaction — the time to hate is over.

Lou Dawson
Carbondale, Colorado

THE REST OF THE STORY

Dear *HCN*,

As one who has spent a significant amount of time in the Selway and Salmon River country, the designated wildernesses of which are pimpled by private inholdings, I have followed the West Elk Wilderness development with interest. I was especially interested in the follow-up letters in *HCN*'s Oct. 5 issue.

Bozeman resident Terry Anderson presented an interesting defense, if you will, of the developer. And now the rest of the story. Montana's privateers for years now have squelched land planning and the updating of an abysmal subdivision law in the name of private ownership and enterprise, all at the expense of public interest, natural resources including wildlife habitat, and good conscience. The argument is often "the economy" but really they mean "my wallet."

In Gallatin County alone, the specific development Terry referred to is but a mere speck of the undeveloped tracts. There are over 6,500 undeveloped rural lots and tracts available in the county, over 2,500 of which were done by exemption to subdivision law. This is over 60,000 acres. He mentions one section. Fully developed, this section will hardly be a model for elk habitat protection, though it *is* infinitely better than what is happening almost everywhere else.

Also overlooked, for example, are the tens of thousands of already developed acres. In fact, Anderson failed to point out that the director of his Political Economy Research Center developed a subdivision on recognized deer winter range and fought public interest concerns and restrictive covenants every step of the way.

Thank you, but I'll take my wilderness in public ownership. The privatization theory is great, Terry, but reality belies it. A good look at private ownership versus public interest may be in order. Our area has seen a large arcreage of wildlands go to the private sector in land ownership consolidation. The lands the public got are still wild. The private lands (some 25,000 acres) cannot be called anything but trashed. Terry asked, "Who is the true environmentalist?" None of my gods are golden cows.

Rick Meis
Bozeman, Montana

BOOK NOTES

New book tells the West: Awake! Awake!

Crossing the Next Meridian: Land, Water and the Future of the West

Charles F. Wilkinson. Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20009. Nov. 1992. 376 pages, maps. $25. cloth.

Review by **Ed Marston**

My Western education came from six years of meetings I went to as publisher of a small-town weekly. When we sold the weekly in 1980, I stopped going to meetings cold turkey. Despite that, there were no withdrawal symptoms: no retching, no headaches, no sneaking out of an evening to attend a town council meeting.

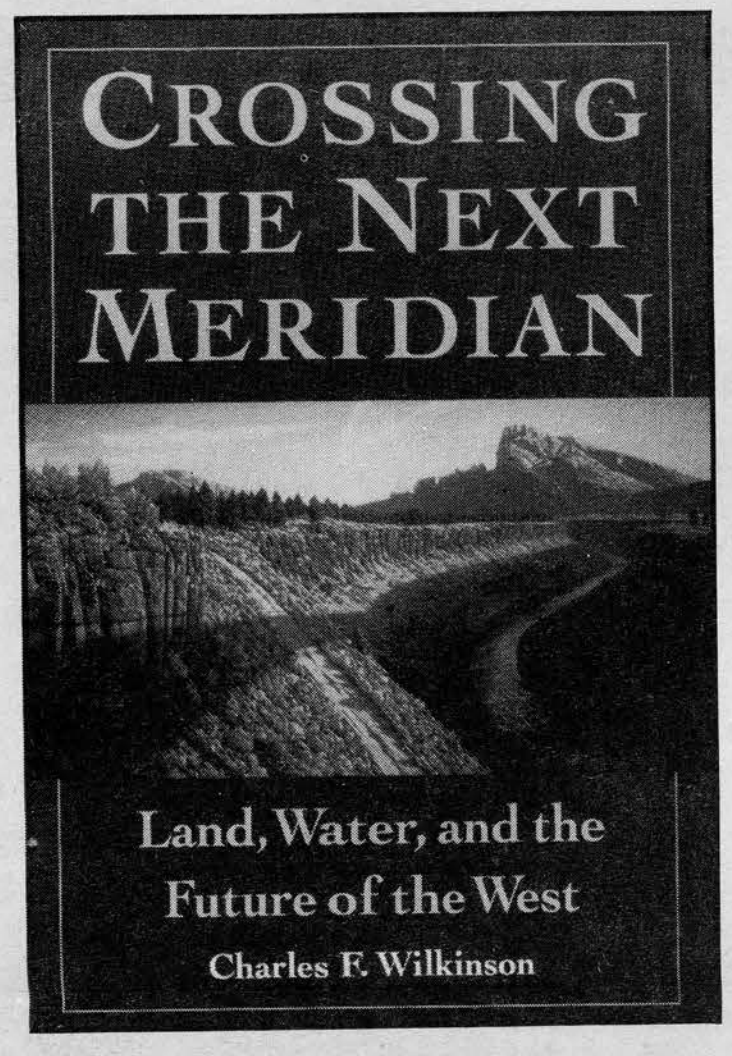
I was reminded of those six years of long nights on cold folding chairs several weeks ago, when 60 of us attended a mosquito control district board meeting in Paonia. Person after person spoke up to indict the district's practices and policies.

They said: Teen-age summer employees are operating the spray truck dressed in shorts and jeans; your truck sprayed my children while they were walking in the street and my kids were sick for a week; as a tax-supported body, it's outrageous that you charge citizens $50 to look at your minutes and financial records; you had no right to tell the few of us who showed up at your last meeting that we smelled of garlic and that you didn't want us to sit close enough to hear what you were saying.

There were also suggestions: Use integrated pest management, recognize that landowners who allow water to stand create some of the need for spraying, find out what is in the sprays you are using, train employees to protect themselves, hire school teachers instead of students, bring in an outside expert.

After the two-hour meeting, which was a reaction to a shouting match at the last meeting, one board member, trying to understand the fuss, asked: "Are you saying you want this board to change the way it's always done business?"

Legal scholar Charles F. Wilkinson has written a book for that board member. It is titled *Crossing the Next Meridian: Land, Water, and the Future of the West*. In it he tells the West that it is indeed time for a change.



The evil stars of the book are his Lords of Yesterday — the General Mining Law of 1872, the Doctrine of Prior Appropriation, the welter of forestry laws that say the only good tree is a cut and sawed tree, the range laws that have allowed public-land ranchers to damage grasslands and streams.

These laws, Wilkinson writes, were intended to encourage economic development. While they may have made economic and social sense once, he argues that it is long past time to change them.

The book has been years in the writing, but its timing could not be better. As a result of the ongoing transformation of the West's economic base and of the last election, there is a chance that the federal statutes governing the West's resources can now be changed. If those changes are to occur, there must be broad understanding of the region's natural resource issues, and *Crossing* is the perfect primer to achieve that understanding.

But the book is more than policy analysis; it is a good read. Wilkinson, a civil-rights attorney for Native Americans before he became a legal scholar, knows the West, and each critique of a "lord" is grounded in a case study: of the logging of Idaho's Jersey Jack area, of the destruction of Nevada's Pyramid Lake, of the destruction and partial restoration of overgrazed streams in Oregon, of the drowning of the Columbia River.

The case studies are brought to life by the people Wilkinson met during his research, including the Native American who used his tribe's oral tradition to help Wilkinson understand what the drowning of the Columbia River had destroyed; the forest products executive who fought the Jersey Jack logging plan because he believes we can cut trees without destroying forests; and the Bureau of Land Management range expert who has inspired numerous attempts to restore the West's streams.

Having made his lord-by-lord case for reform, Wilkinson uses his final chapter to argue for West-wide planning and for limits to growth — two recommendations some will see as blasphemous.

The book's greatest achievement is its ability to paint the West as a badly damaged, bleeding, abused land, while inspiring readers with hope rather than despair. Even when describing the tragic destruction the U.S. Forest Service is visiting on the Jersey Jack area, the book keeps its sights on reformers and on the possibility for reform.

If I have a quibble with the book, it is that the Lords of Yesterday at times appear to lack faces, or to wear historic faces, while the forces of reform are vivid and modern. As a result, the West's mosquito boards, which loom so large in my mind, are not living presences in this book. But it is important that we remember that the West still has large numbers of people who both drive and hide behind those destructive lords.

Congress must change Wilkinson's lords, just as the federal government had to impose civil rights laws on the South. But change in Washington won't be enough. The other part of this fight is the house-to-house, neighbor-against-neighbor struggle to transform the West on the ground — to convince Westerners that conservation, efficiency, restoration and reform of existing economies are in everyone's best interests. ■

LETTERS

LOGGING BY TRIBE HARMS A MAGNIFICENT CANYON

Dear *HCN*,

Peter Donaldson's article about logging near Canyon de Chelly (*HCN*, 10/19/92) brought back sad memories. When I became superintendent of Canyon de Chelly National Monument in 1984, I was appalled to discover that recent logging had occurred right up to the rim of the canyon, well within the boundary of the monument, and that much more was planned.

Although the amount of commercial timber inside the monument's boundary was relatively insignificant, tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials I talked to made it clear they had little concern for preserving natural or cultural values inside the monument. The upper ends of the canyons are places of indescribable beauty, rich in both Anasazi and Navajo history. Wildlife resources include bear, turkey, deer and a documented population of Mexican spotted owls.

The logging can only worsen the devastation caused by overgrazing. Many Navajo farmers in the canyon floor are well aware that continued abuse of the land above the canyon rim threatens the few viable farming plots left. But their concerns have been largely ignored.

As superintendent, I initiated a joint-management planning effort with tribal officials in hopes that an agreement could be reached that would preserve the special values of Canyon de Chelly, particularly for the Navajo people whose ancestors used it as a refuge against armed incursions by Spaniards and later the U.S. Army. The joint management plan was completed after I transferred to Alaska, but unfortunately accomplished little and has not been accepted by the current tribal administration.

Assaults on the natural and cultural resources of Canyon de Chelly come from many directions. There are some real villains, but for the most part, Canyon de Chelly is being destroyed by those who love it most, the Navajo, for the same reasons the rest of us directly or indirectly destroy so much: the desire for immediate satisfaction of immediate needs.

Whether the rest of the world objects or not, the land belongs to the Navajos, and it is theirs to do with as they wish. But it remains to be seen whether Canyon de Chelly will continue to merit the designation of a national monument administered by the National Park Service.

Roger J. Siglin
Fairbanks, Alaska

NUCLEAR NOSTALGIA — AND CANCER — IN NEVADA

Dear *HCN*,

The article on the beginning of the end of the nuclear age (*HCN*, 11/2/92) was accurate: I lived in Las Vegas November 1946 to September 1947 (it was my hometown) working as a nurse. My father was mayor there from 1950 to 1958. The mayor, city council and other specially "invited" guests got to sit on folding chairs in the front row to watch the "explosions." They were told to wear tan cotton long-sleeved shirts, trousers and tan baseball caps (issued to them at the test site) and told to wear dark glasses for "when the bombs went off." There was a lot of sand and dirt on them after the explosion and soldiers at the test site brushed the "sand" off them with whisk brooms. I have snapshots of them sitting in chairs watching the blasts. Of course, the soldiers didn't have any protection at all either and they stood closer to the blast site.

In 1953, I moved from California to Sparks, Nev., and my dad would call and tell us when a "blast" was going off and at what time. We'd get up early at 4 a.m. or whenever, and we could see the mushroom cloud in the sky from K Street in Sparks. My dad said many times an early blast would pop them out of bed when sleeping. In Las Vegas, a mid-size blast would just wake them up with earthquake-like concussion.

There were Atomic Cafes, atomic bar drinks and as you mentioned, atomic hairdos. Everybody had framed pictures of an "explosion" and post cards replaced those of Hoover Dam! Everyone seemed to think it great fun and, of course, it was "good for business" — the ultimate criterion for approval.

Sad to say, Mayor Baker (my dad) and all his council people died of cancer: cancer of the lung, internal organs, leukemia. All died a slow, incurable death by or before age 69. Who's to know? Most smoked cigars and worried a lot, too. Our hope is that the nuclear age will end soon. Fine article.

Phyllis Kaiser
Sparks, Nevada