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# High Country News

January 25, 1993

Vol. 25 No. 1

A Paper for People who Care about the West

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Old Faithful

Mike McClure

**A scalding report on a conspiracy to thwart a Yellowstone Vision/8, 9**



Bruce Babbitt

Marty LaVor © 1991

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GREG SIPLE © 1993

## Can Bruce Babbitt make Interior hum?

by Ed Marston

**P**residents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George Bush kept one set of campaign promises: They ran against Washington, D.C., and the "bureaucrats" and after they won, their political appointees generally treated career people in the West's land management agencies like dirt.

Now the question is: How will the Clinton administration and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt deal with the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and other agencies within the vast Department of Interior?

That decision will affect 75,000 full-time career civil servants at nine agencies and bureaus with budgets totalling \$7.25 billion.

The employees directly administer 500 million acres of land, including the most famous properties in the world: the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Glacier, Yosemite and the other national parks.

Interior also influences hundreds of millions of other acres through its control of subsurface resources, through its trust responsibilities for Indian land and water, and through its administration of the Endangered Species Act.

Running the sprawling, feuding, uncoordinated Department of Interior is not easy in the best of times and Babbitt, assuming he is confirmed, will come into office facing 12 years of bottled-up demand for change aggravated by past, intense political meddling at all levels of the agencies and bureaus.

To succeed, Babbitt will need enthusiastic cooperation from Interior's army of employees. He can gain some of that cooperation through leadership. As a two-term governor of a conservative Western state, as an experienced manager of bureaucracies, as the descendant of a ranching family who has very close ties to the environmental community, and as a broad thinker on Western public land issues (see page 10), Babbitt is uniquely qualified to lead the agency, rather than just command it.

But raising morale and setting out

clear policy may not be enough to redirect some of the agencies. Babbitt himself has said, perhaps hyperbolically and perhaps not, that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation must be destroyed. In another corner of Interior sits the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a huge agency whose scandals and lapses provide infinite grist for congressional investigating mills.

But there are also bright spots. Under John Turner, director for the past four years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is said to be recovering from past mistreatment. And while the National Park Service has been beaten to a pulp by politics, its mission remains clear, and it can be expected to revive if protected from past abuses.

Babbitt's most difficult strategic choice may involve the Bureau of Land Management: an agency with one foot in its old "Bureau of Livestock and Mining" days and another foot in a more progressive approach to resources. The BLM is also a balkanized agency, varying widely from state to state.

*continued on page 11*



## HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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## Dear friends,

### New interns

New intern Adam Duerk comes to *HCN* from a variety of places, most recently Telluride, Colo., where he was a construction worker. Originally from the Washington,

D.C., area, he moved to Colorado this fall after helping to build a house in another mountain state: West Virginia.

Adam is a recent graduate of Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., where he majored in psychology, philosophy, anthropology and sociology — all at once. It's a degree he's still recovering from. At college, Adam tells us he also helped reinvigorate an outing club, established an accredited canoeing course and taught rock-climbing.

John Bokman arrived in Paonia travel-weary. Since earning a B.A. in English from the University of Montana last March, John has lived in various parts of the Intermountain West

and Alaska, registering 15,000 miles on his do-it-all, go-anywhere 1986 Ford.

A native Minnesotan, John says he loves cold and snow, which hit Paonia with a vengeance this month. "Winter is a right, not a privilege," he asserts. When asked where he now lives, John says since he moves often, he likes to say he lives among mountains. "Then I'm never wrong."

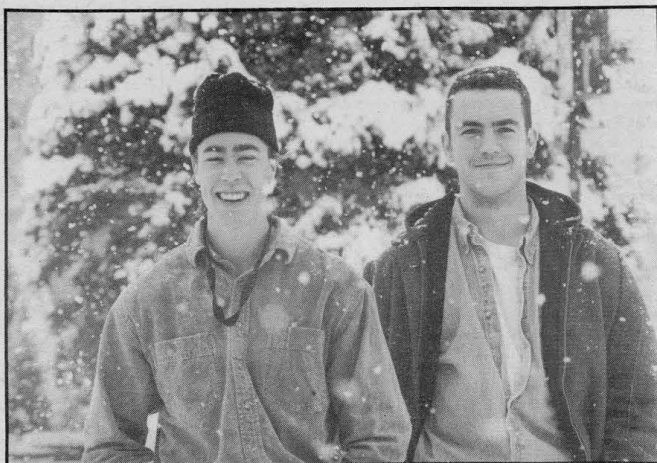
### A gallant woman

About one mile south of Paonia sits a trio of humble — some would say excessively humble — houses that for years served as home for many *High Country News* interns.

In addition to privacy and views of an

orchard, Intern Acres came with Kay Roy, who served up generous portions of *in loco parentis* to her intern tenants.

She ceased presiding over Intern Acres about a year ago, when she fell ill,



Interns John Bokman and Adam Duerk in a Paonia snowstorm

Cindy Wehling

and she died on Jan. 17 after a long bout with cancer. But Kay, a determined woman, achieved her final goal: She lived to vote for Bill Clinton.

Kay and her late husband, Rob, were land developers. About 20 years ago, they bought a hay meadow on Lamborn Mesa, a few hundred feet above Paonia, and converted it into a fruit orchard. And when Coors sold the old company houses off its nearby mining town of Bowie, the Roys bought two of them and trucked them onto high ground above their orchard, next to another little house.

The transplanted houses, which had housed generations of coal miners, now

began to house generations of *HCN* interns. And because an intern generation is only three months, we imagine that there have been more intern generations in those houses than coal miner generations.

The former residents of Intern Acres and the staff of *High Country News* will miss Kay.

### Missing links

Some readers wrote to say that the Dec. 14, 1992, issue on the Northern Rockies did not discuss the question of wilderness release language. As a matter of intent, the last three articles in the issue — on logging in the Clearwater and Bighorn forests and in the Northern Rockies generally — were intended to explore the potential impact of release language.

However, the editing of the articles and their headlines did not clearly link them to the release language debate. We apologize for the error.

—Ed Marston, for the staff

## WESTERN ROUNDUP

### Critics say agency is eating its young

Fisheries biologist Al Espinosa retired from the Clearwater National Forest Jan. 4 rather than risk getting fired in what he and environmentalists say is a management purge on the north-central Idaho forest.

"I'm not bitter because I understood the system and how it works," says Espinosa, 53. "(But) I thought a few years ago the agency would start to right itself, get less political and pander less to the commodity interests." His 19-year Clearwater career dates back to Richard Nixon's presidency.

Espinosa says the Forest Service routinely violates its environmental laws to appease industry and that timber harvest targets are set at unrealistic levels developed in 1987 (*HCN*, 12/28/92).

Espinosa suspects that he, along with wildlife biologist Dan Davis and hydrologist Dick Jones are on an agency hit list for citing problems with forest logging plans. Deputy Regional Forester John Hughes denies the charge.

If the list exists, Clearwater timber planner Steve Petro may be the first victim.

Petro, the forest's timber sales group leader and one of its most decorated employees, received a forced transfer Dec. 16. It ordered him to the Gallatin

National Forest in Bozeman, Mont.

Petro says he will reluctantly accept the transfer but is working to delay it until spring. He plans to file a grievance over the way the "directed reassignment" was handled.

Conservation groups, including the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, believe Petro's forced transfer will help the Forest Service justify the elimination of the real targets — resource specialists perceived to be blocking timber harvests.

"Our concern is that the lives of conscientious scientists are being ruined, and their careers are being ruined, because management of Region 1 is trying to force a timber target on the Clearwater that can't be met," says AFSEE organizer Brian Hunt.

But Petro angrily distances himself from the claim and charges groups like AFSEE with using the media to amend the forest plan "via a bunch of hype."

Espinosa doesn't care what the catalyst is behind amending the forest plan, so long as it gets done. He says a management review of the forest conducted by Region 1 officials last fall missed the point by ignoring resource issues. That review said resource specialists and foresters were in such a constant state of

bickering that nothing could get done.

The review team "stood 10 feet from the target with a shotgun and missed it," he says. "It's like the captain of the Exxon Valdez blaming the cabin boys for the disaster. They're in major league denial."

His boss, Forest Supervisor Win Green, would not discuss Espinosa but conceded that some of his concerns about substandard water quality and fish habitat are real and must be addressed.

Regional Forester Hughes says Espinosa's criticisms are "sour grapes" and are being used by AFSEE to release misinformation about the Clearwater in an attempt to change the forest's direction and, ultimately, the agency's.

"We know we have some difficult management situations on the Clearwater," Hughes says. "They need to get the work force working together. We have some specialists at war with each other. Because of that, the forest and our communities are suffering. Other people want to make this an environmental issue. It's not. It's a management issue."

—J. Todd Foster

J. Todd Foster is an Idaho environmental reporter for *The Spokesman-Review* in Spokane, Wash.



## WESTERN ROUNDUP

# Colorado mining industry strikes again

What was Colorado's largest gold mine in the 1980s is now the state's worst mine pollution disaster.

On Dec. 15, Summitville Consolidated Mining Co. declared bankruptcy and abandoned its cyanide heap-leach gold mine at 11,700 feet in southern Colorado's rugged San Juan Mountains. It left behind a six-year legacy of pollution violations, a 17-mile stretch of the Alamosa River sterilized by mine waste, and a 170 million-gallon tailings pond leaking large amounts of cyanide.

A day later, on Dec. 16, worried state officials called in the Environmental Protection Agency to prevent wholesale damage to the Rio Grande basin. The agency's Superfund program now has 45 people working at the mine and it is spending \$38,000 a day to treat the cyanide waste.

"(We) kind of had it pitched in the middle of our laps," says Superfund spokeswoman Sonya Pennock.

EPA officials estimate the cleanup could eventually cost taxpayers \$20 million — unless the agency is fortunate enough to get some of it back from a bankruptcy court.

In the meantime, the EPA is wondering how to pay for it. The Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board, which permits, regulates and sets bonds for all mining operations in the state, only obtained a \$4.7 million bond from Summitville Consolidated. And Summitville's parent company, Galactic Resources Inc., of Nevada, has also gone under.

As an angry Colorado public and EPA officials confront the state Mined Land Reclamation Board over the disaster, the story that unfolds reveals an environmental and financial boondoggle that state officials say they were helpless to prevent.

Seven people sit on the Mined Land Reclamation Board. They are appointed by the governor and affirmed by the state Senate. Critics say that generally results in a slight industry bias, but board members say that isn't the problem.

"The key reason why things turned out the way they did is the (Colorado) Mined Land Reclamation Act," says environmental lawyer and six-year board member Luke Danielson. "There is a strong pro-industry bent in the way our law is written."

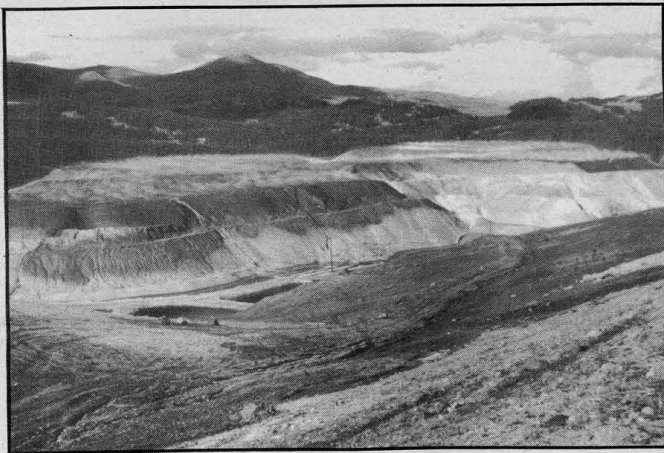
Danielson, one of two board members appointed to represent the conservation community, says the chronology of Summitville illustrates what's wrong with the law. In a heap-leach gold mine, ore is crushed, piled in a heap and then sprinkled with cyanide. As cyanide filters through the pile it dissolves the gold. The "pregnant" solution is then pumped out, the gold recovered and the cyanide re-used. Summitville won a permit for a "valley-fill" heap-leach in 1984. Valley fill means instead of building a special heap-leach pad, the company simply dammed up a small valley.

Danielson says the design, which also buried a creek under the pile, should never have been approved. However, under state law the Division of Minerals and Geology only has 120 days to review a mining application before a permit is automatically granted. Danielson says the law allows extremely narrow grounds to deny a permit. Moreover, the division is limited in what restrictions it can enforce and how high it can set reclamation bonds. As a result, the mine won easy approval with an initial bond of less than \$1 million.

To make matters worse, in 1986, the year Summitville went into operation, the Colorado Legislature eliminated the division's entire budget. Says chief geologist James Pendleton, there were no mine

by creating an emergency reclamation fund and by giving more money and authority to the Mined Land Reclamation Board and its staff in the state Division of Minerals and Geology.

Summitville, Danielson warns, may not be the only problem. In 1988, a smaller, yet mirror image of Summitville occurred near Cripple Creek, where the earthen dam on a cyanide pond owned by the bankrupt Newmont Mining Corp. burst. In that case, the state had only required a \$60,000 bond; the cleanup bill ultimately exceeded \$250,000. Danielson says many of the state's 350 operating mines may have inadequate bonds, or, because of a rule that bars adding inflation rates, bonds that are significantly outdated.



A Summitville waste pile, partially reclaimed, foreground, with the heap leach pad behind  
Division of Minerals and Geology

inspections anywhere in Colorado for one and a half years. Thus, the agency didn't find out until 1989 that Summitville's heap-leach pile had a dangerous water imbalance, with more water coming in than going out.

In addition, the company reported that cyanide was leaking through the plastic liner and into groundwater below. The attempted repair — trapping the contaminated groundwater and pumping it back into the heap-leach pile — did not work. Danielson says the rising waters threatened to breach the dam.

"The mine couldn't be shut down without causing more problems than we already had," says Danielson. Without an emergency cleanup fund, or a higher bond, the mining board members felt that the state's only option was to try and keep Summitville in business so it could control the problem.

Ultimately, the company was fined \$100,000. In negotiations with state officials, mine officials also agreed to raise their bond to almost \$5 million and build a water treatment plant to start emptying the tailings pond.

Although state officials such as Danielson and Pendleton have taken the heat for the disaster, they say the blame lies with the state Legislature and the state's powerful mining lobby.

"This is what happens when the Legislature decides to take a political pot shot at a state program," Danielson says. He wants the Legislature to fix the problem

State and national environmental groups worry that more disasters are primed to happen. But Division of Minerals and Geology spokesman Mike Long says the bulk of the problems were fixed in 1990, when the division won permission from the Legislature to fund its programs by charging higher fees. Now inspections are up.

"The level of expertise on our staff has increased by leaps and bounds," adds Long. "We have taken great pains to make sure our people have the proper backgrounds."

Long and his department will soon have a chance to show that they are up to speed. The largest cyanide gold mine in the state will open near Victor, Colo., later this year (HCN, 5/18/92). Long says the proposal for the so-called Cresson Mine is receiving "more scrutiny" in the wake of the Summitville debacle.

But Jim Lyon of the reform-minded Mineral Policy Center in Washington, D.C., says added training won't solve Colorado's ills. "It doesn't have as much to do with expertise as it does with political will," Lyon says.

Lyon fears that given the historic power of the mining industry in Colorado, the state can't be trusted. The EPA should be involved in permitting and enforcement, not just cleanup, he says. "There will be more Summitvilles unless there is a federal approach."

—Steve Hinchman, Barry Noreen

## HOTLINE



Geoff Tischbein

Tom Beck lowers a tranquilized bear

## How many bears?

How many black bears are there in Colorado — 8,000-12,000? Nobody knows, although bear-human encounters are increasing. Next summer, the Colorado Division of Wildlife hopes to find out by sending veteran bear researcher Tom Beck into the state's backcountry. Beck, who spent eight years studying black bears on Black Mesa near Paonia in western Colorado, will direct the two-to-three-year study. He and other wildlife biologists will set live traps in oak brush and aspen on the Uncompahgre Plateau, then move to privately owned and heavily grazed land in the Middle Park area, near Kremmling. By comparing the two habitats and their respective black bear populations the team hopes for an accurate estimate of bear population in Colorado. Because bears are sensitive to over-harvest by hunters and poachers, Beck says a reliable count is crucial for "managing" the elusive animal. "The previous study showed that if the population drops too low, it can take years to recover," Beck says. The study is expected to cost about \$100,000 each year.

## Storms sweep West

Storms pummeled the West this winter with record amounts of precipitation falling on Salt Lake City, Utah, and Phoenix, Ariz. Mayors in both cities declared a state of emergency in early January. At that time snowpack for Utah measured 110-120 percent of normal, and southern Arizona had so much rain — 4.23 inches in 13 days — that moisture equaled what the state usually receives by late August. Snow also dumped on Nevada, hit hard last summer by a sixth year of drought. "Lake Tahoe is running 180 percent of normal for January snowpack," says meteorologist Mike Elemen, who works for the National Weather Service. But Elemen remains cautious about whether the West's drought is over. "You won't eradicate six bad years in one good year," he says. Other Western states report nearly average or average snowpicks.

## BARBS

What outgoing Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan told AP he most wants in 1993:

"My resolution is to ensure that no one mentions the northern spotted owl at my home or in my presence ever again."

## HOTLINE

**Washington rancher  
spurns subdividers**

Rather than sell his property southwest of Spokane, Wash., to subdividers, a rancher decided to preserve the land he loves even though it means making less money. Charles Miller said his top priority is keeping intact the 7,928 acres settled by his ancestors in 1871. "I've been approached several times to chop the place up so people could build cabins overlooking Fishtrap Lake," he told the *Spokesman-Review*. "(but) money wasn't a priority. We think this is a very special place." The Bureau of Land Management agreed. On Oct. 28, the agency paid Miller \$2.5 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund for the wildlife-rich marshes, ponds and ponderosa-clad hills in eastern Washington. Miller, who admits he is no fan of government, said he will stay involved with the BLM as it devises a management plan for the property. It is already considered the agency's crown jewel in Washington.



Dick Randall/Defenders of Wildlife  
**Dogs killed by baited, spring-loaded traps meant for predators**

**Wyomingites shoot  
to kill M-44s**

Sometimes M-44s kill predators; sometimes they kill dogs and cats. If the federal government continues to use baited, spring-loaded guns which shoot sodium-cyanide into the mouths of animals that pull on the trigger, "a lot of people are going to lose their pets," says former federal trapper Dick Randall. Now a predator-control consultant for the Humane Society, Randall is among more than 1,000 Wyoming citizens who oppose an Animal Damage Control plan to use M-44s on public land near Rock Springs, Wyo. Under current rules, ADC, the federal agency charged with controlling predators, is prohibited from using the devices on public lands. He says coyotes, which M-44s are made to kill, are clever and can avoid M-44s. "Coyotes are so adaptable," says Randall. "A lot of the adults have learned." He adds that some coyotes make it a point to defecate near the baited guns. The Bureau of Land Management, which must approve the ADC plan, reports that only 14 written and recorded statements favored the proposal to use M-44s, while 81 written and recorded statements plus 1,000 signatures on a petition opposed it. The BLM is preparing an environmental assessment on the issue, due March 1. A 60- or 90-day public comment period will be followed by public hearings. For more information, contact the BLM in Rock Springs (307/382-5350).

# Hikers are fenced out of wilderness

TUCSON, Ariz. — Sometime between the designation of federal wilderness in the Coronado National Forest just north of town, and the construction of sprawling neighborhoods, the town planners took a long nap.

To stroll through the saguaro-mesquite country just above the city, hikers must now wend through posh subdivisions, tip-toe across private land shouting with "NO TRESPASSING" signs, march through narrow, chain-linked passageways and park in the boonies.

Now, faced with a planned resort at the mouth of one of the city's most popular trails, local residents and county planners are taking steps to safeguard access to public land.

The \$100 million Pima Canyon Resort, proposed by Stouffer Hotel Co., would turn a pristine, saguaro-speckled floodplain and canyon wash into an 800-car parking lot, 400-room hotel, residential neighborhood, golf course and tennis courts.

Past experience has roused Pima County residents to demand more from town planners and developers.

A mega-resort built in the mid-1980s, the posh Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, along with surrounding developments, effectively discouraged many hikers from entering Ventana Canyon. To reach the wilderness area from there, hikers must park their cars in the employee parking lot of the resort, then walk a quarter mile up an asphalt road, duck around the tennis courts of an apartment complex and finally cross the private property of the Flying V guest ranch. The ranch demands that all hikers call ahead of time and leave their names on a recorded answering machine.

There are no signs to help would-be hikers negotiate the maze of parking lots, roads and properties.

"Ventana Canyon is a disaster," concedes Doug Koppinger, an aide to county supervisor Greg Lunn. "When the resort and apartments were built about eight years ago, there was a great deal of con-

cern over access. But somebody dropped the ball. Now it's totally screwed up."

Tom Quinn, district ranger of the Coronado National Forest, says Ventana access is "a worst case scenario." The forest's Pusch Ridge Wilderness, he says, lies closer to a major urban center than any other wilderness area he knows of. "Anytime you have a wilderness coming right down into neighborhoods, you're going to have conflicts," he says. "In hindsight, it would have been nice to have more of a buffer."

County planners have failed in the past to push for access to other canyon mouths as well. To reach the Campbell Cliff area, for example, climbers and hikers must walk a half-mile within a narrow corridor walled by 8-foot-high chain link fences topped by barbed wire. That is what the private surrounding landowner calls "access."

To hike up the Esperero Trail, the public must either park half a mile away and then trespass on private property, or enter a gated residential community under the pretext of visiting a property owner in order to park closer to the public trail. Even then, one must trespass several privately owned but undeveloped parcels. Although a local conservation group owns one of those parcels, it does not make that information available to the general public.

For the Agua Caliente trail as well, there exists no legal public access, says Quinn.

Aide Koppinger says the county is working with landowners to improve access, and may condemn some property or easements to secure public rights. But this is expensive, he adds, and the county should have required rights-of-way in zoning negotiations years ago.

While officials and many residents say real estate development in these foothills is inevitable, they hope to strike some compromises early in the planning stages of new projects.

"It's like a train coming down the tracks," says Nancy Kelly of the Southern Arizona Sierra Club. "But we've taken some unhappy lessons from Ventana

Canyon, and hopefully we'll write stronger agreements to protect the public."

The Pima County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to approve Stouffer's plan in mid-October. Under the county's terms, Stouffer must build a parking lot specifically for hikers, provide easy access to the trailhead and help fund a trails access committee.

Some activists, however, remain disappointed the developer won't provide additional funding for outdoor education and interpretive programs.

"We were hoping this would be a model accomplishment for trail access, but the developers and the county weren't totally accommodating, and the hiking groups weren't unified in what they wanted," notes Jan Gingold, president of the Pima Trails Association.

"But," she adds, "I'm going to see if we can get more funding. We have to work with developers and pull together. This development could show the way for other access issues to be resolved elsewhere."

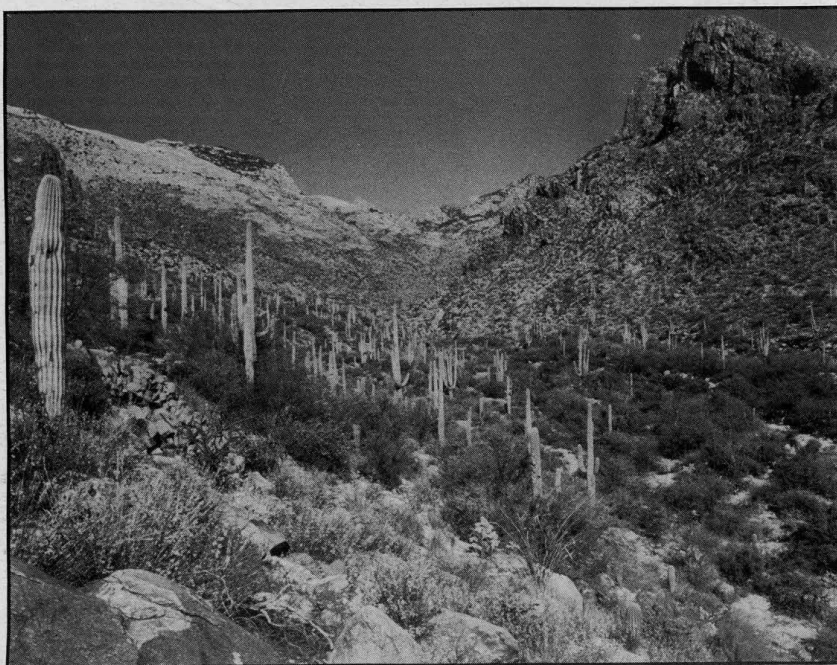
Meanwhile, some observers wonder if all the hue and cry over access is obscuring more serious concerns over increasing development in ecologically fragile areas. Much less fuss was made, for example, when the Board of Supervisors exempted Stouffer from including a riparian zone buffer.

"The Sierra Club threw a temper tantrum over not having access to hiking," notes one planner. "What happened to the idea of being good stewards? Everyone is too concerned with rights and not responsibilities."

Says forester Quinn: "It seems kind of irresponsible the county exempted the buffer zone requirement. It needs to enforce its ordinances." He adds, "In Pima Canyon, the access issue is going to be resolved. I would have liked more help with environmental protection."

For more information, contact the Pima Trails Association, 5660 Paseo de la Tirada, Tucson, AZ 85715 (602/577-2095).

— Florence Williams



Saguaro cactus in the Arizona desert

Arizona Daily Star





David E. Nelson

A tourist uses a video camera to document his helicopter trip over the Grand Canyon

## FAA limits canyon flights, yet again

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — In a change brought about under pressure and hailed by environmentalists, the Federal Aviation Administration has agreed to strictly enforce "flight free" zones over Grand Canyon National Park.

For the past five years air space over many of the canyon's most popular hiking trails on the South Rim has been designated flight-free. But environmental groups and the Park Service say the FAA has allowed aircraft to hover over the canyon. That happens most often in July and August, when Grand Canyon Airport becomes overloaded.

That situation will be tolerated no more, according to an agreement pounded out between the FAA and National Park officials on Dec. 17.

"This is a tremendous step forward," said John Reed, assistant park superintendent.

The agreement also reversed a former FAA decision to allow a new helicopter route for rim-to-rim service. It would have brought skiers to the remote North Rim during the winter months.

Last month the FAA was criticized by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., for failing to enforce the flight-free zones imposed by Congress in 1987. In a Dec. 10 letter to the FAA, McCain called for hearings on the way the FAA manages canyon airspace. He said the FAA was not working to enforce the "natural quiet" of the park, a requirement of the 1987 National Parks Overflights Act. The law established four "flight free" zones over 45 percent of the canyon and banned flights below the canyon rim.

Roger Clark, vice president for conservation for the Grand Canyon Trust, said the agreement means FAA officials will "play more of a partnership role instead of making unilateral decisions."

According to a spokesperson for the FAA, flight-free zones were often ignored because of heavy summer traffic.

"There were times when we, the FAA, had to place pilots in the flight-free zones because of the amount of traffic that comes in the summer," said Elly Brekke of the agency's Western regional office in Los Angeles. "We will not be doing that anymore."

Instead, the air authorities plan to work through the winter with the Park Service and pilots, coming up with recommended solutions this spring.

Brekke said that the changes came about as a result of Grand Canyon Trust staffers charging that the FAA was not enforcing the flight-free zones. "We sort of started taking another whole look at the entire situation," she said. "And we did indeed find that on our charts — the aeronautical charts that the pilots use for navigation — there were some portions missing. Near Bright Angel and Desert View on the southern portion of those flight-free zones there were little — for lack of a better word — little fingers that stretched out that were not charted."

While safety is the FAA's first concern, Brekke said that the recently declared cooperation with the Park Service represents a new outlook for the air traffic czars. "Safety and the environment can be compatible for sure," she said. "Our two concerns can mesh into one."

According to Rick Carrick, chief pilot for Papillon Grand Canyon Airlines, fixed-wing aircraft and not helicopters abused protected air space in the canyon. He said that occurred when the airport control tower had to juggle jams in air traffic.

"The professional tour operators want their jobs," he said. "They don't want to violate those things. And the FAA in the past has always enforced" the flight-free zones.

Carrick said that the only abuses he knew about were general aviation pilots who fly through the area and "don't understand the rules" and military pilots

"out on a lark" who occasionally fly below the rim and through the flight-free zones.

More than 250 people have been killed in plane or helicopter crashes over and around the Grand Canyon in the past 40 years.

In 1991, there were 167,000 takeoffs and landings at Grand Canyon Airport, almost twice the number before the Overflights Act went into effect in 1987.

— Mary Tolan

Mary Tolan is a free-lance reporter in Flagstaff, Arizona.

## BARBS

The heavy wind was in the court room.

After getting caught red-handed logging a protected hillside, then dragging trees through a creek while salmon were spawning, loggers in Vancouver, British Columbia, told a judge that they were actually cleaning up damage from heavy winds. The judge fined two firms \$18,500 and said, "I don't believe for a minute that these intelligent timber company officials could come up with such a stupid plan, or rather such an outrageous explanation," AP reports.

It is also a very modest, aw-shucks kind of place.

In his State of the State speech, California Gov. Pete Wilson said: "We're the people who made the first movies, the first home computers, designed the space shuttle and gave America the tools of victory in the Cold War."

## HOTLINE

### Nuclear power gets gassed

High operating costs, constant safety violations and maintenance problems may soon price the last remaining WPPSS nuclear power plant out of business. WPPSS, the acronym for the Washington Public Power Supply System, is a consortium of 115 Northwestern utilities that proposed building five giant and highly controversial nuclear reactors in the 1970s. By 1983, all but one were abandoned or mothballed and the utilities had defaulted on \$2.25 billion in municipal bonds — the largest bond default in U.S. history. Built along the Columbia River, the 1,100-megawatt Hanford 2 reactor is the only plant that survived. But the Bonneville Power Administration recently warned WPPSS that nuclear power costs over 5 cents per kilowatt-hour while gas-fired electricity is below 3 cents per kilowatt-hour. BPA, which buys all of the Hanford plant's power, said it will start looking elsewhere unless WPPSS can bring its costs in line. Similar problems convinced Portland General Electric to shut down its 1,100-megawatt Trojan Nuclear Reactor in early January, 18 years ahead of schedule.

### Action in Idaho

In Idaho, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service granted endangered or threatened species status to four Snake River snails and a limpet. The tiny animals, all less than a half-inch in diameter, depend upon clean, free-flowing water to survive. But hydropower developments, agricultural runoff and commercial fish hatcheries along the river have contaminated the water. The legal designations came on the heels of court cases filed earlier this year by environmental groups frustrated by federal inaction (HCN, 11/30/92). Roy Herberger, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist in Idaho, said the decline of the snails reveals larger problems. "When a species is listed, there's something wrong in the system," he said. On Jan. 15, the agency also added the Bruneau Hot Springs snail to its list of endangered species. The Endangered Species Act, passed two decades ago, now protects 727 species as endangered or threatened. In a lawsuit settled in December, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to list 400 more species of plants and animals as endangered by 1996, and to add 3,600 species for further review and possible listing.

### Justice in Nevada

When James "Mort the Horse-trader" Mortensen pleaded guilty last year to charges of selling 2,000-year-old Indian artifacts to undercover BLM agents, he became the first person convicted in Nevada under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. Mortensen was sentenced to probation for three years, restitution of \$1,800 to the Bureau of Land Management and 300 hours of community service — helping Native Americans build a museum in downtown Reno, Nev.

# BULLETIN BOARD

## WESTERN VISIONS

"Competing Visions of the New West," an ambitious symposium on environment, land use and alternative economic strategies, is set for the University of Colorado in Boulder, Feb. 5-7. Panels will examine the "wise use" movement's recent court cases dealing with property rights and environmental "takings," wolf reintroduction, reform of the 1872 Mining Act, and alternative economic strategies for the southern Rockies. Keynote speakers are David Brower, director of the Earth Island Institute in San Francisco, and Tom Powers, chair of the economics department at the University of Montana. A pre-conference debate Feb. 3 features wise-use advocate Ron Arnold, vice president of the Center for Defense of Free Enterprise, based in Bellevue, Wash., and Tom Lustig, senior attorney for the National Wildlife Federation's Rocky Mountain clinic in Boulder, Colo. For more information, contact the CU Environmental Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, UMC 331A, Campus Box 207, Boulder, CO 80309-0207 (303/492-8308).

## AVALANCHE ALERT

The high-mountain town of Silverton, Colo., hosts another avalanche training course next month. The San Juan Mountain Search and Rescue Team, which has taught people about the hazards of avalanches for 25 years, will hold its annual Silverton Avalanche School from Feb. 12-14. Students, who range from ski patrollers to recreational skiers, pay \$100 to learn how to recognize avalanche hazards, determine snow stability, run rescue operations and react during emergencies. A two-day course in January drew participants from California and New Mexico as well as Colorado. For more information call the Silverton Chamber of Commerce at 303/387-5654.

## WOLVES IN IDAHO

Members of the Wolf Recovery Foundation say a pack of six to eight wolves may be in the Boise National Forest. The trouble, they say, is that no one seems to care. It took the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over one month to follow up a Nov. 13 sighting by helicopter pilot Bill Albers, says foundation member Michael Wickes, a wildlife photographer. "Albers flew within 50 feet of them, so he got a good look. It was really an exciting lead." After the Forest Service sent Albers' report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dec. 7, the agency said logistical problems kept it from dispatching biologists to the area for another nine days. "They just sat on the report," Wickes said. Frustrated by the government's delay, Wickes hired a plane to fly over the area on Dec. 13, but three large canines he saw were apparently coyotes. Suzanne Lavery, executive director of the Wolf Recovery Foundation, says that over the years sightings of possible wolves have mounted to the hundreds. Confirmed wolf-pack activity could change a federal plan to reintroduce wolves to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho. Under the current plan, agencies favor reintroducing wolves to the areas as an "experimental population." That allows wolves to be killed if ranchers see them preying on livestock. Lavery says she fears federal agencies will ignore the fact that wild wolves may already exist in Idaho; if they do exist, they are entitled to full protection under the Endangered Species Act. "It's not a matter of whether there's wolves in Idaho," she said. "It's that we don't have a commitment from the federal agencies to find out how many there are." The Wolf Recovery Foundation can be reached at P.O. Box 793, Boise, ID 83701-0793. To report wolf sightings in Idaho, call 1-800/793-WOLF. The foundation offers \$1,000 for reports that lead to confirmed wolf-pack activity. — Arden Trewartha

## A TRACKER'S GUIDE

Skiers are not the only ones rejecting when a deep blanket of snow covers the Rocky Mountains. Winter is the best time for trackers, an enthusiastic breed of naturalists intent on understanding the private lives of critters. A new guidebook, *Tracking and the Art of Seeing: How to Read Animal Tracks and Sign*, provides 350 color photographs and detailed descriptions of over 50 mammals. Author Paul Rezendes will lead novices and experts alike into a wonderful, richer world. "Ultimately," writes Rezendes, a professional tracker and photographer, "tracking an animal makes us sensitive to it — a bond is formed, an intimacy develops."

Camden House Publishing, Inc., Ferry Road, Charlotte, VT 05445. 320 pages. Photos, drawings. Paper: \$19.95.

— Florence Williams

## NEVADA'S WATER FUTURE

Winter storms of near-biblical proportions have dampened talk of a seventh year of drought, but water remains a fighting word in Nevada. To foster debate, if not consensus, a series of 30 public forums on water policy will be kicked off at the annual Nevada Water Resources Association meeting Feb. 10-11 at the Peppermill Hotel in Reno. The gathering of state water officials, consultants, project managers and proponents will be the first to experience the Nevada Water Forum, a format designed to provoke discussion of public policies. Participants will analyze four options: maintaining the status quo of the prior appropriation doctrine and the czar-like powers of the state water engineer; letting the market decide by allowing water to be traded as a commodity; legislating water as a public good and strengthening citizen participation in decision-making; or outlawing transfers of water between basins to make people go where water is instead of bringing water to cities. A briefing book, *Nevada's Water Future: Making Tough Choices*, provides essential facts, figures and background on the controversy. Ballots will be available so that participants can vote on "how we the people want to manage and allocate scarce water resources to have the kind of Nevada we want over the next 20 years," says organizer Jean Ford. Results will be presented to the Nevada Legislature. Contact Jean Ford, c/o Women's Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557 (702/784-1560).

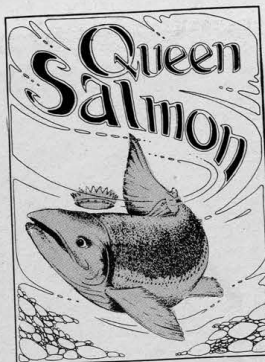


## SEEDS OF CHANGE

Five hundred years ago Columbus stumbled upon the "New World" cuisine and changed tastes worldwide. This is the focus of *Seeds of Change*, a book that recreates a traveling Smithsonian exhibit. It examines the massive changes arising from contact between the continents: Potatoes, corn and sugar were shipped to Europe while horses, cows and sheep came to America. Europeans also introduced diseases such as smallpox and cholera, which killed 75 percent of the Indian population and enslaved Indians and Africans on sugar plantations. Ultimately, the book focuses on the high human and ecological costs of building a new industrial empire. Smithsonian Institution Press, Department 900, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294. Paper: \$24.95, 278 pages, illustrated with photos.

The exhibit travels to the Salt Lake City Public Library, 209 E. Fifth S., Jan. 30 through Feb. 28. For information contact Colleen McLaughlin at 801/524-8234.

— Arden Trewartha



## QUEEN SALMON TOURS NORTHWEST

Those who love the outrageous and odd, prepare for the Washington and Oregon tour of *Queen Salmon: A Biologically Explicit Musical Comedy for People of Several Species*. Presented by the Human Nature troupe, the plot turns on a rural town's struggle to save its declining salmon runs. Characters include loggers and hippies, biologists and business men, and even salmon and spotted owls who squabble and stir things up in their efforts to preserve home. Dubbed by the *San Francisco Guardian* "one of the most entertaining ecology lessons you'll ever encounter," *Queen Salmon* provides a rallying point for people interested in protecting the places they live. For dates, places and times, contact Human Nature, P.O. Box 81, Petrolia, CA 95558 (707/629-3670).

## FOREST WATCHDOGS IN MONTANA

A recently formed forest-watchdog group won the first round in its fight to protect a unique stand of low-elevation timber on state lands near Missoula, Mont. The 100-member Gold Creek Resources Protection Association, composed of mostly Missoula-area residents, was formed in August 1991 to stop the proposed Burnt Bridge Timber Sale. The group filed suit against Montana last July, and in December a district judge ruled that Montana could not sell the timber until 180 days following the completion of a revised environmental assessment or full EIS. The association successfully argued that the original assessment failed to fully consider the impacts of timber cutting on elk habitat and educational and recreational values. "Of the 5 million acres the Department (of State Lands) administers, surely they can set aside a few hundred for educational and recreational purposes," said association spokesperson Tam Ream. A revised environmental assessment is expected by spring; the Montana State Board of Land Commissioners is responsible for making a decision on the proposed sale. For more information about the Gold Creek Association, contact Tam Ream at 406/243-5722 or 406/549-7933.

## MUTUAL AID

The Environmental Resource Center in Ketchum, Idaho, needs two interns to coordinate and run an "Eco-Summer Camp." The Wyoming Outdoor Council hopes an intern will conduct some recycling research. *Making a Change: A Student Guide to Social Change Internships in the Northern Rockies* describes more than 40 internships in a new 78-page booklet. Published by the Northern Rockies Action Group, it lists internships with groups involved in natural resources, low-income communities, women's issues and public policy. The booklet helps a prospective intern's search by giving advice on how to evaluate and select a stint as well as how to prepare an application. The guide costs \$3.50, plus 75 cents for postage, from the Northern Rockies Action Group, 9 Placer St., Helena, MT 59601.

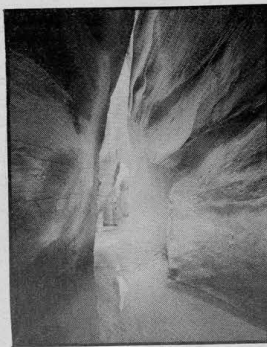


## Unclassifieds

**ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER** available for your or your citizen group's problem. Will work cheap if the cause is right. 303/385-6941. (1x1p)

**SOUTHWEST OREGON** — A great place to live. For a free brochure of properties, call or write: Junction Realty, P.O. Box 849, Cave Junction, OR 97523, or call 1-800/238-6493.

### David Muench Fine Art: SUWA's First Full Color Poster

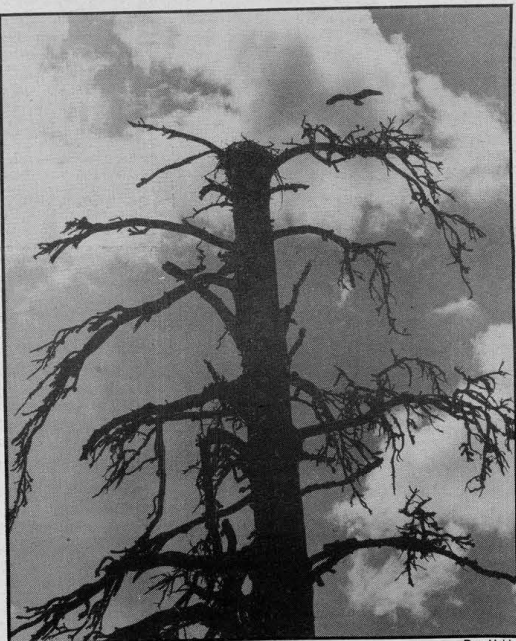


David Muench, one of our finest landscape photographers, has donated the image shown at the left for use in SUWA's first full color poster. We are grateful to Patagonia, Inc., which made the entire project possible with its generous donation, and to Arpel Graphics of Santa Barbara, California, which donated the time and talent for the design of this beautiful 24-inch by 36-inch fine art print. We are proud to have the opportunity to share with you a piece of art depicting the intimate beauty and solitude of southern Utah's priceless canyon country.

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In addition to the regular printing of posters (which we offer for \$20 including shipping and handling), we have 200 copies of a special, limited edition, signed by David Muench and available for \$100 (includes shipping and handling). Please make your check out to SUWA and send your order (specify signed or unsigned poster) to:

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Dan Heidel

An osprey returns to its nest on top of an old snag

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Vol. 25, No. 1

**11 NATURALIST INTERN POSITIONS** — The Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, Aspen, Colo. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Provide natural history and interpretive programs for adults/children; lead interpretive walks at various locations, manage visitor's center, wildlife rehab, special projects, maintenance of facilities. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Educational background in Natural Sciences, Environmental Education, or related field. June-August 1993. Stipend, housing, and Naturalist Field School Course. Write for application packet to ACES, Attn: Jeanne Beaudry, Box 8777, Aspen, CO 81612, or call 303/925-5756. Deadline 3/1/93. (2x1b)

**FOR LOVE OF WILDERNESS!!** ... Hardy workers needed on all wilderness districts within the Selway-Bitterroot. Some paid but **MOSTLY VOLUNTEER POSITIONS.** Assistant wilderness rangers, trail crew, some bio-techs. Living and travel expense reimbursement. Guaranteed great experience! Contact: Shelley, Moose Creek Ranger District, Box 464, Grangeville, ID 83530, 208/983-2712. (2x1p)

**FULL-TIME FARMING/RANCHING POSITION.** Remote Colorado River wilderness ranch. Center pivots, wheel roll and ditch irrigation. House plus benefits, salary DOE. Send résumé and references to: Mountain Island Ranch, P.O. Box 57, Glade Park, CO 81523.

**NEED CARETAKER** with own income for remote mountain ranch. References. Wilson, Box 215, El Rito, NM 87530. (3x1p)

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

### ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

Mineral Policy Center, a national nonprofit environmental organization, seeks a Field Representative or "Circuit Rider" for campaign to control environmental damage from hardrock mining/oil development. The position is a technical expert and community organizer working with communities concerned about mining impacts.

Must have background in community organizing or technical/environmental mining experience. Must be self-starter/enjoy working independently. Frequent travel required. Base location in city central to serve Four Corner states. Salary mid-twenties/low-thirties; benefits.

Send cover letter, complete résumé, "short" writing sample, salary requirement to: C/R Search, Mineral Policy Center, 1325 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 550, Washington, D.C. 20005. Closing date: Feb. 5. No calls, please.

Mineral Policy Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer that supports progressive hiring practices. (1x1b)

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**WANTED: CANVASS DIRECTOR** for statewide grass-roots biodiversity organization. Must be highly articulate and have fierce desire to protect and restore nature. Opportunities for rapid promotions within organization. Salary based on experience. Send résumé, cover letter and references by Feb. 10 to P.O. Box 3243, Boulder, CO 80307.

**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. B.A. 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 Feb. 22, 1993. (1x1b)

"**OUTDOOR PEOPLE AD-Venture**" lists 60-word descriptions of active, outdoor-oriented singles and trip companions nationwide. \$3/issue, \$12/ad. Outdoor People-HCN, P.O. Box 600, Gaston, SC 29053. (7x14p-eoi)

**OPPORTUNITY IN CONSERVATION:** The Nature Conservancy's Wyoming Field Office is seeking a Yellowstone Field Representative to assist the Director of Conservation Programs in developing a comprehensive program to protect natural lands in Wyoming. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree; minimum 2 years experience in land acquisition or related field; and fund-raising experience. Send résumé to: B. Robinson, 258 Main St., Suite 200, Lander, WY 82520.

**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)

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May 15-20, 1993, Corvallis, Montana

# Conspiracy destroyed a

by Michael Milstein

A conspiracy by powerful commodity groups and Bush administration appointees destroyed a plan to boost environmental protections in the Yellowstone region and cost a prominent National Park Service official her job, according to a Dec. 30, 1992, congressional report.

The 44-page report by the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on the Civil Service says both former National Park Service Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer and the "Vision" plan for the Greater Yellowstone Area were victims of politics.

To justify their ruin of the Vision plan, which was reduced from 60 to 10 pages, interest groups and government officials helped manufacture opposition to the plan by "rigging" the public comment process, says the report.

"The subcommittee concludes that the Department of Interior engaged in a politically motivated, underhanded operation to destroy the draft Vision document because it was unacceptable to powerful monied commodity and special interest groups," reads the report.

"This operation resulted in the improper directed reassignment and subsequent retaliation against Ms. Mintzmyer," it says.

Government officials countered they did not move Mintzmyer for political reasons and derided the report as a pot shot by a Democratic-run committee at

the outgoing Bush administration. U.S. Sen. Al Simpson, R-Wyo., who is mentioned as having pushed to water down the Vision plan, called the report "the stupidest trivia and tripe and inanity that I have ever seen."

Subcommittee Chairman Gerry Sikorski, D-Minn., lost his seat in November. The subcommittee staff serves at Sikorski's will and issued its report, which has not been officially approved by the subcommittee's five members, on the last day of the congressman's term.

Interior Department spokesman Jay Sullivan called the staff "a Democratic rogue staff, accountable to no one."

However, Rep. Constance Morella, R-Md., the top Republican on the subcommittee, differed. She had earlier co-signed letters with Sikorski complaining Interior officials were trying to "stonewall" the panel. "The committee hearings and investigation were all conducted in a very professional and businesslike manner," Morella said through a spokeswoman. "There was no partisan effort to embarrass anybody."

In 1991, Interior Department bosses reassigned Mintzmyer, the Park Service's then top-ranking woman, from her job as head of the agency's Rocky Mountain region, which includes Yellowstone National Park. That followed her defense of the Vision plan, an unprecedented, ecosystem-wide blueprint for national parks and forests in the Yellowstone region. It was opposed by mining, livestock and oil industry groups that feared it

could restrict their access to multiple-use national forest lands.

Last April, the highly decorated Mintzmyer ended her 32-year Park Service career by retiring from her new post in Pennsylvania.

Even before that, though, the House Civil Service Subcommittee had launched a bipartisan probe into the forced transfers of both Mintzmyer and John Mumma, the former head of the U.S. Forest Service's northern region. Mumma retired when superiors ordered him to a Washington, D.C., desk job after his region failed to meet logging quotas.

Both Mumma and Mintzmyer, who has sued the government, testified before the subcommittee in well-publicized hearings in September 1991 (HCN, 10/7/91). Although the subcommittee staff has now ended its probe of Mintzmyer's transfer with a report which makes no recommendations for action, it may not issue a report on

Mumma's case.

The strongly worded document is laden with footnotes that refer to nearly 200 pages of attached letters, memos and other records, many relating to congressmen. Subcommittee investigators wrote the report after interviewing more than 45 witnesses and reviewing more than 6,000 documents, says a cover letter from Chief Counsel Kim Japiga.



Lorraine Mintzmyer

“After the release of the draft Vision document, a conspiracy to eviscerate the draft document began to take shape. On Aug. 22, 1990, members of a Western U.S. congressional delegation (from Wyoming) wrote to (Interior) Secretary (Manuel) Lujan requesting a meeting with him to discuss their concerns regarding the draft Vision document.

“While the subcommittee has not been able to determine if a meeting between Secretary Lujan and the U.S. congressional delegation occurred, on Oct. 4, 1990, a meeting did take place between high-ranking representatives of the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, U.S. senators and representatives and members of various commodity and special interest groups.

“According to witnesses, the following individuals attended: then Deputy Principal Assistant Secretary Scott Sewell, Department of Interior; then Assistant Secretary Moseley, Department of Agriculture; Jack Morehead, associate director of the Bureau of Land Management; T.S. Ary, director of the Bureau of Mines; George Leonard, associate

These excerpts are taken from *Interference in Environmental Programs by Political Appointees: The Improper Treatment of a Senior Executive Service Official*. This 44-page staff report of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on the Civil Service examines the forced transfer of former National Park Service official Lorraine Mintzmyer and changes in the "Vision" document for the Yellowstone region.

chief of the Forest Service; Gary Cargill, regional forester of the Forest Service; Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson; Wyoming Sen. Malcolm Wallop; Wyoming Rep. Craig Thomas; an aide to Sen. Simpson; an aide to Rep. Thomas; Carolyn Pase-neaux, Wyoming Woolgrowers Association; Dave Flintner, Wyoming Farm Bureau; and Warren Morton, Wyoming Heritage Society.

“On the day immediately following the Oct. 4, 1990, meeting, Mintzmyer, who was also in Washington, D.C., at the time, was summoned to the office of Assistant Secretary Sewell. During this meeting, Sewell began to effectuate the destruction of the draft Vision document. ...

“After Mintzmyer was told that the draft Vision document was a political disaster and was to be ‘politically’ redrafted, the draft document ceased to be an internal National Park Service and Forest Service project. The Department of Interior acted after the Oct. 4 meeting to revise the draft Vision document to meet the needs of commodity and special interest groups.

“Circumstantial evidence also suggests that the Department of Agriculture was involved in the

operation. According to evidence the subcommittee has obtained, Scott Sewell was the principal operational force behind the activities to destroy the draft Vision document.

“Immediately thereafter, during the week of Oct. 14, 1990, Barry Davis, supervisor of the Shoshone National Forest, and Brian Stout, supervisor of the Bridger-Teton National Forest, met with several commodity and special interest groups hostile to the draft Vision document ... These solicitations were peculiar because they began just 10 days after the Oct. 4, 1990, meeting and opinions from these groups and individuals were suddenly and inexplicably gathered outside of the process set forth in the *Federal Register* for obtaining public comment.

“The Department of Interior moved further into the operation on Oct. 23, 1990, when Scott Sewell began his firsthand alteration of the (60-page) draft Vision document by directing Mary Bradford, his subordinate, to go through the draft and focus on the tone of the document and Department of Interior issues. ...

“Once Sewell's staffers were through with their preliminary revisions, they passed a briefing copy of their efforts on to Constance Harriman, then assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Bradford (a Sewell staffer) wrote in a Nov. 14, 1990, revised Vision document transmittal memo to Harriman that ‘(Interior staffers) Loach, Kimbro, Doddridge and I met to incorporate comments received so far, and in response to Scott's meeting with Sens. Simpson, Wallop and commodities groups.’

“Pressure to change the draft Vision document also was felt by the Department of Agriculture. On Dec. 10, 1990, a U.S. senator (Alan Simpson, R-



# Vison for Yellowstone

Environmentalists cheered the committee's findings. They saw the report as particularly noteworthy not because it details political meddling in federal land issues, which environmental groups have long alleged, but because it depicts the heavy clout industry groups wield in the nation's capitol.

"There is an unholy alliance between the administration, regional politicians and the commodity groups," said Ed Lewis, director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "Extractive industries have a direct line into the heart of Washington and they are very adept at using it."

Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., said he would urge Congress to follow up on the findings of the report.

Mintzmyer, under consideration by the new Clinton administration to become Park Service director, said she felt vindicated by the report and hoped it would teach politicians a lesson: "This kind of political interference will cease if there are people willing to stand up against it."

Before she left the West, Mintzmyer was co-chair of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC). The group of national park and forest managers was directed by Congress in 1985 to improve handling of the Yellowstone region. They did so first by compiling an overview of their management schemes and then by launching the Vision plan.

But, the report reads, "The subcommittee's investigation has revealed a conspiracy by powerful commodity and special interest groups and the Bush adminis-

tration to eviscerate the draft Vision document because the commodity and special interest groups perceived it as a threat."

Although subcommittee staff cannot investigate members of Congress, the report says all three members of Wyoming's congressional delegation plus former Rep. Ron Marlenee, R-Mont., wanted the Vision plan weakened. It also suggests former White House Chief of Staff John Sununu pressed lower-level political appointees to cripple the original plan.

"The Department of Interior and special interest groups first destroyed the 60-page scientific document, turning it into a 10-page 'brochure,'" states the report. "They then developed a story that would explain the revisions and keep their actions a secret."

"Finally, to protect their acts and in apparent retaliation against Ms. Mintzmyer, the Department of Interior effectuated a directed reassignment which moved Ms. Mintzmyer out of the Rocky Mountain region and away from the Vision document process."

The report pinpoints Oct. 4, 1990, as "a critical day in the rewrite of the draft Vision document." Top agency officials, special interest groups and politicians met in the Capitol Hill office of Sen. Al Simpson, R-Wyo., to discuss changes "aimed at making the draft document conform to the desire of the commodity and special interest groups."

Among the impressive roster of those present were Simpson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior Scott

Sewell, the assistant secretary of Agriculture, an associate director of the National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management Director Cy Jamison, the associate chief of the Forest Service, Simpson, Sen. Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., and Rep. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo.

They met with representatives of the Wyoming Farm Bureau, Wyoming Wool Growers Association, Petroleum Association of Wyoming and the Wyoming Heritage Society, a pro-industry group.

"Several characteristics of this meeting indicate that a conspiracy was in progress," the report reads. For instance, "the meeting was scheduled in a covert manner" with no written record. Neither Mintzmyer nor Park Service Director James Ridenour was invited.

However, Simpson has consistently maintained the meeting was only intended to relate constituent concerns about the Vision plan, which he felt was "one-sided and biased" and hard to understand. "Lorraine Mintzmyer was never excluded from this office," he said.

A week after the Oct. 4 meeting, according to the report, two Wyoming national forest supervisors (who have since denied any part in the alleged conspiracy) met privately with commodity groups to solicit their input on the Vision plan. Sewell's staffers began rewriting the plan in Washington, D.C., and later told an Interior official they had "met to incorporate comments received so far, and in response to Scott (Sewell's) meeting with Senators Simpson, Wallop and commodities groups."

With hundreds of initial public comments in favor of the goal of protecting the Yellowstone ecosystem, the report says, Interior officials tried to obscure "the fact that a conspiracy was forcing changes in the draft document." They canceled national hearings expected to bring support for the plan and employed groups to "rig" remaining meetings with negative comments. Then they justified changes with that "manufactured" input.

In contrast to meetings in Wyoming and Idaho, then, meetings in Billings, Bozeman and Ennis, Mont., were characterized by hostility to the Vision plan, the report says. That was the result of People for the West!, an industry-backed group, organizing opposition there, it says.

But the report says the conspiracy to gut the Vision plan unraveled once the subcommittee started probing Mintzmyer's transfer. Investigators found numerous inconsistencies in the statements of Interior officials, especially Sewell, who, the report states, made false and conflicting statements to the committee while trying to justify Mintzmyer's move.

They also found that Interior officials had only ordered the Park Service to move Mintzmyer, in violation of regulations, after she had expressed reservations about changes to the draft plan. She was transferred "under the guise of an ordinary three-way personnel move."

Michael Milstein reports from Cody, Wyoming, for the Billings Gazette, which first obtained the report.

Wyo.) sent a letter to Assistant Secretary (of Agriculture) Moseley thanking him for his time at the Oct. 4, 1990, meeting. In his letter, the senator cautioned Moseley to give his full personal attention and review to the draft Vision document before it became final. ...

"The draft document was effectively politically rewritten when Brian Stout, forest supervisor for the Bridger-Teton National Forest, unexpectedly produced a greatly reduced, 15-page revised draft Vision document at the Feb. 1, 1991, Billings meeting of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, the group of park and forest managers handling the Vision plan. ...

"Scott Sewell attempted to complete the conspiracy when he demanded on March 21, 1991, that Mintzmyer be reprimanded for illegally lobbying Congress. That charge was never substantiated and no action was taken after Mintzmyer contested it.

## Keeping the conspiracy secret

"The next phase of the conspiracy to revise the draft Vision document centered on obscuring the fact that a conspiracy was forcing changes in the draft document. The Department of Interior was faced with the challenge of explaining how the draft Vision document went from a 60-page scientific document down to a 10-page 'brochure.' ...

"They accomplished these goals by utilizing the following tactics: 1) closing previously planned national hearings, to avoid anticipated positive public comment; 2) employing outside groups to 'rig' the appearance of negative public opinion at a few, select, local public meetings; 3) maneuvering the scientific interdisciplinary team out of the revision process; and

4) using the manufactured, negative, public comment to explain why the revisions were necessary. ...

"Extensive plans for gathering public comment ... unraveled when those plans conflicted with the conspiracy to alter the draft Vision document. It appears the conspiracy originated in the period from August to October of 1990. ... To rely on ... negative public comment as the explanation for the extensive changes in the draft document, a plan that involved several simultaneous efforts was launched.

"This plan appears to have been precipitated by a letter from David Rovig, president of Crown Butte Mining (in Billings), to Secretary Manuel Lujan on Aug. 3, 1990. In the letter, Rovig requested that Secretary Lujan delay the release of the draft Vision document. ... The letter received the immediate attention of Assistant Secretary Sewell. ... The department's attention to the mining interest's displeasure with the draft Vision document was indicative of the department's willingness to accommodate commodity and special interest groups' concerns. ...

"On Sept. 10, 1990, the first attempt to pressure the public comment process occurred when the Western congressional delegation sent Mintzmyer a letter requesting that the public comment period for the draft Vision document be extended to January 1991. ... Extending the public comment period provided the draft Vision document's opponents more time to mobilize their forces. ...

"The Vision document process was further tampered with on Nov. 6, 1990, when a staffer for a Western U.S. representative insisted that the GYCC change the format of the public comment meetings. ... The hearing format mandated by the representative's office gave the draft Vision document's critics a vehicle for rigging negative public comment. The

conspirators demonstrated the effectiveness of this plan in Montana. All three of the public meetings held in the Big Sky state were contentious. ...

"While it is not within the purview of subcommittee investigators to examine the acts of congressional delegations and their staff, it suffices to say that extraordinary outside pressure was brought under the guise of populist comment, and that the perception of substantial public comment hostile to the draft document was, in reality, almost entirely manufactured. ...

"This engineering by special interests ... clearly stemmed from both the special interests' possession of their opponents' playbook, and from the cooperation of several of the administration's key players. ...

"Scott Sewell's shifting explanation of the intent behind the Oct. 4, 1990, meeting and evidence contradicting his Aug. 12, 1992, explanation about the meeting make it clear that the conspiracy to destroy the draft Vision document was either formulated during or contemporaneous to the Oct. 4, 1990, meeting. ...

"The only conclusion which can be reached regarding such behavior by the National Park Service and its officials and is consistent with all of the eyewitnesses and documentary evidence is that officials of the Department of Interior had targeted Mintzmyer for removal. She was removed from this position so she would not be able to protect the Vision document. ...

"When caught in the various stories, and under the pressure of the reassignments being totally unusual and violative of regulations, the National Park Service, the Department of Interior and Sewell invented a number of conflicting explanations as to where and why Mintzmyer was reassigned." ■

**T**he new Secretary of Interior once explained why he became head of the League of Conservation Voters: "I always wanted to be president of something."

Bruce Babbitt had wanted to be president of the United States; but his thoughtful 1988 campaign captivated the press and not the public. Although the White House eluded Babbitt, he has been attorney general and two-term governor of Arizona, a founding board member of the Grand Canyon Trust, and, most recently, an attorney in Phoenix.

Some cabinet officials come to their posts having left few "footprints" on the issues; Babbitt, 54, has left deep gouge marks. As governor, he helped change Arizona's use of groundwater, he helped arrange large swaps of land between the state and the federal government, and he helped control emissions from copper smelters. Most recently, he represented rural Nevada in its attempt to stave off a Las Vegas water grab.

His contempt for the West's old-boy politics is softened, slightly, by humor. One of his stump stories relates how Arizona sent Carl Hayden to Congress in 1927

to gain seniority and build the Central Arizona Project. During 42 years in Congress, Babbitt says, Hayden had only one close call: He was almost beaten by rumors that he was dead. An enterprising Arizona newspaper, Babbitt says, sent a reporter to Washington, D.C., where he found Hayden in a hospital — still alive. The photo of Hayden waving weakly from his bed brought him another landslide victory.

Hayden spent four decades inching up the seniority ladder so he could force construction of the CAP. Now a new native son of Arizona, with very different views of the West, takes over a powerful federal position.

Babbitt expressed his views on public lands policy in a talk titled "Public Use and the Future of the Federal Lands" given in March 1990 at a symposium sponsored by the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado, Boulder. It was printed in *A Society to Match the Scenery*, edited by Gary Holthaus, Patricia N. Limerick, Charles Wilkinson and Eve Stryker, 1991, the University of Colorado Press. In it, he takes on three of the West's holiest cows: multiple use, water development, and state control of water. Excerpts are reprinted below.

—Ed Marston

### Babbitt on multiple use

Whatever its original promise, multiple use is a concept that has proven unworkable in practice. Political pressure to increase timber cuts has caused the Forest Service to commit to doubling timber production for public lands... The federal courts have been largely unwilling to control forest abuse because the phrase "multiple use" is so vague that judges seem powerless to set priorities or otherwise limit the discretion of the Forest Service officials. Meanwhile, in Oregon, the heirs of John Muir are taking protest and civil disobedience directly into the old-growth forests.

... Congress, responding halfheartedly to public pressure, has enacted still more planning statutes, notably the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA). Yet without congressionally set priorities, expanded multiple-use planning has resulted in little more than interminable hearings and administrative reviews, which do little to restrain an agency determined to elevate timber cutting above all other values.

Just as the Organic Act of 1960 brought multiple use to the Forest Service, so the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 established a similar mandate for the BLM. However, the bureau, lacking the professional esprit of the Forest Service, tainted by politics and incompetence in upper management, and heavily influenced by mining and livestock constituencies, has been even slower to change...

### Babbitt on the Bureau of Reclamation

With a mandate to open desert lands to small farmers and with huge budgets financed by hydropower from federal dams, the bureau changed the course of Western development. Its practices have been the most environmentally destructive of all the public land agencies, and to this day the bureau has been scarcely touched by the reform movements that have begun, however slowly, to change the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

### Babbitt on solutions

The reform agenda for Western land and water must start by recognizing that multiple-use planning has, for the most part, been a failure. Multiple use skirts the central reality that in the new urbanizing West, there is no longer enough space to accommodate every competing use on every section of the public domain. Commodity production, whether of timber, minerals, or livestock, is increasingly infringing on the broader

public values of open space, wildlife, wilderness and recreation. Choices will have to be made...

The next step in the evolution of public land-use policy is to replace multiple-use management with a new concept — dominant public use — that gives priority to recreation, wildlife and watershed uses. Dominant public use would be a mandate to reconsider destructive resource exploitation that is of marginal economic importance...



Bruce Babbitt

Mary LaVor © 1991

## Babbitt in his words

### Babbitt on water

The battle for Western water reform will require changes in both the big land agencies and the Bureau of Reclamation. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management still retain powers to protect streams and other riparian areas by asserting federal rights to instream flows. Federal agencies can also protect federal waters by petitioning for instream flow rights under state laws; yet with just an occasional exception, they have failed to do so...

The Bureau of Reclamation presents a special challenge to public water reform. With its cultivated image as champion of the small farmer (although it is a longtime ally of corporate agriculture) and a long record of delivering water projects and public power to eager Western members of Congress, the bureau has never attracted the public scrutiny routinely accorded most other federal agencies...

In environmental terms, the case for taking on and reforming the bureau is simple. Growing Western cities must have more water, and they will either get that water from agriculture (which consumes more than 80 percent of the water used in the West) or they will continue to raid and destroy the remaining waters located on the public lands.

Meanwhile, the bureau remains locked in a tight embrace with the apparatus of Western agriculture, who are dedicated to protecting the political power of their organizations by blocking water transfers, even when individual farmers may want the option of selling their water. The reform task is to break the link between the bureau and the agricultural bureaucracies, and redirect the bureau toward a policy of facilitating market water-transfers. Doing so will be about as easy as transitioning the Kremlin to a market economy.

One reform alternative is to abolish the bureau and transfer its river-management functions to interstate river-basin councils modeled on the Northwest Power Planning Council. A less drastic alternative is to abolish the bureau's construction budget and authority for new project starts, take hydropower revenues from the basin accounts that feed bureau projects, transfer them to the general fund, and enact a new reclamation law that eliminates all federal barriers to voluntary market water transfers...

One hundred years ago, Congress authorized the first forest reserves, putting a new concept of perpetual ownership of public lands on the path toward public acceptance and support. Now, at the start of the coming century, the American public and its leaders must accelerate and complete the step of dedicating public land and public waters to the highest and best public use. ■



# Making Interior hum ...

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Babbitt and whoever he appoints as director may choose to reform the BLM incrementally, on a state-by-state basis. But if they listen to the environmental community, they may take harsher steps to change the \$1 billion agency and its 9,650 employees.

Take, for example, the bleak picture painted by Johanna Wald, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council and an expert on grazing policy. She portrays the BLM as an outlaw bureaucracy, which can't account for the money it gets, including half of its range improvement money. She also says it ignores both laws and regulations, and that the ranchers who sit on its grazing boards go well beyond their stated duties to illegally deal with all aspects of BLM management.

Ed Norton, who heads the Grand Canyon Trust, says of Babbitt: "He won't come in like an avenging angel. He will want his people as undersecretary, assistant secretary, and so on. He will have his program. He will look for people within each agency who will support his policies. However, he won't be ideological, like Watt, with an ideology that extends beyond land management questions."

But whatever the agency, Babbitt and his agency heads will have to play hardball at times. It is reported that even before his confirmation hearing, Babbitt has been handed a list of "moles" that former interior secretaries Watt and Donald Hodel buried in the land management agencies. These political appointees are now protected by career civil service status, or they are career people who served as faithful servants of the Watt-Hodel ideology. It is taken for granted that these moles must be removed from influential positions if the

new policies are to be implemented.

## Legacy of obstruction

Babbitt will find another legacy of past administrations. In an Oct. 12, 1987, article in *High Country News* by Rocky Barker, former Interior Secretary James Watt boasted that he and a successor, Donald Hodel, made changes that will last up to 50 years.

"We wrote regulations for every field office. We spent tons of hours not writing news releases, but writing manuals. We made massive changes that way, and were expecting intense private hostility because the professionals (the career civil servants) knew what we were doing. But they couldn't get their hands on it."

Watt also tried to institutionalize a barrier between civil servants and political appointees. According to one Interior employee who asked not to be identified, "Watt told the career people: none of you can be trusted because you worked for Jimmy Carter. He put in writing the rule that political appointees are not to talk to career people."

Watt and Hodel also used the budget process to change agencies. At the BLM, they eliminated funds for range, for example, which kept BLM officials off the public lands and gave ranchers a freer rein. They also raised the BLM's budget for oil, gas, coal and mining, for which there was relatively little demand,

and cut recreation, wildlife and conservation.

Finally, says a former Interior official, "They chased off a fair number of young people, and by restricting hiring they kept new people from coming in. But the people they chased off are out there, and they can be recruited back."

## A dysfunctional department

Taken as a whole, Interior is dysfunctional. Employees identify themselves as working for the Park Service, or the BLM, but never for Interior. The divisions extend to the top. For a long time, BLM director Bob Burford did not speak to Park Service director William Penn Mott.

This interagency conflict served a political purpose. If the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation can't settle a conflict over an endangered fish, the conflict must be settled by the secretary, or even the White House. This encouraged disputes because Reclamation, until recently Interior's top dog, had little reason to settle at the agency level since it always won at the highest political levels.

If Babbitt can hire agency heads who cooperate, disputes over endangered species and the like may be settled more on the basis of science and less on the basis of politics.

Babbitt's record as governor of Arizona from 1978 to 1987 indicates that he

can unite Interior while changing policy. While governor, Babbitt spoke out against the Sagebrush Rebellion, called for reform of Western water law, fought to control groundwater pumping and helped clean up Arizona's copper industry.

This was revolutionary for Arizona. But most impressive was his ability to take these stands without alienating agriculture, ranching or mining. He was able to institute change without splitting the state into warring factions. Arizona didn't turn into Yugoslavia until Babbitt left office. Then, under Gov. Evan Mecham, the various interests went for each other's throats.

## An agency in shock

How Babbitt will approach the agencies and their people won't be known for months. Whatever path he takes, observers agree he has his work cut out for him.

George Herzog, who headed the National Park Service under presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon, says Babbitt will find himself in charge of a shattered National Park Service.

"I think the agency is in cultural shock because of political harassment and suppression. They turned the National Park Service into the world's largest tourist promotion agency. And, of course, you have people who have been stashed throughout the agencies, and who subscribe to the rape, ravage and ruin philosophy. You have to get rid of them." Beyond that, Herzog says he does not expect Babbitt to copy the Watt-Hodel approach.

However, Herzog says the park system can't be insulated from politics. "The National Park Service is a political agency. These are public lands owned by the people of the United States, and the people have a right to influence, through the election, how they are managed."

But Herzog continues, "For the last

continued on next page

## Big changes are coming to Interior, Udall says

Stewart Udall, the nation's last great secretary of Interior, says the prospect of Bruce Babbitt as secretary of Interior makes him "cautiously ecstatic."

"He couldn't be taking over at a better time. The avenues of action have been blocked for years" and the nation is ready for change.

Udall ran Interior from 1961 to 1968 under presidents Kennedy and Johnson and he thinks Babbitt will find the same situation Udall found when he became secretary.

"In 1961, after eight years of Eisenhower, we inherited pent-up demand. We could almost feel pressure moving things in the right direction."

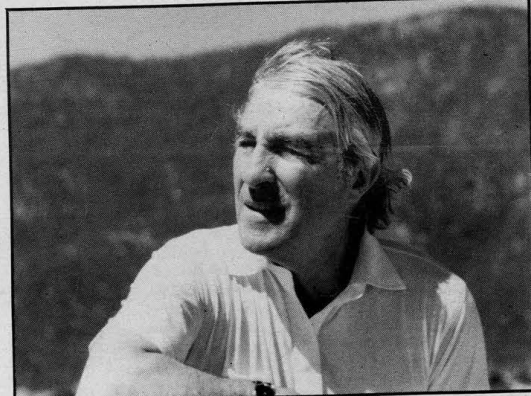
Udall, who serves with Babbitt on the board of the Grand Canyon Trust, says he believes most of Interior's agencies are ready to change. "If the agencies are given new marching orders, the troops are ready to carry them out."

But Udall says inspiring the agencies may take a new kind of agency head. For the last several administrations, agency heads have been political appointees. Udall says Babbitt may change that.

"It wouldn't surprise me if Bruce went back to the old pattern and picked leaders from within the agencies." According to Udall, an up-from-the-ranks head does a great deal to strengthen the "esprit and morale of an agency." That, he says, is especially important today: "There are a lot of frustrated people in these agencies just waiting to do a good job."

Udall does say some agencies are more ready to change than others. He is optimistic about the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "I put those three agencies together. But the Bureau of Reclamation needs a thorough shakeup. It will be interesting to see what Bruce does. He knows the bureau from its building of the Central Arizona Project while he was governor."

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is a special case. "All of us thought that with self-determination in the 1970s, the BIA would wither as the tribes took more responsibility. But it hasn't happened, in part because no administration wanted to shrink it. Under Reagan and Bush, the BIA was seen as a tar-



Stewart Udall

baby — they didn't want to get near it.

"But Bruce told *The New York Times* that he wants to play a larger role in Indian matters. That's enormously heartening to me. And he has the experience. Arizona is 28 percent Indian land."

Udall suggests that Babbitt, to succeed at Interior, will have to do more than lead its many diverse agencies. "He has to be persuasive in dealing with the Congress." He also has to put Interior back on the national stage.

"I thought we took the Western label off Interior. After eight years, Interior and myself had a national following. But since then, the label has crept back on."

He thinks Babbitt could reverse the trend. "The new administration needs someone in addition to Vice President Gore to talk about the environment to the nation as a whole. Babbitt, with his experience, could be that other voice."

— Ed Marston

## Making Interior hum ...

*continued from previous*

12 years, the politics has gone into each park." Political appointees, he says, ignore the head of the National Park Service and go right to each park superintendent with their demands.

"Instead, the politics should be between the head of the Park Service and the political appointees. If I, as Park Service head, sign off on a decision, I'm accountable and responsible." But under the present system, he says, political moves are hidden, and no one publicly accepts responsibility for decisions.

He cites as an example a decision to build housing in Yosemite National Park for 1,000 people. Herzog says the political process that led to that decision is unknown.

"Ask the Park Service and they say

the decision came out of the planning process. Ridenour (present NPS head) won't take responsibility for it." In Herzog's view, blaming the "planning process" attempts to disguise the political moves that dictated the decision.

Herzog partially exempts the present Interior secretary, Manuel Lujan, from his denunciation of recent Interior leadership. "Lujan has restored civility to Interior, and he's entitled to a lot of credit for that. But he gave them no leadership."

Herzog thinks Interior is ready for leadership. "The entire Department of Interior is awaiting rejuvenation, like seeds in a desert awaiting rain. Leadership will do it."

### What about the White House?

Babbitt can only be a strong leader

if the White House lets him. Under Bush, most Cabinet members reported directly to former chief of staff, John Sununu, who made decisions on wetlands, old-growth logging and the like. With Sununu gone, Bush seemed unable to choose between EPA head William Riley and conservative advisors over how to handle the Rio Conference on Environment. Bush's dependence on Sununu was typical. President Reagan had Donald Regan, and Richard Nixon governed through his White House team of H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

Early indications are that Clinton's style may be more collegial, with Cabinet secretaries having more access to him and a freer hand in running their domains. His chief of staff will be Thomas (Mack) McLarty, who, according to the *Los Angeles Times* for Dec. 13, 1992, comes to the White House with no known policy agenda.

The *Times* also wrote: "Both during the campaign and in his latter years as

governor, Clinton tended to resist centralizing power in any single subordinate. He likes a decision-making structure looser and more informal than is typical in business — or for that matter, politics — and he is known for delaying decisions until confident that he has heard all points of view, often long after those around him feel it is wise."

Westerners may find that Babbitt has the same kind of penchant for listening to lots of views. Babbitt helped found and is still on the board of the Grand Canyon Trust, an environmental group. Ed Norton, the group's head, says:

"I expect Babbitt at Interior to be as tough on me as Lujan was. I don't consider Babbitt 'one of us.' I think ranchers will be treated in the same way I am."

Because of that, Norton says, "I am delighted personally, and for the West."

Ed Marston is publisher of *High Country News*.

## Senior BLMer recalls how James Watt did things

**B**ruce Babbitt's reign as secretary of Interior will depend on the several hundred top managers who run Interior's agencies. It is they who will implement policies on grazing, mining, water, off-road vehicles and parks that will be handed down by political appointees such as Babbitt and his agency heads.

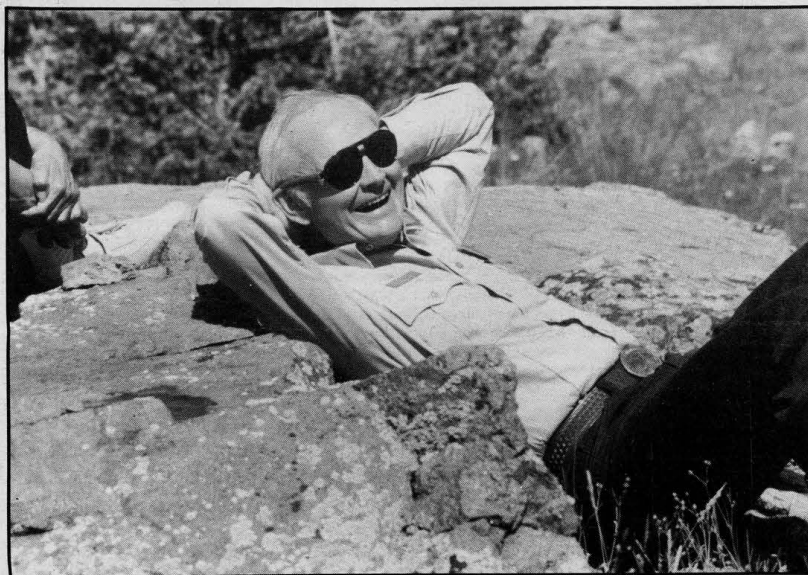
Past administrations — at least back to Jimmy Carter — treated these career civil servants with scorn and distrust. And there are reasons for the distrust: Career people may have their agendas and ideologies, they may have long-standing ties to miners or loggers or environmentalists, and they may have relationships with U.S. senators and representatives that prevent new administrations from steering agencies in a different direction.

But they may also be ready to serve each new administration as loyally as they served the last. Bob Moore, director of the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado and a 37-year BLM veteran, says career people have an obligation to pay attention to election results:

"It's important for career people to recognize the role of politics — the people have spoken. The political appointees are the means by which the new administration puts its stamp on Interior."

But Moore says political appointees also have obligations. "The new crowd has to use the organization that's already in place, at least to get things going." James Watt, President Ronald Reagan's Interior secretary from 1981 to 1983, is Moore's example of what happens when political appointees and career people don't work together.

Watt's most memorable mistake was his banning of the Beach Boys from joining a Fourth of July Celebration in Washington, D.C. (He replaced



Bob Moore

the unwholesome Beach Boys with Wayne Newton.)

But Watt's fatal mistake was mishandling Interior's federal coal leasing program. To make that mistake, Watt had to tromp right over Bob Moore.

Watt arrived at Interior just as Moore and a team were finishing up work on a new coal leasing program. The Carter administration, which eventually got over its initial distrust of career people, had instructed the team to "make coal leasing more businesslike." Moore says they had come up with a strong proposal, and he was prepared to present it to Watt at a meeting the incoming secretary called to review energy policy.

But Moore recalls that the new secretary was "extremely suspicious of the BLM's professionals." At the meeting, "Watt told the oil and gas guy: 'You sound like (Democratic Sen. Dale) Bumpers. I don't like him, and I don't like you.' For the rest of the meeting, Watt referred to the oil and gas guy as 'Bumpers.'"

Moore the "coal guy," didn't do

much better. "Me he called a 'centrist' — he saw me as wanting to manipulate the world from Washington."

Watt would have nothing to do with the proposed reforms. He had different ideas, and they led to a scandal and his resignation.

Moore says Watt could have survived had he understood the role of Interior's veterans. "We're professionals. We've been through administrative changes before. We're not here to fight them. We're here to help them. We tried to anticipate what they (Reagan and Watt) might expect from energy policy. We knew there had been an election. We knew their general view. We hoped they would say to us:

"We're not telling you how to do it, but this is what we want done."

"And if we were doing our jobs, we'd be ready with options."

But Watt wasn't interested in policy options from people who had consorted with Carter appointees.

It was a familiar story to Moore, who for his last 17 years with the BLM has held a high enough position to

observe transitions.

"When the Carter administration came in, everyone was tainted. They came in with a zealous environmental mission, and the assumption was that no one in place could understand them. From the secretary of Interior on down, their attitude was that they were dealing with the enemy."

"It took them a while to figure out that that wasn't true. By the time they left, they were singing the praises of the career civil servant."

What does Moore expect from the Clinton-Babbitt team? "The Bush people made it as smooth as possible. And the Clinton folks have done their homework. They were interested in learning about management issues, rather than about particular programs."

"They didn't focus on BLM wilderness designation, or on Animas-LaPlata, or on sage grouse. They wanted to know about management structure and relations. It's been a good process, from what I could see."

— Ed Marston



# Babbitt wins Interior, by a hair

by Tony Davis

**A**t first, the fight for Interior secretary seemed a walkaway: former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, a national environmental leader on public lands issues, vs. Rep. Bill Richardson, who is little known outside his home state of New Mexico and Washington, D.C.

But when the weeks-long struggle for the post ended Christmas Eve, Babbitt had barely prevailed. The day before, a front-page *New York Times* article had trumpeted half-Hispanic Richardson as the likely choice of Bill Clinton, who was groping to find enough minority appointees to make his Cabinet "look like America."

It appears that a last-minute wave of protests from national environmental groups killed Richardson's chances. It was a fight that created more strains in the already tense relationship between environmentalists and Hispanics, who all but accused environmentalists of racism in the aftermath.

Babbitt seemed technically more qualified for the job simply because he has nine years' experience running a Western state. Now president of the League of Conservation Voters, Babbitt has been thinking, writing about and acting on environmental issues almost since he was old enough to hike the Grand Canyon.

He was the crown jewel for environmentalists, who had chafed for more than a decade under the likes of secretaries James Watt, Donald Hodel and Manuel Lujan. They were thrilled at the idea of having Interior run by a man who in the 1980s had fought to shut down a polluting copper smelter in Douglas, Ariz.

"It really represented Babbitt's per-

sonal commitment to protecting the environment," said Bob Yuhnke, a former Environmental Defense Fund attorney who led the push to close the 70-year-old Phelps Dodge smelter. "He had no political interests to serve. Asking that a major polluting facility be shut down to protect public health and the skies over Arizona was not the kind of thing we heard from any other political leader in the West."

As governor, Babbitt helped reform the state's groundwater supply and quality laws, expanded the state parks system, fought for wilderness and pushed to raise fees for grazing and mining on state lands. Most important, he fought those good fights without alienating the state's entrenched mining and farming interests, who sat at the table with him time and again to hash out differences.

Some Arizona observers even predict that Babbitt will at times disappoint environmental groups at Interior because he is a pragmatist, not a purist: He can bend with the political wind.

He sided with the state's political establishment by backing the \$4 billion Central Arizona Project to pump water from the Colorado River to the state's interior.

As a private lawyer in the 1990s, he represented rural Nevada counties struggling to stop Las Vegas from building a project to "steal" the rural water. Yet he also successfully lobbied the Arizona Legislature to help a hazardous-waste recycler avoid stricter regulations, according to The Associated Press.

"Bruce is a moderate Democrat with an environmental bent," said Steve Weatherspoon, a Tucson lawyer who has represented mining interests. "I've never viewed him as being on one side or the other."

On the surface, Richardson seems a staunch environmentalist, too. In 10 years in the House, he'd compiled 70-plus ratings from the League of Conservation Voters. He'd fought hard to slow the opening of New Mexico's nuclear waste dump, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, to improve clean air laws and to set aside national parks and monuments all over the state. While mining companies regularly fill his campaign coffers with contributions, he last year voted for reform of the 1872 hard-rock mining law.

While many environmentalists publicly refused to choose between the two for weeks, most privately favored Babbitt. Some also raised red flags about Richardson. They worried that he responded more to political pressure than from conviction and that it was often hard to tell where he stood.

While national Hispanic groups such as *La Raza* and the League of Latin American Citizens backed Richardson for secretary, a few other Hispanic leaders were less than thrilled with him. And although New Mexico's 18 Indian pueblo leaders supported Richardson, Navajo Tribal Chairman Peterson Zah and the National Congress of American Indians preferred Babbitt.

"We have attempted to reach out to Bill Richardson in hopes we could have some kind of dialogue on specific issues of concern around environmental justice and how pollution affects communities of color," said Richard Moore, director of the Albuquerque-based Southwest Network for Environmental Justice. "But we have not seen a hand extended from Congressman Richardson."

When it appeared at first that Richardson would get the job, environmental groups such as the League of

Conservation Voters and the Environmental Defense Fund wrote to transition team officials and met with transition leader Vernon Jordan to press their case. Finally, after Clinton named his second Hispanic Cabinet official, former Denver Mayor Federico Peña, as Transportation secretary, Babbitt's path to the job was clear.

Afterward, former New Mexico Gov. Toney Anaya, *La Raza* leader Raul Yzaguirre, and Indian environmentalist Richard Regan were bitter at environmentalists for sandbagging Richardson. Regan, of the Center for Policy Alternatives in Washington, D.C., said it's not fair to judge a Hispanic candidate by mainstream environmentalist standards. He said minorities often approach environmental issues differently.

Recently, his group surveyed 500 minority state legislators around the country, and most said the economy was their top environmental priority. They also considered weatherizing a home of more concern than recycling.

"There's always going to be some Bruce Babbitt out there who will be a nose or two ahead of a person of color candidate, who will not have that mainstream environmentalist thing behind him in his resumé," Regan said. "If we're looking for a person of color with such a spotless environmental resumé, I wonder if such a creature exists."

Environmentalists replied that they simply wanted someone of Babbitt's stature in the job. As The Wilderness Society's Ben Beach put it, "We had a chance to get a Babe Ruth in there, and that was Bruce Babbitt." ■

Tony Davis reports for the *Albuquerque Tribune* and is a frequent contributor to *High Country News*.

## Babbitt's domain: 1.9 billion acres

The domain of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt encompasses a \$7.25 billion budget, 75,000 employees, and more than 500 million acres of land onshore, and another 1.4 billion acres offshore.

Interior's holdings sprawl across the nation. It manages everything from the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island in New York to San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area. But its heart is

in the West.

Interior is more an idea than a reality. It is composed of many diverse, often antagonistic agencies and bureaus, which are described below:

**The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** is the lead federal agency in the conservation of the nation's migratory birds, endangered species, certain mammals and sport fishes. It operates 483 wildlife refuges covering more than 90 million acres as well as a system of fish hatcheries. It also enforces a series of wildlife laws, including the Endangered Species Act.

Its director serves under the assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks and administers

6,500 employees and a \$1 billion budget. The agency was formed in the 1880s to complete a survey of the nation's plants and animals. Critics nicknamed it the "Bureau of Extravagant Mammology."

Major issues include:

- Endangered species. The agency is responsible for recovery plans for the northern spotted owl, the grizzly bear, the wolf, and hosts of other species. The listing of new endangered and threatened species will accelerate in 1993.
- National wildlife refuges. The Congress will consider a new organic act for the diverse and abused system. The act would specify whether refuges should be managed for hunting or biological diversity and what uses are compatible with refuges.

**The Bureau of Land Management** oversees 272 million "multiple use" acres of public lands located primarily in 11 Western states. The BLM also manages minerals underlying 572 million acres. The BLM also manages minerals underlying an additional 300 million acres of federal and Indian lands.

Its director serves under the assistant secretary of land and minerals management and oversees 9,650 employees and a \$1.1 billion budget. In 1946, the Grazing Service merged with the General Land Office to create the BLM within the Department of Interior. Environmentalists nicknamed it the "Bureau of Livestock and Mining."

Major issues include:

- Grazing reform. Environmentalists and fiscal conservatives want the grazing fee raised to market value. Critics also say livestock should be banned from some public land and managed better on other public land.
- 1872 Mining Law reform. Current law allows miners and others to gain ownership of public land for as little as \$2.50 an acre.

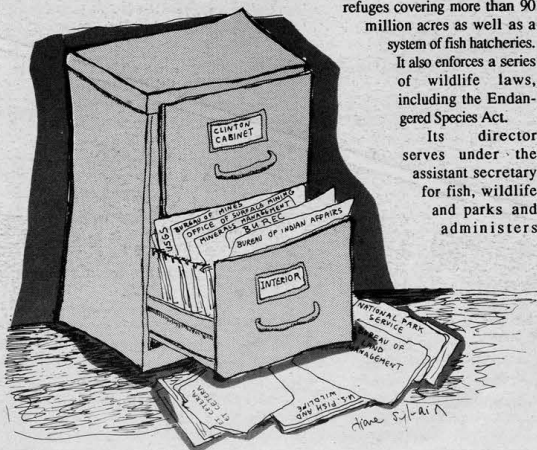
**The National Park Service** administers parks, monuments and historic sites for their recreational, historic and natural values. It oversees 357 units totaling more than 80 million acres, including 51 national parks and 79 national monuments. The agency also coordinates the Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trail System.

Its director serves under the assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks and administers 14,287 permanent employees, 6,818 seasonal workers and a \$1.3 billion budget. The agency began with the establishment of Yellowstone Park in 1872. The 1916 National Park Organic Act ordered the agency to manage park lands for both public enjoyment and preservation.

Major issues include:

- Employee benefits and housing. Critics say these need to be upgraded to stem the loss of Park Service employees.

*continued on next page*



# Babbitt's domain ...

continued from previous page

- Resource degradation. The agency lacks solid information about its natural and cultural resources.
- Outside threats. Park advocates want to give the agency influence over nearby logging, geothermal drilling and other developments that damage park resources.
- Concessionaires. Critics say that the Park Service does not collect enough money from the restaurants, gift shops and hotels that operate within park boundaries.

**Bureau of Reclamation** projects irrigate more than 10 million acres of arid lands in the 17 Western states. Its commissioner serves under the assistant secretary for water and science and administers 7,500 employees with an \$894 million budget, of which \$564 million is allocated for construction.

The bureau was created by the Reclamation Act of 1902 to reclaim arid lands in the West. Today, that mission is done — critics say overdone.

Major issues include:

- Salinity and selenium. Some of the bureau's irrigation projects have concentrated naturally occurring salts and selenium in the soil and water, threatening fish, wildlife and agriculture.
- Animas-La Plata. The bureau's last huge water project, planned for southwestern Colorado, is in deep trouble after the EPA flunked its supplemental EIS last month and information was pried out of the bureau on the project's true costs.
- Dam management. As a result of the listing of endangered species, the

bureau is required to manage its dams in the Columbia, Colorado and Missouri basins to enhance river flows.

- Survival. Some say this is it for the bureau: Adapt or die.

**The Bureau of Indian Affairs** is responsible for the major portion of the trust responsibility of the United States to Indian tribes. It serves 1 million Indians from 500 tribes on 278 reservations. Its leader, the assistant secretary for Indian affairs, oversees Interior's largest agency with 13,500 employees and a \$1.5 billion budget. The BIA began in the War Department in 1824, and was transferred to Interior in 1949.

Major issues include:

- Gaming. This is a \$2 billion industry; critics want the 1988 law regulating Indian gambling tightened.
- Recognition of new tribes. Some 20 groups want tribal status from the BIA, with others waiting to apply.
- Water rights and land claims. Many outstanding water and land claims are being negotiated; settlements often involve a federal payoff.
- Reorganization. The BIA is periodically charged with massive fraud and corruption. Some want the agency reorganized to put more money under tribal control. A federal task force to examine reorganization received a two-year extension in December.

**The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement** establishes environmental and reclamation standards for surface coal mining. It mostly oversees state programs that regulate coal mining. Its director serves under the assistant secretary for land and

minerals and administers 1,000 employees and a \$300 million budget.

The OSM was created by the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act to regulate coal mining. It also collects a per-ton fee from coal producers to clean up abandoned mines.

Major issues include:

- Compliance with existing law. Environmentalists are suing OSM for allegedly failing to enforce the law. The Reagan administration weakened many regulations.
- Compliance with 1992 energy bill. The new energy bill requires OSM to develop a full plate of new regulations, including rules providing incentives for the re-mining of abandoned coal mine sites.

**The Bureau of Mines** develops information and technology to help industry meet the nation's mineral and material needs. Its director serves under the assistant secretary for land and minerals management and administers 2,400 employees and a \$173 million budget.

The agency was founded in 1910 following a series of highly publicized mine disasters to promote the health and safety of mine workers. In the 1970s, the worker health and safety program moved to the Department of Labor as the Mine Safety and Health Administration. In 1977, oversight of the coal industry went to the Office of Surface Mining, and management of energy minerals went to the Department of Energy.

Major issues include:

- Mission. The agency says it works to develop environmentally sound technologies. Environmentalists say it is still a business-as-usual R&D program for the mining industry.

**The Minerals Management Service** oversees the federal Outer Conti-

nental Shelf oil and gas drilling program and collects and distributes mineral royalties from federal and Indian lands. Its director serves under the assistant secretary for land and minerals management and oversees 2,100 employees and a \$205 million budget.

The MMS was created in 1982 by James Watt to administer the BLM's offshore leasing program and the U.S. Geological Survey's minerals royalties program.

Major issues include:

- Offshore oil and gas leasing. Opponents stopped large-scale oil and gas leasing off the continental shelf during the Reagan and Bush administrations. Industry and the agency hope the Clinton administration's commitment to natural gas, which represents 73 percent of the offshore mineral take, will revive offshore drilling.

**The U.S. Geological Survey** is a research agency that publishes maps and reports covering the nation's physical features and its mineral, fuel and water resources. It also evaluates hazards associated with earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, droughts, landslides, toxic materials and subsidence. Its director serves under the assistant secretary for water and science and administers 10,000 employees and an \$800 million budget. USGS was established by Congress in 1879, and charged with the "classification of the public lands, and examination of the geological structure, mineral resources, and products of the public domain." In recent years, it has broadened its activities to include research on global climate change and water quality.

- Mission. The Clinton administration could further stretch the agency's role in doing basic environmental research.

— Paul Larmer

## LETTERS

### COMBINE STRATEGIES TO SAVE WILDERNESS

Dear HCN,

I believe wilderness supporters have lost sight of what it is we want to accomplish and in the process have made some strategic blunders. The first mistake was to become preoccupied with the idea that only Congress can protect wilderness. The Montana Wilderness bill, for example, would designate 1.2 million acres of wilderness, study a few hundred thousand more, and release 6.5 million acres. Not a very good deal for wilderness. If anything, wilderness bills have been bad for wilderness in recent years, and one could argue the courts have saved more wilderness than Congress.

Albeit we must save what we can, we have fooled ourselves into thinking some of the pathetic little pieces of ice and rock with no water and wildlife, clearcut to their edges, grazed by sheep and cattle, and loved to death are wilderness. Designated wildernesses are even less protected in Alaska. If this is the price of saving it, it is like cutting off the dog's tail an inch at a time in the hope it won't hurt so much.

Another aspect of this debate that disturbs me is environmentalists are becoming afraid of their own shadows. Concessions we would have thought unthinkable a few years ago have become commonplace on the grounds we have to be realistic. I have been a witness to numerous decisions not to litigate because either we might lose or offend someone only to regret it later. In

the case of wilderness, I think we are compromising it away partly because most of us have forgotten or never knew what it was.

I think the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, re: its position on reserved water rights, has gotten a bum rap not because it called a good or bad shot, but because environmentalists ran into a congressional roadblock as a

result. This is a risk of any major legal action. It is not SCLDF's fault that Congress stinks.

Our strategy should be a combination of strategies rather than a preoccupation with any one of them. Fortunately, the diversity of the environmental community sees to this. We also must think big. The California Desert Protection bill and the proposed Wild Rockies

Act are thinking big, and Carter thought big when he made the Alaska withdrawals. Finally, we should be patient because wilderness is synonymous with patience and we shall drive ourselves crazy if we aren't.

David McCargo Jr.  
Anchorage, Alaska

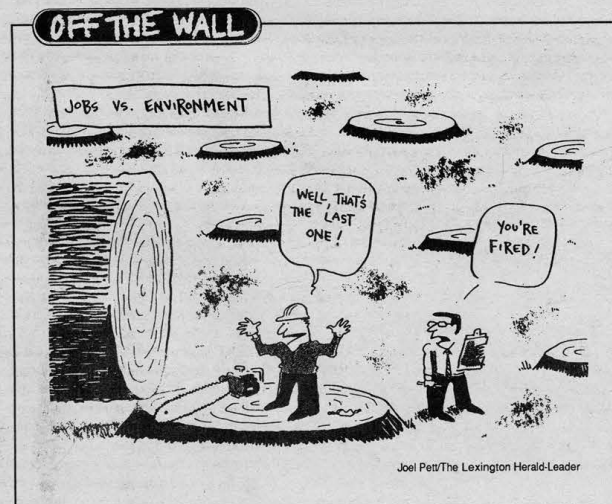
The writer is a former director of the Colorado Open Space Council Wilderness Workshop.

### NEWS IS BETTER THAN SPEED

Dear HCN,

Just thought I'd let you know that I received your Nov. 16 issue on Nov. 17, all the way down here in southeastern Texas. I find that totally amazing! However, I wouldn't waste too much time (i.e., money) on assuring such speedy delivery. I would sacrifice such for quality of articles and continued operation. Please keep up the good work. You are the only complete source of information on what's happening environmentally in the West.

Ronnie Rogers  
League City, Texas





## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Wilderness politics are anything but simple

by Louise Bruce

**T**he case for complexity in nature grows daily. The modern conservation vocabulary swells with terms like "biodiversity," "ecosystems," "cumulative effects" and "bioregions." More people are learning that all things and processes are interconnected, and most conservationists agree that a deeper understanding of interconnectedness will lead to better human relationships with our world.

Why, then, do some people refuse to recognize the principle of interconnectedness in politics?

The question presented itself in Stephen Stuebner's story centering on Montana wilderness legislation (*HCN*, 12/14/92). The Montana wilderness bill passed by the U.S. House last fall, Stuebner writes, "brought cheers" from the Montana Wilderness Association, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society and National Audubon Society.

Wrong. What brought approval from those organizations, or at least the Montana Wilderness Association, was the House's rejection of a contemptible bill passed by the Senate and its amendment of that bill to include additional wilderness areas, recognition of wilderness water rights, and better release language.

We didn't "cheer" the House bill; we encouraged people in the House for making positive changes.

It's understandable why that distinction would be lost on a reporter, whose zeal to plumb the interconnectedness of things might be tempered by deadlines or bias. What's difficult to understand is why strategic subtleties are lost on the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, an organization that extols the idea of interconnectedness ... except in the political realm.

As evidence that several conservation organizations sold out in the waning days of the recent congress, the Alliance points to a letter signed by groups that urged House members to support the Vento-Williams bill and not a measure offered by Rep. Peter Kostmayer, the chief sponsor of the Alliance-authored Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

For those who admit that wilderness politics aren't always simple, two reasons for the letter stand out:

## Kostmayer's bill was DOA

First, Kostmayer's bill was dead on arrival, having no chance to pass against the wishes of the House Interior Committee and two of the most respected environmental legislators in Congress, Reps. George Miller and Bruce Vento.

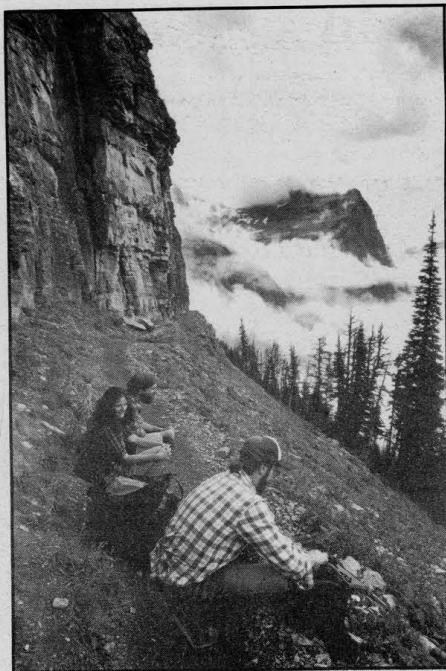
Second, there was a valid fear among conservationists that Montana's Rep. Ron Marlenee might succeed, if he maneuvered adroitly, in amending the Vento-Williams bill to include hard release language, the ultimate bane of any wilderness legislation. We could not allow confusion on the House floor over amendments to enhance that possibility.

Some conservationists therefore adopted a strategy that addressed perceived realities and offered the best chance for maximizing wilderness in any bill that passed the House.

Those who question — as the Alliance frequently does — the need to weigh political realities in lobbying for wilderness should examine the moves made by the Alliance's top ally in Congress at the time last fall when Montana legislation reached a climax.

Rep. Kostmayer did not share his plans with MWA and several other groups, nor did he, as it turned out, introduce the Alliance's bill on the House floor. He offered instead a substitute to the Williams-Vento bill that addressed only Montana portions of the Alliance's multistate plan.

Even then Kostmayer's substitute was flawed. It



Hikers on Highline Trail in Glacier National Park

failed to designate as wilderness over a million acres of roadless land that Montanans have spent years trying to protect, including the Crazy Mountains, Thompson Seton, Great Burn, Trout Creek, East Pioneers and others. Oddly, the Williams-Vento bill, insufficient as it was, protected 300,000 acres that the Kostmayer substitute did not.

Quite obviously, Rep. Kostmayer was a friend of Montana wilderness. But equally as obvious, he made some decisions in the heat of legislative action that didn't toe the ideological line established by his favorite constituents. Could it be that, when crunch time arrived, even the greatest congressional ally of a multistate wilderness bill was forced to deal with political reality, and when he did, he was bound, as all mortals are, to make some mistakes?

## The all-or-nothing approach

None of this is to say that conservationists shouldn't support the Alliance's goal and strive to gain maximum protection for all wildlands in all states of the Northern Rockies. But the Alliance wants that protection only as it comes in one bill and at one time. Will that strategy result in maximum wilderness return?

Is it wise, for example, for Montana conservationists to immediately incorporate the roadless lands of Idaho and Wyoming into their legislative objectives? Would more of Montana's wild country be protected if its fate were heavily influenced not only by Conrad Burns and Max Baucus, but also by Alan Simpson, Malcolm Wallop, Larry Craig, and Idaho's newest wilderness anachronism, Dirk Kempthorne?

Yes, of course we need to replace our local delegations. Yes, of course we need to build national constituencies for sweeping environmental legislation in the West. But how long will it take to accomplish those things, and what will we pay for the wait?

During the 1980s, over 500,000 acres of roadless land in Montana were logged, roaded or otherwise developed. More recently, areas such as the Badger-Two Medicine, Lost Silver, Mount Bushnell, and Nevada Mountain have been pushed precariously close to the chopping block. The Forest Service is now jumping through the legal and administrative hoops to enter those and several other roadless areas. The idea that roadless lands in Montana (or in Idaho, where over 200 timber sales are now being planned for roadless areas) are safe until a wilderness bill passes is a costly myth.

The dilemma of timing is illustrated sharply, if unintentionally, in a letter recently sent to MWA by David Brower, celebrated conservationist and current president of the Earth Island Action Group.

In making an argument for MWA to embrace the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, Brower

refers to MWA's past leadership in gaining protection for the Scapegoat, Absaroka-Beartooth, and Great Bear wilderness areas, as well as the Wild and Scenic segment of the Missouri River. By winning those past issues, Brower says, MWA has a record of uncompromising advocacy.

## One step at a time

But look again. The Lincoln-Scapegoat backcountry wasn't entirely protected in 1972. Twenty years later, we're still trying to add 100,000 acres to the original designation of 250,000 acres.

Likewise, we didn't win everything in the Absaroka-Beartooth in 1978. We're still trying to add tens of thousands of acres — Line Creek Plateau, Republic Mountain, Burnt Mountain, Mount Rae, Tie Creek, Dexter Point, Coffee Creek, and Dome Mountain — not included in the original designation.

We didn't complete the Great Bear in 1978. We're still trying to add significant roadless acreages on both the Middle and South Forks of the Flathead River.

And the Wild Missouri? We've barely begun. There are dozens of riparian BLM areas that need wilderness designation if the Missouri River ecosystem in central Montana is to remain healthy.

Brower's recommendation that conservationists settle for nothing less than immediate and complete protection of all wildlands remaining in five states contradicts the very evidence he offers to support his counsel. Would Brower — or the Alliance — argue that MWA should have opposed the legislation that established the Scapegoat, Great Bear, and Absaroka-Beartooth wilderness areas because the bills didn't protect 100 percent of the areas at one time?

Victories in the conservation arena — or anywhere else — are seldom complete or static. As an undeniable element of nature, wilderness politics is defined as much by processes as by objects, and the failure to understand those processes is a failure to understand the idea of interconnectedness. The Scapegoat Wilderness victory will never be total: it will be accomplished in steps — first 250,000 acres, then 100,000 acres, then again as much acreage as necessary to sustain the area's health.

Complex as the political process sometimes is, MWA's position is straightforward: We will commit every resource we have, for as long as it takes, to protect all wild country in Montana. In the matter of wildlands legislation, we insist on optimum boundaries and maximum acreage, but our ultimate, non-negotiable interest will be statutory language that allows the American public to revisit and expand wilderness boundaries whenever it chooses to do so.

The goals of the Montana Wilderness Association and the Alliance for the Wild Rockies are similar, but our methods differ, particularly as they apply to human interconnectedness. "When people get in the way," says Steve Kelly, the president of the Alliance, "we ask them to move. When they don't move, you've got to go around them."

That's the language of exclusion and proscription, the antithesis of grass-roots activism. Wilderness will endure only with popular support; people won't change their environmental attitudes simply because someone who professes to know better has told them to do so. At MWA, when people get in the way and don't move, we strive to listen, to inform and — if we're good at our work — to build new support for preservation of the wild. In a state where just six weeks ago 47 percent of the electorate voted for Republican Ron Marlenee, that's a long-term challenge many conservation groups won't face up to.

The Alliance professes a profound belief in man's responsibility to manage ecosystems, but it practices political separatism. The Alliance wants to preserve diversity, but it condemns behavior that doesn't conform to its own.

The Montana Wilderness Association encourages the Alliance's promotion of ecosystem protection and we welcome criticism that will help MWA to become a better advocate for that cause. But the Alliance's mean-spirited treatment of allies is a counterproductive waste of energy. If the Alliance really wants people to understand interconnectedness, it should lead by example. ■

Louise Bruce lives in Dillon, Montana, and is president of the Montana Wilderness Association's governing council.

## LETTERS

### A ROAD LESS TRAMMELED

Dear HCN,

I was dismayed to see Lou Dawson's letter (HCN, 11/30/92), in which he asks:

"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."

I'd encourage Mr. Dawson to visit an area right outside his back door, the West Snowmass Creek drainage, where the ecology differs markedly from that of less-trammeled, surrounding areas — and all because of one thing: roads. The fact that the majority of this area is designated wilderness seems to be having little effect on the rate of ecological degradation here. In fact, in reference to this area Mr. Dawson is absolutely on target: there is little difference between the legal wilderness and the road-accessible backcountry to the north. It has all been subjected to very heavy use and has suffered accordingly.

As Mr. Dawson rightly says, roads are a symptom, but they are also the cause of most of the environmental damage on our public lands. With fewer roads, we would have many fewer scarred hillsides in the California desert, far less erosion and subsequent salmon kill in the Pacific Northwest, and less fragmentation of what remains of pristine old-growth forest habitat here in Colorado's national forests. In fact, even Jerry Franklin, forest ecologist for the Forest Service in Washington, has admitted that roads are by far the most damaging element of any timber sale. ...

Sandy Shea  
Boulder, Colorado

### HORSES FROM HELL

Dear HCN,

"Cowboy poet" and rancher Howard Parker paints a pretty grim picture for those of us living in the West (HCN, 10/19/92). There are, he suggests, hordes of wild horses and burros (to which he ascribes nothing less than demonic tendencies) roaming the land. What are these four-legged thugs up to? For one thing, Parker claims, they have single-handedly wiped out the indigenous desert sheep population. He goes on to assert that these unholy and non-native creatures destroy their own habitat as well as that of every other animal sharing the range. Sound like cows? Guess again, it's the Horses from Hell!

After reading Parker's guest essay, I closed my eyes and tried to picture a wild burro murdering a bighorn sheep. Because, in all my years of living in and traveling throughout the West, I have never even seen a wild horse or burro. But wait! What's that coming up the road? It's a gang of wild horses and they look mean. Better get my gun.

Brad M. Purdy  
Boise, Idaho

### IT COULD BE CONTAGIOUS

Dear HCN,

OK ... I confess. I was infected a long time ago. I've been a carrier for years. Oh, it was bad at first. I had chronic outbreaks that would last for months on end. It affected everything I did, colored my relationships, interfered with work ... I was a mess. But all that

began to change in 1977 when I got my first federal appointment.

You see, I'm an incurable idealist. Only in the last decade have I been able, with steady doses of bureaucracy, to keep my episodes to a minimum.

So you can imagine my terror at seeing an outbreak appear at the hand of the Bureau of Land Management's H. James Fox (HCN, 8/24/92). It was with pounding heart that I attempted to call him back to earth (HCN, 9/21/92). Sigh ... I should have known better than to stick my finger in the wet dirt below another Teton Dam. Enter Chuck Romaniello (HCN, 10/19/92) and Lynne Sebastian (HCN, 11/16/92). Mr. Romaniello finishes an even-toned description of the "real world" BLM by affirming that "messengers of bad news" should leap onto the sword of truth-telling. Ms. Sebastian wants to "end the repression" with an appeal to hope. Yeepee! The millennium must be at hand.

Trust me, I'm not having an episode, but ... I agree. I want to see my friends stay on, make tough decisions, and manage our natural resources with good science. I'm tired of paying dues to

Vista Wildlife Refuge charges that a lawsuit filed by environmental groups (including The Wilderness Society) "missed the real problem" and "never address(es) how and for what should (the refuge) be managed." I have to wonder if Mr. Bingham has read either the lawsuit or the legislation creating the refuge. Under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the refuge at Monte Vista was established in 1953 "for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." That seems fairly clear.

This is also clear: Despite its knowledge of documented adverse impacts from grazing, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has never determined whether grazing is compatible with the primary purpose of the refuge as an "inviolate sanctuary" for migratory birds. This violates the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act. Nor has the Fish and Wildlife Service ever evaluated the environmental impacts of its grazing program in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. This violates the National Environmental Policy Act.

As an advocate of "holistic resource

### ROADS TOO OFTEN MEAN DEATH

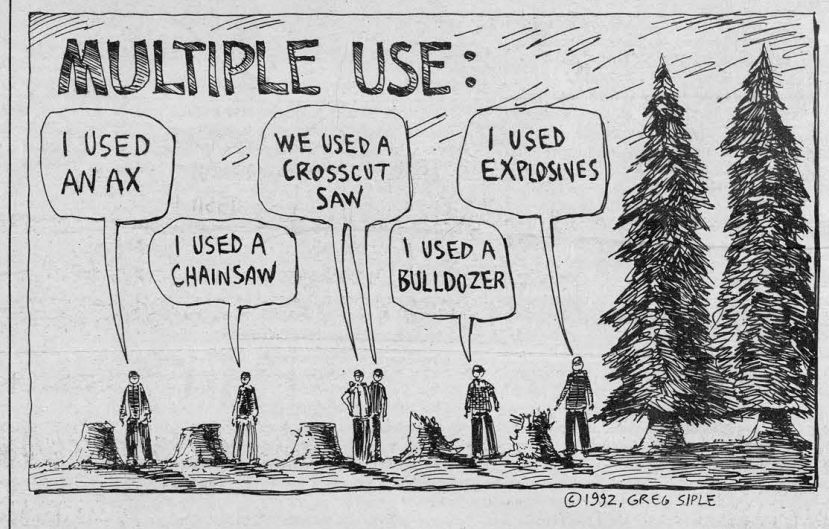
Dear HCN,

I agree with Lou Dawson that bans and bigotry are not the answer to our ecological problems (HCN, 11/30/92). However, I strongly disagree with his assertion that roads do not have an impact on biodiversity.

A vast literature documents the negative impact of roads on native species. In what has become a classic study, D.C. Wilcove demonstrated the pernicious effect of fragmentation on migratory songbirds (Ecology, 1985). R.P. Thiel showed that road density is the best indicator of habitat suitability for wolves — more roads resulting in fewer wolves (American Midland Naturalist, 1985). The same lethal effect on grizzly bears has been presented in the research of D.J. Mattson (refs. in Conservation Biology 5(3), 1991). In a recent issue of Conservation Biology (Vol. 6(2), 1992), R.W. Tyser and C.A. Worley presented strong correlations between roads and the invasion of alien plant species.

Mr. Dawson states that he's "tired of reading why things are bad," so I am

## OFF THE WALL



organizations like the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. I love it when my boss says, "We've got to walk our talk." Meanwhile, my agency "therapy" consists of resignations by good people, career management posturing, waffling, and a win-loss record that brings tears of frustration. I'm worried, though ... Ever since Nov. 3, I've had this terrible and familiar "aura" that proceeds a full-blown episode of my affliction. I've started having weird dreams about line managers actually listening to input from field professionals ... and acting on it. Is this the Second Coming?

Forrest (Woody) Hesselbarth  
Grangeville, Idaho

The writer says he is a minion on an all-wilderness Forest Service Ranger District.

### FOR THE BIRDS

Dear HCN,

Sam Bingham's guest opinion (HCN, 12/28/92) concerning grazing at Monte

management," a method whose benefits are arguable, Mr. Bingham understandably wants your readers to believe that this part of the lawsuit was simply a vehicle for raging against grazing. He's wrong, and has completely missed the big picture. The lawsuit challenges the Fish and Wildlife Service's authorization of secondary uses of refuges without ensuring that those uses are compatible with the primary purposes for which the refuges were established. The filing of the lawsuit is but one step in a much-needed effort to overhaul management of the entire refuge system.

Illegal secondary uses and abuses of national wildlife refuges are, sadly, nothing new. While a court may stop illegal activities occurring on specific refuges, it is going to take significant reform — by Congress — to enable all refuges to fulfill their primary purposes and to meet their potential.

Joanne Carter  
Denver, Colorado

Joanne Carter is assistant regional director of The Wilderness Society.

afraid this letter might mean further consternation for him. But for bear and wolf, orchid, mollusk and warbler, roads too often mean death.

Tim Hogan  
Boulder, Colorado

### GO RESCUE NEW JERSEY

Dear HCN,

The rancher is the West, as much a part of it as the coyote or elk. You want to fence us out — to make a park or maybe a zoo where righteous eco-saviors shall righteously manage and perhaps even benevolently allow us to trespass as long as we don't disturb anything natural.

The natural world is cruel. Perhaps in the end the salvation of the ecosystem will come not from your manipulations but from starvation and disease. Until then I will be happy and free in this beautiful land, hoping that you and your kind who hate what is Western will clear out and rescue, instead, New Jersey.

Barbara E. Barker  
Clark, Colorado